

Expert reports

Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt, 1996-I-1113, Queen's Bench Division

This volume contains the six expert reports served by the defence in *Irving v Penguin Books Ltd and Lipstadt*.

Evidence for the Implementation of the Final Solution

Christopher R. Browning

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Expert report

Evidence for the Implementation of the Final Solution

Electronic edition

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Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt

Royal Courts of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, case 1996-I-1113

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II. Purpose of the Expert Opinion Report

I have been asked to write a report that addresses the following issues:

1. What is the documentary evidence concerning the implementation of a policy to kill the Jews on German-occupied Soviet territory through shooting.
 2. What is the state of evidence concerning the implementation of a policy to kill Jews by means of gas in camps other than Auschwitz, and particularly in the camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.
 3. What is the state of evidence concerning the emergence and existence of an overall plan of the Nazi regime to kill the Jews of Europe.
 4. What is the state of evidence concerning the importance and purpose of the Wannsee Conference.
 5. What is the state of evidence concerning the naming and purpose of "Operation Reinhard."
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III. Implementation of the Final Solution

The Nazi regime implemented the Final Solution or mass murder of the European Jews caught within its empire primarily by two methods--shooting and gassing. In the territories occupied by Germany after June 22, 1941 (with the exception of the district of Bialystok and partial exception of the district of Galicia), shooting was the most common method employed to kill Jews. The Jews of central and western Poland i.e. the Polish territory held by Germany since September 1939, and those deported from all over Europe to Poland during the war for the most part perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, and the gas vans of Chelmno.

The evidence for these killing operations is of four types used commonly by scholars in the writing of history and judicial authorities in the conducting of trials: (1) contemporary documentation; (2) witness

testimony recorded later (from survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders); (3) material evidence; and (4) circumstantial evidence. Because the Nazi regime sought to destroy not only the Jews of Europe but also the documentary evidence and material evidence (i.e. the mass graves and death camps), the evidence with which scholars and judicial authorities can work is both less than complete and not symmetrical for the two killing methods. In particular, the documentation of mass killing by shooting in the territories occupied by Germany after June 1941 is quite extensive, while documents relating to gassing in Poland are scant. For gassing, therefore, witness testimony and circumstantial evidence play a much larger role.

IV. Documentary Evidence for the Systematic Mass Killing of Jews by Shooting

Prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Reinhard Heydrich (Himmler's deputy and Chief of the Security Police and Security Service) assembled four mobile SS units known as Einsatzgruppen. They were designated A, B, C, and D for the Baltic, Central, Southern, and Romanian fronts respectively. The four Einsatzgruppen were in turn divided into smaller units referred to as Einsatzkommandos and Sonderkommandos. By agreement with the German army, these SS units were permitted to move forward with the advancing German military and operate up to the front lines.

In the rear areas police functions were exercised by the Order Police, which included rural police stations of the Gendarmerie, urban police stations of the Schutzpolizei, mobile Police Battalions, and growing auxiliary police units composed of native recruits working on behalf of the Germans called Schutzmannschaften. Heinrich Himmler, the head

of the SS and Chief of German Police, also designated three Higher SS and Police Leaders (North, Central, and South) to coordinate all joint police activities behind the front.

By far the richest collection of surviving documents relevant to the systematic mass murder of Jews through shooting are the reports from the Einsatzgruppen recorded in the so-called Ereignismeldungen or Event Reports compiled by Heydrich's staff in Berlin. One hundred and ninety-five Event Reports were compiled between June 23, 1941, and April 24, 1942.

Eleven "Activity and Situation Reports (Tätigkeits und Lageberichte) of the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and SD in the USSR" were also compiled by Heydrich's staff between July 31, 1941, and March 31, 1942. These Activity and Situation Reports summarized the contents of the Event Reports (bi-monthly for August and September 1941 and otherwise monthly) and were widely circulated throughout the German government. Three other reports originating from the Einsatzgruppen (two by the commander of Einsatzgruppe A, Franz Stahlecker, and one by his subordinate, the commander of Einsatzkommando 3, Karl Jäger, as well as a series of orders from Heydrich are also significant.

One reason for this extensive reporting from the Einsatzgruppen and its systematic compilation in Berlin is revealed by a message from Heinrich Müller, the head of the Gestapo within Heydrich's Security Police, to the four Einsatzgruppen on August 1, 1941. "The Führer is to be kept informed continually from here about the work of the Einsatzgruppen in the East"

These collections of Einsatzgruppen documents certainly constitute the primary though not the only documentary sources for the killing operations into the spring of 1942. Thereafter, for contemporary written records, the historian is dependent upon a mixed collection of Ger-

man documents originating from a number of sources, such as the Higher SS and Police, the civil administration of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the mobile Police Battalions, the Gendarmerie stations, and the military.

This report will not attempt a complete history of the destruction of Soviet Jewry as reflected in these German documents. Rather it will focus on four issues: 1) the scale of killing; 2) the steady escalation of the categories of Jews targeted for execution; 3) the use of open and camouflage language in the documents; and 4) the implications for our wider understanding of Nazi Jewish policy and the Final Solution.

A. Scale of killing:

The various reports and documents are incomplete concerning the total number of Jews and others executed by various German and collaborator units on occupied Soviet territory. Nonetheless, if one simply adds the summary numbers contained in the surviving documents, even the partial total gives a sense of the scale on which the killing was carried out.

Einsatzgruppe A:

- Einsatzkommando 2 reported having shot 34,193 people by February 2, 1942.
- Einsatzkommando 3 reported having killed 133,346 people by November 25, 1941.

Einsatzgruppe B:

- On November 14, 1941, Einsatzgruppe B reported that its “total number” (Gesamtzahl) of “liquidations” (Liquidierungen) had reached 45,467.

Einsatzgruppe C:

- Sonderkommando 4a reported having shot 59,018 people as of November 4, 1941, and
- Sonderkommando 5 reported having shot 36,147 people as of December 7, 1941.
- Einsatzgruppe D reported having shot 91,678 people as of April 8, 1942.

These cumulative totals do not distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish victims. The Jäger Report (summarizing the activities of Einsatzkommando 3 in Lithuania up to December 1941), however, does identify all its victims, of which only 2,042 or barely 1.5% were non-Jewish (mostly identified as communist functionaries or mentally-ill). Einsatzgruppe D did not make this distinction in its cumulative totals, but it often did in its bi-weekly reports. For instance, on November 5, 1941, it reported killing 11,037 Jews and 31 communist officials in the previous two weeks. For the period November 16-December 15, 1941, it reported executing 17,645 Jews, 2,504 Krimchaks (categorized racially as Jews), 824 Gypsies, and 212 communists. For the last two weeks of December 1941, it reported shooting 3,176 Jews, 85 partisans, 12 looters, and 122 communists. For the first two weeks of January 1942, it reported a rare reversal, in which 1,639 communists and partisans were reported shot along with 685 Jews. For the latter half of January, it reported shooting 3,286 Jews, 152 communists, 84 partisans, and 79 looters and saboteurs, and asocials.

By the estimate of Einsatzgruppe C in late October, it had “liquidated” (liquidiert) some 80,000 people, of which 75,000 were Jews. Sonderkommando 4a conceded that “the total number...of those executed included, in addition to a relatively small number of political functionaries, active communists, people guilty of sabotage, etc., above all Jews...”. Einsatzkommando 5 occasionally offered specific breakdowns of its victims as well. For instance, for the period November 2-18, 1941, it shot 10,650 Jews, 15 political officials, 21 saboteurs and looters, and 414 hostages. For the week of November 23-30, 1941, it reported shooting 2,615 Jews, 64 political functionaries, and 46 saboteurs and looters. And for the following week it reported shooting 1,471 Jews, 60 political functionaries, and 47 saboteurs and looters. In short, there is compelling evidence to conclude that the overwhelming majority of the people reported executed by the Einsatzgruppen were in fact Jews.

In addition to giving figures for the four Einsatzgruppen themselves, the Event Reports occasionally record killings by other units as well, though in a much less complete fashion. For example, a police unit operating on Soviet territory just over the border from the town of Tilsit in East Prussia was credited with liquidating 3,302 persons in the first weeks after the invasion. An additional Einsatzgruppe “for special purposes” operated in the areas immediately across the demarcation line in Belarus and the Ukraine once the original four Einsatzgruppen had moved further east. For the last ten days of July, this unit was credited with 3,947 executions. For several periods in August, it was credited with an additional 12,652 killings. The Higher SS and Police Leader South, Friedrich Jeckeln, was reported to have killed 44,125 persons, “mostly Jews,” in August (meist Juden). He was subsequently credited with 10,000 Jews in Dniepropetrovsk and 15,000 Jews in Rowno (the latter with help from EK 5). Transferred to become Higher SS and Police Leader North in November 1941, the same Jeckeln was credited with reducing the Jewish population of Riga from 29,500 to 2,600 in late 1941.

For the period beyond the spring of 1942, other documents provide a glimpse of continued killing of Jews on a massive scale. On July 31, 1942, the head of the civil administration in western Belarus, Wilhelm Kube, reported from Minsk that in the previous ten weeks some 55,000 Jews had been killed in his district. On December 26, 1942, the Higher SS and Police Leader for South Russia, the Ukraine, and the Northeast submitted a report on the campaign against the partisans for the three-month period from September 1 to December 1, 1942. Three days later, on December 29, 1942, the report was retyped in the so-called Führer-type (especially large type that Hitler could read without his glasses) and retitled: “Reports to the Führer on combatting partisans. Report No. 51. Russia South, Ukraine, Bialystok. Results of the antipartisan campaign from 1.9. to 1.12.1942.”

The report was signed by Heinrich Himmler. On the top of the front page was the initialled hand-written note: “submitted 31.12.42.” The report noted for August, September, October, and November in the category of “bandits” a total of 1,337 killed in battle, 737 executed immediately after battle, and 7,828 executed after interrogation. In the category of “accomplices and suspects,” the report had two sub-categories: on a line for “executed,” it listed 14,256. On a separate line for “Jews executed,” it listed 363,211.

Why would Himmler include the killing of 363,211 Jews in a report to Hitler on anti-partisan warfare? According to Himmler’s appointment book, on December 18, 1941, he and Hitler had discussed the “Jewish question.” The result of their conversation was noted succinctly: “to be annihilated as partisans.” (Als Partisanen auszurotten) In short, annihilating Jews and solving the so-called “Jewish question” under the cover of killing partisans was the agreed-upon convention between Hitler and Himmler.

B. Escalation:

The categories of Jews targeted for killing by the Germans steadily expanded. There is no surviving copy of pre-invasion orders to the Einsatzgruppen concerning the killing of Jews. The most specific document in this regard is a summary “in compressed form” (in gedrängter Form) of pre-invasion instructions to the Einsatzgruppen that Heydrich passed on to the Higher SS and Police Leaders of July 2, 1941. According to Heydrich, the Einsatzgruppen had been instructed “to execute” (zu exekutieren) communist functionaries, “Jews in party and state positions” (Juden in Partei- und Staatsstellungen), and “other radical elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, assassins, agitators, etc.” They were also instructed to “promote” (fördern) pogroms, euphemistically dubbed “self-cleansing attempts” (Selbstreinigungsversuchen), by local anti-Jewish elements but “without trace” (spurenlos) of German involvement. Finally, Heydrich

noted that Himmler had explicitly ordered that he be kept continuously and fully informed of the activities of the Einsatzgruppen. On July 17, 1941, Heydrich issued another written order for the execution of all Jews found in German POW camps.

From the very beginning it was clear these instructions did not limit the shooting of Jews to those strictly in “party and state positions” but rather were understood and interpreted broadly to encompass the shooting of large numbers of adult male Jews. Moreover, this interpretation was immediately approved by Himmler and Heydrich. On June 24, 25, and 27, the Security Police in Tilsit organized three mass executions totalling 526 victims who were “primarily Jews.” (vorwiegend Juden) The reason given was that the Jewish population had supported the Red Army, and that in two incidents four Germans had been shot at from behind. In one execution every male Jew in the town of Krottingen was shot, and “only Jewish women and children were left.” (nur jüdischen Frauen und Kinder verblieben sind) Further executions were carried out in Augustowo. “The Reichsführer-SS [Himmler] and the Gruppenführer [Heydrich], who by coincidence were present there, had themselves briefed on the measures implemented by the Tilsit Security Police and approved them completely.” By early July the Tilsit Security Police and its subordinate border police stations reported shooting a total of 1,743 people, and one week later this figure had increased to 3,302.

Numerous Einsatzgruppen reports of July indicate that adult male Jews, and particularly professionals and community leaders, were targeted. For example, for Einsatzgruppe C: “Leaders of Jewish intelligentsia (in particular teachers, lawyers, Soviet officials) liquidated.” For Einsatzgruppe A: “Actions against the Jews are going on in an ever-increasing number. ...The Latvians drive the Jewish families out of town, while they arrest the men. ...The arrested Jewish men are shot without delay and interred in previously prepared graves.” And for Einsatzgruppe B: “In Minsk, the entire Jewish intelligentsia has been

liquidated (teachers, professors, lawyers, etc. except medical personnel).” And: “The emphasis of the operational activity was directed first of all against the Jewish intelligentsia.” As noted already, the Tilsit commando killed all the adult male Jews of Krottingen but not the Jewish women and children. Only Einsatzkommando 3, however, gave an exact statistical breakdown between male and female Jewish victims. For the period July 22-August 3, 1941, it reported killing 1,349 male Jews and 172 female Jews.

The escalation of the killing campaign to include Jewish women and children began in early August 1941, with clear impetus from the top SS leaders. When the 2nd SS Cavalry Regiment was preparing to sweep the Pripet Marshes, it received an “explicit order” (ausdrücklicher Befehl des RF-SS) from Himmler on August 1, 1941: “All Jews must be shot. Drive the female Jews into the swamp.” The reply of SS-Sturmbannführer Magill demonstrated that he fully understood the purpose of Himmler’s order, namely the killing of Jewish women and children through drowning, and he explained the inadequacy of the method: “Driving women and children into the swamps did not have the intended success, because the swamps were not so deep that a sinking under could occur.”

The War Diary of Police Battalion 322 shows a similar transition. In early August its third company carried out executions of all adult male Jews but still spared Jewish women and children on its march from Bialystok to Minsk. Then the chief of the Order Police met with Higher SS and Police Leader von dem Bach-Zelewski in Minsk on August 29, and the following day Police Battalion 322 was assigned to a “thorough Jewish action” (gründliche Judenaktion) or roundup in the Minsk. On September 1 third company took part in the execution of the Jews who had been seized, including 64 Jewish women. The inclusion of Jewish women was justified by their alleged failure to wear the Jewish star. By

early October the Battalion was shooting Jews “of both sexes” (beiderlei Geschlechts) without providing any explanation or rationalization.

Once again the detailed statistics of Jäger’s Einsatzkommando provide the clearest evidence of the transition. On August 6, 1941, Jäger was informed by Stahlecker that the latter had received “general orders from above that cannot be discussed in writing.” Beginning on August 15, 1941, Jäger’s statistics demonstrate a sharp increase in the number of Jews being shot and the inclusion of large numbers of Jewish women and children.

Beginning in late September, the killing campaign escalated once again when entire communities of Jews (with the exception of indispensable skilled workers) were killed in so-called “large-scale actions.” (Grossaktionen) On September 19, following a decision “to liquidate the Jews of Zhitomir definitively and radically,” the ghetto was emptied and 3,145 Jews were shot. The massacre of over 33,000 Jews in Kiev followed on September 29-30. “On November 6 and 7, 1941, the action against Jews that had been prepared for some time was carried out in Rovno, where about 15,000 Jews were shot.” Beginning on November 30, 1941, the Higher SS and Police Leader North reduced the Jewish population of the Riga ghetto from 29,500 to 2,600. In December Einsatzgruppe B reported the elimination of the Bobruisk and Vitebsk ghettos through the shooting of 5,281 and 4,090 Jews respectively. In early December 1941 Einsatzgruppe D noted that some 10,000 Jews lived in Simferopol; two months later, it noted that almost 10,000 Jews had been executed there. Such actions aiming at total extermination of the Jewish population were not limited to large cities. Following killing actions in smaller cities and rural areas, entire towns and then even entire regions were repeatedly proclaimed “free of Jews.”

In early 1942, Heydrich reported: "While the Jewish question in the Ostland (by which he presumably meant the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) can be seen as practically solved and cleansed, progress continues to be made on the clarification of this problem on other occupied territories in the east." Outside the Baltic the pace of killing slowed temporarily in the winter of 1941-42 for two reasons. As SS-Sturmbannführer Hofmann, head of the Security Service in Minsk, explained to a meeting of officials from the civil administration: "At present a complete liquidation of the Jews is not possible due to the frost, because the ground is too frozen to dig pits which would then be available as mass graves for the Jews. A complete eradication of the Jews was also not possible, because workers were still needed from among the ranks of the Jews." Nonetheless, Hofmann assured his listeners that "in the spring large-scale executions would be initiated again."

With the warming weather in the spring of 1942, large-scale killing did indeed begin again. On March 2-3, 1942, 5,721 Jews were executed in Minsk, Vileyka, and Baranovichi, and later in the month 15,000 Jews were killed in Chevron. As noted from the Kube's report of July 31, 1942, on the killing of 55,000 Jews in six weeks in the Minsk region, and "Report No.51 for the Führer" on the execution of 363,211 Jews in the Ukraine and Bialystok in the four months of August through November, the killing was particularly intense in the summer and fall of 1942.

At this point, even the Jewish skilled workers important to the German war economy were no longer spared, as can be seen from documentation relating to the killing of the Jews in the region of Brest-Litovsk in the fall of 1942. Informed of the impending "overall resettlement of the Jews" (generelle Umsiedlung der Juden), the SS and Polizeistandortführer in Brest-Litovsk, Friedrich Wilhelm Rohde, pleaded: "Insofar as the Jewish question is solved in Brest, I foresee severe economic damage resulting from the lack of labor." He was supported by the local

commissioner (Gebietskommissar) Franz Burat: “Although the total resettlement of the Jews from the Kreisgebiet is desirable from the political standpoint, from the standpoint of labor mobilization, I must plead unconditionally for leaving the most needed artisans and manpower.”

These appeals were in vain. On October 15-16, 1942, the 20,000 Jews of Brest, including 9,000 workers, were shot. The war diary and reports of Police Regiment 15 show that the Jews working in camps and on state farms in the region were also executed. The totality with which Jewish labor was executed in this region can be seen from a subsequent report of the military armaments commando: “Then, in October 1942, there were large-scale Jewish evacuations in Volhynia as a result of which every Jew was removed from all the factories, and the factories came to a complete standstill for a shorter or longer time, or production dwindled to a mere fraction.”

In late July 1942 Himmler wrote emphatically: “The occupied eastern territories will be free of Jews. The carrying out of this very difficult order has been placed on my shoulders by the Führer. No one can take this responsibility from me.” In the end, this included even the skilled Jewish workers providing irreplaceable manpower for the German war economy.

C. Camouflage Language:

The documents concerning the killing of Jews on occupied Soviet territory contain both open and camouflage language. Often the documents speak frankly of shootings, executions, extermination, liquidation, etc. Elsewhere they use words such as “special treatment,” “evacuation,” “deportation,” and “resettlement.” Many times one or more rationalizations are given to justify the mass killing of Jews as a response to or “reprisal” for some alleged provocation, and sometimes the documents claim that the Jews were “convicted” and the executions were carried out “according to martial law.” On other occasions, however,

the goal of making these territories “free of Jews” through killing is openly admitted, and Jews are killed for no other reason than being Jewish. The large number of surviving documents for this region allows a more careful examination of this use of language.

The implication that Jews were investigated, convicted, and shot “according to martial law” (*standrechtlich*) for alleged individual offenses is dispelled by Einsatzgruppe C’s own reporting. It noted that by late October 1941, 80,000 persons had been “liquidated.” However, only 8,000 of these were persons “who on the basis of investigation could be proven guilty of anti-German or bolshevik activities. The remainder were finished off on the basis of reprisal measures.” In the same report, Einsatzgruppe C reported that 75,000 of its 80,000 victims were Jews. Clearly the killing of the vast majority of these 75,000 Jews was not the result of individual offenses that led to investigation, conviction, and execution “according to martial law.” Moreover, the claim of legal proceedings in connection with shootings was at times clearly formulaic and transparently specious. For instance, Sonderkommando 4a reported shooting 740 people in the first week of November “according to martial law.” Included in the list of victims, however, were only three political functionaries and one saboteur; the rest of the victims were 137 Jews and 599 mentally ill persons.

As indicated by Einsatzgruppe C, many killings of Jews were explained or justified as “reprisals,” that is collective punishment of the Jewish community for some alleged transgression by unidentified individuals. This involved a variety of accusations: refusing to work, incitement and spreading rumours, looting or plundering, supporting the partisans, and sabotage. On other occasions, the shooting of Jews was justified because of insufficient food supplies or because the Jews were deemed a source of infectious disease or were simply too old and unfit for work.

On two occasions in the Einsatzgruppen reports, however, the reasons for executions are spelled out systematically. Among the reasons listed by Einsatzgruppe C was quite simply: “Jews in general.” (Juden allgemein) Einsatzgruppe A also listed reasons for shooting: alongside participation in the communist party, sedition, partisan activity, and espionage, was quite simply: “Belonging to the Jewish race.” (Zugehörigkeit zur jüdischen Rasse) In short, Jews were to be killed for being Jewish, whether a pretext was listed or not. And in fact many executions were reported without any alleged justification whatsoever. Jews were killed for whom they were, not for what they had done.

The term “special treatment” (Sonderbehandlung) appears in the Events Reports for the first time in No. 21 of July 13, 1941. The report notes that by July 8 the Einsatzkommando in Vilna had “liquidated” 321 Jews. Furthermore, the report explained how this was done, namely that 150 Lithuanians were recruited “to take part in the liquidation of the Jews. ...They arrested the Jews and put them into concentration camps where they were subjected the same day to special treatment. (italics mine) This work has now begun, and thus about 500 Jews, saboteurs among them, are liquidated daily.” Einsatzgruppe B reported in one paragraph that 640 Jews from the Nevel ghetto had been “liquidated.” In the very next paragraph it reported that in Janovichi 1,025 Jews “were subjected to special treatment.” (wurden...sonderbehandelt)

One month later Einsatzgruppe B reported a long list of actions, in which various terms were used interchangeably to indicate killing. In Belowchstchina 272 Jews were “liquidated.” (liquidiert) In Mogilev Einsatzkommando 8 and the Order Police “led 113 Jews to liquidation.” (brachte 113 Juden zur Liquidierung) In Schidow, 627 Jews were “liquidated. In a further action another 812 male and female persons were subjected to special treatment. Without exception they were racially and mentally inferior elements.” (liquidiert. In einer weiteren Aktion wurden noch 812 männliche und weibliche Personen der Son-

derbehandlung unterzogen. Es handelte sich durchweg um rassisch und geistig minderwertige Elemente.) In Minsk, Einsatzkommando 8 “executed” (exekutierte) 41 persons, “primarily” (vorwiegend) Jews. In Talka, “222 Jews were led to liquidation.” (222 Juden zur Liquidierung gebracht wurden) Then in Marina-Gorka, “996 male and female Jews were subjected to special treatment.” (wurden 996 männliche und weibliche Juden der Sonderbehandlung unterzogen) In Borisov 83 Jews were “shot.” (erschossen) In Krupka and Sholpenitsche 912 and 833 Jews respectively were “liquidated.” (liquidiert) “The Rayon Krupka can now be considered free of Jews.” (Die Rayhon Krupka kann damit als judenfrei angesehen werden.) In Bobruisk Einsatzkommando 8 “executed” (exekutierte) 418 persons, including “rebellious Jews.” (widersetzlichen Juden) Then on October 8, 1941, the “total liquidation of the Jews in the ghetto of Vitebsk began. The number of Jews handed over to special treatment came to some 3,000.” (der restlosen Liquidierung der im Ghetto in Witebsk befindlichen Juden begonnen. Die Zahl der zur Sonderbehandlung gelangenden Juden beläuft sich auf etwa 3000.) In Ostrovno 169 Jews were “shot” (erschossen), and finally 52 Jews who had fled from Gorodok were “specially treated.” (sonderbehandelt) A subsequent report stated: “In Vitebsk, the ghetto was evacuated. During this process a total of 4,090 Jews of both sexes were shot.” (In Witebsk wurde das Ghetto geräumt, wobei insgesamt 4090 Juden beiderlei Geschlechts erschossen wurden.) In short, the term “special treatment” (and in this case also “evacuation”) was often used interchangeably with “liquidated,” “executed,” and “shot” in the reports, without any serious pretense that it was supposed to camouflage what was happening.

“Resettlement” and “deportation” are also terms that appear in German documents in a similar fashion. For instance, the Gendarmerie district leader of Brest reported: “On October 15 and 16, 1942, the Jewish action was carried out in Brest-Litovsk. Simultaneously the complete resettlement of the Jews in the Kreisgebiet Brest-Litovsk also occurred.

In all some 20,000 Jews have been resettled up until now.” Two pages later in the same report, he explained the activities of his police station using different language. “Participation in the action against the Jews in the city and Kreisgebiet Brest-Litovsk since October 15, 1942. Up until now some 20,000 Jews have been shot.”

Einsatzgruppe D reported that it had begun preparations for “the deportation of 12-13,000 Jews, Krimchaks, and Gypsies” in early December 1941. In a later document, Einsatzgruppe D noted that “Krimchaks...usually counted as part of the Jewish population.” Thus the inclusion of the Krimchaks and Gypsies in the fate of the Jews occasioned no special notice among the population. “Their extermination, together with that of the actual Jews and the Gypsies in the Crimea, was accomplished for the most part by the beginning of December 1941.”

Thus SS documents for internal use openly employed terms like “special treatment,” “evacuation,” “resettlement,” and “deportation” interchangeably with execution, shooting, liquidation, and extermination. In documents for external use, however, such language was often used to camouflage what the SS was doing or intended to do. The most blatant and cynical act of deception and camouflage can be seen by juxtaposing the internal documents of Einsatzgruppe A with its communications to the civil administration in its region in August 1941. On July 27, 1941, the Reichskommissar for the Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, had issued a set of provisional guidelines for the treatment of the Jewish population without either consulting Stahlecker or delineating any role for the SS. Higher SS and Police Leader North, Hans Adolf Prützmann, urged Stahlecker to meet with Lohse to discuss the matter. Stahlecker instead sent Jäger a three-page position page, which Jäger was to transmit to Lohse orally, as they were both in Kovno. Stahlecker explained that Lohse’s guidelines, providing for ghettoization and forced labor of Jews at the moment and “resettlement” (Umsiedlung) later, were in conflict with the orders that had been given to Einsatz-

gruppe A. Instead of ghettoization in the cities, Stahlecker sketched out a plan of “Jewish reservation areas” (Judenreservatsräume) in the open spaces, where the Jews would be separated by sex to prevent further procreation. Work shops and factories would eventually be constructed there to exploit Jewish labor. The reservations would also facilitate “the later collective deportation of the Jews to a reservation outside Europe.” In a handwritten note at the end, Stahlecker added that the Lohse draft “to a great extent touches on general orders from higher authority to the Security Police that cannot be discussed in writing.”

This scenario of deporting the Jews first to reservations in the open spaces of the Ostland and then later out of Europe was designed only for outside consumption, as Stahlecker’s own documents show. In his summary report of October 15, 1941, he wrote: “It was expected from the start that the Jewish problem would not be solved solely through pogroms. On the other hand the goal of security police cleansing work, according to basic orders, was the most complete removal possible of the Jews. Extensive executions in the cities and flat lands were therefore carried out through special units, to whom selected manpower – in Lithuania partisan troops and in Latvia troops of the Latvian auxiliary police – were attached.” Indeed, the nature of the orders Stahlecker had received from higher authority but could not put in writing are suggested by Jäger’s statistics: his unit began the systematic killing of Jewish women and children on August 15, just days after receiving Stahlecker’s position paper.

D. Implications:

The systematic mass-murder of Jews on occupied Soviet territory primarily through shooting, with the explicit goal of making these territories “free of Jews,” is clearly visible in the surviving German documents. Both method and goal are transparent. The commanders in the field were explicitly told to report extensively, as both Hitler and

Himmler were to be kept well informed. Clearly their reports were intended to show that government policy was being carried out with zeal and efficiency. Their actions were neither the unauthorized initiatives of a few rogue commanders nor the product of a sporadic breakdown in discipline in the heat of battle.

Such a thorough documentation does not exist concerning the fate of the Jews from the rest of Europe. What can be learned from these documents concerning the intentions and actions of the regime and its use of language is essential, however, in interpreting the scantier documentation, evaluating the credibility of eyewitness testimony, and drawing conclusions from circumstantial evidence.

V. The Evidence for the Killing of Jews through Gas in Chelmno, Semlin, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka:

A. Documentary Evidence for the emergence of a program to kill the Jews of Europe:

The Nazi program to murder all the Jews of Europe within the German grasp was called the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (Endlösung der Judenfrage). While historians who have done extensive archival research on Nazi Jewish policy agree that such a program was implemented by the Nazi regime, they are not unanimous in their conclusions about several important aspects of historical interpretation. In particular, they do not agree as to precisely when the Nazi regime decided upon a policy of systematic and total mass murder, and they do not agree upon Hitler’s precise role in this decision-making process. Such disagreements over historical interpretation are, of course, not at all unusual. On the contrary, it is a quite normal occurrence.

What follows is my interpretation concerning the emergence of the Final Solution; it is not shared in every aspect by other able and learned historians of the Holocaust.

In the wake of the Kristallnacht pogrom, Hitler placed Hermann Göring in charge of coordinating Jewish policy. In turn, Göring delegated jurisdiction over Jewish policy that involved policing and emigration to the SS, and on January 24, 1939, Hermann Göring authorized Reinhard Heydrich to take charge of Jewish emigration from the Third Reich. Heydrich's jurisdiction expanded to include the expulsion of Jews, Poles, and Gypsies from the Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich in the fall of 1939. In the spring of 1941 Heydrich began organizing the Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and Security Service, which spearheaded the murderous attack on Soviet Jewry that summer. Then on July 31, 1941, Heydrich expanded his jurisdiction yet further, when he procured an authorization again signed by Göring, entrusting him with the task of making "all necessary preparations" for a "total solution to the Jewish question" (Gesamtlösung der Judenfrage) within the German sphere of influence in Europe. Heydrich was to submit a "comprehensive draft" (Gesamtentwurf) of the preliminary measures for this "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (Endlösung der Judenfrage) promptly. This was not an order for the Final Solution, but Heydrich, the man who was currently in charge of the Einsatzgruppen killing campaign on occupied Soviet territory, was now authorized to draw up plans concerning the fate of all other Jews under German control.

No "comprehensive draft" for a Final Solution is among the surviving German documents found after the war. But other documents have survived that indicate a series of changes in Nazi Jewish policy in the fall of 1941 that, taken together, constituted a program for the systematic mass murder of European Jewry. The first was a reversal of Hitler's previous policy that the deportation of German Jews would not take place until after the war. On September 18, 1941, Himmler in-

formed the Gauleiter of the Warthegau, Arthur Greiser: “The Führer wishes that the Old Reich and Protectorate be emptied and freed of Jews from west to east as quickly as possible.” Thus Himmler intended, “as a first step” (als erste Stufe), to deport the Jews to the incorporated territories (especially the ghetto of Lodz) “in order to deport them yet further to the east the next spring.” On October 10, Heydrich in Prague announced that Riga and Minsk would also be destinations for the deportation of German Jews. The deportations, first to Lodz, then began on October 15.

The second major change in German policy was the ban on Jewish emigration overseas. In August 1941 a number of Spanish Jews living in Paris had been arrested, which led the Spanish government to suggest the possibility of evacuating all Spanish Jews (some 2,000) to Spanish Morocco--a proposal endorsed by the German Foreign Office as fully in line with previous German policy of emigrating or expelling Jews overseas. On October 17, Heydrich blocked the Spanish proposal for two reasons. First, the Spanish would not effectively guard them in Morocco. Second, “In addition these Jews would also be too much out of the direct reach of the measures for a basic solution to the Jewish question to be enacted after the war.” On October 23, 1941, the chief of the Gestapo, Heinrich Müller, then dispatched a circular to all police agencies announcing Himmler’s order that Jewish emigration was to be stopped.

What did the end of Jewish emigration overseas so that even Spanish Jews would not be “too much out of the direct reach of the measures for a basic solution to the Jewish question to be enacted after the war” mean? What did the deportation of German Jews first to Lodz, Minsk, and Riga and then “yet further east the next spring” mean? Did they mean nothing more than expulsion into eastern Russia or Siberia after the defeat of the Soviet Union still expected by the spring of 1942? A combination of three documents dating from the end of October 1941 suggest otherwise.

Between October 18 and 21, 1941, the Foreign Office expert for Jewish affairs, Franz Rademacher, and Eichmann's second deputy, Friedrich Suhr, visited Belgrade. After the trip Rademacher reported how the adult Jewish men in Serbia had been shot by the German army. Concerning the fate of the Jewish women, children, and elderly, Rademacher reported: "Then as soon as the technical possibility exists within the framework of the total solution to the Jewish question, the Jews will be deported by waterway to the reception camp in the east." In short, Jews deported from Europe were not simply going to be expelled into eastern Russia, but rather they were to be interned in a German "reception camp" not yet built. Furthermore, as this reception camp was for women, children, and elderly, it clearly was not a labor camp.

A second relevant document is a short hand-written letter of October 23, 1941, that Franz Rademacher found waiting for him from the foreign editor of *Der Stürmer*, Paul Wurm, when he returned to Berlin. Wurm wrote: "Dear Party Comrade Rademacher! On my return trip from Berlin I met an old party comrade, who works in the east on the settlement of the Jewish question. In the near future many of the Jewish vermin will be exterminated through special measures."

What did Wurm mean by "special measures" for the destruction of Jews in the east? On October 25, 1941, Rademacher's counterpart in the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Eberhard Wetzel, met first with Viktor Brack of the Führer Chancellery (where he was involved with the so-called euthanasia program for the killing of mentally- and physically handicapped patients in German hospitals and asylums) and then with Adolf Eichmann (Heydrich's special advisor on Jewish policy). Wetzel then drafted a letter to be sent by his boss, Alfred Rosenberg, to Hinrich Lohse, who was not happy about the imminent deportation of German Jews to Riga. According to Wetzel, Brack declared himself ready to aid in the construction of "gassing apparatuses" ("Vergasungsapparate") on the spot in Riga. Eichmann con-

firmed to Wetzel that Jewish camps were about to be set up in Riga and Minsk to receive German Jews. Those capable of labor would be sent “to the east” later. Under the circumstances there were no objections “if those Jews who are not fit for work are removed by Brack’s device” in the meantime.

In short, surviving documents show that by late October 1941 the Nazi regime: 1) had ended a longstanding policy of creating a Europe free of Jews through emigration and expulsion overseas; 2) had begun deporting German Jews to the east into ghettos where they awaited deportation further east the following spring; 3) was planning a “reception camp” in the east for non-working Jewish women, children, and elderly; 4) was planning for the destruction of Jews through “special measures”; and 5) was discussing the construction of “gassing apparatuses” in Riga, so that German Jews incapable of work could be “removed” immediately.

These documents suggest that a policy of systematic extermination, including deportation to reception camps and the use of gassing as a method of killing, was taking shape by late October 1941, even if it was not to be implemented until the following spring (after the expected end of the war). The statements of leading Nazis in the following months certainly point to a widening recognition that mass killing, not expulsion, was now the goal of the regime. On November 15, 1941, Himmler had a four-hour discussion with Alfred Rosenberg. Three days later Rosenberg gave a “confidential” background report to the German press. The reporters were not yet to print the details of what was happening in the east, but they needed sufficient background so that the press could give its treatment the proper “color” (Farbe), he explained. Among the topics Rosenberg dealt with was the Jewish question. “ In the east some six million Jew still live, and this question can only be solved in a biological eradication of the entire Jewry of Europe. The Jewish question is only solved for Germany when the last Jew has left German territory, and for Europe when not a single Jew

lives on the European continent up to the Urals. ...for this reason it is necessary to expel them over the Urals or eradicate them in some other way.”

On November 28, 1941, Hitler met with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Hitler stated: “Germany was resolved, step by step, to ask one European nation after the other to solve its Jewish problem, and at the proper time, direct a similar appeal to non-European nations as well.” When Germany had defeated the Soviet Union and broken through the Caucasus into the middle east, Germany would have no imperial goals of its own and would support Arab liberation, Hitler assured the Grand Mufti. But he did have one goal: “Germany’s objective would then be solely the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere under the protection of British power.”

In December 1941, after the Soviet counter-offensive around Moscow, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and the German declaration of war on the United States, there could be no doubt any longer that there would be no end to the war by the following spring. Yet Hitler made clear in a speech to the top echelons of the Nazi party on December 12, 1941, that this did not change the emerging German policy of systematic mass killing. “Concerning the Jewish question, the Führer is determined to make a clean sweep. He prophesied that, if they were once again to cause a world war, the result would be their own destruction. That was no figure of speech. The world war is here, the destruction of the Jews must be the inevitable consequence.”

Hans Frank, who attended this meeting, returned to the General Government and explained what he had learned in Berlin to his district governors and division leaders. “We must put an end to the Jews, that I want to say quite openly. The Führer once spoke these words: If united Jewry should once more succeed in unleashing a world war, then the peoples who have been incited to this war will not be its only victims, because the Jew in Europe will also have found his end. ...Before I con-

tinue to speak I would ask you to agree with me on the following principle: we want to have compassion only for the German people, otherwise for no one in the whole world. Others have had no compassion for us. As an old National Socialist, I must also say: if the Jewish tribe were to survive the war in Europe, while we had sacrificed our best blood for Europe's preservation, then this war would be only a partial success. Thus vis-a-vis the Jews I will in principle proceed only on the assumption that they will disappear. They must go. I have entered into negotiations for the purpose of deporting them to the east. In January a large meeting will be convened in the Reich Security Main Office by SS-Obergruppenführer Heydrich. In any case a large migration of Jews will be set in motion. But what is to happen to the Jews? Do you believe that they will be lodged in settlements in the Ostland? In Berlin we were told: why all this trouble; we cannot use them in the Ostland or the Reichskommissariat either; liquidate them yourselves! Gentlemen, I must ask you, arm yourselves against any thoughts of compassion. We must destroy the Jews, wherever we encounter them and wherever it is possible, in order to preserve the entire structure of the Reich. " Frank did not yet know how unprecedented destruction on this scale could be done, but he assured his audience that "nonetheless we will take some kind of action that will lead to a successful destruction, and indeed in conjunction with the important measures to be discussed in the Reich."

What Frank called the "large meeting" in Berlin under the chairmanship of Heydrich, where "important measures" were to be discussed in January, had originally been scheduled for December 8, 1941, but was postponed until January 20, 1942. Known as the Wannsee Conference, it was attended by the State Secretaries of the ministries of the Interior (Stuckart), Justice (Freisler), the General Government (Bühler), and the Occupied Eastern Territories (Meyer and his deputy Leibbrandt), as well as the Office of the Four Year Plan (Neumann) and Party Chancellery (Klopfer), the Undersecretary of the Foreign Office (Luther), and

ministerial director of the Reich Chancellery (Kritzingen). The State Secretaries, just beneath the cabinet minister level, were by protocol the highest ranking officials that Heydrich could invite to a meeting over which he--as Himmler's deputy--would preside. Also attending were the heads of the Gestapo (Müller), the Race and Resettlement Main Office (Hofmann), and the Security Police in the General Government (Schöngarth), as well as Heydrich, Eichmann, and Rudolf Lange, commander of Einsatzkommando 2 in Latvia. Heydrich's invitations to the meeting were accompanied by copies of his authorization, signed by Göring on July 31, 1941, to prepare a Final Solution to the Jewish question throughout Germany's sphere of influence in Europe. There is no record of Heydrich having chaired any other meeting with such an illustrious list of leading officials of the Nazi regime in attendance in his entire career.

Heydrich briefly reiterated his authority to prepare a European-wide Final Solution and reviewed the policy of emigration until its prohibition in the fall of 1941. Heydrich then stated: "In place of emigration, the evacuation of the Jews to the east has now emerged, after the appropriate prior approval of the Führer, as a further possible solution. A total of 11 million European Jews, including even those from neutral countries like Ireland, Switzerland, and Sweden, would be involved, according to Heydrich. The evacuations, however, were to be regarded "solely as temporary measures" (lediglich als Ausweichmöglichkeiten), for "practical experiences" (praktischen Erfahrungen) were already being gathered that would be of great significance for the "imminent" (kommende) Final Solution. Heydrich then went on to explain just what he meant by this. The Jews would be utilized for labor in the east. "Separated by sex, the Jews capable of work will be led into these areas in large labor columns to build roads, whereby a large part will doubtless fall away through natural diminution. The remnant that finally survives all this, because it is undoubtedly a question of the part with the greatest resistance, will have to be treated accordingly, be-

cause this remnant, representing a natural selection, must be regarded as the germ cell of a new Jewish reconstruction if released.” If the protocol indicates that Jews capable of work were to be subjected to such strenuous labor that most would die, and those who did not would be “treated accordingly,” it makes no mention of what was to happen to those Jews who were not capable of work to begin with. Bühler understood perfectly well that the Final Solution meant more than working Jews to death, for he urged that it begin in the General Government, because there was no transportation problem there and most of the Jews there were already incapable of work.

The protocol summarized in detail lengthy discussions about policy toward Jews in mixed marriage and their children without resolution. On one point the protocol was exceptionally brief, however, and that concerned the question Frank had raised in December, namely how were the Jews to be destroyed. Without any explanation as to actual content of the discussion, the protocol merely noted cryptically: “Finally there was a discussion of the various types of possible solutions....”

Thirty copies of the protocol of the Wannsee Conference were made, and the only surviving copy is the one that was sent by Heydrich to the Foreign Office on January 26, 1942. Apparently the Reich Interior Ministry received a copy at the same time, for already at another meeting on January 29, 1942, its Jewish expert, Bernhard Lösener, made reference to the conference of January 20.

One notable Nazi leader had not sent a representative to the Wannsee Conference, namely Heydrich and Himmler’s disliked rival, Josef Goebbels of the Propaganda Ministry. It would appear that Goebbels received an expurgated version of the protocol only much later. He noted in his diary entry of March 7, 1942, concerning a report “from the SD and police regarding the final solution of the Jewish question.” He noted the Wannsee Conference figure of 11 million Jews in Europe and then wrote: “They will have to be concentrated later, to begin with,

in the East; possibly an island, such as Madagascar can be assigned to them after the war.” In reality, of course, the Jews were neither going to be concentrated “later,” nor sent to Madagascar after the war. The Jews of the Warthegau were already being gassed at this moment, and the gassing of Serbian Jews in the Semlin camp outside Belgrade was imminent. Moreover, the “concentration” of the Jews of Poland in the three tiny villages of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka was about to begin.

B. Documentary Evidence concerning the gassing of Jews at Semlin, Chelmno, and on Soviet occupied territory in gas vans:

A surviving file of documents shows that gas vans called “special trucks” (Spezialwagen and Sonderwagen) were constructed and dispatched by Office II D 3 (Friedrich Pradel’s motorpool section of Walter Rauff’s division for technical affairs) within Heydrich’s Reich Security Main Office. Demand exceeded supply. In one surviving letter, Rauff informed the Criminal Technical Institute that the staff doctor at the Mauthausen concentration camp had requested a gas van. However, “The special trucks constructed by us are at this time all in action in accordance with the order of the Chief of the Security Police and SD.” Moreover, one would not be available for some time. Thus Rauff asked the Criminal Technical Institute, where the chief chemist Albert Widmann had earlier advised the euthanasia program on the use of carbon monoxide in gas chambers to kill mentally- and physically handicapped patients, for help. “Because I assume that the concentration camp Mauthausen cannot wait for an indefinite time for availability, I request the procurement of steel canisters of carbon monoxide or other remedies for implementation be initiated from your end.” No gas van was available for Mauthausen at this time, because they were all in use in three other places: Semlin near Belgrade, Chelmno (Kulmhof) near Lodz, and with the Einsatzgruppen on occupied Soviet territory.

1. Semlin

After the male adult Jews in Serbia had been shot in the fall of 1941, the women, children, and elderly were interned in a makeshift camp constructed in the old fair grounds of Semlin across the river from Belgrade. The planned deportation to a “reception camp” in the east never took place, and by late March 1942 the number of Jews in Semlin had reached 6,280. On April 11, 1942, the head of the military administration in Serbia, Harald Turner, wrote to Himmler’s adjutant, Karl Wolff: “Already some months ago I had everything that could be got hold of in the way of Jews in this land shot, and had all the Jewish women and children concentrated in a camp and at the same time, with the help of the SD, procured a ‘delousing vehicle’ that will now finally have carried out the clearing of the camp in some 14 days to 4 weeks...”

The 10-day reports of the military commander in Serbia document a steady decrease in the number of Jewish inmates in the Semlin camp between early March and late May. They register a population of 5,780 Jews--“mostly women and children”--in the “Jewish camp Semlin” on March 3, 1942, and this number declined to 491 Jews as of May 22. The reports cease to mention the presence of any Jews or even the existence of a “Jewish camp” in Semlin as of June. On May 29, 1942, Franz Rademacher at the Jewish desk in the Foreign Office wrote: “The Jewish question in Serbia is no longer acute.” Ten days later the head of the Security Police in Belgrade, Emanuel Schäfer, informed the commanding general in Serbia, Paul Bader, and the Military Commander Southeast, Walter Kuntze, that there was no longer a Jewish question in Serbia. And Schäfer reported to Berlin, concerning the “special Saurer truck” (Spezialwagen-Saurer)--Saurer was the larger of the two truck models used for conversion into gas vans--that the two drivers, Goetz and Meyer, “had carried out their special task”, and therefore they and the truck were being sent back.

2. Chelmno:

Beginning in December 1941, Jews from the Lodz ghetto and other towns in the Warthegau were deported to the small village of Chelmno. On May 1, 1942, Arthur Greiser wrote to Himmler: “The special treatment of some 100,000 Jews in my territory in an action approved by you in agreement with the Chief of the Reich Security Main Office SS-Obergruppenführer Heydrich will be completed in the next two to three months.”

The completion of this task was not without incident, however, as can be seen in a report in the motor pool section of the RSHA of June 5, 1942, concerning technical alterations in the production of the “special trucks.” “ Since December 1941, for example, 97,000 were processed by three trucks in action, without any defects in the vehicles being encountered. The known explosion in Chelmno must be deemed an isolated case. Its cause must be traced to operator’s error. ”

The deportations from the Warthegau to Chelmno continued in 1942 until the provinces had been made free of Jews and the population of the Lodz ghetto had been reduced to less than 90,000.

3. Einsatzgruppen

On May 16, 1942, Dr. August Becker submitted a secret report to Walter Rauff concerning his inspection tour of the gas vans being used by the Einsatzgruppen. The large model Saurer trucks with Einsatzgruppen C and D, he reported, could travel cross country only in dry weather but were unusable after a rain. Moreover, the rough terrain had loosened seals and rivets, so that many trucks were no longer airtight. The trucks of Einsatzgruppe D had become so well known to the civilian population that they openly referred to them as “death trucks.” (Todeswagen) He had had them disguised by painting windows on the side, but he did not think this subterfuge would preserve secrecy for long.

However, the greatest problems with the gas vans, according to Becker's report, were not technical. The men suffered "enormous emotional and health injuries" (ungeheure seelische und gesundheitliche Schäden) and complained of headaches after each unloading. "The gassing is without exception not undertaken properly. In order to finish the job as quickly as possible, the drivers without exception open full throttle. For this reason those to be executed suffer death from suffocation and are not, as intended, put to sleep peacefully." The result was gashlty--horribly distorted faces and bodies covered with excrement and vomit (verzerrte Gesichter und Ausscheidungen).

Despite such problems, the gas vans were still in demand. The chief of security police in Riga reported in mid-June 1942, one month after Becker's report, that in German-occupied Belarus "a Jewish transport arrived weekly that had to be subjected to a special treatment. The 3 special trucks on hand there did not suffice for this purpose!" He thus requested an additional large Saurer model to add to the other Saurer and the two small Diamond model trucks.

C. Documentary Evidence concerning the Camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

If the documents concerning the Einsatzgruppen and the "special trucks" speak openly about the methods of killing, i.e. shooting and gassing, such is not the case with the documents concerning the camps located in the three tiny villages of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, to which most Polish Jews were deported. Nonetheless, the quite scant surviving documentation makes clear that these were neither labor camps nor transit camps, and Jews were sent there simply to be killed.

In March 1942 the Nazi regime began two simultaneous programs: the deportation of Jews from the Third Reich and Slovakia into the General Government, and the deportation of Jews in the General Government

(initially from the districts of Lublin and Galicia) to a camp at Belzec--a small village on the Lublin side of the border between these two districts. The clearing of the Lublin ghetto began on March 16, as noted in a weekly report circulated by the propaganda division on March 21, 1942: "Resettlement of the Jews. Since Monday, March 16, the ghetto of Lublin is being cleared of Jews. Daily some 2,000 Jews are seized and sent eastward. Only a small Jewish quarter is being preserved for the Jews who still work for German agencies. It is therefore reckoned that the action will be completed by April 1, with the deportation of 35-38,000 Jews. "

In preparation for the simultaneous influx of Jewish transports from outside the Third Reich and Slovakia, Hermann Höfle on Globobnik's staff met with Richard Türk of the Lublin district's Department of Population and Welfare on March 16, 1942, the same day that the clearing of the Lublin ghetto began. Türk reported the results of the conversation: " 1) It would be expedient to divide the Jews in the transports coming into the district of Lublin already at the departure station into those capable and those not capable of work. If this separation is not possible at the departure station, one must then switch over to dividing the transport in Lublin according to the above-mentioned viewpoint. 2) Jews not capable of work must all go to Belzec, the furthest border station in Kreis Zamosc. 3) Hauptsturmführer Höfle intends to build a large camp, in which the Jews capable of work can be classified according to profession and requisitioned. 4) Piaski will be freed of Polish Jews and become the collection point for Jews coming from the Reich. ...In conclusion he declared, he could receive daily 4-5 transports of 1,000 at the end station of Belzec. These Jews would cross over the border and would never return again to the General Government. "

On March 20, 1942, Türk again reported on a discussion that had taken place between Höfle and two Kreishauptmänner (county heads) in the Lublin district. " Kreishauptmann Weienmeyer has as yet been able to learn nothing about final outcome of the deportation; all that is

known is the existence of a collection camp some distance from the Belzec train station on the district border, that is entirely closed off, and the arrival of a SS-commando of some 60 men. ”

After the clearing of the Lublin ghetto, deportations were carried out in various parts of the Lublin district. For instance, the Kreishauptmann of Pulawy reported on May 13, 1941: “In the period from May 6-12 inclusive, 16,822 Jews from the Kreis Pulawy were expelled over the Bug on the instruction of the SS and Police Leader.” (The Bug River was the demarcation line between the German and Soviet occupation zones in 1939-41 and formed the boundary between the districts of Lublin and Galicia thereafter.) With the exception of sick and old Slovakian Jews in the ghetto of Opole, only working Jews remained.

In short, the German documents make clear that tens of thousands of Jews were being sent to the camp at Belzec in the spring months of 1942. There was no pretense that this was a work camp, for only non-working Jews were sent there. There was no pretense that such numbers of Jews could all remain in Belzec, in a tiny village guarded by a mere 60 men. Thus the explanation given by the SS was that these Jews were “expelled over the Bug,” that is sent across the border into the district of Galicia, with the guarantee that they would never return. Two factors make the acceptance of such an explanation utterly untenable.

First, on March 27, 1942, shortly after the clearing of the Lublin ghetto began, Josef Goebbels confided to his diary about the fate of the non-working Jews, i.e. precisely those sent to Belzec: “ Beginning with Lublin, the Jews in the General Government are now being evacuated eastward. The procedure is a pretty barbaric one and not to be described here more definitely. Not much will remain of the Jews. On the whole it can be said about 60 percent of them will have to be liquidated whereas only about 40 percent can be used for forced labor. ”

Second, German documents from the district of Galicia make clear that not only were Jews not arriving in their district from the Lublin district via Belzec, but on the contrary, Jews were simultaneously being deported from the district of Galicia westward to Belzec. The Oberfeldkommandant in Lwow (Lemberg) reported on March 19, 1942: “ Within the Jewish population of Lemberg a noticeable unrest has spread in regard to a deportation action that has begun, through which some 30,000 elderly and other unemployed Jews shall be seized and allegedly transferred to a territory near Lublin. To what extent this evacuation can be equated with a decimation remains to be seen. ”

The Oberfeldkommandant reported the following month: “ The Jewish population displays the deepest depression, which is completely understandable because on the one hand in various locations in the district the well-known actions against the Jews occur again and on the other hand in Lemberg the temporarily interrupted resettlement of Jews resumes; in the meantime it is whispered also among the Jews that the evacuees never reach the resettlement territory that is alleged to them as the destination. ” The deportations from Galicia broke off during the months of May, June, and July 1942, but resumed in August. In October the Oberfeldkommandant reported again: “ The resettlement actions continue undiminished. The Jews are informed of their fate. Indicative is the statement of a member of the Lwow Jewish council: We all carry our death certificates in our pocket--only the date of death is not yet filled out. ”

The trains deporting Jews from Galicia did indeed go to Belzec, as can be seen in the report of Reserve Lieutenant Westermann of the 7th company of Police Regiment 24, whose men helped round up the Jews in Kolomyja and nearby towns and then guarded two transports to Belzec on September 7 and 10, 1942. The first contained 4,769 Jews in 50 train cars and went without incident. The second involved 8,205 Jews. Many had been held for days without food and force-marched 35-50 kilometers to the train in blistering heat. They were then packed

into train cars, in many cases 180-200 per car, virtually without ventilation. As Lieutenant Westermann concluded: "The ever greater panic spreading among the Jews due to the great heat, overloading of the train cars, and stink of the dead--when unloading the train cars some 2,000 Jews were found dead in the train--made the transport almost unworkable." Nevertheless the train that left Kolomyja at 8:50 pm. on September 10 finally crawled into Belzec at 6:45 pm on September 11.

As in the rest of Hitler's Europe, the Germans in Galicia were busy insuring that their district was becoming free of Jews. The SS and Police Leader, Friedrich Katzmann, reported that as of November 10, 1942, 254,989 Jews had been resettled. By June 23, 1943, the total had reached 434,329 Jews "resettled" (ausgesiedelt) with only 21,000 Jews still in labor camps. In short, the allegation that Belzec was a transit camp through which Jews were expelled from Lublin into Galicia is totally disproven by German documentation. Month after month, in train after train, tens of thousands of Jews were taken to the little village of Belzec, and the trains came from both Lublin and Cracow to the west and Galicia to the east. If Höfle clearly lied about the purpose of Belzec, in one regard he told the truth: with the exception of a handful of escapees, the Jews sent to Belzec never returned.

The camp at Treblinka was located in a tiny village just off the main railline between Warsaw and Bialystok near the eastern border of the General Government. Massive deportations from Warsaw to Treblinka began on July 22, 1942, as can be seen in the letter from the State Secretary for the Transportation Ministry, Albert Ganzenmüller, to Himmler's adjutant, Karl Wolff: "Since July 22, one train with 5,000 Jews departs daily via Malkinia to Treblinka. Moreover, twice per week a train with 5,000 Jews departs Przemysl for Belzec." When deportations from the city and surrounding district of Warsaw came to an end in early October, the district governor Fischer reported that a total of 400,000 Jews had been deported. Surviving fragmentary train schedules also show that Jews were deported from northern Lublin district,

Radom district, and the Bialystok district to Treblinka as well. The deportations from Bialystok, a district east of Treblinka, are of special significance for two reasons. First, these deportations from Bialystok make clear that Treblinka was not a transit camp for the expulsion of Jews eastward from the General Government. Rather the tiny village of Treblinka, like Belzec, was a point at which transports of Jews converged from east and west. Moreover, the fate of the Bialystok Jews in the fall of 1942 was clearly stated in Himmler's report to Hitler of December 31, 1942. The Jews of Bialystok were among the 363,211 "Jews executed." The fate of the Jews sent to Treblinka is also reflected in a report noted in the October 10, 1942, entry to the War Diary of the Oberquartiermeister of the military commander in Poland. "OK Ostrow reports that the Jews in Treblinka are not adequately buried and as a result an unbearable smell of cadavers pollutes the air." Ostrow, it should be noted, was some 20 kilometers from Treblinka.

The documentary evidence makes clear that Belzec and Treblinka were camps to which hundreds of thousands of Jews were sent to be killed, though without specifying the method of killing. The scant surviving documentary evidence concerning the purpose of Sobibor indicates that the Germans considered it in the same category as Treblinka and Belzec, but that it was inaccessible due to railline repairs during the peak months of the killing campaign of July-October 1942. Like Belzec, Sobibor received transports of Jews deemed incapable of work, as can be seen in the report of Lieutenant Fischmann of June 20, 1942. Fischmann commanded the police guard that accompanied a train that departed Vienna with 1,000 Jews from Vienna for the Lublin district. SS-Obersturmführer Pohl of Globocnik's staff met the train in Lublin on June 16 and selected 51 Jews between the ages of 15 and 50, who were deemed capable of work. On June 17 Lieutenant Stangl took delivery of the remaining 949 Jews in Sobibor. In the same letter in which Ganzenmüller informed Wolff of the daily transports from Warsaw to Treblinka and the twice-per-week transports

from Przemyśl to Belzec, he also noted that further transports to Sobibor were not possible until October due to construction on the railline. The protocol of a meeting in Berlin on September 26 and 28, 1942, to plan allocation of transportation for the future “evacuation of 600,000 Jews” of the General Government noted: “ After the completion of the restoration of the line Lublin-Chelm, probably from November 1, 1942, the other urgent transports can also be carried out, namely: 1 train per day from the district of Radom to Sobibor; 1 train per day from the northern Lublin district to Belzec and 1 train per day from the central Lublin district to Sobibor.... ” And in his promotion recommendations to Himmler’s chief of personnel, Herff, Globocnik included Franz Stangl, the commandant at Sobibor who was then transferred to Treblinka. According to Globocnik, Stangl was “the best camp commander, who had the greatest share of the entire action....” Included on the list of promotion recommendations for the SS-Sonderkommando “Einsatz Reinhard” were personnel from all three camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Clearly, Sobibor was a camp no different in purpose than Belzec and Treblinka.

D. Eyewitness Testimony concerning Gassing at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

While surviving German documentation reveals that hundreds of thousands of Jews not considered essential for labor were sent to the three small villages of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka from areas both to the east and west and were never seen again, and moreover that the military 20 kilometers from Treblinka complained about the pestilential smell caused the inadequate burial of the Jews there, no contemporary document specifically states how the Jews sent to these three camps were killed. A very large body of testimony--from numerous German, Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian eyewitnesses--provides evidence that the Jews sent to Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka were killed in gas chambers with carbon monoxide from engine exhaust. As in any

body of eyewitness testimonies, there are errors and contradictions as well as both exaggerations and apologetic obfuscation and minimization, but in this case there is above all overwhelming concurrence on three facts: gas chambers existed in these camps, they were used to kill Jews, and the corpses of the murdered Jews were first buried and then later cremated.

It is not possible in the framework of this report to identify, summarize, and analyze the individual testimony of each of more than one hundred relevant eyewitnesses. I will instead identify five categories of eyewitnesses and then provide examples of testimony from each category.

- German visitors to the camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.
- German personnel stationed in the camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.
- Ukrainian auxiliaries taken from POW camps, trained at Trawniki, and assigned as guards to these three camps.
- Poles living in the immediate area of these three camps.
- Jewish escapees from these three camps.

First Category

The first category, testimonies of German visitors, is easily the smallest. The testimonies of three such visitors are very important, however. The first is Adolf Eichmann. In the late 1950's he gave an interview to a Dutch journalist Willem Sassen and corrected the resulting transcript. A brief summary of the interview was published in Life Magazine. After his arrest, he was interrogated extensively in Israel. He composed his hand-written "Meine Memoiren." He prepared notes for his defense attorney, Servatius, that remained in the private papers or Nachlass of the latter that were donated to the Bundesarchiv. He gave testimony in court. And his widow, with the editorial help of the lawyer Rudolf Aschenauer, had a posthumous memoir published in 1980, entitled *Ich Adolf Eichmann. Ein historischer Zeugenbericht*, based primarily upon the Sassen transcripts. In all of these testimonies,

Eichmann confirmed that he had been in charge of organizing the deportation of Jews from all over Europe, in order for them to be killed in the death camps in Poland as part of the Final Solution. In several accounts he also described his visits to Auschwitz, Chelmno, Treblinka, and one other camp in the fall of 1941 whose name he did not remember but which fits the description of Belzec at that time.

According to Eichmann, he was sent by Heydrich to Globocnik in Lublin to report on how Hitler's order to kill the European Jews was going to be carried out. It was the fall of 1941, when the autumn colors were at their peak. Hermann Höfle on Globocnik's staff drove him out of Lublin to a site where he was introduced to an Order Police captain. Eichmann and his escort then crossed the highway to a place where 2-3 wooden buildings were under construction. The Order Police captain explained to Eichmann that one building had to be made airtight to serve as a gas chamber, in which Jews would be killed by carbon monoxide exhaust from a Russian U-boat motor that would be attached. The camp was still empty and the motor was not yet there. In the following summer of 1942, Eichmann visited another camp, where he remembered the railway station with the sign Treblinka. Here he saw naked Jews standing in line behind the barbed wire about to be driven into the gas chambers. By his own account, he also witnessed the gassing of Jews in a gas van at Chelmno.

The second German visitor was Kurt Gerstein, a covert anti-Nazi who infiltrated the SS and became head of the Disinfection Services of the Waffen-SS. According to his testimony, he was ordered by Eichmann's deputy, Rolf Günther, to take 100 kilos of prussic acid to Globocnik in Lublin. They were accompanied by a Professor of Hygiene at the University of Marburg/Lahn, Wilhelm Pfannenstiel. They arrived on August 17, 1942, and met with Globocnik, who boasted (falsely) of a recent visit by Hitler. According to Gerstein, Globocnik also claimed (with great exaggeration) that in Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor respectively 15,000, 25,000, and 20,000 Jews were killed daily with "diesel ex-

haust gas.” (Dieselauspuffgasen) Gerstein’s task was to disinfect the huge amounts of clothing taken from the Jews, and on August 19, he and Pfannenstiel travelled to Belzec and were shown around the camp by SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer. On the following morning, August 20, they witnessed the arrival of a 45-wagon transport from Lwow (Lemberg) with 6,700 Jews, of whom 1,450 were already dead. The Jews were forced to undress (the piles of shoes were allegedly 25 meters high), the women’s hair was cut off, and then the naked Jews were driven between two barbed wire fences to the gas chamber by Ukrainian guards. An SS man offered soothing assurances that they should inhale deeply to prevent lung infection, and then the men would be sent to work. Approximately 750 Jews were driven into each of 4 gas chambers, measuring 5 x 5 meters apiece. For 2 hours and 49 minutes, SS Sergeant Heckenholt struggled to start the engine. Pfannenstiel, looking through glass peep hole in the door of one of the gas chambers, commented that the Jews were weeping “as they do in the synagogue.” Finally, the engine started, and the gassing took 32 minutes. Then Jewish workers opened the outside doors to the gas chambers and took out the bodies. Before the corpses of the Jews were tossed into a large trench, they were searched for valuables and gold dental work was broken out.

The following day Gerstein drove to Treblinka, where the gassing facilities were larger, and he saw “veritable mounds of clothing and underwear, 115 to 130 feet high.” At a dinner in the visitors’ honor, Pfannenstiel made a speech about “the greatness of the work” being done there. On the night of August 21-22, Gerstein travelled by train from Warsaw to Berlin, and accidentally encountered the Secretary to the Swedish Embassy in Berlin, Göran von Otter. In a feverish conversation lasting hours, Gerstein told the Swede all he had just seen and urged him to make it known to the outside world. Von Otter later confirmed this encounter with Gerstein. Gerstein wrote one handwritten French

and two type-written German versions of this report in April 1945 and died in a French prison cell the following July. His death was ruled a suicide by French prison officials.

A third eyewitness account is that given by Professor Wilhelm Pfannenstiel in a series of depositions he gave to judicial authorities in Germany in the 1950's. Pfannenstiel claimed that Gerstein's version was "false" and "full of exaggerations." Günther did not accompany them to Lublin. He did not go to Treblinka after visiting Belzec and thus did not give a speech there. The gassing at Belzec had taken only 18 minutes, not 32 minutes, and he had not made any remark about the Jews weeping as they do in a synagogue. He did confirm that the Jews had to strip naked, the women had their hair cut, an SS officer made soothing remarks, the Jews were driven into four of six gas chambers in the building, exhaust gas from an engine was piped in, and gold teeth were taken from the corpses before they were stacked in a trench by Jews who did the "dirty work."

Many aspects of Gerstein's testimony are unquestionably problematic. Several statements he attributes to Globocnik are clearly exaggerated or false, and it is not clear whether Gerstein or Globocnik was the faulty source. In other statements, such as the height of the piles of shoes and clothing at Belzec and Treblinka, Gerstein himself is clearly the source of exaggeration. Gerstein also added grossly exaggerated claims about matters to which he was not an eyewitness, such as that a total of 25 million Jews and others were gassed. But in the essential issue, namely that he was in Belzec and witnessed the gassing of a transport of Jews from Lwow, his testimony is fully corroborated by Pfannenstiel. It is also corroborated by other categories of witnesses from Belzec.

Second Category:

The second category of eyewitnesses is comprised of Germans who were stationed at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Twenty-nine such German camp personnel were indicted and brought before German courts in the 1950's and 1960's. They all gave pre-trial depositions. Many claimed that they had had no choice but to carry out the duties that they had been assigned, and many denied that they had committed any harmful or malicious acts beyond routine compliance with their obligatory duties. But none of them denied that the camps were equipped with gas chambers, in which hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed. At least 26 of the 29 had prior experience in the so-called "euthanasia" program, in which German mentally- and physically handicapped were gassed in one of six "institutes" or killing centers in Germany.

Of these 29 men, Franz Stangl held the highest rank as commandant of first Sobibor and then Treblinka. Outside of judicial proceedings, he also gave extensive testimony in long interviews with the British journalist, Gitta Sereny, that are easily accessible in her book, *Into That Darkness*. The testimony of Franz Suchomel, a guard at Treblinka, who was interviewed at length on hidden camera by Claude Lanzmann, can be seen and heard in latter's documentary film *Shoah*. Among the judicial testimonies of the other 27 camp personnel brought to trial in Germany were those of Alfred Schluch, Hermann Gley, Erich Fuchs, Erich Bauer, and Heinrich Matthes.

Alfred Schluch had worked at the euthanasia institutes of Grafeneck and Hadamar prior to his assignment to Belzec in February or March 1942. He described the routine killing procedure of the Belzec camp as follows: " After unloading, the ambulant Jews proceeded to the assembly place. At the unloading the Jews were told that they were going to be resettled and before that had to be bathed and disinfected. The speech was given by Wirth and also by his translator, a Jewish capo.

Next the Jews were then led to the undressing barracks. In one of the barracks the men and in the other the Jewish women and children had to undress. After undressing the male Jews and the women with children were led separately through the tube. ...My position in the tube was quite near the undressing barracks. Wirth had installed me there, because in his opinion I could have a pacifying effect on the Jews. I had to direct the Jews along the path to the gas chamber after they left the undressing barracks. I believe that I made the way to the gas chambers easier for the Jews, because they must have been convinced from my words or gestures that they were actually to be bathed. After the Jews had entered the gas chambers, the doors were tightly closed by Hackenholt himself or by the Ukrainians assigned to him. Then Hackenholt started the motor that was used for the gassing. After about 5 to 7 minutes--and I only estimate the length of time--the peephole into the gas chamber was looked through to establish whether everyone was dead. Only then were the outer doors opened and the gas chambers aired out. ...After the gas chambers were aired out, a Jewish work commando under the direction of a capo arrived and took the corpses out of the chambers. I was also occasionally assigned to supervise at this place. Thus I can exactly describe the procedures, because I saw and experienced everything myself. The Jews had been very tightly packed into the gas chambers. For this reason the corpses did not lie on the ground, but all leaned in a jumble this way and that, the one backwards, the other forwards, one prone to the side, the other kneeling, each according to the space around. The corpses were at least partially besmirched with excrement and urine, others in part with saliva. The lips and nose tips of some of the corpses had turned blue. With some the eyes were closed, with others the eyes had rolled. The corpses were pulled out of the chambers and immediately examined by one of the dentists. The dentist removed rings from the fingers and pulled out gold teeth. The valuables recovered in this way were tossed into a box that had been provided. After this procedure the corpses were thrown into the large graves nearby. ”

Heinrich Gley arrived in Belzec in the summer of 1942 and was eventually assigned to the “cremation commando.”

(Verbrennungskommando) Concerning the burning of the corpses, he testified: “ As I remember the gassing was stopped at the end of 1942, when there was snow already on the ground. Then the general exhumation and cremation of the corpses began; it might have lasted from November 1942 until March 1943. The cremation was carried out day and night without a break, and indeed at first at one and then later at two fire sites. It was possible to cremate some 2000 corpses at one fire site within 24 hours. About 4 weeks after the beginning of the cremation operation the second fire site was constructed. On average, therefore, some 300,000 corpses were cremated at the first site over 5 months, at the second site some 240,000 over 4 months. Naturally this is a matter of estimates based on averages. To figure the total number of corpses at 500,000 could be correct. ”

Erich Fuchs, who was stationed first at Belzec, gave the following testimony concerning the construction of the gassing facilities at Sobibor: “ On Wirth’s instructions I drove to Lemberg in a truck and picked up a carburetor engine, that I transported back to Sobibor. ...We unloaded the motor. It was a heavy Russian gasoline engine (probably a tank engine or tractor engine) with at least 200 PS (V-motor, 8 cylinder, water-cooled). We placed the motor on the a concrete base and installed the connection between the exhaust and the pipeline. Then we tested the motor. At first it did not work. I repaired the ignition and the valve with the result that the motor finally started up. The chemist, whom I already knew from Belzec, went into the gas chamber with a measuring instrument in order to test the concentration of gas. In conclusion a test gassing was then conducted. As best I remember, some 30-40 women were gassed in the chamber. ”

Erich Bauer testified to the gassing procedure at the Sobibor camp, where he served from April 1942 to November 1943. “Perhaps 3 or 4 times I also led certain groups through the tube to the gas chambers.

After all no member of the permanent staff in Sobibor could exempt himself over the course of time from having to perform this and all other functions occurring during the destruction process. It may sound astonishing that the Jews went unsuspecting to their death. Resistance occurred extremely seldom. The Jews only became suspicious when they were already in the gas chambers. At this point in time, however, there was no turning back. The chambers were densely packed. ...The doors were sealed airtight and immediately the gassing procedure commenced. After some 20-30 minutes there was complete silence in the gas chambers; the people were gassed and dead. Then the chambers were opened, work Jews dragged the people who had been killed out of the gas chambers and transported the victims by means of lorry to the graves. Later the victims were cremated.”

Heinrich Matthes was assigned to Treblinka in the summer of 1942. He testified: “ The entire time that I was in Treblinka, I served in the upper part of the camp. The upper part of the camp was that part of Treblinka in which the gas chambers were located and in which the corpses of the Jews who had been killed were at first put in graves and later were cremated. ” Matthes’ job was to supervise the Jewish workers in the upper camp. “These had to carry away the corpses and later to cremate the corpses. There were also work Jews, who had to break out the gold teeth of the corpses.”

All of these above testimonies of camp personnel were given to German judicial authorities in the course of pre-trial investigation. The testimonies were given under oath and signed, and those testifying had been advised of their right not to give self-incriminating testimony.

Third Category:

Approximately 30 Germans were stationed at each of the camps and held the key supervisory positions. More numerous were the guards, about 120 per camp, who were for the most part Ukrainians recruited out of the POW camps for captured Soviet soldiers and sent to a special SS training facility at Trawniki southeast of Lublin. Some of these men, having returned to the Soviet Union, gave testimony to German judicial investigators who were collecting evidence for the trial of Karl Streibel, the commandant of Trawniki. Others emigrated abroad, including to the U.S., where some of them faced judicial investigation by the Office of Special Investigations in the U.S. Department of Justice.

Aleksandr Illarionwitsch Semigodow testified that he was captured at the outbreak of war in June 1941 and volunteered to serve with the Germans to escape a very probable death by starvation in the POW camp at Cholm. He was sent to Trawniki in March 1942, and then served at Belzec from August 1942 to March 1943. At first trains arrived daily, and in some cases even twice daily, and then the number of incoming transports gradually diminished. The Jews were killed in the six gas chambers, and the bodies were buried. Then in late fall, the graves were opened, and the burning of the corpses began. This was not finished until March 1943.

Captured in August 1941, Peter Petrowitsch Browzew was taken to Trawniki at the end of 1941 and assigned to Belzec in June 1942. About his experiences in Belzec, he gave the following testimony about procedures after the first small wooden building with three gas chambers had been replaced with a larger cement structure with six chambers: “ Upon the arrival of a train, several train cars at a time were uncoupled and brought into the death camp. In the camp the train car doors were opened, and the Jews were told that they had come to work and that now they would be taken to the bath and should hand over their valuables. Next they were told to undress. Then the Jews were led

through a gate surrounded by barbed wire into a wooden barracks, where they undressed and where their hair was cut. No difference was made between men and women. They all had to undress in one room. Next they were led through the same gate to the gas chambers. There were six gas chambers, three on each side of the entrance. In general the chambers were usually crammed with some 200 Jews. The people were locked in the chambers for 10-15 minutes. Next the chambers were opened, and a Jewish work commando had to take the corpses to a grave already dug near the gas chambers on the grounds of the camp. However, before the corpses were removed from the gas chambers, one worker from the Jewish work commando tore out the gold teeth from the dead. ” The incoming transports of Jews came to an end in late 1942, and the burning of the buried corpses began. “The corpses were pulled out of the graves, they were decomposed. There were metal rails, wood, and everything was burned. 24 hours through, day and night, the corpses burned.” Then on February 3, 1943, Browzew escaped from Belzec and joined a partisan band.

Feodor Federenko gave sworn, pre-trial testimony on May 25, 1976, to American investigators in Hartford, Connecticut. He was captured by the Germans in July 1941 and eventually was sent to the large POW camp in Cholm. Here he was picked out of the camp and sent to Trawniki for training. In late August or early September 1942, he was assigned to Treblinka. He was asked: “Were you aware of the fact that thousands of Jews were being exterminated in Treblinka?” He answered, “Yes, I knew.” Asked if he was assigned to the forced labor camp or the camp “where they had gas chambers,” he replied: “I was where the gas chambers were.”

At his subsequent denaturalization hearing in June 1978, Fedorenko testified over three days in greater detail. He denied that he had actually entered the section of the camp where the gas chambers were located but admitted that he had once been posted on a guard tower overlooking this section of the camp. “I saw how they were loading up dead

people, loading them on the stretchers. ...And they were loading them in a hole.” Later in his testimony, he reconfirmed that this part of the camp “is where there was the workers that took the bodies and buried them or stacked them in the holes. This is where the gas chambers were.” Concerning the unloading of Jews from the trains, he testified: “Some were picked for work and the others, they went to the gas chambers.”

Fourth category:

Many Poles in the villages around these camps saw the endless flow of transports, smelled the terrible odors of the camps, and heard all kinds of rumors of how the Jews were killed, including not only by gas but also by steam and electricity. Some Polish witnesses had particular vantage points, which enabled them to know much more about the camps than other Poles in the surrounding areas. For instance, between November 1 and December 23, 1941, a small force of Polish workers was employed to construct the initial buildings, including the first small gas chamber with only three rooms, at Belzec. Stanislaw Kozak and Edward Ferens both testified immediately after the war about their construction work in Belzec. According to Kozak sand was poured between the double walls of one small building, whose interior was partially covered with zinc sheeting. The building had three rooms, each with two doors, one entering from a interior corridor and the other exiting to the outside. The doors were very strong and covered with rubber; they opened outward and were secured with crossbars on the outside. When Edward Ferens asked the German supervisor the purpose of the building, the latter merely laughed.

While the Poles worked on these buildings, the black-uniformed auxiliaries dug a large pit behind it. Beginning in March 1942 transports began arriving, sometimes 2-3 per day. In the fall the transports stopped, and an excavator was employed to open and empty the mass

graves. For the next three months the terrible smell of burning bodies pervaded the area and could be detected up to 15 kilometers away. The camp was then dismantled.

Jan Jrzowski and Jan Piwonski worked at the train station in Sobibor, directly across from the ramp where the transports for the camp were unloaded. Three German officers arrived in the fall of 1941 and measured the station ramp. Construction on the camp began March 1942, and the observant Poles wondered about the arrival and unloading of large, heavy doors covered with rubber. The transports began arriving in April, and by fall the smell of decaying corpses was detectable. In October 1942 an excavator arrived. The graves were opened and the corpses burned. The smell of burning bodies reached Wlodawa 9 kilometers away. The fire within the camp could be seen clearly at night. On October 14, 1943, an uprising occurred in the camp, after which it was closed.

Fifth category:

Concerning the last category of eyewitnesses, due to prisoner uprisings and breakouts in Treblinka and Sobibor, approximately 50 Jews from each camp survived the war. Some testimonies were recorded even before the end of the war, and one Treblinka survivor, Samuel Rajzman, testified very briefly before the International Military Tribunal at Nürnberg. The testimonies of many others have subsequently been collected, especially at Yad Vashem, and many have been published.

The situation regarding Belzec is much different. Perhaps as many as six prisoners escaped individually from Belzec, but only one, Rudolf Reder, has given extensive post-war testimony. In his very early testimony of December 1945, Reder recounted how he had been deported from Lwow to Belzec on August 17, 1942, in a train of 50 cars, each crammed with 100 Jews. He was only one of eight prisoners selected as skilled workers to join the Jewish labor force in the camp that day.

Working in the camp as a mechanic, for several months he operated the excavator that dug graves behind the gas chamber. He could see the gas chambers even more closely when he delivered gasoline (Benzin) to the engine room at the end of the corridor that ran between the three gas chambers on each side. He gave the following description: “In these chambers the people were packed so tightly together, that even after death they were found in standing position. As soon as all chambers were crammed full, all the doors were tightly shut;then the motor was started. The work of the motor was watched over by the prisoner Moniek, a cabman from Cracow. The motor was always run exactly for 20 minutes, after which Moniek gave one of the machinists the signal to turn it off. After the motor had been turned off, on the order of Moniek the prisoners opened all the doors wide and pulled the dead in pairs out of the chambers with the help of straps placed around the hands of the corpses; the corpses were then pulled to the mass graves already dug out beforehand by machine. On the way between the ramp of the chamber and the grave, dentists pulled gold teeth from the corpses.” In November 1942 Reder escaped his captors and survived in hiding in Lwow until the arrival of the Red Army. He emigrated to Canada in 1953.

Once again, human memory is imperfect. The testimonies of both survivors and other witnesses to the events in Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka are no more immune to forgetfulness, error, exaggeration, distortion, and repression than eyewitness accounts of other events in the past. They differ, for instance, on how long each gassing operation took, on the dimensions and capacity of the gas chambers, on the number of undressing barracks, and on the roles of particular individuals. Gerstein, citing Globocnik, claimed the camps used diesel motors, but witnesses who actually serviced the engines in Belzec and Sobibor (Reder and Fuchs) spoke of gasoline engines. Once again, however, without exception all concur on the vital issue at dispute, namely that Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka were death camps whose primary

purpose was to kill in gas chambers through the carbon monoxide from engine exhaust, and that the hundreds of thousands of corpses of Jews killed there were first buried and then later cremated.

5.5 Documentary Evidence concerning Aktion or Einsatz (Operation) Reinhard (alternatively spelled Reinhardt)

The deportation of Jews to and killing of Jews in the camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, as well as the confiscation of their property, became known as Operation Reinhard, under the command of Odilo Globocnik, the SS and Police Leader in the district of Lublin. The expression Operation Reinhard appears in only a few German documents. So little documentary evidence explicitly dealing with Operation Reinhard survived because it was intentionally and systematically destroyed in 1943 and 1944. This is clearly revealed in a letter from its director, Odilo Globocnik, to Heinrich Himmler of January 5, 1944. It was a cover letter for Globocnik's submission of a final financial accounting of the program, for which Globocnik wanted a quick confirmation of financial propriety, given the "odium" (Globocnik's own expression) that attached to his past reputation in financial matters. Globocnik gave another reason for urgently concluding an audit of the financial side of Operation Reinhard, namely that its "records must be destroyed as soon as possible, after the documents of all other work in this matter have already been destroyed."

An early document mentioning "Einsatz Reinhard" dates from July 18, 1942. It is a form on which the personnel specially authorized "for the carrying-out of the work of the Jewish resettlement within the framework of 'Operation Reinhard' with the SS and Police Leader in the Lublin district" acknowledged having been oriented to specific rules of secrecy by SS-Hauptsturmführer Höfle on Globocnik's staff. They were forbidden to make any communication, verbal or oral, concerning the "Jewish resettlement" (Judenumsiedlung) under any circumstances to

anyone outside of Operation Reinhard. Moreover, there was “an explicit prohibition against photography in the camps of ‘Operation Reinhard.’”

One surviving file of Aktion Reinhard documents (partially burned) concerns the camp personnel at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Two letters date from April 13, 1943. The first of these, addressed to SS-Obersturmführer Kuno Ther of the SS Central Office for Personnel, proposed promotions of the officers and men of Aktion Reinhard. It noted: “The Reichsführer-SS [Himmler] had approved in principle the promotion of the most deserving officers and men after his visit to the Sobibor camp.” It identified Christian Wirth as Inspector and Gottlieb Hering, Franz Reichleitner, and Franz Stangl as “camp commanders.” (Lagerführer) The remaining non-commissioned officers on the list “had been employed in Aktion ‘Reinhard’ since the beginning and had proven themselves in the best possible manner.”

A second letter of the same date, from Globocnik to Gruppenführer von Herff of the SS Central Officer for Personnel of the same day and sent by courier, was slightly rephrased. It did not mention Himmler’s visit to Sobibor specifically but stated that Himmler “on the occasion of his visit in March had visited installations of Aktion ‘Reinhard’” and approved promotions. The enclosed promotion list was for “members of the SS-Special Commando ‘Einsatz Reinhard’.” Subsequent correspondence in the file concerning the recommended promotions of Aktion Reinhard personnel confirmed Himmler’s visit and inspection of Sobibor but dated it precisely to February 12, 1943.

On October 27, 1943, Globocnik confirmed to Herff in the SS Central Office for Personnel that included on his staff of 434 men were 92 men “from the Führer’s Chancellery for the carrying out of Aktion Reinhard.” These were the men who formerly staffed the institutes of the “euthanasia” program for killing mentally- and physically handi-

capped Germans and were subsequently assigned to the camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, where they could continue to use their expertise in gassing.

Another surviving file of documents that mention Aktion Reinhard concern the audit of Operation Reinhard following Globocnik's transfer from the General Government to Trieste in the fall of 1943. On September 22, 1943, Himmler wrote to Oswald Pohl, head of the Economic and Administrative Main Office of the SS, and Globocnik that, in view of Globocnik's transfer, the latter should turn over an audit of the "'Reinhard' account" (Konto 'Reinhard') to Pohl. On November 4, 1943, Globocnik wrote Himmler from Trieste: "As of October 19, 1943, I have terminated Aktion Reinhardt, which I directed in the General Government, and dissolved all camps." It is only at this point in the fall of 1943 that the alternative spelling of "Reinhardt" rather than "Reinhard" first appeared in the documents.

On January 5, 1944, Globocnik submitted his final report on the "economic part of Aktion Reinhardt." (Wirtschaftlicher Teil der Aktion Reinhardt) This report made clear that alongside the seizure and utilization of Jewish property, Aktion Reinhardt also dealt with "the evacuation itself" (die Aussiedlung selbst) and "the utilization of labor." (die Verwertung der Arbeitskraft) In a brief section of the report devoted to the evacuation, Globocnik reported that the "installations" (Einrichtungen) created for the operation had been "entirely cleared away." (zur Gänze weggeräumt) Moreover, "for purposes of surveillance a small farmstead had been founded in each camp," and the occupants had to be paid continuously to maintain the farmsteads. Concerning the utilization of labor, Globocnik noted that he had had a workforce of some 52,000 working in 18 enterprises, but on November 3, 1943, all the manpower had been withdrawn from the work camps, and the factories had been idled. (In this regard it should be noted that on November 3-4, 1943, some 42,000 Jews in the work camps of Lublin, Trawniki, and Poniatowa were shot in an SS killed action code-

named “Fall Harvest” or Erntefest.) Among the recipients of the Jewish property collected during Operation Reinhard were the Ministry of Economics and Reichsbank as well as the Ministry of Finance.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this miniscule remnant of Operation Reinhard documents. Operation Reinhard was directed by Odilo Globocnik, the SS and Police Leader of Lublin, and the SS “special commando” of Operation Reinhard was made up of personnel who staffed the death camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka and who had earlier worked in the gassing institutes of the “euthanasia” program in Germany. The deportation of Jews to and the gassing of Jews in these camps was the central purpose of Operation Reinhard, and every effort was made to erase all physical traces of the three camps. The exploitation of Jewish labor and property were collateral aspects of Operation Reinhard, and the Finance Ministry was only one of a number of recipients of Jewish property. Staatssekretär Fritz Reinhardt of the Finance Ministry is not mentioned in any of the documents, and the spelling of Operation Reinhardt with a “t” as in his name begins only in late 1943. The notion that Operation Reinhard was a program for collecting and exploiting Jewish property and was named after the state secretary of the Finance Ministry, Fritz Reinhardt, is farfetched and finds no support in the surviving documents. Nothing in the surviving documents, however, explicitly indicates that Operation Reinhard was named for the assassinated Reinhard Heydrich.

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Expert report

David Irving, Hitler and Holocaust Denial

Electronic edition

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Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt

Royal Courts of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, case 1996-I-1113

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1.1 This Report is prepared pursuant to the Order of Master Trench dated 15 December 1998 directing that each party may adduce expert evidence from historians and political scientists to address relevant issues in the proceedings. It has been written to assist the Court by providing an expert opinion on allegations made in Professor Deborah Lipstadt's book *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, published in 1994 by Penguin Books, about Mr. David Irving.
- 1.1.2 The book makes a variety of claims about Irving and his work, to which Irving has objected in his libel writ; only those which fall within the scope of my expertise as a professional historian will be considered. These claims can be summarised under four headings. They are as follows (references are to the page of the book on which they occur):
- 1.1.3 Irving is 'a discredited figure' as a historian (p. 180)
- Irving has become a Holocaust denier (p. 111). He had 'long equated the actions of Hitler and Allied leaders, an equivalence that was made easier by his claims that the Final Solution took place without Hitler's knowledge' (p. 162). In 1988, Irving, 'who had long hovered at the edge of Holocaust denial' (p. 162), was converted to the idea that the gas chambers were a myth (p. 179). 'Irving is one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial' (p. 181). He has connections with Holocaust deniers (p. 181).
 - Irving skews documents and misrepresents data in order to exonerate Hitler. He is 'an ardent admirer of the Nazi leader' (p. 161).

- Holocaust deniers ‘misstate, misquote, falsify statistics, and falsely attribute conclusions to reliable sources. They rely on books that directly contradict their arguments, quoting in a manner that completely distorts the authors’ objectives’ (p. 111). Since this statement comes immediately after the allegation that Irving has become a Holocaust denier, the implication that he does all these things too is unmistakable. Indeed, Lipstadt also claims that scholars ‘have accused him of distorting evidence and manipulating documents to serve his own purposes’ and of ‘skewing documents and misrepresenting data in order to reach historically untenable conclusions’ (p. 161). ‘Familiar with historical evidence, he bends it until it conforms with his ideological leanings and political agenda...he is most facile at taking accurate information and shaping it to confirm his conclusions’ (p. 181).

The sources and methods used in this report to assess these claims will be outlined later in this Introduction.

1.2 Material instructions

- 1.2.1 This report has been prepared on the instructions of Davenport Lyons and Mishcon de Reya, the solicitors respectively to the First and Second Defendants. I received both written and oral instructions to provide expert opinion on the historical writings and speeches of David Irving with reference to the allegations made about them by Deborah Lipstadt. I have been given access to the Statement of Claim served on 5 September 1996; the Defences of the First and Second Defendants served on 12 February 1997 and 18 April 1997 respectively; the Reply to both Defences served on 19 April 1997; documents disclosed by the Plaintiff pursuant to his discovery obligations, and various documents from the Plaintiff’s various Lists of Documents as referred to in the footnotes to this report.

1.5 Methods used to draw up this Report

- 1.5.1 I have never met, spoken to, or corresponded with David Irving. I have not previously concerned myself with his work in any way. The only references to him in any of my books come on pages 38 and 76 of *In Hitler’s Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the*

Nazi Past (New York, 1989), in the context, not of a detailed examination of Irving's work itself, but of a discussion of the work of other historians, namely Ernst Nolte and Hans Mommsen. Irving is mentioned on these two pages briefly, and in passing.

- 1.5.2 I had leafed through the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* and because of its style and content considered it a work of journalism rather than of professional history. Like the overwhelming majority of professional historians, I rejected its argument that Hitler did not order the extermination of the Jews. However, I was also aware of the widespread assumption amongst professional historians that Irving's work (like that of a number of other journalists who have written historical work) reached generally acceptable standards of historical scholarship. I also knew of Irving's reputation as someone who had a good knowledge of the archival and other sources for the history of the 'Third Reich' and had discovered previously unknown material on this subject.
- 1.5.3 I had never met, corresponded or had any dealings with Deborah Lipstadt, but I had read Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* and quoted it on pages 239-41 of my book *In Defence of History* in the context of a discussion of the implications of postmodernist theories of knowledge for historical scholarship, especially on the history of the Nazi extermination of the Jews. Lipstadt's treatment of Irving in the book was a matter of completely marginal interest to me. In general, my view of the book was that it was a solidly researched and strongly but rationally argued work of scholarship. However, *Denying the Holocaust* does not deal in any detail with Irving's historical arguments, so that on being asked to write this Report, I had no difficulty in approaching Lipstadt's account of Irving's writings in an open and critical spirit, the same spirit, in fact, as that in which I approach Irving's work, the vast majority of which was completely unfamiliar to me.

- 1.5.4 The material on which this Report is based consists in the first place of Irving's published books. These have gone through numerous editions, and many of them are available both in English and in German in different versions. They are available in libraries in Britain and Germany, though some are rather hard to track down, and I was startled to find that the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* can only be read at the desk in the Rare Books Room of the British Library that is reserved for literature deemed by the Library to be pornographic. Secondly, Irving has published a number of articles, mainly in *The Journal of Historical Review*, which are also available for public inspection in institutions such as the Wiener Library. Thirdly, Irving maintains a very extensive website on the Internet (<http://fpp.co.uk>) on which the text of various speeches by Irving is posted, together with a large quantity of other material revealing of his views on the history of the 'Third Reich'.
- 1.5.5 Fourthly, the legal process of Discovery has provided a large amount of further material of relevance to the issues at the centre of the case. As Irving remarked in 1991, "The first thing that happens in a libel action is this: only a few weeks after you've served a writ on a gentleman there comes a very expensive stage for both parties known as Discovery. The word 'Discovery' written with a capital 'D', just like the word 'Holocaust' written with a capital 'H'. Only this time the word is on my side. Because Discovery is an ugly phase, for plaintiff and defendant, when you face each other across a lawyer's table, at the choosing of the Plaintiff, and you say, "I want to see your documents and you can see mine". And at that stage usually all the defendants crack up and cop out. "
- 1.5.6 In the present case, however, no-one has wanted to 'cop out', and Irving has been obliged to disclose an enormous mass of material in addition to the list of documents he initially agreed to supply. I have had access to many videotapes and audiocassettes of Irving's speeches, tens of thousands of pages of documents, his complete private diaries, thousands of letters and a great deal of other material,

much of it from the huge private archive in which he records his various activities and in which he stores the materials for his historical work

1.5.7 It soon became apparent that the amount of material available was too vast for me to master in the relatively short space of time I had to compile this Report, especially given my other commitments such as my regular academic work. I was fortunate therefore to obtain the research assistance of two of my PhD students, Nikolaus Wachsmann, who is now Junior Research Fellow of Downing College, Cambridge, and Thomas Skelton-Robinson, who is now researching for a PhD at Churchill College, Cambridge. Both had first-class honours degrees in History (from the London School of Economics and from Glasgow University respectively), both had a first-rate knowledge of German (Wachsmann is a native speaker, Skelton-Robinson lived in Germany for five years after graduating), and both had a good knowledge of twentieth-century German history.

1.5.8 The two researchers compiled transcripts of the salient parts of the audiocassettes and videotapes and went through the material supplied by Irving during the process of Discovery, taking extensive notes. It was of course impossible to cover the whole of Irving's *oeuvre* with complete thoroughness, and some principle of selectivity had to be applied. We decided that I would cover Irving's general reputation as a historian, Irving's attitude to Hitler, and the central issue of whether or not Irving was a Holocaust denier. On the equally important matter of whether or not Irving distorted and falsified history, we decided to concentrate on the 'chain of documents' which Irving on various occasions had claimed proved Hitler's ignorance and disapproval of the Nazi persecution and extermination of the Jews. Each document was assigned to one or other of the research assistants for preliminary analysis. In this way we covered the entire documentary basis for Irving's controversial claim.

1.5.9 In addition, we decided to sample a number of other important issues on which Lipstadt's allegations of manipulation and falsification could be tested. These were the bombing of Dresden by the Allies early in 1945, a subject on which Irving had written the book which established his reputation; Irving's use of the evidence of Hitler's adjutants; and the explanations offered by Irving for such antisemitic actions by the Nazis as he was prepared to concede were actually carried out. Here again preliminary analysis was carried out by my research assistants. During the period January 1998 to April 1999, we met frequently, exchanged drafts, and carried out numerous revisions to what we had written. In addition, my research assistants undertook research in German archives and libraries. The compilation, structure and writing of this Report as a whole was undertaken by myself, and I alone bear the final responsibility for what it contains. I am satisfied that the amount of material we have examined, and the number of issues in Irving's writings which we have addressed, constitute a thoroughly representative sample of his work, and that any further investigation on our part would simply have replicated the conclusions we reached on the basis of the sample we looked at.

1.5.10 On all the issues concerned, this Report examines carefully and in detail Irving's writings and speeches over the whole of his career, from the 1960s to the present. Its method has been to identify what Irving wrote or said, and to note whether he changed his views over time, and if so, how and in what respects. The Report is written from the point of view, and with the expertise, of a professional historian. That is, it is not concerned with the issue of whether or not 'Holocaust denial' is morally wrong, or whether what Irving has written and said is politically or morally objectionable. Throughout, it bears in mind the pleaded issues in the case, but its method is not to subject them to any kind of forensic criteria or legal scrutiny, but rather to treat them as matters of historical and historiographical investigation.

- 1.5.11 Thus in examining each of the key ‘chain of documents’ which Irving claims prove Hitler neither knew or nor approved the antisemitic policies of the ‘Third Reich’, this Report is not concerned to demonstrate conclusively that Hitler *did* know or *did* approve of these policies: that is not the issue at hand. The issue is whether or not Irving distorts and manipulates the historical record in trying to prove that Hitler did *not* know and approve of these policies. In dealing with this issue, the Report takes each document in turn, examines Irving’s translation of it (all the documents in question were originally written in German), scrutinises his interpretation of it, and brings as many other relevant documents to bear on this interpretation as it has been possible to research in the time available, in accordance with the standard method of historical research, in which every original document used has to be set in a wider documentary context in order to elucidate its historical significance.
- 1.5.12 Many of these documents are well known to historians, some less so; many of them would appear at first sight to support the view that Hitler *did* know about antisemitic policies and actions in the ‘Third Reich’, and it has been necessary in the course of this Report to point this out. Historians who are advancing a particular argument have to take *all* relevant documentary evidence into account, and where documents appear to go against their argument, they have to explain them; failing to mention them at all constitutes suppression of relevant evidence and is not acceptable in a reputable historian. Citing these documents, as is done extensively in this Report, should not be seen as an attempt to prove conclusively that Hitler knew about the extermination of the Jews and other antisemitic actions during the ‘Third Reich’, only as evidence which has to be taken into account by anyone who, such as Irving, wishes to prove the contrary.
- 1.5.13 Very few historians have actually gone to the trouble of subjecting any of Irving’s work to a detailed analysis by taking his historical statements and claims and tracing them back to the original and other

sources on which Irving says they rest. This is because doing so is an extremely time-consuming exercise, and most historians have better things to do with their time than undertaking a minute analysis of other people's historical writings. It is also because historians generally assume that the work of fellow-historians, or those who purport to be fellow-historians, is generally reliable in its footnoting, in its translations and summaries of documents, and in its treatment of the evidence at a basic level. That is, historians may make mistakes and errors of fact, but they do not generally deliberately manipulate and distort documents, suppress evidence that runs counter to their interpretations, wilfully mistranslate documents in a foreign language, consciously use unreliable or discredited testimony when it suits their purpose, falsify historical statistics, or apply one standard of criticism to sources which undermine their views and another to those which support them.

1.6 Argument and structure of the Report

- 1.6.1 Very soon after we had begun our examination of Irving's work along the lines sketched out above, it became clear that Irving did all of these things. Penetrating beneath the confident surface of his prose quickly revealed a mass of distortion and manipulation in every issue we tackled that was so tangled that detailing it sometimes took up many more words than had been devoted to it in Irving's original account. Unpicking the eleven-page narrative of the anti-Jewish pogrom of the so-called *Reichskristallnacht* in Irving's book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* and tracing back every part of it to the documentation on which it purports to rest takes up over seventy pages of the present Report. A similar knotted web of distortions, suppressions and manipulations became evident in every single instance which we examined. We have not suppressed any occasion on which Irving has used accepted and legitimate methods of historical research, exposition and interpretation: there were none.

1.6.2 The discovery of the extent of Irving's disregard for the proper methods of historical scholarship was not only surprising but also deeply shocking. As this Report will show, it goes well beyond what Lipstadt alleges. I was not prepared for the sheer depths of duplicity which I encountered in Irving's treatment of the historical sources, nor for the way in which this dishonesty permeated his entire written and spoken output. It is as all-pervasive in his early work as it is in his later publications. In this respect the change of view which, as this Report will note, he underwent in 1988 with respect to the Nazi extermination of the Jews, has done no more than emphasise an already existing pattern. It is clear from all the investigations which I and my research assistants have undertaken that Irving's claim to have a very good and thorough knowledge of the evidence on the basis of which the history of Nazi Germany has to be written is completely justified. His numerous mistakes and egregious errors are not, therefore, due to mere ignorance or sloppiness; on the contrary, it is obvious that they are calculated and deliberate. That is precisely why they are so shocking. Irving has relied in the past, and continues to rely in the present, on the fact that his readers and listeners, reviewers and interviewers lack either the time, or the expertise, to probe deeply enough into the sources he uses for his work to uncover the distortions, suppressions and manipulations to which he has subjected them. The late Martin Broszat and the American historian Charles W. Sydnor, Jr., whose work is referred to below, are virtually the only previous historians to have gone some way down this road; this Report, however, is the first full-length investigation of Irving's work on a large scale.

1.6.3 Because of the scope of what we have uncovered, this Report cannot confine itself simply to the allegations made by Lipstadt, though it does deal fully with each one. The detailed analyses in this Report are all illustrative of the points made at the beginning of this Introduction, but inevitably in some cases they also go beyond them. It should be noted that this Report deals both with Irving's writings and speeches before

the publication of Lipstadt's book in Britain in 1994, and in the years since then, up to 1998. As will become apparent, Irving's methods have not changed substantially since Lipstadt completed her book; indeed, however much his views have changed over the years, his methods have remained substantially the same. It is these methods which form the main object of scrutiny in this Report. The fundamental question to which Irving's historical writings and speeches will be subjected is this: do they conform to generally accepted standards of historical scholarship?

1.6.4 That is, in other words, does Irving give a reasonably accurate account of the documents he uses; does he translate them in a reasonably accurate and unbiased manner; does he take into account as many other relevant documents as any professional historian could reasonably be expected to read and cite when he is using one particular source to substantiate an argument; does he apply consistent criteria of source-criticism to all the original material he uses, examining it for its internal consistency, its consistency with other documents, its provenance, the motives of those who were responsible for it, and the audience for which it was intended; are his arguments, his statistics and his accounts of historical events consistent across time and based on reliable historical evidence; does he take account of the arguments and interpretations of other historians who have examined the same documents; does he, in other words, advance his arguments and interpretations in a reasonably objective and unbiased manner?

1.6.5 Historians, of course, notoriously disagree on many aspects of the interpretation of the past. It is seldom, if ever, the case that one particular interpretation of a past event or a process is irrefutably right and all the others wrong. The records left to us by the past are fragmentary and incomplete and susceptible of a variety of interpretations. Historians have to take all kinds of evidence into account: immediate sources written at the time, eyewitness accounts written down shortly after the event in question, interviews and testimony from long afterwards – all

these have their problems, and although historians generally give a greater weight to a source the nearer it is to the event with which it deals, this means neither that such proximate sources are entirely unproblematical, nor that more distant sources are to be dismissed out of hand. That is why gathering as many sources as possible relating to an event, whatever their nature, and comparing them with one another, is the basis of the historian's reconstruction of the past.

- 1.6.6 Historians may disagree with one another for a variety of reasons, and such disagreements are the stock-in-trade of historical controversy. However, such differences of opinion are generally confined within the limits set by the evidence: the number of possible interpretations of an event is not limitless, and historical controversy usually reveals some to fit more closely with the historical evidence than others. Thus for example there has long been a considerable difference of opinion amongst historians as to when the Nazis reached a decision to undertake a systematic extermination of all the Jews in Europe; some, though not many, have put the decision early in 1941; rather more have argued for a date in late July or early August 1941; some have favoured October 1941; more recently one younger German scholar has argued for December 1941 and another for late March or early April 1942. All these estimations have their merits and demerits, and the argument continues, based on a detailed examination and comparison of the documentary record. However, the position can broadly be summed up by saying that there is a general consensus that a decision was taken at the highest level some time between the beginning of 1941 and the Spring of 1942, and most probably between June 1941 and April 1942. The limits set by the available evidence do not allow of a date, say, in January 1933, or January 1943. The view that, for example, no decision was ever taken, or that the Nazis did not undertake the systematic extermination of the Jews at all, or that very few Jews were in fact killed, lies wholly outside the limits of what it is reasonable for a professional historian to argue in the light of the available evid-

ence. Scholarly disagreements often involve accusations of misreading or neglecting sources, or stretching interpretations beyond what the evidence seems to allow; but although there is sometimes room for a certain amount of disagreement at the margins, reasonable historians do not find it difficult to distinguish between interpretation and fantasy, argument and tendentiousness, imaginative readings of the sources and outright manipulations of them, minor errors of fact and deliberate distortions of the documents, or the accidental omission of relevant material and the deliberate suppression of inconvenient evidence. In this Report, these differences will be spelled out repeatedly and in very considerable detail in the course of subjecting Irving's historical work to critical scrutiny.

- 1.6.7 This task is, in a sense, made easier by Irving's repeated insistence that he is not putting forward an argument for debate, but simply telling the truth. His philosophy of history, such as it is, was revealed in a press conference held in Brisbane, Australia, on 20 March 1986: "*Journalist*: It could be argued, couldn't it, that history is always subjective, and your view of history too. *Irving*: Oh yes. Look at the life of Rommel here, the life of Rommel, *The Trail of the Fox*. In writing that, I used two thousand letters that he wrote to his wife over his entire life....Well, two thousand letters, that manuscript was probably six hundred pages long when it was finally (completed), you're doing a lot of condensing, you're condensing an entire man's life into six hundred pages of typescript, and that process of condensing it is the nice way of saying, "but of course you're selecting, you're selecting how to present this man." And that is undoubtedly a subjective operation. And this is why I hope that the readers look at the overall image presented of David Irving by the media and they think to themselves: "Well, on balance we can probably trust him better than we can trust Professor Hillgruber, or Professor Jacobsen, or any of the other historians who write on the same kind of period." *Journalist*: Surely the same argument that you're putting up against the bulk of historians could be levelled at

you. *Irving*: Ah, but then, you see, but this is the difference: they can't prove their points, they can't prove their points. I can prove all my points because I've got all the documents and the evidence on my side, but they can't find even one page of evidence to attack me, and that is why they're beginning to rant and rave instead. ”

- 1.6.8 In other words, Irving admits a degree of aesthetic subjectivity in condensing and organizing his material, but concedes none at all in formulating his arguments (or, as he would put it, proving his points). This Report takes him at his word and asks whether there is indeed any evidence available to disprove his points, or in other words, to demonstrate that his arguments are specious and arrived at not through an accumulation of documents and evidence but by manipulation, falsification, suppression, distortion, mistranslation, misinterpretation and other wilful violations of the basic methods of the professional historian in dealing with the sources on which historical reconstruction and interpretation are based.
- 1.6.9 The first part of the Report following this Introduction examines Irving's output as a historian, his reputation amongst professional historians, and his relations with the historical profession in general. In the course of the discussion, this section deals on a general level with Irving's use of historical evidence and the criteria to which he subjects it. The second part of the Report then turns to the question of whether Irving is, or is not, a Holocaust denier. This requires an outline of what is the generally accepted definition of the Holocaust and what Irving's attitude is to that definition. This part of the Report goes on via a survey of the literature on Holocaust denial to establish four criteria by which, it is argued, it is reasonable to judge whether or not someone denies the Holocaust, and then applies each of these criteria to Irving's work as a whole.

1.6.10 A third and longest part of the Report takes the ‘chain of documents’ on the basis of which Irving has sought to dissociate Hitler from the antisemitic policies of the ‘Third Reich’, and subjects each of them to an extremely detailed and rigorous examination in terms of Irving’s treatment of the document or documents in question and in the light of the other documentation which is relevant to the issue under discussion. The purpose of this third part is to demonstrate at length, and as exhaustively as possible, Irving’s admiration for Hitler and his determination to manipulate the available historical evidence in the service of this admiration. In case it might be thought that Irving’s manipulations of the historical record in this respect are an exceptional aspect of an otherwise reliable historical *oeuvre*, the product of a peculiar bee in the bonnet of a generally honest and competent professional historian, the fourth part of the book turns to three other aspects of Irving’s work and uncovers a similar story of lies and deceptions in Irving’s presentation of past history. It begins by comparing all the available versions of Irving’s account of the Allied bombing of Dresden early in 1945 with the evidence on which they rest and the researches carried out by competent and reasonably objective British and German historians of this event. It moves on to illustrate Irving’s method by studying a sample of the members of Hitler’s entourage on whose testimony, often elicited in personal interviews with Irving himself, he so frequently relies. And it concludes by taking some examples of Irving’s explanation of those aspects of Nazi antisemitism which he is prepared to admit actually existed.

1.6.11 Once again, it should be emphasised that these topics, numerous though they are, were not chosen as particularly egregious examples of Irving’s disregard of proper historical method. On the contrary, his account of the bombing of Dresden was selected for scrutiny because his book on the subject has been reprinted many times and did much to establish his reputation. His use of the evidence of Hitler’s adjutants was chosen for examination because his access to their private papers,

and his use of exclusive interview material generated in his meetings with them, have been presented as strengths of Irving's research not just by himself but by others as well. And finally, his analysis of the reasons for Nazi antisemitism was singled out for investigation because it seemed on the face of it that this might cast light on, or in some way modify or relativise, his insistence that Hitler was not involved in it. In every case, however, as this Report will demonstrate, Irving has fallen so far short of the standards of scholarship customary amongst historians that he does not deserve to be called a historian at all.

2. Irving the historian

2.1 *Publishing career*

- 2.1.1 Over the past thirty years or so, David Irving has published a substantial number of works on historical subjects. Some of them have gone through many reprints and a number of different editions. The great majority of them are about the Second World War, and in particular about Nazi Germany and its leaders.
- 2.1.2 By the time he was thirty, he had already begun researching and writing on twentieth-century history, publishing his first book, *The Destruction of Dresden*, in 1963. There followed *The Mare's Nest*, a study of German secret weapons in the Second World War, published in 1964, and a book about the German atomic bomb, *The Virus House*, in 1967. In the same year, Irving published two more books, *The Destruction of Convoy PQ17*, and *Accident – The Death of General Sikorski*. Despite their somewhat specialized titles, these books in many cases aroused widespread controversy and made Irving into a well-known figure. *The Destruction of Dresden* created a storm by alleging that the bombing of Dresden by Allied airplanes early in 1945 caused many more deaths than had pre-

viously been thought. *The Destruction of Convoy PQ 17* aroused serious objections on the part of a British naval officer criticized by Irving in his book. *Accident* generated considerable outrage by its suggestion that the Polish exile leader in the Second World War, General Sikorski, had been assassinated on the orders of Winston Churchill. By the end of the 1960s Irving had already made a name for himself as an extremely controversial writer about the Second World War.

- 2.1.3 With the publication of his massive study of *Hitler's War* in 1977, Irving stirred up fresh debate. In this book, he argued that far from ordering it himself, Hitler had not known about the extermination of the Jews until late in 1943, and both before and after that had done his best to mitigate the worst antisemitic excesses of his subordinates. Irving heightened the controversy by publicly offering a financial reward to anyone who could come up with a document proving him wrong.
- 2.1.4 The furor completely overshadowed his publication of a biography of the German general Manfred Rommel in the same year, under the title *The Trail of the Fox*. The following year, Irving brought out a 'prequel' to his book on Hitler and the Second World War, entitled *The War Path*. In 1981 he published two more books, one, *The War Between the Generals*, devoted to exposing differences of opinion between the commanders of Hitler's army during the Second World War, the other, *Uprising!*, arguing, to quote Irving himself, 'that the Uprising of 1956 in Hungary was primarily an anti-Jewish uprising', because the Communist regime was run by Jews.
- 2.1.5 The stream of books by Irving continued with *Churchill's War* in 1987, *Rudolf Hess; The Missing Years* published in the same year, a biography of Hermann Göring (in 1989), and most recently a book on *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* (1996). The same year, Irving also produced a book to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, *Nuremberg: The Last Battle* (1996, based on an earlier work).

- 2.1.6 And while he has been producing new work, he has also been publishing revised and amended editions of some of his earlier books, most notably, 1991, *Hitler's War*, which also incorporated a new version of *The War Path*. In addition he has published a number of books in German which have not appeared in English, including a study of Allied bombing raids on German cities (*Und Deutschlands Städte starben nicht*, 1963) and a broader study of strategic bombing in the twentieth century (*Von Guernica bis Vietnam*, published in 1982). Finally, he has edited and translated several documents of the Second World War, including the diaries of Göring's deputy, Erhard Milch, under the title *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe* (1973) and *Adolf Hitler; The Medical Diaries* (1983).
- 2.1.7 Irving is also a frequent writer of letters to newspapers and periodicals on historical subjects, mostly replying to criticisms of his own work. He has given many hundreds of speeches and lectures in many different countries; the overwhelming majority of them have been on aspects of the Second World War and Nazi Germany; a very large number of these have been recorded on videotape or audiocassette. He has also made his views clear in a variety of periodical publications he himself has put out or contributed to, and in recent years he has built up a substantial website on the Internet to disseminate his views, again principally on aspects of the area of history with which he has always concerned himself. This is constantly changing, but it includes lengthy documents and analyses produced or reproduced by Irving himself as well as by others whose views are congenial to him.
- 2.1.8 There is no difficulty, in other words, documenting Irving's views on Hitler and the Holocaust, and no problem in finding abundant source material on which to test Deborah Lipstadt's allegations about his methods, his standing in the profession, and the other points at issue in this case.

2.2 Qualifications

- 2.2.1 ‘I am an untrained historian’, Irving confessed in 1986: ‘History was the only subject I flunked when I was at school.’ Several decades on from his self-confessedly disastrous schoolboy encounter with the subject, however, Irving now lays great stress on the fact that he is a ‘reputable historian’. The term historian, he says, is not reserved for those with academic qualifications. Elsewhere he has declared: “As an independent historian, I am proud that I cannot be threatened with the loss of my job, or my pension, or my future. Other historians around the world sneer and write letters to the newspapers about ‘David Irving, the so-called historian’, and they demand, Why does he call himself a Historian anyway? Where did he study History? Where did he get his Degree? What, No Degree in History, then why does he call himself a Historian?” My answer to them, Was Pliny a historian or not? Was Tacitus? Did he get a degree in some university? Thucydides? Did he get a degree? And yet we unashamedly call them historians – we call them historians because they wrote history which has done (*recte*: gone) down the ages as accepted true history. ” There is a good deal to say for this argument.
- 2.2.2 Irving was born in 1938 and started, but never finished, a science degree at London University. As he suggests in the above passage, he has no academic qualifications as a historian and has never held a university or other academic post in a history department or institute or indeed in any other subject area. However, although these are serious initial disadvantages for becoming a professional historian, there are plenty of examples of reputable and successful historians whose lack of formal academic qualifications is as striking as Irving’s. It is possible to learn the trade over a number of years, and there are many journalists and freelance writers who have clearly done so. It would be quite wrong to argue, as a general principle, that writers on historical subjects who have no academic qualifications in history, or who do not have, and have never had, a university or other academic post in his-

tory, do not deserve to be called historians. Any assessment of Irving's status as a writer on historical subjects has to be based squarely on an assessment of what he has written; he cannot be dismissed simply and solely because he is unqualified in a formal sense.

2.3 Professional historians and archival research

- 2.3.1 Historians reconstruct and interpret past events on the basis of a variety of sources. These include interviews with survivors, where the subject is very recent history; published collections of documents and texts of various kinds; memoirs and reminiscences of contemporaries; photographs, drawings, maps and plans, particularly where contemporaneous with the subject under investigation; and many other kinds of material. Most important of all are archival sources, that is, unpublished official and private, manuscript or typescript material stored in repositories designed for the purpose and administered by the state or by non-governmental institutions and organizations or in some cases by private individuals.
- 2.3.2 Irving tells anyone willing to listen that he is 'an expert historian on the 'Third Reich'; I have spent thirty years now working in the archives in London, in Washington, in Moscow – in short, around the world. (If I) express an opinion it's probably a reasonable (*sic*) accurate opinion which I have arrived at, over a period of years...' In researching Hitler, he claims to have "adopted strict criteria in selecting my source material. I have burrowed deep into the contemporary writings of his closest personal staff, seeking clues to the real truth in diaries and private letters written to wives and friends. For the few autobiographical works I have used I have preferred to rely on their original manuscripts rather than the printed texts, as in the early postwar years apprehensive publishers (especially the "licensed" ones in Germany) made drastic changes in them...But historians are quite incorrigible, and will quote any apparently primary source no matter how convincingly its pedigree is exposed." Irving argued in the Introduction to the 1991 edition

of *Hitler's War* that other historians had been almost uniformly 'lazy' in their attitude to the sources and that therefore everyone else's work on Hitler was unreliable.

2.3.3 He listed a whole variety of diaries and other sources on which he claimed – without any references to back his assertion up, however, – previous historians had relied, and which he himself had exposed as falsifications. All these falsifications, he argued, were to the disadvantage of Hitler. Yet his 'idle predecessors' in writing about Hitler had failed to detect them. 'Each successive biographer' of Hitler, he declared in 1977, 'has repeated or engrossed the legends created by his predecessors, or at best consulted only the most readily available works of reference themselves.' They had never bothered to visit the surviving relatives of leading Nazis to search for additional material. And they never troubled to consult the most basic documentation. In a debate held in 1978 in the German town of Aschaffenburg, Irving attacked establishment historians for allegedly simply copying out of each other's books, while he was the only Hitler specialist who actually consulted the original sources.

2.3.4 In June, 1989 Irving declared – without naming any examples or providing any evidence at all for his statement – that 'the German historians themselves are now beginning, rather shamefacedly, to admit that they have all just been quoting each other for the last forty five years...They have all just been quoting what each other historian has written.' His critics, he charged, had 'relied on weak and unprofessional evidence.' He himself had spent 'twenty years toiling in the archives'. 'Who', asked Irving rhetorically in 1991, 'are those overemotional historians of the Jewish holocaust who have never troubled themselves even to open a readily available file of the SS Chief Heinrich Himmler's own handwritten telephone notes, or to read his memoranda for his secret meetings with Adolf Hitler?' Historians were inveterately lazy. 'A lot of us, when we see something in handwriting, well, we hurriedly flip to another folder where it's all neatly typed

out...But I've trained myself to take the line of most resistance and I go for the handwriting.' Most historians, he averred, only quoted each other when it came to Hitler's alleged part in the extermination of the Jews. 'For thirty years our knowledge of Hitler's part in the atrocity had rested on inter-historian incest.' Thus Irving contemptuously almost never cites, discusses or uses the work of other historians in his own books, though he is happy enough to quote them, as this Report will show, when they write something favourable about his own researches in their reviews of his work.

- 2.3.5 Irving is particularly proud of his personal collection of thousands of documents and index cards on the history of the "Third Reich". He points out that he is 'well known for providing every assistance to and answering the queries of his colleagues, regardless of their attitude to his works', and that he has made his research materials generally available for historical study at the German Federal Archives and at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich. He has published some of his documentary discoveries, including the diaries of Hitler's personal physician, Dr. Morell, in 1983. All this adds up, in Irving's self-presentation to the court, as he says, referring to himself in the third person, 'to the scrupulous diligence for which he had already earned a justifiable reputation'.
- 2.3.6 Yet Irving is misleading his readers when he gives the impression that he is the only historian of this subject with a thorough knowledge of the archives. He is certainly right to criticise those who have written biographies of Hitler. From the early (and for its time very creditable) biography by Alan Bullock through the stylish, but overblown and overpraised study by Joachim Fest, to the hopelessly inaccurate life by John Toland, biographies of Hitler have been more notable for their number than for their quality. Only with the new biography by Ian Kershaw do we have a study of Hitler's life that is both based on a thorough knowledge of the archival material and scrupulously careful and balanced in its judgments. But simply to concentrate on biographies of

Hitler is to deliver a completely misleading account of the state of research on the field in which Irving works. There are hundreds of historians – German, British, American, Israeli, Swiss, French, Dutch, Canadian and so on – and thousands of books and learned articles which have treated in detail, and on the basis of the most painstaking archival investigations, the subjects with which Irving concerns himself.

- 2.3.7 The major documentary collections have been generally available to historians for decades. Already in the immediate aftermath of the war, Allied war crimes prosecutors sifted through tons of captured German documents to prepare their indictments in the Nuremberg Trials. Many of these were printed in the published record of the trials. The eventual return of the original documents, many times more voluminous than the printed selection, to the German Federal Archives provided the stimulus for a massive new research effort, spearheaded by the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* (Institute for Contemporary History), described in the Acknowledgements to the 1977 edition of Irving's *Hitler's War* as 'exemplary'. Since then vast new masses of documents, both official and private in provenance, have become available. They are widely available to scholars in a variety of public state archives in Germany and other countries. This is not an area of history like, say, the fifth century, when historians have to make do with sparse and obscure source material to reconstruct what happened. Historians of the 'Third Reich' and the Second World War are more in danger of drowning in a sea of sources. There is no reason for historians of Nazi Germany to copy from each other, nor in fact does Irving anywhere present any solid evidence that they do so. This is in many ways one of the easiest areas of history to research. The British Government, for example, still keeps many documents of the 1930s and 1940s classified and bars access to them by researchers. This is not the case with German government records of the time, nor has it been for many years.

- 2.3.8 The training of a professional historian in Germany, Britain, the USA and elsewhere has for long been based on the Ph.D., which requires proof of mastery of all the necessary techniques of archival research and historical investigation based on original documents, and from the 1960s onwards, generations of PhD students from these countries and others have descended upon the German archives and the micro-filmed editions of captured German documents available in the National Archives in Washington D.C., the Imperial War Museum and elsewhere, and produced a mass of published research into the history of Germany under Nazism and during the Second World War that is almost overwhelming. The techniques of documentary investigation in which Irving presents himself as the master are in fact a normal part of the stock-in-trade of every trainee professional historian. Of course, Irving has discovered new documents and obtained new evidence, for example, by interviewing surviving eyewitnesses of the time. But this is true of a vast number of other historians too. The difference is that normal professional historians do not make such a fetish of it. Moreover, new discoveries in this field are quite normal. Such is the vastness of the documentary legacy left by Nazi Germany – twelve years in the life of a major, modern industrial state – that much of the archival record still remains to be worked through, though the main outlines have long been known.
- 2.3.9 Nor is what Irving portrays as his own critical attitude to the documents in any way unusual. All historians are trained to adopt such an attitude. Of course, like everyone else, historians make mistakes. But it is quite misleading to give the impression that historians *in general* are incapable of properly evaluating historical documents, gullible about forgeries and falsifications, or content to accept each other's opinions on these matters. Irving is quite correct to say that it is necessary to inquire of every historical document whether it is authentic, why it came into being, and what was the vantage point of its author. To put it another way, historians need to know what were the motives behind a

particular document coming into existence, so that they can control it for possible bias, tendentiousness, or downright intention to mislead. Obviously, however, *every* historical document must be subjected to the *same* critical scrutiny in this way. This is where it begins to become clear that Irving is no ordinary professional historian in this sense. Instead of observing them as scrupulously as he claims, Irving in fact abuses the professional conventions to which he pretends to subscribe. For, as this Report will demonstrate in detail, he does not apply the normal criteria of source-criticism in a consistent or professional way.

2.4 Documents and sources

- 2.4.1 Historians customarily distinguish between primary sources, which were produced at the time of the events to which they relate, and secondary sources, which were produced afterwards and rely on memory or on the work of other historians. Clearly, primary sources are *prima facie* regarded as more reliable, although they must of course be assessed critically as to their authenticity, their authorship and their purpose. As far as secondary sources are concerned, the greater the distance in time from the events to which they relate, the more critically they must be examined. On the other hand, evidence given after the event in the form of testimony in a public trial is relatively sound because it has been given in public, participants in the trial have had the opportunity to challenge it, and their challenges are available as a matter of public record. This testimony too must of course be assessed by the historian as to the purpose or purposes with which it was given. Memoirs and reminiscences have also generally been subject to a process of verification in public through the means of publication and review, though the same principles of source-criticism apply to them too. Finally, there are interviews conducted with participants after the event by the historian. This is perhaps the most problematical kind of evidence. Historians must avoid leading questions; they must not suggest the answers they are looking for; they must try to probe the

motives and purposes of those whom they are interviewing; and they must not take everything they are told at face value. Above all, they must interview at length, and in depth. A brief questioning conducted with the obvious aim of eliciting answers favourable to the historian's own arguments will convince no-one.

2.4.2 Historians also have to rely on each other's work. There is nothing wrong with this, where the work relied on conforms to the accepted canons of scholarly research and rests on thorough, transparent and unbiased investigation of the primary sources. So vast is the material with which historians deal, so numerous are the subjects they cover, so consuming of time, energy and financial resources is the whole process of historical research, that it would be completely impossible for new historical discoveries and insights to be generated if every historian had to go back to the original sources for everything he or she wanted to say. This need to rely on each other's work has nothing to do with copying or plagiarism: on the contrary, the conventions of scholarship ensure that footnote and other references are used in scholarly historical work to pinpoint precisely where the historian has obtained information, and to allow the reader to check up on this if so desired. Thus for example the documentation on which this Report rests is extremely voluminous; frequent reference has to be made to works by other scholars on the historical matters with which it deals; the central concern of this Report is in the end with historiographical issues, that is, with the methods used by Irving in writing about the past, and its use of historical subjects is only intended to provide illustrations of these historiographical points.

2.4.3 In describing his critical approach to the sources for the history of Nazi Germany, Irving has stated that he rejects all 'post-war oral trial evidence', because those who gave it had an axe of some sort to grind. If they were defendants in a war crimes trial, then they would distort the truth in order to save themselves. If they were witnesses, they may have exaggerated their sufferings as an act of revenge. These are reas-

onable enough points; but they do not completely invalidate the testimony in question, otherwise *all* testimony given to a court after an offence had been committed would have to be ruled completely useless as a guide to the truth, an extreme point of view which no reasonable person would surely uphold. If Irving is claiming that war crimes trials evidence is inadmissible because it is oral testimony based on memory, he is incorrect. The Nuremberg War Crimes Trials amassed and used a huge quantity of contemporary written evidence on the basis of which the defendants and witnesses were questioned and which served in a variety of ways to underpin their testimony. Irving himself relies extensively on this documentation in his work.

- 2.4.4 Moreover, as this Report will show, when it suits his argument, Irving makes an exception and actually does use oral testimony from war crimes trials. In any case, Irving does not automatically disqualify oral testimony based on memory. On the contrary, he makes massive use of oral testimony: in particular, over the years he has interviewed a large number of Hitler's former aides and other leading former Nazis, and he places, as this Report will demonstrate repeatedly and in detail a faith in the reliability of their testimony that is almost entirely uncritical. If they were talking to him, after all, they must have been telling the truth! No need therefore to probe too deeply, or to interview for too long. But here too a genuine professional historian has to bring a critical attitude to bear. Former Nazis of all kinds had to construct a version of their own history that would allow them to live in relative peace in the postwar world. In particular, it was in their interest to deny all knowledge of, let alone participation in, the crimes of Nazism, including the extermination of the Jews. If they were part of Hitler's entourage, then it was in their interest to deny Hitler's knowledge or involvement as well, since admitting it would have been to incriminate themselves.

2.4.5 There is no reason to suppose that the story they told to Irving in this respect would have been any different from the story they told to everybody else. If they had an incentive to avoid implicating themselves before a court, they had a motive for persuading Irving to be their mouthpiece in continuing their personal quest for public exculpation at a later date. Their motives for denying their or Hitler's involvement in the extermination of the Jews were the same when they were talking to Irving as they were when they were being interrogated by Allied officers preparing for the Nuremberg trials. Their testimony has to be subjected to particularly searching critical scrutiny. The need for a critical attitude is borne out by the evidence of the memoirs that many of them published – self-serving, mendacious, dishonest, and designed to minimise their own involvement in the crimes of Nazism. This Report will examine many examples of this kind of evidence, much of it relied on by Irving in an entirely uncritical way.

2.4.6 Irving makes great play with his claim that he was the historian who first revealed the 'Hitler Diaries' as fake. In 1983 – the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor – the respected German weekly *Stern* serialized extracts from what its reporters claimed were diaries written by Hitler and recently made available from East German sources. Hugh Trevor-Roper (Lord Dacre), acting for Times Newspapers, declared them to be authentic. As a result, serialization of an English translation began in *The Sunday Times*. Confronted with doubts about the diaries' authenticity from a number of historians, *Stern* organized a press conference on 25 April. Irving had come into contact with the diaries through August Priesack, an old Nazi who had been one of the first to be approached by the forger in his quest for authentication. Priesack's collection of Nazi memorabilia consisted, as Irving immediately recognized, of obvious forgeries. This made it overwhelmingly likely that the 'diaries' were forgeries too. Funded by rival newspapers who wished to preserve their circulation in the face of a threatened scoop, Irving appeared at the *Stern* press conference and

denounced them as a forgery. ‘I know the collection from which these diaries come’, he shouted from the floor. ‘It is an old collection, full of forgeries. I have some here’. Within a short time he was proved right. The diaries were quickly shown by tests carried out on the ink and paper by the German Federal Archives in Cologne to be postwar products. Their author, Konrad Kujau, was eventually sent to prison for his offence.

2.4.7 Irving is accustomed to portray his role in this affair as evidence of his unrivalled expertise on of the original source material for Hitler and the “Third Reich”. Thus while eminent academics had authenticated them, he proved his superior knowledge of the original documents by recognising them for what they were – a crude fake. In fact, however, one of the reasons why the forgery got as far as being printed as authentic in the national press was the fact that eminent academics had not been allowed near them. Those who had, like the American historian Gerhard Weinberg and the Stuttgart expert on Hitler, Eberhard Jäckel, expressed grave suspicions almost from the very start. Even Hugh Trevor-Roper had changed his mind about them immediately after he had sent off his article to the *Sunday Times* authenticating them, and had used the *Stern* press conference, much to the discomfiture of the organizers, to give voice to his new-found scepticism.

2.4.8 Moreover, what Irving fails to mention is that a couple of days after the press conference, he changed his mind. According to Robert Harris, he did this because he was uncomfortable at being aligned with majority, respectable historical opinion, because he was impressed by the sheer size of the diaries – sixty volumes – which seemed almost beyond the capacity of any one individual to forge, and because having finally seen the diaries for himself, they looked more convincing than he had expected. ‘Finally’, adds Harris, ‘there was the fact that the diaries did not contain any evidence to suggest that Hitler was aware of the Holocaust.’ Indeed, all the way through, they seemed to give a favourable impression of Hitler. Whereas most historians held Hitler responsible

for the antisemitic pogrom of the ‘Reichkristallnacht’ in November 1938, the diaries showed him ordering a stop to it as soon as he found out about it. Whereas most historians thought the flight of Rudolf Hess to Scotland in 1941 the act of a madman, the diaries revealed him to have been acting on Hitler’s orders in pursuit of a genuine peace mission. On point after point, the diaries seemed to endorse Irving’s rose-coloured view of the ‘Führer’. Soon he was on the front page of *The Times* declaring his belief in their authenticity. When forensic tests shortly afterwards revealed them definitively as fakes, Irving issued a statement accepting the finding but drawing attention to the fact that he had been the first person to unmask them as forged. ‘Yes’, said a reporter from *The Times* when this was read out to him, ‘and the last person to declare them authentic.’

- 2.4.9 What the affair of the ‘Hitler diaries’ actually suggests, therefore, is not Irving’s skill in unmasking forged Nazi documents, his unrivalled knowledge of the source materials for the history of the “Third Reich”, or his mastery of the most rigorous techniques of historical source-criticism, but his complete lack of any scruple when it comes to evaluating and making use of historical documents for the arguments he wants to put forward. If an obvious forgery like the ‘Hitler diaries’ gives credence to his views, he will use it. This Report will detail other, less spectacular but no less telling examples of this unscrupulousness below. Irving will use any argument, no matter how flimsy, to try and discredit genuine source material if it runs counter to his arguments. And if he cannot dismiss it, then he will manipulate it to the point of falsification, or suppress or ignore it altogether. Often he will attempt to disguise what he is doing by rendering his footnote references opaque rather than transparent, flouting one of the most basic requirements of historical scholarship in the process. These arguments will be substantiated at length in the course of this Report.

2.5 Reputation

- 2.5.1 ‘You may not like my judgments’, Irving told an interviewer in 1977; ‘My judgments may sometimes be wrong. But, by jove, I’ve got my facts right.’ But on occasion he has at least seemed to take a different line. In 1983 he said: ‘They aren’t lies, what I publish: they are true, at any rate the truth as I perceive it...Even the most erudite and hard-working historian is never going to obtain one hundred percent truth; he is only going to approximate it....’ During the 1990s, Irving has described himself as waging an ‘International Campaign for Real History’. ‘My version of Real History’, he conceded in 1992, ‘...may be *wrong* History!’ – and he continued: “I am not so arrogant as to say “thou shalt have no other version of history but mine.”...Nobody has the right to stand up and say, only my version of history is right: all other versions are wrong: and nobody has the right to propagate alternative versions....And that’s what I say about my book *Hitler’s War*; it may be right, it may be wrong! But is certainly a magisterial work...a book which makes my rivals livid with envy and rage...(It) is not what you would call revisionist history at all, it is a staid, stable, traditional look at history with magnificent photographs...”
- 2.5.2 Irving is not portraying himself as one professional historian amongst many; he is saying that he is actually better than the professionals, because his research is more thorough than theirs. He does not really believe that he is wrong, because he does not really think that other historians can come up with evidence that will make him change his mind. ‘I like seeing the other historians with egg on their face’, he has said.
- 2.5.3 Irving has said on so many occasions that his aim to discover the objective truth in history, he has discovered it, and the professional historians have not done so, that his concession that he may be wrong cannot be taken seriously, unless it is taken to apply only to matters of detail. Asked in 1993 whether he was a partisan historian, he replied: “Every historian has to be selective; If I write a biography about Adolf

Hitler, then the archives have got about ten tons of documents on Adolf Hitler, and you have to select which documents you present. And if you're a Jewish historian, you present the facts one way, because they have an agenda to present. I don't have any kind of political agenda, and really, it's rather defamatory for people to suggest that I do have an agenda. The agenda I have, I suppose, is, all right, I admit it, I like seeing the other historians with egg on their face. And they're getting a lot of egg on their face now, because I'm challenging them to produce the evidence for what they've been saying for fifty years. ”

- 2.5.4 Irving does not appear to believe that other historians can rise to this challenge. Rather, he believes that there is an international campaign orchestrated by the 'Jewish community' ('our traditional enemies') in many countries to stop him from speaking and selling his books because he writes and talks about 'Real History' based on the sources, while they purvey lies and falsehoods about the 'Holocaust', about Hitler, and about other topics in the history of the Second World War. These lies can only be defended against Real History by underhand methods, suppression and censorship, because they cannot be defended by normal historical procedures such as reference to the original sources; because, in other words, they are not 'Real History' but false history.
- 2.5.5 Irving's main emphasis, despite the occasional concession that he might get some things wrong, has repeatedly and consistently been on his factual accuracy. He presents himself as almost obsessive in his pursuit of the real facts. 'My duty as an historian', he told the Munich court which rejected his appeal against conviction for denying the Holocaust on 5 May 1992, 'is to establish the truth.' 'Our traditional enemies refuse to debate me', he told an audience in Canada on 1 November 1992; 'they can't debate me.' 'Around the world my traditional enemies have decided to use every means of terror, vandalism and vilification to smear my name and to prevent my books from being published and above all, to prevent me from getting television or radio

or newspaper space.’ Describing his continuing ‘International Campaign for Real History’, he went on: “It is the word real that frightens my opponents, because they have got away with it now for the last fifty years, with their Madison-avenue, their Hollywood versions of history, their television versions of history. Real history is what we find in the archives, and it frightens my opponents because it takes the planks out from beneath their feet. ” Irving actually is saying that in crucial respects all other versions of the history of the Second World War apart from his own *are* wrong, because they are not based on ‘what we find in the archives’. Only ‘Real History’ is correct.

- 2.5.6 The status of a reputable historian, Irving argues, is earned as much by acclaim or accolade as by academic degree. He claims that he himself has earned the right to be recognized as a reputable historian by the many plaudits he has received from eminent academic practitioners of the trade such as the late Professor Sir Harry Hinsley, of Cambridge University, author of the official history of British Intelligence in the Second World War, from Professor Gordon A. Craig, of Stanford University, California, author of the Oxford History of Modern Germany, and many others. The headed notepaper of Irving’s publishing house (‘History in the Making: Focal Point’) indeed has in recent times carried a standard quotation from Professor Craig to illustrate this point (‘Such people as David Irving have an indispensable part in the historical enterprise, and we dare not disregard their views’, Professor Gordon A. Craig, *The New York Review of Books*, September 19, 1996). A similar quotation from Professor Hans Mommsen, an eminent German historian, heads Irving’s website. Irving underlines his claim to reputable status by citing a ‘secret report’ on him by the Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1991, acknowledging ‘Irving’s reputation as one of the world’s most thorough researchers and an exciting and readable historian’. He cites ‘scores of newspaper articles by British and international experts which treat both him and his writings with distinction’.

- 2.5.7 Yet the case he makes for his high reputation amongst academic reviewers begins to crumble when subjected to close scrutiny. To get a really accurate perception of the way Irving's work has been received over the years, it is necessary to distinguish between different kinds of reviewers in the historical profession. In particular, there have been those with a *general* knowledge of modern German and European history, but no *direct* experience of researching in the subjects on which Irving has written, and no first-hand knowledge of the sources in the field in which Irving has worked; and those with a *specific* knowledge of the precise area of whichever of Irving's books they have been considering, or at least part of that area, or a very closely related one.
- 2.5.8 Those with a *general* knowledge have mostly been quite generous to Irving, even where they have found reason to criticise him or disagree with his views; but they have also seldom been entirely uncritical of Irving's work and his methods. Paul Addison, an expert on British history in the Second World War, heavily criticized what he saw in 1977 as Irving's tendency to approach the view 'that Churchill was as wicked as Hitler', and concluded that while Irving was 'usually a Colossus of research, he is often a schoolboy in judgment'. Reviewing *The War Path* in 1978, R. Hinton Thomas, Professor of German at Birmingham University, whose knowledge of the social and political context of twentieth-century German literature was both deep and broad, dismissed the book as 'unoriginal' and its 'claims to novelty' as 'ill-based', but could do no more than speculate about other possible meanings cited by Irving in his attempt to show that Hitler urged restraint in the pogrom of the *Reichskristallnacht* in 1938, commenting that 'it would be more pertinent to stress Hitler's many venomous statements about Jews over many years'.
- 2.5.9 Martin Gilbert, at that time in the middle of writing his official biography of Churchill, noted that 'Irving fails, and fails lamentably', to provide convincing evidence in *Hitler's War* to back up his assertion that Hitler was unaware of the extermination of the Jews. 'Much of

Irving's argument', he wrote, 'is based on speculation.' At the same time, he played down Hitler's antisemitic utterances and omitted key passages of this kind from his discussion of documents such as Hitler's Political Testament. Nevertheless, Gilbert concluded by describing Irving's treatment of this issue as 'a grave blemish on an otherwise scholarly work, the fruit of a decade of wide researches.' Similarly, the military historian Michael Howard, subsequently Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, praised the 'very considerable merits' of *The War Path*, and declared that Irving was 'at his best as a professional historian demanding documentary proof for popularly-held beliefs'. Howard pointed out that Irving's account of an episode such as the enforced resignation of Generals Blomberg and Fritsch before the outbreak of the Second World War was not as original as he claimed and added nothing to the story already told by other historians. 'It would be nice', he wrote, 'if Mr. Irving occasionally recognised that other men had been there before him and done a competent job of work.'

- 2.5.10 Gordon A. Craig reviewed Irving's *Goebbels* in the *New York Review of Books*. He seemed at first glance full of praise for Irving's work: "Silencing Mr Irving would be a high price to pay for freedom from the annoyance that he causes us. The fact is that he knows more about National Socialism than most professional scholars in his field, and students of the years 1933-1945 owe more than they are always willing to admit to his energy as a researcher...*Hitler's War*...remains the best study we have of the German side of the Second World War, and, as such, indispensable for all students of that conflict...It is always difficult for the non-historian to remember that there is nothing absolute about historical truth. What we consider as such is only an estimation, based upon what the best available evidence tells us. It must constantly be tested against new information and new interpretations that appear, however implausible they may be, or it will lose its vitality and

degenerate into dogma or shibboleth. Such people as David Irving, then, have an indispensable part in the historical enterprise, and we dare not disregard their views. ”

2.5.11 What Craig meant by this, however, was that Irving’s views, which he described as ‘obtuse’ and ‘discredited’ in relation to Auschwitz, should be taken as a useful irritant, not as in any way plausible or persuasive, and he went on to quote a statement by Raul Hilberg that Holocaust deniers should not be silenced because they led people who did serious research on the subject ‘to re-examine what we might have considered as obvious’. Craig found Irving’s attempt to exonerate Hitler from responsibility for the extermination of the Jews ‘unpersuasive’.

2.5.12 Craig, however, has carried out little first-hand archival research on the history of Nazi Germany himself; and he is well known as a generous reviewer. Recently for example he was taken to task for his favourable review of a controversial book by the young political scientist Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, a book which argued in a crude and dogmatic fashion that virtually all Germans had been murderous antisemites since the middle ages, had been longing to exterminate the Jews for decades before Hitler came to power, and actively enjoyed participating in the extermination when it began. The book has since been exposed as a tissue of misrepresentation and misinterpretation, written in shocking ignorance of the huge historical literature on the topic and making numerous elementary mistakes in its interpretation of the documents. Faced with mounting evidence of its unscholarly nature, Craig was forced to publish what amounted to a withdrawal of his first, positive reaction. His critical faculties were evidently equally in abeyance when he reviewed Irving’s *Goebbels*, as this Report will demonstrate through repeated and detailed examination of the techniques Irving uses in his book.

2.5.13 Even reviewers who have praised ‘the depth of Mr. Irving’s research and his intelligence’ have found ‘too many avoidable mistakes...passages quoted without attribution and important statements not tagged to the listed sources.’ John Charmley, a right-wing historian at the University of East Anglia, noted on page 675, note 51, of his controversial book *Churchill: The End of Glory* (London, 1993): ‘The current author admires Mr. Irving’s assiduity, energy, and courage’, and says that ‘Mr. Irving’s sources, unlike the conclusions which he draws from them, are usually sound’, but also notes: ‘Mr. Irving is cited only when his sources have been checked and found reliable.’ The journalist Patrick Cosgrave, reviewing *The War Path*, was typical of the more intelligent commentators in this respect. While praising Irving’s hard work, and acknowledging a ‘considerable debt’ owed to him ‘for the hidden, lost, and missing records of Nazi Germany that he has unearthed by his patient and eager courtship of many of the surviving servants of the Reich or their descendants’, Cosgrave considered that he had an ‘uncritical attitude to his own documentation’ and went on: “Mr. Irving is ready and willing to change the rules governing his use of evidence any time it suits him; and when one of his characters (and Hitler in particular) does something which even Mr Irving finds reprehensible his whole position in the story is adjusted to shift responsibility. When, on the other hand, he is doing something Mr Irving is prepared openly to approve of, his central responsibility is fully, and even extravagantly, stated.”

2.5.14 Thus as A. J. P. Taylor had pointed out, Irving considered that Churchill could be proven guilty of murdering General Sikorski even though there was no direct documentary evidence of an order from him to do so, but he simultaneously insisted that Hitler was not guilty of murdering the Jews because no single document in which he signed an order to do so could be found.

- 2.5.15 Historians with first-hand research experience and expertise in Irving's field have been more critical still, even where they have agreed with some of what he has been trying to argue. An early, prominent instance of criticism from such a quarter came with Hugh Trevor-Roper's review of *Hitler's War* in 1977. Trevor-Roper, originally a specialist in seventeenth-century English history, had worked in British Intelligence during the war and had been charged with heading an official mission to find out the true facts about the death of Hitler. The result of his researches, published in 1947 as *The Last Days of Hitler*, immediately established him as a leading authority on Nazi Germany. Over the coming years, despite his limited speaking knowledge of German and his relative lack of familiarity with manuscript sources, Trevor-Roper, appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford in 1956, continued to write on Hitler and Nazism, and his view that the German dictator was not, as was often supposed, merely interested in power for its own sake, but was driven by strong ideological convictions, has stood the test of time.
- 2.5.16 Reviewing *Hitler's War*, Trevor-Roper paid the by now customary tribute to Irving's ingenuity and persistence as a researcher. 'No praise', he wrote, 'can be too high for his indefatigable scholarly industry.' But this was immediately followed by devastating criticism of Irving's method. Trevor-Roper continued: "When a historian relies mainly on primary sources, which we cannot easily check, he challenges our confidence and forces us to ask critical questions. How reliable is his historical method? How sound is his judgment? We ask these questions particularly of any man who, like Mr. Irving, makes a virtue – almost a profession – of using arcane sources to affront established opinions." Trevor-Roper made it clear he found Irving's method and judgment unsound.
- 2.5.17 To begin with, he took exception to Irving's claim that Hitler never attempted or condoned the assassination of foreign opponents while the democracies did. What, Trevor-Roper asked, of the Austrian Chancel-

lor Dollfuss, who many argued had been murdered by Hitler's personal bodyguard unit, the SS, in 1934, or 'the Danish pastor Kaj Munk, whose "assassination" is directly ascribed to Hitler later in this book?'

Moreover, Irving's claim that the democracies had no hesitation about killing their foreign opponents rested, it seemed to Trevor-Roper, on the killing of Admiral Darlan by a young Frenchman with no known connections to foreign governments, the poisoning by persons unknown of King Boris of Bulgaria, and the supposed murder of General Sikorski on the orders of Winston Churchill. As Trevor-Roper pointed out: "Not a shred of evidence or probability has ever been produced for this theory, and when it was tested in the courts, Mr. Irving's only "evidence" (which was very indirect at best) was shown to be a clumsy misreading of a manuscript diary (I have myself seen the diary and feel justified in using the word "clumsy"). And yet here is this stale and exploded libel trotted out again, as if it were an accepted truth, in order to support a questionable generalisation. I have dwelt on this trivial detail because at once it puts us on our guard. In all the rest of his book Mr. Irving may be an exact and scrupulous historian. He may read his manuscript diaries correctly. But we can never be quite sure, and when he is most original, we are likely to be least sure."

2.5.18 After casting doubt on the quality of Irving's scholarship, Trevor-Roper declared that Irving's portrait of Hitler was in most respects far less original than he seemed to think, and in the area where it really was original, namely its denial of Hitler's knowledge of or responsibility for the extermination of the Jews, it was extremely implausible.

2.5.19 He pointed out that Irving omitted key passages from extracts he quoted from the Goebbels diary, and that the Himmler phone log for 30 November 1941, which Irving mentioned four times in the book, clearly referred not, as Irving claimed, to the 'liquidation' of the Jews in general, but only to a particular trainload of Jews from Berlin. 'Generally speaking', Trevor-Roper remarked, 'one does not veto an action unless one thinks that it is otherwise likely to occur.' He went on: "Mr.

Irving's argument about the Jews typifies his greatest weakness as a historian. Here, as in the Sikorski affair, he seizes on a small and dubious particle of "evidence"; builds upon it, by private interpretation, a large general conclusion; and then overlooks or re-interprets the more substantial evidence and probability against it. Since this defective method is invariably used to excuse Hitler or the Nazis and to damage their opponents, we may reasonably speak of a consistent bias, unconsciously distorting the evidence." Thus Irving's claim to be a scrupulous and objective historian was, in Trevor-Roper's view, entirely false.

- 2.5.20 The same view was taken by Martin Broszat, Director of the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* (Institute for Contemporary History) in Munich and one of the world's leading historians of Nazi Germany. Broszat began his critique of *Hitler's War* by criticizing Irving's much-vaunted list of archival discoveries. The evidence Irving had gathered from Hitler's entourage might provide more exact detail of what went on at Hitler's wartime headquarters, he wrote, and it might convey something of the atmosphere of the place, but it did little to enlarge our knowledge of the important military and political decisions which Hitler took, and so did not live up to the claims Irving made for it. Broszat went into considerable detail about the documentary evidence presented by Irving in his book. He pointed out, like Trevor-Roper, that Irving misrepresented a specific ban ordered by Himmler on the execution of a particular trainload of Jewish deportees on 30 November 1941 as a general ban on all such executions, and that Irving's idea that he had done this after talking to Hitler was thoroughly questionable. He went on to show how Irving failed to quote a passage in the Goebbels Diary referring to Hitler's championing of a radical 'solution' in the 'life-and-death struggle between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus', and indeed in the manner of quoting and commenting on the rest of the passage turned it into the opposite of what it said. He pointed out that there was plenty of evidence that people in Hitler's circle knew of the extermination of the Jews, and he described Irving's claim to the con-

trary as ‘fantastic’. Irving’s double standards in dealing with evidence were particularly clear in his extensive use of the postwar statements of Hitler’s entourage while at the same time failing to use, or dismissing as worthless, the postwar statements of the people who actually participated in the killing of the Jews. Indeed, Broszat continued, ‘Irving does not shrink from manipulating documents’ in the service of making his thesis seem plausible. Thus for example he relegated to a footnote statements made by Hitler to the Hungarian leader Admiral Horthy, set them in a misleading context, and reversed their chronology, in order to draw away attention from the fact that Hitler here was personally and openly stating that large numbers of Jews would be shot. All these detailed points of criticism will be taken up and expanded below. The point here is that already in 1977, Irving’s work was clearly recognized by a leading authority on Nazi Germany as biased, factually incorrect and based on the manipulation and falsification of the documentary evidence.

- 2.5.21 In 1978, Irving’s work was reviewed by the diplomatic historian D. C. Watt, subsequently Professor of International History at the London School of Economics, and later author of an exhaustively documented study of the outbreak of World War II in Europe, *How War Came*. Watt praised Irving’s ‘uncanny gift for ferreting out new sources of evidence, and the assiduity with which he has mined the vast collection of captured documents before which lesser mortals quailed’. A real specialist on the history of German foreign policy in the 1930s, who had himself brought out and added a commentary to an English translation of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, Watt also criticised Irving because, he wrote, ‘by avoiding the work of other historians, he has missed any indication that there are questions that need answering’. He went on to list the most important of these in the following three paragraphs of his review before criticising Irving for concentrating on ‘inconsequentialities’ and concluding that *The War Path* gave no more than ‘a readable rehash of what is generally known’.

- 2.5.22 Reviewing the same book in 1978, another historian with a good knowledge of the diplomatic sources for the 1930s, the Oxford don A. J. P. Taylor, praised Irving's 'unrivalled industry' in research and his 'good scholarship', but dismissed his documentary discoveries as adding little to what was already known. Moreover, Taylor noted severely, 'A scholar who condemns the inaccuracies of others should be accurate himself', and Irving wasn't: Taylor had space to note three errors of fact in *The War Path* and also criticized the vagueness of one of his footnote references and the misleading impression given of Germany in the last days of the war in a passage in which, he commented caustically, Irving 'abandons his researches and goes in for fine writing'. Historians with a first-hand knowledge of the sources for the diplomatic history of the 1930s therefore found much to criticise in *The War Path*.
- 2.5.23 When specialists with a first-hand knowledge of the sources for the history of the Second World War came to consider the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War*, they found far more to criticise. Most critical of all was the American Charles W. Sydnor, Jr. who at the time of writing his review had just completed a lengthy study of *Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division, 1933-1945*, published by Princeton University Press. Sydnor's thirty-page demolition of Irving's book deserves lengthy consideration because it is one of the few reviews of any of Irving's books for which the reviewer has manifestly undertaken a substantial amount of original research. Sydnor described Irving's dismissal of other historians' work and his claims to originality, mastery of the sources and exposure of forgeries and frauds accepted by his predecessors as nonsense: "To assume, as Mr. Irving does, that the most important books of Hitler scholarship consist only of the biographies, and that the best works of historical literature related to Hitler, which he anonymously dismisses, were not worth consulting, is – to put it generously – naively amateurish. By seeking to discredit the literature, Mr. Irving evidently excused himself from a good deal of reading, and thus from any confrontation with inconvenient facts con-

tradictory to his thesis. This appears to make the revisionist task easier, but at the same time has led Mr. Irving into a series of egregious errors and has demonstrated either his ignorance or his disregard of basic aspects of Hitler's role in German history. ”

- 2.5.24 Starting with his own field of expertise, Sydnor noted that Irving ‘seriously misrepresents the origin, nature, and scope of the SS role in Poland in the autumn of 1939’ on pages 12-14 of *Hitler's War*. To give an indication of the seriousness of Sydnor's criticisms it is worth quoting them at some length: “Hitler, not Himmler and Heydrich, initiated the campaign of terror and mass murder in Poland, as is clear from the records of Hitler's Berghof speech to his assembled generals on August 22, 1939. The *Einsatzgruppen* used in Poland did not later run the extermination camps in the east (p.12), but conducted mobile killing operations in Russia. There were in fact two separate categories of *Einsatzgruppen* in Poland in 1939, neither of which was subordinated directly to the Army generals, and neither of which was commanded by SS General Udo von Woyrsch, who directed only a single *Einsatzgruppe* (p.13). One group, consisting of three SD *Einsatzgruppen* and two SS Death's Head Regiments, was subordinated to Heydrich as Chief of the Security Police and the SD, while the other, composed of the SS Death's Head Regiment “Brandenburg” and SD *Einsatzgruppe* III, operated under the command of Theodor Eicke, the prewar head of the SS concentration camp system. Significantly, Eicke issued orders to his units via SS General Günther Pancke from aboard Hitler's headquarters train “Amerika” throughout the Polish campaign. In addition, there were at least six thousand SS soldiers and SD and police personnel active in Poland instead of Mr. Irving's “hundred officials in Waffen SS uniform” attached to each corps (There was no “Waffen SS uniform” during the Polish campaign, since there was no Waffen SS.) Their primary functions were not intelligence gathering, seizure of documents, and counterinsurgency operations (p. 13), but the liquidation of Polish political leaders, intellectuals, professionals, priests, and Jews; and their major

killing operations did *not* begin in October as a result of the British rejection of Hitler's peace offer (pp. 14, 37-38, 70), but were well advanced by the end of September, as the records of one such *Einsatzgruppe* clearly indicate."

- 2.5.25 Sydnor went on to identify numerous other 'gaffes' in Irving's book. These ranged from Irving's misidentification of the early nineteenth-century Tyrolean peasant leader Andreas Hofer as a German nationalist shot by the French in the Ruhr in 1923 (p. 315) and his misdescription of the Nazi film *Kolberg* as dealing with the Seven Years' War (p. 764: in fact, it dealt with the Napoleonic War) to his mistaken assumption that the death camp at Treblinka was already operating in March, 1942 (p. 392) and his 'undocumented assertion' that the surviving Jews in the Warsaw ghetto prepared their uprising in 1943 with weapons sold to them by Hitler's allies as they fled westward through the city (p.509: in fact, Sydnor pointed out, there was no evidence that anyone was fleeing through Warsaw at this time, nor that the resistance movement in the Ghetto ever obtained arms directly from any of Hitler's allies).
- 2.5.26 Sydnor identified many other minor errors in Irving's work. But, he went on: 'Inaccuracy becomes distortion in Mr. Irving's handling of Hitler's basic racial and ideological objectives.' Thus, wrote Sydnor, Irving's narrative presentation of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June, 1941 as a 'preventive' war launched as a response to Stalin's aggressive plans against the West, involved a 'twisting of the facts' only possible on the basis of ignorance of the exhaustively documented scholarly literature on the subject. Irving's account of the Wannsee Conference, wrote Sydnor, was 'brief, incomplete and wholly misleading', omitting key passages from the relevant documentation and drastically underplaying its importance.

- 2.5.27 Sydnor went on: ‘The most disturbing technique Mr. Irving employs in the effort to exculpate Hitler is the mistranslation of the German language to misrepresent the meaning of Nazi terminology for the destruction of the European Jews.’ For example, Alfred Rosenberg, Reich Minister for the Eastern Occupied Territories, noted that in a conversation with Hitler on 14 December, 1941, that ‘I would stand on the standpoint, not to speak of the extermination of Jewry’. Hitler, he reported, agreed with this, adding that the Jews had caused the war and so it was not surprising that they would suffer the consequences. Irving leaves out the later part of the report, relegates the first part to a footnote, and translates the key phrase as ‘I took the view that I shouldn’t mention the stamping out of Judaism.’ This is not an accurate translation of the original German, as Sydnor pointed out. In the sentence *Ich stände auf dem Standpunkt von der Ausrottung des Judentums nicht zu sprechen*, the word *Ausrottung* means extermination, and *Judentum* means the Jewish race. Sydnor noted that when the terms *Ausrottung* and *ausrotten* were used by people other than Hitler, such as Himmler’s adjutant Rudolf Brandt and indeed Himmler himself (on pages 867 and 575-6 of the book), Irving translates them without equivocation as ‘extermination’ and ‘exterminate’.
- 2.5.28 Sydnor went on to make some devastating criticisms of Irving’s use of contemporary witnesses. He pointed out that (for example) Karl Wolff, chief of Himmler’s personal staff and liaison officer at Hitler’s headquarters, who Irving said had told him that Himmler conducted the “Final Solution” without Hitler’s knowledge and that he himself had been ignorant of the killings, had been exposed as a liar when evidence emerged of visits he paid to Auschwitz and Lublin in Summer 1942 and of a letter he had received in April 1942 describing the killing of Serbian Jews in mobile gas vans. Similar evidence from Heydrich’s successor as head of the Security Service, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, was equally tainted and equally implausible. As for Heydrich himself, Sydnor demonstrated in a lengthy demolition of Irving’s account of the

circumstances surrounding his assassination that almost everything that Irving wrote on the subject was demonstrably wrong as well as being completely undocumented. Moreover, Irving omitted to mention in his account that Hitler himself had ordered first ten thousand Czechs to be executed as a reprisal for the assassination, then the obliteration of the village of Lidice, which Irving presented without any evidence as having harboured the assassins.

- 2.5.29 When Irving reached the conspiracy to kill Hitler which culminated in the Bomb Plot of 20 July 1944, Sydnor remarks that ‘the further one perseveres into the account, the more difficult it becomes to disentangle what Hitler said about the conspirators from how Mr. Irving feels about them.’ Irving relied uncritically on Gestapo descriptions of the conspirators and invents incidents which demonstrably never happened, notably the champagne party at the conspirator General Olbricht’s house after the conspirators thought their plot had succeeded, when the General was known to have been elsewhere. In his efforts to present Hitler in a humane light, Irving, wrote Sydnor, manipulated sources, invented incidents (such as Hitler’s supposed rebuke of the judge at the conspirators’ trial, Roland Freisler) and once more, as so often, failed to give proper documentary references. ‘The technique of excising damning statements and relying uncritically on dubious sources and witnesses’, concluded Sydnor, ‘deepens the impression that an inflexible bias is the shaky foundation of Mr. Irving’s revisionist edifice.’ This extended in particular to his presentation of Hitler’s Political Testament, whose virulent antisemitism he deliberately minimized. And Irving’s description of Hitler’s final days followed the first edition of H. R. Trevor-Roper’s *The Last Days of Hitler* so closely, paragraph for paragraph, that he even repeated minor mistakes which Trevor-Roper corrected in later editions of his book, although he never cited Trevor-Roper in his notes, only the sources which Trevor-Roper had used, thus giving the unwary reader the impression he had done

the research himself. In this respect, as in others, Sydnor considered Irving's boast to have outdone all other Hitler scholars in the depth and thoroughness of his research to be 'pretentious twaddle'.

2.5.30 Peter Hoffmann, the world's leading authority on the conservative resistance to Hitler and the individuals and groups behind the bomb plot of 20 July, 1944, and a profound student of the German archival record of the wartime years, was strongly critical of Irving's biography of Hermann Göring: "Mr. Irving's constant references to archives, diaries and letters, and the overwhelming amount of detail in his work, suggest objectivity. In fact they put up a screen behind which a very different agenda is transacted....Mr. Irving is a great obfuscator....Distortions affect every important aspect of this book to the point of obfuscation...It is unfortunate that Mr. Irving wastes his extraordinary talents as a researcher and writer on trivializing the greatest crimes in German history, on manipulating historical sources and on highlighting the theatrics of the Nazi era."

2.5.31 Hoffmann commented that while the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* had 'usefully provoked historians by raising the question of the smoking gun: whether an order could be found from Hitler to perpetrate a holocaust against the Jews', twenty-two years on, so much research had been carried out in this area by historians that although he repeated it in *Göring*, 'it is no longer possible to regard Mr. Irving's thesis as a useful provocation'. Irving, he charged, misrepresented the course of events and misinterpreted key documents.

2.5.32 Similarly, John Lukács, an American historian who has written extensively on the Second World War, declared in 1981 with respect to *The War Between the Generals*: "Mr Irving's factual errors are beyond belief. He says that "forty percent of the prisoners in southern France turned out to be Russians who had volunteered to fight for Germany against Stalin." Mr Irving writes of the "'famous tank country of Lower Saxony" (there is no such thing), and that in April 1945 "the German res-

istance was becoming increasingly determined” (at a time when the Germans had begun to surrender in droves). He writes that the Battle of Verdun “annihilated hundreds of thousands of both British, French and German youth. An eighteen-year-old Austrian corporal named Adolf Hitler was wounded there.” There were no British troops at Verdun. Adolf Hitler never fought at Verdun. In 1916 he was 27, not 18...Mr Irving’s methods are not merely bad; they are abominable.”

2.5.33 Lukács has recently renewed his criticisms of Irving in a general survey of historical writings on Hitler. Here he noted that Irving had gathered a ‘daunting quantity of papers’ and met ‘many survivors of the ‘Third Reich’’s hierarchy, especially men and women of Hitler’s close circle, particularly those who were sympathetic to Irving’s views.’ ‘Few reviewers and critics of Irving’s books’, Lukacs complained, not without some justification, ‘have bothered to examine them carefully enough. Had they done so, they would have found that many of Irving’s references and quotations are not verifiable.’

2.5.34 Thus *Hitler’s War* contained ‘many errors in names and dates; more important, unverifiable and unconvincing assertions abound’. There are references to archives ‘without dates, places, or file or page numbers’. ‘Many of the archival references in Irving’s footnotes...were inaccurate and did *not* prove or even refer to the pertinent statements in Irving’s text.’ Lukács found many instances of Irving’s ‘manipulations, attributing at least false meanings to some documents or, in other instances, printing references to irrelevant ones’. Often ‘a single document, or fragment of a document, was enough for Irving to build a very questionable thesis on its contents or on the lack of such’. ‘While some of Irving’s “finds” cannot be disregarded,’ Lukács went on, ‘their interpretation...is, more often than not, compromised and even badly flawed.’ He convicted Irving of ‘frequent “twisting” of documentary sources’ and urged ‘considerable caution’ in their use by other historians.

- 2.5.35 Similar conclusions were reached by Professor David Cannadine, currently Director of the Institute of Historical Research at London University, when he came to consider the first (and so far, the only) volume of Irving's book on Churchill. In putting what Cannadine describes as the case for the prosecution, Irving, he notes, consistently applies 'an evidential double standard, demanding absolute documentary proof to convict the Germans (as when he sought to show that Hitler was not responsible for the Holocaust), while relying on circumstantial evidence to condemn the British (as in his account of the Allied bombing of Dresden)...Every Churchillian fault and failure...is magnified one thousand fold, while every virtue and victory is disregarded, disparaged or only grudgingly admitted.' As a result of Irving's extremely antagonistic account of Churchill, Cannadine notes, the publishers to whom the book was contracted (Michael Joseph in London and Doubleday in New York) turned the manuscript down and it had to be published by an unknown Australian company. 'It has received almost no attention from historians or reviewers', and, Cannadine adds, 'It is easy to see why'.
- 2.5.36 According to Cannadine, Irving portrays Churchill in this book as drunken, embittered, spiteful, excessively belligerent, bent on personal advancement, and the tool of a corrupt syndicate of mainly Jewish financiers. He deliberately provoked Hitler into bombing London and willfully rejected Hitler's peace overtures. All of this, and much more, Cannadine charges, is 'based on ignorance, overstatement and quite inadequate evidence'. Irving's method is full of 'excesses, inconsistencies and omissions'. Even Irving admits that the sources he relies on are 'sparse', 'scurrilous' and 'should be treated with the reserve that all clandestine writings merit'. Many of them are drawn from the archives of 'Churchill's defeatist and disappointed critics'. Irving, says Cannadine, 'seems completely unaware of recent work done on the subject', which is not surprising in view of the fact that, as we have seen, he refuses to read the work of other historians, dismissing them as worthless. However, Cannadine goes on, "It is not merely that the arguments

in this book are so perversely tendentious and irresponsibly sensationalist. It is also that it is written in a tone which is at best casually journalistic and at worst quite exceptionally offensive. The text is littered with errors from beginning to end. Churchill is given the wrong government office in 1922, Lord Willingdon's title as Viceroy of India is incorrect, and names like Montgomery-Massingberd, Lord Cranborne and Lord Cork and Orrery are consistently misspelt. De Gaulle is described as "power hungry" and "amoral", Roosevelt as "sly" and "cynical", Sinclair as "weak and loathsome", Dalton as "distasteful", and Brendan Bracken as Winston's "carrot-topped retainer". Churchill himself is depicted as a "pudgy politician", with a "swelling paunch" and "soft rolls of flesh", who "leers", "gobbles", "loafs" and "sponges". And when we are told that an official followed Churchill after he had visited Paris, "like a street cleaner after a cavalry parade", with "bucket and shovel in hand, cleaning up", we have reached the language of the gutter, not just metaphorically, but literally as well." In Cannadine's judgment too, therefore, Irving is far from being the accurate and impartial historian he claims to be.

- 2.5.37 Another indication of the factual inaccuracy and unreliability of Irving's writings is provided by the extent to which they have landed him in trouble with the law. He was sued for libel by a retired naval officer who considered remarks about him in *The Destruction of Convoy PQ 17* to be defamatory, and was forced to pay damages of £40,000, confirmed on the rejection of Irving's appeal. His allegation in the introduction to the German edition of *Hitler's War* that the Diary of Ann Frank was a forgery led to his publisher being forced to pay damages. In 1968 he was sued for libel by Jillian Page, author of a newspaper article about him, as a result of his allegation that the article was the result of her 'fertile brain'; Irving apologised in the High Court and paid costs as a condition of Page agreeing that the action should be withdrawn. Similarly he was also obliged to pay costs in an unsuccessful li-

bel action against Colin Smythe, publisher of a book (*The Assassination of Winston Churchill*) attacking Irving's views on the death of General Sikorski.

2.5.38 Moreover, during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Irving's books were published by a variety of mainstream publishing houses, including Penguin Books, who published the paperback edition of the early version of *Hitler's War* and its companion volume on the years 1933-39, *The War Path*, Macmillan, under whose imprint later editions of *Hitler's War* appeared up to about 1992; Hodder and Stoughton, who published the original hardback; HarperCollins, whose paperback imprint Grafton Books published an edition of Irving's Göring biography in 1991; and Corgi paperbacks, who produced more than one of the various editions of *The Destruction of Dresden*. Since the late 1980s, however, he has no longer been published by major houses, but instead has brought out all his books under his own imprint, Focal Point. 'If I write a bad book,' he said in 1986, 'or if I write two or three bad books, with boobs in it which the newspapers pick out, which I'm ashamed to admit are probably right, then of course the time comes when publishers turn their back on me.' This was not the reason he gave when the publishers actually did turn their backs on him a few years later. Moreover, while he had brushes with the law at various points in his career, most notably in his arrest and deportation from Austria in 1983, his difficulties in this respect have noticeably increased during the 1990s, with his conviction for Holocaust denial in Germany in 1992 and his banning from entry into that country, into Canada, and into Australia, all in 1992-93. None of this would be expected of a reputable historian, and indeed it is impossible to think of any historian of any standing at all who has been subjected to so many adverse legal judgments, or who has initiated so many libel actions himself.

2.5.39 Recently Irving has posted on his website a letter by Hans Mommsen asking him to withdraw the endorsement displayed there, an endorsement about which Mommsen evidently was not consulted and about

which he knew nothing until very recently. Like other historians who have championed the ‘functionalist’ view of the ‘Third Reich’, according to which Hitler provided the ideological context and ratified, implicitly or explicitly, decisions emerging from below, but did not personally direct or individually order policies, including the extermination of the Jews, Mommsen felt a certain sympathy for Irving’s views in the 1970s. Broszat too, for all his criticisms, thought that Irving had at least got away from the previous all-consuming concentration on Hitler as the begetter of everything that happened in the ‘Third Reich’. On the right, a handful of German historians such as Ernst Nolte and Rainer Zitelmann, and English historians such as John Charmley, have urged that Irving’s views be taken seriously, while distancing themselves from the way in which he arrived at them. But these are only a tiny minority, and as we have seen, even a historian like Charmley has harsh words to say about the quality of Irving’s scholarship. This reflects Irving’s generally low reputation amongst professional historians since the end of the 1980s, and at all times amongst those who have direct experience of researching in the areas with which he concerns himself. In an interview with the American journalist Ron Rosenbaum in the mid-1990s, indeed, Irving himself confessed that his reputation amongst historians was ‘down to its uppers’, though it ‘hasn’t yet worn through to the street.’

2.6 Conclusion

2.6.1 In the light of the above, it seems reasonable to conclude the following:

1. Irving’s claim that other historians copy from each other and only he goes to the original sources is false.
2. Contrary to what he falsely claims are his rigorous methods of assessing the reliability of historical evidence, Irving arbitrarily declares sources such as the Hitler diaries or the oral evidence of Second World War survivors to be reliable or unreliable according to whether he thinks he can use them to support his own arguments.
3. Irving has long been notorious for his factual inaccuracy amongst historians with a real expertise in the subjects on which he writes.

4. The fact that he has had legal judgments and government exclusion orders made against him in a number of countries, and that he no longer finds reputable publishers for his work, also indicates that he is not a reputable historian.

5. He himself admits his reputation amongst professional historians is extremely low.

2.6.2 The following pages will document in considerable detail the reasons for Irving's poor reputation as a researcher and interpreter of the history of Nazism and the Second World War and a biographer of Hitler.

3. Irving and Holocaust denial

(i) A central allegation made by Lipstadt against Irving in her book is that he has become a Holocaust denier (*Denying the Holocaust*, p. 111). He had, according to Lipstadt, 'long equated the actions of Hitler and Allied leaders, an equivalence that was made easier by his claims that the Final Solution took place without Hitler's knowledge' (p. 162). In 1988, she continues, Irving, 'who had long hovered at the edge of Holocaust denial' (p. 162), was converted to the idea that the gas chambers were a myth (p. 179). He has connections with Holocaust deniers (p. 181). 'Irving', she concludes, 'is one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial' (p. 181).

(ii) This section of the Report will examine these charges in detail. It will begin by outlining what is the generally accepted definition of ‘the Holocaust’, then go on to establish in the light of this definition what it would be reasonable to argue were the main criteria for determining whether someone was a Holocaust denier or not. A second part of this section goes on to evaluate Irving’s arguments, put forward principally in his submissions to the court, in support of his claim that he is not a Holocaust denier. This will involve a detailed examination of a number of the documents and publications which Irving has cited in support of his case, as well as a consideration of the reasonableness, or otherwise, of the various definitions he puts forward of the term ‘Holocaust’ himself. The central part of this section subjects Irving’s writings and speeches, especially since the late 1980s, to a detailed scrutiny in the light of the criteria established earlier in the paper, to determine whether or not it is reasonable to call him a Holocaust denier. Finally, the last part of this section turns to Lipstadt’s allegation that Irving has connections with known Holocaust deniers (in effect, that he is part of a wider network of Holocaust denial). It will be necessary to examine in some detail the extent and nature of those connections, and to discuss the question of whether or not the people with whom Irving clearly does have connections can reasonably be described as Holocaust deniers. A conclusion summarises the findings and asks whether others besides Lipstadt have concluded that Irving is a Holocaust denier.

3.1 Definition of ‘The Holocaust’

- 3.1.1 Most historians, indeed most people who know anything at all about the Second World War, accept that an important part of it was the attempt by Nazi Germany, led by its ‘Führer’ or ‘Leader’, Adolf Hitler, to exterminate the Jewish population of Europe. Since the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Hitler’s government had passed numerous laws restricting Jewish rights in the professions, the economy, education and other walks of life. The notorious ‘Nuremberg Laws’ passed in 1935 banned intermarriage and sexual relations between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. In November 1938, the Nazis instigated and carried out widespread acts of destruction of Jewish property all over Germany, arrested over twenty thousand Jewish men, and imprisoned them under brutally harsh conditions for several weeks in concentration camps. Over ninety Jews were killed on the night of 9-10 Novem-

ber 1938 in the course of this action, which the Nazis cynically termed the 'Night of Broken Glass' (*Reichskristallnacht*), and there were many further deaths of Jews imprisoned in the concentration camps in the weeks following. After these events, Jews were fined an enormous sum of money by the Nazi government, effectively deprived of their citizenship, and almost completely removed from employment and other gainful economic activities. About half of Germany's Jewish community had emigrated by 1939 as a result of these policies.

3.1.2 In September 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland, the invading forces encountered a society in which the Jewish minority was far larger than it was in Germany. Numbering nearly two million, the Jews of Nazi-occupied Poland were subjected to widespread violence, including mass shootings by special task forces (*Einsatzgruppen*), and large-scale deportations. The idea was already mooted in leading Nazi circles of deporting all German as well as Polish Jews to a reservation in the General Government, a large part of Nazi-occupied Poland which had not been incorporated directly into the Reich.

3.1.3 The nature of the proposed transportations was made clear by Hans Frank, the Governor of the General Government, on 25 November 1939: 'It's great to get to grips with the Jewish race at last', he said: 'The more that die the better...Get the Jews out of the Reich, Vienna, everywhere. We have no use for Jews in the Reich.' This plan was not immediately put into effect, however. The Jews of Nazi-occupied Poland were set to work in brutally run labour camps, and crowded into specially created ghettos in major towns such as Lodz and Warsaw. After the defeat of France in June 1940, Hitler and leading German officials for some time considered deporting all European Jews under German control to the French colony of Madagascar, which could in no way have supported millions of totally unprepared and unsupported European immigrants. Meanwhile, deportations of Jews to the General

Government continued intermittently, while British control over the seas rendered the Madagascar Plan impractical and eventually forced its abandonment.

- 3.1.4 The German army was followed into Soviet territory by four Security Police and Security Service task forces (*Einsatzgruppen*), with orders to carry out mass executions of Communist officials, 'extremists', 'partisans' and Jews. 'The cleansing operation of the Security Police', wrote the Commander of Task Force A on 15 October 1941, 'had the goal of the most comprehensive elimination possible of the Jews'. Local anti-semites were also encouraged to carry out massacres of Jews. Other German units, from the military and the police (the *Ordnungspolizei*, the *Gendarmerie* and the *Schutzmannschaften*), also took part in the killings. Numerous reports from the task forces indicate that shootings took place on a considerable scale, and by April 1942, about 750,000 Jews had been murdered. By late 1943 the numbers shot by the task forces had reached over 2 million.
- 3.1.5 By this time, the shooting had been extended to German, Austrian and Czech Jews deported to Nazi-occupied territory in Eastern Europe, and mobile gassing vans were also being used; they had already been employed on the inmates of Polish mental asylums before the invasion of the Soviet Union. In the October 1941 Jews were finally banned from emigrating independently from Germany, and began to be deported to the East once more, both to the ghettos and also to specially built camps. In both these places of confinement they were kept on starvation rations and deliberately forced by the Nazis to live in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions which bred disease and led to very high death rates.
- 3.1.6 The complex legal and logistical issues raised by these actions were discussed at a conference in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee on 20 January 1942 to discuss 'the final solution of the European Jewish question'. The minutes indicated that 11 million Jews in 32 different coun-

tries, many not yet under German control, were being considered. The minutes, as Adolf Eichmann, who wrote them, reported under interrogation in 1960, had to use ‘circumlocution’, but at the meeting itself ‘the talk was of killing, elimination, and annihilation’.

3.1.7 In November 1941, construction work began on a camp at Belzec, in the General Government, built specifically in order to kill Jews. Specially constructed gas chambers began operating in March 1942 and by December 1942, when Belzec ceased operations, between 500,000 and 600,000 Jews had been killed there, including people transported from France, Holland, Germany and Greece for that purpose. A camp established at Chelmno, near Lodz, towards the end of 1941 also began killing large numbers of Jews in mobile gassing vans. By May, another extermination camp had been opened, at Sobibor, where between 150,000 and 250,000 Jews from a variety of European countries were killed, and in July 1942 a third camp in the General Government began killing Jews, at Treblinka, where 268,000 Jews, mostly from the Warsaw ghetto, which like the other ghettos was regarded by the Nazis as a stopping-place for Jews on their way to the camps, were gassed or shot between 23 July and 28 August. By 19 August 1943 the total killed in Treblinka numbered at least 750,000 and probably exceeded one million, including many from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece and Germany. Another camp, at Majdanek, in the Lublin district, although primarily a labour camp, also used gas chambers, where about 50,000 people were killed; another 150,000 were shot, or died from illness, malnutrition and overwork; 60,000 of this total were Jews.

3.1.8 The most notorious of the camps in Nazi-occupied Poland was situated at Auschwitz. This was a vast complex, established by the SS early in 1940, and covering nearly eighteen square miles. It included a large synthetic rubber factory run by IG Farben, the German chemical company, with slave labourers drawn from a variety of European countries under German control. In the autumn of 1941, gassing facilities were built in the camp, and used on Soviet prisoners of war. Shortly after-

wards, gassing operations were transferred to a second camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, built in October 1941, some three kilometres from the main camp: both camps are customarily referred to by historians under the general heading of 'Auschwitz'. Transports of Jews began to arrive there early in 1942. From the Summer of 1942, those deemed fit to work were taken to the main camp and enrolled as slave labourers, while the rest were gassed in Auschwitz-Birkenau immediately on arrival without being registered. Periodic 'selections' in the main camp would weed out those whom the SS considered poor workers and consign them also to the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The bodies were disposed of in crematoria and burnt in open pits when the crematoria were unable to cope with the numbers.

- 3.1.9 Unlike the pure extermination camps at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, therefore, where virtually no inmates survived the war, there were many survivors of Auschwitz, including the Birkenau camp (where there were also numerous accommodation barracks, including living quarters for Gypsies, another racial group subjected to extermination by the Nazis), the main camp (where most of the slave-labourer inmates were not Jewish) and some forty subsidiary camps, mostly associated with factories working for the German war effort. Altogether, the camp records list 400,000 prisoners who were registered in the Auschwitz system, of whom perhaps around half were Jews; half of these died in the camp; the others were mostly transferred to other camps, where many of them died, but some at least managed to survive. Some 8,000 inmates were also liberated by the Red Army. More than twice as many Jews, however – some 865,000 – were not registered in the camp, but were killed immediately on arrival. These included many thousands of Jews transported by the Nazis from countries as far away as France, Holland, Italy, Belgium, Norway and Greece.
- 3.1.10 It is the fact that Auschwitz formed the killing centre for Jews from many countries, added to the fact that many more survived than in the other extermination centres, that accounts for the subsequent notori-

ety gained by Auschwitz in contrast to Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka or indeed the shooting campaigns carried out by the task forces and military and police units. Many more Jews and other prisoners died on the brutal 'death marches' carried out after the evacuation of the camps in the face of the advancing Allied armies in 1944-45. Altogether between five and six million Jews had been killed, by gassing, shooting, or deliberate starvation and neglect, by the Nazis, by the time the war came to an end in the Spring of 1945.

3.1.11 A large volume of scholarly writings by historians in America, Britain, Israel, Switzerland, Germany and other countries has documented this massive act of genocide. Amongst those who have studied the history of these events, there is widespread disagreement about the motivation of the Nazis, the reasons why the genocide took place, the precise dating and timing of its inception, and many other issues; but on the central fact of the systematic killing of millions of Jews from a variety of European countries, by shooting and gassing, organized and supervised by Nazi Germany, there is no dispute.

3.1.12 This central fact has been known variously as the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe' (*Endlösung*, the Nazis' own term), the 'Holocaust' or 'Shoah' (the term preferred by many Jewish writers and historians), the 'Judeocide' (a term coined by the Princeton historian Arno Mayer but not widely used by others), the Nazi genocide of the Jews, or, most simply and neutrally, the Nazi extermination of the Jews. The term 'Holocaust' derives from an Ancient Greek version of the old Testament and originally meant 'a burnt sacrificed offering dedicated exclusively to God.' This meaning has given rise to a number of reservations about its application to the Nazi extermination of the Jews, who were not being sacrificed or offered to God, but were brutally murdered in the name of ethnic purity. Used in German, some have argued, the word also has a distancing and almost euphemistic effect. Others have expressed doubts on the grounds that it distracts attention from Nazism's many other victims, such as the disabled, the mentally

ill, tuberculosis sufferers, Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals, gypsies, 'asocial' prison inmates and 'habitual criminals', all of whom were also deliberately murdered by the Nazis in large numbers. However, despite these reservations, the word has gained currency over the past twenty years or so and its use is now widespread among non-Jewish as well as Jewish historians, not just in English but also in German.

3.1.13 The meaning of the term 'Holocaust' is thus metaphorical rather than literal; common usage has made what it refers to, however, abundantly clear. Thus for example the standard work by the distinguished Canadian historian Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (London, 1987) focuses on, to use his own words, 'the Holocaust, the systematic mass murder of European Jewry by the Nazis'. Similarly, Sir Martin Gilbert, in his documentary compilation *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (London, 1986), notes: "The systematic attempt to destroy all European Jewry – an attempt now known as the Holocaust – began in the last week of June 1941, within hours of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. This onslaught upon Jewish life in Europe continued without respite for nearly four years. At its most intense moments, during the autumn of 1941, and again during the summer and autumn of 1942, many thousands of Jews were killed every day. By the time Nazi Germany had been defeated, as many as six million of Europe's eight million Jews had been slaughtered; if the killing had run its course, the horrific figure would have been even higher. Jews perished in extermination camps, execution sites, ghettos, slave labour camps, and on the death marches." Another author, Ronnie S. Landau, put forward a similar definition on page 3 of his book *The Nazi Holocaust* (London, 1982): 'The Holocaust involved the deliberate, systematic murder of approximately 6 million Jews in Nazi-dominated Europe between 1941 and 1945.'

3.1.14 The use of the term 'Holocaust' is ultimately a secondary issue. The essential point is that there is wide agreement that there was a systematic attempt undertaken by the Nazi regime in Germany between 1941 and 1945 to kill all the Jews of Europe, and that it succeeded to the ex-

tent of murdering between five and six million of them in a variety of ways, including mass gassings in camps specially constructed for the purpose. These events are known about from a variety of sources. There is a massive quantity of testimony from Jewish survivors of the camps (principally, Auschwitz) and the ghettos. The Nazi authorities also left an enormous quantity of documentation providing details of the policy of extermination and its implementation; this is now preserved in a variety of archives, particularly in the German Federal Archives in Koblenz and in Berlin. Many further documents were captured by the Red Army in the final stages of the war and taken to Moscow, where they have become available to historians after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s, giving a new impulse to research.

- 3.1.15 After the war, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg presented a mass of testimony and documentation in a series of trials both of leading Nazis and of lesser but still important figures; this evidence was subsequently published in a large, multi-volume compilation of documents. The trial, in Jerusalem, of Adolf Eichmann, one of the principal organizers of the extermination, in 1961 furnished yet more evidence, including Eichmann's own confessions. In 1964 there was a major trial, in Frankfurt, of former officials and guards at the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp, which brought before the public a large quantity of further evidence. Many important institutions have devoted their efforts to gathering and analysing material on the Nazi extermination of the Jews, including the Munich-based *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* (Institute for Contemporary History), the Israeli Yad Vashem Institute, the *Zentralstell der Landesjustiz* and the research branch of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.. The quantity of research by individual scholars on aspects of the topic has been enormous. A bibliography published in 1985 listed nearly two thousand books on the subject and over ten thousand publications on Auschwitz alone. Since then the pace of research has if anything

quickened rather than slackening off. There are specialized journals on Holocaust research, such as *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*; conferences, seminars and scholarly meetings, studies of particular aspects or countries, documentary editions, general surveys, museums and exhibitions and much more. This is, in short, one of the most extensively documented and intensively studied episodes in human history

3.2 Holocaust denial

- 3.2.1 Standing apart from this very substantial scholarly literature is the phenomenon of ‘Holocaust denial’. This is the attempt by a very small number of writers to deny that there was any systematic or organized extermination of Europe’s Jews by the Nazis; to suggest that the number of Jews killed was far smaller than five or six million; and to claim that there were no gas chambers or other specially built extermination facilities. In her book *Denying the Holocaust*, Deborah Lipstadt summarizes the deniers’ arguments as follows: “The Holocaust – the attempt to annihilate the Jewish people – never happened. Typical of the deniers’ attempt to obfuscate is their claim that they do not deny that there was a Holocaust, only that there was a plan or an attempt to annihilate the Jewish people...The real crimes against civilization were committed by the Americans, Russians, Britons, and French against the Germans...The Germans suffered the bombing of Dresden, wartime starvation, invasions,...victors’ vengeance at Nuremberg, and brutal mistreatment by Soviet and Allied occupiers...The postwar venom toward Germany has been so extreme that Germans found it impossible to defend themselves. Consequently, rather than fight this ignominious accusation, they decided to acknowledge their complicity....The central assertion for the deniers is that Jews are not victims but victimizers. They “stole” billions in reparations, destroyed Germany’s good name by spreading the “myth” of the Holocaust, and...used the world’s sympathy to “displace” another people so that the state of Israel could be established. ” The motives of ‘Holocaust deniers’, Lipstadt argues, are

varied, but many of them are extremists of the far right who wish to resurrect fascism and know that this historical blot on the reputation of fascism must first be removed if it is to stand any chance of political rehabilitation.

- 3.2.2 Lipstadt's book is only one of a number of studies of the phenomenon of 'Holocaust denial'. The British political scientist Roger Eatwell (also an expert witness in the present case), a specialist in the study of fascism and neo-fascism, has argued for example along similar, if more differentiated lines. He notes that Holocaust denial takes a number of different forms and its exponents embark upon it for a number of different motives. Some are mainly antisemitic, some seek to delegitimise the state of Israel, some are overtly neo-fascist. It should not be a cause for surprise, therefore, that there are disagreements among them. Some are crude and overtly antisemitic in the presentation of their ideas, others – usually referring to themselves as 'Historical Revisionists' – are more academic in style. Both work in tandem, however. As Eatwell comments, 'there seems to be a dual strategy of using more reasoned arguments to appeal to the educated, and cruder arguments

to appeal to the more stereotypical neo-Fascist activist.' Eatwell distinguishes four specific arguments common amongst Holocaust deniers, with variations of emphasis and accentuation.

3.2.3 First, they point to the absence of any document signed by Hitler and ordering the extermination of the Jews, and the absence of references to gassing in documents like the minutes of the Wannsee Conference. Pursuing this point further, they tend to argue that the language of supposedly incriminating documents is open to a variety of interpretations, some of them not at all sinister. Thus Arthur Butz, for instance, notes that the terms *Endlösung* (Final Solution) and *Sonderbehandlung* (special treatment) can be found in contexts where it referred to matters other than killing. As far as Holocaust deniers are concerned, Nazi antisemitism was largely a matter of rhetoric. Practice was very different. Postwar evidence from the Nuremberg trials is dismissed as the product of 'victors' justice', of poor court procedures, bias (it is alleged for example that there were a lot of Jews working for the prosecutors) and testimony extracted under torture and threats. A recent Holocaust denial work, for example, has asserted that the former commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss, was 'beaten almost to death' and his wife and children threatened before he gave his testimony. Minor errors in Höss's evidence are taken as discrediting the whole.

3.2.4 Secondly, Holocaust deniers discount or attempt to discredit the postwar testimony of survivors of the camps, again pointing out minor errors and contrasting this evidence with eyewitness accounts of Germans who were alive at the time.

3.2.5 Thirdly, they argue that the alleged evidence of the Holocaust, including photographs, and documents such as Anne Frank's diary, is a postwar fabrication, and use population statistics to show that the figure of Jews who died must have been much less than six million.

3.2.6 Fourthly and finally they deploy a range of 'scientific' arguments to disprove the Holocaust. The French writer Robert Faurisson has been particularly active here, using parallel evidence from the gassings of individual capital offenders in the USA and from the commercial use of Zyklon-B. This line of argument, says Eatwell, was strongly reinforced by the 'Leuchter Report' in 1988.

These details will be discussed further below. The point to note here is that Eatwell, while broadly agreeing with Lipstadt, places particular emphasis on the argument that the evidence for the Holocaust was fabricated, or produced under duress or under psychological stress, after the war, as a central element of denial.

3.2.7 The distinguished French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, writing in 1980, outlined six major principles of Holocaust ‘revisionism’, along broadly similar lines. These were:

- There was no genocide, and the gas chambers never existed.
- The ‘final solution’ was merely the expulsion of the Jews to eastern Europe.
- The number of Jewish victims of Nazism is far smaller than has been claimed.
- Hitler’s Germany shares the responsibility for the Second World War with the Jews
- The principal enemy of the human race was the Soviet Union, not Nazi Germany.
- The genocide was an invention of Allied propaganda, which was largely Jewish.

3.2.8 Vidal-Naquet also went beyond this list of core beliefs to elaborate an outline of ‘revisionist’ methods. Those who argued in this manner, he wrote, declared that ‘any direct testimony contributed by a Jew is either a lie or a fantasy’, and that documents describing the gassings and mass killings were either forgeries or falsifications, or were simply ignored. ‘Any Nazi document bearing direct testimony is taken at face value if it is written in coded language, but unacknowledged (or under-interpreted) if it is written plainly.’ Nazi testimony obtained after the end of the war is usually considered as having been obtained under torture, or by intimidation. The falsification and suppression of evidence are key methods. ‘A vast pseudotechnical arsenal is mobilized to demonstrate the material impossibility of mass gassings.’

- 3.2.9 Yisrael Gutman, author of *Denying the Holocaust* (Jerusalem, 1985), defined what is known in German as the ‘Auschwitz-Lie’ as “the slogan under which the murder of the European Jews by the National Socialists is denied, the losses amongst the Jews are portrayed as enormously exaggerated, the murder of the Jews as the result of a purposeful policy is disputed, and the tendentious and trivialising claim is advanced that this process was not unique but had precedents which even served as models...The most extreme are those who claim that the authorities of the “Third Reich” never planned to murder the Jews of Europe, that no extermination camps were constructed or operated, and that the claim that the National Socialists systematically murdered five to six million Jews is an invention. ”
- 3.2.10 Gutman distinguished between ‘partial’ and ‘extreme’ deniers, but noted that even extreme deniers conceded that between 200,000 and 400,000 Jews were killed (estimates varied) and that all deniers dismissed the testimony of Jewish survivors as worthless. Gutman’s argument that the mention of parallels and precedents is an integral part of Holocaust denial reflects the time when he was writing, as a number of German historians were arguing along these lines, and is not typical of the broader literature on this subject. However, other writers on the subject concur that the denial of the uniqueness of the Nazi mass murder of the Jews certainly does belong among the central tenets of Holocaust denial.
- 3.2.11 The German political scientist Armin Pfahl-Traughber, writing in 1996, also using the German term ‘Auschwitz-Lie’, argued that it was going too far to include in it, as Gutman did, the argument that there was no concerted policy in National Socialism to exterminate the Jews, or that the extermination had parallels and precedents elsewhere, and preferred a more restricted definition, tied more closely to the political aim of the moral rehabilitation of Nazism. He pointed out that since the 1970s Holocaust deniers had tended to give themselves the label ‘Revisionists’ in order to suggest that what they were engaged in was a

legitimate exercise in revising historical interpretations rather than (as was really the case) a pseudo-scholarly falsification of the historical record. Pfahl-Traughber suggested that there was a broad and a narrow way of understanding the phenomenon. In its broadest sense, 'Revisionism' was a general term under which all attempts to make National Socialism seem harmless could be grouped, from the denial of its responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War to relativising comparisons (Auschwitz and Dresden). The narrow and in his view the more correct definition, was the denial of the mass extermination of Jews in the gas chambers of the extermination camps, or in other words the 'Auschwitz-Lie'. But while Pfahl-Traughber was correct to argue for a precise and quite restricted definition, he in turn went too far in narrowing it down. The reason for his extremely narrow definition lay partly in the common German usage ('Auschwitz-Lie' rather than 'Holocaust denial'), and partly in his wish to tie it exclusively to far-right and neo-Nazi politics, but mainly he was arguing for a narrow understanding of the concept because for a variety of reasons he wished to tie it to the legal definition in Paragraphs 130, 131, 185 and 189 of the German Criminal Code, which make it an offence to deny the Holocaust in the sense of denying the mass murder of Jews in the gas chambers. In view of the fact that the real centre of Holocaust denial by any definition is in the United States, it would be wrong for a general, internationally applicable definition of the term to be tied too closely to the understanding accorded it in German law. Moreover, what we are dealing with in the actual terms of the libel suit brought by Irving against Lipstadt and Penguin Books is of course the concept 'Holocaust denial', not the concept 'Auschwitz-Lie'.

- 3.2.12 At the other extreme, perhaps the most elaborate of all check-lists of Holocaust denial beliefs has been drawn up by Limor Yagil, a researcher working for the Project for the Study of Anti-Semitism at the Faculty of Humanities, Tel Aviv University. He has argued, again with a some-

what differing emphasis, that ‘since the 1970s there has been general consensus among Holocaust deniers on the following positions and principles’:

- (1) There never was any genocide, and the gas chambers that symbolized it never existed.
- (2) Jewish victims of the Nazis number far fewer than 6 million.
- (3) Hitler’s Germany does not bear primary responsibility for the Second World War, but shares this responsibility with the Jews, and perhaps should not be held responsible at all.
- (4) The main enemy of mankind in the 30s and 40s was not Nazi Germany, but Stalin’s Soviet Union.
- (5) The “Final Solution” never called for more than expelling the Jews to Eastern Europe.
- (6) Most of the Jews who perished in pogroms or disappeared, had been in territories under Soviet, not German, control.
- (7) The claim of genocide was invented by the Allies – primarily by Jews, and in particular by Zionists – to serve propaganda purposes.
- (8) The Jews killed by the Germans were mostly subversive elements, spies, and criminals.

3.2.13 Not all of these views, of course, relate directly to the Nazi extermination of the Jews; for the purposes of the present discussion, for example, number (4) in the above list can be discounted, and numbers (3) and (8) are less than central. However, a number of the views listed by Yagil do correspond closely to those cited by other writers on Holocaust denial in their surveys of the literature.

3.2.14 In most works on Holocaust denial, the issues are put more simply than they are by Yagil. Thus a relatively early writer on this phenomenon, Gill Seidel, in her book *The Holocaust Denial: Antisemitism, Racism and the New Right*, published in 1986, noted: “In various parts of the world, a small but increasingly vocal minority is claiming that the mass extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany never took place; that the gas chambers never existed; that Anne Frank’s diary is a fraud; that the

war atrocity photographs showing the heaps of bodies of camp inmates are also fakes. The Holocaust is presented as “a gigantic hoax” and “the myth of the twentieth century”. ”

- 3.2.15 Like other writers on this topic, Seidel observed that ‘there is not one single version of the neo-Nazi myth denying the Holocaust and the gas chamber, but several’, although she ascribed them all, as Eatwell, writing a decade or more later, no longer did, to the resurgence of international neo-Nazism. Seidel listed four central beliefs of Holocaust denial literature:

“

1. The Nuremberg trial conducted by the Allies at the end of the war to judge Nazi war crimes was a “kangaroo court” because prisoners were tortured to obtain confessions; and the judiciary were Jews or communists, or under their influence. It was therefore a case of “victors’ justice”.
2. The Holocaust is a “hoax”, a “swindle”, “a multi-million dollar racket” to make Jews rich (at the expense of Germany through war reparations) and to justify the Jewish state at the expense of Palestinians.
3. Allied bombings and atrocities, particularly crimes against the civilian population, like the bombing of Dresden, were on the same scale as, or even exceeded, alleged German atrocities.
4. Zyklon-B gas was used in the camps, but only as an insecticide, principally to contain the typhus epidemic. “Extermination” is a mistranslation: Jews died, but they were merely victims of war. ”

These beliefs, she argued, were common to a variety of Holocaust deniers in Britain, France, the United States and elsewhere.

- 3.2.16 How accurate and reasonable are these various characterizations of ‘Holocaust denial’? Clearly there are some differences between them, and equally clearly, not all ‘Holocaust deniers’ subscribe to all the views mentioned by Eatwell, Gutman, Lipstadt, Pfahl-Traughber, Seidel, Vidal-Naquet or Yagil in their various definitions of the concept.

However, an examination of the principal writings to which they refer, by people such as Arthur Butz, Robert Faurisson, Wilhelm Staeglich and others, which will be discussed below, makes it clear that a Holocaust denier would hold the following beliefs:

“

(a) The number of Jews killed by the Nazis was far less than six million; it amounted to only a few hundred thousand, and was thus similar to, or less than, the number of German civilians killed in Allied bombing raids.

(b) Gas chambers were not used to kill large numbers of Jews at any time.

(c) Neither Hitler nor the Nazi leadership in general had a programme of exterminating Europe's Jews; all they wished to do was to deport them to Eastern Europe.

(d) 'The Holocaust' is a myth invented by Allied propaganda during the war and sustained since then by Jews who wish to use it to gain political and financial support for the state of Israel. The supposed evidence for the Nazis' wartime mass murder of millions of Jews by gassing and other means was fabricated after the war. ”

3.2.17 It should be possible to ascertain whether or not any particular individual can reasonably be called a 'Holocaust denier' by examining his or her publications to see if these four basic principles of Holocaust denial are present.

3.3 The arguments before the court

(a) Lipstadt's allegations and Irving's replies

- ¹ In her book *Denying the Holocaust*, Deborah Lipstadt unhesitatingly identifies David Irving as a Holocaust denier. He 'declared himself converted to Holocaust denial' in 1988, she writes, and since then, she alleges, he has been untiring in his efforts 'to promulgate Holocaust denial notions in various countries'. 'Irving is', says Lipstadt, 'one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial.' Irving has objected strongly to this description in his libel action against Lipstadt.

‘It is a particularly mischievous and damaging libel to call the Plaintiff “a Holocaust denier”,’ he wrote in his reply to Lipstadt’s defence, ‘a lie worthy of the Nazi propaganda minister Dr Goebbels himself.’

- ² In his reply to Lipstadt’s defence against his charge of libelling him in this way, Irving asserts ‘that the whole of World War Two can be defined as a Holocaust’. He ‘considers it invidious to single out one single act of mass murder of innocents and to label it “The Holocaust”, as though there was none other. But he goes on to add: “If however the Defendants seek to define the Holocaust as the mass murder of Jews by the Nazis and their cohorts during World War II, then the Plaintiff maintains that he has at no time denied it; on the contrary, he has rendered it more plausible by investigating documents, questioning witnesses, and uncovering fresh sources and making no secret of for example the alleged liquidation of 152,000 Jews at Chelmno on December 8, 1941, about which he wrote in *Hitler’s War*, 1991 edition, at page 426. At page 7 of his book on aerial warfare against civilians *Von Guernica bis Vietnam* (From Guernica to Vietnam), the very first page of text, the Plaintiff emphasised: “The massacre of minorities by the National Socialists in Germany...probably cost more lives than all the air raids carried out to the present date.” ’
- ³ Similarly, Irving maintains that he ‘has at no time denied that the Nazis established concentration camps throughout their territories’. He says he ‘has at no time denied that the murder of the Jews began in about June 1941 when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, or that hundreds of thousands of Jews were shot to death’. In this context he refers to pages 270-1 of the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War*, pages 380-1 of the revised edition of the same book, and unnumbered pages of his recent biography of Goebbels.
- ⁴ These points, however, do not really relate to the Holocaust as defined above, in Section (a) or Holocaust denial as defined above, in Section (b). Irving writes only of an ‘alleged liquidation’ at Chelmno; he does

not accept, therefore, that 152,000 Jews were actually killed there (and this Report will examine later on what precisely he has written and said about this matter). He refers to ‘concentration camps’, but the existence of such camps is not at issue, for nobody has denied that concentration camps were built to imprison those whom the Nazis regarded as their enemies, above all within the borders of the Reich, at Dachau, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Flossenbürg and elsewhere. What is at issue is a different category of camp, namely those constructed in occupied Eastern Europe, such as Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka and Chelmno, and built specifically and exclusively to exterminate Jews, or, in the case of Auschwitz-Birkenau, with extermination as one of its principal aims: in other words, the extermination camps. The distinction between the two is crucial.

- 5 The murder by shooting of thousands of Jews is not the same as the extermination by shooting, gassing, starvation and deliberate neglect of millions of Jews which forms an essential part of the Holocaust as conventionally understood. Moreover, the book on aerial warfare to which Irving refers was published in 1982; but Irving’s views on these issues have not stood still over time. Indeed, in order to establish the accuracy or otherwise of Lipstadt’s characterization of Irving as a Holocaust denier, it is particularly important to bear this point in mind. A comparison of the two editions of his major work, *Hitler’s War*, published respectively in 1977 and 1991, will make this clear, and will also shed light on the first counter-argument put by Irving, namely that an examination of this book demonstrates that he is not a Holocaust denier.

(b) The 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War*

- 1 In his Introduction to the first edition of *Hitler’s War*, published in 1977, Irving devoted several paragraphs to ‘the Führer’s involvement in the extermination of the Jews’ arguing that ‘the burden of guilt for the bloody and mindless massacre of the Jews rests on a large number of Germans...and not just on one “mad dictator”’: “If this book were

simply a history of the rise and fall of Hitler's Reich, it would be legitimate to conclude: "Hitler killed the Jews." He after all created the atmosphere of hatred with his antisemitic speeches in the 1930s; he and Himmler created the SS; he built the concentration camps; his speeches, though never explicit, left the clear impression that "liquidate" was what he meant."

- ² But, he continued, historians had largely copied each other's views on this subject, especially in Germany and Austria, where ascribing the extermination of the Jews to the madness of a single individual provided a useful excuse for all the others who had been implicated. Irving concluded that the documentary record showed Hitler was not directly involved: "The killing was partly of an *ad hoc* nature...the way out of an awkward dilemma, chosen by the middle-level authorities in the eastern territories overrun by the Nazis – and partly a cynical extrapolation by the central SS authorities of Hitler's antisemitic decrees. Hitler had unquestionably decreed that Europe's Jews were to be "swept back" to the East....The Jews were brought by the trainload to ghettos already overcrowded and underprovisioned. Partly in collusion with each other, partly independently, the Nazi agencies there simply liquidated the deportees as their trains arrived, on a scale increasingly more methodical and more regimented as the months passed."
- ³ Even so, Hitler expressed no reservations about 'the methodical liquidation of Russian Jews during the "Barbarossa" invasion of 1941', which 'came under a different Nazi heading – preemptive guerilla warfare.' And Hitler's 'failure or inability to act' to stop the wider killings 'kept the extermination machinery going until the end of the war.'
- ⁴ Leaving aside for the moment Irving's view of Hitler's role in all this, it is clear that in 1977 Irving accepted that the Nazis had systematically killed the Jews of Europe in very large numbers. In the Index to the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War*, for example, there are 17 entries under the heading 'Jews, extermination of, documenting responsibility for and

knowledge of', referring to 31 pages of text. Another entry in the Index is for 'Auschwitz, extermination camp at'. Turning to the pages in question, we find that while they are devoted principally to arguing that Hitler did not know about the 'liquidation' of the Jews (to use Irving's preferred term), or in the cases where he did, tried to prevent or halt it, they make no attempt to deny the fact of the extermination itself. When the Jews were deported to the East on Hitler's orders, Irving writes on page 391, their fate was determined by lower-level officials. 'Arriving at Auschwitz and Treblinka, four in every ten were pronounced fit for work; the rest were exterminated with a maximum of concealment.' On page 660 he cites the evidence of the 'ghastly secret' of Auschwitz revealed in the 'horrifying revelations' of 'two Slovak Jews' who escaped in 1944. On page 718, he quotes the wartime report of a lawyer, Dr. Konrad Morgen, on irregularities in the management of the camp system, during which he was given detailed information about four 'extermination camps' including Auschwitz and Majdanek. Neither in the text, nor in the footnote to it describing his postwar interview with Morgen, does Irving betray any doubts about the reliability of his testimony on this point. Nor does he question the testimony of Heinz Lorenz, Hitler's press officer, on a report that one and a half million people had been killed at Majdanek. Similarly, there are Index references to 'Chelmno, extermination camp at' and 'Treblinka, extermination camp at', while on page 332 of the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving refers to 'the extermination program' which, he writes, 'had gained a momentum of its own.'

- 5 There can be no doubt, therefore, that in 1977 Irving did not question the existence of a programme to exterminate Europe's Jews, nor did he openly cast doubt on the existence of extermination camps in the East where this programme was carried out. Even at this point, however, there are some notable reservations in his account. He did not, for example, refer to gas chambers or gassings: he preferred to use vague terms such as 'liquidation'. The passages in which he dealt with the ex-

termination were few and short, probably because the programme and its implementation were peripheral to the military policies and campaigns of the Nazis which are the main subject of Irving's work. Far more important in his mind was evidently the question of Hitler's own involvement in the extermination, or rather, his non-involvement. His Index entry for 'Hitler, Adolf, anti-Jewish policy of' in the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* is far longer than that even for 'Jews', let alone 'Jews, extermination of' – 55 lines as against 40 lines. Still, his belief in the fact of mass extermination, however it was carried out, is quite clear. He retained this belief for much of the 1980s. Writing about the phenomenon of Holocaust denial or 'revisionism' in 1980, for example, Pierre Vidal-Naquet described Irving as a 'semi-revisionist'. Similarly, Gill Seidel, the author of a highly critical account of Holocaust denial, concluded firmly in 1986 that 'David Irving makes a very decisive contribution to the "soft revisionist" literature on the Second World War. His sober writing contains nothing of the vulgar racism which permeates the pamphlets of McLaughlin and Harwood. He does not deny the Holocaust.' Within a short space of time, however, all this was to change, and Irving was to move from 'soft-core' to 'hard-core' Holocaust denial, to quote the words of another observer of the self-styled 'revisionist' scene.

(c) The 1991 Edition of *Hitler's War*

- ¹ In the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, published under the same cover as a revised version of *The War Path* (dealing with the years 1933-1939), the picture painted by Irving is very different from what it had looked like in the first edition, published in 1977. In the Introduction, the references made in 1977 to 'the extermination of the Jews', 'the methodical liquidation of Russian Jews' and 'the extermination machinery', have all been deleted. Indeed, the word 'extermination' no longer appears at all. Instead, Irving refers vaguely to 'the Jewish tragedy', 'the Nazi maltreatment of the Jews', or 'the entire tragedy'. The only exception to

this is where Irving points to his argument that Hitler made statements in 1942 and 1943 ‘which are incompatible with the notion that he knew that a liquidation program had begun’ and that ‘Europe’s Jews had been systematically murdered’ on Himmler’s orders. On the face of it, this looks like an admission that the Holocaust, as conventionally understood, actually happened. But in fact this is not the case. The reference is to *alleged* facts which Hitler is often supposed to have been aware of, but, in Irving’s view, was not; the ‘liquidation program’ and the systematic murder are ‘notions’ as much as Hitler’s knowledge of them is; there is no implication here that they really took place.

- ² In his reply to Lipstadt’s defence, Irving points to the following Index entries to the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War* as evidence that he is not a Holocaust denier: “Hitler and the Jews: role in Final Solution, 17-21; analysis of his antisemitism, 126-17 (*sic*); threats to Jews, 150-1; Berlin deportations, 407; deportations to east, 425-6; concentration camps, 466, 754; demands restraint, 536; extermination programmes, 426, 427, 463-7, 814; Himmler’s call for extermination, 590; massacres in Russia, 44, 809. ”
- ³ The first reference, in the Introduction, on pages 17-21, is a defence of Irving’s views on Hitler. It has already been pointed out above how it differs from the corresponding Introduction to the 1977 edition of the book in removing all mention of the extermination of the Jews. There is no allusion to Hitler’s antisemitism on page 126, but there is on pages 24-26, which is presumably what Irving meant to refer to. Here he characterizes Hitler’s antisemitic views as a ‘demagogic element’ in his speeches, which was without real significance. ‘Stripped of this demagogic element’, the speeches are in Irving’s view significant only ‘for Hitler’s ceaseless reiteration that a Germany disarmed was prey to the lawless demands of her predatory neighbours’ (p. 24). Thus for example in calling for the hanging of Jewish war profiteers, he was

merely speaking ‘the language that the mobs wanted to hear’ (p. 26); he did not really mean to say that he would actually do this if he came to power.

- ⁴ Pages 150-1 quote Hitler’s January 1939 speech threatening ‘the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe’ if ‘international finance Jewry’ started another world war; Irving frames this speech within two paragraphs about Jewish emigration, thus robbing the comment of its murderous implication by putting it into another context altogether, namely emigration. Page 407 contains a paragraph claiming that Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, not Hitler, was ‘the mainspring behind the “Jewish question”’, which Irving again puts as one of deportation and intimidation, not extermination (in August 1941). Pages 425-6 describe ‘the deportation of Europe’s Jews’. Irving comments here: ‘The evidence is that Hitler’s intention was twofold – to establish a Jewish labor force for his grandiose plans in the east, and to hold them hostage.’ On the ground, however, this intention was frustrated by the actions of ‘the Gauleiters’ in the east, who ‘had no intention of preserving the unemployable Jews’. A proposal to kill the Jews in Riga using mobile gas trucks was approved, though Irving does not say whether or not he thinks it was carried out. ‘Soon the Jews from the Lodz ghetto and Greiser’s territories were being deported farther east – to the camp at Chelmno. There were 152,000 Jews involved in all, and Chelmno began liquidating them on December 8.’ He does not say, however, whether or not all 152,000 were killed. In 1988 he made his views on this point a little clearer. ‘I think it has to be pointed out’, he said, ‘we’re not talking about 152,000 Jews being exterminated. I’m just saying this is one figure which is contained in the document and that Chelmno was certainly involved in killing Jews. I don’t think it’s proper to read anymore into the sentence than that.’
- ⁵ Irving adds, in the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War*, that ‘trainloads of Jews’ from Vienna, Brünn (Brno), Bremen and Berlin’ were ‘shot’ on arrival in the east; he mentions the figure of 10,000 killed in Minsk, and more,

unnumbered, killed in Kovno and Riga (including one trainload of 5,000). There follows, on page 427, a reprise of Irving's argument that Hitler was unaware of all this. On page 463, Irving summarises the Wannsee Conference and claims it dealt only with deportations. Over the next few pages he develops further his argument that this was all that Hitler intended, quoting him for example threatening the 'total elimination' of the Jews (*absolute Ausrottung*) only if they should refuse to leave their homes in other part of Europe. On page 809 there is mention of another 7,000 Jews killed in the East by mass shooting. Finally, on page 814 Irving dismisses evidence that Eichmann had 'liquidated' 33,000 Slovak Jews on Hitler's orders.

- ⁶ None of this exactly provides evidence that Irving is confirming rather than denying the Holocaust as conventionally understood and as outlined earlier in this Report. Yet these passages are not the only entries in the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* that are relevant in this context. An examination of Index entries not mentioned by Irving points up the issue much more sharply, and brings to light a number of additional, sometimes quite dramatic alterations from the corresponding passages in the 1977 edition. The entry is still there in 1991, as in 1977, for 'Auschwitz, extermination camp at', as it is for 'Treblinka, extermination camp at'. But when we turn to the pages in question (463-47 in 1991, 390-93 in 1977) the account has undergone some highly significant alterations. In 1991, the 1977 references to the 'murder machinery' and 'the extermination center at Treblinka', have gone. In their place is new material describing Himmler's visit to Auschwitz on 18 July 1942 and citing the postwar interrogation of Albert Hoffmann, an SS man who accompanied Himmler on the visit, noting that 'maltreatment did occur' but adding that he 'totally disbelieves the accounts of atrocities as published in the press' after the war. Irving explicitly denies there is any documentary sanction for the story that Himmler witnessed the liquidation of a trainload of Jews on this occa-

sion, and adds: 'By late 1945 the world's newspapers were full of unsubstantiated, lurid rumors about "factories of death" complete with lethal "gas chambers"'.

- ⁷ Even more strikingly, the testimony of Morgen and Lorenz and the Slovak Jews cited on pages 718-19 of the 1977 edition, along with the account of the extermination camps at Majdanek and elsewhere, has entirely vanished from the equivalent place, page 699, in the 1991 edition. Morgen and Lorenz have also disappeared from the Index. All that Irving now tells us about Nazi policy towards the Jews in 1944 and in particular about the Hungarian Jews, is what he already told us in the first paragraph of the chapter in question in 1977, namely that Hitler 'evidently made some promise about the Hungarian Jews' at a meeting with a leading member of the Horthy regime there which had resulted in the cessation of deportations of Hungarian Jews to Poland. In 1991, as in 1977, this is pure speculation on Irving's part. What he does in 1991 is to cut out entirely the following three paragraphs on the extermination camps and go straight on to another paragraph on Hungary which begins two pages later in the 1977 edition. The mention on page 660 of the Slovak Jews who escaped from the 'Auschwitz extermination camp' to spread news of it abroad, has been entirely excised from the equivalent place, page 654, of the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*.
- ⁸ Perhaps most noteworthy of all is the difference between the two versions of Irving's account of Hitler's address to a group of generals about Hungary's Jews on 26 May 1944. Hitler's remarks are quoted at length, and it is made clear in both editions that he criticized Hungary for failing to deal with its Jews and claimed that 'this problem is now going to be solved too'. Irving's comment on these remarks differs as follows between the two editions:

- 1977: 'In Auschwitz, the defunct paraphernalia of death – idle since 1943 – began to clank again as the first trainloads from Hungary arrived.'

- 1991: 'Four hundred thousand Jews were being rounded up in Hungary; the first trainloads arrived in Auschwitz as slave labor for the now completed I.G.Farben plant.'

- ⁹ In 1977, Irving makes it clear that the Hungarian Jews were killed. In 1991 he makes no mention of this fact but claims instead that they were being used merely as workers in a chemical factory.
- ¹⁰ The 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, therefore, fails to support Irving's contention that he has not denied the Holocaust. Indeed, its account of these events accords well with the four central features of Holocaust denial described above. It minimises the number of Jews killed; it mentions the gas chambers only in the context of 'unsubstantiated, lurid rumours'; it insists that all that Hitler and the Nazi leadership in general wanted to do was to deport the Jews, not to kill them; and it dates accounts of the gas chambers to the postwar period, dismissing or ignoring contemporary accounts from the war years.
- ¹¹ Thus Irving's views had altered substantially between the two editions. The turning-point in Irving's changing views was the 1988 trial of Ernst Zündel, a German-Canadian antisemite, Holocaust denier and self-confessed admirer of Hitler, Zündel was first tried in Canada in 1985 for spreading false information and disturbing social peace between ethnic groups, but his conviction was overturned on technical grounds and he was retried in 1988. In this second trial, Zündel's defence called a number of Holocaust deniers as expert witnesses in an attempt to demonstrate that the information Zündel had been spreading about the Holocaust was not false. These included for example the French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson, whose views will be outlined in more detail later in this Report.
- ¹² Irving himself also appeared as an expert witness in this second trial. His testimony in the trial is published in full on Irving's website. Irving repeatedly admitted under questioning in the court that he had changed his mind since 1977 on the issues of the numbers of Jews killed and the use of the gas chambers. 'My mind has now changed', he

said, ‘...because I understand that the whole of the Holocaust mythology is, after all, open to doubt.’ Interviewed on radio in 1989, he admitted in relation to the ‘Holocaust story’: “Millions of people don’t like to admit that they have been taken in and so in turn they have quite happily allowed the propaganda flywheel to spin on. I didn’t like to admit that until quite recently I believed the story but I want to be the first one out there in front now saying I was tricked and its time to stop this particular piece of propaganda.”

- ¹³ Central to Irving’s change of mind was his reading of the so-called Leuchter Report, a document commissioned by Faurisson for use in Zündel’s defence in the 1988 trial. In this Report, the American Fred Leuchter, designer of gas chambers and lethal injection devices used in the administration of the death penalty in some states in the USA, declared that his examination of the gas chambers in Auschwitz proved that they had not been used for gassing at all. Leuchter’s report contained a considerable amount of scientific, or, as it turned out, pseudo-scientific analysis of chemical residues on the gas chamber walls, and similar matters. It was quickly discredited, not least on the basis of Leuchter’s failure adequately to defend his findings on the witness stand. However, Irving accepted it fully and published it in Britain, holding a special meeting to launch it. This was the source for his self-confessed change of mind in 1988 on central issues such as the number of Jews killed, the use of gassing, and the evidence commonly accepted by historians for these things.
- ¹⁴ In examining the question of whether or not Irving is a Holocaust denier, it is important therefore to concentrate on his publications and statements at and after the Zündel trial in 1988, not before. For Irving himself said quite openly in 1991 that he had removed all references to ‘extermination camps and death factories’ from the second edition of the book. Work published by Irving before 1988 is thus irrelevant to the issue of whether Lipstadt was correct in 1994 to call him a Holocaust denier.

(d) Irving's biography of Hermann Göring

- ¹ Irving claims in his reply to Lipstadt's defence that the Index to his biography of Hermann Göring, the head of the German Air Force and overlord of the German economy in the late 1930s and the early part of the war, also shows that he is not a Holocaust denier. The book was published in 1989 and therefore at a time when Irving's views could be expected to be broadly similar to those he expressed in the second edition of *Hitler's War*. It has an index entry on 'Jews, mass extermination of, 343-9, 469, 487, 489, 499, 502'. Let us look these pages up. The first, and longest passage referred to, on pages 343-9, begins by claiming that in the 'winter of 1941/42 Hermann Göring heard rumors of mass killings in the east'. A significant proportion of those transported to the east, particularly those unable to work, were being 'brutally disposed of' when they arrived. Irving continues: 'The surviving documents provide no proof that these killings were systematic; they yield no explicit orders from "above", and the massacres themselves were carried out by the local Nazis (by no means all of them German).'
- ² The famous order signed by Göring on 31 July 1941 ordering the head of the SS Security Service Reinhard Heydrich to 'make all necessary preparations in an organizational logistical, and material context for an overall solution of the Jewish problem within Germany's sphere of influence in Europe' is dismissed by Irving as 'a routine administrative directive' extending Heydrich's powers to the East. 'Final Solution' was not yet the term for extermination, Irving asserts. Göring, in effect, was being duped by Heydrich and Himmler, who were the real architects of murder. Göring did not know and did not want to know. 'In the entire files of Göring's *Stabsamt* and other bureaus there is no evidence that Göring knew of Heydrich's ultimate intentions.' He simply implemented official Nazi policy, which was to expel the Jews from Europe, if not to Madagascar, then to the East. 'The documentary record shows that the initiative for specific atrocities came from Nazi officials in the field.' Göring even noted in a speech to the Reich Research Council on

6 July, 1942, that Hitler had ‘made exceptions’ to the policy and kept valuable Jewish specialists in one area or another working ‘all the way down to operetta level’. If Jews were killed in considerable numbers, this was because, Irving goes on, the whole trend was towards illegal and brutal modes of war – towards ‘innocentocide on a grand scale. Violent air raids had resumed. The partisan warfare developing in Russia was barbarous beyond belief. Millions were starving too.’ Interrogated by the Allies after the end of the war, Göring protested that cruelty had always been abhorrent to him – a claim which Irving quotes without any comment or critical note. Göring knew, Irving claims, of Auschwitz only as a synthetic rubber plant (at least, this is how it appears in the economic planning minutes, which however is only to be expected and does not provide any concrete evidence of the limits of Göring’s knowledge at all).

- ³ The first, and by far the longest reference to the Holocaust in the Göring book thus turns out to be a chapter arguing that there was no systematic extermination, that Göring, like Hitler, knew nothing about the killings of Jews in Eastern Europe, that official Nazi policy was only to deport the Jews, and that if many died, it was as a product of the general brutalization of the war, not because of any deliberate plan to kill them. What of the other references? On page 469 we find Irving citing Göring under interrogation claiming that the extermination camps were ‘merely propaganda’. ‘I always thought they were places where people were put to useful work’, he said. Irving offers no comment on this remarkable claim. He goes on to report that Göring reminded his questioners that atrocity stories in World War I had turned out to be untrue. On page 487 we are told that Göring did not enjoy the prosecution’s depiction of atrocities in the concentration camps. On page 489 we find Göring saying he ‘still can’t grasp’ the atrocities in the camps – what exactly these atrocities were, Irving does not say – and Göring getting angry that some other leading Nazis were deserting the united front he had hoped to put up against the Allied indictment. On page

499 Irving reports that Göring was accused of directing Heydrich to kill the Jews. On page 502 he records the appeal against Göring's sentence by the lawyer Otto Stahmer on the grounds, among other things, that his client could not have known about the extermination of the Jews. Taken together, these references hardly seem to amount to an admission of the Holocaust as normally understood. On the other hand, they are quite compatible with the core beliefs of Holocaust denial as outlined above in Section (b), in other words, with a minimization of the number of Jews killed, denial of the use of gas chambers, refusal to accept that the mass murder was co-ordinated or systematic, and belief that the evidence for it was fabricated.

(e) Conclusion

- ¹ Irving's claim that the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* and the 1989 biography of Göring indicate that he is not a Holocaust denier is not credible when the Index references he cites in support of this contention are actually consulted. Both books give an account of Nazi policies and actions towards the Jews during the Second World War that is perfectly compatible with the central tenets of Holocaust denial as this is normally understood by historians. In his reply to Lipstadt's defence, Irving refers to two further books authored by himself *Von Guernica bis Vietnam* and *The Trail of the Fox*, as evidence that he is not a Holocaust denier. *Von Guernica bis Vietnam*, however, was published in 1982, and is no evidence of Irving's recent views, which, as we have seen, differ markedly on these issues from the views which he expressed in the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* and which (there is every reason to believe) he still held in the early 1980s. The same is true of his book on Rommel, *The Trail of the Fox*, which was also published in 1977. An examination of Irving's *recent* writings and speeches, since his self-confessed change of mind towards the end of the 1980s, demonstrates that his portrayal of equivalences between the Nazi extermination of the Jews and the Allied bombing raids on Germany is very different from what

his reference to these two books would lead one to suspect. These equivalences as claimed by Irving will be examined in more detail below.

- ² None of the writings and publications cited in Irving's defence against Lipstadt's charge that he is a Holocaust denier thus stands up to close examination. Lipstadt's book is quite clear that Irving had been 'converted' to Holocaust denial during the Zündel trial in 1988, and it is irrelevant to cite work published by, or statements made by, Irving on this subject before that point, since Lipstadt stated unequivocally that 'prior to participating in Zündel's trial, Irving...had never denied the annihilation of the Jews.'
- ³ In August 1988 Irving confessed that his thesis that Hitler knew nothing about the extermination of the Jews 'was a kind of half-way house in my conversion'. Already in the mid-1980s, as this Report will show, Irving was refusing to be definite or explicit about the number of Jews killed by the Nazis. In 1983, the 'mole' Ray Hill, who had infiltrated the far-right scene in Britain with a view to exposing its beliefs and ramifications, had a private discussion with Irving in the latter's flat. Believing that Hill, who by that time had achieved a leading position in the extreme right-wing British National Party, was sympathetic to his view, Irving told him that the figure of six million Jews killed by the Nazis was 'ridiculous'. 'There may have been a million or so', he said. If it had been admitted that only about one million Jews had died in the Holocaust, then the whole affair would have begun to fade from the memory of the world just as the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915 had done. But the Holocaust issue had to be kept alive to ensure money and influence for the state of Israel. If this was so, Hill asked, why hadn't Irving exposed the six million figure as a lie? 'The time still isn't right', Irving said. Five years later, at the Zündel trial in Canada, it clearly was.

3.4 Irving and the central tenets of Holocaust denial

In Section (b), above, this Report outlined four central tenets of Holocaust denial: minimization of numbers killed, denial of use of gassing, denial of the systematic nature of the genocide, and claims that the evidence was fabricated, above all after the war. Attention will now be focused on a detailed examination of Irving's writings and speeches to see if he subscribes to them, bearing in mind the change in his views which took place at the end of the 1980s.

(a) Numbers of Jews killed

- ¹ Until the late 1980s, Irving paid little attention to the numbers of Jews killed during the Second World War. In 1986, for example, while confessing that he thought 'the six million figure is probably marginally exaggerated', Irving described the minimal figure of 100,000 as being put forward by a 'school of thought' that was 'right out at the fringe', and added that 'I have to admit that I haven't examined the Holocaust in any detail.' Within a couple of years, however, he was declaring himself to be an expert on the subject. In his evidence to the second Zündel trial in Canada in 1988, Irving was asked to comment on the following statement (put to him by the defence lawyer): 'If the "Holocaust" is represented as the allegation of the extermination of 6 million Jews during the Second World War as a direct result of official German policy of extermination (*sic*), what would you say to that thesis?' Irving replied: "I am not familiar with any documentary evidence of any such figure as 6 million...it must have been of the order of 100,000 or more, but to my mind it was certainly less than the figure which is quoted nowadays of 6 million. Because on the evidence of comparison with other similar tragedies which happened in the Second World War, it is unlikely that the Jewish community would have suffered any worse than these communities."

- ² Since making this statement in 1988, Irving has rarely deviated from his attempt to minimise the number of Jews killed by the Nazis in the Second World War in order to establish a moral and statistical equivalence with the numbers of Germans and others killed by the Allies. As he himself said in 1996, ‘cutting the Holocaust down to its true size makes it comparable with the other crimes of World War II’.
- ³ This applies not just to gassing and extermination camps, but also to the mass shootings carried out by the Security Service and Security Police task forces, the *Einsatzgruppen*. In his evidence to the second Zündel trial in 1988, Irving cast doubt, for example, on the reports filed by task force leaders giving numbers of Jews shot by their forces. ‘I don’t trust the statistics they contain’, he said. ‘Soldiers who are out in the field doing a job or murderers who are out in the field doing a job, they don’t have time to count.’ Each leader, he suggested, submitted reports whose aim was to ‘show he’s doing a jolly good job’, and by inference, therefore, seriously exaggerated or even invented the numbers killed. ‘Statistics like this are meaningless’, Irving said. ‘I’m suggesting’, he continued, ‘it is possible that at the time some overzealous SS officer decided to put in a fictitious figure in order to do Heinrich Himmler a favour.’ This of course is pure speculation, unsupported by any documentary evidence. This is characteristic of Irving’s methods in disposing of inconvenient documents. If a document does appear which Irving is unable to suggest is not genuine, or in some way unreliable, such as a memorandum from Himmler to Hitler in which 300,000 Jews are referred to in 1942 as having been exterminated, Irving says he is ‘unhappy about it because it is such an unusual, isolated document’. But of course, it is only ‘isolated’ because Irving has dismissed or ignored all the other documentary evidence which points in the same direction: there is no genuine documentary warrant at all for this remark.

- ⁴ A particularly clear view of Irving's stance can be gained from the plate sections of two of his most recent books. Between pages 506 and 507 of the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, the following illustration captions occur in sequence: "At the end of November 1941, on Hitler's orders, the railroading of the remaining Jews out of Germany to "the east" begins. In Riga, Latvia, SS officers plunder and liquidate the local Jewish population, machine-gunning them into pits. German army officers secure, too late, orders from Hitler's headquarters that the mass shootings are to stop. A trainload of five thousand Jews from Berlin arrives in the middle of the massacre; they too are shot to death although Himmler telephones (*right*) to Heydrich the Führer's ruling that they are *not* to be liquidated. A rare original photograph shows the next trainload, of 1,200 Jews from Stuttgart, leaving their passenger train at Riga on December 4, 1941. Except for one uniformed SD officer near the third open carriage door, the escorts are all elderly German police officers, with two Latvian police in the right foreground. SLAVE LABOUR. On June 26, 1944, a high flying Allied reconnaissance plane photographs the entire Auschwitz complex – the gigantic I.G.Farben synthetic rubber and oil plant at Monowitz, the first concentration camp built at Auschwitz (Oswiecim) itself, and the huge subsequent slave labour camp ("Auschwitz II") erected at nearby Birkenau. In the spring of 1942, after the Wannsee Conference, the Reich Justice Ministry briefs officials including State Secretary Roland Freisler. "The Führer has repeatedly declared...that he wants the Solution of the Jewish Problem postponed until after the war is over." FIRESTORM. In July 1943 British bombers devastate the German port of Hamburg. Forty-eight thousand people die in the devastating holocaust. "
- ⁵ The last-named caption accompanies no fewer than three photographs spread over two entire pages; one of them shows a dead child clutching the body of an adult. By contrast, there are no pictures of concentration or extermination camp inmates or victims, nor of any of the shootings. The only picture of the Nazis' Jewish victims is of the train at

Riga, an orderly scene of passenger carriages and people handing luggage out of the windows; no obvious brutality, no herding, no whips; Irving also neglects to mention in any of his writings the well-known fact that most transports of Jews to the East were in cattle trucks, whose passengers were crowded together without food or water for several days in conditions so bad that many died; on reaching the camps, they were frequently brutally assaulted by the guards.

- ⁶ While Irving's presentation of photographic evidence on the Jewish victims of Nazism is confined to the single illustration of the railway station at Riga, he reproduces between pages 666 and 667 no fewer than six photographs of the bombing of Dresden, covering four whole pages. The caption reads: "Dresden, February 1945. Huge funeral pyres are erected behind police cordons in the city center, and the air raid victims are cremated, five hundred or a thousand at a time. Over one hundred thousand people have died. *Previous page*: Photographed after the horrific British and American air raid of February 13 and 14, 1945, Dresden is a roofless ghost city. There are no longer enough living to bury the dead."
- ⁷ On the very next page there is a colour photograph of another bombing raid, captioned 'The British air offensive continues. Twenty-seven thousand die as Pforzheim is engulfed in a firestorm.' In this section too, as in all the others, there is not a single photograph of anyone killed by the Nazis, unless one includes high German officials such as Admiral Canaris who belonged to the resistance.
- ⁸ In *Nuremberg: The Last Battle*, published in 1996, the plate section, between pages 182 and 183, includes the following pictures and captions on facing pages: '*Punished...* Snapshots from a German soldier's photo album. The daily routine of a cruel warfare in the Balkans. A German soldier is found mutilated. The German troops take reprisals, stringing up the menfolk in the village, like washing on a line – one by one, a chair kicked away beneath each victim and then painful death

by strangulation. For crimes like these, German generals are executed at Nuremberg.’ ‘...and *Unpunished*. No Allied general is ever called to account for the appalling fire-raids on Japan (*above*) or Dresden (*Left and below*). In each of these 1945 raids about a hundred thousand innocent civilians are burned alive in what is only now universally recognized as a crime against international law.’ It is worth adding that one of the photographs on the page covering the ‘cruel warfare’ in the Balkans shows two unmistakably Jewish men with long beards and dark coats and hats, suggesting that the atrocities were committed by Jews.

- ⁹ The illustration captions in Irving’s recent books therefore clearly constitute an attempt to establish an equivalence between the Nazi extermination of the Jews, which is minimised, sanitised or in a number of its key features completely ignored, and the Allied bombing of German cities. Auschwitz-Birkenau is described as a slave labour camp; only a relatively small-scale massacre of Jews in Riga is admitted. A similar equivalence is asserted by the illustration captions between other war crimes for which German military officers were condemned at the Nuremberg Trial, and other actions of the Allies and resistance movements in German-occupied Europe. Indeed, the tendency in these illustrations is strongly to suggest that the Allies’ actions were more criminal, and less defensible, than those of the Germans. While the bombing of Dresden is said (incorrectly) to be ‘universally recognized as a crime against international law’, there is no statement to the same or equivalent effect about the crimes of the Nazis, though the verdict of guilty on them passed at the various trials of the International Military Tribunal after the war are still valid in international law. Irving concedes some of these, such as the shootings, but denies Hitler was responsible for them, and minimises them in comparison to what he portrays as the far greater crimes of the Allies.
- ¹⁰ Irving’s description of the bombing raid on Hamburg as a ‘holocaust’ is repeated on page 440 of his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the ‘Third Reich’* (published in 1996). Not only does he rely in these descriptions

on an explicit or implicit minimization of the number of Jews killed by the Nazis, he also postulates an equivalence by exaggerating the number of Germans killed by the Allies in bombing raids. Irving's work on Dresden deserves separate treatment on its own (see Part IV, Section (b), below); here two other examples will suffice to illustrate the point.

- ¹¹ On page 441 of *Goebbels*, he describes the number of those killed in the bombing raid on Hamburg on 27-28 July 1943 as 'nearly fifty thousand'; in 1989, he put it far higher, claiming that while 74,000 people had died at Auschwitz, 'nearly twice as many died in the July 1943 RAF attack on Hamburg'. In fact, all these estimates are inflated; the Hamburg air defence reported that 31,647 dead had been found, and other official German estimates of the time put the overall total at 34,000 or 35,000. The postwar estimate of 41,800 given by the Hamburg authorities is regarded by some experts as too high, while the amateur military historian Martin Middlebrook's figure of 44,600 has no basis in any identifiable source at all. The probable number, therefore, is between 35,000 and 40,000; Irving's wildly varying but invariably categorical statements that 48,000, nearly 50,000 or nearly twice 74,000, and deliberately inflated claims designed to establish an equivalence with his minimized statistics of Jewish deaths at the hands of the Nazis. They have no basis in documentary evidence or historical fact.
- ¹² There are even more explicit examples of Irving's attempts to show that Allied killings of German civilians were a greater crime than German killings of Jews. The same tactic of inflating the numbers involved in the former and minimising the numbers involved in the latter is particularly clearly visible in a speech delivered in Toronto on 8 November 1992, when Irving estimated the numbers who 'died' in Auschwitz ('most of them from epidemics', he said) as 100,000. 'Around one hundred thousand dead in that brutal slave labour camp.' Around 25,000 were killed by shooting or hanging, according to German radio reports from Auschwitz received and decrypted by the British, he added. He continued: "Twenty-five thousand killed, if we take

this grossly inflated figure to be on the safe side: That is a *crime*; there is no doubt. Killing twenty-five thousand in four years – 1941, 1942, 1943, and 1944 – that is a *crime*; there is no doubt. Let me show you a picture of twenty-five thousand people being killed in twenty-five *minutes*. Here it is, in my book, a vivid picture of twenty-five thousand people being killed in twenty-five minutes by the British (in February 1945) in Pforzheim, a little town where they make jewellery and watches in Baden, Germany. Twenty-five thousand people were being burned alive...That is what it looks like when twenty-five thousand civilians are being burned alive in twenty-five minutes. One person in four, in twenty-five minutes. One person in four in that town. As I said when I was speaking in Kitchener yesterday, it is as though somebody came to Kitchener, a town of about a hundred thousand people, and killed one person in four in twenty-five minutes. That too is a crime. Twenty-five minutes! In Auschwitz it was a crime committed over four years. You don't get it spelled out to you like that. Except by us, their opponents. When you put things into *perspective* like that, of course, it diminishes their Holocaust – that word with a capital letter.... ”

- 13 Yet, Irving went on, spelling out this equivalence had led to a massive campaign against him. ‘Anybody who wants to analyse any part of the Holocaust story is dismissed and smeared as an anti-Semite or at the other end of the scale, a “pro-Hitler apologist(“), a “Nazi apologist”...’
- 14 ‘Analyse’ here is a synonym for ‘refute’ or ‘deny’, words which Irving was careful to avoid in this particular context. Irving’s almost incantatory repetition of the figures ‘twenty-five thousand’ and ‘twenty-five minutes’, mentioned in this passage respectively four times and five times, compared with his figure of twenty-five thousand for Auschwitz (‘grossly inflated’), mentioned only twice, left no room for doubt about which crime he considered the greater. In fact, quite apart from the gross minimization of the Auschwitz figures, Irving’s equivalence does not stand up to examination because of his wild exaggeration of the

number of deaths caused by the Pforzheim raid, which was estimated in a report of the Statistical Office of the City of Pforzheim in 1954 not as 25,000 or 27,000, as Irving claims, but as 17,600.

- ¹⁵ In recent years, Irving has deployed a range of arguments to buttress his minimal estimates for the numbers of Jews killed by the Nazis. In *Nuremberg: The Last Battle* (London, 1996), he claims that the Auschwitz death books give 46,000 names, dying mainly from disease. Citing British decrypts of German code messages from Auschwitz to Berlin, Irving has suggested on a number of occasions that some 25,000 Jews may have died in Auschwitz by killing, the rest from disease, the cause given in most of the reports. On occasion, he has gone so far as to claim that *all* the Jews who died in Auschwitz died from disease: ‘Probably 100,000 Jews died in Auschwitz’, he said in 1993, ‘but not from gas chambers, they died from epidemics.’ Indeed, Irving actually claims that the official history of British Intelligence during the Second World War, by the late Professor Sir Harry Hinsley, “states...that upon analysis of the daily returns of the Auschwitz concentration camp, it becomes completely plain that nearly all of the deaths, nearly all of the deaths, were due to disease. The others were by execution, by hanging, and by firing squad. There is no reference, and I’m quoting this page, there is no reference whatever to any gassings. So why hasn’t this extraordinary revelation been headlined in the newspapers around the world? It’s not just some cranky, self-appointed, British, neo-fascist, neo-Nazi pseudo-historian. And you journalists who are present can take those words down. It’s not just some pseudo-historian from Britain saying this. This is the British official historian, Professor Hinsley, who had unlimited access to the archives of the SIS, the Secret Intelligence Service, and to the archives of the British code-breaking agency, who says that in Auschwitz nearly all the deaths were due to disease. There is no reference whatsoever to gassings. (Applause).”

- ¹⁶ In fact, Hinsley did not claim that nearly all the deaths were due to disease; all he wrote was that the British decrypts of encoded radio messages sent from Auschwitz did not mention gassings, which is hardly surprising, given the Nazis' policy of not mentioning the gas chambers explicitly in any of their communications with one another.
- ¹⁷ Moreover, although Irving claimed that the radio reports from Auschwitz to the central administration of the camps in Berlin were decrypted by British intelligence at Bletchley Park 'from 1942 to the end of 1943', in fact the decrypts ended on 1 September 1942, when the authorities stopped reporting deaths by radio, and reported them only in writing. The returns to which Hinsley referred covered early-to-mid-1942, which was the only period during which the total number of prisoners in the camp corresponded to the total number of inmates mentioned in the decrypts. It was only subsequently that numbers increased (to 135,000 in March 1943) and mass gassing began on a really large scale with the completion of Crematorium II in March 1943. Crucially, too, the decrypts were decipherments of radio reports of the additions and subtractions to the *regular* camp population: these reports omitted all Jews (as well as gypsies) selected for gassing immediately on arrival. Thus they proved nothing, except that there were numerous deaths from executions and disease amongst the regular camp inmates. Finally, as Hinsley himself pointed out in reply to a letter from Irving on 17 June 1991, he had not in any case seen the original intercepts himself at all: 'I saw only a summary of them, compiled afterwards, and they were probably not translated and circulated at the time.' The originals certainly contained information not purveyed in the summaries, and it is anybody's guess as to what it might have been. The decrypts therefore completely fail to substantiate Irving's allegation that there were no deaths by gassing in Auschwitz.
- ¹⁸ This is far from being the only attempt Irving has made to twist the evidence in order to minimise the numbers of Jews deliberately murdered by the Nazis. 'Despite the most strenuous efforts' he has

also claimed, ‘the Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem, has compiled a list of no more than three million possible Holocaust victims. The same names appear in this list many times over.’ This does not mean, of course, that the same names refer to the same people; nor does the fact that the number of names compiled totals less than six million mean that six million were not killed.

¹⁹ In order to suggest that the figure of six million is mythical, Irving claims that as early as 1919 the governor of New York claimed that ‘six million’ Jews were being exterminated – a claim that implies the later statistics of Jews killed in the Second World War was not only invented but part of a long tradition of invention. In fact, of course, even if this claim was actually made, it has no direct bearing on figures provided by historians and others of Jews killed in the Second World War, which must be assessed on their own merits. The later figure of six million, Irving says, originated in a guesstimate based on a comparison of European Jewish population figures in 1929 and 1946. It has no basis, he declares, in documented historical fact. This depends of course on one’s definition of ‘documented’, which in Irving’s case, as this Report has already shown, changes according to what he wants to prove. The discrepancy in population is a documented historical fact, and a figure of between five and six million is what is arrived at when calculations are made which take into account everything else which is known about the fate of the European Jews in these years, including emigration and natural deaths.

²⁰ When it comes to suggesting ways in which the missing Jews might in fact have survived the war, Irving suddenly and conveniently forgets his demand for ‘documented historical fact’. Nobody, alleges Irving, has ‘explained what became of the one million cadavers’ which it is claimed ‘were produced by killing operations at Auschwitz’, nor for that matter what happened to the alleged corpses produced by supposed gassings in other camps. There is no trace in Allied aerial photographs of mass graves at Auschwitz, so where have the bodies gone? he

asks. Irving himself has supplied more than one answer. He has for instance claimed that the Jews who disappeared did not die but were secretly transported to Palestine by the Haganah, the Zionist underground, and given new identities. Irving also suggests some of the missing Jews were killed in the February 1945 bombing raid on Dresden: 'Many other raids were like that. Nobody knows how many Jews died in them. Nobody knows how many Jews died on the road of hunger or cold, after the evacuation of concentration camps in late 1944 and early 1945. Nobody knows how many Jews survived in displaced persons' camps. None of the Holocaust historians have researched this.'

- ²¹ Such allegations commonly occur in Irving's speeches. They derive ultimately from the Holocaust denier Paul Rassinier's unsubstantiated assertion that four-fifths of the six million Jews most historians agree had been killed in fact 'were very much alive at the end of the war', repeated by Arthur Butz in his Holocaust denial tract *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. In 1989, Irving told an audience who had come to hear him present the Leuchter Report in London, that he had "Alternative explanations to the gas chamber. Obviously if the gas chamber now turns out to have been phony, then we have to try and explain what happened to the figures. Now, one possible reason is the large number that turned up in the state of Palestine, what's now the state of Israel. The Jews that were in Israel didn't come from nowhere. Another part of them, when Auschwitz was liberated, were sent out on the roads to be shipped westwards, where they ended up in cities like Dresden. I don't have to tell you what happened in Dresden three weeks after Auschwitz was evacuated by the Germans. There were one million refugees in the streets of Dresden at the time that we burned Dresden to the ground, killing anything between 100,000 and 250,000 of them. Large numbers of people on the streets in Europe that winter also suffered normal deaths of exposure and starvation and epidemic. I'm offering to you alternative solutions to where the people went."

- ²² All of this, of course, is pure speculation, unsupported by any of the documentary evidence which Irving usually claims is such an essential and characteristic feature of his historical work.
- ²³ By advancing such claims, Irving is seeking to minimise the number of Jews killed by the Nazis, and if there is anything consistent at all in the methods which he uses to do this, it is in the double standard of criticism he applies to evidence according to whether it is in his favour or tells against his argument. In a speech delivered on 11 October 1992, for example, Irving recounted how he has discovered hitherto unknown personal papers and memoirs by Adolf Eichmann, the principal bureaucrat in the implementation of the 'Final Solution'. He was obliged to point out that by the time he wrote this account of his life in the 1950s, 'Eichmann's mind is rather confused and muddled', because he used the Morgenthau Plan – an American plan, never accepted by the Allies, to reduce Germany to a pre-industrial condition after the war – as a justification for Auschwitz, whereas Auschwitz was on the point of being closed down at the time of the plan. This does not stop him, however, praising the accuracy of Eichmann's memory when it comes to casting doubt on the estimate given in the memoirs of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, of the numbers of Jews killed in the camp and the abortive negotiations he claimed to have conducted with Zionists in 1944 about a possible 'rescue' of Hungarian and Slovakian Jews (on which 'he has almost total recall'). Nor does Irving question Eichmann's powers of recall when on 10 April 1961 Eichmann testified that he had not received any written order from Himmler which stated that Hitler had decided that the 'final solution' should begin at once.
- ²⁴ What Irving did concede in his 1992 speech was that there were some unauthorized mass shootings of Jews behind the Eastern Front, not least because he was concerned to present the Eichmann papers as authentic and important, and in them Eichmann himself described witnessing one such incident in considerable detail. On this point, Irving was explicitly supported by the leading Holocaust denier Robert

Faurisson, speaking on this occasion from among his listeners, who confirmed: 'We assume that there were massacres and hostages and reprisals and so on...I don't know any Revisionist who says that there were no massacres, because there is no war without massacres, especially on the Russian front where you had Jews, and partisans, women, and children all mixed together.' Irving agreed: 'It's important to say this because we are called Holocaust deniers, and the television screens show you the mass graves and all the rest of it, which we don't deny.' Irving agreed once more, in 1995, conceding that 'there is no doubt in my mind that on the Eastern front large numbers of Jews were massacred, by criminals with guns – SS men, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, whatever – to get rid of them.' Atrocities, as Irving has said or written on many occasions, always occur during wars.

- ²⁵ Does this amount to 'Holocaust denial'? Irving is quite explicit that it does, claiming without qualification that 'Eichmann's memoirs are an important element of the refutation of the Holocaust story'. If engaging in a 'refutation of the Holocaust story' is not Holocaust denial, then what is? 'For me as a historian', Irving said in 1992, 'the Holocaust is a mere footnote to history. I write about world history; I write about Real History, and I am not going to talk at any great length about something which is of far more obsessive interest to other historians, revisionists, or whatever.' Speaking in Toronto on 1 November 1992, Irving declared: "The legend was that Adolf Hitler ordered the killing of six million Jews in gas chambers in Auschwitz. This is roughly how history has had its way for the last forty or fifty years. But when people come along, with no real axe to grind – because I don't think any of us on the right wing on this matter has axes to grind – when people come along and say, "I don't believe this version of it all;" or, "I am not going to accept all the ingredients of that statement," the methods used against us are becoming increasingly bizarre. But why should we accept all the ingredients of their statements? It's like any other marketing project. I don't like that capital "H" they use for the word Holocaust for example:

when you see a capital letter on a work it makes you think it is some kind of brandname or trademark like Tylenol, and that we are being sold a package of something, and that we are not allowed to open it at either end to check it first. Well, I am not a Holocaust denier, and that word really offends me, but I am a Holocaust analyst, I think we are entitled to analyse the basic elements of the statement: Adolf Hitler ordered the killing of six million Jews in gas chambers at Auschwitz, and to ask, is any part of this statement open to doubt?"

- ²⁶ Once again Irving, as in another speech already quoted from his Canadian lecture tour in 1992, was using the term 'analysis' as a euphemism for 'denial'; the difference between 'analysis' and denial' here is non-existent, when one takes Irving's own, highly idiosyncratic definition of the term 'Holocaust' into account. Irving will use almost any word rather than 'denial': 'I don't like this word "deny", he said in 1993 with reference to the figure of six million Jewish victims of Nazism: 'the word "deny" is only one step away from lying, really. I challenge it, I contest it.' There is nothing about the word denial that implies telling a lie, however, any more than there is anything about the words challenge, contestation, or analysis that implies telling the truth.
- ²⁷ At the beginning of his videotape *The Search for Truth in History*, Irving says once more: 'The Holocaust with a capital "H" is what's gone down in history in this one sentence form, so to speak: "Adolf Hitler ordered the killing of six million Jews in Auschwitz". But nobody in fact has ever argued that six million Jews were killed by gassing in Auschwitz, and Irving nowhere cites any references to demonstrate that anybody has: his claim that this is what the term 'Holocaust' means is a figment of his own imagination. The standard works on the Holocaust make it clear both that a substantial proportion of those killed were shot or starved to death or deliberately weakened and made susceptible to fatal diseases as a matter of policy, and that gassings took place at other centres besides Auschwitz, including notably Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka.

- ²⁸ Only on one recorded occasion, namely during an interview with the Australian journalist Ron Casey on 27 July, 1995, in other words after the publication of Deborah Lipstadt's book, has Irving departed at all significantly from his extreme minimization of the numbers killed: "Casey: What is your estimate of the number of Jews who died at the hands of Hitler's regime in the war years? What number – and I don't like using this word – what number would you concede were killed in concentration camps? Irving: I think, like any scientist, I'd have to give you a range of figures and I'd have to say a minimum of one million, which is a monstrous crime, and a maximum of about four million, depending on what you mean by killed. If putting people into a concentration camp where they die of barbarity and typhus and epidemics is killing, then I would say the four million figure, because, undoubtedly, huge numbers did die in the camps in the conditions that were very evident at the end of the war."
- ²⁹ Nowhere else in recent years has Irving even come close to putting the figure at more than a million. Far more usual has been his claim that the Nazis killed 'on the order of thousands at a time....not millions.'
- ³⁰ Even in giving, exceptionally, a figure of between one and four million however, it was noticeable that Irving strongly qualified his remarks by claiming that 'barbarity and typhus and epidemics' were the main causes of death. Irving had a long record of blaming the high mortality rate in the camps – insofar as he conceded it at all – on epidemics rather than on deliberate, systematic killing. Thus for example in 1986 he told an audience, again in Australia, that the piles of dead filmed in Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen at the end of the war had been the result of epidemics which 'had only broken out in the last two or three weeks of the war.' And who in Irving's view was responsible for these epidemics? "We have to admit probably that we, the British and the Americans, were partially responsible, at least partially responsible for their misfortune. Because we vowed deliberate bombing of the transportation networks, deliberate bombardation, bombarding the Ger-

man communications, by deliberate destruction of the German pharmaceutical industry, medicine factories. We had deliberately created the conditions of chaos inside Germany. We had deliberately created the epidemics, and the outbreaks of typhus and other diseases, which led to those appalling scenes that were found at their most dramatic in the enclosed areas, the concentration camps, where of course epidemics can ravage and run wild.”

³¹ In fact, of course, conditions for epidemics were deliberately created by the Nazis, who ran the camps in a way that deprived the inmates of hygiene and medical attention as a matter of policy. Irving has a repeated tendency to blame virtually *all* the deaths of the Second World War on the Allies in general, the British in particular, and above all on Winston Churchill. Thus he told an audience in South Africa in 1986: “We went in and we bombed the Belgians, and the Poles, and the French, and the Dutch. We did appalling damage. We killed millions of people in Europe in the most bestial way, in defiance of all conventions. In a way which eventually damned with infamy on the name of the British, and it all goes back on Winston Churchill’s name. ”

³¹ Indeed, he said on another occasion, probably in the same year: ‘We’d killed 20 million people.’ Winston Churchill, in Irving’s view, ‘bears at least a partial share of the blame for the tragedy that befell the Jews in Europe, because Churchill fought the war five years longer than was necessary and provided the smokescreen behind which the tragedy could occur.’

³² In conclusion, therefore, it is clear that Irving has consistently and grossly underestimated the number of Jews deliberately killed by the Nazis, usually by quoting a total figure, or figures for individual killing centres such as Auschwitz, of a completely different, lower order of magnitude than those generally accepted by reputable professional historians, frequently by attributing such deaths as he does concede occurred to ‘natural’ causes such as epidemics and malnutrition, and

occasionally even by blaming British bombing raids and the British persistence in prosecuting the war throughout the period 1940-1945. All of this puts him into the same camp as the well-known Holocaust deniers who regularly give a negative answer to the question ‘did six million really die?’

(b) Use of gas chambers

- ¹ Denial of the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz and elsewhere is a central element in denial of the Holocaust. Irving, as Plaintiff in the case, has responded to the defence’s plea to the court in the following terms: ‘It is denied that the Plaintiff has denied the Holocaust; it is denied that the Plaintiff has denied that gas chambers were used by the Nazis as the principal means of carrying out that extermination; they may have used them on occasion on an experimental scale, which fact he does not deny.’ This sentence is self-contradictory – is he saying that he accepts that the gas chambers were the principal means of killing, or that their use was only possible (‘may have used’) and if it did occur, is he merely saying that it was only experimental in scale?
- ² It is also contradicted by another line of defence he takes against the accusation of being a Holocaust denier, namely to deny that there is any authentic wartime archival evidence for the existence of gassing facilities at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka; a cautious statement stopping short of an outright denial but clearly designed to imply that those gassing facilities therefore did not exist. Here it is necessary to point out that the term ‘archival’ is redundant: if there is authentic wartime evidence, it does not matter whether it is stored in an archive, a library, a private house or anywhere else: its authenticity is not affected by any of this. Moreover, if Irving is implying here that he will not accept any evidence about the Second World War unless it was written at the time, then how does he justify his own very extensive use of the postwar testimony of members of Hitler’s entourage given in interviews with them conducted by

himself? Here again, he is applying double standards in his approach to different types of evidence. The fact is, as this Report has already pointed out at some length, that historians have to take all kinds of evidence into account, and apply the same standards of criticism to all of them. Even if Irving is correct in implying that there is no authentic wartime evidence of gassing facilities at the camps he mentions (and as expert witness reports by Professor Van Pelt and Professor Browning will demonstrate, he is not), this does not mean that there is no authentic evidence of any kind to prove that they existed.

- ³ Nevertheless, Irving clearly means to imply that they did not. In his testimony to the Zündel trial in 1988, indeed, Irving explicitly rejected the use of the term ‘extermination camps’ apart from Chelmno, which ‘was operating on a very small scale’, and by shooting, not gassing. This minor concession is characteristic of his technique in admitting small-scale, limited instances of what he devotes much of his attention to denying on the large scale, as a kind of alibi that enables him to deny that he is really doing the latter at all. Admitting the existence of experimental gassing facilities and mass shootings (‘on a very small scale’) at Chelmno does not, however, constitute an admission that the Holocaust happened as it is conventionally defined by those who have carried out *bona fide* research into it.
- ⁴ In 1992, he put forward the same kind of argument in describing the memoirs of Adolf Eichmann, Irving said: “He also describes – and I have to say this being an honest historian – going to another location a few weeks later and being driven around in a bus; then being told by the bus driver to look through a peephole into the back of the bus where he saw a number of prisoners being gassed by the exhaust fumes. So I accept that this kind of experiment was made on a very limited scale, but that it was rapidly abandoned as being a totally inefficient way of killing people. But, I don’t accept that the gas chambers existed, and this is well known. I’ve seen no evidence at all that gas chambers existed.”

- ⁵ In pursuit of the latter argument, Irving endorsed the so-called Leuchter Report, which sought to prove that there were no gassings at Auschwitz, and published the Report under his Focal Point imprint on 23 June, 1989.
- ⁶ Following the Leuchter Report, Irving alleges both that there has been a ‘refusal of the authorities to call for site examinations, forensic tests and other investigations’ at Auschwitz, and that ‘forensic tests were carried out by Polish authorities on the Auschwitz site’, but that the results (‘of which the Plaintiff has a copy’) were ‘suppressed’ because they confirmed Leuchter’s findings. He alleges that ‘equal tonnages of Zyklon-B pesticide granules were delivered to Auschwitz and Oranienburg camps, at which latter camp nobody has ever suggested that gas chambers existed, and to camps in Norway.’ Recently discovered documents in former Soviet archives show that Auschwitz prisoners, he says, were released to the outside world on completion of their sentence. This is ‘incompatible with the character of a top-secret mass extermination centre’. The official history of *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, edited by F. H. Hinsley, claims that illness was the main cause of death in Auschwitz, and not gassing. Moreover, he denies ‘that diesel engines can be used for killing operations. These engines exhaust non-lethal carbon dioxide (CO₂), and only minute quantities of toxic carbon monoxide (CO). These howlers’, he says, ‘typify the flawed historical research into “the Holocaust” even now, fifty years after the tragedy.’ In his videotaped speech *The Search for Truth in History*, made in 1993, Irving asked: ‘How can you gas millions of people with hydrogen cyanide gas and leave not the slightest significant trace of chemical residue in the walls of the gas chambers?’ Irving went on to claim that Dr. Franciszek Piper of the Auschwitz State Museum had had the tests secretly replicated and when the State Forensic Laboratory in Cracow had confirmed Leuchter’s findings the museum suppressed the fact and filed the report away. The engines used in the gas-vans at Chelmno and elsewhere were not diesel but

petrol engines. The official history of British Intelligence in the Second World War by F. H. Hinsley does not, as this Report has already noted, suggest that nobody was gassed at Auschwitz.

- ⁷ These allegations are the subject of a separate expert witness report by Professor Robert Jan Van Pelt. Here it may be noted briefly that Irving's arguments are specious and derivative, and correspond to those put forward by well-known Holocaust deniers. The Leuchter Report is an incompetent and thoroughly unscientific document compiled by an unqualified person; it was completely discredited at the second Zündel trial in 1988. The Polish authorities have not suppressed findings of their own investigations of the former gas chambers, and these findings do not confirm Leuchter's claims. Prisoners sent to Auschwitz for extermination were not even enrolled on the camp's list of inmates, but were sent straight away to the gas chamber; there was no record of their release.
- ⁸ These arguments are not for the most part based on original research by Irving, but are derived from previous work by well-known Holocaust deniers such as Robert Faurisson. Irving himself is on record as ascribing his 'conversion' to the belief that there were no gas chambers to his reading of the Leuchter Report during the Zündel trial. The fact that the Leuchter Report has been widely discredited since its appearance in 1989 has not prevented Irving from continuing to assert that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz or elsewhere, and there was no mass murder of Jews by gassing during the Second World War.
- ⁹ In his book on the Nuremberg trials, published in 1996, Irving notes (p. 131) that evidence was presented at Nuremberg that there were lethal gas chambers at Dachau. 'The German government has certified that no lethal gas chamber was ever operated at Dachau'. But of course the Nuremberg evidence and the German government statement say two different things. Not even Irving claims that the evidence presented to Nuremberg said that the gas chamber at Dachau ever actually

came into use. Irving's technique here is to present (sometimes real, sometimes invented) minor mistakes and propaganda legends at Nuremberg while ignoring the overwhelming mass of evidence on major matters of fact, using the former to discredit the latter.

- 10 The situation in Dachau has no bearing on the situation in Auschwitz; it is important here, as always, to bear in mind the crucial distinction between *concentration camps*, designed from 1933 onwards to imprison, abuse and humiliate Nazism's real and imagined opponents in Germany, and *extermination camps* set up only during the war and outside the German borders of 1937 with the express purpose of killing large numbers of Jews and other categories of undesired or unwanted people not just from Germany but from other countries as well. Towards the end of the war, to be sure, the distinctions between the two began to become less important and less clear-cut, but they remained none the less.
- 11 Once more, the plates in Irving's recent books give a clear expression of his views. Thus an illustration on pp. 182-3 of *Nuremberg: The Last Battle*, carries the following caption: 'Pest control in the Auschwitz slave labour camp. Tons of Zyklon B pellets, containing poisonous hydrogen cyanide, are shipped by the Degesch factory to the Pest Control division of Auschwitz and other camps including Oranienburg in 1944.' The delivery note pictured opposite the caption, however, only concerned Auschwitz. It is addressed to Kurt Gerstein. It makes no mention at all of pest control. Here again, Irving's intention to deny that gassings took place at Auschwitz could not be clearer.
- 12 In June 1989, he told a radio interviewer that 'the buildings identified hitherto as gas chambers in Auschwitz and Treblinka, were not. This is a myth, and it is time the myths were dispelled.' 'There were no gas chambers in Auschwitz', he said on 5 March 1990. In his view, only '30,000 people at the most were murdered in Auschwitz...that's about as many as we Englishmen killed in a single night in Hamburg.' In

1995 he repeated this view: ‘we revisionists’, he declared, ‘say that gas chambers didn’t exist, and that the “factories of death” didn’t exist.’ In his persistent and undeviating denial, since 1988, that gassing was used at Auschwitz and other camps in the German-occupied east for murdering large numbers of Jews, Irving stands squarely in the camp of the Holocaust deniers. ‘I’m a gas chamber denier’, he told a television interviewer in 1998, ‘I’m a denier that they killed hundreds of thousands of people in gas chambers, yes’.

- 13 Irving has repeatedly denied that there were *any* functioning gas chambers and that *any* Jews or other victims of Nazism were killed in them, with the sole exception of a small number who he concedes were gassed during experiments. In 1989, for instance, he confessed himself ‘quite happy to nail my colours to the mast on that, and say that to the best of my knowledge, there is not one shower bath in any of the concentration or slave labour camps that turns out to have been some kind of gas chamber.’
- 14 On 5 March 1990 he declared roundly to an audience in Germany once more that there were no gas chambers at all in Auschwitz during the war: “There were no gas chambers in Auschwitz, there were only dummies which were built by the Poles in the postwar years, just as the Americans built the dummies in Dachau...these things in Auschwitz, and probably also in Majdanek, Treblinka, and in other so-called extermination camps in the East are all just dummies.”
- 15 Repeating this claim later in the same speech, Irving added that ‘I and, increasingly, other historians, ...are saying, the Holocaust, the gas chamber establishments in Auschwitz did not exist.’ On 8 November 1990 he repeated the same claim to an audience in Toronto: ‘The gas chambers that are shown to the tourists in Auschwitz are fakes.’ These statements are clear and unambiguous. They make it plain that Irving’s statement to the court of his position on this issue – ‘it is

denied that the Plaintiff has denied that gas chambers were used by the Nazis as the principal means of carrying out that extermination' – is a falsehood.

(c) Systematic nature of the extermination

- ¹ A refusal to accept that the extermination of the Jews was systematic, organized or centrally directed, is a major element in the phenomenon of Holocaust denial. Where does Irving stand on this issue? Even before he changed his mind on the numbers killed and the use of gassing as a murder technique, Irving was denying that the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been carried out in a systematic manner. Thus for example in 1986, two years before his change of mind on these other issues, Irving told reporters in Brisbane, Australia: "I'm not attacking the figure of six million, I'm not attacking the fact that the Jews were killed, but I am attacking or questioning whether in fact it was a tragedy ordered and organized on the very highest German state level, namely by Hitler himself. And I think this is what they find very repugnant. Because if my hypothesis is correct, then it means that all these Jews – and it may be any figure, I don't look at the figure concerned – if my hypothesis is correct, it indicates that the Jews were the victims of a large number of rather run-of-the-mill criminal elements which exist in Central Europe. Not just Germans, but Austrians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, feeding on the endemic antisemitism of the era and encouraged by the brutalization which war brought about anyway. These people had seen the bombing raids begin. They'd lost probably women, wives and children in the bombing raids. And they wanted to take revenge on someone. So when Hitler ordered the expulsion, as he did – there's no doubt that Hitler ordered the expulsion measures – these people took it out on the person that they could."
- ² Irving did not explain how Allied bombing raids on Germany, could have turned Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians against the Jews. He did make it clear, however, that he thought the mass killings of Jews in

the Second World War resulted from local initiatives in East-Central Europe, not from any overall co-ordination by the Nazi leadership or indeed by any part of it.

- ³ His view that these local initiatives were excusable comes through clearly as well. As he told an interviewer the same month in 1986, “The millions of Jews, or the hundreds of thousands of Jews – I’m not going to name any figure – who were liquidated during the Second World War by the Germans, or the Latvians, or the Ukrainians, or all the rest who carried out liquidations – they were the victims of a large number of nameless criminals into whose hands they fell on the Eastern Front. Mostly around Eastern Europe, the liquidations occurred – and these men acted on their own impulse, their own initiative, within the general atmosphere of brutality created by the Second World War, in which, of course, the Allied bombings played a part.”
- ⁴ Other aspects of his 1986 statements were soon revised; this one was not. The extermination of Jews in Eastern Europe during the war, he repeated in 1988, in places like Minsk and Kiev and Riga, was ‘conducted for the most ordinary and repugnant motives of greed and thievery’, by ‘individual gangsters and criminals’, for whom the German state and people could not be held responsible. In fact, of course, even those responsible on the ground for directing and carrying out the actual killing operations were not ‘nameless’ and most of them were not ‘criminals’ in the sense of having previous convictions; they were responsible officials acting on behalf of the Nazi state and Nazi agencies such as the SS and the police, and their names are very well known to posterity; later on in this Report, a number of them will be mentioned by name and their actions and activities discussed in detail. The signed reports they filed on killing operations are available to historians and have been widely used.

- ⁵ As so often when he deals with these questions, Irving abandons the pretence of original research and resorts to speculation and innuendo. Testifying at the 1988 Zündel trial, for example, Irving said he was “puzzled at the apparent lack of logic: that the Nazis are supposed to have had a government policy for the deliberate, ruthless, systematic extermination of the Jews in Auschwitz and other places of murder and yet tens if not hundreds of thousands of Jews passed through these camps and are, I am glad to say, alive and well amongst us now to testify to their survival. So either the Nazis had no such programme or they were an exceedingly sloppy race, which isn’t the image we have of them today. It’s another of the logical questions which is being asked in this history which the historians hitherto have not asked.”
- ⁶ ‘I don’t think there was any overall Reich policy to kill the Jews’, he repeated later on the same occasion. Of course, his argument here was fallacious; as we have already seen, Auschwitz was both a labour camp and an extermination camp, so it is not surprising that many Jews interned there survived the experience. On the other hand, Treblinka, Chelmno, Belzec and Sobibor, which is presumably what Irving means by ‘other places of murder’, were purely designed for extermination; Irving presents no evidence to show that any Jews at all survived, which is not surprising, for hardly any did.
- ⁷ Irving’s view that the extermination was not systematic also leads him to dispute a number of specific instances which most historians have taken to show the concerted nature of the killings. Most historians accept, for example, that the extermination of the Jews who lived in, or had been transported to, the General Government area of Nazi-occupied Poland, in the camps at Sobibor, Belzec and Treblinka, was a concerted operation: Irving rejects this view. Irving also disputes the view, commonly held among historians, that the Wannsee Conference, held on 20 January 1942, drew up statistics of Jews in many European countries who were to be taken to Eastern Europe for extermination, either in the near future or, later, when, as evidently expected, these

countries fell into German hands. The transcript of the meeting preserved in the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry, he says, contains no reference to 'liquidation' or 'agreement with Hitler'. It was, he says, a low-level conference concerned with implementing a change of plan from deporting the Jews to Madagascar to evacuating them to the east, as the foreign ministry official Martin Luther reported afterwards, an impression confirmed by Hitler's Table Talk on 27 January and the Goebbels Diary entry on 7 March.

- ⁸ Irving has repeatedly attempted to argue away the Wannsee conference. He told the 1988 Zündel trial that "Several of the participants in the Wannsee Conference subsequently testified in later criminal proceedings that...none of them had an idea that at that conference there had been a discussion of liquidation of Jews...There is no explicit reference to extermination of the Jews of Europe in the Wannsee Conference, not in any of the other documents in that file. We cannot take documents out of context...In my opinion, it has been inflated to that importance by irresponsible historians who probably haven't read the document."
- ⁹ This is a classic instance of the technique described by Vidal-Naquet in Section 2 above, of taking the euphemistic language of Nazism at face value because it seeks to disguise the fact that mass murder was the subject it was referring to, but casting doubt on any source which speaks directly and in unvarnished terms about murder and extermination. Eichmann testified in 1961 that the talk at the Wannsee Conference had all been of killing and liquidation, disguised in the minutes (written by Eichmann himself but checked over and amended by Heydrich) by euphemisms. However, Eichmann, said Irving, forgetting how he had relied on the Nazi bureaucrat's 1961 testimony on other occasions, 'got confused about what he really recalled and what he had in the meantime been told.' Moreover, the Wannsee Conference was in fact a high-level meeting with a wide range of senior officials from different administrative and executive bodies with an interest in the im-

plementation of the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe'. Finally, Irving suggests without a shred of justification that historians have neglected to read the Wannsee Conference minutes even though this is one of the most frequently reprinted and widely available of all documents of the 'Third Reich'.

- ¹⁰ Irving specifically denies on pages 343-9 of his book on Göring that there was anything systematic about killings of Jews by Nazis in Eastern Europe, and he also denies that there is any evidence that these killings were carried out in response to orders from above. As the same passage in the Göring biography also shows, Irving's view has been for many years now that Hitler only wished to deport Jews, not to kill them. On pages 407 and 425-6 of the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, as we have already seen, Irving repeats his view that Hitler and the leading Nazis planned only to deport the Jews.
- ¹¹ Presented with the orders issued to the task forces or *Einsatzgruppen* in advance of the invasion of the Soviet Union to kill Jews, Red Army commissars and others in areas which the German Army was to occupy after the invasion, Irving argues nevertheless that such orders, clear evidence of an overall German state policy of exterminating Jews, could not be 'part of an overall German state policy of exterminating Jews...because there is no documentary evidence to support the contention 'that there was such a policy. I don't now believe', Irving said in 1988, 'there was anything you could describe as "extermination machinery" other than the very disorganized *ad hoc* efforts of the criminals and murderers among the SS who were carrying out the liquidations that we described earlier.'
- ¹² Thus Irving denies a central element of the Holocaust as it is conventionally understood, by arguing that the Nazis had no concerted or systematic policy of exterminating the Jews of Europe during the Second World War. This is one of the most widely promoted aspects of Holocaust denial. One of the earliest Holocaust deniers, Paul Rassinier, de-

scribed ‘the systematic mass extermination of the Jews in the gas chambers’ as an ‘infamous accusation’ invented by the Jews. Another Holocaust denier, Austin J. App similarly asserted that there was no ‘single document, order, blue-print’ demonstrating the Nazis’ intention of murdering the Jews, and went on to argue, as Irving later did, that the Nazis were so efficient that the fact that some Jews undoubtedly survived proves that they never had any intention of murdering them all: had they wanted to, ‘they would have done so’.

(d) Evidence for the Holocaust

- ¹ Holocaust deniers argue that evidence for the Holocaust has all been fabricated. In a number of speeches and writings, Irving has claimed that the ‘Holocaust legend’ was invented by British wartime propaganda. There were, he told the second Zündel trial in 1988, “some very interesting documents in the British archives which show the British intelligence service suggesting a propaganda campaign against Germany on the basis of invented allegations of gas chambers and the subsequent belief that it would be wrong to press this kind of absurd story too far in order not to make the whole of British propaganda implausible.”
- ² Nevertheless, apparently the idea was not abandoned, for Irving’s foreword to the Leuchter Report contains the claim that the British Political Warfare Executive invented the lie that the Germans were using gas chambers to kill millions of Jews. In a radio interview in June, 1989, Irving repeated his view that with respect to “the story that the Germans were using gas chambers for the mass extermination of Jews ...in August 1943 the Psychological Warfare Executive warned the Cabinet that this was a lie that we ourselves had invented and they persuaded the British cabinet not to attach the British Government’s name to a declaration that they were being asked to purely because it

was a lie, they said we can't recommend that His Majesty's Government should put its name behind this declaration because this is a lie that we ourselves have created."

- ³ Irving went on to claim he had copies in his possession of the documents in the Public Record Office at Kew which proved his argument. In 1988, indeed, he admitted that these documents 'showing quite clearly that British intelligence deliberately masterminded the gas chamber lie' were supplied to him by a researcher working for Ernst Zündel. Repeated over the BBC, this myth, Irving claimed, was soon common currency amongst the Germans: "There's hardly a German who hasn't been listening clandestinely to the BBC who hasn't heard about the gas chambers. And they begin mentioning it in rumours to each other. From one washerwoman to the next, the rumour goes around Germany, until finally they've actually seen about it and their son's working in a unit and he's heard about it, too. And that's how the legend gains credibility from the German side too." Thus to put it in a nutshell, 'the gas chambers are a very clever piece of propaganda that we British very cunningly connived at and contrived during World War II.'
- ⁴ So where does Irving believe that the gas-chamber 'story' originated? In extracts from the forthcoming second volume of his Churchill biography Irving writes: "There was no shortage of Intelligence about the continued 'cleaning-up' operations in the east. [...] Despite this, the foreign office was inclined to treat the more lurid public reports with scepticism. They were regarded as part of the international Zionist campaign which was continuing regardless of the war effort. [...] When such a telegram arrived from Geneva on August 10, 1942, composed by Gerhart Riegner, the youthful secretary of the World Jewish Congress, it ran into this wall of institutional disbelief: Riegner claimed that Hitler's headquarters was planning to deport up to four million Jews from Nazi-occupied countries to the east during the coming autumn, where they were to be exterminated 'in order to resolve, once

and for all, the Jewish question in Europe.’ Killing methods under discussion included, claimed Riegner, the use of hydrogen cyanide. [2. Tel. Norton to FO, No. 2831, 10 August 1942, with the text of a telegram from Riegner to Sydney Silverman MP (PRO file FO. 371/30917). The 30-year-old Riegner claimed to have the report from ‘a German industrialist,’ whom he has refused to identify. Dr Benjamin Sagalowitz, press officer to the Swiss Jewish community, claimed to have given the name to Leland Harrison, the American ambassador in Berne, to place in a sealed envelope; there is no archival evidence to support this. Walter Laqueur, writing in *Encounter*, Jul 1980, page 13, expressed doubts that the man was German or an industrialist. Harrison regarded Riegner’s story as a ‘wild rumour inspired by Jewish fears’ (ibid.; NA: RG.226, Berne, folder 2, box 2, entry4).] There was nothing new in such allegations [...] they had cried wolf too often before. In internal papers, the F.O. remarked that there was no confirmation for Riegner’s story from ‘other sources’ – a hint at ULTRA. [3. Minute by D Allen, Aug 14, 1942; Frank Roberts minuted, ‘I do not see how we can hold up this message much longer’ but he feared the ‘embarrassing repercussions’ it would provoke (ibid.) ‘The facts are quite bad enough,’ wrote Roberts, ‘without the addition of such an old story as the use of bodies for the manufacture of soap.’ Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939–1945* (London, 1979)]. There was a marked reluctance to exploit the stories for propaganda, and the files show that there was little public sympathy with the Jews in wartime Britain. A year before, the ministry of information had directed the horror stories were to be used only sparing and they must always deal with the maltreatment of ‘indisputably innocent’ people – ‘not with violent political opponents,’ they amplified. ‘And not with Jews’ [4. Ministry of Information minute, Jul 25, 1941 (PRO file INF.1/251)].[...] While they [the Foreign Office] felt that they might profitably consult PWE (their own Political Warfare Executive) about Riegner’s ‘rather wild story,’ that was the only further action they would take [6. Minute by D. Allen, Sep 10, 1942 (PRO file FO.371/30917)].”

- ⁵ What is the real documentary evidence for this account? Gerhard Riegner was director of the Geneva Office of the World Jewish Congress from 1939 until 1945. On 8 August 1942 Riegner handed an identical telegram to Howard Etling, American Vice-Counsel in Geneva, and to H. B. Livingston, the British Consul. Riegner asked that the telegram be conveyed to the World Jewish Congress leaders in London (Sydney Silverman, M.P.) and New York (Rabbi Steven Wise). The telegram stated: "Received alarming report stating that, in the Führer's Headquarters, a plan has been discussed, and is under consideration, according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3 to 4 millions, should, after deportation and concentration in the East, be at one blow exterminated, in order to resolve, once and for all the Jewish question."
- ⁶ Although the message put the plan as 'under consideration' there was an additional detail: 'Ways of execution are still being discussed, including the use of prussic acid.' Riegner himself said 'We transmit this information with all the necessary reservation as exactitude cannot be confirmed by us.' But he added 'Our informant is reported to have close connections with the highest German authorities, and his reports are generally reliable.'
- ⁷ It is important to note that contrary to Irving's claim it was the intermediary, and not the source, who was Jewish. Any impact the report might have had, following eleven weeks after a first report on gassings in Chelmno (the Bund Report), was lost in bureaucratic disbelief. The British and American diplomats passed Riegner's message on to the State Department and the Foreign Office.
- ⁸ In America the report was tagged with a covering note by the vice-consul, reporting that when he had mentioned to Riegner 'that this report seemed fantastic to me', Riegner had replied that 'it had struck him in the same way', but that when one considered the recent deportations from Western European capitals and countries 'it was always conceiv-

able that such a diabolical plan was actually being considered by Hitler.' He added that Riegner was 'a serious and balanced individual' who would not have approached him had he not had 'confidence in his informant's reliability' and if he had not considered 'that the report might well contain an element of truth.' In Washington however the message was held back. One official wrote on 13 August that it did not seem advisable to pass the message on to Wise because of 'the fantastic nature of the allegations and the impossibility of our being of any assistance if such action were taken'. The United States Minister in Bern, Leland Harrison, was informed that Riegner's message would not be passed on to Wise 'in view of the apparently unsubstantiated nature of the information'. This message was repeated to Riegner, by the American Consul in Geneva, Paul C. Squire, but was informed that if he should receive 'corroboratory information' the matter would be considered further.

- ⁹ At the Foreign Office in Britain several officials examined the message, to which the British Consul had appended no commentary. Roger Allen, of the Central Department said: 'We have no confirmation of this report from other sources, although we have of course received numerous reports of large scale massacres of Jews, particularly in Poland.' Checks were made with the Refugee and Eastern Departments as to who Riegner was, but to no avail. Frank Roberts of the Foreign Office noted on 15 August 'I do not see how we can hold up this message much longer, although I fear it may provoke embarrassing repercussions' and added 'Naturally we have no information bearing on the story.' Silverman was given Riegner's message on 17 August who repeated the text by telegraph to Stephen Wise. Silverman's request to meet Foreign Office officials was granted on 9 September, but they turned down his request to be allowed to telephone Wise as such calls were often intercepted by the Nazis and might betray sources of information. As regards Silverman's request that the report be given publicity, it was agreed in the Foreign Office 'that the most we could

say to Mr Silverman was that, if Jewish organisations themselves wished to give publicity to the story, the F.O. could see no objection, although we could take no responsibility for the story.'

- ¹⁰ In his note of 10 September, David Allen expressed the general scepticism of the Foreign Office: "We have also received plenty of evidence that Jews deported from other parts of Europe have been concentrated in the Government-General and also that Jews once there are being so badly treated that very large numbers have perished: either as a result of lack of food or of evil conditions, i.e. in the Warsaw ghetto, or as a consequence of mass deportations and executions. Such stories do provide a basis for Mr Riegner's report but they do not of course amount to 'extermination at one blow'. The German policy seems rather to eliminate 'useless mouths' but to use able-bodied Jews as slave labour." He was reluctant to make use of 'this story' in British propaganda against Germany 'without further confirmation'.
- ¹¹ The documents in the Public Record Office to which Irving refers appear to be well-known minutes by Foreign Office officials Roger Allen and Victor Cavendish-Bentinck which provide no support for the claim that it was the British who actually invented the propaganda claim of gas chambers being used. These minutes, on the contrary, refer only to the use of reports of gas chambers in British propaganda. They clearly imply that these stories emanated from Poland, but they do not refer to Auschwitz, and indeed Cavendish-Bentinck was talking about stories about Polish victims rather than about Jews.
- ¹² Irving cites a letter by Cavendish-Bentinck written in 1943 during the formulation of a joint British-American 'Declaration on German Crimes in Poland' released at the request of the Polish government-in-exile. The relevant part of the original draft of 11 August 1943 read: "Reliable information has reached H. M. Government regarding the crimes committed by the German invaders against the population of Poland. Since the autumn of 1942 a belt of territory extending from the

province of Bialystok southwards along the line of the River Bug has been systematically emptied of its inhabitants. In July 1943 these measures were extended to practically the whole of the province of Lublin, where hundreds of thousands of persons have been deported from their homes or exterminated. These measures are being carried out with the utmost brutality. Many of the victims are killed on the spot. The rest are segregated. Men from fourteen to fifty are taken away to work for Germany. Some children are killed on the spot, others are separated from their parents and either sent to Germany to be brought up as Germans or sold to German settlers or dispatched with the women and old men to concentration camps, where they are now being systematically put to death in gas chambers. ”

- 13 The draft was taken to Quebec where it was proposed to issue the declaration simultaneously in Britain and America. In a minute of 27 August Roger Allen (not to be confused with David Allen) of the Foreign Office wrote: “This [Polish] aide-mémoire [on which the declaration was based] is in line with a good deal of information which we have received from time to time. There can, I think, be little doubt that the general picture painted is pretty true to life. On the other hand it is of course extremely difficult, if not impossible, for us to check up on the specific instances or matters of detail. For this reason I feel a little unhappy about the statement to be issued on the authority of His Majesty’s Government, that Poles “are now being systematically put to death in gas chambers.”
- 14 Then outlined the only two references to gassings he had been able to find in the appendix to the Polish aide-mémoire: one dated 17 July 1943 from the Commander-in-Chief of armed forces in Lublin of murders in ‘gas cells’ at Majdanek and a telegram of the same date detailing the murder of two transports of old men, women, and children ‘in gas cells.’ Roger Allen wrote: “It will be observed that the first of these reports gives no indication of the date of the occurrence, or the number of people concerned; the second is silent as to the place and

the source. It is true that there have been references to the use of gas chambers in other reports; but these references have usually, if not always, been equally vague, and since they have concerned the extermination of Jews, have usually emanated from Jewish sources. Personally, I have never really understood the advantage of the gas chamber over the simpler machine gun, or the equally simple starvation method. These stories may or may not be true, but in any event I submit we are putting out a statement on evidence which is far from conclusive, and which we have no means of assessing.”

- ¹⁵ There was no suggestion here, therefore, that the stories had somehow been dreamed up out of nothing by the British propaganda machine. Cavendish-Bentinck added: “In my opinion it is incorrect to describe Polish information regarding German atrocities as “trustworthy”. The Poles, and to a far greater extent the Jews, tend to exaggerate German atrocities in order to stoke us up. They seem to have succeeded. Mr. Allen and myself have both followed German atrocities quite closely. I do not believe that there is any evidence which would be accepted in a Law Court that **Polish** children have been killed on the spot by Germans when their parents were being deported to work in Germany, nor that **Polish** children have been sold to German settlers. As regards putting Poles to death in gas chambers, I do not believe there is any evidence that this has been done. There may have been stories to this effect, and we have played them up in P.W.E. rumours without believing that they had any foundation. At any rate there is far less evidence than exists for the mass murder of Polish officers by the Russians at Katyn. On the other hand we do know that the Germans are out to destroy the Jews of any age unless they are fit for manual labour. I think that we weaken our case against the Germans by publicly giving credence to atrocity stories for which we have no evidence. These mass executions in gas chambers remind me of the story of employment of

human corpses during the last war for the manufacture of fat, which was a grotesque lie and led to true stories of German enormities being brushed aside as being mere propaganda.”

- 16 From a hand-written note appended to Cavendish-Bentinck’s minute by David Allen it would seem that it was too late ‘to make substantial changes’, but a draft was telegraphed to Washington and Moscow. Likewise the Polish ‘P.M.’ received an amended draft and ‘readily accepted the change’.
- 17 The Foreign Office’s doubts were telegraphed to Washington the same day. “On further reflection we are not convinced that evidence regarding the use of gas chambers is substantial enough to justify inclusion in a public declaration of concluding phrase of paragraph 2 of draft and would prefer if United States agree, that sentence in question should end at “concentration camps”.”
- 18 As requested, the original declaration issued on 30 August stood, save that it duly read that some children were ‘despatched with the women and old men to concentration camps.’
- 19 Thus the sources Irving cites do not support the thesis he is proposing. There is no evidence here that the British Political Warfare Executive invented the story of the gas chambers: only that two officials in the British Foreign Office were giving it as their personal view that reports coming from Poland were not necessarily to be trusted. This material has been known at least since its publication in Martin Gilbert’s book *Auschwitz and the Allies* (London, 1981).
- 20 Irving has made it clear that he considers that following on this supposed propaganda lie, evidence for the Holocaust was fabricated after the end of the Second World War. On 21 April 1990, for example, he said in a speech in Germany that there were never any gas chambers at Auschwitz; they were erected after the war. This led to his being fined by the Munich magistrate’s court on 11 July 1991 *in absentia* for violating clauses of the Criminal Code of Germany which outlawed the

denial of the Nazis' extermination of Jews by gassing at Auschwitz and elsewhere during the Second World War. In his reply to the defence in the present case, Irving repeats his view that the gas chambers at Dachau and Auschwitz were built after the war. He also claims that he is not aware of any authentic wartime archival evidence that camps were set up at Chelmno, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka for the sole purpose of killing Jews by mass gassing.

- ²¹ What, then, of the thousands of former camp inmates and survivors of the Nazi extermination programme who have testified in writing and in speeches, broadcasts and taped reminiscences to the existence and operation of the mass extermination of Jews and others in gas chambers in Auschwitz and other camps? In his videotaped lecture *The Search for Truth in History*, Irving, says his supporter Nigel Jackson, speaks of the alleged eyewitnesses to the Auschwitz extermination machine 'with sympathy', suggesting they have fallen prey to distortions of memory and to pressure on the part of their listeners to have the legend justified. He says that 'eyewitness testimony' has to be submitted to psychiatric or psychological examination. In an interview with the right-wing magazine *CODE* in 1990, Irving, answering a question about how he would judge the credibility of Holocaust survivors, responded in similar fashion: 'I say that the psychiatrists should concern themselves with this matter some time. There are many cases of mass hysteria.' 'I'm afraid I have to say I wouldn't consider what a survivor of Treblinka could tell me in 1988 to be credible evidence', he told the court at the second Zündel trial; one could not rely on 'the very human and fallible human memories after a tragic wartime experience forty years after the event.' (Irving would have been lucky to have found such a survivor. Only *fifty-four* people are known to have survived of the million or so who entered the camp in 1942 and 1943; most of them escaped during an uprising of Jewish prisoners on 2 August 1943).

- ²² Alleged extermination camp survivors would in Irving's view go to considerable lengths to prove their stories, 'even the ones who've got tattoo marks on their arms', he told an audience at Latvian Hall, Toronto, on 8 November 1990: "Because the experts can look at a tattoo and say, "Oh yes, 181,219, that means you entered Auschwitz in March 1943." So if you want to go and have a tattoo put on your arm, as a lot of them do, I'm afraid to say, and claim subsequently that you were in Auschwitz, you've got to make sure (a) that it fits in with the month you said you went to Auschwitz, and (b) that it's not a number which anyone has used before (Laughter from the audience)."
- ²³ 'The eyewitnesses in Auschwitz...who claim to have seen the gas chambers', he said in another lecture in 1991, 'are liars'. They were 'an interesting case for the psychiatrist. People over a period of years begin kidding themselves that they have seen something.' This was because they had been through a traumatic experience (Irving did not say what this was), and 'being in the centre of a traumatic experience is liable to induce strange thoughts in eyewitnesses.'
- ²⁴ On another occasion he was less sympathetic. People claimed to be eyewitnesses of the gas chambers and extermination camps, he told a Canadian audience in 1990, 'particularly when there's money involved and they can get a good compensation cash payment out of it': "And the only way to overcome this appalling pseudo-religious atmosphere that surrounds the whole of this immense tragedy called World War II is to treat these little legends with the ridicule and bad taste that they deserve. Ridicule isn't enough, you've got to be tasteless about it. You've got to say things like: "More women died on the back seat of Senator Edward Kennedy's car at Chappaquiddick than died in the gas chamber at Auschwitz." (Laughter in audience). You think that's tasteless? What about this: (Laughter in audience) I'm forming an association especially dedicated to all these liars, the ones who try to kid people that they were in these concentration camps. It's called "The Auschwitz Survivors, Survivors of the Holocaust, and Other Liars" –

“A.S.S.H.O.L.E.S.”(Laughter in audience). Can’t get more tasteless than that. But you’ve got to be tasteless because these people deserve all our contempt, and in fact they deserve the contempt of the real Jewish community and the people, whatever their class and colour, who did suffer.”

- ²⁵ In 1995, Irving repeated the allegation: confronted with an alleged Holocaust survivor, he said, he would ask her “‘How much money have you made from that piece of ink on your arm, which may indeed be real tattooed ink?’ And I’ll say ‘Yes. Half-a-million dollars, three-quarters of a million dollars for you alone?’” Far from being killed in extermination camps, Irving has argued repeatedly, the millions of Jews missing from Europe after the war had ‘turned up in the state of Israel’ with new identities, or ‘ended up in cities like Dresden’ and were bombed in their hundreds of thousands by the Allies, or just ‘went all around the world’ after the end of the war. ‘There are now hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of survivors. There are now millions of survivors. And I’m glad. But of course every survivor is living proof that there was no Nazi extermination programme.’ In 1995 he repeated his claim that there were ‘millions’ of survivors – ‘they defy all laws of natural disease and all laws of biology. The number of survivors is growing’.
- ²⁶ Irving never uses eyewitness testimony from victims of Nazism in any of his voluminous writings; he hardly ever discusses it or even mentions its existence, and when on occasion he is asked directly about it in circumstances where a direct expression of his views would be embarrassing or difficult, he evades the question by pointing to minor inaccuracies in the details with which he is presented, as in a radio interview in June 1989: “*Interviewer*: I have to put it to you Mr Irving, I was in Israel not so long ago and I talked to a number of survivors of the camps like Treblinka and Auschwitz and they talked very clearly about people being divided at the railway station into those who were going to live and those who were going to die, they talked about the stench of

burning flesh, they talked about smoke rising from those gas chambers. *Irving*: I think that what you are saying displays a certain amount of confusion if you don't mind my saying so. Smoke doesn't rise from gas chambers, smoke might possibly rise from crematorium premises...I think this is part of the wool-pulling that has gone on since the end of the Second World War, people talk about gas ovens and gas furnaces and gas chambers quite indiscriminately. It's time for a lot greater precision and that's what this laboratory finding has done."

²⁷ When confronted with actual survivors, he picks on little technical aspects of their testimony which he tries to use to discredit their memories. A discussion with a survivor in a programme broadcast on Australian television in 1997, for example, included the following exchange: "Irving: You said you saw the smoke coming from the crematoria. Survivor: Absolutely. Irving: Is that correct? Survivor: Correct. Irving: But crematoria don't smoke, Mrs. Altman. Go and visit your local crematorium in Sydney."

²⁸ Thus in June, 1989, Irving's technical expertise led him to assert that smoke might rise from crematoria but not from gas chambers; in March 1997 his technical expertise led him to assert that there was no question of crematoria smoking at all. Once again, he varied his story according to the circumstances. He was nearer the truth on the earlier occasion; on the latter, the thought that the crematoria of Auschwitz might have been designed differently, and with less regard to the susceptibilities of onlookers and neighbours, than the crematoria in Sydney, did not, apparently, enter his mind.

²⁹ Irving's discussion on pages 239-44 of *Nuremberg: The Last Battle*, of the testimony of Marie-Claude Vaillant Couturier, an ex-member of the French National Assembly who had been sent to Auschwitz in January 1943 and claimed to have witnessed gassings, is a rare exception to his general refusal to discuss the evidence of survivors. Irving says some of her story 'was evidently based on hearsay'. Her testimony was dis-

trusted by Judge Biddle and the implication is that it should be distrusted by everyone else too, for the same reason. However, Irving made sure that he did not cite the transcript of the testimony itself or subject it to a critical examination of his own. Indeed, it is not even clear that he has actually read it. Had he done so, it would have been clear that Biddle's notes did not give a very accurate account of what was said. Thus Irving only mentions the eyewitness testimony of victims of Nazism when, as here, he can find some means of implying that it is unreliable; even here he suppresses the evidence itself.

³⁰ Not quite in this category, but a frequent target for the hostility of Holocaust deniers, is the diary kept by Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl, in Holland, before her deportation by the Nazis to Auschwitz, and eventually to Bergen Belsen, where she died. According to Lipstadt, 'Anne Frank's diary has become one of the deniers' most popular targets. For more than thirty years they have tried to prove that it was written after the war.' The diary has sold more than twenty million copies across the world since its publication not long after the end of the war. Its popularity derives from the very human and moving account it gives of a young girl's everyday life in hiding from the Nazis. Those who have tried to discredit its claims to authenticity include Butz, Harwood and Faurisson. Allegations that it was written after the war were the subject of court proceedings, which found them unproven. An exhaustive scientific investigation by the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation carried out after the death of Anne Frank's father Otto in 1980 proved that it was written by one person and that all the materials used were in use in the 1940s. It also found a limited number of minor stylistic emendations made later on, in ballpoint pen.

³¹ Disregarding these findings entirely, Irving has followed other Holocaust deniers in describing the diary as a 'novel', alleging that the handwriting is not hers, suggesting that whole pages were written with a ballpoint pen, and asserting that a thirteen-year-old girl would not have the maturity to write such a document. All these allegations were

made in 1993, long after the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation had completed and published its work. On this occasion, Irving was confronted with the results of the forensic scientific investigation of the diaries summarized in the critical edition in 1989: “Interviewer: Are you aware that the Dutch Centre for War Documentation has made a full report about this? Irving: Doesn’t surprise me. Interviewer: And they say it’s – they have made public all the diaries, and they examined the handwriting, and all there is to know about it. Irving: Doesn’t surprise me. A lot of money is at stake. The Anne Frank Foundation is a very wealthy political organization in Amsterdam. Interviewer: We’re talking about the Dutch State War Documentation Centre here. We’re not talking about the Anne Frank Foundation. We’re talking about a public institution. Irving: But I’m talking about the financial interests which are at stake here.”

- 32 It was noticeable that while he suggested here that the official Dutch Institute for War Documentation somehow had a financial stake in proving the diaries authentic (which was not the case), Irving managed to avoid replying in detail to its comprehensive demolition of all the pseudo-scientific points he had made about the diary’s authenticity.
- 33 Irving’s attempts to discredit the Anne Frank diaries are entirely characteristic of his refusal to take seriously any testimony by victims of the Nazis. He places, by contrast, a good deal of faith in the testimony of Nazis themselves, and is quite happy to cite eyewitness evidence from former members of Hitler’s staff interviewed long after the war by himself without any prior psychiatric or psychological examination; that is, provided that they are telling him what he wants to hear. Where a Nazi or SS functionary testifies to the existence of gas chambers and mass extermination facilities, Irving does his best to discredit him or to ignore the evidence as far as he is able.

- ³³ The most obvious case in point is the testimony of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, written in Polish captivity shortly before his execution for war crimes. These are detailed and circumstantial, and contain a great deal of first-hand observation of the mass gassing of Jews at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the retrieval and handling of the corpses, the mass burnings of the dead in pits or crematoria, and much else besides. ‘I had to watch coldly’, Höss wrote, ‘while the mothers with laughing or crying children went into the gas-chambers.’ He continued: “I had to see everything. I had to watch hour after hour, by day and by night, the removal and burning of the bodies, the extraction of the teeth, the cutting of the hair, the whole grisly, interminable business. I had to stand for hours on end in the ghastly stench, while the mass graves were being opened and the bodies dragged out and burned. I had to look through the peephole of the gas-chambers and watch the process of death itself, because the doctors wanted me to see it.”
- ³⁴ It is vital to Holocaust deniers that this book and the confessions which precede it be discredited. Irving fully shares this purpose. He alleges in his book on Nuremberg that Höss was ‘manhandled’ by those who arrested him and kept without sleep until he confessed. Irving terms this ‘torture’ and says that Höss’s confessions contained many deliberate errors to make it clear they were untrue. His memory was patchy about days and places, and about the events of four or five years earlier’. There were many inconsistencies in his account. He signed a confession in English although he had no reading knowledge of English. He frequently changed his testimony about numbers. Höss wrote his memoirs in Polish captivity ‘as a means of postponing his fate’. His statements, Irving charges, contained ‘egregious anachronisms, inconsistencies and other generally implausible passages’.
- ³⁵ In Irving’s view, therefore, the Höss memoirs are worthless – a view he shares with leading Holocaust deniers such as Robert Faurisson. In a speech delivered in Los Angeles about papers of Adolf Eichmann that

had come into his possession, Irving said Eichmann had ridiculed Höss's claim that he had killed 2.5 million Jews in Auschwitz. 'In question time after Irving's address Professor Robert Faurisson reminded the audience of the proof that Höss was tortured into making his absurd "confessions" about Auschwitz, proof supplied by Moritz von Schirmeister.' In fact, Höss was not tortured; he made his confessions freely, and noted in his memoirs only that he had been treated roughly and deprived of sleep early on in his interrogation. Moreover, the first confession which he signed, after this maltreatment, was not used in court. Höss knew he was going to die and that he would be unable to postpone his fate. The imminent prospect of death is likely to have made him honest. His memoirs reveal that he did in fact know English, having learned it in Palestine and improved it during his imprisonment under the Weimar Republic. There is no evidence that the memoirs or his signed confessions were either spurious or full of deliberate mistakes; here as so often Irving uses small errors to try and discredit more important testimony. Höss repeatedly and voluntarily confirmed the accuracy of what he told the International Military Tribunal. Finally, what Höss actually said about the numbers killed in Auschwitz was not that they totalled 2.5 million, but that Eichmann himself had supplied the figure, which he, Höss, had used in his first interrogations; on reflection, however, Höss agreed that this total was 'far too high', and gave his own estimate of 1,130,000, arrived at by adding up the figures supplied to him by Eichmann or his deputies for the numbers killed at Auschwitz from the main European countries under German control.

- ³⁶ The reliability or otherwise of the memoirs and confessions of Rudolf Höss is discussed more fully in the expert witness report by Professor Robert Jan Van Pelt; here the point to stress is that Irving joins with Faurisson and other Holocaust deniers in the attempt to discredit them as a source. Indeed, Irving casts doubt on almost all testimony at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials or during the prior interrogations if

it does not fit his arguments, alleging it was obtained by torture and threats; by contrast, where he finds it useful, he admits it as evidence without comment. In his testimony to the second Zündel trial in Canada in 1988, he strongly suggested that the surviving copies of the notorious 1943 Posen speech by Heinrich Himmler, outlining in graphic detail the policies of systematically murdering Jewish men, women and children before an audience of high-ranking Nazi officials, were forgeries, although, as so often, when he wants to use a document for other purposes, he does not question the authenticity of the speech. A casual conversation with 'one of Himmler's staff', for example, who said that he knew nothing about the concentration camps or the extermination of the Jews, is presented by Irving as a most reliable and authentic piece of evidence because it suits his purpose; there is no evidence of a critical approach towards this particular source on Irving's part, still less any tendency to dismiss it because it is not 'authentic wartime archival evidence'.

- ³⁷ In the conflict between Irving's pride in discovering previously unknown documents and his commitment to the principles of Holocaust denial, the latter have generally proved stronger. On 3 June 1992, for example, he confided to his diary: 'At PRO all day; finished reading file of interrogations and MS by one SS officer, Hans Aumeier, a high Auschwitz official....His reports grow more lurid as the months progress. I wonder why? Beaten like Höss, or was he finally telling the truth? A disturbing two hours, anyway.' Reporting his find in the recently released files of the Political Warfare Executive, he wrote on 4 June to Karl Philipp suggesting that Aumeier's confession was extracted from him. 'Brutal force by interrogators, perhaps', was his explanation of Aumeier's admissions in a letter he wrote the same day to Tom Marcus and Mark Weber of the Institute for Historical Review, the world's leading Holocaust denial organization, and an institution with which Irving has particularly close connections. Referring to the document in the German edition of his book on Nuremberg, Irving described

Aumeier as a 'parallel case to Höss', who expressed himself 'confusedly' but with 'increasing certainty and exactitude' in confessions which were 'written in a style characteristic for the British army' and beaten out of him by his interrogators, who he had earlier supposed were led by the brutal Colonel Scotland at the 'London Cage'.

- ³⁸ What was in this embarrassing document and why did Irving try so hard to discredit it? As deputy commandant of Auschwitz during a relatively early period of the camp's functioning as a mass extermination centre, in 1942-43, Hans Aumeier witnessed and assisted in the gassing of Jews on a number of occasions and described the procedures employed in considerable detail. There is no evidence that he was tortured or badly treated; this is simply supposition, or wishful thinking, on Irving's part. The file shows that Aumeier's responses became more detailed as he was confronted with the testimony of other camp guards who rendered futile his attempt to cover up what had been going on at Auschwitz. The most detailed account of the operation of the gas chambers in Aumeier's report was written while he was in captivity in Norway, not in London. The file likewise shows that Aumeier was only told how to present his account, and what topics he should cover in it, not what he should actually write; the style, including the writing of personal names in capital letters, was British army interrogation style, not general British army style, and was used to make it easier for officers to note down the names of other suspects for search lists and the compiling of evidence about such people. Irving hints that it is suspicious that Aumeier was not called as a witness in Nuremberg, but the prosecution did not call Höss either (he appeared for the defence in the case of Ernst Kaltenbrunner); Auschwitz itself was not a subject of the court's proceedings, and it was unlikely that a relatively insignificant cog in the Nazi machine such as Aumeier would have been called in the trials of major policy-makers such as Göring or Ribbentrop.

³⁹ Irving may have been right to claim (in private) that he was the first to read this important piece of testimony – one of a very small number of immediate postwar accounts from a camp officer of the functioning of the mass murder of Jews and others carried out by gassing at Auschwitz – after its release for scrutiny by researchers in the Public Record Office in 1992. But it does not fit into his preconceived opinion that there were no gassings carried out at Auschwitz. Therefore he suppressed its details and suggested that what little he did report in his subsequent published work had been invented by Aumeier’s interrogators. For reasons that are unclear, Irving has recently started posting extracts from the Aumeier interrogations on his website, accompanied by a brief comment from ‘Samuel Crowell’ suggesting that its details of gassing procedures were plagiarized from previous sources. This suggests that Irving is now confident that he has found a means of discrediting Aumeier’s confessions, and that therefore he can trumpet them as yet another discovery of a significant document of the ‘gas-chamber myth’.

⁴⁰ This whole episode is characteristic of Irving’s suppression and manipulation of the historical record in the service of the principles of Holocaust denial. Like the Höss memoirs, the Aumeier confession has to be explained away by claiming, without any evidence to prove it, that the details which it provides of gassings at Auschwitz were put into its author’s mouth by inventive interrogators who had already agreed on the essential details of the gas chamber ‘myth’ which Irving has made it his mission to discredit.

⁴¹ Why, then, does Irving think all this evidence has been concocted? Who could possibly have gone to all the immense trouble necessary to fabricate such a vast quantity of documentary material? Describing various versions of Holocaust denial in 1986, Gill Seidel remarked: “They all purport to show that Jews are liars and tricksters holding the world to ransom and continuing to extract war reparations. This is a continuation and an extension of the anti-Jewish prejudices and prac-

tices. The implication is that after all this time Jews are still liars, parasites, extraordinar(il)y powerful, and fundamentally dishonest – and that maybe Hitler was right.”

⁴² Irving’s recent writings and speeches have brought him increasingly into line with these views. Fundamentally, he seems to believe – against all the evidence of the massive amount of scholarly research carried out by non-Jewish historians in many countries – that the history of the Nazi extermination of the Jews has been written by Jewish historians. Thus he can refer, as he did in 1993, to ‘we independent historians, shall we say, the non-Jewish historians, the ones with an entirely open mind’, as if all non-Jewish historians agreed with him. Such agreement exists only in Irving’s fantasy.

⁴³ In his preface to the English edition of Fred Leuchter’s *Auschwitz: The End of the Line: The Leuchter Report – The First Forensic Examination of Auschwitz*, published by his Focal Point publishing house, Irving wrote: “Nobody likes to be swindled, still less where considerable sums of money are involved (Since 1949 the State of Israel has received over 90 billion Deutschmarks in voluntary reparations from West Germany, essentially in atonement for the “gas chambers of Auschwitz”). And this myth will not die easily: Too many hundreds of millions of honest, intelligent people have been duped by the well-financed and brilliantly successful post-war publicity campaign which followed on from the original ingenious plan of the British Psychological Warfare Executive (PWE) in 1942 to spread to the world the propaganda story that the Germans were using “gas chambers” to kill millions of Jews and other “undesirables”. As late as August 1943 the head of the PWE minuted the Cabinet secretly that despite the stories they were putting out, there was not the slightest evidence that such contraptions existed, and he continued with a warning that stories from Jewish sources in this connection were particularly suspect.”

- ⁴⁴ This is the typical Holocaust denier's argument that the 'myth' of the Holocaust has been kept going by a 'well-financed' campaign in order to legitimise the paying of German reparations to the state of Israel.
- ⁴⁵ 'People', Irving remarked in a radio interview in June, 1989, '...have made a lot of money out of the Holocaust story until now.' This evidently meant in particular Israel. 'The "big lie", he declared in 1991, referring to the Holocaust, 'allows Jewish fraudsters to escape unpunished and Israel to torture Arabs and ignore UN resolutions.' And who were these Jewish fraudsters? 'The big lie is designed to justify both in arrears and in advance the bigger crimes in the financial world elsewhere that are being committed by the survivors of the Holocaust.' On 7 July 1992 *The Guardian* printed an interview with Irving in which, consistently with views he expressed elsewhere, Irving predicted that; "one year from now the Holocaust will have been discredited. That prediction is lethal because of the vested interests involved in the Holocaust industry. As I said to the Jewish Chronicle, if a year from now the gas chamber legend collapses, what will that mean for Israel? Israel is drawing millions of dollars each year from the German taxpayer, provided by the German government as reparation for the gas chambers. It is also drawing millions from American taxpayers, who put up with it because of the way the Israelis or the Jews suffered. No one's going to like it when they find out that for 50 years they have been believing a legend based on baloney."
- ⁴⁶ The allegation that the Jews have used the Holocaust story to win reparations from the Germans can be found, for example, in the classic Holocaust denial texts of Paul Rassinier. The well-known Holocaust denier Austin J. App similarly argued that the Jews had 'used the six million swindle to blackmail West Germany into "atoning" with the twenty billion dollars of indemnities to Israel.' In fact, the true figure was 735 million dollars; and the money was paid for resettlement of survivors, not as compensation for the dead; had the state of Israel actually wanted to maximise the amount of reparations, then, as Lipstadt

pointed out, the state of Israel would have tried to argue that – as Irving tried to argue – millions of Jews were not killed by the Nazis, but fled to Israel instead.

⁴⁷ Irving of course denies being ‘anti-Jewish’ or ‘anti-Israel’, just as he denies being a Holocaust denier. In a speech delivered to the Institute for Historical Review in 1983, Irving said: ‘I’m always running into problems with my critics of a certain persuasion. It’s not a battle of my choosing. I am not anti-Jewish, I am not antisemitic. I have employed Jewish staff: my lawyer, my attorney in London for the last 26 years has been the firm of Michael Rubinstein; they’ve lost every case they’ve fought for me but I’ve still stood loyal to them.’ Speaking in Canada in November 1992, he told his audience: “I am not an antisemite, despite thirty years of harassment. It’s a miracle, but I am not! In fact, when people say to me, what is your attitude towards Jews, I am rather inclined to compare them with the Americans: We English find the Americans very pleasant, agreeable individuals to be with, bright, brainy, beautiful people. So it is with the Jewish people that we know, and I am sure it is probably the same with most people in this hall. We all know individual Jews, who are perfectly ordinary and easy to get on with. But when they come together – those Americans – they form agencies, and government, and they become involved in international crime. Crimes on an extraordinary scale, like the Gulf War! (*Applause*). And so it is with people of probably every race or nationality. When they look around, and they find that they are not alone, and they form into clubs and cliques and gangs, they feel somehow that ordinary laws don’t apply to them.”

⁴⁸ Leaving aside Irving’s description of the Gulf War – in which the Americans and their allies attacked the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein because it had illegally annexed Kuwait and was threatening to attack Israel – as a crime, this denial of antisemitism was carefully tailored to the circumstances, in which Irving was under threat of deportation from Canada, and needed to be cautious.

⁴⁹ On other occasions, he was a good deal less restrained. He himself realises that his ideas open him up to the obvious accusation that he is an antisemite: “Interviewer: When one reads your speeches, one had the impression that Churchill was paid by the Jews, that the Jews dragged Britain into the war, that many of the Communist regimes have been dominated by Jews subsequently, and that a great deal of control over the world is exercised by Jews. Irving: Right, these are four separate facts, to each of which I would be willing to put my signature. They are four separate and unrelated facts. When you string them together like that, you might be entitled then to say: “Question five, David Irving, are you therefore an antisemite?” This may well have been – Interviewer: No, this wasn’t my question. Irving: But the answer is this, these are in fact four separate facts which happen to be true, in my considered opinion as a historian. And I think we can find the historical evidence for it.”

⁵⁰ Since the end of the 1980s, Irving has taken to referring to Jews as ‘our traditional enemies’. Who these precisely were, he made clear in a speech given in 1992: ‘our old traditional enemies...(are) the great international merchant banks are controlled by people who are no friends of yours and mine’, who were ‘annoyed’ by sixty-foot posters advertising the *Sunday Times* serialization of the Goebbels Diaries ‘in all the Jewish ghettos of Great Britain’.

⁵¹ Later on in the speech he attacked the ‘odd and ugly and perverse and greasy and slimy community of “anti-Fascists” that run the very real risk of making the word fascist respectable by their own appearance!’ His particular venom seems to be reserved for the Board of Deputies of British Jews, to whom he referred in 1991 as ‘cockroaches’. ‘I never used to believe in the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy’, he said: ‘I’m not even sure now if there’s an international Jewish conspiracy. All I know is that people are conspiring internationally against me, and they do mostly turn out to be...(drowned out by laughter and applause).’ In April 1998 he spoke of American Jews ‘moving into the

same positions of predominance and influence (media, banking, business, entertainment, and the more lucrative professions like law, medical and dentistry) that they held in Weimar Germany, which gave rise to the hatreds and the resulting pogroms; and that this being so, twenty or thirty more years might see in the USA the same dire consequences as happened in Nazi Germany.'

52 This is the classic language of antisemitism: 'ghettos', 'greasy and slimy', 'lucrative professions', 'cockroaches', 'international Jewish conspiracy'. The use of the term 'ghettos' for example suggested in standard racist manner that there were districts in Great Britain where Jews were in a majority and, by implication, not integrated into the wider society in which they lived. In fact, such ghettos exist nowhere in the United Kingdom. Irving's language expressed the classic ideology of antisemitism too, with its attempt to whip up jealousies and hatreds of Jews by portraying them – without a shred of evidence – as exerting 'predominance' over key professions and institutions (though why this should be a cause for 'pogroms', or indeed objections from anybody, Irving does not say). It is this alleged 'predominance' which in the view of Holocaust deniers is behind the continuing widespread public acceptance of what they call the 'Holocaust myth'.

53 Indeed, some of Irving's own speeches contain a veiled threat of violence against Jews in the future as a result of his own 'exposure' of the Holocaust 'myth': "And gradually the word is getting around in Germany (Irving said in 1991). Two years there from now too the German historians will accept that we're right. They will accept that for fifty years they have believed a lie. And then there will come about a result not only in Germany, but around the world, which I deeply regret and abhor. There will be an immense tidal wave of anti-Semitism. It's an inevitable result. And when people point an accusing finger at me and say, "David Irving, you are creating anti-Semitism", I have to say, "It is not the man who speaks the truth who creates the anti-Semitism, it's

the man who invented the lie of the legend in the first place.”
(Applause).” Irving’s expression of regret should not be taken too seriously.

- 54 For in 1996, recounting the view of the head of the publisher who eventually refused to publish the American edition of his book on Goebbels, Irving said: “Maybe...the chairman of St. Martin’s Press was right when he said: “This book suggests they (the Jews) had it coming to them.” But is he’s right, let me say in advance in my self-defence, it isn’t David Irving who says that, it’s David Irving reporting Dr. Goebbels who says that. Maybe I didn’t make it plain enough, or maybe I didn’t put enough distance between myself and Dr. Goebbels, or maybe I didn’t put in all the counter-arguments I should have done to be politically correct.” Fundamentally, however, as Irving conceded, he was in basic agreement with Goebbels in his belief that ‘they had it coming to them’.
- 55 For, Irving told an audience in Tampa, Florida, on 6 October 1995: “What these people don’t understand...is that they are generating anti-semitism by their behaviour, and they can’t understand it. They wonder where the antisemitism comed from and it comes from themselves, from their behaviour...I said to this man from Colindale, this leader of the Jewish community in Freeport, Louisiana, I said...”You are disliked, you people. You have been disliked for three thousand years. You have been disliked so much that you have been hounded from country to country, from pogrom to purge, from purge back to pogrom, and yet you never asked yourselves...why your disliked. That’s the difference between you and me. It never occurs to you to look in the mirror and say, why am I disliked? what is it that the rest of humanity doesn’t like about the Jewish people, to such an extent that they repeatedly put us through the grinder?”. And he went beserk. He said: “Are you trying to say that we are responsible for Auschwitz? Ourselves?” And I said, “Well the short answer is yes. The short answer I have to say is yes...If you had behaved differently over the intervening

three thousand years, the Germans would have gone about their business and not have found it necessary to go around doing whatever they did to you.” Thus the Holocaust as Irving defines it was not exactly ‘innocentocide’: the Jews were guilty for it themselves.

⁵⁶ After all, he said in 1991, ‘they (meaning the Jews) dragged us into two world wars and now, for equally mysterious reasons, they’re trying to drag us into the Balkans.’ Irving was confronted with his statements to this effect in 1996: “Interviewer: At times in your speech to these groups you speak at, you ask if the Jews have ever looked at themselves to find a reason for the pogroms and the persecutions and the extermination. In other words, you’re asking, “did they bring it on themselves?”. Irving: Yes. Interviewer: Thereby excusing the Germans, the Nazis. Irving: let us ask that simple question: why does it always happen to the Jews?... Interviewer: But isn’t that an ugly, racist sentiment? Irving: It is an ugly, of course it’s an ugly, racist sentiment. Of course it is. You’re absolutely right. But you can’t just say, therefore let’s not discuss it, therefore let’s not open that can of worms in case we find something inside there that we don’t like looking at.” Thus Irving followed other Holocaust deniers in implying, and on occasion, directly claiming that the Jews were responsible for provoking the Holocaust.

⁵⁷ After all this, it is not surprising that he considered that ‘the Madagascar solution would probably have been the most peaceful for the present world’, because the Jews ‘would have had no neighbours, nobody who they could feel intimidated by, and of course, nobody whom they in turn could intimidate’, though it is clear that the Nazi regime, in drawing up its never realized plans to deport the Jews there, would have made no provision to supply them with food and clothing and the basic necessities of life, and that the climate and economy of the island were entirely unsuited to sustaining millions of European settlers.

- ⁵⁸ It is clear that Irving shares the common position of Holocaust deniers that evidence for the Holocaust has been fabricated, beginning with the propaganda operations of the British during the Second World War, and continuing since then through a mixture of intimidation of Nazi witnesses, mass hysteria on the part of Jewish survivors, and deliberate fabrications on the part of people such as the Polish authorities in whose territory Auschwitz lay after the war.
- ⁵⁹ He has augmented these arguments with a wider range of assertions about the Jews' alleged influence in the postwar world, their supposed responsibility for provoking attacks on themselves, which in style and content can fairly be called antisemitic. All these views, detailed above, are characteristic of Holocaust denial as conventionally understood and as described by many writers and commentators on the phenomenon. They can be found in the writings and speeches of well known Holocaust deniers. 'The Holocaust story', Irving said in 1995, 'is an ill-fitting legend which has been under researched and there's no evidence for the Holocaust historians to bear them out'.

(e) Conclusion

- ¹ An examination of Irving's work since the late 1980s confirms beyond all reasonable doubt that he subscribes to the four central tenets of Holocaust denial as outlined above, namely that the number of Jews killed by the Nazis was far less than six million; that gas chambers were not used; that there was no systematic killing of Europe's Jews; and that 'the Holocaust' is a myth invented by Allied propaganda during the war and sustained since then with fabricated evidence by Jews who wish to use it to gain political and financial support for the state of Israel and for themselves.

3.5 Connections with Holocaust deniers

(a) The Institute for Historical Review

- ¹ Irving's connections and relationships with well-known Holocaust deniers are numerous and often close. They indicate that he is part of a loosely-organized international network of Holocaust deniers, whose central institution is the so-called Institute for Historical Review. Many of Irving's contacts with Holocaust deniers are also part of his wide-spread connections in the world of extreme right-wing politics; these are detailed in the expert reports submitted by Professor Eatwell and Professor Funke. Here it is proposed to deal only with a limited number of contacts, sufficient to establish the fact that Irving does indeed have extensive contacts with Holocaust deniers, far more so, indeed, than with professional historians, whether or not the latter are based in universities. It is also clear that he makes a great deal more use of the work of Holocaust deniers, whether acknowledged or not, in his own writings, than he does of the use of competent professional historians, which, as this Report has already shown, he openly admits he does not read. Irving, in short, is part of the world of Holocaust denial; he is not part of the world of competent, serious professional history.
- ² The so-called Institute for Historical Review, based in California, is the subject of Chapter 8 of Lipstadt's book *Denying the Holocaust*. It holds regular conferences and issues a journal which is available for perusal in libraries. An examination of the journal and of reports of its conferences indicates that the Institute is dedicated to putting the case for Nazi Germany and against what it regards as the 'myth' of the Nazis' extermination of millions of Jews in the Second World War. At its first convention, held in Los Angeles in 1979, the Institute passed a resolution declaring *inter alia* that 'the facts surrounding the allegations that gas chambers existed in occupied Europe during World War II are demonstrably false', and stating its belief that 'the whole theory of "the holocaust" has been created by and promulgated by political Zionism

for the attainment of political and economic ends, specifically the continued and perpetual support of the military aggression of Israel by the people of Germany and the US'. The resolution urged the US Congress to investigate, among other things, 'deceitful wartime propaganda masquerading as fact...and the truth of the alleged extermination of 6 million Jews in Europe during World War II.'

- ³ The Institute for Historical Review purports to be a respectable academic body. In 1980, the Institute began publishing a quarterly magazine, the *Journal of Historical Review*, which cast itself in the form of a respectable academic journal. The Editorial Advisory Committee of the Journal includes all the most prominent Holocaust deniers, most notably Arthur R. Butz, Robert Faurisson and Wilhelm Staeglich. Butz's book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, published in 1976, constituted the first attempt to present Holocaust denial in a pseudo-academic form: its eight chapters are adorned with 450 footnotes, 5 appendices and 32 plates and diagrams and it looks at first glance like an academic treatise. The book argues, *inter alia*, that the Allied bombing of Dresden produced more corpses than have ever been found from the camps, that Zyklon-B gas was used just as an insecticide, that Auschwitz was just an industrial plant, that deaths there were mainly due to typhus, and that there were no gassings there. In Butz's view, when the Nazis talked or wrote about *Judentum* they meant the destruction of Jewish power, not of Jewish human beings, and when they used the word *Vernichtung* or *Ausrottung* in this context they did not mean actual killing. He alleged that the failure of the Yad Vashem memorial to the Holocaust, in Jerusalem, to collect six million names of those who had died, proved that the number of dead was far fewer than six million. The Nuremberg trials were a 'frame-up' in Butz's view, and the 'myth' of the Holocaust was propagated after the war by the Jews for their own advantage. In order to find out the truth, Butz concludes, 'all one needs to do is consult the relevant German documents. What the German leaders were saying to each other about their policy is obviously the

first authority that one should consult.’ A number of these arguments and methods were taken up later by Irving and presented as if they were his own discoveries.

- ⁴ Robert Faurisson, another leading figure at the Institute and member of the editorial board of *The Journal of Historical Review*, is a former teacher of French literature who has argued over many years that Anne Frank’s diary is a forgery, and that ‘the alleged massacres in the “gas chambers” and the alleged “genocide” are part of the same lie’ which ‘is essentially Zionist in origin’ and ‘has allowed a huge political and financial swindle of which the state of Israel is the principal beneficiary’. Faurisson has concentrated in particular on attempting to prove that the gas chambers at Auschwitz and in other camps never existed and never came into operation. Faurisson testified to this effect as an expert witness in the first Canadian trial of Ernst Zündel. By this time, however, Faurisson himself had been tried in his native France for slander, violation of Article 382 of the Civil Code by wilfully distorting history, and incitement to racial hatred, which had been outlawed under a law of 1972, and been found guilty on all three counts. He has since been one of the most vocal and extreme of Holocaust deniers at the conferences of the Institute for Historical Review, and a frequent contributor to its journal. His arguments too have been adopted by Irving and presented without acknowledgment as his own original discoveries. Irving has praised Faurisson as ‘a very distinguished intellectual in my mind, a very brave man indeed.’
- ⁵ A third key figure on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal* from its early days was Wilhelm Staeglich, an academically qualified German lawyer whose book *Der Auschwitz-Mythos: Legende oder Wirklichkeit* (The Auschwitz Myth: Legend or Reality), published in 1979 by the far-right Grabert-Verlag in Germany, followed Butz in presenting Holocaust denial in a pseudo-academic form. The book argued that there had been no mass extermination of Jews in Nazi extermination camps, and that guilty verdicts in postwar trials of the perpetrators were

wrong. Staeglich used minor discrepancies in postwar documents and reports of the extermination to dismiss all such documents as forgeries and falsifications. At the same time, he made claims which could easily be falsified on the basis of contemporary documentation, for example, that before the outbreak of the Second World War, no Jew had ever been incarcerated in a German concentration camp on racial grounds. In this instance he simply passed over the imprisonment of more than twenty thousand Jewish men in concentration camps after the pogrom of 9-10 November, 1938, just as he ignored many other key documents relating to Nazi antisemitism. All the so-called evidence for the Holocaust, he maintained, had been fabricated after the war. As a result of this book Staeglich was dismissed from state employment and his doctoral title was withdrawn by his university, events about which he showed considerable bitterness when he subsequently came to address the Institute of Historical Review. Although he had previously criticised Staeglich for not doing enough research, Irving still appeared on the same platform as him at a meeting in Munich on 23 March 1991.

- ⁶ With men such as Faurisson, Butz and Staeglich on the editorial board, it is hardly surprising that leading writers for *The Journal of Historical Review* have included other prominent Holocaust deniers such as Austin J. App, author of *The Six Million Swindle: Blackmailing the German People for Hard Marks with Fabricated Corpses* (Tacoma Park, Maryland, 1973) and a contributor to the first issue of *The Journal of Historical Review* with an article estimating the total number of Jewish casualties of the 'Third Reich' at around 300,000, and declaring the 'six million' to be 'an impudent lie'. Born in 1902, App was for a time President of the Federation of American Citizens of German Descent, and in 1942 he campaigned in the USA in support of Nazi war aims. In the early years after the war, he defended the Nazi mass murder of the Jews and similar atrocities as legitimate acts of war, minimized the numbers of victims, and denied the existence of gas chambers. In his book, he ar-

gued, in terms familiar from other Holocaust deniers, that the ‘fraudulent six million casualty’ figure for Jewish deaths at the hands of the Nazis was used ‘vindictively as an external club for pressuring indemnities out of West Germany and for wringing financial contributions out of American Jews’. He alleged that at least 500,000 of the Jews supposedly gassed in the camps had gone to Israel. The perpetuation of the ‘swindle’ was due to Jewish domination of the media. The Americans and the British and above all the Soviet Union colluded in the deception in order to distract attention from their own war crimes.

- ⁷ Other articles in the *Journal of Historical Review* have revealed their Holocaust denial content in titles such as ‘The Diesel Gas Chambers: Myth Within a Myth’, ‘The Myth of the Extermination of the Jews’, ‘How Many Jews Died in the German Concentration Camps?’ (the author’s answer was between 300,000 and 600,000), and so on. Bolstered by contributions from Holocaust deniers such as App, Butz and Faurisson, the overall thrust of the journal’s efforts is to present a wide variety of arguments in support of the thesis that, to quote one article among many, ‘the Holocaust story is absurd’. Thus for example it has devoted a special issue to an attempt to vindicate the Leuchter Report, carried an article with the title ‘Neither Trace Nor Proof: The Seven Auschwitz “Gassing” Sites’, and devoted several issues and numerous articles to attempting to demonstrate that nobody was ever gassed at Auschwitz. Another article in the *Journal* underlined Holocaust deniers’ tendency to inflate the influence of Jews in the postwar world by claiming that ‘Judaism, through the “Holocaust” cult, has become the informal state religion of the West’. The centrality of Holocaust denial to the Institute for Historical Review and its journal cannot be doubted.
- ⁸ Irving says in his reply to Lipstadt’s defence that the Institute is a respectable and non-extremist institution whose Board members hold established academic qualifications; they are not antisemites or racists or ultra-right-wing. However, such academic qualifications as they have are not in history but in other fields. Butz is an engineer; Fauris-

son a specialist in French literature, Staeglich qualified as a lawyer, and so on. None of them is an established professional historian, academic or otherwise. The same is true of the *Journal of Historical Review*. The contributions to the journal are often, though not always, academic in format, with footnotes and references; but there is no other example of a learned journal which claims to print academic articles in a specialized field which include on its editorial board barely a single academically accredited specialist in the field with which it concerns itself.

- ⁹ Moreover, the *Journal* and its parent institute have a political rather than an academic background. They were founded and owned by the Noontide Press, whose proprietor, the Legion for the Survival of Freedom Inc., was owned by Willis Allison Carto, a leading proponent of Holocaust denial. He is a former organizer of the John Birch Society, an American neo-fascist political group dedicated to the revival of Nazism and the promotion of white supremacy. Carto's main publication was, and is, the extreme right-wing journal *Spotlight*, described by Irving in 1982 as an 'excellent' publication. Irving was already familiar with Carto and his 'efficient and dedicated staff' by the early 1980s and was well aware of what he publicly referred to as 'the ties that exist between the Liberty Lobby and the Institute of Historical Review'.
- ¹⁰ The booking for the Institute's opening convention in September 1979 was made by Noontide Press, under the name of Lewis Brandon, a pseudonym for David McCalden, formerly a leading light of the National Party, an extreme racist breakaway from the extreme right-wing political organization the British National Front, founded in 1975. McCalden, who also wrote under the name David Berg, was director of the Institute for Historical Review from 1978 until 1981 and a self-confessed 'racialist'. The antisemitic and neo-fascist politics of the leading Holocaust denier and *Journal* Board member Arthur Butz are also well known and have been thoroughly documented.

- ¹¹ The *Journal* regularly purveys the politics of right-wing extremism and carries articles attacking ‘multiculturalism’, criticising the launching of the Gulf War against Saddam Hussein, arguing that Soviet Communism was a Jewish creation and that Jews were responsible for its murderous career, and praising the Iranian Revolution which overthrew the Shah in 1978. A lengthy article by the long-lived wartime Belgian fascist leader Léon Degrelle who lost none of his Nazi convictions in the postwar decades, praised Hitler as a radical social reformer who achieved dictatorial power by non-violent means. Its hostility to Israel is strongly echoed in Irving’s speeches, as this Report has already documented.
- ¹² In 1992-93 the *Journal* and the Institute came under pressure from Willis Carto, its principal financial backer, to abandon its scholarly pretensions and become a more openly political forum for the propagation of racism. In January 1993 the *Journal* dropped its academic format and since then has been published as a bi-monthly illustrated glossy magazine. Its contents and its basic thrust, however, have not changed. Tom Marcellus, Mark Weber and other members of the staff quarrelled with Carto over this issue, and in September 1993 they broke off all contact with him. In February 1994 they secured and circulated endorsements of their line from six leading Holocaust deniers: Robert Faurisson, Ernst Zündel, Bradley R. Smith, James J. Martin, Arthur J. Butz, and David Irving. Irving’s endorsement praised the *Journal* as ‘sincere, balanced, objective, and devoid of polemics’ and its editors and staff as ‘staunch and unflinching soldiers in what our brave comrade Robert Faurisson has called “this great adventure”, meaning of course the ‘adventure’ of Holocaust denial.
- ¹³ Carto not only fired back in his magazine *Spotlight* the accusation that the Institute had been taken over by the Jewish Anti-Defamation League – a charge to which, not surprisingly, some of those who supported the existing line of the Institute and its journal strongly objected – but evidently also withdrew his financial backing, for in 1995 the

Institute and the *Journal* were forced to admit that they were in financial difficulties because of what the *Journal* editors Mark Weber and Greg Raven called ‘the massive theft of IHR money by former associates’. However, the journal did not go under. It has continued since then to publish articles mainly devoted to advocating Holocaust denial.

- 14 Like many individual Holocaust deniers, the Institute as a body denies that it is involved in Holocaust denial, calling this a ‘smear’ which is ‘completely at variance with the facts’ because ‘revisionist scholars’ such as Faurisson, Butz ‘and bestselling British historian David Irving acknowledge that hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed and otherwise perished during the Second World War as direct and indirect result of the harsh anti-Jewish policies of Germany and its allies’. But as we have seen, the concession that a relatively small number of Jews were killed is routinely used by Holocaust deniers to distract attention from the far more important fact of their refusal to admit that the figure ran into millions, and that a large proportion of these victims were systematically murdered by gassing as well as by shooting.
- 15 Irving has denied that he is affiliated to the Institute in any formal capacity, and this is strictly speaking true. He is a member neither of its Board nor of the Editorial Advisory Board of its *Journal*. However, as we have already seen, his informal connections with the Institute and the *Journal* are extremely close and have been maintained over a considerable period of time. Irving’s website, for example, advertises the 1991 edition of his book *Hitler’s War* as being obtainable through the Institute. He has been a frequent visitor to the annual conferences organized by the Institute for Historical Review, which are devoted to lectures purveying various aspects of Holocaust denial. To date he has spoken to audiences at the Institute five times; his speeches, like other contributions to the Institute’s conferences, are printed in *The Journal of Historical Review*. He spoke at the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth conferences in succession. It was hardly surprising that in 1993 the editor of the *Journal* described him as ‘a good friend of the Institute’.

There were articles about Irving in the fourth and sixth issues of Volume 13 of the *Journal*. Irving printed an advance copy of his introduction to the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* in the *Journal*, alongside a reassessment of Rommel and a scurrilous attack on Sir Winston Churchill ('almost a pervert – a man who liked to expose himself to people'). The first issue of Volume 13 included one article by Irving and two others about him. The next issue had another article by Irving, and he also printed two more articles in the first issue of Volume 15. Before he established his website on the Internet, it would not be going too far to describe the *Journal* as the principal forum in which Irving disseminated any historical work of his that was shorter than book-length but longer than a newspaper letter or article. This was certainly the case at the time when Lipstadt completed her book in 1993.

- ¹⁶ Irving has gladly continued to lend his support to the efforts of *The Journal of Historical Review* to win more subscribers. A leaflet advertising the journal carries a photograph of Irving and quotes him as follows: '*The Journal of Historical Review* has an astounding record of fearlessly shattering the icons of those vested interests who hate and fear truth. That is why I strongly endorse it...and suggest that every intelligent man and woman in America, Britain, and the dominions subscribe.' In the January-February issue of Volume 13 of the *Journal*, a full-page spread is headed: 'David Irving: Institute for Historical Review: Your Source for David Irving's Masterworks'. After listing and describing five of his books and picturing the cover of each, the advertisement enjoins readers to 'Order these fine books from Institute for Historical Review', and gives the address. Irving has close relations with leading figures at the Institute and includes correspondence with them in his *Discovery*.
- ¹⁷ In his reply to the defence, Irving maintains that lecturing at the conferences of the Institute for Historical Review does not associate him with Holocaust denial. He points out that other lecturers have included not just Holocaust deniers but writers not concerned with this field at

all, such as the Canadian journalist James Bacque, whom Irving described in 1991 as ‘a very good friend of mine’. This is true only if taken literally. James Bacque gained a brief notoriety in the late 1980s and early 1990s not for Holocaust denial, in which he had never been directly involved, but for his book, *Other Losses: An Investigation into the Mass Deaths of German Prisoners of War at the Hands of the French and Americans After World War II*, published in 1979. This publication alleged that the Americans under General Eisenhower deliberately starved to death over a million German prisoners at the end of the Second World War – a thesis which made its author an obvious person to invite to a conference of Holocaust deniers, given their need to establish that Allied war crimes were as bad as, or worse than, German war crimes. In fact, the book, which gained some credence on its publication through the appearance of careful archival research, has since been exposed as a tissue of errors and falsehoods and has as little historical credibility as Holocaust denial itself.

- ¹⁸ A more recent book by James Bacque has claimed that the American occupation authorities deliberately starved to death as many as nine million German civilians after the end of the Second World War. Bacque’s work has been described as “part of the trend toward a “paranoid style” in writing recent history. This style is characterized by five elements: the image of a huge conspiracy, a self-bestowed duty to save civilization from apocalypse, a manichean worldview of absolute good versus absolute evil, the conviction that traitors make history, and the amassing of evidence to prove a preconceived thesis.”
- ¹⁹ Bacque’s work has been shown to rest on the manipulation of statistics, in which the population of Germany in 1946 is inflated through double-counting and projected to reach 74 million by 1950, when a census showed an actual figure some 6 million short of this (imaginary) number; Bacque’s conclusion that these ‘missing’ six million were murdered by the Americans is pure fantasy. His work, in other words, bears a striking resemblance to the pseudo-history of the Holocaust

deniers, which is no doubt why he has been welcome at their meetings. Both Bacque and Irving spoke at a meeting organized by the right-wing Canadian group 'Alternative Forum' in the early 1990s, and Bacque acknowledged Irving's useful advice in his work. Examined carefully, all the other speakers at the Institute's conferences turn out, like Bacque, to be putting forward arguments which, if not directly denying the Nazi extermination of the Jews, are of obvious usefulness to the broader purposes of those who do, for example through the relativization of the mass murder committed by the Nazis by claiming that the Western Allies were engaged in the same kind of thing, or worse.

²⁰ Irving also points out that he has had disputes with well-known 'Revisionists' like Robert Faurisson, and so by implication is not one of them. It is certainly the case that Irving has had his disagreements with Faurisson in particular. In 1983, for instance, he devoted the final part of a rambling speech delivered to the Institute's annual conference to 'the so-called Holocaust'. He told the assembled 'revisionists': "I am sure you realize that I take a slightly different line from several people here. I would specify as follows: I would say I am satisfied in my own mind that in various locations Nazi criminals, acting probably without direct orders from above, did carry out liquidations of groups of people including Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, mentally incurable people and the rest. I am quite plain about that in my own mind. I can't prove it, I haven't gone into that. I haven't investigated that particular aspect of history but from the documents I have seen, I've got the kind of gut feeling which suggests to me that that is probably accurate."

²¹ Responding to Irving later, Robert Faurisson issued a 'challenge' on this point. What use, he asked, was a 'gut feeling' in the absence, as he maintained, of evidence for 'the alleged physical extermination of the Jews', a subject which Irving himself admitted he had not researched? He had a point. Given Irving's insistence on the need to provide docu-

mentary evidence for everything, his affirmation of ‘liquidations’ which most of his audience undoubtedly denied, was far from convincing.

- ²² But the disagreement proves nothing. This was Irving’s first speech to the Institute, and it was delivered at a time – 1983 – when, this Report has demonstrated, he had yet to become a fully-fledged Holocaust denier; that only happened five years later, at the end of the 1980s. In 1983, Irving’s speeches and writings showed a general if sometimes vague or qualified acceptance of all the central elements of the conventional definition of the Holocaust apart from the systematic nature of the mass murder. Thus his 1983 speech to the Institute for Historical Review is remarkable mainly for the manner in which it pandered to his audience by qualifying this acceptance with references to his lack of expert knowledge of the subject. The previous year, indeed, he had told the Institute’s principal financial backer Willis Carto that the Holocaust was an issue ‘of purely academic interest to historians, and of no relevance whatever to modern European, let alone British, problems’. It was, he had said, ‘a red herring’ with which the right had been ‘tricked into poisoning their own operations’. He did not explicitly reject Holocaust denial, but he clearly did think it was politically inexpedient at this time, and he still gave at least some credence in the books he wrote at this time, such as the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War*, to some aspects of the Holocaust as conventionally understood.
- ²³ By the early 1990s, Irving’s and Faurisson’s positions had converged, they were agreeing on the essentials, and they were only disputing minor points of disagreement within the Holocaust denial theses. Indeed, one authority on Holocaust denial, in the context of discussing Irving’s connections with the Institute and the deniers, even went so far in the early 1990s as to claim that ‘Irving... has placed himself at the head of the “Revisionists”’. In 1995 Irving referred to himself as part of this wider movement, ‘people like myself and the brave band of scientists, and writers, and journalists, and historians who have gradu-

ally fallen in. I won't say they've fallen in behind me because I'm not going to try and place myself at the head of this revisionist movement. They've fallen in shoulder-to-shoulder with us and are marching at our side in this extraordinarily interesting adventure'. By the middle of the 1990s Irving was talking to members of the Institute for Historical Review in terms of 'we revisionists'. In all of their work, those associated with the Institute have sought to avoid being labelled Holocaust deniers by describing themselves as 'revisionists', and Irving's appropriation of this label to himself, and his association of his work with theirs, clearly indicated that he regarded himself as one of their number. The close connection between Irving and the Institute can no more be reasonably denied than can the fact that the principal business of the Institute and its journal is, as it has been from the day of its foundation, the denial of the Holocaust as it is conventionally understood.

(b) Other Holocaust deniers

- ¹ Irving has connections with other, individual Holocaust deniers, some of whom are associated in one way or another with the Institute for Historical Review, others of whom do not seem to have any connection with it, but are concerned more with direct participation in extreme right-wing politics, particularly in Germany.
- ² In 1992, Irving referred to Ernst Zündel as one of 'my friends in Ontario', and described him as a 'martyr'. Irving's diary records him as having breakfast with Zündel in Munich on 23 March 1992, on which occasion the German-Canadian forwarded Irving 1,500 Marks to cover the cost of his flight to Toronto to testify in a trial. This Report has already pointed out that Zündel is a Holocaust denier. He is the author of *The Hitler We Loved and Why*, and a white supremacist who advocates the return of fascism and openly admires the Nazis. Among other things, he was engaged in distributing Holocaust revision literature in

Canada, such as Harwood's *Did Six Million Really Die?* These activities were at the centre of the two criminal trials which he underwent in the second half of the 1980s.

- ³ In September 1992, Zündel was a guest speaker at a meeting of Irving's Clarendon Club in London. Praising Irving for inviting him, the *League Sentinel*, organ of the neo-Nazi League of St. George, commented: 'Zündel's fight against those who would wish to censor history has been an example to us all.' Irving has had his disagreements with Zündel, who refused to accept Irving's concession that there were some massacres of Jews behind the Eastern Front during the Second World War, but of the closeness of his contacts and the general friendliness of his relations with this outspoken Holocaust denier there can be no doubt. Indeed, in a rare acknowledgment of a borrowing from someone else, Irving admitted in 1989, referring to a document in the Public Record Office, that it was 'one of Ernst Zündel's researchers who found this document and showed it to me'.
- ⁴ Irving has posted on his website the text of the evidence he presented to the second Zündel trial in defence of the accused against spreading the falsehood, in effect, of Holocaust denial. As this Report has already shown, this evidence has some claim to be regarded as the first occasion on which Irving publicly espoused the full range of Holocaust denial beliefs. Also published on Irving's website in 1998 is a very lengthy tract by one 'Samuel Crowell' (apparently a pseudonym), dating from December 1997, which describes the belief that millions of Jews were gassed by the Nazis as a 'delusion', a 'rumor', a 'legend' and a 'hoax'. This item on Irving's website is followed by a discussion by John Ball of photographic material which alleges that "'death camp" rumours and myths' were invented by the Soviet Union to distract attention from the crimes of Stalin. Ground photos of Auschwitz show 'healthy, happy, relaxed, well-fed inmates'. Irving, in other words, is

using his website to publicise Holocaust denial material by himself and other Holocaust deniers and indeed make it available to anyone in the world with access to the Internet.

- ⁵ In the past, since his conversion to Holocaust denial, Irving has also given his particular support to the work of one of the earliest and most prominent Holocaust deniers, the Frenchman Paul Rassinier. In 1989 he published an afterword to a German edition of Rassinier's book *Les Responsables de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, first published in French in 1967. The German edition was published by the Grabert Verlag, which was set up in 1952 by a former official in Alfred Rosenberg's Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories during the war and specialized in Holocaust denial and other right-wing extremist literature, publishing for example Wilhelm Staeglich's *Der Auschwitz-Mythos* in 1979.
- ⁶ In this afterword, Irving described Rassinier as 'a pacifist, a socialist, a member of the resistance against Hitler, a former inmate of a German concentration camp'. In fact, Rassinier (1908-1967) had already been expelled from the Communist Party as a young man before the war, and had been part of a socialist, antimilitarist resistance group in occupied France, which is why he had been arrested and sent to the German concentration camp at Buchenwald. Here, it seems, he had been beaten by a Communist fellow-prisoner for failing to recognise or pay his respects to the imprisoned German Communist leader Ernst Thälmann (subsequently murdered by the SS in 1944). Not only did his fellow-prisoners seem more dangerous than the SS guards to him, Rassinier also got a relatively easy job in the infirmary on his transfer to camp 'Dora' in the Harz mountains, where he was evidently well treated by his boss, a senior SS officer.
- ⁷ His Holocaust denial, which initially consisted in defending the SS against its critics and denying reports by survivors of atrocities in the camps, subsequently came to include a denial of the existence of the gas chambers and the assertion that it was the Jews who started the

Second World War. Irving described Rassinier as a ‘far-shining star’ whose book alone guided mariners across the seas of historical knowledge in a way that was unusual in a field where most readers needed to sail by the light of several different stars, several different opinions as it were. His own contribution to the book, in which Rassinier argued that the Jews were responsible for starting the Second World War, was to give credence to Rassinier’s thesis by pinning the blame for Britain’s declaration of war on the Jewish-dominated British press, Jewish emigrants in Britain, financiers and arms dealers (the unspoken assumption was that these were Jewish too) and suggesting that ‘World Jewry – with French politicians like Léon Blum and Georges Mandel at their head – armed itself for a crusade of revenge against Hitler and his supporters, a pitiless crusade which was to be fought out with the armies of other peoples and the blood of other peoples.’

- ⁸ Irving also has a long-term association with the DVU, the *Deutsche Volks-Union*, a far-right political party in Germany whose main organ, a newspaper called the *Deutsche National-Zeitung*, carries stories under headlines such as ‘How Many Died in Auschwitz?’; ‘Auschwitz – Millions of Dead Invented’; ‘Jewish Demands for Billions – How Much Longer to Pay for Hitler?’ The stories carried under these headings steer clear of direct denial sufficiently carefully to avoid calling down a prosecution under the German law banning denial of the Holocaust. In 1982 Irving went on a speaking tour of Germany at the invitation of the DVU, denouncing the Nuremberg trials as ‘victors’ justice’, and closely following instructions about what to say sent to him by the DVU’s sponsor and organizer Dr Gerhard Frey; in 1983 the *Deutsche National-Zeitung*, the DVU’s paper, awarded Irving a ‘European Freedom Prize’ for his activities. On 17 December 1984 Irving confided to his diary that speaking engagements for the DVU were ‘all that I have lived on this last year’. He had also been asked by the DVU ‘to do lucrative research in Berlin Document Center’ (diary, 19 May 1984).

- ⁹ Irving has also had close contacts with the Holocaust denier and active neo-Nazi Ewald Althans, who was condemned to three years and six months in prison in August 1995 for his statements in a film, *Beruf Neonazi* (Profession – Neo-Nazi) that there had been no mass murder of Jews by the Nazis in the Second World War. Althans organized a meeting in Munich on 21 April 1990 at which Irving was guest of honour, and those filmed as present included Anthony Hancock. He also played a prominent role in organizing Irving's tour of the then German Democratic Republic the same year. Irving's diary records him having dinner with Althans, as well as Wilhelm Stäglich and Anthony Hancock, in Munich on 20 April 1990,, and responding positively to a phone call from Althans inviting him to give a speech at a far-right *Nationale Liste* meeting in North Germany on 3 March 1990. Althans was again present with Irving at a Holocaust denial event organized by Thies Christophersen in Antwerp in 1992; Christophersen was a former SS man and author of *The Auschwitz Lie*, a key Holocaust denial text of the early 1970s. And at a meeting of the 'Circle of Friends of Ernst Zündel' held in Munich on 14 January 1993, Irving spoke immediately after Althans.
- ¹⁰ Another Holocaust denier with whom Irving has had a long-term association is Anthony Hancock, a member of the National Front and then from 1975 an even more extreme splinter-group known as the National Party. Hancock and his father Alan, a former member of Oswald Mosley's blackshirts, were active in promoting Holocaust denial and published *Did Six Million Really Die?* by 'Richard Harwood', the pseudonym for the National Front leader Richard Verrall. Hancock set up a business called The Print Factory and then became the British agent for the Institute of Historical Review. His Historical Review Press distributed *The Auschwitz Lie* by the German Holocaust denier Thies Christophersen, and published a number of other Holocaust denial texts, including Arthur Butz's *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. Irving has referred to Anthony Hancock as someone 'who sometimes does some

printing for us', but in fact the relationship is much deeper. Hancock hired the venue and distributed tickets for a 'revisionist' seminar in London on 4 July 1992 at which Irving spoke; Hancock's Historical Review Press printed Irving's newsletter *Focal Point* in the early 1980s; the same press informed readers of the *Revisionist Newsletter* in 1996 that 'by arrangement with David Irving we will be sending his *Action Report* in lieu of the *Revisionist Newsletter* whenever the former appears'. Hancock was also filmed at a Holocaust denial meeting in Munich on 21 April 1990 at which Irving was guest of honour. Irving's diary records telephone calls from the elder Hancock in 1984-5 offering funds and facilities to publish his Churchill biography in the UK ('Hancock's would not make a profit, they'd leave that to me. I really would consider that', wrote Irving on 10 October 1985).

- 11 Perhaps the most sinister of the Holocaust deniers with whom Irving has had extensive and long-term contacts was General Otto Ernst Remer. Remer played a key role in suppressing the resistance movement against Hitler after the failed bomb attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944, a role of which he boasted ever after. He was an unrepentant Nazi who belonged to the Socialist Reich Party and the *Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten*, the 'Action Front of National Socialists', both neo-Nazi organizations which were banned by the West German government as unconstitutional. Interviewed by a journalist in 1992, he said how much he had loved Hitler, and called the Jews 'our deadly enemies. They have no business being here. They all must be killed.' Remer had several convictions for defaming the dead, including the resisters of 1944, whom he called traitors, and also the Jews who had died at Auschwitz. In 1993 Remer said that 'the Jews have expanded their religious love of legends to include the legend of the murder of six million Jews, the most part of which are supposed to have been murdered in German gas chambers during the Second World War'. He went on to condemn 'the purported gas chambers at Auschwitz' as 'one of the

many propaganda lies used by the Jew-organizations against Germany.’ Remer repeated this assertion in a speech at the funeral of the Belgian Nazi leader Léon Degrelle in March, 1994.

- ¹² Remer was filmed at the April 1990 meeting in Munich referred to above, at which Irving was the star speaker. Remer had close connections to the Institute of Historical Review, and spoke at its Eighth International Revisionist Conference in 1987 on ‘My Role in Berlin on July 20, 1944’. In 1990 *The Journal of Historical Review* carried an interview with him ascribing wartime atrocities against the Jews to Ukrainians and Russians. He was active in the HIAG, an organisation for ex-members of the SS with which Irving also had contacts. Irving knew Remer, therefore, and had a high opinion of him, which he expressed on Remer’s death in October 1997 in an obituary praising him, among other things, for remaining ‘loyal to the old cause’. Irving’s website posted a letter from Remer’s widow expressing gratitude ‘for what you sent’ and complaining that the German government had cancelled her widow’s pension.
- ¹³ Remer was connected with another active Holocaust denier, Ahmed Rami, an Arab radical whose organ *Radio Islam* is a serious purveyor of Holocaust denial. Irving appeared on the same platform as Rami at the so-called ‘Leuchter Congress’ on 23 March 1991, a meeting at which Rami voiced strongly antisemitic views. In 1993 Rami and Remer held a conversation which was posted on the Radio Islam website. Remer alleged that it was the Jewish organizations that had declared war against the German Reich, that the Soviet Union had been set up by Jews, that Jewish organizations planned to set up a new world order, and that they controlled the media and ‘most political parties’ in the world. ‘The war against the Jewish organizations’, he concluded, ‘is a total war.’

- ¹⁵ If Remer was an old Nazi who purveyed Holocaust denial in public, then another of Irving's connections, Günter Deckert, can better be classified as a neo-Nazi. Born in 1940, Deckert has had a long career in extreme-right political organizations in Germany, most recently as Federal Chairman of the National Democratic Party (NPD), Germany's most openly neo-Nazi political party, from 1991 to 1995. He has a string of convictions for incitement to racial hatred, insulting the memory of the dead, slandering the Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Ignatz Bubis, and other, similar offences. The activities which led to his imprisonment included translating a lecture given in 1991 by Fred Leuchter denying the existence of gas chambers in Auschwitz. Irving knows Deckert well, and wrote to him in 1991: 'Dear Günter, – I am shocked about what the police-state has done to you yet again'. Elsewhere he has described him as a 'freedom-fighter' and a defender of 'this great cause' who is 'just one of Germany's Political Prisoners'. Irving has consistently publicised Deckert's imprisonment over the past few years and presented him as something of a martyr for the cause of 'real history'. The point in this context is not whether or not Deckert's imprisonment is morally justified: the point is that he has been imprisoned for Holocaust denial under German law, and Irving has associated himself with his cause.
- ¹⁶ In general, therefore, Irving's close association with virtually all the most prominent Holocaust deniers in several different countries demonstrates once more that he is to be counted amongst their number.

3.6 Conclusion

- ^{3.6.1} Not everyone who has studied Irving's writings and speeches in the 1990s has reached the conclusion that he has become a consistent and undeviating Holocaust denier. The American journalist Ron Rosenbaum, interviewing Irving for his book *Explaining Hitler*, published in 1998, concluded that 'Irving's stance in relation to Holocaust denial

has seemed to waver confusingly back and forth in the time since I encountered him'. On occasion, says Rosenbaum, Irving, for example in his Goebbels biography, 'seems to argue that the Holocaust, or at least mass killings of Jews, *did* happen...that there was *some* deliberate killing of Jews, perhaps a hundred thousand or so, but mainly wildcat, unauthorized actions in the blood heat of the fighting on the eastern front.' Moreover, in the course of his conversation with Rosenbaum, Irving admitted of some Holocaust deniers 'that there are certain organizations that propagate these theories which are cracked anti-Semites', and that he only spoke at their meetings because 'I've been denied a platform worldwide...I know these people have done me a lot of damage, a lot of harm', he confessed, without actually saying who he meant by this or what kind of damage or harm he was referring to. This was enough for Norman Stone, reviewing Rosenbaum's book, to conclude that 'Irving...puts some blue water between himself and the nutty "revisionists" who claimed the Holocaust never happened...even Irving is not blind to the facts.'

- 3.6.2 However, even Stone was clear about the fact that Rosenbaum, as he wrote, 'cannot follow' subjects about which he was writing because of his ignorance of history, and had 'misunderstood' another of the key books he was writing about; while Rosenbaum himself confessed in his book to bewilderment as to the line Irving was taking in his interview with him, and elsewhere in the same chapter stated that 'to an ever-increasing extent, Irving has...become a fiery rabble-rousing Führer of the Holocaust-denial movement, addressing adoring rallies in Germany and, not surprisingly, in Argentina.' The fact that Irving had been banned from addressing rallies, whether adoring or not, in Germany, some years before the publication of Rosenbaum's book seemed to have escaped the author. Rosenbaum is a careless and inattentive interviewer and author, who has clearly not taken the trouble to investigate the phenomenon of Holocaust denial or to arrive at a reasonable definition of it. If he had done so, it would be clear to him, as it should

be to Stone, that Irving's admission that a hundred thousand Jews were killed in largely unco-ordinated acts of war on the eastern front did not constitute an admission of the reality of the Holocaust in any meaningful or generally accepted sense of the term.

3.6.3 A close examination of Irving's speeches and writings since the late 1980s indicates that there is no doubt at all that he has become a Holocaust denier. He clearly holds all four central beliefs of the deniers as defined above. He argues that the number of Jews deliberately killed by the Nazis was far less than six million; it amounted to only a few hundred thousand, and was thus similar to, or less than, the number of German civilians killed in Allied bombing raids, which he portrays as crimes of a similar or greater order. He argues that gas chambers were not used to kill large numbers of Jews at any time. If Jews did die in large numbers, it was as a result of epidemics for which the Allied bombing raids were in large measure responsible. If there has been any wavering by Irving on these points, it has been since the publication of Lipstadt's book; even here, however, insofar as it can be observed at all, it appears to be more a matter of presentation than of content.

3.6.4 Irving continues to assert, as he had already done prior to 1988, that the Nazi state had no concerted policy of exterminating Europe's Jews; all the Nazi leadership, Hitler at its head, wished to do was to deport them to Eastern Europe. He alleges that the Holocaust is a myth invented by Allied propaganda during the war and sustained since then by Jews who wish to use it to gain political and financial support for the state of Israel or even for themselves. The supposed evidence for the Nazis' wartime mass murder of millions of Jews by gassing and other means, he claims, was fabricated after the war. He has referred repeatedly to the 'Holocaust myth' and the 'Holocaust legend' and has described himself as engaged in a 'refutation of the Holocaust story'.

- 3.6.5 Irving is far from being a lone figure or an original, isolated researcher in this field. For some years now, Irving has had close contacts with virtually all the major Holocaust deniers, including Faurisson and Butz. In the years up to the publication of Lipstadt's book, he was a regular speaker at meetings of the Institute for Historical Review and continued to be through the mid-1990s. He has published extensively in its journal. An examination of the Institute's history, context and activities and of the contents of the *Journal of Historical Review* makes it clear beyond any reasonable doubt that its central business is Holocaust denial. Irving has contacts with many other Holocaust deniers and is using his website on the Internet to propagate their views. He has been prosecuted for Holocaust denial in Germany and found guilty under German law. Whether or not the law is just is in this context quite immaterial; the point is that he was convicted by a German court of Holocaust denial and that the conviction stands.
- 3.6.6 It is reasonable, therefore, to regard Irving as part of an international network of Holocaust denial. Irving links himself with others of similar views in rejecting the label 'Holocaust denier', as we have seen, either because they agree that *some* massacres of Jews took place (as Robert Faurisson, quoted above, argued, massacres always take place in wartime), or because they redefine the term 'Holocaust' so as to make it possible for them to say they believe in it without believing in the systematic Nazi extermination of millions of Jews, the Nazis' use of gas chambers, or any of the other aspects of the Holocaust or 'Final Solution' as conventionally defined.
- 3.6.7 Thus for example Irving tends to argue, when accused of Holocaust denial, that the *whole* of the Second World War was a Holocaust, in the sense that many innocent civilians were killed on all sides; or that the term 'Holocaust' means the gassing of six million Jews at Auschwitz (a proposition which nobody apart from Irving himself has ever advanced). But it is not the term *Holocaust* which is at issue here. One may reject the term 'Holocaust' as a label without in any way rejecting the

fundamental proposition that the Nazis had a conscious and centrally directed policy of exterminating all the Jews in Europe, and carried it out during the Second World War to the extent that they killed between five and six million of them by shooting, deliberate starvation and neglect, and in specially built gassing facilities at Auschwitz and elsewhere. It is these fundamental propositions which are at issue here, not the term used to describe them. And it is these fundamental propositions which Irving denies, in common with others who have made it their business to do so as well.

- 3.6.8 These are the facts which justify any reasonable person in describing David Irving as a Holocaust denier. Indeed he himself has come close at times to agreeing with the application of this description to himself. ‘Until 1988’, he told an audience in Calgary in 1991, ‘I believed that there had been something like a Holocaust.’ But since then, he continued, it had been clear to him that ‘that story was just a legend.’ It was not so much the label he rejected as its negative connotations – ‘Holocaust denier’ – as though there’s something wrong in refusing to accept...the whole story.’
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4. Irving’s writings on Hitler

4.1 *Admiration*

- 4.1.1 Irving presents himself in his writings and speeches as a man who has discovered the objective truth about Hitler and the Nazis, rescuing it from the myths and legends perpetrated by historians, politicians and others by refusing to believe what other historians wrote and by going back to the original sources instead. ‘I saw myself as a stone-cleaner’, he wrote in the Introduction to his book *Hitler’s War* in 1977, ‘less concerned with architectural appraisal than with scrubbing years of grime and discoloration from the façade of a silent and forbidding monu-

ment.’ ‘The biggest problem in dealing analytically with Hitler’, he continued, ‘is the aversion to him deliberately created by years of intense wartime propaganda and emotive postwar historiography.’ Hitler, Irving argued, has been caricatured by posterity, beginning with the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, where everybody tried to shift the blame to Hitler. ‘These caricatures have bedevilled the writing of modern history ever since.’ Irving cultivates the image of a man who has achieved the feat of demolishing these caricatures and restoring a true picture of Hitler and Nazism by massive, indefatigable research into primary sources, and by a scrupulously critical attitude to the documents.

- 4.1.2 In the Preface to the first edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving wrote that ‘this book views the situation as far as possible through Hitler’s eyes, from behind his desk’, a strategy which undoubtedly speaks of a strong identification with the subject and the subject’s point of view. In a discussion on BBC1 television in 1977 he said that once Hitler had become Reich Chancellor, ‘he became a statesman and then a soldier...and the Jewish problem was a nuisance to him, an embarrassment.’ ‘Adolf Hitler’, he wrote in 1984, ‘was a man of a certain amount of intellectual honesty’. In 1989, Irving praised Hitler at somewhat greater length in his afterword to the German translation of a book by the French Holocaust denier Paul Rassinier arguing that Germany had been ‘driven’ into the Second World War by her enemies ‘Adolf Hitler was a patriot – he tried from start to finish to restore the earlier unity, greatness and splendour of Germany. After he had come to power in 1933, he carried out the programme whose realisation he had promised since 1922: he restored faith in the central government; he rebuilt the German economy; he removed unemployment; he rebuilt the disarmed German armed forces, and then he used this newly-won strength to attain Germany’s sovereignty once more, and he became involved in his adventure of winning living-space in the East. He had no kind of evil intentions against Britain and its Empire, quite the op-

posite...Hitler's foreign policy was led by the wish for secure boundaries and the necessity of an extension to the east...The forces which drove Germany into the war did not sit in Berlin."

- 4.1.3 These claims, it should be noted in passing, are not substantiated by Irving. The evidence examined by specialists on these subjects indicates, rather, that Hitler did not restore the German economy in any normal sense, but rapidly distorted it through his extreme prioritization of rearmament; he did have evil intentions towards the British Empire; and his 'adventure of winning living-space in the East' was a war of genocidal extermination against the Poles and other peoples who lived there, justified by an ideology of racial supremacy: there is no evidence of any kind that Germany and the Germans actually needed 'living-space' in the East.
- 4.1.4 As far as this report is concerned, however, Irving's writings quoted above would seem indeed to indicate that Irving is, as Lipstadt put it, 'an ardent admirer of Hitler'. Faced with this charge, Irving asserts in his reply to Lipstadt's defence that on pages 5 and 20 of the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, he 'makes explicit reference to the crimes committed by Hitler'. On looking up the 1991 version of *Hitler's War*, however, we find that on page 5 Irving refers to Hitler's inconsistency in, on the one hand, using the argument of military necessity to justify orders to execute hostages, massacre Italian officers who had fought against German troops in 1943, kill Red Army commissars, Allied commandos and captured Allied aircrews, and exterminate the male populations of Stalingrad and Leningrad, and, on the other, opposing the use of poison gas, the assassination of enemy leaders and the ruse of having German tanks fly Soviet flags to confuse the enemy. Hitler's 'crimes' here are carefully selected to fit in with the argument that Hitler viewed mass killing as a military necessity; other, much larger crimes, such as the deliberate murder of more than three million Soviet prisoners of

war, or the mass extermination of Europe's Jews, do not get a mention, because there is no sense in which they could be justified or excused as acts of military necessity.

- 4.1.5 The reference to Hitler's crimes on page 20 simply repeats this list, adding Hitler's 'order for the liquidation of tens of thousands of fellow Germans (the Euthanasia Order)'. This too, if we turn to pages 227-8, is presented by Irving as a matter of military necessity: "About a quarter of a million hospital beds were required for Germany's disproportionately large insane population: of some seven or eight hundred thousand victims of insanity all told, about 10 percent were permanently institutionalized. They occupied bed space and the attention of skilled medical personnel which Hitler now urgently needed for the treatment of the casualties of his coming campaigns."
- 4.1.6 In a debate chaired by David Frost on BBC1 television in June, 1977, Irving, asked whether he thought Hitler was evil, replied: 'He was as evil as Churchill, as evil as Roosevelt, as evil as Truman.'
- 4.1.7 Irving goes on in the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* to explain how 'the National Socialists had instituted a program of racial hygiene' on coming to power in 1933, identifying 20 per cent of the German population as suffering from hereditary biological defects. 'The economic burden represented by these specimens was explained, and particularly repulsive samples were housed at the institutions as walking laboratory exhibits.' According to Irving, Hitler's initial involvement was in sanctioning 'mercy killing' of 'patients in intolerable pain' and 'deformed newborn babies'. This quickly led, he suggests, to 'the programmed elimination of the burdensome tens of thousands of insane' which Hitler saw as a necessary part of the war effort. Nowhere does Irving explain that the killing of such people was not in fact merciful; that Hitler had long intended to rid the country of the eugenically unfit and had deliberately waited until the circumstances of war allowed him, as he thought, to do so; that 'repulsive samples', or in other words handi-

capped human beings, only appeared so because of the way they were presented in Nazi propaganda films; or that humans and civilized societies do not regard those of their members who are disadvantaged in this way as economic burdens.

- 4.1.8 Hitler, in Irving's eyes, was a 'dictator by consent', to quote the title of one of the early chapters of the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, a man who ended 'the cancerous symptoms of industrial unrest' and replaced unions with the 'German Labor Front, the DAF...the biggest trade union in the world, and one of the most successful.' The labour force according to Irving was his 'power base'. He 'saw the random bickering of the newspapers of the democracies as an inexcusable frittering away of a vital national resource'. Irving defended the 'night of the long knives' in June 1934, when Hitler personally ordered the murder of some 90 of his former associates, above all in the leadership of the SA (*Sturmabteilung*, the paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party).
- 4.1.9 Most historians have seen this as a shocking violation of moral and legal norms, in which Hitler not only brought retrospectively trumped-up charges against the SA leaders of plotting a coup, but also used the opportunity to bump off politicians, such as former Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher and retired Bavarian politician Gustav von Kahr, who he felt knew too much about his past, or whom he simply strongly disliked, and against whom no conceivable political suspicions could be directed in 1934. According to Irving, however, 'the SA *was* planning to overthrow Hitler's government'. 'In an act of rare magnanimity', he went on, neglecting to mention that in personally marking crosses against the names of scores of people in the night in question, Hitler had not shown much magnanimity at all, 'Hitler ordered state pensions provided for the next of kin of the people murdered in the Night of the Long Knives, as June 30, 1934 came to be known. Even so he began to suffer nightmares and could not sleep.' Rather than a brutal murderer, Hitler, according to Irving, was a 'friend of the arts, benefactor of the

impoverished, defender of the innocent, persecutor of the delinquent' (the arbitrariness and injustice with which the supposedly 'delinquent' were persecuted is another subject Irving neglects to discuss).

4.1.10 Irving's position on all these issues is undoubtedly highly favourable to Hitler. Reviewers of his work have frequently commented on this. Gordon A. Craig – a customarily generous reviewer – pointed out that "The Hitler who emerged from his version of the past was a far different one than was to be found in earlier works – less brutal and ruthless, more human, and deserving of sympathy, since he was always being let down by others. This result was achieved, however, not by the presentation of new evidence but rather by means of the technique employed by the author. In his introduction, Irving wrote that his book "view(ed) the situation as far as possible through Hitler's eyes, from behind his desk", and this method...meant that, when judgments were made, they were Hitler's own judgments and that they were uncontested. Thus, Mr. Irving, who did not hesitate to use formulations like "Hitler was cheated of the ultimate winter victory", accepted the Führer's attribution of all military setbacks to the incompetence or disloyalty of the General Staff and the commanding generals, without making any appraisal of Hitler's own deficiencies as a commander." Thus, Craig concluded, Irving's identification with Hitler led to a substantial distortion of the historical record by omitting other, more critical perspectives on the Nazi leader's conduct.

4.1.11 Reviewing *Hitler's War* in 1977, Hugh Trevor-Roper found a 'consistent bias' in favour of Hitler and against his opponents. This was, he thought, in part the consequence of Irving's decision to describe the war from the point of view of Hitler and his court. but it went further than this. Given the nature of the sources, which reflected the standards and assumptions of the court, it was inevitable that Hitler's view should prevail in Irving's book. By contrast, the case for Hitler's opponents went by default. But: "Sometimes, by adjectival innuendo, Mr. Irving adds his own support to Hitler's verdict; sometimes it is not

clear who is pronouncing judgment on these “undesirables”, these “querulous generals”, this “polyglot mixture of nobility and plebs. Some people always come out badly: Canaris is always a “slimy” or “slippery” defeatist, one of the “worms” who turn and are naturally destroyed. Winston Churchill is never mentioned except to be dismissed: either in Hitler’s terms – “drunkard”, “cretin”, “paralytic”, “nincompoop” – or, by Mr. Irving, with more refined distaste. On the other hand, Hitler’s popularity and radiating charm is constantly stressed: no man, we are told, possessed “the affection of the German people” as completely as he did, in the summer of 1944, just before the attempt to assassinate him.” ‘Mr. Irving’s sympathies’, Trevor-Roper concluded, ‘can hardly be doubted’; and in his view they were consistently in favour of Hitler and the Nazis.

4.1.12 The journalist Robert Harris, in his meticulous account of the ‘Hitler diaries’ affair, concurred in this judgment. Harris’s description of *Hitler’s War* went further than Craig’s or Trevor-Roper’s in pointing to the identification of the author with his subject: “Irving’s aim was to rewrite the history of the war “as far as possible through Hitler’s eyes, from behind his desk”. This made for a gripping book, but one which was, by its nature, unbalanced. However “objectively” he might piece together the unpublished recollections of Hitler’s subordinates, they were still the words of men and women who admired their ruler. And confined to Hitler’s daily routine, the biography had a curiously unreal quality: the death camps, the atrocities, the sufferings of millions of people which were the result of Hitler’s war were not to be found in *Hitler’s War* as it was reconstructed by David Irving.”

4.1.13 Interviewing Irving about the “Hitler diaries’, Harris noted, perhaps a little mischievously, some even more alarming aspects of the identification of author and subject than were readily apparent from the book: “Irving admitted that in writing *Hitler’s War* he had “identified” with the Führer. Looking down upon him as he worked, from the wall above his desk, was a self-portrait of Hitler...” “I don’t drink”, he would say, ‘Adolf

didn't drink you know."... He shared Hitler's view of women, believing that they were put on the earth in order to procreate and provide men with something to look at: "They haven't got the physical capacity for producing something creative,"...In 1981, at the age of forty-one, he had founded his own right-wing political group, built around his own belief in his "destiny" as a future British leader. With his black hair slanting across his forehead, and a dark cleft, shadowed like a moustache between the bottom of his nose and the top of his upper lip, there were times, in the right light, when Irving looked alarmingly like the subject of his notorious biography."

- 4.1.14 Harris was perhaps indulging in a little journalistic licence here. But the fundamental point that he was making about *Hitler's War* was a sound one, and shared by others too. Irving's book, he noted, aimed to humanise Hitler, to make him, as the book's Introduction claimed, 'an ordinary, walking, talking human.'
- 4.1.15 Reviewing *Hitler's War* in 1979, Charles W. Sydnor Jr. found that Irving portrayed Hitler not as a monster but as 'a fair-minded statesman of considerable chivalry, who never resorted to the assassination of foreign opponents (p. xii), who never intended to harm the British Empire and genuinely wanted peace with Britain after June 1940 (pp. xv-xvi), and who attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941 only as a preventive measure.' Irving's Hitler, noted Sydnor, 'was a strategist and tactician of inspired genius, who was nearly always right', and if he became more hostile to the Jews during the war, this was only under the influence of his unsavoury associates such as Goebbels or Himmler. 'Hitler's most brutal policies, therefore, were either a response to perfidious Allied actions, or were conducted in his name, but without his knowledge, by his unscrupulous subordinates. Mr Irving's Hitler, moreover, was a man capable of genuine warmth and maudlin sentimentality.'

4.1.16 The American historian John Lukács, reviewing Irving's work in the course of a general survey of historical writing on Hitler over the past few decades, commented in 1998 that *Hitler's War* was a 'partial rehabilitation of Hitler' and 'revealed for the first time (that is, to careful readers) his admiration of Hitler'. During his career, Lukács wrote, Irving had progressed from a young sympathizer of Germany and things German to a "rehabilitator" of Hitler and then to his indubitable admirer and partisan.' Similarly, the German historian Martin Broszat, writing about the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War*, noted that there was an obvious contradiction between Irving's self-confessed desire to look at events from behind Hitler's desk, and his claim to take an objective view of events. 'Irving', he continued, 'does not remain silent about individual actions of killing and annihilation which go back to Hitler, but portrays them in an exculpatory and often erroneous way.' He created an imaginary picture, allegedly painted by historians, of a mad Hitler, which in fact had long ceased to exist for serious researchers, as a kind of straw man against which to pit his arguments. The whole book, Broszat charged, was dominated by a perspective narrowed by partisanship in favour of Hitler.

4.1.17 It has long been apparent to careful and knowledgeable reviewers, therefore, that Irving is an admirer of Hitler. The terms in which Irving portrays Hitler in his books, writings and speeches, as we have seen, confirm this view. Irving himself has made no secret about how he sees his role. Irving explained his role as Hitler's 'ambassador' to Ron Rosenbaum: "Every time I've written a biography, you find you become close to the character you're writing about because you're his ambassador then. You're his ambassador to the afterlife. Or to the next generation. And if you do your job conscientiously, then you bend over backward to do it ... I don't think it should lead you to adopt an unobjective position."

4.1.18 Irving was more expansive to an audience of historians and fellow publicists in 1978, when he explained how fate had anointed him Hitler's historian: "Basically Hitler himself determined who should be his biographer. I know that since I found Hitler's ear, nose, and throat doctor in Krefeld in early 1970, the man who treated Hitler after the assassination attempt of 20 July 1944, Dr. Erwin Giesing. I called on him in his practice. He had no time at that moment and I had to wait for half an hour for him. Already in the waiting room he gave me a file to read, about 500 typed pages. Can you imagine how one feels when one reads the diary of the doctor who treated Hitler after the assassination attempt? It begins on 23 July 1944. I ask him, why are you giving this to me, Herr Dr. Giesing? He answers me, read page 387. It's about a conversation between Hitler and Giesing. The doctor writes that he had to treat Hitler for the pain in his ears. He writes, I asked the Führer if he knew that the Kaiser also once suffered from a similar ear pain. He nodded. I asked him if he had read that very good book about the Kaiser written by an Englishman, 'A Mythical Creature of our Times'. The Führer answered in the affirmative to this too. I said, actually the Kaiser came off very well. After all he was an Englishman. The Englishman managed to utilise the Kaiser's hand-written papers. Hitler said, Herr Doctor Giesing, for two years now I too have also gone over to allowing protocols of my discussions to be taken down. Perhaps an Englishman will also come one day who wants to write an objective biography of me. It has to be an Englishman of the next generation. Because a representative of the present generation cannot write the truth about me and certainly won't want to either. It has to be an Englishman who knows the archives and who has mastered the German language. And that is why you are getting the diaries Mr Irving, the doctor said." Irving therefore sees himself in the end not as a neutral, objective historian but as Hitler's representative in the world after his death, as the historian chosen, as it were, by the Führer himself.

- 4.1.19 In a very real sense, indeed, he evidently conceives of himself as carrying on Hitler's legacy. Speaking to an audience in Calgary, Canada, in 1991, he revealed that he had once been described as a 'self-confessed moderate fascist', and added: 'I strongly object to that word "moderate".' In an interview for the television programme *This Week*, in 1991, Irving said: 'I think Adolf Hitler made a lot of mistakes. He surrounded himself with people of very very poor quality. He was a rotten judge of character. These are the mistakes that you have to avoid replicating.' 'You' in this context clearly referred to Irving himself.
- 4.1.20 And whatever mistakes he thought Hitler had made, there is no doubt that basically Irving's attitude towards him was one of admiration. At a press conference in Brisbane in 1986, a journalist asked him: 'Do you admire Hitler?' Irving replied: "Erm, yeah, certain aspects. What a tricky question; you see now, I thought I had you. You're asking a question which, really, however you answer it, you're going to be in deep water, because there are certain aspects of his life that everybody admires. The fact that he had risen from nobody. You see she's writing it down. He'd risen from nobody, and he'd risen from nobody and become the admired and respected leader of two great nations, Germany and Austria. That after a very, very hard (?) and difficult fight in 1933, just five years later he got 49 million Germans to vote for him, which was 99.8 per cent of the electorate....I think that from 1938 onwards he began to go off the rails, in the moral sense. He became too big for his boots, and assumed that he was the law. And that is a very common defect."
- 4.1.21 This criticism was not a very serious one however. Irving failed to mention that in the 1938 vote there was massive intimidation of the electorate. Democratic societies do not produce 'yes' votes of 99.8 per cent. Moreover, Irving's own writings about Hitler's conduct during the war do not suggest that he thinks Hitler went 'off the rails'. Finally,

however much Irving might seek to relativise his own admiration for Hitler by arguing that others share it, there is in fact no truth in his claim that ‘everybody admires’ certain aspects of Hitler’s life.

- 4.1.22 In the same interview, another journalist put to him the following question, and got a rather less guarded answer: “Wouldn’t it be fair to say that the historical perspective that we’re given here in the West is that Churchill was the person to be looked up to and Hitler was the rogue. Are you saying that that situation is really quite the reverse? Irving: Quite the reverse.”
- 4.1.23 Hitler, in other words, was according to Irving in 1986, a person to be looked up to, or in other words, a person to be admired. Both explicitly, in his speeches and interviews, and in a more roundabout way, in his books, Irving has consistently portrayed Hitler in positive terms which leave one in no doubt that he ardently admires him.

4.2 Exculpation

- 4.2.1 Irving has always been particularly sensitive to the charge that Hitler was antisemitic and used his power to bring about anti-Jewish laws and finally to order the extermination of all the Jews in Europe. He has consistently tried to exculpate Hitler from the charge that it was he who drove the antisemitic and exterminatory policies of the ‘Third Reich’ forward. ‘Hitler’, Irving has claimed, ‘used his antisemitism as a political platform from which to seize power in 1933, but that after that he lost interest in it except for occasional flights of public oratory; while Dr Goebbels and other lesser Nazis continued to ride that horse to the hounds, to the mounting irritation of their Führer Adolf Hitler who no longer needed antisemitism.’ Even before 1933, Irving argues, Hitler’s antisemitism was only tactical, and in practice he was not personally ill-disposed towards the Jews. Referring to the notorious 1935 Nuremberg laws, which deprived German Jews of their citizenship and outlawed marriage and sexual relations with non-Jewish Germans,

Irving asserted in 1996: 'To Goebbels's ill-concealed irritation, Hitler leaned toward leniency in applying these new laws'. He quoted Hitler saying there must be 'no excesses'.

4.2.2 In the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving conceded (p. 576) that Hitler must have known about the extermination of the Jews from 7 October 1943, when he met the Gauleiters who had recently listened to Himmler's notorious speech in Posen where he revealed to them that 'by the end of 1943 the last Jews in occupied Europe would have been physically *exterminated*.' However, Irving's Index entries even for the subsequent period contain items such as 'orders to work in factories in Hungary', 'favors transfer abroad', 'promises end to massacre', and 'says it's Himmler's affair.' Irving already argued in 1977 that it was significant that no written order had been found bearing Hitler's signature for the extermination of the Jews. There were for example comparable orders which he did sign, for instance the so-called Euthanasia Order, dated 1 September 1941, ordering the killing of the mentally and physically handicapped in German hospital institutions. He also claimed that no other high-ranking Nazi ever made any reference to a Hitler order for the liquidation of the Jews, and that there was no evidence that Hitler ever gave a verbal order to this effect either.

4.2.3 What was Irving's position when he came to revise the book for its second edition in 1991? In the Introduction to the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving removed the reference to Hitler having known about the 'extermination' of the Jews from October 1943 because, as we have already seen, Irving now disputed the factuality of the extermination altogether. 'When confronted with the facts he took no action to rebuke the guilty', Irving wrote of Hitler in this edition of his book: but he did not go into detail as to when this happened or what 'the facts' actually were. The argument about the extermination having been set in motion by local SS commanders in the East was also removed altogether. Instead, he inserted a new section arguing that "Every document actually linking Hitler with the treatment of the Jews invariably takes the

form of an embargo, from the 1923 beer-hall putsch (when he disciplined a Nazi squad for having looted a Jewish delicatessen) right through to 1943 and 1944. If he *was* an incorrigible anti-Semite, what are we to make of the urgent edict issued “to all Gau directorates for immediate action” by his deputy, Rudolf Hess, during the infamous Night of Broken Glass in November 1938, ordering an immediate stop to such outrage “on orders from the very highest level”? Every other historian has shut his eyes and hoped that this horrid, inconvenient document would somehow go away. But it has been joined by others, like the extraordinary note dictated by Staatssekretär Schlegelberger in the Reich Ministry of Justice in the Spring of 1942: “Reich Minister Lammers”, this states, referring to Hitler’s top civil servant, “informed me that the Führer has repeatedly pronounced that he wants the solution of the Jewish Question put off until after the war is over.” Whatever way one looks at this document it is incompatible with the notion that Hitler had ordered an urgent liquidation program....And Hermann Göring himself is on record as stressing at a Berlin conference on July 6, 1942, how much the Führer and he deprecated the doctrinaire harassment of Jewish scientists...”

- 4.2.4 At all times in the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War*, Irving exculpated Hitler from involvement or even knowledge of the few atrocities against Jews he is still prepared to admit actually happened. Thus for example when Irving described the shooting of 75,000 Jews in Kiev by the SS, he was careful to add that ‘Hitler’s responsibility – as distinct from Himmler’s – was limited to the decision to deport all European Jews to the east.’ Himmler, Irving argued, concealed their fate from him. He claimed that Hitler’s surviving staff all said after the war that ‘never once was any extermination of either the Russian or European Jews mentioned – even confidentially – at Hitler’s Headquarters.’ (pp. 422-4). Hitler’s intention was to merely to hold Jews hostage in the East (p. 425). Irving summed up his views on Hitler and the Jews when he told the International Revisionist Conference in 1983: that ‘prob-

ably the biggest friend the Jews had in the ‘Third Reich’, certainly when the war broke out, was Adolf Hitler. He was the one who was doing everything he could to prevent things nasty happening to them.’

4.3 Historical method: case-studies

(a) Irving’s ‘chain of documents’

- ¹ Irving has claimed on numerous occasions, as he said on BBC1 television in June, 1977, that ‘there is a chain of important documents, starting in about 1938 and going right through to 1943, indicating, firstly, that Adolf Hitler was issuing vetoes, saying this is not to be done to the Jews, they are not to be liquidated.’ In 1983, Irving told the International Revisionist Conference in almost identical terms: ‘There is a *whole chain* of evidence from 1938 right through to October 1943, possibly even later, indicating that Hitler was completely in the dark about anything that may have been going on’ with respect to mass killings of Jews. ‘So far’, he boasted triumphantly, ‘*I haven’t been disproved.*’ Similarly, in his submission to the court, Irving argues that when the documents are subjected to rigid historical criteria as to their authenticity, the reasons for their existence, and the vantage point of their author, ‘a relatively slim dossier of evidence resulted which portrayed Hitler intervening in *every* instance to mitigate or lessen wrongdoing against the Jews...there were few, if any, documents of comparable quality – documents which met the same criteria – giving the opposite sense.’
- ² The following sections of this Report go through this chain of documents and examine in detail whether they stand up to close and critical scrutiny. It will demonstrate that in every case, without exception, Irving engages in the skewing of the sources and the misrepresentation of data. So egregious are his distortions of the historical record, indeed, that they go far beyond what Lipstadt has actually alleged in this context. These examples have not been chosen because they show how Irving has falsified the historical record. On the contrary, they have

been chosen because it is these specific instances of historical evidence and its interpretation which Irving puts forward as the strongest, most unassailable supports for his contention that Hitler did not know about the persecution and extermination of the Jews, and on the occasions when he did discover that Jews were being maltreated or persecuted, did his best to stop it.

- ³ In dealing with Irving as a Holocaust denier, this Report has already noted a number of instances of Irving's misinterpretation and misconstrual of the sources, and subjected his inconsistent and unprofessional methods of dealing with historical evidence to critical scrutiny. However, the following case-studies, some of which are very extensive and extremely detailed, will show beyond all doubt that Lipstadt is correct in claiming that Irving misstates, misquotes, falsifies statistics, falsely attributes conclusions to reliable sources, relies on books and sources that directly contradict his arguments, quoting in a manner that completely distorts the authors' objectives, manipulates documents to serve his own purposes, skews documents and misrepresents data in order to reach historically untenable conclusions, bends historical evidence until it conforms with his ideological leanings and political agenda, takes accurate information and shapes it to confirm his conclusions, and – a vital point not mentioned by Lipstadt – constantly suppresses or deliberately overlooks sources with which he is familiar because they contradict the line of argument he wishes to advance.

(b) Evidence at Hitler's trial in 1924

(i) Historical background

- ¹ The first link in Irving's self-proclaimed chain of key documents which demonstrate that Hitler was the best friend the Jews ever had in the 'Third Reich' does not in fact relate to the 'Third Reich' itself but to a relatively early incident in Hitler's career. The revolution of November 1918, which had overthrown the Imperial structure and for the first

time in Germany history set up a fully democratic state, soon led to a backlash from the right. This backlash was most extreme in Bavaria. Under a counter-revolutionary government, Munich quickly became the centre for a variety of nationalist or *völkisch* sects which had formed all over the country since the end of the First World War.

- ² One of the *völkisch* groups was the DAP, the German Workers' Party. It would in all likelihood have remained an insignificant and obscure splinter sect, had not Adolf Hitler, at the time a political agent for the German army, the *Reichswehr*, decided to use it as the platform for the launch of his political career. Hitler soon became the leading figure of the party (he officially took over the leadership of the party in July 1921) which changed its name in February 1920 to NSDAP, National Socialist Workers' Party, or Nazis. While there was some local support for the Nazis, it was only with the crisis of the Weimar state in 1922 and 1923, that the Nazi Party started to expand beyond its Munich power base. In this time of instability, intensified by the perceived threat of an imminent Communist rising in central Germany, the Nazis became increasingly powerful on the right-wing fringe of the political spectrum.
- ³ In late 1923, Hitler tried to translate his perceived strength into action and attempted a 'March on Berlin' to seize power. On the evening of 8 November, Hitler and some armed supporters stormed a meeting in the *Bürgerbräukeller*, (a Munich beer-cellar). The meeting was addressed by Gustav Ritter von Kahr, who as General Commissioner possessed almost dictatorial powers and was the most powerful politician in Bavaria. Hitler fired a shot into the ceiling. Then, he led von Kahr and others senior figures, such as the police president Seisser, into a back room, where they were forced to declare their support of the putsch.

- ⁴ Once Hitler had secured the backing of these men, his supporters, who were assembled in another beer hall, the *Löwenbräukeller*, were informed via telephone that the ‘national revolution’ had broken out. Hitler’s followers in the *Löwenbräukeller* were led by Ernst Röhm, an army officer who was actively engaged in arming right-wing paramilitary groups. With Röhm were members of his own paramilitary organisation as well as SA (Storm Division) troops – the brown-shirted paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party. From April 1924 the brownshirts too would be led by Röhm. Once Röhm got the message that Hitler had apparently been successful, he mobilised his troops and marched towards the District Military Headquarters to take them over. But Hitler had seriously miscalculated his influence over the Bavarian government and army. He failed to win the support of leading political figures like von Kahr, who started counter-measures against the coup once he had been set free by Hitler. A small group of determined Nazi marchers set off for the city centre at noon on 9 November 1923 and were dispersed by armed police who fired on them as they approached the Odeonsplatz.
- ⁵ The trial against Hitler and some of his accomplices began on 26 February 1924 before a political court, the *Bayerisches Volksgericht*. The trial aroused great interest in both the domestic and the foreign press. The presiding judges allowed Hitler to turn the trial into a propaganda show for the Nazi party. Hitler was able to elaborate his ideology at great length, without interruption. The sympathies of the Bavarian judge were openly manifested in the sentence meted out to Hitler on 1 April 1924 the minimum possible, namely five years’ incarceration in a *Festung* (a much milder form of imprisonment than prison or penitentiary). Hitler was released in December 1924.

(ii) David Irving's argument

- ¹ One of the main aims of Irving's historical writings, as we have already seen, is to distance Hitler from all forms of violence against the Jews. This Report has already noted his statement in the Preface to the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*: 'Every document actually linking Hitler with the treatment of the Jews invariably takes the form of an embargo.' One such document, he goes on to argue, refers to 'the 1923 beer-hall putsch (when he disciplined a Nazi squad for having looted a Jewish delicatessen).' Irving also recounted this alleged incident in his *Göring*: "Meanwhile, Hitler acted to maintain order. Learning that one Nazi squad had ransacked a kosher grocery store during the night, he sent for the ex-army lieutenant who had led the raid. "We took off our Nazi insignia first!" expostulated the officer – to no avail, as Hitler dismissed him from the party on the spot. "I shall see that no other nationalist unit allows you to join either!". Göring goggled at this exchange, as did a police sergeant who testified to it at the Hitler trial a few weeks later'."
- ² Irving cites this incident again in his new edition of *Hitler's War*, and also in his Pleadings. Here he refers to his account in *Göring*, and concludes that to his knowledge 'no other historian has ever quoted this passage, finding it hard to reconcile with their (*sic*) obsessively held views'. It is necessary therefore to turn now to an investigation of Irving's claims and to assess the accuracy of his presentation and interpretation of this portion of the trial record.

(iii) Inconsistencies and omission of references

- ¹ The first inconsistency in Irving's account is obvious even without a deeper knowledge of the sources: while he claims in *Hitler's War* that Hitler disciplined an entire Nazi squad, in *Göring* Irving claims that Hitler only disciplined its leader. To clear up this inconsistency, we need to examine the testimony at the trial of Hitler in 1924 by the police officer whom Irving mentions. But Irving makes it difficult for his

readers to investigate the matter further. Footnotes are properly used by responsible historians to guide the interested reader to the sources on which each claim or statement in the text is based. However, Irving frequently transgresses this basic convention of historical scholarship. Thus, in his *Görling*, he gives no clear reference for the incident involving Hitler at all, making it very difficult to find the original source. Irving fails to inform the reader what the name of the police officer was, and when he gave his testimony. He only tells the reader, that his narrative 'is knitted together from the eyewitness evidence at the trial'.

- ² Irving is not much more forthcoming about the exact details in his Pleadings to the court, either. He merely states that the 'source is the transcript of the police sergeant's evidence, on U.S. National Archives microfilm'. This makes it impossible for most readers to verify Irving's claims. The only way to examine Irving's account is to read through the entire record of the Hitler trial, searching for the original source of his depiction of the events in question. However, if one is willing to invest time and effort, the reference can eventually be located. The court record for the 4 March 1924 detail the testimony by a former police officer, *Oberwachtmeister* Hofmann: "Apart from this, I want to mention a previous incident because acts of violence which individuals have committed, have always been ascribed to him. I once went along to Hitler when I was still in the force and said to him: this and that have happened again. Some elements had attacked the Israelite delicatessen "That gives a bad impression of the party, and it's rather embarrassing for us in the police that such a thing should have to happen." By chance the leader of the group, a young, wartime army lieutenant, was there. Called on to speak, this man said: "I took off the party badge". Hitler said: "By doing this you admitted that you did not belong to the party at the moment when you committed that act. You are expelled with immediate effect from the party with your whole

team and I will take care that you don't get admitted to any nationalist fighting squad again." Hitler always condemned these acts of violence and the individual excesses which occurred."

(iv) Misrepresentation of documents; invention and falsification.

- ¹ When comparing this account with the one Irving gives in his book *Göring*, several distortions, inventions and misrepresentations become obvious. Irving invents and falsifies in order to make Hitler appear more actively opposed to violence against Jews and their property than he appears in the original testimony. Thus for example:

- Irving simply invents the assertion that 'Göring goggled at this exchange' between Hitler and the Nazi activist. Göring is not mentioned in Hofmann's testimony.
- Irving is wrong to say that the police officer 'goggled' at the exchange. Irving invents this passage to give the impression that Hitler must have expressed his views in an exceptionally forceful way. There is no warrant in the document for such a description.
- It is clear from Hofmann's account that Hitler did not send for the Nazi activist, but that he was already present before Hitler had been told about the incident. Thus Irving portrays Hitler as much more active than he actually had been in Hofmann's version, thereby casting him in a much more favourable light than the document actually allows.
- Finally, the testimony by Hofmann is falsely used by Irving to claim that Hitler acted to maintain order during his putsch attempt in November 1923. Irving is wrong when he claims that the incident took place on the night of the failed putsch. It is clear from Hofmann's testimony that the incident had taken place at some earlier, unspecified time and had no connection with the failed putsch at all.

(v) Use of unreliable sources

- ¹ Until now, we have only examined Irving's misrepresentation of Hofmann's testimony. But the basic question still has to be answered: is Irving right to use Hofmann's testimony as an example for Hitler intervening to protect Jewish property? To answer this question, we have to examine the reliability of Hofmann as a witness. Matthäus Hofmann was a low-ranking official working in the aliens registration office of

the Munich police. He apparently left the force on 1 January 1924. Hofmann was an open supporter of the Nazi Party, and had joined the party in 1921. As a Nazi supporter in the police service, he organised a fast-track system for issuing visas to foreign Nazi sympathisers. Hofmann was also active within the Nazi party organisation. Hitler made him head of the political section of the NSDAP's intelligence unit. It appears that in this capacity Hofmann actually participated in the putsch of 8 and 9 November. There are strong indications that it was he who received the telephone message in the *Löwenbräukeller* announcing that the revolution had broken out. According to his own testimony, he accompanied Hitler for the rest of that night. Hofmann also seems to have visited Hitler in prison while he was awaiting trial.

- ² Hofmann's testimony at Hitler's trial thus has little, if any, credibility. He was a long-standing Nazi supporter and party official, who tried hard to present Hitler in a favourable light as a law-abiding citizen. This tactic was even recognised by the lenient court. After Hofmann's testimony on Hitler's supposed opposition to violence (including Hitler's alleged sacking of the Nazi activist), which Hofmann had volunteered without any prompting from the court, the presiding judge commented: 'It's a nice testimony to you that you are speaking out on behalf of your leader.'
- ³ The reason that other historians have not relied on the testimony of Hofmann is not because of their 'obsessive' views, as Irving alleges, but because the source has no historical value. It is Irving's obsessive views which make him rely on a witness who could not be more biased in favour of Hitler, and it is Irving's dishonesty which leads him to conceal the salient facts about this witness from his readers. Irving obviously knows that the witness was a Nazi Party member, and he has clearly deliberately concealed this fact and made it more difficult for others to discover his deception by failing to provide a proper footnote reference to the document in which it is revealed.

(vi) Skewing reliable sources

- ¹ Irving claims that Hitler acted to protect Jewish property during the putsch in November 1923. In reality, the exact opposite happened. On Hitler's orders, a squad of SA men forced their way into the printing and publishing house of the Jewish brothers Parvus on Promenadenstraße early on 9 November, and under the threat of violence stole a large sum of money, which was later distributed as 'payment' amongst the members of the SA. Hitler openly admitted this at his trial. When asked whether he ordered this particular raid, he replied in the affirmative: 'I did it in memory of the Revolution, which confiscated hundreds of billions in gold from the German people. I felt I had the right to do it.'
- ² Irving mentions this incident in his book on *Görling*. His account of the raid on the Jewish printers is as follows: 'Hitler...sent armed men into the city to requisition funds; they took 14,605,000 billion Reichsmarks from the Jewish bank-note printers Parvus and Company, and gave a Nazi receipt in exchange, Meanwhile, Hitler acted to maintain order.' There then follows the story of the attack on the Jewish delicatessen.
- ³ Irving's account of the robbery of the printing establishment gives the impression that it was not a robbery at all but a 'requisitioning' which happened in an orderly manner and was above-board. If Hitler acted to maintain order, it was not in respect of this action, but with regard to the attack on the delicatessen, which, as we have seen, did not in fact take place during the putsch, if indeed it actually happened in the way claimed by Hofmann at all.
- ⁴ Thus Irving's account of the robbery waters down its illegality and violence and is immediately relativised and undermined in its significance by the following description of Hitler's alleged action in the earlier case.

(vii) Conclusion

- ¹ When examined in detail, Irving's claim that Hitler acted against anti-semitic excesses by his followers during the putsch of 1923 dissolves into thin air. He misrepresents the document on which he relies, he embroiders it with outright inventions, and the document itself turns out to be evidence from a source so biased as to have no credibility at all. He completes this by skewing a genuine source so as to give a misleading impression of Hitler's attitude towards another attack on Jewish property which he himself ordered and justified in his testimony before a court of law.

(c) 'Reichskristallnacht' November 1938.

(i) Background

- ¹ The second link in Irving's 'chain' of proof that Hitler defended the Jews is Hitler's actions during the events of 9-10 November 1938, part-trivialized, part-celebrated by the Nazis as the *Reichskristallnacht* or 'night of broken glass'. This episode is well known to historians. There have been many important scholarly studies based on a painstaking examination of the original archival documentation. These include two accounts by staff members of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich and other detailed studies by widely respected historians of Nazi Germany, also using the extensive original archival material available to historians in a wide variety of repositories in Germany, Britain and the USA. There have also been a number of local studies and exhibitions in German towns. The pogrom was carried out in public and widely reported in the German and international press, and the main events are not disputed by historians.
- ² The course of events on 9-10 November 1938, and their immediate origins, can be briefly summarised as follows. On Monday, 7 November 1938, a young Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, shot and badly wounded the German legation secretary vom Rath in the German Em-

bassy in Paris. Grynszpan said his motive was as a protest against the expulsion of his parents from Germany. The expulsion was part of a dispute between the right-wing, antisemitic government of Poland, which was threatening to deprive Polish Jews living abroad of their Polish citizenship, and the Nazi government in Germany, which had reacted by trying to deport Polish Jews in Germany back to Poland *en masse*. On hearing of the shooting, Hitler expressed his concern for vom Rath by sending his personal physician to Paris.

- ³ On Tuesday 8 November, acting on the instructions of the official German Press Bureau, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi daily paper, reported the shooting and threatened the Jews of Germany with retaliation, particularly against Jewish shops and landlords. These reports were repeated in the local and regional press. Nazi party members and local associations all over Germany were already preparing to celebrate the anniversary of Hitler's unsuccessful attempted *putsch* in Munich on 9 November 1923, and in Kassel and Dessau and some surrounding small towns they led attacks on Jewish community centres, synagogues and cafés, breaking windows and damaging interiors. On the evening of 8 November 1938, Hitler delivered his traditional speech, on the eve of the anniversary of the *putsch*, in the *Bürgerbräukeller* in Munich, without mentioning the assassination attempt on vom Rath.
- ⁴ Wednesday 9 November 1938 was marked by the usual parades and marches commemorating the putsch in Munich. Hitler was told, probably some time in the late afternoon, that vom Rath had died at 5.30 p.m. that day. The news was on the wires, announced by the official German news agency, at 7 p.m.. Hitler then went for dinner to the Old Town Hall, where the Party leadership was gathering to celebrate an evening of comradeship from about 8 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.. After a discussion with Goebbels, Hitler left the dinner to go to his Munich home, although the usual custom was that he should address those present at the commemoration.

- ⁵ Shortly afterwards, at about 10 p.m., Goebbels spoke to the meeting in Hitler's place. According to a report submitted to Hermann Göring by the Supreme Nazi Party Tribunal on 13 February 1939, Goebbels told his audience that there had already been anti-Jewish demonstrations in Hesse and Magdeburg-Anhalt, in which synagogues and Jewish businesses had been destroyed. He added: 'On his briefing, the Führer had decided that such demonstrations were neither to be prepared nor organized by the party, but insofar as they were spontaneous in origin, they should likewise not be quelled.' The decision had probably been discussed by Hitler and Goebbels during the previous dinner conversation. The report added that all those local party chiefs present understood this to mean that the party organization should organize anti-Jewish actions without being seen to do so.
- ⁶ After the end of the meeting at 10.30 p.m. the *Gauleiters* present at the meeting contacted their local staffs and told them to act against Jewish shops, businesses and synagogues. Later that night, SA leaders in Munich also called upon the SA's regional officials all over Germany to organize and participate in the pogrom. The police, meanwhile, were given orders to stay aloof, and police officers were instructed not to participate in the pogrom unless events took a turn which endangered German property or the lives of non-Jewish Germans and foreigners. They were, however, ordered at the same time 'to arrest as many Jews, especially well-off Jews, as can be accommodated in the available detention areas.'
- ⁷ The terror lasted well into the morning of 10 November, 1938, and in some places even longer. One historian has aptly described it as a 'relapse into barbarism.' During the night, according to a first official balance-sheet drawn up on 11 November 1938 by Reinhard Heydrich, head of the security police, 191 synagogues had been set on fire and a further 76 had been completely destroyed. The real figures were of course much higher. A total of around 20,000 Jews had been arrested by the police. The majority of these Jews were released from concen-

tration camps after a few days or weeks, but not before undergoing repeated beatings and humiliations by the SS camp guards. At a meeting chaired by Göring on 12 November 1938, it was disclosed that 7,500 shops and businesses had been destroyed and that there had been some 800 cases of looting, which -unlike the destruction of Jewish premises – appeared to the Nazi leaders as criminal acts. The report of the Supreme Nazi Party court on 13 February 1938 on the pogrom referred to 91 killings, but the real number of deaths, including suicides, was certainly much higher.

- ⁸ These events were the only major nationwide pogrom undertaken in public against the Jewish population during the ‘Third Reich’. It is important to understand the nature of the violence unleashed not only against property but also against persons, which justifies referring to the night of 9-10 November 1938 as a pogrom. The US consul in Leipzig, David Buffum, reported on 21 November on the events in his town starting at 3 o’clock in the morning of 10 November: “Jewish buildings were smashed and contents demolished or looted. In one of the Jewish sections an eighteen-year-old boy was hurled from a three-storey window to land with both legs broken on a street littered with burning beds and other household furniture and effects from his family’s and other apartments. This information was supplied by an attending physician. ...Jewish shop windows by the hundreds were systematically and wantonly smashed throughout the entire city...According to reliable testimony, the debacle was executed by SS men and Stormtroopers not in uniform, each group having been provided with hammers, axes, crowbars and incendiary bombs. Three synagogues in Leipzig were fired simultaneously by incendiary bombs and all sacred objects and records desecrated or destroyed, in most cases hurled through the windows and burned in the streets. No attempts whatsoever were made to quench the fires, the activity of the fire brigade being confined to playing water on adjoining buildings....Having demolished dwellings and hurled most of the movable

effects onto the streets, the insatiably sadistic perpetrators threw many of the trembling inmates into a small stream that flows through the Zoological Park, commanding horrified spectators to spit at them, defile them with mud and jeer at their plight. The latter incident has been repeatedly corroborated by German witnesses who were nauseated in telling the tale. There is much evidence of physical violence, including several deaths. At least half-a-dozen cases have been personally observed, victims with bloody, badly bruised faces having fled to this office, believing that as refugees their desire to emigrate could be expedited here.” Numerous cases brought before German courts shortly after the war against the perpetrators indicated a similar pattern of violence and destruction all over Germany.

- ⁹ The maltreatment of the 20,000 or more Jewish men arrested and taken to concentration camps was similarly described in a large number of eyewitness reports filed both during and after the war by those who successfully reached exile. There is only space here for one such report to give an impression of the kind of hostility and brutality to which the arrested Jewish men – who had been neither formally tried nor found guilty of no crime or offence against the law of any kind – were exposed in the camps. One of the six thousand Hamburg Jews taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp on 10 November described in an eyewitness report written only a short time after these events how he and his fellow-prisoners were “met by a large contingent of SS men upon our arrival in Sachsenhausen. They immediately started to mistreat us so badly by kicking and beating us with rifle butts and truncheons that the police guard which had accompanied us stood aside aghast and then quickly departed...We were forced to stand in the camp for nineteen hours (in some cases, this period was even up to twenty-five hours). During this time, if someone collapsed, he was greeted by a hail of kicks and blows from the butts of rifles. The first thing we heard was a shout for the rabbi in the group, who was dragged by his beard and roughed up. He was then presented with a sign read-

ing, 'I am a traitor and share responsibility for vom Rath's death'. He was forced to carry this sign at arm's length for a period of twelve hours...Then our beards and heads were shaven, and we were forced to stand out in the pouring rain for six hours without food, drink, or head covering...The work we were marched to at double-time pace was performed in the clinker factory (Hermann Göring Werke) and consisted of transporting sand and sacks of cement...Sacks of cement weighing a hundred kilos were lifted without distinction onto the backs of men sixty and sixty-five years old, and they were then forced to drag this heavy burden ...During the return march from work, we trotted in rows of five. Those who collapsed along the way were beaten and then carried on stretchers inside the rows of five men...Whoever did not perform exercises in a sufficiently energetic manner was compelled to 'roll around', that is, he had to roll and spin in the sand until he fainted. These unfortunate souls frequently threw themselves onto the electric fence and were electrocuted or shot by a guard who saw them trying to get across the barrier."

- ¹⁰ The Nazi press presented all this as 'a vivid demonstration of the degree to which the anger of the German people has reached, without Jews suffering any physical harm as a result.'

(ii) Irving's Account of the Events of the Night of 9-10 November 1938

(A) Misquotation and Skewing of Documents: The Goebbels Diary

- ¹ A number of historians have argued with some force that while the initiative for these events came from Goebbels, he wanted to have Hitler's approval from the very outset, and Hitler gave it. The fact that Hitler left the Old Town Hall after dinner on the evening of 9 November without giving his traditional speech is taken as evidence that he and Goebbels considered it important for Hitler, as Head of State, not to incur international opprobrium by being associated with the pogroms, which were presented by Goebbels's propaganda machine as spontan-

eous outbreaks of popular anger (contemporary reports in fact indicate that there was widespread disquiet among the German population, especially at the destruction of so much property).

- ² However, in his various accounts of the events, David Irving argues that Hitler did not approve of the pogrom, did not know about it until it was well under way, and tried to stop it when he found out about it. In order to give this impression, he systematically distorts and manipulates the evidence in a way that is wholly unacceptable to serious historical scholarship.
- ³ The first example of such falsification of the historical record is on pages 273-274 of his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, where Irving writes: "Events that evening, November 9, are crucial to the history of what followed. As Goebbels and Hitler set out to attend the Nazi reception in the old city hall, they learned that the police were intervening against anti-Jewish demonstrators in Munich. Hitler remarked that the police should not crack down too harshly under the circumstances. 'Colossal activity', the Goebbels diary entry reports, then claims: 'I brief the Führer on the affair. He decides: Allow the demonstrations to continue. Hold back the police. The Jews must be given a taste of the public anger for a change.'"
- ⁴ The original German of the entry in Goebbels's diary to which Irving refers in this passage reads as follows: "In Kassel und Dessau große Demonstrationen gegen die Juden, Synagogen in Brand gesteckt und Geschäfte demoliert. Nachmittags wird der Tod des deutschen Diplomaten vom Rath gemeldet. Nun aber ist es g.(ar). Ich gehe zum Parteiempfang im alten Rathaus. Riesenbetrieb. Ich trage dem Führer die Angelegenheit vor. Er bestimmt: Demonstrationen weiterlaufen lassen. Polizei zurückziehen. Die Juden sollen einmal den Volkszorn zu verspüren bekommen. Das ist richtig."

- ⁵ An accurate translation of this passage would be as follows: “Big demonstrations against the Jews in Kassel and Dessau, synagogues set on fire and businesses demolished. The death of the German diplomat vom Rath is reported in the afternoon. But now the goose is cooked. I go to the Party reception in the Old Town Hall. Colossal activity. I brief the Führer about the matter. He orders: let the demonstrations go on. Withdraw the police. The Jews must for once feel the people’s fury. That is right.” Irving’s account of this diary entry, given above, misquotes it and skews it so as to misrepresent its contents.
- ⁶ In this passage, Irving completely omits the reference to the demonstrations and widespread destruction of Jewish property in Kassel and Dessau which is the context of Goebbels’s talk with Hitler as reported in the diary, and gives the entirely false impression that the context was provided by ‘some anti-Jewish demonstrators’ in Munich. This suggestion is nonsensical. No contemporary source, neither Goebbels’s diary nor the Nazi Party’s Supreme Tribunal, makes any reference to ‘anti-Jewish demonstrators’ making their presence felt in Munich before Hitler’s arrival at the Town Hall. As Irving himself admits in his Pleading, such events did not take place in Munich until much later, on the evening of 9 November 1938.
- ⁷ Irving also fails to note that the phrase ‘colossal activity’ refers to the meeting in the Town Hall (basically it just means there were a lot of people there) and not to the alleged demonstrations in Munich. ‘Hold back the police’ is absolutely wrong as a translation of *Polizei zurückziehen*: its proper translation is: ‘withdraw the police’. ‘Hold back the police’ would be ‘Polizei zurückhalten’. ‘The Jews must be given a taste of the public anger for a change’ is also erroneous as a translation of the last sentence in the German quotation above. Nowhere do the words ‘taste’ or ‘for a change’ occur. The cumulative effect of these mistranslations and omissions is to give the impression that Hitler merely ordered the Munich police not to intervene against some unspecified ‘anti-Jewish demonstrators in Munich’. But what Hitler really

said to Goebbels, as is evident from the Goebbels diary entry, was that police forces should be withdrawn in the case of ‘demonstrations’ against Jews, so that the Jews would feel the ‘people’s fury’, as expressed in the burning of synagogues and the destruction of property which had occurred in Kassel and Dessau.

(B) Suppression of relevant evidence: the Eberstein testimony and the Goebbels speech in the Old Town Hall

- ¹ Irving’ tries to suggest that Goebbels did not know about the pogroms in Kassel and Dessau until *after* he had spoken to Hitler at the dinner in the Old Town Hall. This would reinforce his claim that Hitler was not involved. In his pleading in the case, Irving suggests that the diary entry for the previous day, 8 November, in which Goebbels first mentions the demonstrations in Hesse, was written up not the following morning (which would have proved Goebbels knew about them on 9 November) but at a later date.
- ² But this is completely irrelevant. The diary entry for 9 November, quoted above, demonstrates that Goebbels knew about the pogroms in Kassel and Dessau before he had dinner with Hitler and that they were the subject of the two men’s discussion before Hitler left the Old Town Hall. Indeed, the attacks were reported in the morning issue of the Nazi Party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, of 9 November, which Goebbels would certainly have read and authorized.
- ³ Irving completely fails to mention the report of the Munich police chief Eberstein, whose testimony he uses in other instances, of Hitler’s intense discussions with Goebbels at the dinner, after supposedly receiving the news of vom Rath’s death. These discussions between Hitler and Goebbels are also reported by several other witnesses used by Irving in his account. By suppressing this well-known piece of testimony, Irving reinforces the impression given in his book that Hitler was not involved in Goebbels’s encouragement to the local party leaders present in the Old Town Hall to repeat the excesses in Kassel and

Dessau in the rest of Germany. Irving continues to suggest that Hitler left the dinner in total ignorance by claiming that only after Hitler had left the Old Town Hall in Munich did Goebbels decide, on an *ad-hoc* basis, to incite the Nazi leaders present to give orders to start the pogrom. After Hitler left, Irving claims, *Gauleiter* Rudolf Jordan “now told Goebbels of widespread anti-Jewish violence in Magdeburg. According to Bormann’s adjutant Heim, Goebbels seemed taken aback by this: things were getting out of hand and the carefully propagated image of German law and order was taking a battering. Deciding to make a virtue out of necessity...[Goebbels] announced the death of the German diplomat and the anti-Jewish incidents...The local British consulate learned that he also said that Jews were now fair game and that ‘the SA could do anything to them short of looting and plundering’.”

- ⁴ This account is highly suspicious on three counts. First, there is no indication in the Goebbels diary that Goebbels was at all concerned about the sporadic anti-Jewish violence which had taken place over the preceding days, and of which he was well aware. For instance, in his diary entry on 9 November 1938 (describing the events of the previous day), Goebbels noted: ‘Big antisemitic demonstrations in Hesse. The synagogues are burned down. If only one could now unleash the people’s fury!’ Thus, not only did he have no worries about the local violence undermining the propaganda image of Germany, he was even hoping that the ‘people’s fury’ could be unleashed on a wider scale. Goebbels certainly made no sudden decision to start a pogrom after Hitler had left the dinner.
- ⁵ Secondly, the reason why it was on the evening of 9 November 1938 that Goebbels held the speech aimed at unleashing the ‘people’s fury’ was not because he had just received news about what happened in Magdeburg, but because he had evidently received Hitler’s general permission to do so. As will be remembered, Goebbels noted in his diary that before Hitler had left the dinner in the Old Town Hall, he told Goebbels: ‘Let the demonstrations go on. Withdraw the police. The

Jews must for once feel the people's fury'. Hitler's involvement in the decision-making process is confirmed by another contemporary source, the investigation of the Supreme Nazi Party Court into the pogrom already mentioned above. According to the court's report, Goebbels told the Nazi officials in the Old Town Hall about the anti-Jewish demonstrations in Hesse and Magdeburg-Anhalt, adding: 'On his briefing, the Führer had decided' that such demonstrations should not be stopped. Goebbels is extremely unlikely to have lied to an audience of Nazi officials about an order from Hitler if that order had not actually been issued. Irving is familiar with this source. Yet, this key part of Goebbels speech on 9 November 1938 is entirely omitted by Irving in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*. This amounts to a serious suppression of relevant historical evidence. Only by suppressing this information can Irving later claim that the Supreme Court inquiry left little doubt about Goebbels's 'sole personal guilt'.

- ⁶ Third, the account given by Gauleiter Jordan in his memoirs of his conversation with Goebbels is totally at odds with Irving's description of this conversation. According to Jordan, after Hitler had left the dinner on 9 November 1938, "I went after a while to Goebbels and reported to him on the two Magdeburg occurrences. He looked at me mockingly and said: "Don't trouble your thoughts with these little miniature outrages. From other areas I have similar and more exciting reports...That is just the very first beginning. The German people still have enough sense of honour to hand out a very different answer to Jewry after the cowardly terror-murder. Just you wait five more minutes. Then I will take a position on the subject.."
- ⁷ Thus, according to Jordan's own recollections, Goebbels was by no means taken aback. On the contrary, it had already been decided that Goebbels would give a speech and incite the Nazi officials present to unleash the 'people's fury' on a wider-scale.

- ⁸ In the light of all this evidence, therefore, it is clear that Irving's claim that Goebbels only decided to unleash the pogrom after Hitler had left the dinner at the Old Town Hall, a claim which Irving puts forward in order to absolve Hitler from responsibility for the pogrom, and can only be maintained on the basis of manipulation and suppression of the historical record.

(C) Manipulation of evidence: The involvement of the SA in the pogrom

- ¹ Part of Irving's strategy in his account of the pogrom is to suggest that practically all leading Nazis were opposed to what was 'Goebbels's folly'. Thus, Irving argues that, Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich and many others completely opposed the pogrom. As will be demonstrated later, these claims rely to a large extent on the blatant manipulation of the documentary evidence. Another person whom Irving presents as having been opposed to the pogrom is the SA leader Victor Lutze. In *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving writes that after Goebbels's speech on 9 November 1938, one witness, Max Jüttner, saw Lutze 'warn his old friend Goebbels that his S.A. men would keep well out of any pogrom'. Further on in the text, Irving refers to Lutze's 'misgivings' regarding the burning of synagogues by SA men. Also, he supports his claim that the SA leadership opposed the pogrom by stating that 'only three of the twenty-eight S.A. Gruppen received actual orders to stage demonstrations'. These claims by Irving do not hold up when examined in the light of the historical evidence.
- ² To begin with, Jüttner is anything but a reliable source, having been a very senior SA official in Nazi Germany. From 1934 onwards, Jüttner acted as head of the *Führungsamt der Obersten SA-Führung*, and in 1939 he was appointed as Lutze's deputy (*Stellvertreter des Stabschefs der SA*). For this reason, Jüttner had a vested interest after the war in claiming that the SA had not been involved in any criminal activities. During his testimony at the Nuremberg trial, and in subsequent written state-

ments, he repeatedly lied about the SA's involvement in the violence and destruction in November 1938. For this reason alone, his claim that Lutze banned the SA from taking part in the pogrom must be regarded with great suspicion. Jüttner's claim is further undermined by contemporary documents which demonstrate the massive involvement of the SA and its leaders in the pogrom.

- ³ The improbability of Jüttner's claim is clearly demonstrated by the NSDAP's own Supreme Party Court, which found that all party officials present (which included Lutze) at Goebbels's speech on 9 November 1938 apparently understood this speech to mean that 'the Party should not appear to the outside world as the originator of the demonstrations, but should in reality organize them and carry them out.' That regional SA commanders received orders to start the pogrom from above is also borne out by several contemporary documents which clearly show the active role played by the SA group leaders (the top regional SA officials), most of whom were present in Munich. For instance, when the leader of the SA group *Nordmark*, Mayer-Quade, was informed in Munich at about 10 p.m. on 9 November 1938 of the impending pogrom, he contacted the *Gauleiter* of Schleswig-Holstein, Hinrich Lohse, to offer the 'voluntary' participation of his SA group. At around 23.20, Mayer-Quade instructed the *Stabsführer* of the SA group *Nordmark* in Kiel: "A Jew has fired a shot. A German diplomat is dead. Completely superfluous assembly houses are standing in Freidrichstadt, Kiel, Lübeck and elsewhere. These people also still have shops with us. Both are superfluous. There must be no maltreatment of people. Foreign Jews must not be touched. Use weapons in case of resistance. The action must be carried out in civilian clothing and be finished at 5 a.m.." As a consequence of this order, the local SA in Schleswig, Lübeck, Heide and Pinneberg raided Jewish houses, synagogues and shops, and shot two Jews.

- ⁴ Similarly, the leader of the SA Brigade 50 reported on 11 November 1938 that on the previous day he had received orders from his superior, the SA group leader in the Palatinate (*Kurpfalz*): “The following order reached me at 3 a.m. on 10. 11. 1938: On the orders of the Gruppenführer all Jewish synagogues in the area of Brigade 50 are immediately to be blown up or set on fire. Neighbouring houses which are inhabited by the Aryan population must not be damaged. The action is to be carried out in civilian clothing. Mutinies and acts of looting are to be forbidden.”
- ⁵ As a consequence of this order, SA Brigade 50 destroyed (or partially destroyed) a total of 35 synagogues. Herbert Fust was the SA Gruppenführer *Kurpfalz* who had given the orders for this orgy of destruction to SA Brigade 50. Contradicting this documentary evidence of Fust’s actions, Irving in his account claims that Fust explicitly ordered that no synagogues should be destroyed at all. This claim goes far beyond any mere manipulation of a source. Irving mistakenly refers to Fust as ‘Lust’. He provides no evidence for his claims regarding Fust, which are nothing more than pure invention.
- ⁶ The leader of SA group *Nordsee*, Böhmcker, in the evening of 9 November 1938 issued the following instructions from Munich to his subordinates: ‘All Jewish shops are immediately to be destroyed by SA-men in uniform...Jewish synagogues are to be immediately set on fire...The police are not permitted to interfere. The Führer wants the police not to interfere...All Jews are to be disarmed. In case of resistance immediately shoot them down.’ There is no mention of this order in Irving’s *Goebbels*.
- ⁷ These orders by the SA group leaders *Nordmark*, *Kurpfalz* and *Nordsee* make Jüttner’s story highly improbable. It is extremely unlikely that the SA group leaders issued orders to organise the pogrom of their own accord, in flagrant disregard of the orders which Irving claims their superior officer Lutze issued to keep the SA out of the whole affair. It is

extremely misleading by Irving to claim that only three SA groups ‘received actual orders to stage demonstrations’. To be sure, only the three orders cited above have survived; but this does not mean that no other such orders were given to any other SA groups. In fact, it is clear that many other SA group leaders (*Gruppenführer*) gave similar orders which have not survived in the archives. This has been confirmed in numerous post-war testimonies by SA- and NSKK-*Obergruppenführer* und *Gruppenführer*, who stated that Lutze on 9 November 1938 instructed the Nazi officials very much in accordance with Goebbels’s speech, and that after these instructions, the *SA-Gruppenführer* rang their district officials to give them the orders for carrying out the pogrom. That such orders were issued seems also clear from the involvement of SA groups in violence and destruction against Jews and Jewish property all over Germany on 9 and 10 November 1938. Various contemporary documents and evidence collected in numerous post-war trials established the participation of the SA in a great number of cities and towns beyond any doubt. Thus Irving’s claim that Lutze had opposed the pogrom and ordered the SA not to get involved is contradicted by a great wealth of historical evidence. It is not even confirmed by Lutze’s own diary, cited by Irving elsewhere. There is no documentary evidence for Irving’s assertion that only three SA groups received orders to participate in the pogrom. Irving has taken over this claim from the antisemitic Nazi-sympathiser Ingrid Weckert, whose writings (and Irving’s use of them) will be discussed in detail later in this Report.

(D) Invention and manipulation of evidence: the Eberstein testimony

- ¹ Having given the impression that Hitler knew nothing of the initial pogroms of 8-9 November, Irving now goes on to suggest that when he did discover what was going on, he was extremely angry and tried to stop it. At one point, Irving refers to Hitler’s ‘fury’ about the pogrom. In a speech delivered in 1983, Irving claimed that Hitler did ‘everything

he could to prevent things nasty happening' to the Jews. Once more, his account relies on a tissue of inventions, manipulations, suppressions and omissions.

- ² The first piece of evidence other than the Goebbels diaries which Irving handles in this way is the testimony of the Munich police chief and SS-*Obergruppenführer* Friedrich Karl von Eberstein to the Nuremberg trial. Irving claims that when the management of the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten phoned Hitler's private apartment after 1 a.m. on 10 November to report that the synagogue had been set alight, Hitler sent for Eberstein, who found him 'livid with rage'.
- ³ Irving's whole account of this incident lacks any kind of credibility when checked against the sources. The evidence offered by Irving for the encounter between Eberstein and Hitler is the 'testimony of Wilhelm Brückner', which Irving provides no further details about and which he has not disclosed to the court. Brückner was a close associate of Hitler, and as such, his testimony has to be treated with due caution. Brückner boasted after the war that between 1930 and 1940, when was the Head of Hitler's *Adjutantur*, he saw Hitler almost every single day. Brückner was also an *Obergruppenführer* in the SA, in which he had already been a *Führer* (according to another of Hitler's loyal followers) before 1923. Irving only provides an incomplete reference for Brückner's testimony, which could not be located in the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich. The only document which could be located was a summary of a statement of Brückner, written by a German historian. According to this summary, Brückner claimed that Hitler 'is said to have raged' when he was informed of the burning Munich synagogue. However, Brückner does not confirm Irving's statement that Hitler sent for Eberstein. The statement merely mentions that 'Brückner betook himself to Hitler, probably accompanied by the Munich Police President Baron von Eberstein.' Thus, even Irving's main witness is not sure whether Eberstein was with Hitler or not; he only thinks he 'probably' was.

- ⁴ The claim that Hitler spoke in anger to Eberstein is advanced by another of Irving's sources, Hitler's adjutant Nicolaus von Below, in a transcribed interview with Irving. As will be shown later in this report, however, this is a highly unreliable source. Little weight should be placed by serious historians on von Below's claims as reported by Irving. In fact, it is unlikely that the exchange between Hitler and Eberstein took place in the manner described by Irving. It seems unlikely that Hitler was 'livid with rage' after he had instructed Goebbels only a few hours previously that the Jews were to be given 'a taste of the public anger for a change', as Goebbels had noted in his diary. Also, in his testimony at the Nuremberg trial, Eberstein himself never mentioned such a meeting with Hitler, although there was no reason for him not to have mentioned it had the meeting actually taken place. Irving is of course familiar with the trial records, and must know that they cast grave doubt on his version of events, which is no doubt why he ignores them in this instance.
- ⁵ Most importantly, if he really had found Hitler 'livid with rage' about the pogrom, then why did Eberstein send a telex later the same night to the Gestapo in Augsburg, Nuremberg, Würzburg and Neustadt, repeating the order that the police were not to interfere in the 'actions against the Jews' which were taking place all over Germany? This would appear to have been a deliberate flouting of Hitler's wishes, which would have been inconceivable. In order to overcome this problem, Irving claims that the instruction to the Gestapo in Augsburg and the other towns was sent out before Eberstein's supposed 'bawling out' by Hitler. But this would mean that Hitler was not informed about the nationwide pogrom until after 2 a.m. on the morning of 10 November, the time when Eberstein sent his order out. At one point, Irving does indeed suggest this, claiming in a lecture given in 1983 that von Below had told him during their interview: 'Mr. Irving, the first thing that Hitler knew about the night of broken glass throughout the pogrom that evening was when the phone rang at 2.00 in the morning in our

adjutants' apartment.' But we know that large numbers of Nazi officials of all ranks were informed about it hours before. It is inconceivable that Hitler was kept in the dark when everyone else knew what was going on. Moreover, Irving's 1983 claim is not borne out by the transcript of his interview with von Below, where no time at all is given for the phone call, so that it appears to be pure invention on Irving's part.

- ⁶ According to a number of other testimonies, the leading officials in Munich received details of the pogrom well before midnight. Heydrich received first reports at around 11.15 p.m. on the night of 9 November, his close associate SS-Gruppenführer Karl Wolff found out about the burning of the synagogues and other excesses about five minutes later, and Eberstein received reports of a burning synagogue in Munich before a quarter to midnight. Two of these sources, which this Report will examine in greater detail below, also provide convincing evidence for the conclusion that Hitler himself was informed about the pogrom before midnight. Irving is familiar with these sources, but he suppresses them because they would seriously undermine his attempt to dissociate Hitler from the pogrom.
- ⁷ Reich Propaganda Minister Goebbels and *Gauleiter* Wagner were also informed of the first destructive actions against Jewish synagogues and shops well before midnight. Most of these leading Nazi officials were present at midnight at the swearing in of SS troops at the *Feldherrenhalle*, where Hitler spoke to the new recruits. Irving himself has acknowledged in the past that Hitler was informed of the pogrom before midnight on 9 November 1938, a fact which completely discredits his own later claim that Hitler was informed only after Eberstein's telex was sent at 2.10 am on 10 November 1938. And Hitler, as we have seen, had already ordered that 'The Jews must for once feel the people's fury', so why should he have any reason to be angry about what was going on.

(E) Use of unreliable evidence, suppression of reliable testimony, and invention: von Below and Schaub

- ¹ Next, according to Irving, Hitler phoned Goebbels and ‘tore the strips off him’. Irving continues his narrative: “According to Luftwaffe adjutant Nicolaus von Below, Hitler phoned Goebbels. ‘What’s going on?’ he snapped, and: ‘Find out!’ According to Julius Schaub, the most intimate of his aids, Hitler ‘made a terrible scene with Goebbels’s and left no doubt about the damage done abroad to Germany’s name. He sent Schaub and his colleagues out into the streets to stop the looting (thus Schaub’s postwar version).”
- ² Irving had already given a similar description in his 1978 book on the prewar years of Nazi Germany, *The War Path*: ‘He [Hitler] telephoned Goebbels and furiously demanded: “What’s the game?” He sent out Schaub and other members of his staff to stop the looting and arson.’
- ³ Julius Schaub was one of the longest-standing followers of Hitler, having first joined the Nazi party (NSDAP) in 1921 or 1922. Schaub took part in the failed putsch of November 1923, and served a prison sentence for his involvement with Hitler in Landsberg. From 1925 onwards, he served as Hitler’s personal adjutant. By 1938, he had risen to the rank of *SS-Gruppenführer* in the SS. At this time, he was also in possession of various prestigious Nazi decorations, such as the *Blutorden* for his participation in the 1923 putsch. In his post-war testimony, Schaub exonerated Hitler from various crimes and portrayed Hitler as a peace-loving man. In his private circle, Schaub claimed, Hitler had cursed the war and ‘was always for peace.’ Clearly, Schaub must be regarded as a highly unreliable witness.
- ⁴ The source which Irving gives for Schaub’s claims is: ‘Schaub’s unpubl. memoirs, in the author’s collection (IfZ:ED.100/202)’. However, there is no reference to the pogrom on 9-10 November 1938 in this file in the Munich Institute of Contemporary History. Once more, Irving makes it difficult to verify his claims. Thus, the reference has to be located in

another file. Also, it is very misleading to describe the notes in this file as ‘unpublished memoirs’. In any case, Schaub’s claims are completely undermined by other sources. Thus, the claim that Hitler was outraged at the pogrom and attempted ‘to rescue what could still be rescued, and ordered that his people, his entourage, including Schaub, had to stop the looting immediately’, is clearly proven to be a self-serving lie by Schaub to protect himself. For according to Goebbels’s diary, Schaub was not trying to stop the violence but was actively involved in it: “The *Shock-troop Hitler* gets going immediately to clear things out in Munich. That then happens straight away. A synagogue is battered into a lump...The Shock-troop carries out frightful work...We go with Schaub to the Artists’ Club, to await further reports. In Berlin 5, then 15 synagogues burn down. Now the people’s anger is raging...Schaub is completely worked up. His old shock-troop past is waking up.”

- ⁵ This contemporary document – not mentioned by Irving – is clearly incompatible with Schaub’s claims, which are also undermined by the evidence given after the war by von Below, another of Hitler’s adjutants, which is used by Irving himself.
- ⁶ In his memoirs, von Below claims that he was in Hitler’s apartment in the night of 9 November 1938. He reports that Hitler phoned Goebbels privately from his own living room, so that it would not have been possible for him or Schaub to have heard what was going on; certainly, von Below made no claim to have overheard Hitler’s end of the conversation. Von Below states quite clearly that Hitler conducted his phone conversation with Goebbels ‘on his own, from his living-room’. Irving generally regards von Below as a reliable witness, but clearly it is not in the interest of his argument to cite him on this point, and so he does not.
- ⁷ Typically, Irving gives no reference for his claims regarding von Below in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the ‘Third Reich’*. But it appears clear in this instance that rather than relying on the published, written memoirs of

von Below, which so crassly contradict Irving's account of events, Irving's book relies instead on the interview its author conducted with von Below in 1968. Even here, however, Irving misrepresents and misreads his own transcript of what he claims von Below told him. After receiving details of the pogrom, von Below allegedly told Irving, Schaub passed on the news to Hitler. The transcript (with questions put to von Below by Irving in brackets) continues: "Then the police president of Munich, von Eberstein, was immediately summoned. Herr von Eberstein then appeared straight away in the Führer's apartment, he was also an SS-*Obergruppenführer*. He was now interrogated by Hitler. Then a telephone conversation took place between Hitler and Göbbels (*sic*) on the situation. (did he also stay in Munich?). I don't know. The people must all have been in Munich because of the 8/9 November. (What was Hitler's reaction to the first reports?) Well, "what's going on, please find out, I have to know what the game is." I had the impression that all of us, including Hitler himself, were all in the same basket, nobody knew anything....Then Hitler became angry and spoke very loudly to Eberstein...I heard this because the conversation took place between the door and the jamb. But what the situation was with the order to Göbbels (*sic*) or to Himmler for the rest of the Reich territory, I don't know."

- 8 Regardless of whether this account by von Below is to be believed (and there are good reasons for disbelieving it), it is abundantly clear from it that Hitler's demand to be informed about what was going on was not made on the phone to Goebbels, as suggested by Irving, but as a reaction to being told initially of the pogrom by Schaub well before the phone conversation with Goebbels. Von Below also again makes clear that he did not listen in to or overhear the phone conversation between Goebbels and Hitler. Finally, there is no indication that Hitler 'snapped' any orders as Irving claims. What Irving says in his account of these events is not even borne out by his own interview transcript.

- ⁹ It is worth adding that in the Preface to his published memoirs, von Below took strong exception to Irving's claim that he had provided Irving with 'unpublished contemporary manuscripts and letters' and had checked through 'many pages' of Irving's manuscript. 'I remember, to be sure', von Below wrote, 'some visits by Irving, during which I answered his questions. But I must decidedly reject his more far-reaching claims as not corresponding to the truth.' Irving's own claims of what von Below said to him during their interview must in the light of all this be regarded with a considerable measure of distrust. On no account is Irving's claim that von Below actually approved of his depiction of the events of 9-10 November 1938 to be accepted.
- ¹⁰ The claim that Hitler made a 'terrible scene with Goebbels's and told him that he utterly condemned the pogrom is further disproved by contemporary documentation. Throughout Goebbels diary entry describing the events of 9-10 November 1938, Goebbels clearly revels in the destruction and violence. There is no indication whatsoever for any disapproval by Hitler regarding what was going on, even in the early morning of 10 November 1938: 'In Berlin 5, the 15 synagogues burn down. Now the people's anger rages. Nothing more can be done against it for the night. And I don't want to do anything either. Should be given free rein...As I drive to the hotel, windows shatter. Bravo! Bravo! The synagogues burn in all big cities. German property is not endangered.'
- ¹¹ This euphoric state of mind is hard to reconcile with Goebbels having just been informed by Hitler personally of his strong disapproval of the pogrom. Goebbels attitude that night is confirmed by the Supreme NS-DAP Party Tribunal report of 13 February 1939. When Goebbels was phoned at around 2 in the morning on 10 November with the news that the first Jew had been killed in the pogrom, 'Party Comrade Goebbels answered to the effect that the man reporting it should not get upset because of one dead Jew, thousands of Jews would have to believe in it the coming days.'

- ¹² Clearly, these documents show that Irving's claim that Goebbels was told by Hitler personally in no uncertain terms of his total opposition to the pogrom, and that Hitler then sent Schaub and others to stop the arson and the looting, is entirely fictitious. Irving relies in his book on Julius Schaub's testimony, despite the fact that Schaub is a highly unreliable witness, despite the fact that Schaub's version is not (as Irving claims) backed up by von Below, and despite the fact that it is discredited by contemporary documentation. That Irving persists in using Schaub's testimony amounts to a wilful manipulation of the historical record.

(F) False attribution of conclusions to reliable sources: the Heydrich telex

- ¹ Other evidence, too, points to Irving's claim about Hitler ordering a stop to the destruction of synagogues and Jewish shops being completely false. This becomes obvious if one investigates the orders given to the German police in the night of 9-10 November 1938. In his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving claims that the *Reichsführer-SS* and Chief of the German Police, Heinrich Himmler, was 'totally unaware' of the pogrom until 1 a.m. on 10 November 1948. According to Irving, once his immediate subordinate Reinhard Heydrich, Head of the German Security Police (including the criminal and political police) heard that the Munich synagogue next to the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten had been set ablaze, he 'hurried up to Himmler's room, then telexed instructions to all police authorities to restore law and order, protect Jews and Jewish property, and halt any ongoing incidents'. The only historical truth in this account is the assertion that Heydrich sent a telex to the German police authorities. Everything else is a blatant manipulation of the historical record.
- ² On 10 November 1938, at 1.20 a.m., Heydrich transmitted orders given to him by Himmler further down the chain of command to the leading police officials and members of the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst* or Security

Service) all over Germany instructing them not to prevent the destruction of Jewish property or get in the way of violent acts committed against German Jews. The telex told officials that ‘demonstrations against the Jews are to be expected in the course of this night – 9th to 10th November 1938 – in the entire Reich....the demonstrations which occur are not to be hindered by the police’.

- 3 On Himmler’s instruction, there were, to be sure, some restrictions placed on the action: “a) Only such measures may be taken as do not involve any endangering of German life or property (e.g. synagogue fires only if there is no danger of the fire spreading to the surrounding buildings), b) The shops and dwellings of Jews may only be destroyed, not looted. The police are instructed to supervise the implementation of this order and to arrest looters. c) Care is to be taken that non-Jewish shops in shopping streets are unconditionally secured against damage. d) Foreign nationals may not be assaulted, even if they are Jews.”
- 4 Thus the police were explicitly ordered not to intervene in the destruction except in these four very particular, exceptional circumstances. The telex, in other words, ordered the exact opposite to what Irving claimed it did. It would be hard to find a clearer example of the false attribution of a conclusion to a legitimate historical document in the interests of the manipulation of the historical truth.
- 5 But Irving’s manipulations in this case go further than this falsification of the content of Heydrich’s telex of 10 November 1938. Irving’s account of the actions of Heydrich and Himmler on this particular night have to be seen in the overall context of his claim that Hitler was furiously angry about the pogrom and ordered it to be stopped as soon as he found out about it. There is strong evidence that Himmler and Hitler talked together about the pogrom well before midnight on 9 November. This evidence suggests strongly that Hitler was not ‘furious’ about the pogrom and that he did not give any orders to bring it to a

halt. For if Himmler had had contact with Hitler before Heydrich's telex relaying his (Himmler's) orders to the German police at 1.20 a.m. on 10 November 1938, and Hitler had indeed ordered a halt to the destruction of Jewish property, it is inconceivable that Himmler and Heydrich would have sent out instructions that the pogrom was 'not to be hindered by the police'.

- ⁶ This becomes clear in the light of the evidence of *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Luitpold Schallermeier to the Nuremberg war crimes trial and the witness statement of *SS-Gruppenführer* Karl Wolff now preserved in the files of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History. Of course, both these statements have to be examined critically in the light of the obvious interest in self-exculpation on the part of those who made them. For instance, in his desire to distance the SS from the pogrom and thus avoid possible prosecution by the German courts, Schallermeier untruthfully claimed that Himmler had ordered the SS in the early morning of 10 November to help protect Jewish persons from attack, a claim flatly disproved by Heydrich's telex of 1.20 a.m. quoted above.
- ⁷ Schallermeier reported that when Heydrich received news of the pogrom, he sent Karl Wolff to Hitler's apartment. Wolff arrived there at about 11.30 p.m.. Himmler was already present in the apartment. After the swearing-in of SS troops on the Odeonsplatz at midnight by Hitler and Himmler, the latter returned to his hotel, where Heydrich was waiting for him. Himmler told Heydrich that Hitler had forbidden the SS and police to intervene in or stop the pogrom, and then gave Heydrich his orders to telex to police forces in the rest of Germany, which he did at 1.20 a.m.. Later on the same night, Himmler dictated a short note to Schallermeier in which he blamed Goebbels as the main instigator of the pogrom.
- ⁸ Schallermeier's account of these events is supported by Wolff's testimony, given in 1948: "Shortly before the swearing-in of the SS forces – roughly just before 23.20 hrs, – I heard about synagogue fires and ex-

cesses. I thereupon went straight away to Hitler's private apartment, where Himmler was present, and reported the events. Both had not yet been informed and were completely surprised. In my presence, Hitler gave Himmler the order that the SS itself must in all circumstances keep out of these events."

⁹ These accounts can also help to interpret another key document which is completely ignored by Irving in his biography of Goebbels. On 9 November 1938, at five to midnight, almost an hour and a half before Heydrich's telex, *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Heinrich Müller had already sent a telex from Berlin to the German police officials with instructions about the pogrom. Müller was the head of Section II of the Security Police, dealing with internal political policing, and a direct subordinate of Heydrich. In this telex, Müller warned German police officials that "Actions against Jews, in particular against their synagogues, will very shortly take place across the whole of Germany. They are not to be interrupted. However, measures are to be taken in co-operation with the *Ordnungspolizei* for looting and other special excesses to be prevented...The arrest of about 20-30,000 Jews in the Reich is to be prepared. Propertied Jews above all are to be chosen. More detailed instructions will be issued in the course of the present night."

¹⁰ It is unthinkable that Müller, a Bavarian career policeman who had been employed in the German police administration since 1919, would have sent this telex without having been instructed to do so by his superior, either Heydrich or Himmler or both. Just as Hitler, according to Schallermeier and Wolff, had told Himmler to order the police not to intervene, so too did Müller. Thus it seems likely that the content of this telex was transmitted by Himmler or Heydrich to Müller in Berlin after the former's conversation with Hitler.

¹¹ Müller's telex is the only document sent by a leading police official that states the number of Jews to be arrested, a number which tallies with the figure which Goebbels's diary notes was personally and directly

ordered by Hitler himself. The coincidence of the two figures named by Müller and by Goebbels is another strong indication that Hitler and the police leadership had been in contact with one another before Müller sent out his telex. Irving, for his part, cites the Goebbels diary entry, only first to cast doubt on its validity as a source, then to falsify it by reporting on the basis of this reference, not that Hitler *ordered* the Jews arrested, but that he *failed to prevent* them being taken to concentration camps. In fact, Hitler's direct and personal responsibility for the mass arrest of Jews which formed such a central part of the pogrom seems quite beyond dispute.

- ¹² The suggestion that Hitler met with Himmler on the night of 9 November 1938 before any orders were issued to the police is further confirmed by another important contemporary document. On 11 November 1938, the British Consul in Munich reported to the Foreign Office that "I learn from a reliable source that Dr. Goebbels at a meeting here of the "old Guard" on November 10th on hearing that vom Rath had died in Paris announced that Jews were now beyond the law and that the S.A. could do anything to them short of looting and plundering. The old Guard were prominent in attacks on Jewish shops which followed. Herr Hitler and Herr Himmler were in consultation on the same evening and the latter subsequently issued an order forbidding all Jews to carry arms under penalty of twenty years imprisonment."
- ¹³ The information of the British diplomats in this case was remarkably accurate. Their summary of Goebbels's speech is broadly confirmed by other sources, such as the Nazis' own internal inquiry into the pogrom. Also, the circular sent out by Heinrich Müller on 9 November 1938 at 23.55 did indeed contain instructions for the police regarding armed Jews, just as the British diplomats had noted. Irving is familiar with the report of the British Consul. He cites some parts of it in his account of '*Kristallnacht*' and even comments on the reliability of the document.

Yet, in his attempt to distance Hitler from the pogrom, he completely suppresses the information that Hitler and Himmler met on the evening of 9 November 1938.

- ¹⁴ So there is a very strong likelihood that Hitler met Himmler before midnight on 9 November 1938 and issued him with instructions for the police in connection with the pogrom. Hitler did not, as Irving claims, order a stop to the pogrom once he found out about it, otherwise such an order would have been passed on in the telexes sent out by Heydrich and Müller. Indeed some SA leaders were already informed late on 9 November 1938 that Hitler wished the police not to intervene against the pogrom. This is obvious in the order given from Munich by the leader of the SA-group *Nordsee* in the evening of 9 November 1938. He instructed the local SA to destroy all Jewish shops and businesses, and to burn down all synagogues. The SA Group leader added the statement, quoted above, that Hitler himself did not wish the police to interfere.
- ¹⁵ In *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving either ignores or dismisses the evidence contained in these various documents. As this Report has already noted, he suppresses the fact that the British diplomats reported that Himmler met with Hitler on 9 November 1938, before instructions were issued to the police. Irving also simply dismisses Wolff's testimony, claiming on the basis of no evidence at all that Wolff was 'evidently wrong...in placing Himmler in Hitler's apartment at this time.' Moreover, while Wolff states quite clearly that he had been in Hitler's apartment before midnight, Irving deliberately falsifies this testimony by implying that Wolff claimed to have been there at around 1 a.m.. Finally, Irving fails to mention that Wolff's testimony is supported by Schallermeier's; indeed he does not mention Schallermeier's evidence directly at all, he only uses the parts of it which fit into the story he is trying to construct, while actually disguising the fact that he is using Schallermeier as a source (because, obviously, the assiduous reader, in following up a footnote to Schaller-

meier's testimony, would immediately discover that it includes evidence which fatally undermines the account of these events given by Irving). Thus Irving fails to mention that Schallermeier reports Himmler as present in Hitler's apartment before midnight, but on the other hand he does cite the brief note which Himmler dictated to Schallermeier in the early hours of 10 November blaming Goebbels for having instigated the pogrom. Irving, of course, has extracted this note from Schallermeier's affidavit; but he disguises the fact by referring in the footnotes merely to a 'Himmler memorandum, cited by Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York, 1973). This mysterious 'Himmler memorandum', of course, when checked through Hilberg's source references (a lengthy business since Irving fails to provide a page reference, and Hilberg's book is very long indeed), turns out to be none other than Schallermeier's affidavit.

- ¹⁶ Irving's persistently partial and manipulative use of such sources leads to increasing contradictions in his work. In *The War Path*, for instance, Irving writes that after the dinner at Munich's old Town Hall on 9 November, Hitler was in his private apartment with Himmler, where both were informed before midnight by Karl Wolff of the start of pogroms. This clearly contradicts Irving's later claim that Hitler never met Himmler and only found out about the pogroms after 1 in the morning.
- ¹⁷ In 1995, Irving also admitted that Hitler was with Himmler on the night of the pogrom, though in an account that otherwise consists of nothing but fantasy and invention: "Hitler was furious when he heard, during the night, about the anti-Jewish outbreaks. Throughout the night, telephone calls came in reporting synagogues blazing across Germany. Hitler sent for Himmler and asked: "What the hell is going on here, *Reichsführer*?" Himmler replied: "Send for Goebbels, he knows". Hitler summoned Goebbels and raked him over the coals."

- ¹⁸ Irving nowhere supplies any evidence, not even tainted or manipulated evidence, to authenticate this alleged conversation between Hitler and Himmler and this supposed meeting between Hitler and Goebbels. In fact, of course, it never happened. The entire account is pure invention, plucked out of thin air to convey a completely distorted version of events. No new evidence has emerged by the time Irving changes his story in his Goebbels biography; all that has happened is that he has decided to suppress and manipulate evidence he earlier relied upon in order to skew his account of these events even further.

(G) Bending a reliable source to fit the argument: the Hess order

- ¹ Continuing his distorted and falsified account of the night of 9-10 November on page 277 of his Goebbels book, Irving further claims: ‘At 2.56 a.m. Rudolf Hess’s staff also began cabling, telephoning, and radioing instructions to Gauleiters and police authorities around the nation to halt the madness’. Elsewhere, Irving has described this document as ‘ordering an immediate stop to such outrage [referring to ‘the infamous Night of Broken Glass’]’. In his Pleadings, Irving links this document to Hitler by using the words ‘Rudolf Hess, the Deputy Führer, who was with Hitler, issued an order’. What did this order consist of? According to Irving, speaking in 1983, “It is a directive which goes out to all the party offices throughout Germany, to all the Gauleiters, for immediate communication. Directive No. 174/38. Repetition of telegram which had already gone out 10th November 1938. “On express orders issued at the very highest level, there are to be no kind of acts of arson or outrages against Jewish property or the like on any account and under any circumstances whatsoever”...Now if the Deputy Führer issues an order on express instructions from the very highest level, this can only mean that *Adolf Hitler himself has ordered that all this outrage has got to stop forthwith.*”

- ² Hess's staff undoubtedly did send out a circular at 2.56 a.m.; it is mentioned in the party court report submitted to Göring on 13 February 1939, which is cited by Irving as his source. But according to the report, the circular only forbade any 'setting fire to Jewish shops', an order repeated in circular 174 on 10 November. This second circular was only sent to local party officials; it was not sent to the police, as Irving claims. The same is true for the original circular, a copy of which can be found in the Federal Archive in Berlin. Addressed to all *Gauleitungen*, it stated that 'on the express command of the highest instance, fire-raising in Jewish shops or similar must in no case and under no circumstances take place'. It was not signed by Hess, but by Opdenhoff, presumably an official in Hess' office. Irving has clearly and deliberately mistranslated *Geschäften* as 'property', thus implying the inclusion of synagogues etc., instead of 'shops'.
- ³ What Hess's staff was doing was telling the local party officials who were organising the pogrom that they should not burn down Jewish shops. This fits in well with the instructions issued by Heydrich to the police that German property was not to be endangered; for many Jewish shops were in fact rented from German landlords, and in any case it would be difficult to stop fires spreading to neighbouring buildings once they had taken hold. This did not, of course, prevent the destruction of the contents of these shops, the smashing of their windows or the breaking of furniture and fittings.
- ⁴ As far as the extent of the destruction on the night of 9-10 November 1938 is concerned, it is hardly surprising that Nazi officials during the night tried to control the arson attacks to prevent serious damage to German property. In Vienna, for instance, the officials of the Security Service, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, noted on 10 November 1938 that all the firemen, including those on holiday, had been mobilised in order to control the fires: 'At various places there was a great threat to neighbouring houses, without the fire however actually spreading.' This was confirmed by the British consul in Vienna, who reported that there was

an 'orgy of destruction' and that all the 'fire brigades of Vienna were fully employed, for at one time there seemed to be a grave threat of a serious and widespread conflagration involving large sections of the city'. These concerns had already had an influence on the orders given in the evening of 9 November 1938. For instance, the leader of the SA-group Nordsee, in a telephone call from Munich, ordered that: "All Jewish shops are immediately to be destroyed by SA-men in uniform....Jewish synagogues are immediately to be set on fire...The fire brigade is not allowed to interfere. Only residential buildings of Aryan Germans are to be protected by the fire brigade. Adjacent Jewish residential buildings are also to be protected by the fire brigade; however the Jews in them must leave, since Aryans will move in there in the next few days..."

- ⁵ In his order to the German police on 10 November 1938 (1.20 am), Heydrich had also explicitly ordered that synagogues could only be burned down if this did not endanger German property, and that during the destruction of Jewish shops care had to be taken to secure all non-Jewish shops against any damage.
- ⁶ In any case, there was no mention in the circular sent by Hess's staff of not arresting Jews or beating them up, no mention of not attacking and wrecking Jewish houses, apartments and shops, no mention of not destroying or burning down synagogues and Jewish welfare and community centres. But if this was not the 'madness and 'outrages' to which Irving refers, then what was? Once more, Irving deliberately misconstrues an order to set limits to a small part of the pogrom as an order completely to stop the whole. Moreover, Irving provides no evidence for his claim that Hess was with Hitler when issuing this order.

(H) Manipulation of evidence (Wiedemann testimony, Hederich testimony) and suppression of reliable documentation (Goebbels diary, Supreme Party Court Report)

- ¹ On the same page of *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving then attempts to reinforce his thesis that Hitler was totally opposed to the pogrom (for which Irving claims he blamed Goebbels), and to argue that Hitler ordered Goebbels to stop the attacks on Jewish property as soon as he heard about them: "Philip Bouhler, head of the Führer's private chancellery, told one of Goebbels's senior officials that Hitler utterly condemned the pogrom and intended to dismiss Goebbels. Fritz Wiedemann, another of Hitler's adjutants, saw Goebbels spending much of that night of November 9-10 'telephoning...to halt the most violent excesses'."
- ² Irving had given a similar account in 1978, when he wrote: 'Goebbels, now in no doubt where Hitler's real favour lay, also spent the night on the telephone trying to extinguish the conflagration that his mischievous tongue had ignited.'
- ³ In his footnotes to *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving states that the reference to Bouhler is based on 'Hederich interrogation', presumably a reference to the 'Interrogation of Hederich, Nuremberg, Apr 16, 1947', to which Irving had referred previously. Hederich was an old Nazi, first having joined the party in October 1922 (according to his own testimony), in which he also held a senior rank (*Befehlsleiter*). In 1934, he was made manager of the *Parteiamtlichen Prüfungskommission zum Schutze des nationalsozialistischen Schrifttums*. This meant that he had the power to declare books and other publications to be official party material. Hederich carried out this work in the party agency run by Hess (not Goebbels, as claimed by Irving). Hederich was first interrogated in Nuremberg by Robert Kempner, who was irritated by Hederich's reluctant and evasive answers.

- ⁴ Examining Hederich's testimony of 16 April 1946, it is easy to see why. Hederich stated that "At that time, I took part in this meeting in Munich, at which Dr. Goebbels spoke, and I had the impression that all these events, which followed this, on 8th and 9th, that that was a provocation of Dr. Goebbels...for he had held a speech, and I had the impression, that it did not harmonise with what Hitler himself had said before, and I have been strengthened in this conviction by the investigation which Herr Schneider has carried out, a man who was well known to me personally. He was in the Supreme Party Court and through this investigation I came to the conviction that Dr. Goebbels and perhaps also Heydrich...must have borne the principal blame for these events and on the other hand, that emerged from the conversations at Buhle(r)'s, but substantial instances and above all it is also said to have been Hitler himself, condemned these things. It was said that Goebbels would be removed from office because of it."
- ⁵ Hederich's testimony is highly unreliable. First, no other witness of the events on the evening of 9 November 1938 claimed that Hitler had made a speech before Goebbels. Hitler left the dinner in the Old town Hall without making a speech, breaking with his usual custom. Despite this obvious inconsistency, Irving has used this part of Hederich's testimony in another passage in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, claiming that Hederich felt that Goebbels's speech 'conflicted with the tenor of Hitler's speech'. Secondly, there is no passage in the report of the Supreme Party Tribunal Report, signed by Schneider, which backs up Hederich's claims. There is also no mention in this document of a speech by Hitler.
- ⁶ So Hederich falsely claimed that Goebbels's speech contradicted a previous speech made by Hitler, thus exonerating Hitler from any guilt for the pogrom. This conclusion seriously undermines Hederich's subsequent claims about the reaction in leading party circles against Goebbels. In any case, Hederich nowhere claims that Bouhler himself told him directly that Hitler 'utterly condemned the pogrom' and that

he intended 'to dismiss Goebbels's. As is plain to see, Irving manipulates Hederich's testimony to reach this conclusion. All that Hederich said was that someone in discussions with Bouhler claimed that Hitler was supposed to have condemned the pogrom and that there was also speculation that Goebbels might be dismissed. A lot of this was just hearsay. Thus Irving uses a highly suspect source for his claims, and then manipulates it to say something which it does not.

- ⁷ Turning to Irving's claim about Fritz Wiedemann, it seems very peculiar indeed that Irving uses Wiedemann as a source at all, having dismissed his testimony in the 1991 edition of *Hitlers War* as untrustworthy. Evidently the only reason for Irving's use of this supposedly discredited source in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* is because in this particular instance, it apparently suits his twisted interpretation. The source which Irving gives for his claims in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* is 'Fritz Wiedemann, handwritten MS, Feb 1939 (Libr. of Congress, Wiedemann papers, box 604).'
- ⁸ Irving has disclosed some documents which appear to originate from this collection. These documents are presented in his Discovery List in no particular order, and include letters to Wiedemann and some handwritten notes, as well as some typed notes. Irving evidently draws on one passage where the author (presumably Wiedemann) refers to the pogrom in November 1938: 'There is absolutely no doubt that this action slipped out of the hands of those who instigated it. It is reliably reported that Göbbels (*sic*) as well repeatedly telephoned from Munich during the night to stop the worst outrages.' Thus it is clear that Wiedemann did not see Goebbels make any phone calls on the night of 9-10 November 1938 at all, as Irving has claimed. He merely repeated what other people had told him. He also only said the Goebbels made a series of phone calls, and not, as Irving would have it, that Goebbels spent 'much of that night' making these phone calls.

- ⁹ In any case, Wiedemann's suggestions are incorrect. Goebbels was certainly not engaged in stopping excessive violence against Jews, as Irving well knows. What Goebbels was actually saying on the phone on the night in question is amply documented by other, reliable historical sources. The Supreme Party Tribunal report of 13 February 1939 states that when Goebbels was phoned at around 2 in the morning on 10 November 1938 with the news of the first death of a Jew in the pogrom, "According to the statement of the deputy *Gauleiter* of Munich-Upper Bavaria, Party Comrade Dr Goebbels answered to the effect that the man reporting it should not get upset because of one dead Jew; thousands of Jews would have to believe in it in the coming days. At this moment in time, most of the killings could have been prevented by a supplementary order. If this did not happen, the conclusion has to be drawn from this fact, as from the comment in itself, that the end result was either intended, or at least taken into account as possible and desirable. Then the individual perpetrator had put ...the correctly recognized, if unclearly expressed will of the leadership into effect."
- ¹⁰ Thus Goebbels was explicitly intervening to stop any attempt to save Jewish lives. In his diary entry for the night of 9-10 November, moreover, he noted the excesses with obvious approval, as this Report has already shown. And yet, according to Irving, Goebbels had spent the previous few hours desperately telephoning all over Germany to get this kind of thing to stop!
- ¹¹ Goebbels's only concern was to stop looting and prevent damage to German property, which is what he was referring to when he wrote in the same diary entry for an earlier point in the evening: 'I now issue a precise circular in which is set out what may be done and what not.' As the rest of the diary entry and the evidence of the Supreme Party Tribunal both conclusively demonstrate, he continued to encourage all the continuing attacks on Jewish persons and property and to greet news of their occurrence not with alarm, but with enthusiasm. Irving's

use of Wiedemann's testimony is intended to give a different impression from this proven reality and to advance his deliberate distortion of the events of 9/10 November 1938.

(I) Use of insignificant evidence and suppression of important evidence: the Groscurth and von Hassell diaries

- ¹ Irving quotes from the diary of Helmuth Groscurth to illustrate some minor points about the events of 9-10 November 1938, but fails to mention that the diary reports the view of Hjalmar Schacht, President of the Reichsbank and one of Hitler's top economic advisers, that Hitler had himself approved the pogrom, a report confirmed by Schacht's own memoirs published after the war. Similarly, Irving cites the diary of the diplomat Ulrich von Hassell, later a prominent member of the resistance movement which culminated in the attempt to kill Hitler on 20 July 1944, to the effect that 'Goebbels has seldom found less credibility than for his claim that a "spontaneous outburst of public rage" led to the violence.' This statement is undeniably true. What Irving does not do, however, is to quote the following passage in von Hassell's diary, relating to a conversation he had on 17 December 1938 with the Prussian Finance Minister, Johannes Popitz, about the destruction and violence of 9-10 November. 'Popitz said to Göring, those responsible must be punished. Answer: "My dear Popitz, do you want to punish the Führer?"' Göring, who was far closer to Hitler than the old-conservative Popitz, thus considered that Hitler himself was responsible for the pogrom.

(J) Conclusion

- ¹ As we have seen, therefore, the available evidence points overwhelmingly to Hitler's having backed the pogrom. There are strong indications that he actually approved of this before he left the Old Town Hall in Munich. In any case, the evidence makes it clear beyond any reasonable doubt that Hitler did not attempt at any time to stop the pogrom, as Irving maintains he did. Irving knows the evidence. Yet he has de-

liberately chosen to suppress or distort it in his efforts to exculpate Hitler from responsibility. This is clear evidence of his skewing of sources as charged by Lipstadt. It is not a mere case of carelessness or sloppy research on Irving's part. He has decided to suppress information of which he is aware, deliberately misconstrue other information, and manipulate the material in order to serve his own purpose of absolving Hitler from blame for the anti-Jewish excesses of the night in question.

(iii) Irving's Account of Events After the Night of 9-10 November 1938

(A) Misquotation, manipulation, and discounting of reliable evidence to fit a preconceived argument: the Goebbels diary

- ¹ The pogrom of 9-10 November, obviously, eventually came to a halt. Once again, in his account of the ending of the pogrom and its aftermath, Irving is determined to manipulate and falsify the historical evidence to make it appear as if Hitler was opposed to the whole pogrom from the outset. The first piece of evidence which he treats in this way is the inevitable Goebbels diary.
- ² In his account of the events of 10 November 1938, Goebbels wrote: 'New reports rain down the whole morning. I consider with the Führer what measures should be taken now. Let the beatings continue or stop them? That is now the question. On page 277 of *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving paraphrases this entry as follows: 'As more ugly bulletins rained down on him the next morning, November 10, 1938, Goebbels went to see Hitler to discuss "what to do next" – there is surely an involuntary hint of apprehension in the phrase.' The claim – and the use of the word 'surely' rather than, say, 'possibly' or 'perhaps' makes it a claim rather than a supposition or speculation – that Goebbels was apprehensive has no basis in the source whatsoever, but is Irving's own invention. The effect is to suggest to the uninformed

reader that Goebbels was worried about Hitler's reaction. There is no evidence anywhere in the diary entry for any sense of worry or apprehension on Goebbels's part whatsoever.

- ³ When Hitler and Goebbels talked on the morning of 10 November as reported in this diary entry, therefore, no decision had yet been taken. It was already clear, however, that other Nazi leaders were unhappy about the pogrom. As the head of the Four-Year Economic Plan, Hermann Göring was particularly concerned about the damage it was causing to economically valuable property and assets.
- ⁴ Following this first conversation with Hitler on the morning of 10 November, Goebbels drafted an order to bring the pogrom to a halt. 'Yesterday', he wrote on 11 November in his diary, 'Berlin. There, all proceeded fantastically. One fire after another. It is good that way. I prepare an order to put an end to the actions. It is now just enough.....In the whole country the synagogues have burned down. I report to the Führer at the Osteria.' The fact that Goebbels had not drafted any order or indeed come to any view about whether or not the actions should be ended before he met Hitler to consider 'what measures should be taken now', and that he *had* drafted an order before he met Hitler in the Osteria, a Munich restaurant, makes it clear that, contrary to what Irving claims, these were two separate meetings.
- ⁵ At the Osteria, Goebbels presented Hitler with his draft order to stop the pogrom. His diary entry continued: "I report to the Führer in the Osteria. He agrees with everything. His views are totally radical and aggressive. The action itself has taken place without any problems. 17 dead. But no German property damaged. The Führer approves my decree concerning the ending of the actions, with small amendments. I announce it via the press and radio. The Führer wants to take very sharp measures against the Jews. They must themselves put their

businesses in order again. The insurance companies will not pay them a thing. Then the Führer wants a gradual expropriation of Jewish businesses.”

- ⁶ This entry makes it clear, first, that Hitler approved the pogrom, and second, that it was Hitler who devised the economic measures taken against the Jews at the subsequent meeting chaired by Göring on 12 November 1938.
- ⁷ Other evidence supports the diary on these points. On the afternoon of 10 November, after he had reported to Hitler, Goebbels informed the Nazi Party chief of Munich-Upper Bavaria that the pogrom was to be terminated, and added: ‘The Führer sanctions the measures taken so far and declares that he does not disapprove of them.’ In another circular sent out the same day to Gau propaganda officials, quoted in Irving’s own book on Goebbels, and quite clearly reporting Hitler’s views at the meeting in the Osteria, Goebbels added: ‘An order is to be expected according to which the (cost of the) damage resulting from the anti-Jewish actions is not to be met by insurance companies but by the Jews concerned themselves. Furthermore, a series of measures against the Jews will very shortly be implemented through the promulgation of laws or decrees.’ This point also echoes Goebbels’s diary entry, cited above, in which the Propaganda Minister noted that Hitler wanted ‘to take very sharp measures against the Jews’.
- ⁸ How does Irving deal with this particularly incriminating diary entry? In 1992, when Irving first read the Goebbels diary entries for the period 9-10 November 1938, he was convinced that it showed that Hitler approved of the pogrom: “According to his diary [Goebbels], and I can’t emphasise those words enough, according to his diaries, Hitler was closely implicated with those outrages. And that’s a matter of some dismay to me because it means I have to revise my own opinion. But a historian should always be willing to revise his opinion.”

- ⁹ A year later, he was sounding a slightly more sceptical note. Goebbels's diary, Irving said, "describes how Hitler thoroughly endorses what he, Goebbels, has done, namely starting that outrage that night. This was a deep shock for me and I immediately announced it to the world's newspapers that I had discovered this material, although it appeared to go against what I had written in my own book *Hitler's War*. But even there you have to add a rider and say, 'Wait a minute this is Dr. Goebbels writing this.' Dr. Goebbels who took all the blame for what was done. So did he have perhaps a motive for writing in his private diaries subsequently that Hitler endorsed what he had done? You can't entirely close that file."
- ¹⁰ By the time of the publication in 1996 of *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, this slightly sceptical note by Irving had been transformed into total conviction that Goebbels was lying. One should stress here that Irving's change of mind was not influenced by any further discoveries of new documentary material. As we have seen, in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* Irving claimed (as he had done in *Hitler's War*) that Hitler did not know about the pogrom, was furious when he was informed about it, and sharply attacked Goebbels for his involvement. Thus, the essence of Irving's account of the pogrom in his written work has remained totally unchanged by the discovery of vital new evidence, the Goebbels diary, even though Irving himself at first accepted this evidence as destroying his previous theories.
- ¹¹ Unable to manipulate the diary's clear statement that Hitler took an extreme antisemitic line, Irving tries to explain it away by suggesting that Goebbels was falsely claiming that Hitler approved of his action and was 'radical' and 'aggressive' in his attitude towards the Jews, in order to give anyone who read the diary the misleading impression that Goebbels had merely been carrying out the wishes of the 'Führer' when in fact he had been acting against them. But what grounds does Irving have for claiming that this entry is 'perhaps slanted'? The fact that it 'stands alone, and in direct contradiction to the evidence of

Hitler's entire immediate entourage'! But we have already seen that far from standing alone, it ties in well with a mass of other contemporary evidence. And we have also seen that the evidence of Hitler's entourage (von Below, Schallermeier, Schaub, Wiedemann, Wolff) is either manipulated by Irving to say something it does not in fact say, distorted, invented, suspect on any one of a number of grounds, or a combination of these things. The overwhelming likelihood in the light of the available archival evidence is that Goebbels's report of Hitler's radical views at the meeting in the Osteria restaurant was accurate and truthful. There is, on the other hand, no evidence at all to suggest that was not.

- 12 One further important point needs to be made here. It emerges from the Goebbels diary that on the morning of 10 November 1938 no decision had yet been taken by the Nazi leadership regarding the continuation of the pogrom. As Goebbels had noted: 'Let the beatings continue or stop them? That is now the question'. Only after his conversation with Hitler did Goebbels draft an order to end to pogrom which was then approved by Hitler at the meeting in the Osteria and then passed on the press and radio by Goebbels. Various contemporary documents support this course of events and show that this order by Goebbels went out in the afternoon of 10 November 1938, probably between 4 pm and 5 pm. Irving accepts that this order went out on 10 November 1938, even though he falsely claims that it was broadcast at 10 a.m.
- 13 This order by Goebbels demonstrates once more that Irving's version of events is simply untrue. As will be remembered, Irving claimed that after Hitler was informed of the pogrom (after 1 am on 10 November 1938), he was furious and condemned it, that Goebbels spent most of the night trying to stop 'the most violent excesses', that Heydrich ordered the police at 1.20 am to 'halt any ongoing incidents' and that Rudolf Hess's staff instructed the *Gauleiters* and the police at 2.56 am to 'halt the madness'. So if all these attempts to stop the pogrom were go-

ing on in the early hours of 10 November 1938, why was the official directive that the pogrom was to be stopped only announced in the afternoon of 10 November 1938? Clearly, the factual evidence once more contradicts Irving's version of events.

(B) Suppression of important aspects and concentration on insignificant aspects of reliable evidence to divert attention from its significance

- ¹ That Goebbels's version of events was an accurate one is strongly indicated by the fact that the economic measures which Hitler proposed in his meeting with the Reich Propaganda Minister were shortly afterwards put into effect. Goebbels did not have the power to intervene in economic matters in this way. The main responsibility lay with Göring, as head of the Four-Year Plan. Göring summoned a conference to put into effect Hitler's views on the economic and other measures to be taken in the aftermath of the pogrom. It was held on 12 November 1938. Those present included Göring and Goebbels, Heydrich as Chief of the Security Police, the Economics and Finance Ministers, the head of the uniformed police, and representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the insurance companies. Göring opened the meeting by declaring that he had 'received a letter written on the Führer's orders by Bor-mann, the chief of staff of the Führer's deputy, requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, co-ordinated and solved one way or another. And yesterday once again the Führer requested me on the phone to take co-ordinated action in the matter.'
- ² The meeting proceeded to issue a decree ordering the Jews to bear the cost of the damage and declaring any insurance payments made to them the property of the state. Another measure, the 'Decree Excluding Jews from German Economic Life', ordered the final 'Aryanization' of Jewish property. The running or management of shops and businesses was to be forbidden to Jews from 1 January 1939. In the Spring of 1938 there were still some thirty to forty thousand Jewish businesses in Germany; by 1 April 1939, nearly 15,000 of these had been

‘liquidated’, over 10,000 had been or were being ‘Aryanized’ and just over 7,000 were being investigated. These were precisely the measures that had been proposed by Hitler when he met Goebbels in the Osteria restaurant. Yet Irving makes no mention at all of the connection between that meeting and the meeting of 12 November, nor of the way in which Hitler had obviously been pushing Göring on to implement his ideas in the intervening period. Nor does Irving mention that Hitler later publicly endorsed various measures which had been discussed at the meeting on 12 November 1938. For instance, Göring reported on 28 December 1938: “On my report, the Führer has taken the following decisions in the Jew-question:...The Aryanization of businesses and shops, landed property, forests etc. is a matter of priority. The use of sleeping-cars and restaurant-cars is to be barred to Jews...Moreover the Jew-ban can be pronounced for bathing establishments, certain public places, seaside resorts etc..”

- ³ However, Irving’s account of the conference in Berlin on 12 November focuses on differences of opinion between Göring and Goebbels, from which Irving concludes that Goebbels’s diary entry for 12 November (‘I am co-operating splendidly with Göring. He’s going to crack down on them too. The radical line has won’) was written with ‘less than total honesty’. But in fact Göring did agree with Goebbels, and did follow a radical line, agreeing for example to Goebbels’s suggestion that Jews should be banned from German baths, parks and other public spaces.
- ⁴ The kind of disagreement which arose between them is exemplified by Göring’s remark on 12 November: ‘I would have preferred it if you had beaten 200 Jews to death and hadn’t destroyed such valuable property.’ Once the property was damaged, however, Göring ensured that the meeting took maximum financial advantage out of the events for the Nazi state. The tone of the meeting is vividly captured in the following exchange between the two men: “*Goebbels*: For instance, it is still possible today for a Jew to share a compartment in a sleeping car with a German. Therefore we need a decree by the Reich Ministry of Trans-

port stating that separate compartments shall be available to Jews; in cases where this compartment is full up, Jews cannot claim a seat. They will be given a separate compartment only after all Germans have secured seats. They are not to mix with Germans, and if there is no more room, they will have to stand in the corridor. *Göring*: In that case, I think it would be more sensible to give them separate compartments. *Goebbels*: Not if the train is overcrowded! *Göring*: Just a moment. There is only one Jewish coach. If that is full up, the other Jews will have to stay at home. *Goebbels*: Suppose, though, there aren't many Jews going on the express train to Munich, suppose there are two Jews in the train and the other compartments are overcrowded. These two Jews would now have a special compartment. Therefore, one has to say that Jews may claim a seat only after all Germans have secured one. *Göring*:... I'd give the Jews one coach or one compartment. And should such a case as you mention really ever arise and the train be overcrowded, believe me, we won't need a law. We'll kick him out even if he has to sit all alone in the lavatory all the way! *Goebbels*: I don't agree. I don't believe in that. There ought to be a law...."

- 5 Clearly, whatever the differences between them, both Göring and Goebbels were united on the need to impose radical new measures against the Jews. That is what the meeting of 12 November 1938 came up with; and that is what Hitler had been urging on the two men since November 10th.

(C) Suppression of evidence: Memoirs of Hans Kehrl and Correspondence of Carl Burckhardt

- 1 In *Goebbels; Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving writes that Göring told the *Gauleiter* on 11 November that he would not tolerate any repetition of the pogrom, and that he would insist that Hitler should sack Goebbels. In support of this claim, Irving cites the memoirs of Hans Kehrl, a leading official in the office of the Four Year Plan, and a book published by Carl J. Burckhardt, a Swiss diplomat and member of the

International Committee of the Red Cross. Irving quotes selectively from these sources and omits anything which puts Hitler in a bad light. Thus Irving makes no mention at all of the following passage in Kehr's memoirs, which describes how Göring openly admitted that the ensuing "argument between Hitler and Goebbels went in a completely different direction from that which he had hoped for. Apparently Hitler – he expressed himself cautiously – had not only forgiven Goebbels, who had previously (i.e. before 9 November 1938) fallen considerably into disfavour, but Goebbels had even succeeded, for reasons which were unclear, in using the action as an opportunity to demand further steps against Jewry. Thus Hitler had...commanded Göring to pursue the final expulsion of the Jews from the economic sphere more keenly and to impose on the Jews in their totality a kind of contribution towards covering the damage which had occurred."

- ² These measures were indeed discussed at the meeting on 12 November as described above. Irving considers this source reliable and trustworthy. He deliberately suppresses its description of Hitler's role in the legislative aftermath of the pogrom.
- ³ Irving is similarly selective in the case of Burckhardt. While he uses one part of a letter written by Burckhardt in December 1938, he omits another passage in the same letter in which Burckhardt notes that the emphasis placed on vom Rath's assassination in Nazi propaganda was ordered by Hitler himself ('I discovered from a reliable source that the command to employ this Fortissimo had been issued by the Reich Chancellor himself'). Burckhardt also reported a conversation with Himmler's adjutant Wolff, who had informed him that the SS leadership had felt the Goebbels was exercising a baleful influence on Hitler. The SS leadership had expected Goebbels to be sacked after the pogrom. But, Wolff went on, 'the Führer rescued him this time as well'.

(D) Misquotation and suppression of evidence: the von Hassell diaries

- ¹ Irving blatantly misconstrues another reliable source, the diaries of Ulrich von Hassell, which he claims show that ‘Hess confirmed that in his view Goebbels alone was to blame’ for the pogrom. In fact what Hassell wrote in the entry to which Irving refers was as follows: “On 23. 12 Hess spent two hours at the Bruckmanns’. They said he had been more depressed than ever before. He had left them in no doubt that he completely disapproved of the action against the Jews; he had also reported his views in an energetic manner to the ‘Führer’ and begged him to drop the matter, but unfortunately completely in vain. Hess pointed to Goebbels as the actual originator.”
- ² Thus Hassell never reported Hess as saying Goebbels *alone* was to blame, simply that he was the man who initiated the pogrom. Irving omits all mention of the crucial sentence which reports Hess as saying his attempt to get Hitler to stop the pogrom had been futile, or in other words, that Hitler had backed Goebbels.

(E) Misrepresentation of reliable documents: the Communication of the SA Leadership

- ¹ Irving also misrepresents the role of Rudolf Hess in the pogrom and its aftermath. In order to emphasise his point that almost all of the Nazi leaders, except Goebbels, opposed the pogrom, Irving claims that Hess ‘ordered the Gestapo and the party’s courts to delve into the origins of the night’s violence and turn the culprits over to the public prosecutors.’ However, this claim rests on a misrepresentation of the original document cited in its support, and gives a completely misleading picture of the way the Nazi leadership dealt with the brutal crimes committed in the night 9-10 November 1938. The document in question, dated 19 December 1938, cites an order of the SA leadership stating that Hess had ordered that the pogrom be investigated by the Gestapo and the party courts: “The aim of the investigation by the Party Courts

is to establish which cases can and must be held responsible by the action itself and which cases arose out of personal and base motives. In the latter cases a referral to the state prosecution service will be unavoidable, indeed it will be just.”

- ² Thus, these investigations were never supposed to examine all incidents which occurred during the pogrom. Already on 10 November 1938, the Ministry of Justice had instructed its officials that ‘material damage to synagogues, cemetery halls and graveyards through fire, blowing up etc.’ as well as ‘damage to Jewish shops’ should not be prosecuted. This directive excluded a great number of the criminal offences committed during the pogrom and left only cases of looting, killing, grievous bodily harm and the destruction of Jewish homes out of selfish motives. And in these cases, the criminal courts left any investigations to the Gestapo and the party courts. In these cases investigated by the party courts, by no means all ‘culprits’, as Irving claimed, were later to be turned over to the criminal justice system. Only those offenders were to be transferred in this way who were judged by the party courts to have acted out of base motives. In all other cases, the participants in the violence of 9-10 November 1938 were to be spared a criminal prosecution. What Hess’s directive did, therefore, was the exact opposite to what Irving claims it did. It ensured that only a small number of offences committed during the pogrom ever reached the criminal courts. Had Hess wanted the criminal courts to deal with the offences, then he would have left the investigations to the public prosecutors, rather than the Gestapo and the party courts. However, this was precisely what leading Nazis like Hess wanted to avoid. As the Supreme Party court of the NSDAP noted in February 1939 “The Führer’s Deputy shared the view of the Supreme Party Court that the excesses which had become known should in any case first be investigated by the party jurisdiction...The view of the Supreme Party Court is that it must be fundamentally impossible for political offences which primarily touch on the party’s interests, offences which...are desired by the

party as illegal measures, are confirmed and condemned by state jurisdiction, without the party previously having the possibility of creating clarity about the events and contexts through its own courts, in order if necessary to ask the Führer to quash the trial before the state courts at the right moment..”

- ³ Where the Party Courts drew the line between actions which could be justified, and those which were judged to have been committed out of vile motives, becomes clear in the various judgements of the Party Courts. For instance, in the report of 13 February 1939, Göring was informed of the outcome of the investigations in 16 cases which the Supreme Party Court had undertaken. In only two of the 16 cases, both involving the rape of Jewish women, had the Party Court transferred the perpetrators to ordinary criminal courts (and in these two cases the party judges were not motivated by concern for the victims, but simply by the fact that Nazi party members had committed ‘racial defilement’ or in other words compromised what the party regarded as their own racial purity). In all the other 14 cases, the Supreme Party Court asked Hitler to quash proceedings. These cases included the brutal murder of 21 Jews, who had been shot dead, stabbed to death or drowned by Nazi party members. The worst punishment meted out to these murderers was an official warning and barring from any Nazi party office for a period of three years. The great majority of offenders received even milder ‘punishments’, or none at all.
- ⁴ In view of this evidence it is completely misleading by David Irving to claim that Hess ordered that the ‘culprits’ for the violence committed during the pogrom to be turned over to Public Prosecutors. On the contrary, Nazi leaders including Hess successfully prevented the vast majority of offenders from being prosecuted.

(F) Misconstrual of books that directly contradict Irving's arguments: the Goebbels diary

- ¹ Irving suggests that Hitler distanced himself from Goebbels in the aftermath of the pogrom. This is very far from an accurate picture of the two men's relationship after 9/10 November 1938. As Irving well knows, on the day after the pogrom, on 10 November 1938, Hitler made a semi-public appearance with Goebbels in front of members of the German press. Goebbels was standing next to Hitler while the latter delivered his speech. Indeed, Irving actually prints a photograph of this evening in his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, with the caption: 'Hitler stands by Goebbels and delivers an impassioned speech to editors on the importance of propaganda to the tasks that lie ahead'. Hitler continued to give his personal support to Goebbels during the following days. He visited him on the afternoon of 15 November and according to Goebbels's diary was 'in a good mood. Sharply against the Jews. Approves my and our policy totally.'
- ² There is no reason to suppose, as Irving implies, that this entry was in some way an invention on Goebbels's part. Indeed, as Irving notes, Hitler demonstrated his approval of Goebbels by visiting the theatre with him and staying overnight and all the following day at the Goebbels home, talking with the Propaganda Minister and playing with the Goebbels children. All the while, Goebbels continued his antisemitic campaign in the newspapers, whose output he directed, with Hitler's explicit approval: 'The Führer', he noted in his diary entry for 24 November, 'is very satisfied with our anti-Jewish campaign in the press.'

(G) Invention of evidence: the Ribbentrop memoirs

- ¹ This openly supportive behaviour of Hitler towards Goebbels is extremely difficult for Irving to reconcile with his claim that Hitler was furious about the pogrom and extremely angry with Goebbels. The evidence presented above makes it clear that there is no indication of

any kind in the historical record that Hitler disapproved of the pogrom. Instead, there is clear evidence for Hitler's support. This is clearly the reason why he stood by Goebbels in the aftermath of the events of 9/10 November 1938. Irving cannot admit this. He cannot explain why Hitler failed to dismiss or even discipline Goebbels despite what Irving describes (without any justification) as his 'fury' at the attacks on the Jews. Irving indeed has to concede that it is 'baffling why Hitler tolerated what Goebbels had done.'

- ² In *The War Path*, Irving suggests it was because he '*post facto* endorsed' his actions. In 1996, however, Irving has a different explanation: 'Ribbentrop relates that when he tackled Hitler about the damage Goebbels had done, Hitler rejoined that this was true, but he could not let the Propaganda Minister go – not when he was just about to need him again.' Irving cites Ribbentrop's book *Zwischen London und Moskau* (*Between London and Moscow*) as evidence for this claim.
- ³ It is typical of Irving's slapdash scholarship that he fails to give a page reference to the relevant passage in the book, but an examination of Ribbentrop's text reveals that the only relevant passage in it dealing with the events of 9-10 November 1938 is the following: "I explained to Hitler how serious the effect of such unlawful antisemitic measures must be on our own people, and drew his attention to the unavoidably serious consequences of the excesses. He said in response to this, with great earnestness, that one could not always regulate the course of things as one wanted to, and that everything would be once more brought into an orderly course."
- ⁴ Whatever one makes of this passage, there is no reference at all here to Goebbels or to any discussion of demands for his dismissal: these appear to be the pure invention of David Irving.

(H) Misrepresentation and presentation of irrelevant evidence: the Wolff memoirs

- ¹ Apart from the falsifications presented in his books and articles, chiefly in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving also presents a number of additional documents in his Discovery, in which there is a similar tissue of falsehoods and distortions. This includes the memoirs of the journalist Ottokar Ernst Wolff, whose claims to have been at a (non-existent) press reception on 9 November and to have dined with Hitler until one in the morning on 10 November must be regarded as pure fabrication in the light of what we know from the other evidence examined above about Hitler's movements that night.

(I) False attribution of a conclusion to a reliable source: the Goebbels diary

- ¹ On page 611 of *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving claims that Goebbels later admitted he had been on the verge of a nervous breakdown during 9-10 November. In fact the diary entry cited by Irving, for 17 January 1939, makes no reference whatsoever to the events of 9-10 November. Rather, Goebbels was concerned with his mental state in January 1939. 'I am close to a nervous breakdown', he wrote, using the present tense. Goebbels at this time was deeply concerned with a serious crisis in his marriage, which was also undermining his political standing. This is clearly a deliberately false attribution of the conclusion that Goebbels was worried about the fact that (as Irving would have it) Hitler disapproved of his actions on 9-10 November to a source that refers to a different date and makes no mention of any disapproval by Hitler of anything Goebbels did at all.

(J) Misrepresentation of reliable sources: the reports to the British Foreign Office

- ¹ Irving tries hard to twist the sources in such a way as to make it appear that Goebbels was virtually the only Nazi leader in favour of the pogrom. He manipulates the historical record to suggest that Himmler,

Heydrich, Hitler, Lutze and others opposed the pogrom or even tried to stop it. As part of this strategy, He also suggests that Goebbels was completely isolated in the aftermath of the pogrom. Irving falsely suggests that Hitler distanced himself from Goebbels, and that Goebbels had been on the verge of a nervous breakdown. In another manipulation of the historical record, Irving also claims that 'Dr Goebbels found himself a pariah in official Berlin' and that 'Foreign diplomats reported that Goebbels now outranked both Ribbentrop and Himmler in unpopularity'.

- ² Irving's first claim is based, according to his footnotes, on a report by the British Ambassador in Berlin to the Foreign Office. But, in a lapse typical of Irving's historical standards, when we turn to this document, there is no reference in it to Goebbels being a 'pariah' in Berlin. In any case, we have already seen that Hitler visited the theatre with Goebbels on 15 November 1938 in Berlin. Three days previously, Goebbels had actively taken part in the conference chaired by Göring in Berlin, where many officials from various party and state offices were represented – hardly a sign of Goebbels 'pariah' status.
- ³ Irving's second claim is based, according to his footnotes, on the following documents in a file in the Public Record Office in Kew: 'Memos from W.W. Astor, Nov 9; British consulate in Vienna to Ogilvie-Forbes, Nov 25; memo by Capt. J. McLaren, Nov 29; minute by W. Ridsdale, Dec 6, 1938'. However, these documents again fail to support Irving's claims. In his memorandum, Astor only states that Goebbels 'equals von Ribbentrop in unpopularity' and, in any case, this document was written before '*Kristallnacht*'. The British Consulate in Vienna makes no reference at all in its communication of 25 November 1938 to Goebbels's unpopularity. The memorandum by Captain McLaren similarly does not contain the content attributed to it by Irving. Also, McLaren was not a diplomat, though Irving claims he was. And the Ridsdale minutes also fail to support Irving's assertions. They refer to information received by a British Foreign official in London from the

French Embassy (presumably in London), which in turn drew on information received from the French Embassy in Berlin, reviewing the German political situation. According to this (third-hand) information, which Ridsdale received from a M. Maillaud, 'Ribbentrop, Goebbels and Himmler, in that order, would apparently be at the head of any public Hate Ballot in Germany at the moment'.

- 4 These particular inaccuracies and misrepresentations might appear trivial. However, if seen in the context of the great number of similar lapses and misrepresentations of documents, they further undermine any claim by Irving to be taken serious as a diligent historian. All too often, Irving provides inaccurate references or no source references at all. And if the documents referred to by Irving can be traced, it is often revealed that he manipulated, misrepresented or misread them.

(K) Use of a discredited and disreputable source: Ingrid Weckert

- 1 It has already been noted that Irving contemptuously almost never cites, discusses or makes use of the work of other historians or writers. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that in his *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, he refers no less than six times in seven pages to an author by the name of Ingrid Weckert in his account of the events of 9-10 November 1938. Clearly he regards her as an eminent authority on the pogrom. Characteristically, however, the references he supplies are inadequate, the footnotes sloppy and in crass contravention to the normal practice of responsible historical scholarship. Footnotes are designed to enable the reader to check statements in the text against the sources cited to see if the statements rest on a reasonable interpretation of the sources in question. Checking Irving's statements and claims is often difficult, since he commonly provides vague or incomplete references, but in the case of Ingrid Weckert it is even more difficult than usual. In the footnotes to the seven pages under consideration here, Irving repeatedly refers merely to 'Ingrid Weckert' or 'the author Ingrid Weckert', without providing any details of who she is or

even the name of the publication or publications for which she is responsible. The critical reader is entitled to ask, therefore, who this mysterious writer Ingrid Weckert is, and which of her works provide authority for the statements Irving is making in the text.

- ² Ingrid Weckert has long been active on the far-right German and international ‘revisionist’ scene. Based in Munich, she had close connections with leading Holocaust deniers. In March 1991, for example, Ernst Zündel, the German-Canadian antisemite, admirer of Hitler and proven Holocaust denier, was apparently arrested at Weckert’s Munich home. Weckert has also corresponded with Zündel and Irving. She has authored several articles in publications by Holocaust deniers and self-styled ‘revisionists’, such as the *Journal of Historical Review*, discussed above. Her work has consistently aimed to play down or deny the crimes of the ‘Third Reich’. In an article published in 1994, for instance, she declared that ‘the claim that Germans killed thousands of people in “gas vans” is to be categorized as rumour.’ In an article published in 1985, which Irving has evidently read, Weckert openly acknowledged her sympathy for the Nazis, confessing that ‘the youth of Adolf Hitler’s Germany was the finest of all Europe and perhaps of the entire world. The same ethical standards’, she continued, ‘applied to the SS and SA...It was their faithfulness and gallantry which saved Germany from chaos and Communism.’
- ³ In 1997, Weckert suggested in an article that conditions in the Dachau concentration camp were better when it was run by the SS than when it became a US internment camp after the end of the Second World War. The article in which she put forward this claim was first published in the magazine *Sleipnir*, published in Berlin by the *Verlag der Freunde* (VdF). According to the annual report of the North-Rhine-Westphalian Government Office for the Protection of the Constitution, this magazine is “Mainly a forum for extreme right-wing authors from home and abroad. Besides agitation against foreigners and antisemitic agitation, revisionist views are particularly represented...On the basis

of suspicion of publishing contributions which are an incitement to antisemitism, the offices of the VdF and the private residences of those responsible for it have been searched several times in the past and relevant publications as well as parts of the publishing operation seized.”

- ⁴ According to information posted on various ‘revisionist’ websites, Weckert was sentenced in 1998 by the local court or *Amtsgericht* in Berlin-Tiergarten to a fine of over three thousand German Marks for her article in *Sleipnir*.
- ⁵ Weckert is best known, however, for her manipulation of the historical record of the pogrom of 9-10 November 1938. She published a series of articles on the subject in the late 1970s, at least one of which was read at the time by Irving. Her book *Feuerzeichen: Die ‘Reichskristallnacht’*, was first published in German in 1981 and is also available in an English translation. The complete third German edition of the book published in 1989, is available on the Internet on the website of *Vrij Historisch Onderzoek*, a ‘revisionist’ website offering a forum for the dissemination of the writings of prominent Holocaust deniers such as Arthur R. Butz, Robert Faurisson, Fred Leuchter, Wilhelm Stäglich and many others. The same website also includes a substantial number of articles by David Irving. Irving has also read at least parts of Weckert’s book, as well as an article on the pogrom published by Weckert in 1985.
- ⁶ Weckert’s book is full of crude and offensive antisemitic remarks and praise for Hitler’s ‘Third Reich’. On Nazi antisemitism, for example, Weckert declares that a ‘rational and sustainable solution’ to ‘the Jewish problem’ between 1939 and 1942 was sought by the German government, the Nazi party and the SS. As far as the events of 9-10 November 1938 are concerned, Weckert absolves all the leading Nazis of any blame and suggests that it was master-minded by German ‘traitors’ and ‘World Jewry’ in the hope that such violence would reflect badly on the (blameless) Nazi regime and cause it to fall. The real vic-

tims of the pogrom were the Germans, not the Jews. Not surprisingly, the German authorities have blacklisted the book. It is illegal to sell or lend it to any person under the age of eighteen. The authorities not only described the book as likely to corrupt young minds by arousing antisemitic feelings in them but also declared that it showed no evidence even of minimal attempts at truthfulness and objectivity.

- ⁷ Irving's source Ingrid Weckert thus turns out to be an antisemitic propagandist who is a well known figure on the Holocaust denial scene, who has been sentenced for her antisemitic and pro-Nazi outpourings, and whose book is blacklisted in Germany. It is obvious that Irving has good reason to hide the true identity of his source from his readers and to withhold full references to her work in his footnotes. Nevertheless, he knowingly makes use of the book in his biography of Goebbels. His claim on page 276, for example, that only three of the twenty-eight SA *Gruppen* received actual orders to stage demonstrations is taken straight from Weckert's work.
- ⁸ It is neither possible nor necessary here to pursue all the instances in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, in which Irving relies on Weckert's spurious historical work. One example must suffice. On page 280, Irving claims that Werner Naumann, State Secretary in the Propaganda Ministry, reported that when Goebbels returned to Berlin early on 11 November 1938 he 'fulminated with suppressed anger against the extent of the pogrom and issued a public dressing down to his deputies Görlitzer...and Wächter when they met him on the railroad platform'. The source for this claim? If we turn to note 59 on page 614, we find simply: 'Cited by Weckert'. Exactly what is cited by Weckert can be found in her Chapter on the events following the pogrom of 9-10 November, where she refers to a 'personal communication of Dr. Naumann to the author on 24. 1. 79 and 27. 3. 79', in which Naumann supposedly described how he and Goebbels arrived in Berlin on 10 November 1938: "When we arrived in Berlin in the morning, Görlitzer (the deputy Gauleiter of Berlin) welcomed us at the station and repor-

ted on the events of the previous night. The doctor (i.e. Goebbels) was extremely angry and made no secret of his displeasure, which was all the more unpleasant because in the meantime numerous fellow-travellers had recognised him and gathered around him. As the two gentlemen were debating with one another, I succeeded with difficulty in persuading them to continue their loud discussion in the car.”

- ⁹ Comparing this alleged letter with Irving’s text, it is immediately clear that for whatever reason, Irving has simply invented the presence of Wächter on the station; there is no mention of him in this ‘source’ at all. Even if he had just relied on the letter instead of embellishing it with his own invention, Irving would not have been out of trouble. For Naumann is a demonstrably unreliable source for the events of 9/10 and 11 November 1938. Naumann’s alleged letter to Weckert makes it clear that he is claiming to have boarded the train in Munich on the night of 9 November and arrived on the morning of 10 November, which is demonstrably untrue, since Goebbels stayed in Munich that night. In another passage, Naumann claims that Goebbels was upset when they passed the burning synagogue in Munich, a claim which Goebbels’s own diaries show to be completely without foundation.
- ¹⁰ Since Irving is familiar with the diaries, he therefore unilaterally alters the date of arrival in Berlin clearly indicated by Naumann – 10 November – to 11 November, when Goebbels did indeed arrive in the capital. But if this was so, then what were ‘the events of the previous night’ to which Naumann referred? Not a lot happened on the night of 10/11 November, and certainly not the pogrom over which Naumann says Goebbels was upset: it had happened on the night of 9/10 November.
- ¹¹ What we have here, therefore, is a whole chain of fabrications and inventions. Irving here is deliberately using sources that are obviously unreliable; he is also copying from another author – a notorious anti-semitic and falsifier of history – in a manner that he has frequently criticized legitimate historians for doing. Moreover, he does not rest con-

tent with merely copying. Irving doctors and manipulates a claim made by Weckert, which rests on a dubious and demonstrably false report, by Naumann, in order to bolster his wholly misleading account of the pogrom of 9/10 November 1938. A more blatant disregard for the most elementary rules of historical scholarship would be hard to imagine.

(L) Invention of evidence: testimony of Schirmeister and Fritzsche

- ¹ Another instance of Irving's poor scholarship is the footnote reference given on page 281 of *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* to back up his claim that 'Goebbels however would brag that he had proved that the Jews could be eliminated from the economy, whatever Funk said to the contrary.' When we turn to pages 190-1 and 235-7 of volume 17 of the Nuremberg Trials documents, cited by Irving as the location of the 'Testimony of Schirmeister and Fritzsche, June 28, 1946' in support of his statement, we find that the reference for pages 190-1 refers to June 27 not June 28, that Schirmeister is never mentioned on these pages, and that Fritzsche's testimony deals with a completely different subject.

(iv) Conclusion

- ¹ Irving's egregious errors and lapses from normal scholarly standards go beyond mere carelessness. We have already seen numerous examples of how Irving distorts the documentary record in his futile attempt to claim that Hitler did not know about the pogrom of 9-10 November and tried to stop it when he found out about it. In places, he goes beyond this and gives credence to the Nazis' own public claims about the events, which, as we have seen, portrayed the assassination of vom Rath as a Jewish conspiracy and alleged that there had been little or no violence against Jewish persons. On page 272 of *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving suggests that there is 'some frail evidence that LICA, the Paris-based International League Against Anti-

semitism' had a hand in the assassination. But he provides no evidence for this insinuation at all, not even frail evidence. In the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving has already made a similar suggestion. Once more failing to provide a source reference for his claims, Irving wrote: "Revisionist historians now argue that the Nazis had fallen into a Zionist trap. The Haganah officials with whom Adolf Eichmann negotiated on his trip to Palestine in November 1937 had hinted that it would serve their interests if things were made hot for Germany's Jews, to accelerate Jewish emigration to Palestine. It deserves comment that Grynszpan, although a destitute youth, was able to reside in a hotel in 1938 and purchase a handgun for 250 francs, and that his defence counsel Moro Giafferi was the best that the money of the International League against Anti-Semitism (LICA) could buy: LICA's Paris office was around the corner from Grynszpan's hotel."

- ² Once more, therefore, Irving uncritically repeats the Nazi propaganda claim that Grynszpan had acted as the agent of 'world Jewry' as if it were fact. Irving again has taken over the details from the discredited antisemitic writer Ingrid Weckert, this time however without acknowledging his debt to her in any way. Yet again, his claims have no basis in fact. Grynszpan, whom Irving describes in an illustration caption in *Goebbels* as a 'crazed Jew', had actually been living until the day before his assassination attempt with his uncle Abraham Berenbaum, and left after a quarrel, renting a room in the Hôtel Suez on the Boulevard de Strasbourg for 22 francs 50 centimes a night. With 320 francs in his pocket, he bought a gun and cartridges from the weapons dealer Carpe for a total cost of 245 francs on the morning of 7 November 1938. There is no indication at all that he received financial or any other kind of support from Jewish organizations. His defence lawyer was paid by a non-Jewish committee in the USA set up by the journalist Dorothy Thompson in November 1938 specifically to help the young Pole. A subsequent investigation by the Gestapo failed to come up with any links at all between Grynszpan and Jewish organizations, or between

such organizations and other assassinations mentioned by Irving. When Grynszpan was finally arrested after the Nazi invasion of France in 1940, the official appointed by the Propaganda Ministry to represent the interests of the German Reich in the Grynszpan affair in France, Professor Friedrich Grimm, admitted on 10 July 1942 that ‘one can not prove any direct relationship between the murderer and Jewish organizations’. It was precisely because of this that plans to prosecute Grynszpan were dropped. One is entitled to ask, therefore: what does Irving know that the Gestapo and the Propaganda Ministry failed to discover? One searches his text and footnotes in vain for an answer to this question.

- ³ Irving’s entire portrayal of the events of 9-10 November is designed to diminish the suffering of the Jews. Even though Irving is well acquainted with the figures detailing the terror of the pogrom drawn up by the Nazis themselves, he often provides much lower figures in his published work, both of the destruction caused and of the number of Jews killed. In *The War Path*, published in 1978, Irving gave the official figure of 91 killed, arrived at by the Nazis themselves. Of course, this figure is still far too low, and does not account for suicides, of which there were 680 by Jews during or shortly after the pogrom in Vienna alone. Others were killed after their transport to the concentration camps. However, many other historians have quoted the figure of 91 deaths, and Irving’s account in 1978 at least gives some insight into what happened during the pogrom. He comments that the night of 9-10 November saw ‘the first anti-Jewish pogrom since the Middle Ages’, in which there was ‘an orgy of burning and destruction, of murder and rape’ throughout Germany and Austria. By the end of the 1980s, however, Irving had altered his portrayal of these events. In his book on Göing, published in 1989, and his book on Goebbels, published in 1996, he cites a figure of 35 or 36 dead, basing it on an early, incomplete report by Heydrich. Irving’s own earlier work shows that he knows as well as anybody that these figures are wrong. His overall presentation of the events, which he de-

scribes in the Goebbels book simply as the Night of Broken Glass, without any inverted commas, reaches a low point of tastelessness in the relevant Chapter heading of the Göring biography, which is entitled ‘Sunshine Girl and Crystal Night’, trivialising the murderous destruction of the pogrom by linking it in this way to a section on Göring’s daughter Edda.

- ⁴ In his most recent writings on the pogrom, Irving’s manipulation of the figures of destruction caused during the pogrom is even more openly designed to minimise the suffering of the Jews in Germany. In *Goebbels: Mastermind of the ‘Third Reich’*, Irving only devotes one short paragraph to the statistics of the pogrom: ‘By dawn on November 10, 191 of the country’s fourteen hundred synagogues had been destroyed; about 7,500 of the one hundred thousand Jewish shops had had their windows smashed. Thirty-six of the country’s half-million Jews had been murdered, and hundreds more badly beaten.’
- ⁵ Not one of these claims is accurate. The only source Irving supplies for his claims is the minutes of the conference on 12 November 1938, chaired by Göring. What Irving fails to tell his readers is that, once more, he has lifted large parts of his information from the notorious Ingrid Weckert (the figure of 1,400 synagogues; the figure of 100,000 Jewish shops). Let us deal with Irving’s various claims in turn.
- ⁶ First, on 12 November 1938 Heydrich did give the figure of 7,500 shops. At least this figure is repeated correctly in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the ‘Third Reich’*. In an article in 1995, Irving had merely stated that ‘Hundreds if not thousands of Jewish shops were destroyed’. However, while giving the correct figure in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the ‘Third Reich’*, Irving utterly trivialises the damage done to these shops. Heydrich did not claim at the conference on 12 November 1938 that the 7,500 shops merely had their windows smashed, as Irving does. What Heydrich did say, in fact, was that these shops had been ‘destroyed’. During the pogrom, the internal fittings of many Jewish shops had

been smashed, goods had been destroyed, thrown on the streets or stolen. It was official Nazi propaganda which trivialised this destruction as the 'Night of Crystal', a lie simply taken over by Irving.

- ⁷ Secondly, it is totally misleading to claim, as Irving does, that only about one in every 13 Jewish shops were destroyed during the pogrom. As the historian Avraham Barkai, an expert on the economic life of Jews under the Nazis, has discovered, according to official figures there were only about 9,000 Jewish shops left in the *Altreich* in July 1938. Thus, during the pogrom the vast majority of Jewish shops in Germany were destroyed.
- ⁸ Thirdly, regarding the destruction of synagogues, Heydrich himself had stated in a letter to Göring on 11 November 1938 that a total of 267 synagogues had been set alight or smashed during the pogrom. It was clear even at the time that the real figure was considerably higher. The organisation of the Social Democrats in exile (SOPADE), which had informants all over Germany, estimated in November 1938 that 520 synagogues had been completely or partially destroyed. More detailed investigations of the damage could only be carried out after the war. According to A. Diamant, some 1,200 of around 1,800 synagogues and prayer-halls standing in Germany in 1933 were destroyed during the pogrom five years later. S. Korn has arrived at slightly lower figures: of around 2,000 synagogues and prayer-halls, about half of which were destroyed during or just after the pogrom. Whichever way one looks at these figures, it is clear that Irving's figure of only 191 destroyed synagogues is many times lower than the real figure.
- ⁹ Fourthly, as Irving himself has acknowledged in the late 1970s, at least 91 Jews (as noted previously, the real figure is significantly higher still), and not 36, had been murdered during the pogrom. Again, Irving uses implausibly low figures in order to diminish the suffering of Jews. He also fails to mention any cases of rape and sexual abuse.

- ¹⁰ The account David Irving gives in his recent work, and above all in his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, of the pogrom of 9-10 November 1938, therefore, amply demonstrates the unscholarly and biased nature of his approach to the past. He falsely attributes conclusions to reliable sources, bending them to fit his arguments. He relies on material that turns out directly to contradict his arguments when it is checked. He quotes from sources in a manner that completely distorts their authors' meaning and purposes. He misrepresents data and skews documents. He uses insignificant and sometimes implausible pieces of evidence to dismiss more substantial evidence that does not support his thesis. He ignores or deliberately suppresses material of which he is aware that it runs counter to his arguments. When he is unable to do this, he expresses wholly implausible doubts about its reliability. He uses discredited sources when they appear to support his arguments, and tries to conceal his dependency on them from the reader. He has no scruples about stooping to sheer invention if this serves his purpose.
- ¹¹ Irving does all this in order to minimise and trivialise the violence and destruction visited by the Nazis upon the Jewish community in Germany, to suggest that the Jews were themselves partly responsible for it by organising the assassination of vom Rath, and above all to dissociate Hitler completely from events which he approved of. Irving's conclusions are completely untenable. His scholarship is sloppy and unreliable and does not meet even the most basic requirements of honest and competent historical research. None of his work on the *Reichskristallnacht*, whether it was written before or after his conversion to full-scale Holocaust denial, merits being called a serious contribution to historical knowledge.

(d) The expulsion of Jews from Berlin, 1941

(i) Historical Background

- ¹ With the German invasion of Poland and the beginning of the Second World War on 1 September 1939, Nazi policy against the Jews became markedly more radical. Millions of Jews in Poland came under the rule of the 'Third Reich'. Probably around 7,000 of them were killed until the end of 1939. The freedom of movement of the Polish Jews was restricted, as more and more were forced into ghettos set up by the Nazis. The living conditions in the ghettos deteriorated rapidly. Cut off from the outside, the local Nazi officials in charge of the day-to-day running and supplying of the overcrowded ghettos failed to provide sufficient food, heating materials and other vital resources. In May 1941, more than 3,800 Jews died in the Warsaw ghetto alone. German Jews in the first years of the war were also deprived of most of the few rights they still had left: curfews were imposed, their food supplies were restricted and their radios were confiscated. However, the aim of Nazi policy at this time concerning the Jews remained emigration, or forced deportation. Thus, in early summer 1940, after the defeat of France, the Nazi leadership seriously discussed the transportation of all European Jews to French island of Madagascar.
- ² The invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 marks a further watershed in Nazi policies towards the Jews. The mass murder of Soviet citizens in general, and Jews in particular, had been decided upon before the invasion. On 19 May 1941, the German army was given the order that the fight against the Soviet Union 'requires ruthless and energetic action against Bolshevik agitators, guerillas, saboteurs, and Jews, and the total elimination of all active and passive resistance'. Also, four fully motorised task forces (*Einsatzgruppe A, B, C, D*) were set up and immediately after the invasion began killing Soviet Jews. Soon, these task-forces were committing mass murder without regard to age or sex. By 15 October 1941, *Einsatzgruppe A*, which operated in the Baltic

states, reported to have executed a total of 118,430 Jews. The leader of *Einsatzkommando 2*, one of the four units making up *Einsatzgruppe A*, wrote in January 1942: 'The aim which Einsatzkommando 2 held up to itself from the beginning onwards was a radical solution of the Jewish problem by the execution of all Jews'. Reports submitted by the task force leaders to Berlin detailed shootings of Jews on a huge scale.

- ³ As a consequence, the Nazi leaders began to rethink their policy towards German Jews. Emigration abroad was finally forbidden on 23 October 1941. On 1 October 1941, there were still about 164,000 Jews left living in Germany. From 15 September 1941 onwards, they had been forced to wear the yellow star of David on their clothes, to make them immediately identifiable, a measure which according to the Goebbels diaries had been endorsed by Hitler personally. It is in this context that regional Nazi leaders stepped up their efforts to make their regions '*judenfrei*' (free of Jews) by deporting Jews to Nazi-controlled territories in the East. The initiative apparently came from Hitler himself.
- ⁴ On 18 September 1941, Heinrich Himmler informed Arthur Greiser, the *Gauleiter* of the Warthegau, that the 'Führer wishes that the Old Reich and the protectorate be emptied and freed of Jews from west to east as quickly as possible'. Himmler intended to transport Jews first to the incorporated territories (former parts of Poland), in particular to the Lodz ghetto in the Warthegau. But other destinations further to the east were also decided upon in this period. In particular, the Nazi leadership selected destinations in the so-called *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, the German-occupied territory which included the Baltic states and parts of 'White Russia', as destinations for Western Jews. On 10 October 1941, Himmler's deputy Reinhard Heydrich announced in Prague that Riga and Minsk were earmarked as destinations for deportations.

- ⁵ Similar information was passed on by other Nazi officials at this time. On 11 October 1941, Franz Stahlecker, the commander of *Einsatzgruppe A*, informed the General Commissioner of Latvia, Otto Drechsler, that a large concentration camp for Jews from the German Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was to be set up near Riga 'at the Führer's wish'. Soon the deportations of Jews from the West were under way. From 15 October 1941, about 20,000 Jews were transported from the German Reich to the Lodz ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland. In November and December 1941, several tens of thousands of Jews were transported East, this time to Nazi-occupied parts of the USSR (e.g. Riga and Minsk). While the Jews transported to Lodz and Minsk were initially allowed to live, some Jews on the other transports, for example to Kovno and Riga, were executed by the SS immediately on arrival.
- ⁶ The propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels played an important role in 1941 in accelerating the deportation of Jews living in Berlin. Goebbels, since 1926 *Gauleiter* of Berlin (in charge of the regional party), pressed ahead with the aim to make his territory 'free of Jews', in particular he claimed because of the symbolic status of Berlin as the capital of Germany. As he stated in his diary on 20 August 1941: 'Berlin must become a city free of Jews. It is infuriating and a scandal that 76,000 Jews can still loiter around in the capital of the German Reich, mostly as parasites'. The plan to deport Jews from Berlin had already been discussed at Hitler's lunch table in March 1941, if not earlier. In October 1941, this plan became reality, when the first Berlin Jews were transported to the Lodz ghetto.
- ⁷ Between 18 October 1941 and 1 November 1941, a total of over 4,000 Berlin Jews were taken to Lodz. In November, the transports to the former Soviet territory began. On 17 November 1941, a transport consisting of 942 Berlin Jews departed for Kovno. On 25 November 1941 2,934 Jews deported from Berlin, as well as Munich and Frankfurt, were shot in Kovno by the *Einsatzkommando 3* of the *Einsatzgruppe A*. On 27 November 1941, another transport left Berlin, this time for Riga,

with 1,000 Jews on board the train. They arrived on the night of 29-30 November 1941, a few hours before the execution of the Jews living in the Riga ghetto began. This massacre was supervised by Friedrich Jeckeln, who had recently been appointed by Himmler as the Chief of the SS and police in the region (*Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer Russland-Nord und Ostland*). Before this appointment, Jeckeln had served as Chief of the SS and police in the southern areas of the occupied Soviet territory. In this capacity, he had already organized and participated in various large-scale massacres against Jews in the late summer and autumn of 1941. Jeckeln ordered the shooting of 23,600 Jews in Kamensk-Podolsk and sent two commandos of Police Regiment South to assist *Sonderkommando* 4a, part of *Einsatzgruppe* C, in the killing of 33,000 Jews in Kiev in late September 1941. Another of his units executed at least 10,000 Jews on 13 October 1941 in Dniepropetrovsk, and in early November 1941 Jeckeln ordered the murder of some 15,000 Jews in Rovno. Himmler officially commended Jeckeln on 31 October 1941: 'I express to you my heartfelt thanks and my most particular recognition for your outstanding activity'.

- ⁸ After his arrival in Riga, Jeckeln ordered the extermination of the inhabitants of the ghetto. The killing started on 30 November 1941, a few miles outside Riga. According to a report compiled by the Reich Security Head Office (RSHA), a total of 10,600 Jews were shot in Riga on 30 November 1941, including the Jews who had just arrived on the transport from Berlin. A similar massacre took place on 8 December 1941. In total, according to statistics provided by *Einsatzgruppe* A, around 27,800 Jews were killed in Riga in these acts of mass murder. According to another RSHA report, only 2,600 Jews survived these two massacres in Riga.
- ⁹ The Jews transported to Riga from Berlin were the first to be killed on the morning of 30 November 1941. A German court described in detail in 1973 how the Jews from Berlin and Riga were murdered. They had to strip to their underwear and walk in groups of ten towards ditches

which had been prepared for their bodies. “In the ditches, the Jews had to lie down next to one another with their faces downturned. They were killed at close range...by being shot in the back of the neck by Russian machine pistols which had been set to fire individual shots. The victims who came after them had to use the space available and...lie on top of those who had just been shot. The old, children,, and those who had difficulty in walking, were led to the ditches by the stronger Jews, placed by them on top of the corpses, and shot by the marksmen who were standing on the dead in the big ditch. In this way the ditches gradually filled up. ”

(ii) Hitler’s table talk of 25 October

(A) Irving’s argument

- ¹ In his book *Goebbels*, Irving comments on the deportation of Jews from Berlin, starting in October 1941: ‘Hitler was neither consulted nor informed’. As proof for his assertion he refers to remarks made by Hitler at dinner ten days after the transportations had begun. According to Irving, Hitler on this occasion claimed that the Jews had started the war and said: “Let nobody tell me”, Hitler added, “that despite that we can’t park them in the marshier parts of Russia!” “By the way,” he added, “it’s not a bad thing that public rumour attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews”. He pointed out however that he had no intention of starting anything at present. “There’s no point in adding to one’s difficulties at a time like this!”.”
- ² It is easy to investigate Irving’s account of this monologue by Hitler on 25 October 1941, as the German original was published in 1980. An accurate translation of the whole passage would read as follows: “In the Reichstag, I prophesied to Jewry, the Jew will disappear from Europe if war is not avoided. This race of criminals has the two million dead of the [First World] war on its conscience, and now hundreds of thousands again. Nobody can tell me: But we can’t send them into the

morass! For who bothers about our people? It's good if the terror that we are exterminating Jewry goes before us...I'm forced to pile up an enormous amount of things myself; but that doesn't mean that what I take cognisance of without reacting to it immediately, just disappears. It goes into an account; one day the book is taken out. I had to remain inactive for a long time against the Jews too. There's no sense in artificially making extra difficulties for oneself; the more cleverly one operates, the better. When I read speeches from a person like Galen, I say to myself: pricking them with pins has no purpose; it's better to keep silent; unless one doubts the future of the movement! If I believe that the movement will exist in a few centuries, then I can wait. I wouldn't have dealt with Marxism either, if I hadn't had the power behind me."

(B) Bending and wilfully mistranslating reliable sources

- ¹ Once more, Irving manipulates his sources so that they fit his argument. His first obvious mistake is that there is no correspondence in the German original to Hitler's alleged statement in Irving's text concerning the 'parking' of Jews in the 'marshier parts of Russia!'. In the German original there is no reference to Russia, and the action described is not the innocuous-sounding 'park them', which implies some kind of reasonably long-term stay, but 'send them'. In all probability Hitler was referring to the Pripet marshes. What may well have been meant by his statement was illustrated by an order given by Himmler to the SS in the area of the Pripet marshes on 30 July 1941 three months prior to this monologue: 'All Jews must be shot. Drive Jew-women into the marshes.' Reporting on their attempt to carry this order out, the mounted division of the second SS cavalry regiment noted on 12 August in terms which left no doubt as to the purpose of driving the Jews into the marshes: 'Driving women and children into marshes did not have the success that it was meant to, since the marshes were not deep enough for them to sink in. In most cases one

encountered firm ground (probably sand) below a depth of 1 meter, so that sinking-in was not possible.’ It seems reasonable to suppose that Hitler was aware of these events by mid – to – late October.

- ² Irving is also wrong in claiming that Hitler added: ‘By the way...it’s not a bad thing that public rumour attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews’. As we can see, what Hitler really said was: ‘It’s good if the terror that we are exterminating Jewry goes before us’. Irving’s version waters this down in several respects. The translation of ‘Schrecken’ as ‘public rumour’ is inadequate, as it fails to convey the element of terror and anxiety indelibly associated with the word ‘Schrecken’. ‘Public rumour attributes to us’ implies that it is, as rumour so often are, untrue; in fact, of course Hitler said nothing about *attribution*, but presented it as a fact. Finally, Irving completes his distortion and manipulation of this sentence by inserting the word ‘plan’, which is wholly absent from the original, in order to make it seem that the rumoured extermination of the Jews was not actually taking place but was still in the planning stage. In fact, of course, Hitler’s actual recorded statement was unambiguous in its recognition of the fact that Jews were being exterminated behind the Eastern Front as the German army advanced, and crystal clear in its approval of the effect this had in terrorising the inhabitants of the areas which were still to be conquered.
- ³ Concerning the extermination of the Jews, Hitler, according to Irving, ‘pointed out however that he had no intention of starting anything at present’. Irving here draws on his own account of the table talk in his book *Hitler’s War* (1991), where he claimed that Hitler said that ‘with the Jews too I have found myself remaining inactive’. However, the German original makes clear that Hitler saw himself no longer as being inactive towards the Jews. He clearly states that: ‘I had to remain inactive for a long time against the Jews too’. This means that the time of inactivity was over. Hitler is talking in the present tense about the Jews, not in the future tense.

- ⁴ But Irving continues his falsifications and adds that Hitler said: 'There's no point in adding to one's difficulties at a time like this!'. Clearly, Irving's translation here is, once again, wrong. The German original means: 'There's no sense in artificially making extra difficulties for oneself; the more cleverly one operates, the better'. Thus, Hitler makes the general point that when attacking one's enemies, one has to wait for the right moment to strike. The meaning of this passage is that while Hitler thought that the time had come to deal with the Jews and with Marxism, and states that he had started to do so, he wanted to postpone the conflict with the Catholic Church, personified by Bishop Galen, who had on 3 August 1941 in a sermon publicly attacked the Nazis 'euthanasia' programme (the killing of mentally and physically disabled adults and children).
- ⁵ In his Pleadings, Irving recognises that he is on weak ground because of his constant mistranslations in this case. He tries to rescue his position by arguing that he merely followed the official translation in English, first published in 1953 by Weidenfeld. However, this is merely a smokescreen, and just raises more questions about Irving's methods. The table talks in question, recorded by Heinrich Heim at Hitler's lunch and dinner table, were first published by Weidenfeld in an English translation. Until 1980, the German originals were not officially accessible to historians, who had to rely on the English translation, which is full of mistakes.
- ⁶ For instance, it does indeed use the term 'park', it translates 'Schrecken' as 'public rumour' and has Hitler claim that 'Even with regard to the Jews, I've found myself remaining inactive'. Clearly, Irving has followed this translation. Yet, by the time he published his book *Goebbels*, he had been familiar with the German original text of the table talk for almost 20 years. In the Pleadings, Irving claims proudly that he 'was the only historian in the world to whom the original German texts were made available by their physical owner, namely in October 1977'. As Irving stated in 1983, the German original 'is completely different

from the published English translation'. Consequently, Irving then changed some aspects of his accounts of the table talk of 25 October 1941. Thus, in his first edition of *Hitler's War* in 1977, still relying on the Weidenfeld translation, he included a phrase attributed to Hitler ('Terror is a salutary thing'), which had no correspondence in the German original. It was an addition by the translator, and after reading the German original, Irving dropped it from his revised 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*.

- ⁷ But while Irving cut out this phrase, which made Hitler appear in a bad light, he deliberately continued to use the other parts of the flawed Weidenfeld translation, if the original German text implicated Hitler in a way that the Weidenfeld translation did not. Thus, as we have seen, in 1996, in his book on Goebbels, he continues to claim that Hitler said that he planned nothing against the Jews at present (Weidenfeld translation), while the original, as we have seen, had Hitler stating that 'I had to remain inactive for a long time against the Jews too'. Irving uses both the German original, and the flawed translation, depending on which of the two documents serves his purpose of showing Hitler in a favourable light. Whether or not the Weidenfeld translation is accurate in any given case is of no interest at all to him; all that he is interested in is whether or not it supports his argument. Because he is familiar with the German original and must know that he is using a flawed translation, his version of the Hitler table talk in this instance amounts to manipulation of the source-material even if the actual translation is not his own.

(C) Hitler's involvement in the deportations

- ¹ Irving thus falsifies a report in the *Table Talk* to make it look as if Hitler was saying in October 1941 that he was remaining inactive about the Jews. He draws from this the inference that Hitler was 'neither consulted nor informed' about the deportations of Berlin's Jews to the East which were taking place even as he spoke. In fact, however, there is

some evidence that suggests that Hitler not only knew of the expulsions but that he had actually ordered them himself in the first place. In his discussion in the table talk on 25 October 1941, even Irving admits that Hitler was talking about the expulsion of the Jews from Germany to the East. Hitler's positive reference to the 'terror' of extermination that preceded the German advance strongly suggests he knew the Jews were being killed by the SS task forces.

- ² As far as the expulsions are concerned, Goebbels noted in his diary on 19 August 1941 that Hitler had approved them in principle: 'Apart from this, the Führer gave me approval to move the Berlin Jews out to the east as quickly as possible, as soon as the first possibility of transport offered itself'. On 18 September 1941, Himmler in fact had told his subordinate in the Warthegau: "The Führer wishes the Old Reich and the Protectorate to be emptied and freed of Jews from west to east as quickly as possible. I am thus aiming to transport the Jews of the Old Reich and the Protectorate if possible before the end of this year into the eastern territories which newly came to the Reich two years ago, initially as a first step, in order to move them further still to the east next spring."
- ³ One month later, on 24 September 1941, Goebbels noted in his diary that Hitler had made a final decision on the matter: "I can bring the Führer a series of internal political problems to decide upon: the Führer is of the opinion that the Jews must be taken out of the whole of Germany bit by bit. The first cities that are now to be made free of Jews are Berlin, Vienna and Prague, and I have the hope that we shall succeed even in the course of this year in transporting a significant portion of Berlin's Jews off to the East."
- ⁴ Irving, to be sure, does acknowledge in his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* that Hitler had decided in late 1941 that all Jews were to be removed from Germany. It would be difficult even for him to avoid doing this, in the light of the evidence provided by the Goebbels

diary entry of 24 September 1941. However, in his submission to the court, Irving states that while Hitler had given the *general* authority under which the Jews were to be deported, starting with Berlin, he was ‘not consulted or informed about the actual time that the expulsions began’. This qualification disappears in the following pages of *Goebbels*, where the impression is given that Hitler was not consulted about the entire operation of deporting Jews from Berlin (‘Hitler was neither consulted nor informed’). As we have seen, this claim rests on a falsification of Hitler’s *Table Talk*. The evidence cited above makes clear that Hitler was very much part of the decision-making process to drive the Jews out of Berlin.

(iii) Goebbels’s article in ‘Das Reich’ of 16 November 1941

(A) Irving’s claim

- ¹ In describing the deportation of Jews from Berlin, Irving mentions an antisemitic article by Goebbels, published on 16 November 1941 in *Das Reich*, his propaganda paper. According to Irving, this article (entitled ‘The Jews are to blame!’) was Goebbels’s ‘most venomous leader article ever for *Das Reich*...’.
- ² Irving summarises the article as follows: “‘The Jews wanted this war’, he argued, ‘and now they have it’. They were getting their just deserts. An eye for an eye. All Jews alike, whether languishing in an eastern ghetto or whining for war from New York, were conspiring against Germany. The Yellow Star, he argued, was akin to a ‘hygienic prophylactic’, because the most dangerous were those otherwise not recognizable as Jews. To those who might bleat that the Jews were humans too he pointed out that the same could be said of muggers, rapists, and pimps. ‘Suddenly one has the impression that all of Berlin’s Jews are either darling little babies who wouldn’t hurt a fly, or fragile old ladies’. ‘Were we to lose this war’, he continued, ‘these oh-so-harmless Jewish worthies would suddenly turn into rapacious wolves...That’s what

happened in Bessarabia and the Baltic states after the Bolsheviks marched in, and neither the people nor the governments there had had the slightest sympathy for them. For us, in our fight against the Jews, there is no going back’.”

- ³ Directly after his summary of the article, Irving claims that this article shows that Goebbels was much more violent in his antisemitism than Hitler. This is part of Irving’s general strategy to diminish the magnitude of Hitler’s hatred for the Jews. For instance, just ten pages before the statement cited above, Irving claims that ‘neither the broad German public nor their Führer shared his (i.e. Goebbels’s) satanic antisemitism.’
- ⁴ Irving also argues that the Goebbels article in *Das Reich* directly influenced the SS in widening the scope of the ‘final solution’. He indirectly constructs a link between the article and the killing of the Jews in Riga on 30 November 1941. The full text of the relevant passage in Irving’s *Goebbels* reads: “The article displayed a far more uncompromising face than Hitler’s towards the Jews. When the Führer came to Berlin for Luftwaffe general Ernst Udet’s funeral he again instructed Goebbels to pursue a policy against the Jews ‘that does not cause us endless difficulties’, and told him to go easy on mixed marriages in future. Dieter Wisliceny, one of Eichmann’s closest associates, would describe the Goebbels article in *Das Reich* as a watershed in the Final Solution of the Jewish Problem. The S.S. took it as a sign from above. Adolf Eichmann would admit in his unpublished memoirs, ‘It’s quite possible that I got orders to direct this or that railroad transport to Riga’. On the last day of November, on the orders of the local S.S. commander Friedrich Jeckeln, four thousand of Riga’s unwanted Jews were trucked five miles down the Dvinsk highway to Skiatowa, plundered, and machine-gunned into two or three pits. ”

- ⁵ It is necessary to deal with Irving's treatment of this article in a number of stages. Let us look first at Irving's use of the article to claim that Goebbels showed himself to be more antisemitic than Hitler, before moving on to investigate his claim regarding the impact of Goebbels on the SS.

(B) The deliberate omission of relevant evidence: The article in 'Das Reich'

- ¹ In his summary of Goebbels's article in *Das Reich*, Irving fails to translate one key passage. In his well-known speech in the *Reichstag* on 30 January 1939, Hitler, as we have already seen, had made a chilling prediction: "I want to be a prophet again today: if international finance Jewry in Europe and outside should succeed once more in plunging the peoples into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and with it the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."
- ² In the first paragraph of his article in *Das Reich*, Goebbels referred explicitly to Hitler's prediction: "The historical guilt of World Jewry for the outbreak and spread of this war has been so sufficiently proven that no further words need to be wasted on it. The Jews wanted their war, and now they've got it. But the prophecy is also coming true for them, that the Führer pronounced on 30 January 1939 in the Reichstag, that if international finance Jewry should succeed in plunging the peoples once more into a world war, the result would be not the Bolshevization of the earth and with it the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. We are experiencing now the execution of this prophecy, and a fate is thus being fulfilled for Jewry that is, to be sure, hard, but more than earned. Sympathy or even regret is completely inappropriate there."
- ³ This entire passage referring to Hitler's prediction is omitted by Irving from his account. Once again, Irving doctors the sources to suit his own argument.

(C) Further suppression of evidence of Hitler's antisemitism, July-December 1941

- ¹ The following examples will show that Hitler at the time of the Goebbels article (published on 16 November 1941) was voicing very similar views concerning the Jews to those expressed by Goebbels.
- ² On the evening of 10 July 1941, Hitler declared at his table: 'I feel I am like Robert Koch in politics. He discovered the bacillus and thereby ushered medical science onto new paths. I discovered the Jew as the bacillus and the fermenting agent of all social decomposition.' At a meeting with the Croatian Minister of Defence, Marshal Slavko Kvaternik, on 21 July 1941, Hitler repeated these sentiments, albeit in a slightly different form: "The Jews were the scourge of humankind...If the Jews had a free reign, as they had in the Soviet paradise, they would realise the craziest plans. Thus Russia had become a dangerous plague-centre [*Pestherd*] for the whole of humankind...If even one state, on whatever grounds, tolerated a Jewish family in its midst, this would become the breeding-ground for bacilli for a new subversion. If there were no more Jews in Europe, the unity of the European states would not be disturbed any more."
- ³ After a meeting with Hitler, Goebbels noted on 19 August 1941 in his diary that Hitler was once again referring to the prophecy he had made at the beginning of 1939, quoted more than once already in this paper: "We speak about the Jewish problem. The Führer is convinced that his former prophecy in the Reichstag, that, if Jewry succeeded once more in provoking a world war, it would end with the annihilation of the Jews, is being confirmed. It is being confirmed in these weeks and months with certainty that seems almost uncanny."
- ⁴ At his table talk on 21 October 1941, Hitler exclaimed about the Jews: 'If we exterminate this plague, we will accomplish for humankind a deed the importance of which our men out there can still have no idea.' Moreover, as we have already seen, in his table talk on 25 October

1941, when the task forces had already murdered tens of thousands of Jews behind the Eastern Front, Hitler himself came back to his own prediction of 30 January 1939, which he now took as a legitimization of the Nazis' murderous policies.

- ⁵ In his table talk on 5 November 1941, Hitler once more displayed his radical antisemitism: "I have always said that Jews are the stupidest devils there are. They haven't a single real musician, thinker, no art, nothing, nothing at all. They are liars, forgers, deceivers. Any one of them only ever achieved anything as a result of the stupidity of his surroundings. If he wasn't washed by the Aryan, the Jew wouldn't be able to see out of his eyes for dirt. We can live without the Jews, they can't live without us."
- ⁶ On 28 November, 1941, Hitler told the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem that after defeating the Soviet Union, Germany would not wish to conquer the Middle East: 'Germany's objective would then be solely the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere under the protection of British power.'
- ⁷ In his table talk on the night of the 1 December 1941, Hitler declared: 'Many Jews had also not been conscious of the destructive character of their existence. But he who destroys life risks death himself, and nothing else but that is happening to them.'
- ⁸ On 12 December 1941, less than one month after the publication of the article in *Das Reich*, Hitler spoke about the Jews in front of the *Gauleiters* (noted down by Goebbels): "With reference to the Jewish question, the Führer is determined to clear the decks. He prophesied to the Jews that if they should once more bring about a world war, they would experience their own annihilation in doing so. That was no mere talk. The world war is there, the annihilation of Jewry must be the necessary consequence. The question is to be considered without any sentimentality. We aren't there to have sympathy with the Jews, only sympathy with our German people."

- ⁹ Here, Hitler mirrored directly Goebbels's statements from the article in *Das Reich*. While Irving does cite this speech of 12 December 1941 by Hitler in *Goebbels*, he is careful to omit any mention at all of this key passage because it shows that Hitler was as determined to act brutally against the Jews as Goebbels was.
- ¹⁰ Irving can only argue that the article by Goebbels in *Das Reich* 'displayed a far more uncompromising face than Hitler's towards the Jews' by deliberately manipulating or leaving out a mass of relevant evidence that would undermine his case completely. He is aware of this evidence, and his suppression of it constitutes a conscious manipulation of the historical record to fit his preconceived arguments.

(D) The deliberate omission of evidence: Goebbels's diary entry of 22 November 1941

- ¹ Irving manipulates a Goebbels diary entry describing a meeting with Hitler on 21 November 1941, the first time Goebbels had met Hitler since the publication of the article in *Das Reich*. Goebbels noted in his diary: "The Führer also completely agrees with my views with reference to the Jewish question. He wants an energetic policy against the Jews, which, however, does not cause us unnecessary difficulties. Evacuation of the Jews is to be undertaken city by city. So it is still uncertain when it is Berlin's turn; but when it is, the evacuation is then to be completed as quickly as possible. With reference to Jewish mixed marriages, the Führer recommended to me a somewhat more reserved procedure, above all in artistic circles, because he is of the opinion that these marriages will in any case gradually die out, and one should not allow any grey hair to grow on one's head over it."
- ² In his Goebbels biography, Irving does quote this diary entry, but he omits the crucial first sentence and the first half of the second sentence from the text ('He wants an energetic policy against the Jews') because it shows once more that Hitler thought about the 'Jewish Question' in the same way as Goebbels. Irving only prints the first sen-

tence hidden in the endnotes, directly followed by his comment that Hitler was ‘clearly’ not in agreement with Goebbels. In his Pleadings, he argues that Goebbels inserted the line concerning Hitler’s approval as an alibi ‘for his own wrongdoing’.

- ³ But what was the ‘wrongdoing’ in this case? Irving does not say. Certainly not Goebbels’s article in *Das Reich*, which explicitly referred to Hitler’s own prediction of 1939. Also, if Goebbels was so keen falsely to present Hitler as more radical an antisemite than he was, why then did he note down that Hitler wanted him to go easier on mixed marriages (the background here was the suicide of a well-known German actor, Joachim Gottschalk, who was married to a German Jew)?
- ⁴ As well as manipulating this diary entry by transposing a key point of it to an endnote, Irving also mistranslates. According to Goebbels’s diary, Hitler, as we have seen, explained that he wanted to avoid causing ‘us unnecessary difficulties’ in pursuing an ‘energetic policy against the Jews’. What he meant by ‘unnecessary difficulties’ was probably both the removal of Jews working in industries which were important for the war effort, and the printing of hostile reports about the evacuations in the foreign press. However, Irving omits the word ‘energetic’, and mistranslates ‘unnecessary difficulties’ as ‘endless difficulties’ thus removing the specific context and broadening the significance of what Hitler was saying beyond what the diary entry actually implies.

(E) The Systematic Killing of Jews in the Baltic

- ¹ As we have seen, Irving’s account of Goebbels’s article in *Das Reich* explicitly states that the article was taken by the SS as ‘a sign from above’ and directly inspired the killing of thousands of Jews in Riga on 30 November 1941 ‘on the orders of local SS commander Friedrich Jeckeln’. There is no evidence at all of any radicalising influence exerted by Goebbels’s article on Jeckeln or the SS. As we have already seen, Jeckeln himself had already been involved in a number of large-scale massacres of Jews in the occupied Soviet territory in later summer and au-

tumn of 1941: the over 80,000 Jews exterminated in Kamenets-Podolsk, Kiev, Dniepropetrovsk and Rovno were all killed before the publication of the Goebbels article in *Das Reich*. Clearly, Jeckeln did not need any 'sign from above' by Goebbels to organise the mass extermination of the Jews.

² Similarly, the SS officials in Berlin needed no cue from Goebbels to escalate the mass extermination of the Jews. Adolf Eichmann certainly did not make such claim during his trial in Jerusalem – indeed, he did not even mention Goebbels's article in *Das Reich*. And quite apart from the fact that Heinrich Himmler would not have regarded any statement by Goebbels as a 'sign from above', it has already been shown that the SS leadership was pursuing a policy of mass extermination of the Jews in the occupied Soviet territories long before Goebbels's article was published on 16 November 1941. This policy of mass murder was also put into effect in the Baltic states. From July to November 1941, around 80% of the entire Jewish population of Lithuania were killed. The commander of *Einsatzkommando* 3 (EK 3, one of the four sub-units constituting *Einsatzgruppe* A) reported on 1 December 1941 that 'the aim of solving the Jew-problem for Lithuania has been achieved by EK 3. There are no more Jews in Lithuania, apart from the work-Jews and their families'. The same murderous policy was being pursued in neighbouring Latvia. *Einsatzgruppe* A reported that by October 1941, 30,000 of the 70,000 Jews in Latvia had already been killed. Clearly, the extermination in late November and early December 1941 of the Jews in Riga, the capital of Latvia, was simply following the murderous logic of Nazi extermination policy and had nothing to do with the Goebbels article in *Das Reich*.

³ This conclusion is supported by further documentary evidence. In his post-war interrogation, Jeckeln stated that he received orders from Himmler on 10 or 11 November 1941 to liquidate the Riga ghetto. Himmler's appointment book suggests that the meeting between Jeckeln and Himmler in fact took place on the evening of 4 November 1941

in Himmler's headquarters in Eastern Prussia. In his testimony, Jeckeln stated that Himmler informed him that Hinrich Lohse (the *Reichskommissar Ostland* stationed in Riga, responsible to the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Alfred Rosenberg), was apparently opposed to the liquidation of the ghetto. Jeckeln continued: 'Himmler said I should talk this through with Lohse, and even if he was against it, the Riga ghetto must still be liquidated. "Tell Lohse it is my order, which also corresponds to a wish of the Führer!"'.

- 4 On 5 November 1941, Jeckeln's men, about 50 in total, arrived in Riga. Jeckeln himself arrived some time after. That Himmler approved of the liquidation of the Riga ghetto is also shown by another source. Himmler evidently approved of the "liquidation" of the Riga ghetto. It is clear that on 4 December 1941, very shortly after the first day of mass killings of the Baltic Jews in Riga on 30 November 1941, Jeckeln met with Himmler to discuss these events. A mere four days after this meeting, on 8 December 1941, Jeckeln supervised the killing of most of the remaining Jews in Riga. Concluding, Himmler had most probably ordered these massacres before the publication of Goebbels article in *Das Reich*. No connection at all can be established between this article and the killing of the Riga Jews.

(F) Suppression of relevant evidence: Testimony of Walter Bruns

- 1 Irving omits further documentary evidence in order to support his claim that the massacre of Jews in Riga on 30 November 1941 was inspired by Goebbels's article in *Das Reich*. The German army officer Walter Bruns was apparently in Riga during the massacre. Bruns is regarded as a highly reliable witness by Irving. Irving has referred to Bruns's statements in many of his books, including both editions of *Hitler's War*, the biographies of Goebbels and Göring, and the book on the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, and concludes that there 'can be no doubt as to the veracity of his (i.e. Bruns's) description'. In a conversation on 8 April 1945, apparently secretly taped by the Allied forces,

Bruns recalls a conversation in Riga with a young man called Altenmeyer, who apparently belonged to the SS. Bruns claimed that he argued that the local Baltic Jews ought not to be killed, as they were valuable workers. But Altenmeyer replied: "Yes, they must be shot, it's a FÜHRER-command!". I say: "FÜHRER-command?". "Yes, indeed", and then he shows it to me.' Since Irving submits this document in evidence, he must know its contents. But he totally fails to make reference to this part of Bruns testimony in his published account of these events. This is a clear example of the deliberate suppression of relevant evidence because it does not fit in with Irving's case.

(G) Manipulation and Suppression of Evidence. The testimony of Dieter Wisliceny

- ¹ As described above, Irving claims that Dieter Wisliceny, one of Adolf Eichmann's top officials, described 'Goebbels article in *Das Reich* as a watershed in the Final Solution of the Jewish problem'. Once more, Irving makes it very difficult to verify his claims. According to his footnotes, Wisliceny's post-war report of 18 November 1946 can be found in the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, file F 71/8. However, this file does not exist, and Wisliceny's report has to be located elsewhere.
- ² In his report, Wisliceny states that after the invasion of the USSR in June 1941, Nazi policy against the Jews was transformed dramatically in a step-by-step process, completed in the spring of 1942. One of these radicalising steps was taken in late 1941. As Wisliceny reported: "The second wave of radicalization began after the USA entered the war. This could clearly be felt in the internal German propaganda too. Externally it was expressed in the introduction of the "yellow star" as a mark of the Jews: reference in this connection also to the Goebbels-article "The Jews are Guilty" in an edition of the magazine "Das Reich". In this period of time after the beginning of the war with the USA, I am convinced, must fall the decision of Hitler which ordered the biological annihilation of European Jewry."

- ³ Quite clearly, Wisliceny does not see Goebbels's article as a 'watershed'. Rather, the decisive event in late 1941 in his mind was the decision by Hitler to exterminate the European Jews. However, Irving fails to acknowledge this important admission by Wisliceny, who repeatedly in his report returns to Hitler's decision to kill the European Jews. The main culprits for the extermination of the Jews, according to Wisliceny's report, are Hitler, Himmler, and Eichmann and Heydrich. By contrast, Goebbels is only mentioned once, in the context of the intensification of anti-Jewish propaganda cited above. In no way does Wisliceny's report bear out Irving's claim that Goebbels pursued a more radical policy against the Jews than Hitler. On the contrary, Wisliceny clearly states that it was Hitler who ordered the extermination of the Jews.
- ⁴ Moreover, in addition to all this, Wisliceny makes a further important admission in his report: "According to Eichmann's own report, which he made to me, Globocnik (*sic*) was the first to use gas chambers for the mass extermination of humans. Globocnik had set up big labour camps for Jews in his area of command, and he got rid of those who were unable to work in the manner described. As Eichmann explained, this "procedure" was "less conspicuous" than the mass shootings...."
- ⁵ Thus, Wisliceny's report not only fails to back up Irving's claims that the article in *Das Reich* by Goebbels was seen by the SS as a 'watershed', it completely contradicts everything that Irving has said about the 'final solution': According to Wisliceny, Goebbels was not a major decision maker in the 'Jewish question', Hitler personally ordered the extermination of the European Jews, and the Nazis used gas chambers to implement this order. Once again, Irving manipulates a document into saying the exact opposite from what it actually says.
- ⁶ In conclusion, it is clear that the documentary evidence fails completely to support Irving's claim that Goebbels's antisemitism in the article which he wrote for *Das Reich* was more violent than Hitler's anti-

semitism. It lends no credence at all to Irving's suggestion that the article influenced the killing of Jews in Riga on 30 November 1941. On the contrary, the evidence strongly suggests that the liquidation of the Riga ghetto was part of a systematic extermination process ordered by the Nazi leadership.

(H) Manipulation of statistics: the number of Jews killed in Riga

- ¹ As has already been demonstrated in other briefings, Irving often manipulates numbers and statistics. He does so again in the case of the Jews killed in Riga. As we have seen, Irving claims that on 30 November 1941, one thousand Jews from Berlin and 'four thousand of Riga's unwanted Jews were...machine-gunned into two or three pits'. Irving's assertion here, which he states with absolute certainty, relies on a report of *Einsatzgruppe A*. However, subsequent reports by the Nazi killing squads and post-war legal investigations indicate that the real number of Jews exterminated was significantly higher. For instance, a report compiled by the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) detailed that a total of 10,600 Jews were shot in Riga on 30 November 1941. After a detailed post-war investigation, the jury court in Hamburg accepted in 1973 that the real number was even higher: between 13,000 and 15,000 Jews were killed on 30 November 1941 in the massacre near Riga. Faced with this evidence, Irving offers a further argument in support of his significantly lower figure. Drawing on the testimony of Bruns, who had described that the victims were gunned down into three ditches (24 metres long, about 3 metres wide), Irving claims that each ditch 'would have held one or two thousand victims'. It is entirely unclear how Irving arrives at this bizarre conclusion, for Bruns in his testimony makes no reference at all to the depth of the ditches.
- ² Furthermore, Irving in his main narrative in *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, fails to enlighten his readers about a second massacre of the Riga Jews which took place on 8 December 1941. Only in his footnotes does he acknowledge that *Einsatzgruppe A* reported that in early

December 1941 a total of 27,800 Jews were executed in Riga. However, Irving immediately casts doubt on these figures, claiming that they are ‘possibly an exaggeration’. Yet, Irving’s doubts are not confirmed by other sources. The court in Hamburg in 1973 established that 12,000-15,000 Jews were killed on 8 December 1941, bringing the total number of Jews murdered by the Nazis in Riga between 30 November 1941 and 8 December 1941 to 25,000-30,000. Using various methods of calculating the victims in Riga, the historian Andrew Ezergailis has also arrived at figures of certainly almost 25,000 Jews killed.

(iv) Himmler’s phone call of 30 November 1941

- ¹ Irving’s attempt to show that Hitler was not responsible for the mass killings of German Jews deported to the East also makes use of Himmler’s phone log. This appears repeatedly in Irving’s work, as we have already seen, and for many years formed a key link in his alleged chain of documents exculpating Hitler from involvement in the extermination of the Jews. It therefore repays closer examination, as does Irving’s shifting position on its status over time in the light of the devastating criticisms that have been levelled at it by Broszat and Trevor-Roper, as well as by others, and more recently, in the light of new documentary discoveries which back these criticisms up.

(A) Irving’s claim in *Hitler’s War* (1977)

- ¹ In *Hitler’s War* (1977), Irving argues that Hitler disapproved of the killings of Jews in the East. He claims that Hitler even explicitly ordered a stop to the extermination of Jews in November 1941 – as Trevor-Roper noted, blatantly contradicting his own claim that Hitler was ignorant about what was happening to Jews in Eastern Europe. In the most in-depth discussion of this issue, Irving states that on 30 November 1941 Himmler “was summoned to the Wolf’s Lair for a secret conference with Hitler, at which the fate of Berlin’s Jews was

clearly raised. At 1:30 P.M. Himmler was obliged to telephone from Hitler's bunker to Heydrich the explicit order that Jews were *not to be liquidated*; and the next day Himmler telephoned SS General Oswald Pohl, overall chief of the concentration camp system, with the order: "Jews are to stay where they are".

- ² Irving's evidence for his far-reaching claims relies purely on one entry in Himmler's phone log. Apparently, Himmler had a phone conversation from Hitler's bunker with Heydrich in Prague on 30 November 1941 at 1:30 pm, which Himmler summarised as follows: "Verhaftung Dr Jekelius [Arrest of Dr Jekelius]. Angebl. Sohn Molotow [Supposed son of Molotov]. Judentransport aus Berlin [Jew-transport from Berlin]. Keine Liquidierung [No liquidation]."
- ³ Irving interprets this in the 1977 edition of his book as meaning that Hitler told Himmler to tell Heydrich over the phone not to kill any Jews at all, ever. In the introduction to *Hitler's War*, Irving states that this is 'incontrovertible evidence' that 'Hitler ordered on November 30, 1941, that there was to be "no liquidation" of the Jews (without much difficulty, I found in Himmler's private files his own handwritten note on this)'. Later on in the text, Irving several times refers to Hitler's 'November 1941 order forbidding the liquidation of the Jews'. The document Jackel, *Hitler und der Mord an den europaischer Juden* is mentioned no fewer than six times in the book, and forms the object of its only illustration. In June 1977 he also said: 'We want to know why other historians have not mentioned ever the one document that exists of Adolf Hitler saying "no liquidation of even a tiny train-load of Jews".'

(B) Bending and misinterpreting reliable sources: The Himmler phone log of 30 November 1941

- ¹ There is no doubt about the authenticity of this phone log. But it provides no evidence for Hitler's involvement at all. All we know is that Himmler spoke to Heydrich at 1:30 p.m.; it is pure surmise on Irving's part to speak of an 'order' by Hitler. There is no evidence at all that

Hitler and Himmler even met before the latter's call to Heydrich at 1:30 pm, let alone that they discussed the 'transport of Jews from Berlin'. Hitler's bunker was a large and rambling complex, not a small room in which everyone, including Himmler and Hitler himself, was present at the same time. Once more, Irving manipulates the evidence in order to present Hitler as being opposed to the physical extermination of the Jews.

- ² Irving's manipulation of sources is most obvious regarding his claim that Hitler explicitly forbade the murder of 'the Jews'. From the entry in Himmler's phone log it is perfectly clear that the subject of the conversation on 30 November 1941 between Himmler and Heydrich concerned *one* transport of Jews *from Berlin*, namely the one which left Berlin on 27 November 1941. There was no *general* order by anyone to stop the killing of Jews. This meaning is falsely attributed to the source by Irving, a key example of how Irving misrepresents and bends source material to fit his thesis.
- ³ Irving nowhere gives a motive for Himmler's telephone conversation with Heydrich on 30 November 1941 regarding the fate of the Jews from Berlin, other than Hitler's opposition to the extermination of Jews, a motive which has no basis in historical fact. Himmler's motives in this case are not known for certain. Many historians have put forward convincing explanations for Himmler's opposition to the semi-public killing of the transport of Jews from Berlin on their arrival in Riga. As in so many other cases, Irving pays no attention to these alternative explanations at all, although it is the duty of any serious historian to take account of interpretations put forward by other historians on the basis of documentary evidence that is being used.
- ⁴ To begin with, it is necessary to point out once more that no final decision regarding the immediate fate of the German Jews deported to the East seems to have been taken by the Nazi leadership by November 1941. Whilst native Jews living in former Soviet territory conquered by

the German army were already being indiscriminately killed in very large numbers, the fate of Jews deported from the West was not yet clearly marked out: some were killed on arrival, others were initially allowed to live. Some historians have deduced from this that Himmler still expected at this time the German Jews would be deported even further to the east the following year, after the expected victory over the USSR.

- ⁵ Other historians have argued that in late 1941, opposition was being expressed in various parts of the German military and civilian authorities to the deportations of German Jews to the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. Leading army officials in the area objected to the use of the railway system, claiming it should concentrate on bringing up supplies behind the front. Civilian officials such as the General Commissioner of *Weissrussland*, Kube, criticised the 'import' of Western Jews into the area. There was also disquiet in Germany, above all about the inclusion (or otherwise) in the deportations of so-called 'half-Jews', Jews with non-Jewish spouses, children, the infirm, and Jewish army veterans with decorations for gallantry won during the First World War. Foreign journalists in Berlin had also begun to ask awkward questions about where the deported Jews were going. The decision by Himmler on 30 November 1941 also has to be seen in the context of the execution of German Jews in Kovno in late November 1941. On 25 November 1941, some 2,934 Jews from Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt-am-Main were killed by *Einsatzkommando* 3 in Kovno, as were another 2,000 from Vienna and Breslau on November 29.
- ⁶ Recently available documentary evidence suggests that the decision to include the Jews transported from Berlin in the massacre of the Jews in Riga was taken locally, by Jeckeln. Although Himmler approved of the mass killing of the Baltic Jews, and indeed probably ordered it, he had not yet issued any orders for the extermination of the Jews transported to Riga from Berlin. Thus he called Heydrich on 30 November to prevent the murder of the Berlin Jews on their arrival in Riga, in the

light of the killing of Berlin Jews transported to Kovno a few days earlier. It was semi-public and would arouse further attention. However, by the time of this telephone conversation between Himmler and Heydrich, the Jews were already dead. On the day after the massacre, 1 December 1941, Himmler once more spoke to Heydrich about the executions in Riga. Then, the same evening, he issued the following message to Jeckeln in Riga: ‘The Jews who have been resettled out to the territory of the *Ostland* are only to be dealt with in accordance with guidelines issued by me or by the Reich Security Head Office on my authority. I would punish individual initiatives and contraventions. Signed H. HIMMLER.’

- ⁷ There can be little doubt, therefore, that Jeckeln was acting on his own initiative on 30 November, and that Himmler not only tried to stop him, but, when he had failed, then made sure that Jeckeln would not repeat his action. Equally, however, there can also be little doubt that Himmler concerned himself only with preventing the killing of Jews transported to Riga from the west; he fully sanctioned the mass murder of local Jews in Riga at this time.

(C) Inventing documentary evidence: Himmler’s phone call to Pohl

- ¹ As we have seen, Irving claimed in the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War* that on the following day, 1 December 1941, Himmler telephoned SS General Oswald Pohl with the order that ‘Jews are to stay where they are’. Himmler’s phone log for 1 December 1941 does indeed confirm that he spoke to Pohl that day. Himmler summarised their conversation as follows: “‘Besuch bei Schwarz. Koksagys. Verwaltungsführer der SS haben zu bleiben. Lappenschuhe u. Finnenstiefel’”
- ² The relevant part of this entry for the matter under discussion consists of the third and fourth lines, which together make a single sentence. They translate as follows: ‘Administrative leaders of the SS are to stay’. Thus, what Himmler talked about with Pohl was not that *Jews* were to stay where they were (i.e. safe from liquidation), but that the *administrat-*

ive leaders of the SS had to stay where they were. The term ‘Jews’ is not mentioned by Himmler in his phone call at all. It is simply fabricated by Irving, a fabrication which he has continued to repeat in other books, such as the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War*.

(v) Irving’s later repetition, and amendment, of his falsifications

(A) Continued misrepresentation of the Himmler phone log of 30 November 1941

- ¹ In his submission to the court, Irving defends his broad, and as we have seen, completely false interpretation of the Himmler phone log of 30 November 1941 by claiming that the phrase ‘*Judentransport aus Berlin*’ could be translated as ‘transportation’ in the sense of a repetitive movement. But there is no doubt about the fact that the German word ‘*Judentransport*’ only refers to one single transport. Otherwise, the German plural, ‘*Judentransporte*’, would have been used. Irving already knew that the subject of the phone call had been limited to Jews transported only from Berlin because this is what the document actually says. Thus, his more far-reaching claim that there was an order that Jews in general were not to be liquidated was a deliberate misrepresentation of the source. The leading German historian and critic of Irving, Martin Broszat, like Irving writing in 1977, had no difficulty in establishing that Himmler and Heydrich were talking about the transport from Berlin of 27 November 1941.
- ² Irving subsequently claimed that only after the publication of the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War* did ‘colleagues provided him with the documentation which usefully narrowed down the reference in the Himmler-Heydrich phone note of November 30, 1941 to one particular trainload of Jews being shipped from Berlin to Riga at that time’. What is this documentation to which Irving refers? The evidence that the phone call referred to a single transport of Jews is unmistakably present in the document itself. However, while implicitly denying that he deliber-

ately manipulated the document by misconstruing it to mean a general ban on killing Jews, Irving does concede that he has amended his account of it since 1977.

- ³ In *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, published in 1996, as well as in the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving indeed appears to have stepped back from some of his earlier claims. All he argues in *Goebbels* is that the Berlin Jews who arrived in Riga on 30 November 1941 were killed 'even as Hitler...was instructing Himmler that these Berlin Jews were not to be liquidated'. In his Reply to the Defence, submitted to the court, Irving similarly argues that the significance of the phone call on 30 November 1941 is that 'these Jews were shot despite the existence of a specific Hitler ruling to the contrary'.
- ⁴ However, as we have already seen, there was no 'specific Hitler ruling'. It is also nonsense to argue that the Jews were shot 'despite' a ruling to the contrary, for as Irving himself states in the same paragraph of his submission to the court, the Berlin Jews were shot dead on 30 November 'a few hours before Himmler spoke with Heydrich'.
- ⁵ As the German historians Martin Broszat and Eberhard Jaeckel also pointed out, moreover, if Hitler *had* intervened personally to stop the killing of a single trainload of Berlin Jews on their arrival in Riga, then this would also strongly suggest that he was making an exception here, and that he knew that there was a *general* policy of killing them on arrival. Thus Irving's revised interpretation snared him in a fresh net of contradictions, in which the document ends up by showing the reverse of what he intended it to.

(B) New misrepresentations and omissions: The testimony of Walter Bruns and the letter of Dr. Otto Schulz-Du Bois

- ¹ Irving's misrepresentation of the events surrounding the killing of the Jews in Riga is compounded in a recent article on his website. Here Irving relies on Walter Bruns (already mentioned above) as the source for his claim that a report about the killings in Riga eventually reached

Hitler's headquarters. 'Hitler...seemingly intervened at once to order a halt to "*diese Massenerschiessungen*" (these mass shootings) as soon as a report, signed by a junior officer, was forwarded to him.'

- ² Irving also makes the same point in his Pleadings, where he claims that some time after Bruns's eyewitness account of the massacre reached Hitler's headquarters, Bruns met an 'SS officer (in Riga, who) scoffed to him..."Here's an order that's come, saying that mass shootings like these are no longer to take place".'
- ³ What is the evidence for these claims? As so often, Irving's argument depends on a complete misrepresentation of the source on which it purports to rest. First, he fails to draw attention to the full statement about these events made by Bruns in captivity on 8 April 1945. According to Bruns, two weeks after the massacre in Riga, 'ALTENMEYER (?) triumphantly shows me: "Here's an order that's come, saying that mass shootings of this kind may no longer take place in future. That is to be done more cautiously now".'
- ⁴ Bruns made this point even more explicitly during his interrogation in Nuremberg. One or two weeks after the mass executions in Riga, he recalled, 'there someone showed me a piece of paper that sanctioned the shootings, they just had to be carried out less conspicuously in future.' Thus there was no question of bringing the killings *per se* to an end; it was simply a matter of carrying them out more discreetly. And indeed this is precisely what happened. In early 1942, Heydrich could note that 'the Jewish question in the *Ostland* can be seen as practically solved and cleaned- up.' Thus Bruns's evidence clearly implicates the Nazi leadership in the *continuation* of the killings of Jews in the East; in no way does it lend credence to Irving's claim that Hitler actually put a stop to these killings.
- ⁵ Bruns's testimony is backed up by another document, which Irving simply suppresses. In the conversation of 8 April 1945, apparently secretly taped by the Allied forces, Bruns states that on 30 November

1941 he sent two officers as witnesses to the spot in Riga where the executions were taking place. According to Bruns, it was decided to send reports of the killings to Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr, the intelligence department of the Armed Forces High Command. Canaris would then tell Hitler about these events. One of the two officers sent by Bruns to witness the executions in Riga was Dr. Otto Schulz-Du Bois, a reserve engineer captain.

- ⁶ Not long after the massacre in Riga, Schulz-Du Bois sent a secret letter to his wife, which she later dated to January 1942. On his website, Irving acknowledges that Schulz-Du Bois did indeed send his wife this letter referring to the killings in Riga. However, he makes no mention of the letter's contents; and it is easy to see why. In this letter, Schulz-Du Bois wrote that some time after 30 November 1941, he inquired about the impact of the eyewitness report which he had drawn up on the massacres of Jews in Riga. He was told that his report had been forwarded to the top counter-espionage official "with the justification that these things damage the morale of the troops who see and hear such things. This man, who has constant access to the Führer, is said to have described the consequences and the terrible nature of these methods to the F. (ührer) once more compellingly, whereupon he (i.e. Hitler) is said to have said: "You want to show weakness, do you, mein Herr! I have to do that, for after me there will not be another one to do it!" Schulz-Du-Bois, who died in 1945, also apparently repeated this account verbally to a friend before the end of the war.
- ⁷ Yet Irving makes no attempt to confront this important evidence pointing to Hitler's having sanctioned the mass killing in Riga; he simply omits it from his account. Thus Irving completely misleads his readers by claiming that once Hitler received the report of the 30 November massacre in Riga, he intervened to order a halt. Yet another piece of evidence which Irving argues shows that Hitler intervened to save the Jews fails on closer inspection to match up to the claims Irving makes for it.

(C) Irving's partial withdrawal of his original claims about the Himmler phone log for 30 November 1941

- ¹ On the Focal Point website, Irving claims that on 17 May 1998 he received a document detailing Himmler's appointments for the 30 November 1941 from the Moscow archive. He reproduces this document, with translation, on his website. As emerges from this document, Himmler met Hitler at 14.30, i.e. after he made the phone-call to Heydrich concerning the transport of Jews from Berlin, not before. The summary on the Focal Point website claims: 'This suggests that Mr Irving's original theory that Himmler discussed the matter with Hitler *before* phoning Heydrich is wrong'. Irving, of course, had never presented this as a *theory*, but as an absolute *certainty*. As will be remembered, Irving claimed that the Himmler phone log of 30 November 1941 was 'incontrovertible evidence' that Hitler ordered 'that there was to be "no liquidation" of the Jews'.
- ² Thus, Irving has now retreated from his claim that Hitler on 30 November 1941 ordered the stop of all liquidations of Jews. He has been forced to admit that the phone call Heydrich-Himmler only referred to one trainload of Jews from Berlin. He has also had to give up his claim that Hitler ordered Himmler to make the phone-call. Absolutely nothing remains of his original claim, which he had set out with such certainty in *Hitler's War* (1977) and repeated in modified form on a number of subsequent occasions. So conclusive is the new documentary evidence that even Irving has had to admit that one of his key arguments for Hitler's opposition to the extermination of the Jews is completely without substance.
- ³ Yet, extraordinarily enough, even though on 17 May 1998 Irving admitted that the claims he had made about the Himmler phone-log had been totally bogus, he still continued to support his earlier claims in some of his subsequent publications. Thus on 31 August 1998, he posted another document on his website in which he argued that on 30 November 1941, Hitler had 'demonstrably...ordered' (*nachweis-*

lich...befohlen') that the Berlin Jews on the transport to Riga were not to be killed. This document could still be accessed on Irving's website on 11 April 1999. Evidently the story, which he himself had discredited a few months earlier, proved in the end to be too useful to be discarded altogether. A more egregious instance of Irving's totally unscrupulous use of manufactured, manipulated and doctored historical evidence to support his own untenable historical arguments would be hard to find.

(e) The Schlegelberger note

(i) The document in question

- ¹ Irving consistently argues that far from driving on Nazi Germany's antisemitic policies, Hitler frequently personally intervened to stop them or water them down. One key document which he uses to support his case is what he describes in the Preface to the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* as "an extraordinary note dictated by Staatssekretär Schlegelberger in the Reich Ministry of Justice in the Spring of 1942: "Reich Minister Lammers", this states, referring to Hitler's top civil servant, "informed me that the Führer has repeatedly pronounced that he wants the solution of the Jewish Question put off until after the war is over." Whatever way one looks at this document, it is incompatible with the notion that Hitler had ordered an urgent liquidation programme."
- ² According to Irving, 'no other historians have quoted this document, possibly finding its content hard to reconcile with their obsessively held views' about Hitler's responsibility for the extermination of the Jews.
- ³ Irving's claim that no other historians have quoted this document is pure invention. It must be so, since he has made a point elsewhere of claiming on more than one occasion that he never reads the work of other historians. In fact the Stuttgart historian Eberhard Jäckel published an article about the note as long ago as June, 1978. Indeed it was Jäckel who first informed Irving of the document's existence, a fact

that Irving himself acknowledged. The full text of the typewritten document is as follows: “Reich Minister Lammers informed me that the Führer had repeatedly explained to him that he wanted the solution of the Jewish Question put back until after the war. Accordingly the present discussions possess a merely theoretical value in the opinion of Reich Minister Lammers. But he will be in all cases concerned that fundamental decisions are not reached by a surprise intervention from another agency without his knowledge.” However, the interpretation of this document is by no means as straightforward as Irving’s description of it implies.

- ⁴ The document can be found in a folder of Reich Ministry of Justice files held at the German Federal Archives in Berlin (R 22/52). In terms of its appearance, it is a very unusual document: it has no date, no signature, none of the abbreviations usually used by the leading officials in the Ministry of Justice when signing memoranda, and not even an internal reference number (*Aktenzeichen*). The only direct clue to the background of the document is the name of the State Secretary in the Ministry of Justice, Freisler, which appears in handwriting above the hand-written abbreviation ‘UB IV’ and ‘UB V’ (possibly references to internal departments in the Ministry of Justice) in the bottom left-hand corner. However, this writing appears not to be by Freisler himself, and it is not clear from the note itself whether Freisler is the author. The handwriting rather suggests that Freisler and two internal departments of the Ministry of Justice were to be informed of the content of the note. All the handwriting can establish is that the note was apparently written before August 1942, when Freisler left the post of State Secretary on his appointment as President of the People’s Court.
- ⁵ When trying to analyse documents such as this, historians have to attempt to establish their background by examining the context of the file in which the document are located. Even this is far from straightforward in the present case. The file (R 22/52) is not an original file kept by ministerial officials in the ‘Third Reich’, but rather a large col-

lection of documents (204 pages) put together after 1945. It contains various original and copied documents relating to issues regarding Jews in Germany which touched in some way on the authority of the Ministry of Justice, from the forcible 'Aryanisation' of Jewish property in the late 1930s, to the implications of the 13th *Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* of 1 July 1943.

- ⁶ Of all the documents collected in the file (R22/52), only five bear an older page reference in the top left corner (01/108–01/112). This older pagination has subsequently been crossed out, indicating that these five documents, which include the document in question ('Schlegelberger note'), originally belonged to the same file or context. However, this older page reference does not appear to be a German ministerial reference, nor is it an archival reference (these traditionally appear on the top right side of a page where the documents, as here, are single-sided). It is most likely that the deleted pagination was stamped on these five documents by the Allies in preparation for the Nuremberg trials. This theory is confirmed by documents prepared by the Office of U.S. Chief of Counsel. In a staff evidence analysis of 22 June 1946, the five documents are listed together as located in the Ministry of Justice files.
- ⁷ This conclusion still does not allow the document in question ('Schlegelberger note') to be put into context beyond any reasonable doubt. For only three of the five documents clearly belong in the same context, namely that of ongoing discussions about the treatment of so-called 'mixed Jews' or 'half-Jews' (*Mischlinge*) and German Jews married to non-Jewish Germans (*Mischehen*) during the Spring of 1942. These three documents are as follows: (1) A letter by State Secretary Schlegelberger to the Head of the *Reichskanzlei*, Hans Heinrich Lammers. In this letter, dated 12 March 1942, Schlegelberger raises objections to proposals regarding the fate of certain Jews and 'mixed Jews', which had been made at a conference on 6 March 1942, and requests a personal meeting with Lammers in that matter. (2) Lammers's reply to

Schlegelberger, dated 18 March 1942. Writing from Hitler's headquarters, Lammers informs Schlegelberger that he expects to return to Berlin at the end of the month, and would then arrange a date for a meeting. (3) A letter by Schlegelberger to various party and state agencies, dated 5 April 1942, regarding proposals for the treatment of 'half-Jews' and Jews in 'mixed marriages'.

- ⁸ By contrast, the fourth document dates not from spring 1942, but from 21 November 1941. It is an internal memorandum, signed by *Ministerialdirigent* Lutterloh, a senior civil servant in the Ministry for Justice with responsibility for personal and organisational matters. In the memorandum, Lutterloh noted that "With reference to the current situation of the Jews, discussions are taking place in the Ministry as to whether the Jews are to be deprived of their right to take part in court proceedings, and whether their representation before a court is to be regulated in another way. In this matter the deciding factor is whether an immediate expulsion of all Jews can be reckoned with."
- ¹⁰ At that time, the deportations of the German Jews to the East had already started and the view inside the Ministry of Justice was evidently that it made little sense to draw up new guidelines for the treatment of Jews before German courts if there were to be no Jews left in Germany within a short time anyway.
- ¹¹ It is not immediately clear what the relation the fifth document (the 'Schlegelberger memorandum') has to these other four documents. There appear to be three different possibilities.
- ¹² First, it might not stand in any relationship with either documents 1-3 or document 4. This does not very likely, yet this possibility cannot be totally dismissed. It is at least possible that the Allies, when collecting the five documents under examination here, mixed them together from different parts of the same file. In this case, the dating and meaning of the document would remain obscure. It may well have been written in 1940 or 1941, in which case the reference to Hitler's wish for the

postponement of the 'Solution of the Jewish Question' until after the war at this point is perfectly compatible with Hitler having decided on the extermination of all European Jews later on. Indeed, the note in the bottom left-hand corner of the document seems to date it to '17.7' from which a dating to 17 July 1941 would seem to follow. In this case the document would have referred to a meeting held on 16 July 1941, at which Lammers but not Schlegelberger was present, along with Hitler, Goring, Keitel, Rosenberg, and Bormann. The Jewish question was almost certainly discussed at this meeting since it was followed on 17 July by the Appointment of Rosenberg + Himmler to their respective responsible posts for the administration of the occupied Eastern territories. – See ADAP XIII p. 127.

- ¹³ Second, the document ('Schlegelberger memorandum') might be linked to the Lutterloh memorandum. As the discussions in the Ministry of Justice about the legal status of Jews in November 1941 were, according to Lutterloh, linked to the question of whether the German Jews would rapidly disappear from Germany or not, it is possible that a senior judicial official asked Lammers about the general direction of Nazi policy towards the Jews. Would they all 'disappear' soon or not?
- ¹⁴ On the whole, this interpretation does not appear to be very likely either, as Lammers would probably not have agreed to a meeting on issue of such comparatively minor importance. There is also no indication in the Lutterloh memorandum that such a meeting was sought by the Ministry of Justice. Still, this interpretation can not be dismissed completely. After all, Lutterloh had asked in his memorandum on 21 November 1941 that his assessment be passed on to State Secretary Freisler, whose name, as we have seen, also appears on the document in question ('Schlegelberger memorandum'). It should also be noted that the document ('Schlegelberger memorandum') uses the same term for discussions ('Erörterungen') as the Lutterloh memorandum. Thus, it is at least thinkable that Lammers had informed a senior judicial official (possibly Schlegelberger) sometime after 21 November

1941, that the current discussions in the Ministry of Justice were purely theoretical, as Hitler had stated in the past that the 'Final Solution' would only be carried out after the war.

- 15 This dating and context would also be perfectly compatible with the notion that Hitler did decide on the extermination of all European Jews at some later date. After all, the document in question ('Schlegelberger memorandum') does not refer to Hitler's present views ('Reich Minister Lammers informed me that the Führer *had* repeatedly explained to him...Lammers clearly had not consulted Hitler directly about the issue, but was merely repeating a series of previous utterings). Thus, Lammers might be repeating views which Hitler held some time in 1941 or even earlier. Indeed, some historians would even accept that Hitler was still voicing similar views in early 1942.
- 16 Thus the historian Peter Longerich has argued in a recent, document-based study of the National Socialist extermination of the Jews, in early 1942 the Nazi leadership still saw the extermination of Jews in the East (which was in fact already under way) merely as 'pre-emptions of the "final solution" which was first to be carried out to its full extent after the end of the war.' Only in spring-summer 1942 did Nazi policy escalate further, and it was decided that the 'Final Solution' (that is, the systematic extermination of all European Jews) would not be carried out mainly after the war, but already while the war was going on. In this context, it is important to remember that the Nazi leadership considered in the winter of 1941-42 that the war would be over relatively quickly, possibly well before the end of 1942, and only as the offensive on the Eastern Front became increasingly bogged down during the Spring of 1942 did they begin to realise that it would take a lot longer to bring to a conclusion.
- 17 These first two possible interpretations of the document cannot be dismissed out of hand, and there will probably always remain some degree of uncertainty about the context in which it should be read and

understood. There is a third possibility, however, and that is, that the document in question might be linked to the discussions in the Spring of 1942 regarding the fate of 'half-Jews' and Jews in 'mixed marriages' which form the context of documents one, two and three discussed above. This seems to be the most likely interpretation. It has also been advanced by several historians of Nazi Germany, by one of the leading prosecution attorneys at the Nuremberg trials, and indeed even by David Irving himself. It is this interpretation which will now be investigated in greater detail, in order to establish what seems the most likely context into which the Schlegelberger memorandum can be put.

(ii) Nazi policy towards 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages'

- ¹ In September 1935, the Nazis proclaimed the so-called Nuremberg laws, which outlawed sexual relations between Germans and Jews (apart from those already married) and made German Jews officially into second-class citizens. These laws meant that the Nazis had to legally define who they regarded to be a 'Jew'. This issue was settled in the First Supplementary Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 November 1935. Falling back on religious definitions of Jews (and thus openly acknowledging the absurdity of Nazi racial ideology), a Jew was defined as 'anyone who is descended from at least three grandparents who are racially full Jews'. This last point was defined as follows: 'A grandparent shall be considered as full-blooded if he or she belonged to the Jewish religious community'.
- ² However, German citizens with two grandparents who had belonged to the Jewish religion were classified in a crucially different way. Only if they, too, were members of the Jewish religion or married to a 'full Jew', were they classified by the Nazis as 'Jews'. In all other cases (barring some other special circumstances), they were classified as 'half-Jews' (*Mischlinge*) 'of the first degree'.

- ³ 'Half-Jews' faced various forms of discriminations, from being dismissed as civil servants to having to pay higher school fees than 'Aryans' did. But while their treatment continuously deteriorated during the 'Third Reich', the 'half-Jews' were still in a comparatively better position than those Germans who had been classified by the Nazis as 'full-Jews'. The privileged status of the 'half-Jews' (of whom there were an estimated 69,000 in Germany and Austria in 1939) compared to 'full Jews' was not accepted by some agencies in the Nazi dictatorship. The Nazi party and other officials (for instance in the *Sicherheitsdienst*) pushed for a change in policy and demanded that 'half-Jews' be treated in the same way as 'full Jews'. These demands were opposed by officials in the Ministry of the Interior and other government departments. Hitler was apparently ambivalent about the status of 'part-Jews' and did not decisively intervene in these debates.
- ⁴ Already before the beginning of the deportation of German Jews to the East in autumn 1941, the question of what should happen to the 'half-Jews' apparently took on greater urgency for various Nazi officials. This became obvious above all at the notorious Wannsee conference of 20 January 1942. The general topic of the conference was the 'final solution of the European Jewish question'. In the first part of the conference, Heydrich informed the high-ranking party and government officials present, that Hitler had approved of the 'evacuation of the Jews to the east' as a solution to the 'Jewish question'. Heydrich left no doubt about the murderous fate which awaited the Jews: "Large labour gangs will be formed from those fit for work...and undoubtedly a large number of them will drop out through natural wastage. The remainder who survive – and they will certainly be those who have the greatest powers of endurance – will have to be dealt with accordingly."
- ⁵ Adolf Eichmann, who took these minutes at the meeting, after the war admitted that the minutes were put in euphemistic language, and that at the meeting itself the talk had been openly about 'killing and elimination and annihilation'. The meeting voiced no opposition to the plans

outlined by Heydrich. Soon after the Wannsee conference, Heydrich expressed his satisfaction that the 'basic line in respect of the final solution of the Jewish question has been set and complete agreement exists on the part of the agencies which are participating in it.'

- ⁶ The same could not be said, however, for the special case of 'half-Jews' and Jews in 'mixed marriages' with people whom the regime defined as non-Jews or 'Aryans'. Even though their fate was discussed at great length in the second part of the Wannsee conference, no consensus was reached. As Heydrich pointed out at the meeting, an important precondition for the 'Final Solution' was 'the precise definition of the group of persons involved'. Heydrich thus suggested that '*Mischlinge* 1st degree are to be treated as Jews for the purpose of the final solution' [i.e. deported to the East], apart from certain exceptions such as 'half-Jews' married to partners classified by the Nazis as German. Those few 'half-Jews' allowed to stay in the *Reich*, Heydrich proposed, were all to be sterilised 'to resolve finally the *Mischling* problem'. Regarding 'mixed marriages', Heydrich argued that the 'decision on whether the Jewish partner should be evacuated or sent to an old people's ghetto must be decided from case to case depending on the effects of such a measure on the German relatives of this mixed marriage.'
- ⁷ Heydrich's plans regarding the 'half-Jews', which repeated demands made in summer 1941 by Nazi Party and SS radicals, were not universally accepted. State Secretary Stuckart from the Ministry of the Interior criticised them as leading to 'endless administrative work'. He proposed that the 'half-Jews' be sterilised (rather than 'evacuated') and that in the case of 'mixed marriages', as he said, 'one ought also to contemplate ways by which the legislator might say, for example: "these marriages are dissolved"'. In order to iron out these differences regarding the treatment of 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages', Heydrich called a 'detailed discussion' (*Detailbesprechung*) of lower-ranking state and party officials on 6 March 1942 in the Reich Security Head Office.

- ⁸ It is absolutely vital to note that this conference, and the written exchanges by the participants in the aftermath of the conference, were *only* concerned with the issue of ‘mixed marriages’ and ‘half-Jews’. The fate of the ‘full Jews’ was not raised, as it had already been agreed upon in principle, even if, as historians like Peter Longerich have argued, Nazi leaders had not yet abandoned their view that the total extermination of all European Jews would only be completed after the war was won. Nevertheless, the conference on 6 March 1942 and the subsequent exchanges were still conducted under the general heading ‘Final Solution of the Jewish Question’. The reason for this is clear: the officials were still occupied with determining ‘the precise definition of the group of persons involved’ in the ‘final solution’, as Heydrich had put it at the Wannsee conference. Were ‘half-Jews’ also to be ‘evacuated’, or ‘only’ sterilised? And what would be the fate of Jews in ‘mixed marriages’? All of these seemingly minor questions of detail were vital to the implementation of the ‘Final Solution’ and had already taken up a great deal of time at the Wannsee Conference itself. This was unfinished business from the Conference, in other words, and it is not surprising that it continued to be carried on under the general heading of the ‘Final Solution of the Jewish Question’.
- ⁹ These matters of detail were thus debated at the meeting of 15 lower ranking state and party officials on 6 March 1942 under this very general heading – ‘*Endlösung der Judenfrage*’. The content of this meeting is detailed in several contemporary sources. Regarding the ‘half -Jews’, Stuckart’s proposal that they all be compulsory sterilised and then allowed to remain in the *Reich* was widely criticised. Most officials agreed that such mass sterilisations were impossible during the war, as hospital beds and doctors were needed for the war-wounded. It was also remarked that Stuckart’s proposal would not lead to a complete ‘solution of the half-Jew problem’, for: “According to a communication from the representative of the Party Chancellery, the view had been expressed, in the highest quarter, in connection with the discussion of

half-Jew questions in the Army, that it was necessary to divide the half-Jews into Jews and Germans, and that it was in no way tenable to keep the half-Jews permanently alive as a small race. No account would be taken of this demand if all half-Jews were to be sterilised and allowed to stay on Reich territory. (**German translation** Nach Mitteilung des Vertreters der Parteikanzlei werde von hochster Stelle anlässlich der Erörterung von Mischlingsfragen in der Wehrmacht zum Ausdruck gebracht, daß es notwendig sei, die Mischlinge auf Juden und Deutschen afzuteilen, und daß es keinesfalls tragbar sei, die Mischlinge als dritte kleine Rasse auf die Dauer am Leben zu halten Dieses Forderung wurde bei einer Sterilisierung aller Mischlinge und ihrer Belassung im Reichsgebiet nicht Rechnung getragen: See BA Berlin, 99 US 58013:”

- 10 'In the highest quarter' was the traditional bureaucratic designation for the head of state, or in this context, for Hitler. In view of the fact that Hitler had expressed himself on this issue, the meeting decided that Hitler should be presented both with Stuckart's proposal for the general compulsory sterilisation of all 'half-Jews', and with an alternative plan, which mirrored Heydrich's suggestions at the Wannsee conference. Under this proposal, 'half-Jews' would generally be equated with Jews, and 'evacuated' (possibly to special 'settlements' to be set up for 'half-Jews'). However, there was to be a one-off screening process of 'half-Jews', after which a relatively small group would be allowed to remain in the Reich. In their case, the officials envisaged their 'voluntary' sterilisation 'as quid-pro-quo for the clemency accorded to them in being allowed to stay in the Reich.' But in case Hitler still opted for the Stuckart proposal, rather than this alternative plan, it was suggested that the sterilised 'half-Jews' should not be allowed to remain in the Reich, as they represented a political and administrative 'burden'. Rather, they should be deported to a special 'settlement' for 'half-Jews'.

¹¹ The representative of the Propaganda Ministry at the conference on 6 March 1942 also criticised the proposal Stuckart had made at the Wannsee conference regarding the issue of ‘mixed marriages’. He rejected the promulgation of a law which would forcibly dissolve all marriages between German Jews and non-Jewish Germans on political grounds, especially as the Vatican would probably criticise such a law. The representative of the Ministry of Justice also opposed the proposed law out of general legal considerations. In the end, the officials at the meeting put forward a compromise solution, which, however, was still close to the original proposal for forcible divorces. The German partners in ‘mixed marriages’ were to be given the option to approach the courts for a divorce, which would then be granted automatically. However, if the German partners failed to do so within a specified time-frame, then “The state prosecutors will be instructed to institute divorce proceedings. The divorce decree will then depend solely on the ruling that one marriage partner is fully or half-Jewish. The Head of the Security Police and the SD (Heydrich) will make this ruling. The state prosecutors and the courts will be bound by the ruling of the Head of the Security Police and the SD. Werden die Staatsanwaltschaften angewiesen, Scheidungsanträge zu stellen. Der Scheidungsanspruch hängt dann nur von der Feststellung ab, daß ein Ehepartner volljüdisch bzw. Mischung I. Grades ist. Diese Feststellung trifft der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD. Die Staatsanwaltschaften und Gerichte sind an die Feststellung des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD gebunden.”

¹² When the lower-ranking officials reported to their superiors about the outcome of the conference on 6 March 1942, several senior officials immediately raised concerns. On 16 March 1942, State Secretary Stuckart from the Ministry of the Interior sent a letter to seven of the state and party offices which had been represented at the 6 March 1942 meeting. In this letter under the heading ‘Re: Final Solution of the Jewish Question’ Stuckart reiterated his vehement opposition to

the plan 'to equate the half-Jews with the Jews and to incorporate them into the expulsion action already in progress for Jews'. He reiterated his proposals for the 'natural dying-out of the half-Jews within the Reich territory' after their sterilisation.

- 13 The discussions at the conference on 6 March 1942 also rang alarm-bells in the Ministry of Justice. When the acting Minister of Justice, Franz Schlegelberger, was informed by the ministries' representative at the meeting, Massfelder, of the discussions, he immediately wrote to Hans Heinrich Lammers, the head of the Reich Chancellery. It is at this point that we return to the three documents collected in the file in the German Federal Archives (R 22/52). In his letter to Lammers on 12 March 1942, Schlegelberger noted that the meeting of 6 March 1942 had prepared the ground for decisions, 'which I must hold to be in large part completely impossible': 'Since the result of the discussions, in which indeed an adviser from your Department took part, is to form the basis for the Führer's decision, I urgently wish to discuss this matter with you personally in good time.'
- 14 In a letter sent some three weeks later to seven of the state and party offices which had been represented at the 6 March 1942 meeting, Schlegelberger set out exactly which proposals he objected to. Again, this letter is written under the heading 'Re: Final Solution of the Jewish Question'. At the beginning of his letter Schlegelberger reiterated Heydrich's demand at the Wannsee conference for a clear definition: 'The final solution of the Jewish question demands a clear and permanently determining prior delimitation of the group of people to which the measures envisaged are to be applied.'
- 15 Schlegelberger then moved on to discuss in detail the different proposals for the treatment of 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages'. Regarding the former, Schlegelberger supported Stuckart's proposal that "Preference is to be given to the prevention of the reproduction of these half-Jews over their equal treatment to that of the full Jews and the expul-

sion connected with it. The fertile half-Jews should be given the choice of submitting to sterilisation or to being expelled in the same way as full Jews.” Those ‘half-Jews’ with children who were not classified as ‘half-Jews’, Schlegelberger suggested, could possibly even be exempted both from sterilisation and ‘expulsion’.

- ¹⁶ Regarding ‘mixed marriages’, Schlegelberger raised no objections to the proposals that procedures for divorce applications by non-Jewish Germans married to German Jews or ‘half-Jews’ be simplified. However, Schlegelberger strongly opposed the proposals for forcible divorces which had been made at the conference on 6 March 1942: “Substantial reservations exist in respect of compulsory divorce, perhaps on the application of the state prosecutor. Such compulsion is unnecessary because the marriage partners are separated from one another in any case by the expulsion of the Jewish partner. Compulsory divorce is, however, also pointless, because even if it removes the ties of marriage, it does not remove any inner ties between the marriage partners.”
- ¹⁷ No doubt, Schlegelberger also opposed the proposals for forcible divorces made at the conference on 6 March 1942, as they would have left the entire decision-making process in divorce issues regarding Jews to Heydrich’s officials. Courts and judges were to be given no option but to grant divorce petitions approved by the Reich Security Head Office. For most of the Nazi years, the Ministry of Justice was consistently concerned to maintain at least the formal appearance of judicial independence, and here was a proposal which threatened to undermine it. In practical terms it would also have removed a significant area of decision-making from the Ministry’s purview.
- ¹⁸ It was these issues, the treatment of the ‘half-Jews’ and ‘mixed marriages’, which Schlegelberger wanted to raise with Lammers. Schlegelberger was clearly not concerned about the fate of ‘full Jews’. As we have already seen, their fate had already been agreed upon in prin-

ciple by the different state and party officials at the Wannsee conference. On 18 March 1942, Lammers, writing from Hitler's headquarters, replied to Schlegelberger's request for a meeting. Under the heading: 'Re: Complete Solution of the Jewish Question', Lammers agreed to meet Schlegelberger. A date for the meeting would be fixed upon Lammers's return to Berlin, which he expected to be at the end of March 1942.

¹⁹ If it is accepted that it dates from Spring 1942, then it is possible that the document in question ('Schlegelberger memorandum') is Schlegelberger's record of this meeting with Lammers, which according to the historian Eberhard Jäckel took place on 10 April 1942. Lammers at the meeting apparently informed Schlegelberger that Hitler had repeatedly told him in the past, that the issue of 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages' would be solved after the war. This is the only reasonable interpretation of the phrase 'solution of the Jewish question' (*Lösung der Judenfrage*) used in the note if the note is dated to the Spring of 1942. As has been clearly demonstrated, Schlegelberger did not seek a meeting with Lammers to discuss the 'evacuation' of Jews to the East in general. This had already been decided upon. He only wanted to raise the issue of 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages'. It has also been shown that the debates about this very specific issue in March and April 1942 were conducted under the general heading 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) or complete solution of the Jewish question (*Gesamtlosung der Judenfrage*).

²⁰ This interpretation of the document is supported by other sources as well. In preparation for the Nuremberg trials, Allied prosecutors interrogated several officials who had been involved in the discussions regarding 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages' in spring 1942. Some officials, like Franz Rademacher from the Foreign Office, simply claimed that they did not remember a thing about the conference on 6 March 1942, even though Rademacher had himself passed on a summary of the meeting to his superiors. Edinger Ancker, who had represented the

Party Chancellery at the meeting on 6 March 1942, suffered from a similar loss of memory. However, two officials from the Reich Chancellery (headed by Lammers), Hans Ficker and Gottfried Boley, did give testimonies about the discussions in spring 1942. These testimonies were certainly self-serving (for instance, Ficker claimed ignorance about the extermination of the Jews) and have to be treated with some scepticism. As Ficker admitted, he had talked about the meeting on 6 March 1942 ‘more than a dozen times’ with Boley in an internment camp. Nevertheless, these interrogations broadly confirm the context of the document in question (‘Schlegelberger memorandum’).

- ²¹ Asked about the exchange of letters between Lammers and Schlegelberger in March 1942, Ficker recalled that in early 1942 the Reich Chancellery had received an invitation from the Reich Security Head Office for a discussion regarding the ‘Final Solution of the Jewish Question’ (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). It is clear that this was the conference on 6 March 1942, which was to discuss the treatment of ‘half-Jews’ and ‘mixed marriages’. Ficker at that time was *Kabinettsrat* in the Reich Chancellery, which he had joined at the beginning of the Second World War. Previously, he had been a senior official (*Ministerialrat*) in the Ministry of Justice. According to his testimony, Ficker totally rejected the proposals to be discussed at the 6 March 1942 meeting and refused to represent the Reich Chancellery. Instead, a junior official in the Reich Chancellery, Boley, was sent to the conference. Boley was indeed present at the conference on 6 March 1942. State Secretary Kritzing, as Ficker testified on 20 December 1946, strictly instructed Boley “in no way to express a position on the issue, but just to report the result of this meeting. This Boley did; on the basis of his written report of the meeting, it was suggested to the Minister (Lammers) that he should now already, that is, before the responsible department heads or State Secretaries had expressed their views, report on the matter to the Führer and suggest a postponement for the time being of the whole problem (i.e. what to do with ‘half-Jews’ and mixed marriages). This

report followed, and Hitler decided that this so-called 'final solution' should now be postponed until the end of the war. This was in my opinion communicated to the Reich Security Head Office. Before this decision had been obtained, State Secretary Schlegelberger, who at that time was entrusted with carrying out the business of the Reich Justice Ministry, had written a letter which, I believe, was sent to various recipients, also including Reich Minister Lammers, [this is incorrect; the letter was not sent directly to Lammers]...Since the decision of Hitler had gone out in the meantime, it was necessary to inform State Secretary Schlegelberger of it." Further testimony by Ficker makes it clear that all that was discussed between Lammers and Hitler, and subsequently Lammers and Schlegelberger, was the issue of 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages'.

²² Once Boley reported back to the Reich Chancellery with the results of the conference on 6 March 1942, Ficker stated on 19 February 1947, 'Lammers went straightaway to Hitler and said, this proposal has been put forward, that won't do, we must postpone this matter. And thereupon he came with an instruction from Hitler to postpone the whole matter to the end of the war.' Ficker supplied more detail about the context in his testimony on 11 June 1947. After the conference on 6 March 1942, Boley returned to the Reich Chancellery and "Tabled a note about the session...Lammers was not in Berlin. At that time we tabled the matter with a note from Boley and Kritzinger was agreed that the matter should be postponed to the end of the war. After the report to the Führer the Minister (Lammers) came back with the same note too."

²² Boley also testified about the aftermath of the conference on 6 March 1942: "The minutes were sent to the individual departments and these were to give their opinion on the matter. Weeks later, the Reich Chancellery received a demand (from the Reich Security Head Office) in pretty impolite manner...to take a position. Thereupon we replied saying we refused to take a view. For us, and also for myself, the matter

was thus closed. Lammers also claimed in a conversation we had after the end of the war that he had stopped it being carried out by reporting to Hitler.”

- ²² What these testimonies show, despite their various internal inconsistencies and the various self-serving statements put out by these witnesses, is that if one accepts the view that it dates from the Spring of 1942, then it is very likely that the document in question (‘Schlegelberger memorandum’) is Schlegelberger’s record of a meeting with Lammers, which took place in the wake of the conference on 6 March 1942, and dealt with Schlegelberger’s opposition to certain proposals regarding ‘half-Jews’ and ‘mixed marriages’. However Ficker’s claim that Hitler made a direct decision of the issue is implausible in the light of the document’s failure to record such a decision.
- ²³ How can we explain Hitler’s uncertainty and ambivalence regarding ‘half-Jews’ and ‘mixed marriages’? There can be no doubt that Hitler was very hostile towards ‘half-Jews’. Already in *Mein Kampf*, he had made tasteless remarks about ‘cross-breeding’ and ‘bastards’, and in spring and summer 1942 his attitude towards the *Mischlinge* clearly became more radical. In June and July 1942 he repeatedly complained that various agencies used excessively ‘mild criteria’ in assessing ‘half-Jews’. On 10 May 1942, he told General Jodl that “He regretted the many exceptions which the Army was making in the recruitment of fifty-per cent half-Jews. For experience proved that from these Jewish descendants four, five, six generations long, pure Jews bred out again and again. These pure-bred Jews posed a great danger! In principle he would now only permit exceptions in quite special cases.”
- ²⁴ At the same time, Hitler was apparently not prepared simply to brush aside the criticisms uttered by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice and follow the demands by the party radicals to include most ‘half-Jews’ and Jews in ‘mixed marriages’ in the extermination (‘expulsion’) programme. There are numerous possible reasons for

this. Hitler repeatedly chose not to interfere with internal conflicts between different agencies of the Nazi dictatorship, in an attempt to avoid association 'with possible unpopular policy options'. This may have been an instance of such a refusal. He also probably wanted to avoid causing unrest among the non-Jewish relatives or partners of the Jews involved. Unlike those Germans classified as 'full Jews', the 'half-Jews' and Jews in 'mixed marriages' were not yet totally cut off from the rest of the German population, as they still often had one parent classified as German, or were married to a German partner. That these 'Aryan' Germans would not necessarily allow deportations to go ahead without resistance was powerfully confirmed in the famous Rosenstrasse incident in February 1943, when a large crowd of 'Aryan' German women successfully staged a public demonstration to force the release of some two thousand of their arrested Jewish husbands and even the return of a handful who had already been sent to Auschwitz.

- ²⁵ In fact, Hitler failed to issue an authoritative order that discussion of the issue should be postponed. After all, Lammers in his discussions with Schlegelberger did not claim to have actually spoken to Hitler about the different proposals made regarding 'half-Jews' and Jews in 'mixed marriages'. All Lammers stated was that Hitler *in the past* had repeatedly said that a decision in the matter should be postponed until after the war. As Hitler did apparently not make any clear decision in Spring 1942, the discussions continued throughout Summer and Autumn 1942. On 16 July 1942, Alfred Meyer, an official in Rosenberg's Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, sent a letter regarding the status of 'half-Jews' to various state and party agencies, which had been involved in the discussions that same spring. At a conference in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, several state and party officials had already proposed on 29 January 1942 that in Czechoslovakia, Romania, Croatia, the General Government and in the occupied Eastern territories all 'half-Jews' and non-Jewish wives married to Jews were to be classified as Jews. In the letter of 16 July

1942, the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories informed the other officials that it proposed that a 'decision of the Führer' be requested regarding the different proposals made for the treatment of 'half-Jews' at the conference on 6 March 1942. In this context, Himmler wrote ten days later to the Head of the SS Main Office, Gottlob Berger. While Jews were all to be exterminated, no binding decision should be made about the definitions (and thus the status of the 'half-Jews'): "I. I urgently request that no decrees should be issued concerning the concept of a Jew. We only tie our hands with all these stupid definitions. II. The occupied Eastern territories are going to be freed from the Jews. The *Führer* has placed the responsibility for implementing this very difficult order on my shoulders. I forbid any discussion..."

- ²⁷ However, this did not put an end to the issue. On 27 October 1942, yet another conference took place in the Reich Security Head Office, under the heading 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). Like the meeting on 6 March 1942, it was entirely devoted to the issue of 'half-Jews' and 'mixed marriages', and included no less than eight of the participants of this earlier conference, including Boley and Massfelder. Regarding 'half-Jews', the participants were informed that "findings and new experiences in the area of sterilization [possibly a reference to experiments which had just started in Auschwitz] will probably make it possible to carry out sterilization in simplified form and in a shortened operation already during the war. Having regard to this, it was agreed that the proposal to sterilize all half-Jews of the first degree should be approved."
- ²⁸ Yet, this programme was never implemented and the issues were never resolved. As a consequence, most *Mischlinge*, as well as many Jews in mixed marriages, survived the war.

(iii) Conclusion

- ¹ This detailed investigation has made clear that David Irving is wrong to claim with absolute certainty that the document in question was dictated by Franz Schlegelberger in Spring 1942. As has been shown, this is merely one of several possible interpretations, albeit the most convincing one, and the note may in fact date from July 1941. Irving is utterly misleading when he argues that the document ‘is incompatible with the notion that Hitler had ordered an urgent liquidation programme’ and shows that Hitler ‘ordered “No Final Solution”’. If one accepts that the note dates from Spring 1942, an examination of the historical context makes clear that the ‘present discussions’ to which the document refers, were most probably the discussions taking place in the spring of 1942 about divorce proceedings for Jews in ‘mixed marriages’ and measures against ‘half-Jews’. These discussions took place under the general heading ‘Final Solution of the Jewish Question’ (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). In this context, the overwhelming likelihood is that Lammers’s reference to views Hitler had expressed in the past that the solution of the ‘Jewish question’ be postponed until after the war was over, referred only to the fate of ‘half-Jews’ and Jews in ‘mixed marriages’. The fate of ‘full Jews’, by contrast, had already been decided upon in principle. Yet, until the position of the borderline categories was finally clarified, the ‘Jewish Question’ as many Nazis understood it could not be regarded as completely solved. Lammers’s reference to a possible surprise intervention from another agency was probably meant to reassure Schlegelberger that more radical officials in other party or state positions who, as we have seen, favoured a more drastic solution, would not be allowed to resolve the issue without Schlegelberger’s considerations being taken into account.
- ² The absurdity of Irving’s claims regarding the document can be demonstrated in two other ways. First, if the term ‘final solution’ was really understood to mean, in each and every context in which it was used by the Nazis, the total physical extermination of the Jews in

Europe, as Irving implies, then the document immediately would make clear that Hitler did know about the plan to exterminate Europe's Jews, even if he did want it postponed until after the war. Surely Irving would not want this implication to be drawn from the document in question; the inference would run counter to everything he has previously argued about Hitler, and indeed he does not draw it here.

- ³ Secondly, the actions of the Ministry of Justice regarding the Jews from spring 1942 onwards are absolutely incompatible with Ministry officials having received any *general* order from Hitler which stated “‘No Final Solution’”, or in other words, no killing of Jews. On 16 April 1942, only six days after Schlegelberger's presumed meeting with Lammers, the Ministry of Justice issued a directive to all Chief State Prosecutors in Germany stating that the Ministry supported the ‘evacuation’ to the East of the Jewish inmates of all German penal institutions. On this date, regional judicial authorities were instructed by the Ministry that ‘the implementation of a prison sentence against Jews who are to be evacuated is to be discontinued after a requisition by the state police authority’. In such cases, the prisoners were to be directly handed over to the Gestapo. The same principle was applied to Jewish prisoners awaiting trial on remand, ‘unless’, the Ministry added in a revealing phrase, ‘it is expected that they will be sentenced to death’, showing that judicial officials clearly understood that ‘evacuation’ was a synonym for ‘execution’.
- ⁴ All the remaining Jews in state penal institutions were handed over to the police (together with other selected ‘asocial’ state prisoners) after a meeting between Himmler and the new Minister of Justice, Otto-Georg Thierack, on 18 September 1942 ‘for annihilation through labour’. More than 1,000 Jewish prisoners were transported straight to Auschwitz following this agreement. Finally, on 13 October 1942, Thierack wrote to Martin Bormann to inform Bormann of his plans that in future the judicial courts would no longer prosecute any offences by Jews, as well as other ‘racial aliens’ (Russians, Poles and Sinti and Roma). In-

stead, such offenders should be left to the SS and police. Thierack explained his motives with reference to the fact that “The judicial system can only contribute in small measure to exterminating members of this race...There is no sense either in conserving such persons for years on end in German prisons and penitentiaries....On the contrary it is my belief that substantially better results can be achieved by delivering such persons to the police, who can then take their measures free of the threat of legal prosecution.”

- ⁵ Thus, the Ministry of Justice since 1942 was actively involved in the extermination of Jews. Whatever Schlegelberger had come away with from his meeting with Lammers, it was clearly not the impression that it was Hitler’s wish that the Jews were not to be exterminated. Schlegelberger also did not mention any such wish in his testimony at the Nuremberg trials. In contrast, the Ministry of Justice made apparently no further policy advances regarding ‘half-Jews’ after the meeting between Lammers and Schlegelberger. Thus, Thierack agreed in October 1942 that the issue of the ‘half-Jews’ should be left alone until the end of the war.
- ⁶ Irving is well aware that the historical context of the document in question (‘Schlegelberger memorandum’) is most likely to have been the discussions regarding ‘mixed marriages’ and ‘half-Jews’ in spring 1942. He has even accepted this himself. He knows the documents which support this conclusion. The fact that he continues to mislead the public with his claim that the document proves that Hitler ‘ordered “No Final Solution”’ is testament to his obsessive belief in Hitler’s innocence which, here as in so many other instances, has led him to misrepresent a documentary source in the interest of a historically untenable argument.
- ⁷ Peter Hoffmann, a leading specialist on the history of the German resistance, noted in 1989, when Irving repeated his account of the Schlegelberger memorandum in his biography of Hermann Göring: “Mr.

Irving knows that this is part of a file regarding the legal status and definition of German Jews of mixed parentage and those married to non-Jewish partners.... Apparently, 11 years after the West German historian Eberhard Jäckel first showed and explained the document to him, Mr. Irving is still too pleased with its possibilities to see that it defeats his purpose. By publishing it as “proof” that Hitler did not want the Jews murdered, Mr. Irving accepts the term “solution of the Jewish question” as meaning mass murder, and he accepts Hitler’s knowledge of the program. Had he taken it at its discernible face value, he would have avoided the logical trap. Further, he put himself in the position of accepting second-hand evidence on Hitler’s wishes in the matter, so that he cannot convincingly contrive to exclude the mass of available secondhand evidence contradicting his interpretation.”

- ⁸ Ten years previously, after first demolishing Irving’s interpretation of the document, Jäckel had written that Irving knew full well how limited its significance was. ‘But he only ever sees and collects what fits his story, and even now he will not let himself be dissuaded from understanding what he wants to by the phrase ‘postponement of the Jewish question.’ Jäckel predicted that Irving would soon repeat it in his books once more. That he would still be repeating it so many years after it had been disproved, would come therefore as no surprise to him. This supposedly key document in Irving’s arsenal of alleged documentary proof of Hitler’s lack of culpability for the extermination of the Jews has long been regarded by professional historians as nothing of the kind.

(f) The Goebbels diary entry of 27 March 1942

(i) Historical context

- ¹ On 1 September 1939, German troops invaded Poland, and overran and defeated it within weeks. The most western parts of Poland were incorporated directly into the German Reich (Danzig Westpreussen;

Warthegau; Zichenau). The central parts of Poland under German control, next to the new Soviet borders, were placed under German civilian administration. This area became known as the General Government.

- ² Soon after the invasion of Poland, leading Nazis, including SS leader Heinrich Himmler, began to put into action a wide-scale plan of ethnic cleansing in the new territories under German control. In September 1939, Hitler had suggested establishing three distinct population belts from west to east: the first, the territory which was incorporated into Germany, was to become totally German, through the expulsion of Jews, Gypsies and Poles. The place of these people was to be taken by ethnic Germans from other parts of Eastern Europe. The Poles were to be concentrated in the second, central area of Poland, the western part of the General Government. Finally, the Jews were to be deported into the third area, the most eastern region of the General Government, the Lublin region. In the following years, this 'ethnic domino-policy' was partially realised by the forcible deportation of many thousands of Jews from the Warthegau to the General Government. By early 1942, about 2.3 Million Jews were living in the General Government.
- ³ The freedom of movement of the Polish Jews was restricted, as more and more were forced into ghettos set up by the Nazis from 1940 onwards. Living conditions in the ghettos deteriorated rapidly. Local Nazi officials failed to provide sufficient food, heating materials and other vital resources. However, the long-term aim of Nazi policy at this time concerning the Jews was not yet extermination, but forced deportation. Thus, in early summer 1940, after the defeat of France, the Nazi leadership began seriously discussing the transportation of all European Jews to the French island of Madagascar.
- ⁴ The German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 marked a watershed. The mass murder of Soviet citizens in general, and Jews in particular, had been decided upon before the invasion. Specially

formed task forces (*Einsatzgruppen*) immediately followed the army into newly conquered Soviet territory and soon started to kill all Soviet Jews, without consideration of age or sex. One of these task forces reported on 15 October 1941 that it had already killed 118,430 Jews since late June 1941. While the task forces executed Jews living on former Soviet territory, Nazi officials searched for ways to extend the murderous programme to Jews living in the General Government. Probably sometime in autumn 1941, the former Gauleiter of Vienna and SS and Police leader in Lublin, Odilo Globocnik, was charged by Heinrich Himmler with the extermination of Jews living in the General Government.

- ⁵ In late 1939, the Nazis, acting on a specific written order signed by Hitler, had started the extermination of the mentally and physically handicapped, the so-called 'euthanasia' programme. By August 1941, over 70,000 people had been murdered in several designated asylums all over Germany. Most of the victims were gassed. Once the Nazis had decided to exterminate the Jews, the individuals involved in operating the 'euthanasia' programme were transferred to the east. Their technical expertise in mass murder was required for the construction and running of extermination centres set up in order to kill the Jews. An extermination centre was established at Chelmno, in the Warthegau, where an SS unit under Herbert Lange, who had been in charge of the 'euthanasia' gas vans in Germany in 1940, began gassing Jews in December 1941.
- ⁶ In the General Government, a camp was set up in the small town of Belzec (south-east of Lublin) in the most eastern corner of the General Government. Construction started in November 1941, and in December 1941, Christian Wirth, a former senior member of the 'euthanasia' programme, arrived in Belzec to take up his position as camp commander. Gas chambers were built, connected to an armoured car engine which was set up outside the gas chambers. The carbon monoxide fumes were used to murder the victims in the gas chambers. In March

1942, the first Polish Jews from the General Government, were transported to Belzec by train, and murdered. To increase the capacity for murder, and to shorten the length of the transports, two further death camps were set up in the General Government: the first gassings in Sobibor (east of Lublin) took place some-time in April or May 1942, while killings in Treblinka (north of Lublin) started in July 1942.

- ⁷ This operation was officially terminated in October 1943, and by November 1943, the three camps had been dismantled. According to Professor Raul Hilberg, around 1.5 million Jews were gassed in Belzec, Treblinka and Sobibor. According to estimates by Professor Wolfgang Benz, around 1.75 million Jewish women, men and children, mostly Jews, were murdered in Belzec, Treblinka and Sobibor. Probably more than 90% of the victims came from the General Government, while the others came from territory as far away as Holland, Macedonia and France. Tens of thousands more Polish Jews were shot by German police officers, organised in so-called police battalions. Himmler congratulated Globocnik for his part in organising the genocide in the General Government. On 30 November 1943, Himmler wrote to him: "I would like to express to you my thanks and appreciation for the great and unique service which you have performed for the whole German people by carrying out the 'Reinhard Action'."
- ⁸ These events have been established by exhaustive archival research, and are not disputed by serious historians.

(ii) David Irving's claims in the first edition of *Hitler's War*

- ¹ In the first edition of *Hitler's War* (1977), David Irving claims in several passages that Hitler was kept in the dark in the first half of 1942 by other Nazi officials such as Goebbels and Himmler about the extermination of Jews in the East. This is part of his general argument that Hitler knew nothing of the 'final solution'. In one such passage, Irving writes: "The ghastly secrets of Auschwitz and Treblinka were well kept. Goebbels wrote a frank summary of them in his diary on March 27,

1942, but evidently held his tongue when he met Hitler two days later, for he quotes only Hitler's remark: "The Jews must get out of Europe. If need be, we must resort to the most brutal methods"." How does Irving use the diary entry in question to substantiate this claim?

(A) Omission of reliable sources: the Goebbels diary entry of 27 March 1942

- ¹ Irving refers to the diary entry for 27 March 1942 and Goebbels's subsequent conversation with Hitler as evidence that Goebbels by this time knew of the details of the mass extermination camps operating in the East, and that Hitler did not. However, the full diary entry gives a very different impression from that conveyed by Irving: "The Jews are now being pushed out of the General Government, beginning near Lublin, to the East. A pretty barbaric procedure is being applied here, and it is not to be described in any more detail, and not much is left of the Jews themselves. In general one may conclude that 60% of them must be liquidated, while only 40% can be put to work. The former Gauleiter of Vienna [Globocnik], who is carrying out this action, is doing it pretty prudently and with a procedure that doesn't work too conspicuously. The Jews are being punished barbarically, to be sure, but they have fully deserved it. The prophesy that the Führer issued to them on the way, for the eventuality that they started a new world war, is beginning to realise itself in the most terrible manner. One must not allow any sentimentalities to rule in these matters. If we did not defend ourselves against them, the Jews would annihilate us. It is a struggle for life and death between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus. No other government and no other regime could muster the strength for a general solution of the question. Here too, the Führer is the persistent pioneer and spokesman of a radical solution, which is demanded by the way things are and thus appears to be unavoidable. Thank God, during the war we now have a whole series of possibilities which were barred to us in peacetime. We must exploit them. The ghettos which are becoming available in the General Government are now being

filled with the Jews who are being pushed out of the Reich, and after a certain time the process is then to renew itself here. Jewry has nothing to laugh about...”

- ² Clearly, Irving is right to use this diary entry to show that Goebbels knew the operational details of the mass extermination in the East. However, Goebbels clearly did not refer to Auschwitz or Treblinka, as Irving claims. The reference to Globocnik, and to killings taking place in the east of Lublin, make clear that Goebbels is writing about Belzec. More importantly, aside from this elementary factual error, Irving does not tell his readers that Goebbels described Hitler as having pushed for this ‘radical solution’. Irving simply omits the entire passage relating to Hitler, as he did in the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War*, because this statement by Goebbels discredits Irving’s claim that Hitler knew nothing about the extermination camps in the East. If Hitler was ignorant, how could he be ‘the persistent pioneer and spokesman of a radical solution’? Thus, Irving manipulates the diary entry to argue the exact opposite of what it actually shows.
- ³ Irving tries to justify himself in his reply to the defence by arguing that Goebbels’s claim Hitler’s complicity should be regarded simply as ‘gratuitous references to the Führer’ and discarded as untrue: “...when analysed, these references boiled down to (a) the empty rhetoric of a diarist dictating orally to a subordinate private secretary (Richard Otte), and (b) Goebbels’s by now familiar alibi-ing technique, of ascribing some historic act – be it Hitler’s decision to stand against Hindenburg, or the ‘Kristallnacht’, or some other event – *post facto* to The Will of an omnipotent and omniscient Führer. The perceptive historian does not fall for such subterfuges, particularly given the Goebbels Diaries’ troubled relationship with the truth. In short the passage quoted is evidence in law against Goebbels, but not against Hitler.”

- ⁴ Irving's manipulation and distortion of Hitler's and Goebbels's role in 'Kristallnacht', the anti-Jewish pogrom of November 1938, has been discussed previously. Here, we will deal with Irving's other claims in this passage.
- ⁵ First, the question whether Goebbels's dictated this passage or not is irrelevant to the issue, particularly in view of the fact that his diary entries relating to the '*Kristallnacht*' were not dictated. Far from using 'empty rhetoric', Goebbels in fact repeats several of Hitler's own thoughts. For the reasons given by Goebbels for the extermination of the Jews in his diary had also been expressed in similar form by Hitler in the previous year. In July 1941, Hitler stated: 'If even one state, on whatever grounds, tolerated a Jewish family in its midst, this would become the breeding-ground for bacilli for a new subversion.' On 12 December 1941, Hitler spoke about the Jews in front of the *Gauleiters* (noted down by Goebbels himself): "With reference to the Jewish question, the Führer is determined to clear the decks. He prophesied to the Jews that if they should once more bring about a world war, they would experience their own annihilation in doing so. That was no mere talk. The world war is there, the annihilation of Jewry must be the necessary consequence. The question is to be considered without any sentimentality. We aren't there to have sympathy with the Jews, only sympathy with our German people."
- ⁶ Far from keeping the knowledge of the mass extermination in the camps in the East from Hitler, as Irving claims, Goebbels not only describes Hitler as the originator of the most radical measures taken against the Jews, but even uses Hitler's line of argument to justify this murderous policy.
- ⁷ Secondly, Irving's selective use of the Goebbels diary is not based on neutral analysis, as he claims, but it is motivated by his attempt to absolve Hitler of responsibility for the extermination of the Jews. Irving accepts as accurate all those passages in the diary which confirm

Goebbels's involvement, and dismisses all the passages implicating Hitler as 'alibis'. Irving is open about this biased use of the Goebbels diary. He claims that the diary 'is acceptable as evidence against Goebbels, but not necessarily against third parties. A distinction must be drawn therefore between what he admits putting to his Führer, and what he alleges the Führer to put to him.' But for which audience were these 'alibis' inserted by Goebbels? If Goebbels really did try in his diary to shift the blame for the extermination of the Jews onto Hitler, and away from himself, why did he include so many passages which showed that he himself favoured the mass extermination of the Jews? Why did he sometimes even show himself as suggesting radical measures to Hitler rather than simply taking orders from him? As a means of absolving its author of blame, the diary is worse than useless. Surely Goebbels was cleverer than that. In any case, it is clear throughout that Goebbels never expected to be called to account for his actions by a hostile power or a disapproving posterity. He passionately believed in the prospect of the 'Thousand-Year-Reich' and he clearly wrote the diary to show the future inhabitants of that state how important his own role had been in its creation.

- ⁸ In *Hitler's War* (1977 edition) Irving relies on the Goebbels diary entries of 26 April 1942 and 29 May 1942 to show that Hitler did *not* know about the extermination of the Jews while Goebbels himself did. So why did Goebbels not insert an 'alibi' here? Why did Goebbels not pin the blame for the extermination of the Jews on Hitler in these passages too? Irving's use of the diary shows him not to be a 'perceptive historian', but an incorrigible manipulator of evidence. If the diary, in Irving's view, exonerates Hitler, he accepts it as genuine. But if the diary implicates Hitler, Irving dismisses it as an 'alibi'. This selective use of the diary leads Irving to conclude that 'nowhere in the entire Goebbels diaries – *including* the unpublished years – is there any reference to Hitler's alleged initiative in the extermination of the Jews.' This claim is completely false.

(C) False attribution of quotes and manipulation of evidence: the Goebbels diary entry of 30 March 1942

- ¹ Irving claims that Goebbels did not inform Hitler of the murderous activities taking place in Auschwitz and Treblinka when he met him on 29 March 1942. In order to support this claim, the account in *Hitler's War* of the Goebbels diary entry on 27 March 1942 is extremely selective. It is also clear from Goebbels's diary entry for 30 March 1942, which recorded the events of the previous day, that the propaganda minister did not meet Hitler on the 29 March 1942. Hitler's remark ('The Jews must get out of Europe. If need be, we must resort to the most brutal methods') was made on 19 March 1942, as recorded in Goebbels's diary on 20 March 1942, and cannot therefore be used, as Irving uses it, as evidence that Goebbels 'held his tongue when he met Hitler' after writing his 'frank summary' of the 'ghastly secrets' of the extermination camps on 27 March. Nor does Irving publish the complete passage from Goebbels diary entry of 20 March. Goebbels recorded: 'We speak in conclusion about the Jewish question. Here the Führer remains, now as before, unrelenting. The Jews must get out of Europe, if necessary, with the application of the most brutal means.' Thus Irving in 1977 omits Goebbels's characterisation of Hitler's stance as 'unrelenting', an omission he repeated in the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*.

(iii) Evaluation of Irving's defence of his claims

(A) Irving's defence

- ¹ In his reply to Lipstadt's defence, Irving admits that Hitler's statement that the 'Jews must get out of Europe, if necessary, with the application of the most brutal means' was recorded in the Goebbels diary entry on 20 March 1941, not on 30 March 1941, as he had claimed in *Hitler's War* (1977).

- ² Irving also admits that he was wrong to use this statement by Hitler as evidence that Goebbels, who had on 27 March 1942 noted down in his diary a frank account of the murder of the Jews, ‘held his tongue when he met Hitler’ two days later. As this Report has noted above, this meeting did not take place at all. In any case, Irving goes on to argue that this error is insignificant, claiming that Hitler ‘said the same thing again and again at this time, both before and after the March 27, 1942 entry, according to Goebbels’s.
- ³ In *Hitler’s War*, Irving provides some examples which show, in his view, that Hitler still talked only about the deportation of Jews from Europe, and was therefore ignorant of their extermination. In particular, Irving refers to the Goebbels diary entries of 27 April 1942 and 30 May 1942, and Hitler’s table talks of 15 May 1942 and 24 July 1942. This Report will now therefore give detailed consideration to these four sources and to Irving’s interpretation of them, beginning with the Goebbels diary entry for 27 April 1942 and the related Hitler table talk of 15 May 1942.

(B)Irving’s misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the sources: the Goebbels diary entry of 27 April 1942 and Hitler’s table talk of 15 May 1942

- ¹ In his table talk on 15 May 1942, as recorded by Henry Picker, Hitler stated that the Jews were being deported to the East, and admitted that there was apparently some opposition to this policy among the German population: “Our so-called bourgeoisie is lamenting today over just the same Jew who back then [in 1918] carried out this stab in the back, when he is pushed out to the East. The remarkable thing about it is that this bourgeoisie didn’t however concern itself with the fact that 250,000 to 300,000 German people were emigrating from Germany a year, and about 75 per cent of the German emigrants to Australia already died during the journey. No stratum of the population is more stupid in political things as this so-called bourgeoisie. If for reasons of state one renders a definite racial pest harmless, for example by beat-

ing him to death, then the entire bourgeoisie cries out that the state is a violent state. If however the Jew drives the German person...with juridical chicanery tobs the German person of his professional existence, takes his house and home from him, destroy his family, then finally drives him to emigration and the German person then loses his life on the journey to his emigration destination, then the bourgeoisie calls the state in which that is possible a state founded on the rule of law, because this entire tragedy has indeed been played out completely within the context of the possibilities offered by the law. That the Jew as a parasite is the person on earth most able to withstand any climate, and in contrast to the German settles down in Lapland just as in the tropics, is considered by not a single one [of the people] who weeps his crocodile tears after a Jew transported off to the East. In this case, as a rule, however, we have to do in the case of this philistine with a person who imagines he stands firmly on the basis of the Bible, although, however, he does not know that according to the reports of the Old Testament, the Jew cannot be harmed either by a sojourn in the desert nor a march through the Red Sea.”

- ² A related statement was recorded by Goebbels on 27 April 1942 in his diary. Here, Hitler spoke about ‘pushing Jews out of Europe’, which since the failure of the Madagascar plan in the autumn of 1941 had meant deportations to the East into the former Soviet territory: “I talk through the Jewish question extensively once more with the Führer. His standpoint with regard to this problem is unrelenting. He wants to force the Jews out of Europe absolutely. That is also right thus. The Jews have brought so much suffering upon our part of the earth that the hardest punishment that one can impose upon them is still too lenient. Himmler is pressing ahead at the moment with the great resettlement of the Jews from the German towns to the Eastern ghettos.”
- ³ These quotes do not show, as Irving has claimed, that Hitler was completely ignorant of the extermination of the Jews at this time. In this diary entry, Goebbels describes Hitler as radical and unrelenting, just as

he does in his diary entry of 27 March 1942. By this time, Goebbels already knew that ‘resettlement’ meant that the Jews were being exterminated in the East (as proven by his diary entry of 27 March 1942). So it is unlikely that he would have characterised Hitler’s views as a “radical,” (27 March 1942 and “unrelenting” (27 April 1942) if Hitler in reality had only been aiming to push the Jews out of Western and Central Europe, and not to kill them as well. This characterisation of Hitler as a radical and unrelenting makes sense only if Hitler, like Goebbels, also knew that ‘pushing the Jews out of Europe’ meant killing them when they got to the East.

- ⁴ This conclusion suggests that at his table talk of 15 May 1942, some three weeks after Goebbels diary entry of 27 April 1942, Hitler was well aware of the fate of the Jews in the East, despite his suggestion that Jews were able to ‘withstand any climate’. For, whatever Hitler’s reasons were for this absurd and cynical claim (which he had already made in similar form on 4 April 1942), Jews transported to the East faced a much worse enemy than a hostile climate: they had to face the *Einsatzgruppen*, the SS gassing facilities and other agencies of the Nazi killing machine, all hell-bent upon exterminating the Jews. In his table talk, Hitler even hinted at the violent fate of the Jews when he referred to ‘racial pests’ or ‘*Volksschädlinge*’ being beaten to death. The context of this remark, with its juxtaposition to the (completely unfounded) claim that Jews had driven Germans from Germany in conditions in which many German emigrants died, clearly indicates that it was intended to refer to the killing of Jews.
- ⁵ Even this brief investigation makes clear that Irving’s claim that these sources show that Hitler was ignorant of the extermination of the Jews is untenable. This conclusion is supported by further examination of the documents. What the Goebbels diary entry of 27 April 1942 and Hitler’s table talk of 15 May 1942 have in common is that Hitler speaks about the concrete fate of the Jews in rather general terms. Thus, he refers to Jews being ‘pushed out to the East’, Jews being ‘transported

off to the East', and Jews being forced 'out of Europe'. What did these terms stand for and why were they employed by the Nazis? There was a central ambiguity in both Hitler's recorded private conversations and in his and Nazi propaganda. Genocide and extermination were invoked and justified in general terms, while the political reality and the detailed mechanics of the extermination programme were treated as a state secret and generally only referred to in coded language such as 'transported off to the East'. There are a large number of instances where Hitler spoke openly about exterminating the Jews, at a time when these mass killings were already taking place.

- ⁶ These statements by Hitler are recorded in a great number of different sources, ranging from comments he made in private meetings to statements he uttered in public speeches. Irving either ignores these examples, or distorts their significance (as this Report has already demonstrated in its examination of Irving's account of the Goebbels diary entry of 27 March 1942 and Irving's account of the Hitler table talk on 25 October 1941), or disputes their veracity. These statements clearly suggest that Hitler was not ignorant about the fate of the Jews and that he did not merely assume that they were being transported to the East. Despite the fact that Hitler was careful not to mention any specifics or details about the extermination programme set up in the East or give anything away about its manner of operation, what he said was quite clear in its general reference to what was going on.
- ⁷ Already on 19 August 1941, almost two months after the murders of Soviet Jews by the SS task forces had begun, Goebbels noted in his diary: "We speak about the Jewish problem. The Führer is convinced that his former prophecy in the Reichstag, that, if Jewry succeeded once more in provoking a world war, it would end with the annihilation of the Jews, is being confirmed. It is being rendered true in these weeks and months with a certainty that seems almost uncanny. In the East the Jews have to pay the price; in Germany they have paid it

already in part and in future they will have to pay yet more. Their last refuge remains North America; and there they will also have to pay some time, sooner or later.”

- ⁸ In Hitler’s table talk on 25 October 1941, as we have already seen, the following statement was recorded: “In the Reichstag, I prophesied to Jewry, the Jew will disappear from Europe if war is not avoided. This race of criminals has the two million dead of the [First World] war on its conscience, and now hundreds of thousands again. Nobody can tell me: But we can’t send them into the morass! For who bothers about our people? It’s good if the terror that we are exterminating Jewry goes before us...I’m forced to pile up an enormous amount of things myself; but that doesn’t mean that what I take cognisance of without reacting to it immediately, just disappears. It goes into an account; one day the book is taken out. I had to remain inactive for a long time against the Jews too.”
- ⁹ In a meeting with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem on 28 November 1941, Hitler explained (according to the official minutes) that ‘Germany stood for uncompromising war against the Jews’ and that when the German armies had reached the southern exit from the Caucasus, ‘the Führer would on his own give the Arab world the assurance that its hour of liberation had arrived. Germany’s objective would then be solely the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere under the protection of British power.’ On 12 December 1941, a few days after the first Jews had been killed at the extermination camp set up in Chelmno, Hitler spoke about the Jews in front of the *Gauleiter* (noted down by Goebbels): “With reference to the Jewish question, the Führer is determined to clear the decks. He prophesied to the Jews that if they should once more bring about a world war, they would experience their own annihilation in doing so. That was no mere talk. The world war is there, the annihilation of Jewry must be the necessary consequence.”

- ¹⁰ Only two days after this speech, Hitler met with Alfred Rosenberg, the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern territories, who showed him the manuscript of a speech he planned to make. As Rosenberg noted down on 16 December 1941, he [Rosenberg] 'took the standpoint of not talking about the extirpation of Jewry. The Führer approved of this position and said, they had forced the war on us and they had brought destruction, it was no wonder if the consequences affected them first.'
- ¹⁵ In his table talk on 25 January 1942, Hitler expressed sentiments similar to the ones at the table talk on 15 May 1942 discussed above: "If I take the Jews out today, then our bourgeoisie becomes unhappy: what is happening then with them? But have the same people troubled themselves about what would become of the Germans who had to emigrate? One must do it quickly, it is no better if I have one tooth pulled out by a few centimetres [*sic*] every three months -, when it is out, the pain is gone. The Jew has to get out of Europe. Otherwise we get no European understanding. He incites people the most, everywhere. In the end: I don't know, I'm colossally humane. The Jews were maltreated at the time of the Pope's rule in Rome. Up to 1830 eight Jews were driven through the city every year with donkeys. I am just saying, he has to go. If he collapses in the course of it, I can't help there. I only see one thing: absolute extermination, if they don't go of their own accord. Why should I look at a Jew with other eyes than at a Russian prisoner of war? Many are dying in the prison camps because we have been driven into this situation by the Jews. But what can I do about that? Why then did the Jews instigate the war?"
- ¹⁶ Hitler came back to his 'prophecy' of the extermination of the Jews in a widely-transmitted speech in the *Reichstag* on 30 January 1942. Irving merely comments that in his speech, Hitler 'reminded his audience of his "prophetic warning" to the world's Jews in 1939'. In fact, Hitler was much more explicit: "I have already pronounced it in the Reichstag on 1 September 1939 – and I guard myself against premature prophecies –, that this war will not end as the Jews imagine, namely that the

European-Aryan peoples will be exterminated, but that the result of this war will be the annihilation of Jewry. For the first time the truly old Jewish law is being applied this time: 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!'. ”

- 17 Hitler came back to these same sentiments in the following month. In his diary on 15 February 1942, Goebbels recorded a conversation he had had the previous day with him: “The Führer gives expression once again to his opinion that he is determined to clear out the Jews in Europe. One must not have any sentimental moods here. The Jews have earned the catastrophe which they are experiencing today. They will also experience their own annihilation. We must speed up this process with a cold ruthlessness, and we are thereby performing an inestimable service for humanity, which has suffered and been tortured by the Jews for millennia. This clear attitude of enmity towards the Jews must also be implemented in our own people against all rebellious groups. The Führer emphasises that explicitly, also again afterwards amongst the army officers, who can just remember that. The great chances which this war is offering us are recognized in their entire import by the Führer. He is conscious today of the fact that he is fighting a battle of gigantic dimensions, and that the fate of the whole of civilized humanity depends on the outcome of this struggle.” Nor was this the only such statement.
- 18 At Hitler’s table talk on 22 February 1942, the following statement was recorded: “It is one of the greatest revolutions there has ever been in the world. The Jew will be identified! The same fight that Pasteur and Koch had to fight must be led by us today. Innumerable sicknesses have their origin in one bacillus: the Jew! Japan would also have got them if it had remained open any longer to the Jew. We will get well when we eliminate the Jew.”

- ¹⁹ On 24 February 1942 a statement by Hitler was announced to NSDAP party members in Munich which again made a reference to his ‘prophecy’: “Today the idea of our National Socialist, and that of the fascist revolution, have conquered great and powerful states, and my prophecy will find its fulfilment, that through this war Aryan humankind will not be annihilated, but the Jew will be exterminated. Whatever the struggle may bring with it or however long it may last, this will be its final result. And only then, with the removal of these parasites, will a long period of understanding between nations, and with it true peace, come upon the suffering world.”
- ²⁰ These statements, made between the late Summer of 1941 and February 1942, clearly suggest that Hitler was well aware that Jews were not merely being deported to the East, but were being killed there. When he talked about the Jews, Hitler frequently referred to their murderous fate: as we have seen, he spoke repeatedly of their ‘annihilation’, ‘destruction’, ‘extermination’ and ‘elimination’ and also referred to the Jews going ‘kaputt’ and experiencing a ‘catastrophe’.
- ²¹ Clearly, he gave no detailed descriptions of the killing programmes. It is important to note that leading Nazis, including Hitler, rarely spoke openly about the extermination of the Jews, but rather used euphemistic or coded language, such as ‘resettlement in the East’ when referring to the details of the extermination of the Jews. After the realisation that the Madagascar plan was unrealistic because of Britain’s naval dominance, leading Nazi officials in spring 1941 apparently advanced the plan to transport the Jews ‘to the East’ into the territory of the Soviet Union, once it had been defeated by Germany. There, they would slowly die of hunger, or be worked to death. However, these plans were never realised, and by the spring of 1942 Jews from both Eastern and Western Europe were being systematically exterminated, mainly in the newly established extermination camps. Despite this reality, many Nazis continued to use terms like ‘deportation to the

East', when they were really talking about mass murder. This terminology no longer stood for the plan of actually transporting Jews to the former Soviet territory, but for extermination.

- ²² The element of secrecy surrounding the Final Solution was a central motive for this linguistic camouflage. All officials in the extermination camps were sworn to secrecy. The SS leader Heinrich Himmler referred to the extermination of the Jews on 4 October 1943 as 'a glorious page in our history and one that has never been written and can never be written'. On 25 September 1941, Hitler had decreed the 'Fundamental Order Number 1', which ordered that no member of a party, government or military agency was to be informed or seek to know more than was required for the enactment of his or her duties. This order for secrecy clearly covered the operational details of the 'final solution'. As Henry Picker, who had recorded many of Hitler's table talks, noted: 'Over state secrets, Hitler was totally uncommunicative. He told us nothing in his table talk about the extermination of the Jews in the concentration camps...His conversations nevertheless revealed his deep-rooted and fanatical hatred for all other races.'
- ²³ Historians have put forward various reasons why the Nazi leaders tried to keep the operational details of the extermination of the Jews secret. For instance, regarding Hitler's private conversations, the late Martin Broszat, for many years director of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, pointed out that Hitler avoided speaking about the exterminations, and indeed did not have to, as he knew, 'what he could expect of his entourage'. The use of coded language at Hitler's lunch and dinner table avoided uncomfortable discussions and maintained a harmony among the guests which would have been disturbed by an admission of the detailed arrangements for the extermination of the Jews. As far as any public announcement was concerned, leading Nazis had become more careful about the impact of public statements of murder actions after details of the 'euthanasia' killings of the men-

tally and physically disabled had become known to a wider audience. In this case, the public disquiet about the killings had contributed to the temporary stop of the 'euthanasia' programme in 1941.

- ²⁴ Thus, in general, leading Nazis and other officials used coded terms when describing the programme for the extermination of the Jews. However, there are various known examples where the individuals involved themselves revealed what these terms really stood for. For instance, in his notorious speech to SS leaders in Posen on 4 October 1943, the SS leader Heinrich Himmler spoke of 'the Jewish evacuation programme, the extermination of the Jewish people', using the two as synonymous.
- ²⁵ Another example can be found in a statement by Adolf Eichmann, one of the leading bureaucrats in the Reich Security Head Office dealing with the extermination of the Jews. Eichmann was examined in 1961 by his defence lawyer during his trial in Jerusalem, and gave evidence on the use of technical language or euphemistic terms by the Nazis to avoid open reference to the killing of the Jews. Asked about the minutes of the Wannsee conference of 20 January 1942, which he had drawn up, Eichmann explained: "The minutes reproduce the essential points factually and correctly, but of course they are not word for word minutes, because the, shall we say, certain excesses, a certain jargon that was used, had to be clothed in official words by me, and these minutes, I believe, were corrected 3 or 4 times by Heydrich."
- ²⁶ Thus, while the participants in the discussion openly talked about 'killing, elimination, and annihilation, the minutes drawn up by Eichmann refers only to the 'evacuation of the Jews to the East' and the 'final solution of the European Jewish Question'. Camouflage language was also used in the various reports by the *Einsatzgruppen*, which carried out the mass shootings of Jews in the occupied Soviet territory.

However, in some of these reports, euphemistic terms like ‘resettlement’, ‘deportation’ and ‘special treatment’ are used interchangeably with terms like ‘liquidation’, ‘executed’, ‘shot’ and ‘extermination’.

- ²⁷ Another such example is Goebbels’s diary entry of 27 March 1942, which this Report has already examined above. Here, Goebbels had first noted that the Jews were being ‘pushed out to the East’, only to then explain later that this meant that 60% of these Jews were being exterminated (while keeping quiet about the details of the methods of extermination), and the rest ‘put to work’. In his table talk on 15 May 1942, Hitler used precisely the same words as Goebbels. He spoke of Jews being ‘pushed out to the East’ and ‘transported off to the East’.
- ²⁸ In the light of Goebbels’s diary entry of 27 March 1942, as well as the general comments made above on the use of coded language by leading Nazis, it is highly likely that Hitler knew perfectly well what the term stood for. Such language cannot be used as proof for Hitler’s ignorance of the extermination. The evidence points very strongly indeed in the opposite direction to Irving’s theses, and Irving is unable to deal with it except by blatant manipulation and suppression.

(C) Irving’s suppression, misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the sources: the Goebbels diary entry of 30 May 1942

- ¹ Another document cited by Irving in support of his claim that Hitler was deceived by Goebbels and others about the true nature of the deportations to the East, is Goebbels’s diary entry of 30 May 1942. Goebbels here noted: “Thus I plead once again for a more radical Jewish policy, whereby I am just pushing at an open door with the Führer...The Germans only ever take part in subversive movements when the Jews seduce them into it. Therefore one must liquidate the Jewish danger, cost what it will...Therefore the Führer also does not wish at all for the Jews to be evacuated to Siberia. There, under the harshest living conditions, they would undoubtedly form an element of vitality once more. He would rather settle them in central Africa. There they

live in a climate that would surely not render them strong and capable of resistance. In any case it is the Führer's aim to make West Europe completely Jew-free. Here they will not be allowed to have any home any more."

- ² Once more, Goebbels characterises Hitler as being in favour of a more radical policy against the Jews – a fact which Irving suppresses in his account of this Goebbels diary entry. As Goebbels knew by this time that 'resettlement' meant that the Jews were being exterminated in the East (as proven by his diary entry of 27 March 1942), it is inconceivable that he would have characterised Hitler as a radical, if Hitler had in reality only aimed to push the Jews out of Europe. This characterisation of Hitler as a radical makes sense only if Hitler, as has previously been noted, also knew that 'pushing the Jews out of Europe' meant killing them when they got to the East.
- ³ So how can we explain Hitler's reference to the evacuation of Jews to Siberia and Africa? As has been noted above, the 'final solution' went through various stages. In summer 1940, leading Nazi officials were seriously considering deporting Jews to the island of Madagascar. By spring 1941, Nazi officials such as Heydrich apparently advanced a plan for the 'final solution' which involved the transport the Jews 'to the East' into the territory of the Soviet Union, once it had been defeated by Germany. There, they would slowly die of hunger, or be worked to death. One area apparently envisaged at the time as a possible destination for the Jews was Siberia.
- ⁴ In the following 12 months, this plan for a Jewish reservation was increasingly superseded by the escalating mass murder of first the Eastern European Jews, and then the Central and Western European Jews. But, as the historian Peter Longerich has argued, "one must proceed on the assumption that even those who were involved in mass murder up to the period May-June 1942 believed that the "real" "final solution"

would only take place after the end of the war and that the murders taking place before then were only “provisional” measures, “anticipatory” measures to the “final solution”.

- ⁵ This distinction between the ongoing extermination of the Jews in the East, and a long-term ‘final solution’ (which was expected to take place after the war), is also evident in Goebbels’s record of Hitler’s views on 30 May 1942. On the one hand, Goebbels characterised Hitler’s attitude as very radical, at a time when Jews were already being ‘transported off to the East’ as Hitler had stated many times, and killed there. On the other hand, Hitler was still talking about some vague long-term plan (note his reference to the Jews in western Europe) which might take place sometime in the future, in this case mentioning Central Africa as a destination.
- ⁶ These considerations, which never took on any more concrete forms, however are not evidence that Hitler did not know of the extermination programme in the East. Rather, they are testament to his belief that the ‘real’ ‘final solution’ was not yet fully under way. To cite Peter Longerich again: ‘Only in the spring and early summer of 1942 did the realisation slowly come through that the “Final Solution” would take place during the war: it finally became clear which means would be chosen to achieve the “Final Solution”.’

(C) Irving’s suppression and manipulation of the Goebbels diary entry of 30 May 1942 and the table talk of 29 May 1942.

It is worth quoting Goebbels’s diary entry of 30 May 1942, covering the events of the previous day, at some length:

"I once more present the Führer with my plan to evacuate the Jews out of Berlin with none remaining. He is completely of my view, and gives Speer the order to ensure as quickly as possible that the Jews who are employed in the German armaments industry are replaced by foreign workers. I see a great danger in the fact that 40,000 Jews who have nothing more to lose find themselves at large in the capital city of the Reich. That is virtually a provocation and invitation to outrages. Once they break out, then one's life is no longer safe. The fact that even 22-year-old Eastern Jews took part in the latest firebomb attacks speaks volumes. Thus I plead once again for a more radical Jewish policy, whereby I am just pushing at an open door with the Führer. The Führer is of the opinion that the danger will become greater for us personally the more critical the war situation becomes. We find ourselves in a similar situation to that of the second half of 1932, where bashing and stabbing were the order of the day and one had to take all possible security measures to escape from such a development in one piece. The extermination of criminals is also a necessity of state policy. Should the war situation become very dangerous at any time, the prisons will have in any case to be emptied through liquidations, so that the danger does not arise of their one day opening their doors to let the revolting mob loose upon the people. The Führer once more explains his demand for the creation of an equilibrium between the loss of idealists and the loss of negativists. His proof is absolutely convincing...The penitentiaries do not have the task of preserving criminals for possible cases of revolt in wartime. What does it mean, besides, to proceed more rigorously and brutally against criminals, if one calls to mind the fact that in the past Winter they had a far better life than the three million soldiers on the Eastern Front! So we don't need to allow any false humanitarianism to reign here, but rather would do well to look things soberly in the eye and not allow ourselves to be influenced by any sentimentality... I explain to the Führer how much more favourable the situation is today than in, say, 1917. At that time attempts at revolt were already beginning; a peace declaration was submitted in the Reichstag; the first munition workers' strikes were flaring up. There can be no talk of a similar situation today. The Führer answers to this, that the German workers are not thinking of stabbing him in the back. Every German worker today wants victory. If at some time we were in danger of losing the war, it would be precisely the German worker who would have to suffer most from it, and he would surely be filled with a deep sadness. The Germans only ever take part in subversive movements when the Jews seduce them into it. Therefore one must liquidate the Jewish danger, cost what it will. How little the Jews can assimilate themselves to West European life in reality can be seen from the fact that where they are put back into the ghetto they also become very quickly ghettoized again. West European civilisation just exists with them as an outer veneer. There are, to be sure, also elements among the Jews who go to work with a dangerous brutality and mania for revenge. Therefore the Führer also does not wish at all for the Jews to be evacuated to Siberia. There, under the harshest living conditions, they would undoubtedly form an element of vitality once more. He would rather settle them in central Africa. There they live in a climate that would surely not render them strong and capable of resistance. In any case it is the Führer's wish to make West Europe completely Jew-free. Here they will not be allowed to have any home any more."

Ich trage dem Führer noch einmal meinen Plan vor, die Juden restlos aus Berlin zu evakuieren. Er ist ganz meiner Meinung und gibt Speer den Auftrag, so schnell wie möglich dafür zu sorgen, daß die in der deutschen Rüstungswirtschaft beschäftigten Juden durch ausländische Arbeiter ersetzt werden. Ich sehe eine sehr große Gefahr darin, daß sich in der Hauptstadt des Reiches 40 000 Juden, die nichts mehr zu verlieren haben, auf freiem Fuß befinden. Das ist ja geradezu eine Herausforderung und eine Aufforderung zu Attentaten. Bricht das einmal los, dann ist man seines Lebens nicht mehr sicher. Die Tatsache, daß bei den jüngsten Brandbombenattentaten sogar zweiundzwanzigjährige Ostjuden beteiligt waren, spricht Bände. Ich plädiere also noch einmal für eine radikalere Judenpolitik, womit ich beim Führer nur offene Türen einrenne. Der Führer ist der Meinung, daß die Gefahr für uns persönlich bei kritischer werdender Kreislage umso größer werden wird. Wir befinden uns in einer ähnlichen Situation wie in der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 1932, wo es auch auf Hauen und Stechen ging und man alle Vorichtsmaßnahmen treffen mußte, um heil aus einer solchen Entwicklung herauszukommen.

Auch die Ausmerzung der Verbrecher ist eine staatspolitische Notwendigkeit. Sollten wir während des Kriegsverlaufes einmal zu einer sehr gefährlichen Entwicklung kommen, so müssen sowieso die Gefängnisse durch Liquidationen geleert werden, damit nicht die Gefahr entsteht, daß sich eines Tages ihre Tore öffnen, um den revoltierenden Pöbel auf das Volk loszulassen.

Der Führer erklärt noch einmal seine Forderung der Schaffung eines Gleichgewichts zwischen dem Verlust von Idealisten und dem Verlust von Negativisten. Seine Beweisführung ist absolut überzeugend...Die Zuchthäuser haben im Kriege nicht die Aufgabe, das Verbrechertum für eventuelle Fälle einer Revolte zu konservern. Was heißt es um übrigen, gegen die Verbrecher rigoroser und brutaler vorgehen, wenn man sich vorstellt, daß die Verbrecher es im vergangenen Winter viel besser gehabt haben als die drei Millionen Soldaten, die im Osten standen! Wir brauchen hier also keine falsche Humanität obwalten zu lassen, sondern tun gut daran, den Dingen nüchtern ins Auge zu schauen und uns von keiner Sentimentalität beeinflussen zu lassen...Ich lege dem Führer dar, wie viel günstiger die Situation heute ist als etwa 1917. Damals gingen schon die Revolteversuche an; im Reichstag wurde eine Friedenserklärung abgegeben; die ersten Munitionsarbeiterstreiks flammten auf. Von einer ähnlichen Situation kann heute ja überhaupt keine Rede sein. Der Führer antwortet darauf, daß die deutschen Arbeiter nicht daran denken, ihm in den Rücken zu fallen. Jeder deutsche Arbeiter wünscht heute den Sieg. Würden wir einmal in Gefahr stehen, den Krieg zu verlieren, so würde gerade der deutsche Arbeiter darunter am schwersten zu leiden haben, und er würde gewiß von einer tiefen Traurigkeit erfüllt werden. Die Deutschen beteiligen sich an subversiven Bewegungen immer nur, wenn die Juden sie dazu verführen. Deshalb muß man die jüdische Gefahr liquidieren, koste es was es wolle. Wie wenig die Juden sich dem westeuropäischen Leben in Wirklichkeit angleichen können, sieht man daran, daß, wo sie ins Ghetto zurückgeführt werden, sie auch sehr schnell wieder ghettoisiert werden. Westeuropäische Zivilisation stellt bei ihnen nur einen äußeren Farbanstrich dar. Es gibt allerdings auch unter den Juden

Elemente, die mit einer gefährlichen Brutalität und Rachsucht zu Werken gehen. Deshalb wünscht der Führer auch gar nicht, daß die Juden nach Sibirien evakuiert werden. Dort unter härtesten Lebensbedingungen würden sie zweifellos wieder ein lebenskräftiges Element darstellen. Er möchte sie am liebsten nach Zentralafrika aussiedeln, Dort das Ziel des Führers, Westeuropa gänzlich judenfrei zu machen. Hier dürfen sie keine Heimstätte mehr haben.' (E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, Teil II, Vol. 4 (Munich, 1995), pp. 405-6.)

- ² The views which this diary entry expresses on the treatment of the Jews are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, there was apparently rather open talk in the meeting about the murderous fate of the Jews. Hitler approved Goebbels' plan for a more radical policy, namely the 'evacuation' of all Berlin Jews. That 'evacuation' here apparently means extermination becomes clear in the sentence linking the fate of the Jews to criminals in state penal institutions (the extermination of certain criminal offenders got under way in the autumn of 1942, with Hitler's approval). These murderous intentions are also suggested later on in the diary entry, in the statement that the 'Jewish danger' had to be liquidated at all costs. On the other hand, Hitler also speaks vaguely about settling the Jews in Central Africa.
- ³ This apparent contradiction can be explained by a careful evaluation of the Goebbels diary entry and another contemporary document. The more explicit statements about the fate of the Jews were made in a confidential meeting between Hitler and Goebbels (and possibly a few other leading figures of the Third Reich), in which there was also a detailed talk about the German military campaign. By contrast, Hitler's vague statement about the settlement of Jews in Central Africa was made at his lunch table. Clearly, the diary entry of 30 May 1942 records two different conversations at which Goebbels was present in Hitler's company in the course of the previous day. This is confirmed by the record of Hitler's table talk on 29 May 1942: "The boss remarked at lunch that according to reports on his desk, the Jewish police in the ghettos were lashing out at their co-religionists to a degree which our police scarcely dared even in the worst fighting periods of

our party comrades. The whole crudity of the Jewish being really finds expression there. It is of further interest that the so-called highly-educated Jews such as doctors, lawyers and so on, who have long been active in West European cities, have hardly been in the ghetto for a fortnight before they have become completely ghettoised and go around in caftans and the like. There could scarcely be a clearer proof that the Jew in the end is an Asiatic and not a European. So the whole of Europe must be completely Jew-free after a definite time. That is necessary if only because there is always a certain percentage of fanatics amongst the Jews, who seek to raise Jewry up again. Therefore the deportation of the Jews to Siberia is not recommended, since with their resistance to the climate their health would only be particularly toughened-up there. It would be much more correct to transport them to Africa, since the Arabs don't want them in Palestine, and thus to expose them to a climate which impairs every human's capacity to resist and thus excludes any conflict of interest with human beings in Europe. After a reference to the fact that Japan too is going about exterminating the Jews who have slithered into Japan through trade with America, the boss explained that at some point the Jew would have the whole world as his enemy. Even a country like the United States (USA), in which – to use a metaphor – he is maintaining himself through his continual somersaults, astonishing to everybody, will notice him and fight him when he no longer possesses the necessary vigour for somersaulting. Then there will be a sudden end to Jewish casuistry there too.”

- 4 Leaving aside Hitler's cynical claims about the life of Jews in the Eastern ghettos, it is very likely that his vague reference to settling Jews in Africa was simply intended to deceive his listeners. Hitler used this tactic repeatedly in order to avoid uncomfortable discussions at his lunch or dinner table. Indeed, reading the record of the table talk in conjunction with the Goebbels diary entry discussed above illustrates

the point that the Nazi leaders spoke in more concrete terms about the true fate of the Jews while amongst themselves, while they often remained more guarded in front of their wider entourage.

- ⁵ In view of the open talk about extermination in the confidential conversations between Hitler and Goebbels on 29 May 1942 (as recorded in the Goebbels diary the following day), it beggars belief that David Irving claims that this diary entry indicates that the ‘ghastly secrets of Auschwitz and Treblinka were well kept’ from Hitler. He can only do this by manipulating the Goebbels diary entry for 29 May 1942, as the following extract from *Hitler’s War* (1991) shows: “The gulf between the actual atrocities in the east, and what Hitler knew or said about them widened...Goebbels, unhappy that forty thousand Jews still remained in “his” Berlin, raised the subject at lunch with Hitler on the twenty-ninth [of May]. (“I once again inform the Führer on my plan to evacuate every single Jew from Berlin...”) Hitler merely expatiated on the best post-war homeland for the Jews. Siberia was out – that would just produce an even tougher bacillus strain of Jews; Palestine was out too – the Arabs did not want them; perhaps central Africa? At all events, he summed up, western Europe must be liberated of its Jews – there could be no homeland for them there.” Irving’s account here draws on both the table talk of 29 May 1942 and the Goebbels diary entry of the following day. However, in order to present Hitler as ignorant about the true fate of the Jews, Irving simply suppresses the crucial reference to the apparent plan to exterminate the Berlin Jews as well as the statement that the ‘Jewish danger’ had to be liquidated at all cost. In addition, Irving suppresses that Hitler was in full agreement with Goebbels about the need to ‘evacuate’ the Jews from Berlin, as is evident in Hitler’s immediate orders to Speer to this effect.

(D) Irving's misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the sources: the Hitler table talk of 24 July 1942

- ¹ The final document cited by Irving in support of his claim that Hitler was ignorant of the extermination of the Jews and was deceived by Goebbels and others about the true nature of the deportations to the East, is the Hitler table talk of 24 July 1942. Henry Picker recorded Hitler as saying that: "After the war was over he would rigorously take the standpoint that he would smash city after city to pieces if the Jews did not come out and emigrate to Madagascar or some other Jewish national state...When it was reported to him that Lithuania was also Jew-free today, that was therefore significant."
- ² There can be no doubt that this statement was designed by Hitler to deceive his aides and guests into believing that he had nothing to do with the extermination of Jews, which was already the subject of rumours. By the time of this statement, in late July 1942, the Madagascar plan had long been put aside – by none other than Hitler himself. At the notorious Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942, Reinhard Heydrich informed the other high-ranking Nazi officials present that in place of emigration from now on the evacuation of the Jews to the East has come into operation as a further possible solution, after a corresponding prior approval by the Führer.'
- ³ By early 1942, it had thus been made official that Hitler was no longer aiming at driving Jews out of Europe to Africa. The Madagascar plan, which had already been postponed indefinitely in the Autumn of 1940, was now officially shelved. It is totally misleading to speculate, as Irving does, that Hitler in July 1942 'might still be dreaming of Madagascar'. On 10 February 1942 the Foreign Office official who had first proposed the plan for deporting the Jews to Madagascar in 1940, wrote that "...Gruppenführer Heydrich has been charged by the Führer with carrying out the solution of the Jewish question in Europe. In the meantime, the war against the Soviet Union has opened up the possibility of placing other territories at our disposal for the final solution."

Accordingly the Führer has decided that the Jews should be pushed off not to Madagascar but to the East. Madagascar therefore does not need to be foreseen for the final solution any more.”

- ⁴ Thus, by the time Hitler referred to the possibility of deporting Jews to Madagascar in the summer of 1942, this plan had long been abandoned on *his own orders*. Irving is well aware of these facts.
- ⁵ Hitler knew that, in order to realise the plan of shipping Jews to Madagascar, Germany needed control over the seas. But not only was the British fleet dominant; British troops had even landed on Madagascar itself between 5 and 7 May 1942. Hitler commented on 13 May 1942 that ‘England does not think of surrendering Madagascar again’. The plan to deport Jews to Africa had become a complete fiction.
- ⁶ In fact, by this time the complete extermination of all European Jews in the Nazi sphere of influence was well under way. Transports with Jews from various countries had already gone to the death camps in the East. The extermination camps in Belzec, Sobibor and Auschwitz had been in operation for several months, and the death camp in Treblinka was just beginning to receive the first transports of Jews to be exterminated. The extermination of the Jews living in the General Government was also escalated. On 19 July 1942, Himmler ordered that the ‘resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the General Government is to be carried out and completed by 31 December 1942.’ And on 28 July 1942, just two days after Hitler’s table talk, Himmler wrote to the Head of the SS Head Office, Gottlob Berger, and explained that ‘the occupied Eastern territories will be Jew-free. The Führer has laid the implementation of this very difficult order on my shoulders. In any case, no-one can take the responsibility from me. So I am denying myself any debate about it.’
- ⁷ All these documents make clear that Hitler on 24 July 1942 was not serious about deporting Jews to Madagascar. So why did Hitler refer to Madagascar? Essentially, as one historian, Magnus Brechtken, author

of the standard work on the Madagascar plan, has convincingly argued, this was no more than ‘pure hypocrisy, at best a verbal smokescreen of Hitler’s, born out of thought-games, a smokescreen with which he took up a known topic which had also once been the subject of concrete planning, in order not to call the measures which were actually going on against the Jews by their name.’

- ⁸ This view has also been expressed by other historians, such as Peter Longerich, who argues that all of Hitler’s statements from the Summer 1942 ‘about possible “resettlement projects” – are diversions meant to deceive his listeners’. After the war, some of Hitler’s listeners did indeed claim that they had been deceived by Hitler. Henry Picker, who took the notes at the table talk of 24 July 1942, claimed that Hitler, even in his private circle, had never “forgotten to keep silent about things for which there was no resonance among his table-companions, as amongst the broad mass of out people. Only take the persecution of the Jews, which he obscured before his table-companions with references to preparations for the establishment of a Jewish national state on the island of Madagascar or alternatively in central Africa.”

(iv) Conclusion

- ¹ An examination of David Irving’s claims about the Goebbels diary entry of 27 March 1942 has revealed that he is wrong to claim that Goebbels deceived Hitler about the true nature of the ‘final solution’ when the two men met two days later. It has also been shown how Irving manipulated the diary entry of 27 March 1942 in order to omit Goebbels’s reference to Hitler as the ‘persistent pioneer and spokesman of a radical solution’ of the ‘Jewish Question’, which clearly suggests that Hitler was not ignorant of the extermination of the Jews, as Irving has claimed. A detailed examination of further documents cited by Irving in support of his theses has shown that they also fail to substantiate his claim that Hitler was deceived by Goebbels about the true nature of the ‘final solution’ and ignorant about the extermination of

the Jews. There are a number of documents and sources which strongly suggest that Hitler knew all along. Irving does not confront these but misrepresents and suppresses them in the interests of his own argument.

(g) The Himmler minute of 22 September 1942

(i) Historical background

- ¹ A further link in Irving's chain of documents is provided by a minute written by Himmler on 22 September 1942. The background to the document is as follows. Some time in the autumn of 1941, the former *Gauleiter* of Vienna and SS and Police leader in Lublin, Odilo Globocnik, was charged by the SS leader Heinrich Himmler to exterminate the Jews in the General Government. The method chosen for the killing was gas. The site chosen as the first extermination camp was the small town of Belzec (south-east of Lublin) in the most eastern corner of the General Government. Construction started in November 1941. Crude gas chambers were built, connected to an armoured car engine which was set up outside the gas chambers. The carbon monoxide exhaust fumes were used to murder the victims in the gas chambers, who died a slow and agonising death. On 17 March 1942, the first Polish Jews from the General Government, transported to Belzec by train, were murdered. To increase the capacity for murder, further death camps were set up in the General Government. The first gassings in Sobibor (east of Lublin) took place some time in April or May 1942.
- ² In the Summer of 1942, there was a serious attempt to accelerate the extermination process. There was some resistance against this, partly because Jews were increasingly used as forced labour, and partly because most means of transport were used by the army. It seems likely that Himmler needed Hitler's support to overcome this resistance. It is possible that he talked about this issue with Hitler during various meetings on 11, 12 and 14 July 1942. On 16 July 1942, Himmler's ad-

jutant with Hitler, SS-Obergruppenführer Wolff, had an urgent phone conversation with a leading official in the Ministry for Transport, Dr. Ganzenmüller, concerning the provision of more railway services. On 19 July 1942, Himmler ordered that the mass murder of the Polish Jews was to be intensified. He set a deadline on 31 December 1942, by which time 'no kind of persons of Jewish origin should be staying in the General Government any more'. The only exception were those Jews employed for the Nazi war economy in several ghettos such as Warsaw.

- ³ Some historians have argued that Himmler acted with Hitler's backing. This argument is supported by contemporary documentation. As has already been pointed out, on 28 July 1942, just two days after Hitler's table talk, Himmler wrote to the Head of the SS Head Office, Gottlob Berger, and explained that 'the occupied Eastern territories will be Jew-free. The Führer has laid the implementation of this very difficult order on my shoulders.'. The acceleration of the killing was clearly also in line with Globocnik's thinking, who had some weeks earlier demanded to be able 'to carry out the whole Jewish action as fast as in any way possible, so that one doesn't get stuck in the middle of it one day'.
- ⁴ On 22 July 1942, Globocnik welcomed Himmler's new order: 'The Reichsführer SS...has given us so much new work that with it now all our most secret wishes are to be fulfilled. I am so very thankful to him for this, and he can be sure of one thing, that these things he wishes will be fulfilled in the shortest time.' The next day, killings started in the extermination camp set in Treblinka (north of Lublin). Three extermination camps were now in full operation in the General Government. On 28 July 1942, Dr. Ganzenmüller, from the Ministry of Transport, reported to SS-Obergruppenführer Wolff that 'since the 22.7. one train has been travelling every day with 5,000 Jews on it from Warsaw via Malkinia to Treblinka, and moreover twice a week a train with 5,000 Jews from Przemysl to Belzec.' Wolff, writing from Hitler's headquarters, thanked Ganzenmüller for his efforts on 13 August

1942, and noted: 'With particular joy I noted your assurance that for two weeks now a train has been carrying, every day, 5,000 members of the chosen people to Treblinka.'

- ⁵ In the seven weeks from the end of July 1942 until mid-September 1942, some of the worst excesses of mass murder of the entire 'final solution' occurred in the General Government. Apart from mass gassings, German police forces also exterminated entire villages by shooting all Jewish inhabitants. 'Operation Reinhard' was officially terminated in October 1943, and by November 1943 the three camps had been dismantled. According to conservative estimates, around 1.75 million women, men and children, mostly Jews, were murdered in Belzec, Treblinka and Sobibor. Probably more than 90% of the victims came from the General Government, while the others came from territory as far away as Holland, Macedonia and France. Many more Polish Jews were shot by German police officials. Himmler congratulated Globocnik for his part in organising the genocide.

(ii) Hitler and the 'final solution': the Himmler minute of 22 September 1942

- ¹ On 22 September 1942, Himmler had a lengthy meeting with Hitler. Judging from Himmler's hand-written agenda notes, one subject appears to have been the extermination of the Jews. Under the heading '**Race and Settlement**', Himmler noted:

“

1. Emigration of Jews
 - how to be further proceeded?
2. Settlement Lublin –
 - Circumstances
 - Lorrainers
 - Gen[eral] Gouv.[ernement]
 - Germans from Bosnia
 - Globus
 - Bessarabia ”

IV. Volkstum u. Siedlung

- 1) Judenauswanderung
 - Wie soll weiter verfahren werden?
- 2) Besiedlung Lublin
 - Lothringer
 - Verhältnisse
 - Deutsche aus Bosnien.
 - Gen. Gouv.
 - Bessarabien
 - Globus

BA Berlin, NS 19/1447, Bl. 78089, here 85: Vortrag beim führer Wehrwolf, 22.9.1942. Some historians have dated this document 7 October 1942, or 17 October 1942. However, examining the original file in the German Federal Archives on microfiche leaves doubt that the date for the meeting was 22 September 1942. Himmler's entry under the heading 'Volkstum u. Siedlung' continued, but the following points (settlement of the Crimea; registration of illegitimate children in Russia) are not relevant to the above topic.

- ² The fact that Himmler discussed the 'emigration of the Jews', a euphemism for the extermination of the Jews frequently used by the Nazis, as well as 'Globus', his nickname for Globocnik, who was re-

sponsible for this programme of mass extermination in the General Government, raises the strong suspicion that the mass annihilation of the Jews was one of the topics of conversation between Hitler and Himmler on that day.

- 4 This interpretation has been advanced by a number of historians. For instance, Gerald Fleming concluded that the note made clear that ‘the Führer and his Reichsführer SS discussed the operations that came under Globocnik’s supervision’. Saul Friedländer, another expert on the history of Jews in the ‘Third Reich’, accepts Himmler’s note for the meeting on as indirect proof ‘that Hitler attentively followed the process of annihilation’. Thomas Sandkühler, a specialist historian of the operation, argues that the note shows that in September 1942 ‘Himmler reported to Hitler on the annihilation of the Jews’.

(iii) Irving and the Himmler note

- 1 In his reply to the defence, David Irving concedes that he has neglected the Himmler note in question. On his decision to omit any discussion of the note, Irving writes: “It is admitted that the plaintiff did not draw attention to this minute, but it is denied that this is relevant...The Defendants have failed to inform us of the minute’s ‘obvious significance’, which escapes the Plaintiff...Himmler’s jotted agenda for his meetings with Hitler are crowded with names, pet or otherwise, and in the absence of collateral evidence it is imprudent in the extreme to spin fanciful theories around them.”
- 2 Indeed, the minute does seem significant. It is not a fanciful theory to suggest that the note gives a strong indication that Hitler was updated by Himmler on the mass murder of Jews in the East, or that the two men decided on the next steps in the ‘final solution’. There is no doubt that at this time important decisions by the Nazi leaders were being taken. During a conference between 20 and 22 September 1942, in view of the extreme shortage of labour, Hitler apparently agreed to the proposal of Sauckel, the official responsible for the work-force in the

war economy, to continue to employ skilled Jewish workers in the General Government. As a consequence, Himmler ordered on 9 October 1942 that Jewish workers employed in the war economy in the General Government were to be gathered in a few concentration camp factories: 'However, the Jews there too will disappear one day, in correspondence with the wish of the Führer.

- ³ Some historians have not used the note. However, both the defence and Irving are in fact wrong in claiming that Irving has not used the note by Himmler in his work. Irving, who knows well what he has written and what not, once more twists the truth. In the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving uses the minute to support his claim that in his meetings with Hitler, Himmler did not enlighten Hitler about the true fate of the Jews in the East. This is part of Irving's argument that it was not Hitler, but other leading Nazis, like Himmler and Goebbels, who were behind the extermination of the Jews. Hitler, he argues, was left in the dark by his officials: "Himmler meanwhile continued to pull the wool over Hitler's eyes. On September 17 (*recte: September 22*) he calmly jotted in his notes for that day's Führer conference: "1. Jewish emigration – how is to be handled in future? 2. Settlement of Lublin," and noted next to these points: "Conditions in Generalgouvernement," and "Globus" (Globocnik's nickname)."
- ⁴ Irving's claim lacks all factual foundation. First, there is no indication at all that Himmler took down the notes of the meeting 'calmly' or kept Hitler in the dark about the mass annihilation of the Jews. Second, the fact that the mass murder of the Jews is not mentioned openly in Himmler's notes, which Irving seems to take as proof for Himmler's having mislead Hitler, should come as no surprise. As stated above, the Nazis generally used camouflage terms like 'evacuation', 'resettlement', 'wandered off', 'disappeared', when noting down details of the extermination of the Jews. There was a great difference between what the Nazi officials wrote down on paper, and what they actually discussed verbally. For instance, as has already been pointed out in this

Report, while the participants at the Wannsee conference on 20 January 1942 openly talked about ‘killing, elimination, and annihilation’, the protocol minutes drawn up by Adolf Eichmann refers only to the ‘evacuation of the Jews to the East’ and the ‘final solution of the European Jewish Question’. Irving is well aware of this, and his interpretation is a blatant misrepresentation of the Himmler minute, quite apart from the gratuitous addition of his characterisation of Himmler as having ‘calmly’ taken down the notes. Also, why would Himmler mention Globocnik at all at his meeting with Hitler, if he aimed to keep Hitler in the dark about the mass killings? It is clear, therefore, that if anyone has spun fanciful theories around this document, it is Irving himself.

(h) The Antonescu/Horthy Meetings with Hitler in April 1943

(i) Background

- ¹ The next link in the chain is provided by documentation on Germany’s relations with Hungary in 1943. During the Second World War, Hungary was ruled by a strongly authoritarian, right-wing regime, which had come to power in a bloody counter-revolution at the end of the First World War. Led by Admiral Horthy, whose title derived from the defunct Habsburg Empire and who functioned as Regent for the absent Habsburg Emperor, the Hungarian regime allied itself to Nazi Germany from early on, principally in order to recover territory from small neighbouring countries which it considered belonged to Hungary by the historic right of the Habsburg tradition.
- ² In 1938-39 it joined Germany in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. In return for German backing in obtaining territory from Romania in August 1940 and Yugoslavia in April 1941, the Hungarian government sent troops to participate in the German invasion of Russia in June 1941. Having achieved its principal goals in annexing territory from its small neighbouring states, Hungary now tried to pull

out of the war on the Eastern front, and withdrew substantial numbers of troops. Following the defeat of the German armies at Stalingrad, Hitler began to put pressure on Admiral Horthy to reverse this policy, and summoned him to a meeting on 16 and 17 April 1943, at which the German Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop, was also present. Hitler and Ribbentrop also used this opportunity to discuss with Horthy the question of Hungary's Jewish population.

- ³ A substantial number of Jews lived in Hungary; a figure of around three-quarters of a million in 1943-44 is widely accepted by historians. These people were already subjected to massive legal discrimination by the strongly antisemitic Horthy regime, which denied them basic rights such as entering the professions and enforced on them restrictions comparable to those obtaining in Germany under the Nazis before 1939. The Hungarian fascist party, the Arrow Cross, was putting pressure on the Horthy government to introduce harsh new policies against the Jews. These measures, enacted from 1938 onwards, had been partly designed to appease it.
- ⁴ The subject of Hungary's Jews had already been the cause of friction between the two regimes of Hitler and Horthy. After the invasion of Russia, on learning of the Nazis' intentions of deporting Jews to Russia, the Horthy regime began deporting 'alien Jews' (including Jewish refugees from Austria, Slovakia, Poland and Germany) to Körösmezo, close to the border with the General Government. From here, they were forcibly transported over the border into German-controlled territory. By late August 1941, when the operation was completed, 16,000-18,000 Jews had been transferred. The great majority of the Jews pushed out of Hungary in this way were exterminated by SS units in Kamenets-Podolsk (Ukraine), in a massacre on 27-28 August 1941. Only about 2,000 Jews who had arrived from Hungary initially survived.

- ⁵ In the following year, the ‘Third Reich’ stepped up its efforts to include the remaining Jews in Hungary in the ‘Final Solution’. On 15 August 1942, the Hungarian representative in Berlin, Döme Sztójay, reported to his government that following instruction from Hitler regardless of the nationality of these Jews and provided transportation facilities exist “the Germans are determined to rid Europe of the Jewish elements without further delay and intend...to deport them to the occupied territories in the East, where they will be settled in ghettos or labour camps and made to work. The authorities have been instructed to complete these deportations while the war is still on. According to absolutely reliable information, Reichsleiter Himmler has informed a meeting of SS leaders that it is the wish of the German Government to complete these deportations within a year.”
- ⁶ Two months later, the Germans officially approached the Hungarian government in this matter. On 14 October 1942, the senior Foreign Office official Martin Luther instructed the German embassy in Budapest to inform the Hungarian government of the reasons ‘which are moving us according to the will of the Führer to attempt a complete solution of the Jewish question in Europe soon, and to ask the Hungarian government to drive forward on its part the measures which are necessary for this purpose.’ These measures included the ‘immediate labelling of all Jews’ as well as the preparation for ‘deportation and transport off to the East’. These demands were passed on by the German representative in Budapest on 17 October 1942 to the Hungarian government.
- ⁷ However, the Hungarians comprehensively rejected the demands. In its reply on 2 December 1942, the Hungarian government made clear that it was extremely jealous of its sovereign rights and insisted that any ‘solution’ of the Hungarian dimension of the ‘Jewish question’ would have to take the specific circumstances in Hungary into account. It rejected the special marking of Jews and informed the Germans that as far as the ‘deportation of Jewry out of Hungary’ was con-

cerned, 'the Hungarian government possesses today neither the possibilities nor the technical means of lending governmental measures practical validity in this matter.'

- ⁸ The German government was clearly unhappy with this response from its military ally, and increased its pressure on Hungary to give in to its demands. On 15 January 1943, Luther reminded the Hungarian representative in Berlin, Döme Sztójay, "that the Führer is resolved under all circumstances to remove all Jews from Europe already during the war, because these, as he (Sztójay), to be sure, knows exactly, constitute an element of subversion, and in most cases carry the guilt for acts of sabotage which occur, and otherwise also occupy themselves mainly with espionage for the enemy. It fills us with very great concern that just one country in the middle of Europe that is friendly to us harbours about 1 million Jews. We cannot look on this danger in the long run without taking action." However, in the following months the Hungarian government did not change its stance on the matter.
- ¹⁰ The meeting between Hitler and Horthy on 16 and 17 April 1943 was in part designed to escalate the pressure which the German government had already put on Horthy to 'solve' the 'Jewish question' in Hungary once and for all and to persuade Horthy to remove the obstacles which he had so far put in the way of the forcible deportation of all of Hungary's Jews to territory controlled by the Nazi regime.

(ii) The meeting between Hitler and Horthy on 16 and 17 April 1943.

- ¹ The meeting between Hitler and Horthy on 16 and 17 April 1943 has generally been regarded by historians as one of the few occasions on which Hitler openly admitted the extermination of the Jews in Poland. The minutes of the meeting were taken by Dr. Paul Otto Schmidt, who confirmed them and added his own recollections at the Nuremberg trials. There is no doubt about their authenticity. The minutes for the meeting on 17 April 1943 record a statement by Ribbentrop, in Hitler's

presence, to a point made by Horthy: “On Horthy’s retort, what should he do with the Jews then, after he had pretty well taken all means of living from them – he surely couldn’t beat them to death – The Reich Foreign Minister replied that the Jews must either be annihilated or taken to concentration camps. There was no other way.”

- ² This blunt statement by Ribbentrop contributed to the conclusion of the judges at the Nuremberg trials in October 1946, that Ribbentrop had played an important part in the ‘final solution’ and was guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- ³ On 17 April 1943, Hitler almost immediately confirmed Ribbentrop’s explicitly murderous statement at some length: “Where the Jews were left to themselves, as for example in Poland, gruesome poverty and degeneracy had ruled. They were just pure parasites. One had fundamentally cleared up this state of affairs in Poland. If the Jews there didn’t want to work, they were shot. If they couldn’t work, they had to perish. They had to be treated like tuberculosis bacilli, from which a healthy body could be infected. That was not cruel, if one remembered that even innocent natural creatures like hares and deer had to be killed so that no harm was caused. Why should one spare the beasts who wanted to bring us Bolshevism more? Nations who did not rid themselves of Jews perished.”
- ⁴ Despite this open language, Horthy was clearly not convinced about the need to murder large numbers of Jews, much to Hitler’s annoyance.
- ⁵ Some three weeks after Hitler’s meeting with Horthy, on 8 May 1942, Propaganda Minister Goebbels noted down in his diary the following statement by Hitler: “The Jewish question is solved worst of all by Hungary. The Hungarian state is completely permeated by Jews, and the Führer met with no success during his discussion with Horthy in convincing him of the necessity for harsher measures. To be sure, Horthy is himself, together with his family, extraordinarily strongly in-

terwoven with Jews and will also in future struggle with all his might against getting a really active grip on the Jew-problem. Here he is bringing forward thoroughly humanitarian counter-arguments, which naturally possess absolutely no importance in this connection. There can be no talk of humanity towards Jewry. Jewry must be thrown to the ground. The Führer has been at great pains to convince Horthy of this point of view, but he has only succeeded to a very small extent.”

- ⁶ Thus it is clear that the statements by Ribbentrop (in Hitler’s presence) and of Hitler himself on 17 April 1943 pose an insurmountable problem for anyone who wishes to argue, as Irving does, that Hitler neither knew nor approved of the extermination of the Jews. Whilst Irving never openly challenges the authenticity of the minutes of Hitler’s meeting with Horthy, he attempts in various ways to minimise their significance, as we shall now see.

(iii) Irving’s account of the meeting between Hitler and Horthy: Bending reliable sources to fit preconceived ideas, invention and fabrication

(A) Hiding key statements in footnotes

- ¹ In the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War*, Irving starts off by hiding away in a footnote Ribbentrop’s statement that all Jews had to be either ‘annihilated or taken to concentration camps’. Irving resorts to the same tactic in his 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War*. One might think, of course, that putting this statement in a footnote is no great crime against honest scholarship in itself – after all, it is still there in the book for everyone to read. But everyone, of course, does not read footnotes, and placing it there allows Irving to marginalise it almost out of existence.

(B) Citing other documents to discredit the minutes of the meeting.

- ¹ Irving has referred repeatedly to other documents, which, he claims, indicate that Hitler, in fact, did *not* mention the extermination of the Jews during his meeting with Horthy. These arguments by Irving are

utterly pointless, as the authenticity of the original minutes is beyond doubt, and never directly challenged by Irving. Not surprisingly, the documents used by Irving indirectly to undermine the official minutes fail to support his case and once more illustrate his flawed methodology.

- ² First, in his footnote, Irving casts doubt on the reliability of the official minute by claiming that “Secret Hungarian records do not echo the wording in such bluntness. In a draft letter to Hitler on May 7, Horthy included a sentence – later deleted – “Your Excellency further reproached me that my government does not proceed with stamping out Jewry with the same radicalism as is practised in Germany.”
- ³ This is pure invention by Irving. It is based on the fact that the draft letter by Horthy (disclosed by Irving to the court) uses the term *Ausrottung*, which Irving insists on translating as ‘stamping out’. However, its true and generally agreed meaning is ‘extermination’, which is of course no less blunt than the term ‘annihilated’ used by Ribbentrop in the minutes. The complete passage in Horthy’s draft letter should thus be translated as follows: ‘Your Excellency further reproached me that my government did not proceed in the extermination of Jewry with the same radicalism with which this is being carried out in Germany and there is also regarded as desired for other countries too.’ Clearly, this draft letter comprehensively fails to support the claim which Irving attaches to it.
- ⁴ Secondly, in his plea to the court, Irving cites a report submitted by the Hungarian representative in Berlin, Sztójay, to Prime Minister Kallay in Budapest. According to Irving, the report summarised ‘the talks between Hitler and Horthy and Ribbentrop’ and did not say that the Hungarian Jews ‘were to be liquidated, only interned’. In fact, the document is concerned with a separate conversation between Sztójay and Ribbentrop. Only a very brief passage of the document deals with the Hitler-Horthy meeting. In this brief passage, Sztójay reports that Hitler

‘personally drew the attention of His Highness the Regent [Horthy] to the necessity of settling in a more thorough and penetrating manner the Jewish question in Hungary. No doubt His Highness the Regent has informed Your Excellency [Kallay] of this’.

- ⁵ Clearly, Irving completely misrepresents this source. As is plain to see, Sztójay in his reference to the Hitler-Horthy talks does not mention that Hungarian Jews were ‘only’ to be interned. Also, it is no surprise that Sztójay speaks merely of ‘more thorough and penetrating’ measures, and does not directly mention killing. Possibly, Sztójay was not aware of the explicit statements made by Ribbentrop and Hitler on 17 April 1943. After all, Sztójay himself had not been present during the meeting. More likely, though, Sztójay was well aware of Nazi extermination policy, and merely cloaked the murderous programme in more neutral, euphemistic language. This was common practice. For instance, Horthy himself in his letter of 7 May 1943 to Hitler (see above) deleted the sentence which spoke of the ‘extermination’ of the Jews. The remaining letter made no direct reference to the fate of the Jews.
- ⁶ Thus neither Horthy’s draft letter to Hitler on 7 May 1943, nor Sztójay’s report of April 1943 can cast any doubt on the remarks made by Hitler and Ribbentrop at the meeting on 17 April 1943. Irving’s claims are totally irrelevant and simply designed – not very effectively – to undermine a reliable source, namely the minutes drawn up by Schmidt of the meeting.

(C) Invention, fabrication and falsification: placing Hitler’s remarks at the meeting with Horthy on 17 April 1943 into a false context, in order to bend a reliable source.

- ¹ As has been described above, Ribbentrop’s comments to Horthy at the meeting on 17 April 1943 were almost immediately followed by a murderously antisemitic outburst on the part of Hitler. However, by removing Ribbentrop’s preceding remark to a footnote, Irving places Hitler’s subsequent statement addressed to Horthy on 17 April 1943 in an en-

tirely different context: “Events in Poland were pointed to as providing an ugly precedent: there were reports of Jews roaming the country, committing acts of murder and sabotage... In Warsaw, the fifty thousand Jews surviving in the ghetto were on the point of staging an armed uprising – with weapons and ammunition evidently sold to them by Hitler’s fleeing allies as they passed westward through the city. Himmler ordered the ghetto destroyed and its ruins combed out for Jews. “This is just the kind of incident that shows how dangerous these Jews are”. Poland should have been an object lesson to Horthy, Hitler argued. He related how Jews who refused to work there were shot; those who could not work just wasted away. Jews must be treated like tuberculosis bacilli, he said, using his favourite analogy. Was that so cruel when one considered that even innocent creatures like hares and deer had to be put down to prevent their doing damage? Why preserve a bestial species whose ambition was to inflict bolshevism on us all? Horthy apologetically noted that he had done all he decently could against the Jews: “But they can hardly be murdered or otherwise eliminated”, he protested. Hitler reassured him: “There is no need for that.”

- ² Thus, Irving implies, Jews were violent and disruptive in Eastern Europe and posed a threat. They had to be dealt with and ‘combed out’ like lice. But despite all this, Hitler did not want them killed.
- ³ This is pure invention on Irving’s part. Whoever said “This is just the kind of incident that shows how dangerous these Jews are”, Adolf Hitler certainly did not say it to Admiral Horthy at their meeting on 16-17 April 1943. Hitler did not mention the Warsaw ghetto uprising at all, which is not surprising, since it did not even begin until two days later. Nor did the uprising involve 50,000 armed Jews, as Irving implies, but at most a few thousand of them. Nor did Hitler mention Jewish partisan activity or Jewish violence, but simply poverty and degeneracy, something quite different. Irving also waters down the expression used by Hitler to describe the fate of those Polish Jews who could

not work – *verkommen* – by translating it as ‘wasted away’, as if they had no assistance towards this fate by Nazi authorities who deliberately starved them of food.

- ⁴ Most seriously of all, however, the exchange reported at the end of Irving’s account, beginning ‘Horthy apologetically noted’, did not occur on 17 April, as Irving clearly portrays by placing it immediately after his summary of Hitler’s speech, but on the previous day, and in another context, namely during the first of the two men’s meetings. On 16 April, namely, Horthy stated: ‘He had done everything which one could decently undertake against the Jews, but one could surely not murder them or kill them in some other way. The Führer replied that this was also not necessary. Hungary could accommodate the Jews in concentration camps just like Slovakia did.’ At this point in the meeting, Hitler and Ribbentrop were not being as open as they became on 17th. It was because he was not satisfied with Hitler’s response, and was aware that he had still not satisfied the Nazi leaders with his, that Horthy repeated his question on 17th (‘he surely couldn’t beat them to death’), eliciting this time far more explicit statements of what they expected him to do, both from Ribbentrop and from Hitler, namely that they were to be put in camps if they could work, and killed if they could not.
- ⁵ One might add here that the majority of the Slovakian Jews were by no means ‘only’ put into concentration camps, as Hitler claimed on 16 April 1943. In fact, they were killed. According to SS statistics, 57,545 Slovakian Jews had been transported to Nazi-occupied Polish territory between 26 March 1942 and 31 March 1943 (only about 25,000 Jews were still left behind in Slovakia). The transports went to Auschwitz, Sobibor and Lublin. At the end of the war, only 284 survivors of these transports could be registered. The rest were dead.
- ⁶ What Irving does, therefore, is to bend this reliable source to suit his argument, misrepresenting the historical data and skewing the documents on which he relies, by placing quotations in a false context, re-

moving part of the record to a footnote, and mixing up two different conversations in the text so that it looks as if Hitler is telling Horthy that the Jews should not be killed, only interned in camps. Irving increases the force of Hitler's statement by putting it into direct speech instead of the indirect, reported speech in which it appears in the original minutes.

- ⁷ In fact, the real sequence of statements on 17 April is perfectly clear: Horthy, unclear as to why the Nazi leaders were still putting pressure on him after all the measures he had already taken against the Hungarian Jews, repeated his question to Hitler and Ribbentrop: surely you can't want me to kill them? Ribbentrop replied yes, that is exactly what they wanted, kill them or put them in camps, and Hitler immediately followed by saying he should do as had been done in Poland, namely shoot those who refused to work in the camps, and ensure that those who were unable to work perished. Just to make it absolutely clear, Hitler used the analogy of a healthy human body ridding itself of tuberculosis bacilli. His meaning could hardly have been clearer.
- ⁸ In the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, Irving omits all reference to the Warsaw uprising in this discussion of the meeting. Instead, he offers two different accounts of Hitler's words: "In Hitler's warning to Horthy that the "Jewish Bolsheviks" would liquidate all Europe's intelligentsia, we can identify the influence of the Katyn episode – a propaganda windfall about which Goebbels had just telephoned him...Hitler warmly approved Goebbels's suggestion that Katyn should be linked in the public's mind with the Jewish question. But the most persuasive argument used to reconcile Hitler with the harsher treatment of the Jews was the bombing war: From documents and target maps found in crashed bombers he knew that the British aircrews were instructed to aim only at the residential areas. Only one race murdered, he lectured the quailing Horthy, and that was the Jews. It was they who had provoked this war and given it its present character against civilians, women, and children."

- ⁹ Irving provides no factual evidence for these two claims in his footnotes. The word 'Katyn' does not even occur a single time in Horthy's conversations with Hitler.
- ¹⁰ To be sure, Hitler did know about the massacre, since Goebbels had recorded Hitler's decision that it should be used for propaganda in his diary on 14 April 1943. But all of Hitler's statements in his conversations with Horthy were couched in general terms and differed little from his previous warnings about 'Jewish-Bolshevism': "It would surely be madness to believe that if the German army should not be in a position to stop the Russians, a Turkish-Bulgarian-Hungarian combination would be capable of it. It would be swept aside, and the Bolshevik Jews in Moscow would annihilate the intelligentsia and exterminate the masses by unimaginable means."
- ¹¹ Katyn thus had nothing to do with it, and there is no evidence that knowledge of it made Hitler more antisemitic than he had been previously. The reference is pure invention on Irving's part.
- ¹² Similarly with Allied bombing raids. Irving's claims that these lay behind Hitler's antisemitic outbursts in his conversations with Horthy rest on Hitler's statement to Horthy on 16 April 1943 that there was no need to be soft towards the Jews because "they were also responsible for the present war and the form which it has taken, in particular for the bombardment of the civil population and the numerous victims among women and children...Only *one* murdered, namely the Jew, who sparked wars and through his influence given them their present character directed against civilians, women and children."
- ¹³ And on the following day, Hitler told Horthy at the beginning of their conversation that the Germans had found detailed plans which showed that during a recent raid on Frankfurt the British bombers were not specifically instructed to destroy industrial targets but had been told

they could also bomb residential areas (not quite the same as Irving's claim that they were told to aim *only* at residential areas). Also, there is no mention of Jews in this passage.

- 14 Immediately after this statement, Hitler added that "the attacks themselves had been irritating but wholly trivial.' In view of the fact that he dismissed them as unimportant, it is highly unlikely that these bombing raids roused Hitler to an unprecedented antisemitic fury which he then expressed to Horthy. The antisemitic outbursts in his conversations with the Hungarian leader in fact only need explaining in Irving's scheme of things by such inventions and fabrications because Irving denies the normal antisemitic virulence of Hitler's views at other times. In fact, of course, there is massive evidence for the extreme nature of Hitler's antisemitism at other times, stretching back over more than two decades.
- 15 This boundless antisemitism is also evident throughout Hitler's talks with Horthy. Hitler had mentioned among other things during these conversations that (in his view) the Jews were to blame for the 1918 revolution, the First World War and the Second World War, that they had had a very destructive impact on morals, on the currency and on the economy, that they were parasites, that they ran the black market in wartime, and that any country or city that did not get rid of them would go under.
- 16 In another passage not quoted or referred to by Irving, Hitler told Horthy that "one did not need to fight shy of pursuing the struggle against the Jews energetically on his part either. There must be no deviation in this, and anyone who believed in compromises in this question was fundamentally deceiving himself. Why should the Jews be treated with kid gloves?...They were also responsible for the present war and the form which it had taken on, and for the numerous victims among wo-

men and children.” Later, he added that ‘the Jews had indeed started the war, and one need have no sympathy for them if the war now brought serious consequences for them with it.’

- ¹⁷ In view of all this, it seems very unlikely that a bombing raid which Hitler described as ‘trivial’ and which he did not link directly to the Jews, would have counted for very much in his mind. Hitler pursued his murderous policies against the Jews not because of the alleged criminality of Jews in Poland, the impending Warsaw uprising, or the bombing campaign of the Allies, but because of his all-consuming hatred of the Jews, whom he saw as responsible for almost every problem that faced Germany and the world. Finally, Irving’s manipulation of the context of Hitler’s remarks on 17 April 1943 cannot distract from the simple fact that Hitler openly admitted and justified the murder of the Jews in these conversations with the Hungarian leader.

(iv) Further suppression of evidence of Hitler’s radical antisemitism.

- ¹ Hitler’s antisemitic remarks to a meeting held with the Romanian military dictator Ion Antonescu, another of his allies whom he accused of disloyalty to Germany, on 13 April 1943, shortly before he met Horthy, are also suppressed by Irving. To be sure, on page 508 of the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War*, Irving does mention the fact that the two men met on 12 April to discuss Romania’s position in the war. But he omits to mention altogether the fact that the official meeting went on for a second day, 13 April, during which, according to the minutes, Hitler harangued Antonescu in uncompromising terms about the ‘Jewish Question’: “The Führer then described the measures which had been taken in Germany in this area. The moment the Jews had been removed, the economy, cultural life and other areas had blossomed. In other countries, where the Jew-question had not been so energetically cleaned-up, as e.g. in Hungary, the circumstances were very difficult. The Jews were the natural allies of Bolshevism and the candidates for

the positions occupied by the present intelligentsia who were to be murdered during Bolshevization. Therefore, in contrast to Marshal Antonescu, the Führer took the view that one must proceed against the Jews, the more radically the better. He (the Führer)...would rather burn all his bridges behind him, because the Jewish hatred is so enormously great anyway. In Germany, as a consequence of the clearing-up of the Jewish question, one had a united people without opposition at one's disposal...however, once the way had been embarked upon, there was no going back."

Hillgruber (ed.), *Staatsmänner*, Vol. 2, pp. 232-3.

"Der Führer schilderte dann die Massnahmen, die in Deutschland auf diesem Gebiet ergriffen worden seien. In dem Augenblick, in dem die Juden entfernt wurden, habe in der Wirtschaft, im Kulturleben and auf auf anderen Gebieten eine Blüte eingesetzt. In anderen Ländern, wo die Judenfrage nicht so energisch bereinigt worden sei, wie z.B. in Ungarn, seien die Verhältnisse sehr schwierig. Die Juden seien die natürlichen Verbündeten des Bolschewismus und die Kandidaten für die Stellen, die jetzige bei der Bolschewisierung zu ermordende Intelligenz innehabe. Deshalb sei der Führer im Gegensatz zu Marschall Antonsecu der Meinung, dass man je radikaler desto besser gegen die Juden vorgehen müsse. Er (der Führer)...breche lieber alle Brücken hinter sich ab, da der jüdische Hass sowieso riesengross sei. In Deutschland habe man infolge der Bereinigung der Judenfrage ein geschlossenes Volk ohne Opposition zur Verfüfung...allerdings gäbe es auch kein Zurück auf dem einmal eingeschlagenen Wege."

- ² Once again, since the meetings of 12 and 13 April between Hitler and Antonescu are recorded in the same documentary collection, a collection with which Irving is fully familiar, the failure to mention the second day's discussion in a book, *Hitler's War*, which devotes considerable attention to Hitler's attitude towards the Jews, can only be the result of deliberate suppression.

(v) Conclusion

- ¹ The significance of the meeting between Hitler and Horthy on 16-17 April 1943 only really becomes clear when we recall what happened subsequently. In May 1943 the Hungarian Prime Minister Kállay publicly rejected the idea of ‘resettlement’ of Hungary’s Jews in the East until he received a satisfactory answer from the Germans as to how and where the resettlement was to take place. But the Nazi government did not abandon its designs for the extermination of the Hungarian Jews. In March 1944, Horthy was again summoned to meet Hitler. According to Horthy, at the meeting on 18 March 1944 Hitler complained that ‘Hungary did nothing in the matter of the Jewish problem, and was not prepared to settle accounts with the large Jewish population in Hungary’. Meanwhile, German troops marched into Hungary and took the country over. Sztójay was appointed Prime Minister on 22 March 1944 of a puppet government. Already on 19 March 1944, the Eichmann *Sonderkommando* was in Budapest to organise the deportation of the Hungarian Jews. By July 1944, over 430,000 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz. After a brief halt called by Horthy, who still retained some influence, the Germans staged another coup in October 1944 and installed the Hungarian fascist leader Szalasi as Prime Minister. Although plans were laid to deport more Jews and thousands were marched to Austria under terrible conditions, many of them dying *en route*, Auschwitz was now being wound up in the face of the Russian advance and there was no more major extermination, although thousands of Jews died in what had become a virtual ghetto in Budapest in the winter of 1944-45. All of this demonstrated clearly the paramount importance the extermination of Hungary’s Jews had for Hitler.
- ² Irving is at pains to obscure this in his account of the German leader’s meeting with Admiral Horthy on 16-17 April 1943. Through bending reliable sources to fit his argument, misrepresenting and skewing historical data, misinterpreting sources and deliberately suppressing relevant information, he conveys the impression in his book *Hitler’s War*

that Hitler was actually opposed to the extermination of the Hungarian Jews, demanding merely their confinement in internment camps, a measure for which, Irving falsely insinuates, events in Poland (including the Warsaw ghetto uprising, which as we have seen had not actually taken place at the time of the meeting between Hitler and Horthy) provided a reasonable justification. This argument is untenable on historical grounds, and rests on a deliberate falsification of the historical record.

(i) The Deportation and Murder of the Roman Jews in October 1943.

(i) Background

- ¹ In his reply to the defence, Irving cites the following incident as part of his argument that Hitler opposed the killing of Jews, and refers in the course of his account to another of the key links in the documentary chain of evidence which he claims supports his argument: “ On 6 October, 1943 at 1.30 p.m. Ribbentrop received a message from Consul Moellhausen in Rome, reporting that SS *Obersturmbannführer* Kappler had been instructed to arrest the eight thousand Jews living in Rome and take them to Upper Italy, ‘where they are to be liquidated’; and that the commandant of Rome, Luftwaffe General Stahel, was objecting. Upon receiving this telegram, the foreign minister Ribbentrop visited Hitler at his headquarters The Wolf’s Lair. He lunched with Hitler at two p.m. on October 6, and his liaison officer at the Wolf’s Lair, Walther Hewel, had several meetings with Hitler on October 6, 8, and 9, 1943. Ribbentrop’s aide Franz von Sonnleithner sent to the minister’s office a telex stating that Ribbentrop asked that their ambassador in Italy, Rudolf Rahn, and consul in Rome, Moellhausen, should be informed ‘that by a Führer Directive the 8,000 Jews living in Rome are to be taken to Mauthausen, Upper Danube, as hostages’ (Nuremberg Document ng-5027) – i.e., kept alive.”

- ² Irving has been using this document in this way for over two decades, for the same example appears, with variations, in the 1977 edition of his book *Hitler's War*. Here, Irving described the incident in the following terms which, unlike his account to the court, make it clear what actually happened to these Jews: "Early in October the remaining Jews were deported from Denmark. Himmler also considered the eight thousand Jews in Rome a potential threat to public order; Ribbentrop brought to Hitler an urgent telegram from his consul in Rome reporting that "the eight thousand Jews resident in Rome are to be rounded up and brought to Upper Italy, where they are to be liquidated." Again Hitler took a marginally more "moderate" line. On the ninth Ribbentrop informed Rome that the Führer had directed that the eight thousand Jews were to be transported to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria instead, where they were to be held "as hostages" It was, Ribbentrop defined, purely a matter for the SS. (The SS liquidated them anyway, regardless of Hitler's order.)"
- ³ In the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War*, this passage appears once more, abridged and amended, as follows: "Himmler evidently also considered the eight thousand Jews in Rome a potential threat to public order; Ribbentrop brought Hitler an urgent telegram from his consul in Rome reporting that the SS had ordered that "the eight thousand Jews resident in Rome are to be rounded up and brought to Upper Italy, where they are to be liquidated." Again Hitler took a more "moderate" line. On the ninth Ribbentrop informed Rome that the Führer had directed that the Jews were to be transported to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria instead, where they were to be held "as hostages". "
- ⁴ In 1991 Irving goes on to describe Himmler's speeches to SS officers in October 1943 on the extermination of the Jews. He deletes all reference to the fact that the Jews of Rome were killed anyway, in keeping

with his general removal of references to the extermination of Jews from the book following his conversion at the end of the 1980s to Holocaust denial, as described earlier in this report.

- ⁵ Before we come to examine the supporting documentation advanced by Irving for this claim, three background factors need to be borne in mind. First, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* [Reich Security Head Office – RSHA] had been formally entrusted with the ‘final solution of the Jewish question’. To move against Jews in conquered and allied countries or indeed Jewish nationals of countries within German territory, however, required the assistance of the Foreign Office. By early 1943 Ribbentrop had perceived the political expediency of engaging in diplomacy on behalf of the Final Solution. The longer the war continued, the more the operational sphere of Ribbentrop’s Foreign Office was reduced, and in turn the more Ribbentrop himself tried to compensate for lost jurisdiction by replacing it with war-related assignments, such as implementing the Final Solution, thereby maintaining his influence on Hitler.
- ⁶ Secondly, Rome was plagued by the administrative confusion and overlapping authority which were such marked features of the ‘Third Reich’. On 25 July 1943, Hitler’s ally Mussolini had been overthrown and the new Italian government had thereupon surrendered to the Allies. Germany then invaded Italy, her erstwhile ally, and annexed the areas she had previously occupied with the intention of putting Mussolini back as the figurehead of a German-dominated administration. German civilian, military, and police agencies jostled with each other over disputed jurisdictions. Italy was in effect governed by the military, headed by Field Marshal Albert Kesselring in Southern Italy and Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in the North. Control of Rome was exercised by military Commandant General Rainer Stahel, but he did not command all the forces in the city, since some of the police were under the German police attaché in Rome, *SS Obersturmbannführer* Herbert Kappler. Kappler in turn was responsible to *SS Obergruppenführer* Karl Wolff,

commander of the SS in Italy. An equally confusing mixture of powers characterised the diplomatic service in Italy. The German ambassador to Italy, Dr. Rudolf Rahn, was appointed plenipotentiary of the Greater German Reich in Italy, and he and his staff departed from Rome shortly after the occupation of the city to the projected seat of the new puppet Italian fascist government at Salò, leaving a few officials behind in Rome. Ernst Freiherr von Weizsäcker headed the German embassy to the Vatican, which since 1929 had been an independent sovereign state located within the city.

- ⁷ Thirdly, the situation in all of the newly overrun territories was extremely unstable. This had serious implications for policy. Martin Bormann wrote to the *Gauleiters* of the border provinces of Venezia Giulia and Alto Adige on September 10, 1943 underlining the need to distinguish between ‘ideal aims, which are not immediately achievable’ [*Ideal-Zielen, die sofort gar nicht zu verwirklichen sind*] and the ‘steps which lead to these ideal aims’ [*Stufen, die zu diesen Ideal-Zielen führen*]. The lack of available police battalions circumscribed the achievable for it made the occupiers dependent on the native Italian police. Bormann went on: “Accordingly all our steps must be dictated by political cleverness. Every rash step endangers our war potential. 4) The therefore decisive point is that we refrain from shrill, political imprudence which could provoke a country into revolt and resistance.” The presence of the Vatican made the situation in Rome particularly sensitive.
- ⁸ All these factors constitute, therefore, a difficult and complex historical situation against which the meaning and significance of the Ribbentrop telegram have to be judged.

(ii) Irving’s suppression of two key documents.

- ¹ The sources Irving cites in *Hitler’s War* concerning the deportation of the Roman Jews are the following: (1) Nuremberg Document, NG-5027, telegram from Consul Eitel Friedrich Moellhausen, 6 October, 1943; (2) Hitler’s negation of the SS order in Franz von

Sonnleithner's teletype dated October 9, 1943. (3) T175/53/7133, the SS report on the roundup of Rome's Jews, 17 October, 1943. In his submissions to the court in the present case, Irving has cited the first two of the above and an additional document relaying the content of Sonnleithner's teletype to Rome. All three documents provided are separate leaves from NG-5027 (i.e. a document used by the Nuremberg Court in their prosecutions).

- ² All three are telegrams. The first, as we have seen, is from Consul Eitel Moellhausen in Rome to Ribbentrop, dated 6 October 1943. The second document listed above is from Foreign Ministry official von Sonnleithner asking that Consuls Dr. Rudolf Rahn and Moellhausen be informed of Hitler's and Ribbentrop's orders to deport the Jews of Rome, dated 9 October 1943, addressed from Westphalia. The other document cited by Irving in his submission to the court, but not mentioned in his account in *Hitler's War*, and therefore referred to here as document number (4), is also dated 9 October 1943 and is a message from the Foreign Ministry in Berlin to the same effect, but addressed only to Consul Moellhausen.
- ³ These three documents (1), (2) and (4) read together could lead one to believe that Hitler had intervened to the advantage of Rome's Jews, as is no doubt Irving's intention. As we shall see, however, this belief would be mistaken.
- ⁴ The background circumstances are as follows. On 12 September 1943 the German police attaché in Rome, Kappler, received a telephone call from Rastenberg [Hitler's field headquarters in East Prussia, also known as the *Wolfschanze* – Wolf's Lair] informing him that Himmler wanted him to proceed with the round-up and deportation of the Roman Jews. This telephone call was followed by a secret cable: "Recent Italian events impose an immediate solution to the Jewish problem in the territories recently occupied by the armed forces of the Reich. The *Reichsführer SS* therefore requests *Obersturmbannführer* Kappler to take

without delay all preliminary measures necessary to ensure the swift-ness and secrecy of the operation to be carried out in the territory of the city of Rome. Immediate orders will follow.”

- ⁵ On 24 September Himmler’s office in Berlin sent a second secret cable calling for the ‘final solution’ to the Jewish problem in Rome. All Jews were to be arrested and sent to the Reich ‘for liquidation’.
- ⁶ The cable did not set a date for the operation, but continued: “It is known that this nucleus of Jews has actively collaborated with the Badoglio movement, and therefore its speedy removal will represent, among other things, a necessary security measure guaranteeing the indispensable tranquillity in the immediate rear of the Southern front. The success of this undertaking is to be ensured by means of a surprise action, and for this reason it is absolutely necessary to suspend the application of any anti-Jewish measures in the nature of individual acts in order not to arouse any suspicions amongst the population of the imminent Jewish action [*Judenaktion*].”
- ⁷ On 25 September the RSHA sent a circular to all its branches at home and abroad, announcing that ‘in agreement with the Foreign Office’ all Jews of listed nationalities could now be included in the deportation measures. Italy headed the list.
- ⁸ Although it was marked ‘confidential’ and ‘personal’ the military commandant of Rome, Stahel, read the cable from Himmler and contacted Consul Moellhausen. By chance Moellhausen had become the chief representative of the Reich in German-occupied Rome when his superior, ambassador Dr. Rudolf Rahn, had been injured in a car accident the day before.
- ⁹ It would seem that both Moellhausen and Stahel agreed that the action was a mistake. Regardless of their motivations, Moellhausen in turn agreed to take the matter up with Kappler, and proceeded to do so on 26 September. Moellhausen drew Kappler’s attention to Tunisia, where in 1942 the Jews had been saved by drawing them into forced labour

on fortification work. Both Rahn and the current military commander of southern Italy General Field Marshal Kesselring had been involved. Moellhausen and Kappler then called on Kesselring, who told them that he would be unable to spare any soldiers for the action, and that if Berlin considered it necessary to do something about the Jews within his jurisdiction, he would approve using Jewish labour for fortification work around Rome.

- ¹⁰ At the beginning of October *SS Hauptsturmführer* Theodor Dannecker of Section IV-B-4 of the RSHA arrived in Rome at the head of a mobile *Einsatzstab* [task staff, i.e. execution team]. Dannecker had already played a prominent part in the deportation of Jews from France and Belgium. He had with him an authorisation from Gestapo Chief Heinrich Müller ordering the local police chief to furnish all necessary assistance. It was in this context that Moellhausen sent his cable of 6 October (document 1, above, cited by Irving both in *Hitler's War* and in his submission to the court). It was marked 'very very urgent' [*Supercitissime*] and addressed to the Reich Foreign Minister personally.
- ¹¹ This cable, Telegram 192, read in full: "Obersturmbannführer Kappler has received orders to arrest the eight thousand Jews resident in Rome and bring them to Upper Italy, where they are to be liquidated. The City Commandant of Rome, General Stahel, informs me that he will permit this action only if it corresponds to the intention of the Herr Reich Foreign Minister. I am personally of the opinion that it would be better business to employ the Jews for fortification work, as in Tunis, and, together with Kappler, I will propose this to Field Marshal Kesselring. Please advise Moellhausen."
- ¹² Consul Moellhausen followed this with a second dispatch on 7 October, again marked 'very very urgent' [*Supercitissime*] and to 'the Reich Minister personally'. It was numbered 201 and headed 'in connection with telegram of 6th, no. 192+' [*Im Anschluß an Telegramm vom 6. Nr. 192+*] Irving completely omits this document from his account, although the

Foreign Ministry's reply, document number 98 as submitted by Irving, clearly reads 'in response to no. 201 of 7.10' [*Auf Nr. 201 vom 7.10.*]. Telegram 201 read as follows: "Field Marshal Kesselring has asked *Obersturmbannführer* Kappler to postpone the planned *Judenaktion* for the time being. But if something has to be done, he would prefer to use the able-bodied Jews of Rome for fortification work here."

- 13 This is the complete documentary background to Hitler's order [*Führerbefehl*] as passed on to Rome by Eberhard von Thadden of the Foreign Ministry.
- 14 On 9 October, Moellhausen received an answer to telegram 201 addressed explicitly to him and marked 'very urgent'. This is the additional document, listed above as number (4), submitted by Irving to the court. It reads: "On the basis of the Führer's instructions, the 8,000 Jews resident in Rome are to be taken to Mauthausen as hostages. The Herr R(eich) F(oreign) M(inister) asks you not to interfere in any way in this affair, but to leave it to the SS. Please inform Ambassador Rahn Thadden."
- 15 This in turn was a response to a message of earlier in the day from Dr. Franz von Sonnleithner to the Office of the Foreign Ministry asking them to relay the following message from Ribbentrop to Rahn and Moellhausen. This is the document referred to above as number (2) and also cited by Irving, indeed the key document in his whole account. It reads as follows: "The Reich Foreign Minister requests that consuls Rahn and Moellhausen be informed that, on the basis of a Führer instruction, the 8,000 Jews resident in Rome should be taken to Mauthausen (Upper-Danube) as hostages. The Reich Foreign Minister requests that Rahn and Moellhausen be told under no circumstances to interfere in this affair, but rather to leave it to the SS. Sonnleithner."
- 16 But Irving then omits a vital document from his account. A few hours later a second, unequivocal message was sent to Rome from the same source: "The Herr Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs insists that you

keep out of all questions concerning Jews. Such questions, in accordance with an agreement between the Foreign Ministry and the Reich Security Head Office, are within the exclusive competence of the SS, and any further interference in these questions could cause serious difficulties for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

- ¹⁷ Nowhere does Irving even mention the existence of this document, let alone cite or refer to its contents.

(ii) Irving’s manipulation of reliable sources.

- ¹ Moellhausen’s telegram of 6 October, not cited by Irving, makes it clear that not merely was Stahel ‘objecting’ to the *Aktion*, but that he was refusing to comply with it unless it was sanctioned by Ribbentrop himself. Moreover Moellhausen, Rahn’s stand-in, had not only the stupidity to use the word ‘liquidate’ in official correspondence with the Foreign Minister, but also the audacity, before a response could be given to his first telegram, to contact Field Marshal Kesselring and obtain his agreement that the Jews of Rome be engaged in fortification work. The senior figures in Rome, Moellhausen, Kesselring, and probably also Kappler had effectively formed a triumvirate to block deportation. Any prospect of a ‘clean’ round-up was fading fast in this entanglement. Hitler’s order cut decisively through the mess and made clear in no uncertain terms that the Jews of Rome were still to be deported and not to be kept in Italy on fortification work.
- ² Appended to the order outlining ‘the Führer’s instructions’ in this matter was a clear order that Moellhausen and Rahn were ‘under no circumstances’ to interfere in the affair. They were instead to leave it entirely to the SS. Irving manipulates the document (no. 2 above) by omitting all mention of this part of it both in the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War* and in his submission to the court. Only in the 1977 edition of his book does he mention that Ribbentrop ordered that the matter was to be left to the SS, just as only in the 1977 edition of his book does he add that the Jews were ‘liquidated’ anyway. Clearly he is suppressing

this important information in order to underline the impression he gives that Hitler was intervening purely and simply to stop the Jews being killed. Yet the instruction to put them in the hands of the SS was made explicit by the second telegram, which is left unmentioned by Irving even though he must be familiar with its contents.

- ³ In 1977, Irving wrote that the Jews were liquidated ‘regardless’ of Hitler’s orders (i.e. contrary to them), part of his thesis that Hitler was only responsible for the deportations; and Himmler and Heydrich murdered the Jews without his knowledge. Ribbentrop must have discussed with Hitler all the major aspects of the situation, including Himmler’s liquidation orders, the impending round-up by the SS, and the attempts to block it by the consuls and the army. There is every reason to suppose that Ribbentrop’s injunction to leave the *Aktion* to the SS was an integral part of the discussion, and that Hitler approved it. If Hitler was intervening to stop the Roman Jews from being killed, then he knew that the Roman Jews were to be liquidated, he knew it was on Himmler’s orders, and he must have known it was part of a much wider pattern of mass murder of Jews by the SS, or in other words, he must have known it was part of the ‘Final Solution’.

(iv) Other relevant documentation.

- ¹ The Jews of Rome were finally rounded-up and deported on 16 October 1943. Moellhausen claimed in his post-war memoirs that he was reprimanded by Rahn on October 19 to the following effect: “Apropos the events of October 16th: You got Ribbentrop’s senior men on your neck; you have placed Kesselring in an embarrassing position and have weakened your own, and thus my position, in order to gain little or nothing at all. You should have reported to me and I would have tried to arrange something with Wolff. You have created chaos and have ruined everything. Very bad! ”

- ² On the face of it, there is no reason to disbelieve his account, since it fits in with the contemporary documentary record, though not, of course, as amended and manipulated by Irving.
- ³ A second relevant additional piece of documentary evidence is the following report, written by the German Foreign Office in the discussions that followed the initial attempts to round-up the Jews of Italy: “The RSHA has informed us that the actions ordered in Italy by the *Reichsführer-SS* [Himmler] to catch the Italian Jews have lead to no results worth mentioning because the necessary steps have been protracted by objections from various sides, so that the majority of the Jews have availed themselves of the opportunity to find hiding in small villages etc.”
- ⁴ This reference to ‘objections from various sides’ no doubt included Moellhausen’s actions in the matter, described above.
- ⁵ But there were other objections too. Hitler’s order rode roughshod over a number of considerations on the part of various authorities in both Rome and Germany about the impending deportation. Any one of these either in isolation or combination could have dictated a policy of compromise to the less determined and fanatical mind. The greatest fear was of a public Papal condemnation. On the day of the action a letter of protest was signed by Bishop Alois Hudal, Rector of the German Catholic Church in Rome addressed to Commander Stahel. It requested an immediate stop to the arrests: “I must speak to you of a matter of great urgency. A high Vatican dignitary in the immediate circle of the Holy Father has just informed me that this morning a series of arrests of Jews of Italian nationality has been initiated. In the interests of the good relations which have existed until now between the Vatican and the German High Command ... I earnestly request that you order the immediate suspension of these arrests both in Rome and its vicin-

ity. Otherwise I fear that the Pope will take a public stand against this action which would undoubtedly be used by the anti-German propagandists as a weapon against us. ”

- ⁶ The ambassador to the Holy See, Baron Ernst von Weizsäcker, wrote urgently to the Foreign Office: “With regard to Bishop Hudal’s letter ... I can confirm that this represents the Vatican’s reaction to the deportation of the Jews of Rome. The Curia is particularly upset because the action took place, in a manner of speaking, under the Pope’s own windows. The reaction could be muffled here somewhat if the Jews were to be used for labour service here. The people hostile to us in Rome are using this affair as a means of forcing the Vatican from its reserve [...] Enemy propaganda abroad will certainly view this event in the same way [as events in France] in order to disturb the friendly relations between the Curia and ourselves.” Weizsäcker subsequently wrote that the pressure had been unsuccessful.
- ⁷ Others predicted civilian unrest in Rome as a result of the deportations and a consequent hampering of the German war effort. That security problems had been anticipated is clear from the Gestapo report of the round up sent to *SS Obergruppenführer* Karl Wolff. This was signed by Kappler, but presumably written by Dannecker: ‘The antisemitic part of the population was nowhere to be seen during the action, only a great mass of people who in some individual cases even tried to cut off the police from the Jews. In no case was it necessary to use firearms.’
- ⁸ A report drawn up for Stahel’s headquarters for his war diary was brief and inaccurate, but finished: ‘What the consequences of the *Aktion* will have, remain to be seen.’ Ten days after the deportation Legation Secretary Gumpert wrote to defend the conduct of General Stahel who was under threat of with removal. On occupying the city he had quickly restored an ‘atmosphere of trust’ between the military authorities and

the population. 'Even the measures against the Jews, which were thought strong here and all sorts of German evacuation measures could ... be enforced without any special outwardly noticeable shocks.'

- ⁹ Irving argues that Hitler was in 'most circumstances a pragmatist' and that he would not 'willingly destroy manpower, for which his industry was crying out.' Why did he willingly destroy it, then, in a country which was in the thick of battle, as Italy was? Countermanding the plan that the Jews of Rome be pressed into fortification work deprived the army of sorely needed manpower. No single document illustrates this, but almost every second piece of German Foreign Office correspondence in this context is concerned with some aspect of work mobilisation, whether it be sending Italian workers to the Reich or trying to build battalions for defence work. It was clear that police forces were not sufficient to capture the Jews in Italy in one fell swoop. The diehards of the SS balked at what Hitler expected to be done with so little available manpower.
- ¹⁰ A meeting between von Thadden of the Foreign Office and Müller of the Gestapo on 16 October recorded: "He [Müller] does not agree with the opinion of the Foreign Office which believes that precisely here [i.e. in Italy] especially with regard to the position of the Catholic Church a surprise blow is called for. The available forces are not sufficient to do such a thing in the whole of Italy. One is therefore forced to begin with the unrolling of the Jewish question immediately behind the front line and drive the purge step-by-step further north. *Gruppenführer* Müller evidently had certain apprehensions at the time to do with the practical implementation of the *Führerbefehl*, concerning the arrest of 8,000 Jews in Rome."
- ¹¹ The only thing which separated Hitler from the SS and the RSHA was a difference in the tactics to be used in a complex situation where the Germans, in the view of some of their senior officials, lacked the strength to carry out the full measure of the 'Final Solution'.

(v) The fate of the Roman Jews: the question of language.

- ¹ As it was, on 16 October 1,259 people were seized and after two days and a sifting process the remaining Jews were shipped off, not to Mauthausen, but to Auschwitz. The exact number of deportees is unclear. Kappler's report gave the number as 1,007, but the Italian literature puts the number at somewhere between 1,030 and 1,035. On arrival on 23 October 149 men were admitted to the camp and given the numbers 158491-158639, and 47 women were admitted and given the numbers 66172-66218. Katz traced 14 male and one female survivor. Tagliacozzo traced 17 men and one woman and *Ebrei in Italia* 15 men and one woman. The rest were gassed.
- ² Even after the analysis above, the question remains if it is possible to reconcile 'liquidation' in 'upper Italy', 'hostages' in Mauthausen, and deaths in Auschwitz. Four points can be made: First, where exactly in Northern Italy Himmler ordered the Jews to be taken and how they were to be 'liquidated' is unclear. The first large concentration camp on Italian soil (Fossili near Carpi) was not operational until December 1943. 'Upper Italy' was probably a convenient euphemism for 'the East'. This is supported by a note by the head of the *Inland II* department of the Foreign Office, Horst Wagner on a conference in Berlin on the Italian Jewish problem on 4 December 1943. By this time the Italians had gone some way to rounding up the Jews themselves. *Inland II* had persuaded the RSHA to 'delay' [*abwarten*] with a request for an immediate transfer of Jews concentrated in Italy to the East: "Group Inland II considers it, however, advisable to delay this request for the moment because the concentration process will probably proceed with less trouble if the transfer to concentration camps appears for the moment as the final solution and not as a proper step to the evacuation to the eastern territories." Ribbentrop saw the note and concurred.
- ³ The verbal camouflage surrounding the Final Solution is notoriously hard to penetrate. That Moellhausen used the word 'liquidate' is reason enough to surmise that Hitler's order used 'Mauthausen' and 'host-

age' to reassert the prescribed phraseology. It should suffice to quote another order of Hitler's. On 11 July 1943 Hitler's private secretary and close collaborator Martin Bormann addressed a circular to all *Reichsleiter, Gauleiter, and Verbändeführer*: "Re: treatment of the Jewish question. By order of the *Führer* I hereby notify: in the public handling of the Jewish question every discussion of a future total solution must be discontinued. It can be said though that the Jews will be drawn into appropriate work detail en bloc."

- ⁴ The concern to use camouflaged language and avoid all use of words such as 'liquidation' and 'final solution' in public thus emanated from Hitler himself.
- ⁵ As for Mauthausen, if Hitler did indeed mean what he said when he ordered the Roman Jews to be sent there, he was surely aware that it was perhaps the deadliest of all concentration camps. In January 1941 the head of the Reich Security Service *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich divided the concentration camps into three grades to determine conditions of detention and work in each. Those camps in Grade III were to deal with the worst category of prisoner; protective custody prisoners with bad records, particularly criminal records and anti-social elements, i.e. those who could not be re-educated.
- ⁶ Grade III was reserved solely for Mauthausen. The mortality rate, especially for Jews, was terrible. Deportation to Mauthausen was effectively a death sentence, often by forced labour in the quarries or in camp construction. For example, between 26 November 1942 and 1 March 1943, 10,191 state prison inmates were transferred from German state prisons to concentration camps. 7,587 of them were transferred to Mauthausen/Gusen. By 1 March 1943 3,853 of the original ten thousand were dead, 3,306 of them in Mauthausen alone. Marsálek estimates that of the 25,732 Jews committed to Mauthausen between 1938 and 1945, 14,356 were registered in the camp's deaths register [*Totenregistratur*] as 'deceased'. This figure excludes 4,005 retransferred to

other camps. The fate awaiting Jewish 'hostages' in Mauthausen is clear from the example of Holland. In February of 1941 a German security detachment surprised a Jewish 'illegal terror group' and were doused in ammonia. In retaliation some 400 young men between eighteen and thirty-five were rounded-up in the Jewish quarter. They were taken as 'hostages' first to Buchenwald and then 348 of them on to Mauthausen on 17 June 1941. A second group of 291 'hostages' arrived direct from the concentration camp Schoorl outside Amsterdam on 25 June. Only one of the original 400 young men survived.

(vi) Conclusion.

It is incumbent upon the historian to provide an account of events that is consistent with the facts. When considering the facts relating to the deportation of the Jews of Rome Irving is open to charges of manipulation and willful misrepresentation. Hitler's intervention was not one which 'mitigated' the lot of the Jews. On the contrary it counteracted a concerted local attempt to save them and condemned them to extermination. Hitler's order was not a revision of Himmler's order but a forceful reaffirmation of it. Hitler surely knew that for the Jews to be deported from Italy 'as hostages' was their death warrant, whether it was to Mauthausen or whether this was simply a euphemistic deception on his part. Irving manipulates and falsifies the documentation, suppressing material which he knows runs against his case, in order to support a wholly untenable conclusion which in fact is the exact opposite of the real truth.

(j) Ribbentrop's testimony at Nuremberg and his evidence from his cell in Nuremberg.

(i) Introduction

- ¹ In *Hitler's War*, Irving used an extract from Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop's Nuremberg prison notes to support the thesis that Hitler knew nothing of the 'Final Solution'. In a footnote on page 851 of the 1977 edition Irving wrote: "Writing a confidential study on Hitler in his Nuremberg prison cell, Ribbentrop also exonerated him wholly. "How things came to the destruction of the Jews, I just don't know. As to whether Himmler began it, or Hitler put up with it, I don't know. But that he *ordered* it I refuse to believe, because such an act would be wholly incompatible with the picture I always had of him."
- ² This forms another of the documents in Irving's much-vaunted chain of sources allegedly supporting his thesis that Hitler was not responsible for the extermination of the Jews.

(ii) Irving's manipulation of the source.

- ¹ The journalist Gitta Sereny pursued Irving's reference for her 1977 *Sunday Times* article. The original document in the Bavarian State Archives contained an additional sentence as translated by Sereny: 'On the other hand, judging from his [Hitler's] Last Will, one must suppose that he at least knew about it, if, in his fanaticism against the Jews, he didn't also order [it]'. When Sereny and her collaborator asked him about the omission Irving told them 'that it was "irrelevant" to the logic of his argument and that he did not "want to confuse the reader."'
- ² Irving's own notes on the original make clear that by editing away the later sentence, he has altered the sense of Ribbentrop's comments. Far from 'exonerating him wholly' the full text, even from Irving's own notes, makes clear that Ribbentrop drastically qualified the reference to Hitler which is quoted by Irving. The full text of the manuscript account by Ribbentrop as noted by Irving reads: "Undoubtedly the Führ-

er saw world Jewry, about whose organisation he was convinced, more and more in the last years as the actual originators of this war. One saw this in his speeches, although, knowing my attitude about this subject, he did not speak with me. How things came to the destruction of the Jews, I just don't know. As to whether Himmler began it, or Hitler put up with it, I don't know. But that he ordered it I refuse to believe, because such an act would be wholly incompatible with the picture I always had of him. Adolf Hitler, who ate no meat because he did not want animals to be killed, to whom children had such trust that we all adored him, could not have been cold blooded to such a terrible degree. On the other hand, judging from his testament, one must suppose that he at least knew about it, if not even ordered it, in his fanaticism against the Jews."

- ³ The word 'ordered' put into italics by Irving in the published version does not appear so in the extract.
- ⁴ Following the appearance of the article by Chester and Sereny, Irving wrote to the editor of *The Sunday Times* on 14 September 1977 claiming that 'The passage from Ribbentrop's statement which I omitted is totally irrelevant to my claim that *up to October 1943* there is no evidence for the claim that Hitler knew what was going on.' But this does not detract from the documentary manipulation by Irving which was revealed in the article. At no other point in this letter or in his subsequent correspondence did Irving try and defend his editing of the Ribbentrop note. Despite such devastating criticism by Chester and Sereny, the quotation remained intact and is still without the missing sentence in the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* [p. 809].
- ⁶ In his Reply to the Defence, Irving stands by his argument 'that the omitted passage was irrelevant to the logic of his argument and that its inclusion would confuse the reader.' It is of course perfectly true that the omitted passage *did not support* the logic of Irving's argument. But to claim that it was irrelevant is another matter. Its relevance consists

in the fact that it undermines Irving's argument. The reader is entitled to know that the passage in point is by no means as unequivocal about Hitler and the 'Final Solution' as Irving would have us believe. Ribbentrop concedes that he cannot but suppose that Hitler knew about, and probably ordered, the 'Final Solution'. In editing the document Irving has manipulated its meaning.

(iii) Irving's use of an unreliable source.

- ¹ Irving does not address the reliability of Ribbentrop himself as a source. In this context, it is important to note that at no point in the Nuremberg trials did Ribbentrop waver in his loyalty to Hitler, and at no point did he acknowledge the truth of the serious charges laid against him by the International Military Tribunal. After the war, Ribbentrop was questioned about his role in the deportation of the Jews of France and Denmark, and on his conversations with the Italian dictator Mussolini and with Admiral Horthy of Hungary to try to overcome their reluctance to deporting their own Jewish nationals. Ribbentrop admitted that he was a 'faithful follower' who 'adhered' to Hitler's orders to deport all Jews, but claimed that he had no idea of the fate awaiting those Jews after deportation. Yet this last-mentioned claim was an obvious untruth. It is undermined by Ribbentrop's knowledge of the 'Activity and Situation Reports of the task forces of the Security Police and the SD in the USSR' [*Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte der Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in der UdSSR*].
- ² These reports detailed the activities of the mobile armed units operating in Russia behind the advancing German army. The most sensational part of these reports concerned the execution of large numbers of Jews. The first report we know Ribbentrop to have received was report number six, forwarded to him by Heydrich on 25 November 1941 and covering activities in October. According to it all Jews over sixteen, ex-

cepting doctors and elders had been shot in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. In Kiev nearly 34,000 Jews had been shot on 29 and 30 September.

- ³ On 12 December 1941 Ribbentrop received a summary of the first six such reports. By January 1942 it was an open secret in higher circles of the Foreign Office that the Russian Jews were being systematically murdered. Ribbentrop likewise received the seventh, eighth, tenth and eleventh reports. Most important in respect of deportations to the east, the reports made clear that the Ostland was now ‘free of Jews’ [*Judenfrei*]. It was to Riga in the Ostland that trainloads of German Jews had been shipped at the end of 1941, obviously only to share the fate of native Jews.
- ⁴ Ribbentrop was unwavering in his refusal to criticise Hitler in any way in the dock at Nuremberg. His own defence witnesses, state secretary Steengrach, and his secretary, Margarethe Blank, both spoke of his total subservience to Hitler. The Nuremberg psychologist G. M. Gilbert recorded the following exchange with Ribbentrop on 4–5 May 1946: “[Ribbentrop] “... But I was against this antisemitic policy. What he says about World Jewry starting the war is nonsense – sheer nonsense. – I fought him tooth and nail on it. – “ [Gilbert] “Why couldn’t you say that at the trial?” [Ribbentrop] “Oh I couldn’t stand there and attack the Führer – it just couldn’t be done. I am not like certain Germans – now I don’t want to say anything against any other defendant, but I can’t say I was against him. – Oh, I might still say I don’t believe the Jews started the war, but I can’t bring out how I opposed the Führer on that issue.” ”
- ⁵ Before his execution on 16 October 1946 Ribbentrop had a final meeting with his son Rudolf. Ribbentrop had spent the previous months writing his memoirs. Rudolf expressed the hope to his father that in doing he had not been too uncritical of Hitler. This sentiment apparently shocked Ribbentrop senior. This contradiction between Ribbentrop’s public denial of his own knowledge of the ‘Final Solution’ at

Nuremberg and his obvious real complicity in it, coupled with his overwhelming need to exculpate Hitler, make him an unreliable witness to either his own or Hitler's innocence.

(iv) Irving's suppression of a contradictory source.

- ¹ In his book *Nuremberg. The Last Battle*. (London, 1996) Irving uses G.M. Gilbert's *Nuremberg Diary* (London, 1948) as a source. As we have seen, Gilbert was prison psychologist in the Nuremberg prison and wrote up his conversations with the defendants from memory, either immediately after having spoken with them or that same evening. Under 19-22 April 1946, Gilbert recorded the following exchange with Ribbentrop: "[Ribbentrop] "... Tell me – I wasn't in court on Monday. – Did Hoess actually say – that Hitler had ordered the mass murders?" [Gilbert] "He said that Himmler gave him a direct *Führerbefehl* for extermination of the Jews in 1941." Ribbentrop held his head in his hand and repeated in a descending whisper, " – '41 – '41 – '41 – My God! – Did Hoess say in '41?"[...] [Ribbentrop] "... All those years – a man to whom children came so trustingly and lovingly. It must have been a fanatic madness – there is no doubt now that Hitler ordered it? I thought even up to now that perhaps Himmler, late in the war, under some pretext -. But '41, he said? My God! My God!" Irving is of course aware of this exchange, but suppresses altogether in his book.

(v) Irving's further arguments.

- ¹ Irving tries to bolster his position with three arguments, all of them spurious. First, he argues that the 'special circumstances and imperatives of ... Ribbentrop, writing under duress in Allied captivity and facing the inevitable death sentence, had to be borne in mind'. Irving nowhere explains exactly what these 'special circumstances and imperatives' are. Does he mean the imperative of a condemned man to tell the truth? Or does he mean the imperative to try and exonerate himself before history by arguing that he must have known nothing of

the extermination of the Jews because Hitler knew nothing? If Ribbentrop wrote under 'duress' then why does Irving not dispense with the whole document, as he does for example with the memoirs of Rudolf Höss, rather than trying to maintain that this 'duress' was manifest only when Ribbentrop implicated Hitler but not when he did not?

² Secondly, Irving suggests that Hitler's political testament 'does not explicitly specify a Hitler knowledge *[sic]* of the extermination.' This repeats the argument presented by Irving in his letter to Harold Evans of *The Sunday Times*, on 14 September 1977. Irving wrote that 'Hitler's Testament was written in April 1945, and Ms. Serenyi *[sic]* knows it; in any case, its wording is as ambiguous as every other document that has ever been produced purporting to prove Hitler's guilt.' Even if true the fact remains that Ribbentrop saw enough in the document to revise his opinion that Hitler knew nothing of the 'Final Solution'. However this is not true. Hitler's political testament, dictated during his last days in the bunker in Berlin, bristled with anti-Semitism. It was brutally clear: "I also made it quite plain that, if the nations of Europe are again to be regarded as mere shares to be bought and sold by those international conspirators in money and finance, then Jewry, the race which is the real criminal in this murderous struggle, will be saddled with the responsibility. I further left no one in doubt that this time millions of Europe's Aryan peoples would not die of hunger, millions of grown men would not suffer death, nor would hundreds of thousands of women and children be allowed to be burnt and bombed to death in the towns, without the real criminal having to atone for his guilt, even if by more humane means."

³ This passage is in no sense ambiguous. Hitler unmistakably informs posterity that he has made good his threat that 'this time' [i.e. in contrast to World War One] the deaths of millions of Aryans would not go unavenged. This can only refer to his speech before the Reichstag of 30 January 1939. This speech has already been mentioned a number of times above, and was constantly referred to by members of the Nazi

leadership during the war when they referred to the extermination of the Jews. In it (it will be remembered) he said: “Today I will once more be a prophet. If the international Jewish financiers inside and outside Europe should once again succeed in plunging the nations into a world war, the result will not be the bolshevization of the world and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation [*Vernichtung*] of the Jewish race throughout Europe.”

- ⁴ With the radicalisation of Jewish policy during the course of the war his ‘prophecy’ took on a prominent place in Hitler’s thinking. On 30 January 1941, for example, Hitler reminded his audience: “And I do not want the remark forgotten, which I once made in the German Reichstag on 1 September 1939. The remark namely, that if the other world is thrown into a general war by Jewry, then the whole of Jewry will be done for in Europe. ”
- ⁵ Hitler returned to his ‘prophecy’ yet again a year later in another speech making it absolutely clear that he now considered himself engaged in a war against the Jews in which either one side or the other would end by being exterminated: “We are certain that the war can only end in that either the Aryan peoples will be exterminated or that Jewry disappears from Europe. I already pronounced before the German Reichstag on 1 September 1939 – and I guard myself against hasty prophecies – that this war will not end as the Jews imagine it will, namely that the European-Aryan peoples will be exterminated, rather that the result of this war will be the annihilation of Jewry. For the first time this time the real ancient Jewish law will be applied, ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’”
- ⁶ This ‘prophecy’ also became common currency in higher Nazi circles, as we have already seen. Here too there was a clear understanding of what it actually meant. The propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary on 13 December 1941: “Concerning the Jewish question the Führer is determined to make a clean sweep. He predicted to

the Jews that if they were to once again bring about a world war, that they would thereby experience their annihilation. That was no idle phrase. The world war is here, the annihilation of Jewry must be the necessary consequence. ”

- ⁷ Another leading Nazi, the Governor-General of occupied Poland, Hans Frank, spoke before his government on 16 December 1941 in similar terms which also made it clear what he understood by the phrase ‘deportation to the east’: “An end must be made with the Jews one way or another – I want to tell you that quite openly. The Führer once pronounced: if united Jewry should once again succeed in unleashing a world war, then the blood-sacrifice will not only be brought by those peoples incited into war, but the Jew in Europe will also meet his end. [...] But what will happen to the Jews? Do you believe that they will be housed in village settlements in the Ostland? We were told in Berlin: why all the screaming; we can not do anything with them in the Ostland or the Reichskommissariat either, liquidate them yourselves! ”
- ⁸ Hitler, of course, was considerably less brutal in the language used in his testimony, and used the term ‘even if by more humane means’. All this should do, however, is alert the historian to the well-documented fact that murder by gassing was considered (without any justification, it must be added) to be more humane than shooting or starvation, and that Hitler included in his testament the propagandistic point that the killing of civilians by bombing raids, at least when the civilians in question were German, was inhumane.
- ⁹ These points can be illustrated by an infamous memorandum of July 1941 in which SS-*Sturmbannführer* Rolf-Heinz Höppner drew the attention of the Jewish expert of office IV B 4 of the RSHA, Adolf Eichmann, to considerations amongst SS men in the Warthegau regarding the ‘solution of the Jewish question’. Point 4 read: “This winter there is a danger that not all of the Jews [of the Warthegau] can be fed anymore. One should weigh up honestly if the most humane solution might not

be to finish off those Jews, as far as they are incapable of being put to work, by some quick-working means. At any rate, this would be more pleasant than letting them starve to death.”

- 10 Irving cited this selfsame document in trying to convince the historian Martin Broszat that there was no Hitler order for the ‘Final Solution’, rather that it was the result of a number of *ad hoc* local initiatives. And yet the same tale-tell reference to starvation and more humane means of killing occurred both in this document and in Hitler’s final testament.
- 11 Thirdly, Irving claims that he ‘had a fund of collateral documentary evidence on which to base his decisions on how to paraphrase or edit over-long documents. This includes the transcript of a conversation, secretly recorded between Ribbentrop and a British officer at this time, relating [sic.] to what had happened in these concentration camps.’ This fact, he further claims, has been overlooked.
- 12 The transcript referred to does not seem to have been included in Irving’s First List of Documents, but presumably this refers to the interrogation of 11 August 1945 cited in Irving’s *Nuremberg: The Last Battle*. Far from being collateral evidence of Hitler not having ordered the destruction of the Jews, it is as contradictory as the Ribbentrop notes detailed above. In Irving’s book, Ribbentrop answers the question if Hitler knew of the fate of the Jews in the concentration camps thus: “I have so often thought about that. It would absolutely ruin my picture of Hitler if I thought this. I know one thing, that after the Russians [in September 1944] had taken over the concentration camp in Poland, Majdanek I think it was called, that was the first time I heard of these persecutions in concentration camps, misdeeds, atrocities. This was the first thing I heard when our representatives from abroad sent telegrams that Russian propaganda was making a tremendous row in neutral countries. I got these telegrams and placed them before the

Führer. I said that if this were true in any respect it would be quite impossible to make foreign policy. So he took the matter in hand and said it was not my business to discuss this. That's the only thing I heard."

- 13 This, therefore, is the first piece of 'collateral evidence' which Irving cites in order to justify his procedure in 'editing' Ribbentrop's testimony.
- 14 Ribbentrop is likewise quoted in Irving's book on Nuremberg as having said to the Nuremberg psychologist Gilbert: 'You know, I didn't know anything about the exterminations – until the Maidanek affair came out in '44.' Thus even by his own admission Ribbentrop did know about the concentration camps and had discussed them with Hitler at the latest in 1944, contradicting his own testimony whilst in the dock. Ribbentrop's account here is as unreliable and self-serving as it is on other aspects of this question.
- 15 These allegedly 'collateral' pieces of evidence thus in no way justify, as Irving claims they do, the suppression of important parts of Ribbentrop's public and private evidence at Nuremberg in Irving's account. He is not engaged in the neutral 'editing' of 'over-long' documents in order to convey their essential sense in a few words. He is, once more, engaged in the skewing of the evidence by editing out parts of it which run counter to his argument.

(vi) Conclusion.

- 1 Irving's editing of the Ribbentrop note is a blatant manipulation of the evidence, and is also based on testimony that is itself thoroughly unreliable. By omitting a key part of Ribbentrop's statements, Irving conveys a completely misleading impression of what he said. Not only is Ribbentrop an unreliable and discredited witness anyway, but none of the arguments which Irving musters in defence of his editing justifies this manipulation. Another link in Irving's much-trumpeted chain of documents proving Hitler opposed or at least did not know about the

extermination of the Jews (insofar as, in his later work, Irving admits this happened at all) thus turns out to be so brittle that it falls apart at the first critical glance. All of the links, indeed, turn out to be based on the manipulation and falsification of the historical record.

- ² If Irving's attempt to exculpate Hitler involves the use of such scandalously unprofessional methods, then what of his other historical work? This is the subject of the next section of this report.

5. Irving's use of evidence

5.1 Introduction

- ^{5.5.1} In her book *Denying the Holocaust*, it will be remembered, Lipstadt makes a series of allegations about Irving's work, both indirectly, by describing him as a Holocaust denier, and directly, by referring to him in person. Lipstadt argues that Holocaust deniers 'misstate, misquote, falsify statistics, and falsely attribute conclusions to reliable sources. They rely on books that directly contradict their arguments, quoting in a manner that completely distorts the authors' objectives' (p. 111). Since this statement comes immediately after the allegation that Irving has become a Holocaust denier, the implication that he does all these things too is unmistakable. Indeed, Lipstadt also claims that scholars 'have accused him of distorting evidence and manipulating documents to serve his own purposes' and of 'skewing documents and misrepresenting data in order to reach historically untenable conclusions' (p. 161). 'Familiar with historical evidence, he bends it until it conforms with his ideological leanings and political agenda...he is most facile at taking accurate information and shaping it to confirm his conclusions' (p. 181).

5.1.2 It is important to unravel the normal or common-sense meaning of these charges in order to determine whether or not it is reasonable to conclude after examining Irving's work that they are justified. If we put them in (a more or less arbitrary) order, they can be summarised as follows:

1. Irving misstates. This would seem to mean that he gives a false account of historical fact.
2. Irving misquotes. This must mean that he does not quote from historical documents in an accurate manner. Such misquotation can include suppression of vital parts of such documents as well as false and inaccurate quotations from the documents themselves.
3. Irving falsifies statistics.
4. Irving falsely attributes conclusions to reliable sources.
5. Irving relies on books that directly contradict his arguments, quoting in a manner that completely distorts the authors' objectives.
6. Irving distorts evidence and manipulates documents to suit his own purposes.
7. Irving skews documents and misrepresents data in order to reach historically untenable conclusions.
8. Irving bends historical evidence until it conforms to his own ideological leanings and political purposes.
9. Irving takes accurate information and shapes it to confirm his conclusions. The implication is that the conclusions have been reached before the information has been evaluated, and that in using accurate information, in this way, Irving distorts it.

5.1.3 It has already been shown in the preceding sections of this Report how Irving adopts a variety of procedures which conform to several of the techniques of falsification and manipulation laid out in Lipstadt's list. He bends and wilfully mistranslates reliable sources; he deliberately suppresses evidence which runs counter to his argument; he skews evidence and misquotes by omitting vital parts of documents and by mistranslating other parts which he does cite; he takes accurate and reliable sources such as the Himmler phone log and shapes and bends it to suit his purposes by including speculation and pure invention which is in no way warranted by the documentary record; he misrep-

resents data by presenting unreliable sources as reliable when they serve his argument; he relies on books such as memoirs and diaries that directly contradict his argument, and interprets them in a way that runs counter to what the authors intended, falsely attributing to them conclusions which they did not reach.

- 5.1.4 All of this Irving does in order to support the historically untenable conclusion that Hitler neither knew nor approved of the extermination of the Jews, and that insofar as persecution of Jews came to his notice, he did his best to stop it. This conclusion is untenable because, as we have seen above, all of Irving's attempts to prove it rest on a falsification of history. An accurate and unbiased reading of relevant parts of the documentation, as we saw in the previous section, would indeed lead any reasonable person to conclude that Hitler did indeed know, approve of and in documented instances order the killing of large numbers of Jews. But it is not necessary to prove this point beyond all reasonable doubt in order to prove that Irving is manipulating the evidence to reach an untenable conclusion. It is the untenability of Irving's argument that Hitler did not know or approve of the mass murder of the Jews that is at issue, not the validity of the contrary argument that he did.
- 5.1.5 Part IV of this Report takes these points further, and examines other aspects of Irving's work where he is not directly engaged in the exculpation of Hitler. It begins with a discussion of one point so far largely (though not entirely) left to one side, namely the charge that Irving falsifies statistics. This Report has already shown how he falsifies statistics in the matter of the numbers killed in bombing raids on Hamburg and Pforzheim; it will now examine in more detail his account of the numbers killed in the 1945 Allied bombing raid on Dresden.
- 5.1.6 The Report then turns to Irving's use of one particular kind of source, namely the testimony, mostly postwar, of Hitler's adjutants, much of it elicited from them in interviews by Irving himself. This will provide

further evidence, on a more general level, in support of the conclusions reached above, particularly, though not exclusively, in connection with Irving's attempt to exculpate Hitler from responsibility for the extermination of the Jews.

- 5.1.7 Finally, the Report details the ways in which Irving seeks to explain those acts of Nazi antisemitism which he can neither dismiss nor ignore. Here too, it will be demonstrated that Irving's methods involve a wholly unprofessional and dishonest falsification of the historical record.

5.2 The Bombing of Dresden in 1945.

(a)Background

- ¹ The city of Dresden was subject to two fierce attacks by British bombers on the night of 13/14 February 1945, followed the next day by two further attacks by American bombers. The attacks are rightly seen as the high point of the strategic air war in Europe. Ill chance played a role in sealing Dresden's fate. The head of the RAF's Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, anticipating the complications that such a long-range attack would probably entail, sent double the number of planes in the second wave of the attack. Dresden itself was ill-prepared for the attack. Flak batteries had been removed to the Eastern front and Dresden citizens had the illusion that their city would escape the fate of so many other German towns. German defence fighters remained grounded and the first attacking wave had unusually good weather, so that marking the target was achieved without hindrance.
- ² Dresden was an important centre for administration, communications, and transport. After Berlin and Leipzig it was the largest city behind the eastern front, a military installation with garrisons and troops. Dresden's industries were fully integrated into the structure of armaments manufacture. Yet these war industries, although cited as a justification for the raid, were not even targeted. Instead, the British at-

tacked the maze of timbered buildings which made up the historic heart of Dresden and which were so easy to ignite. In proportion to the stated aim of crippling Dresden as a transportation point, the attack was grotesquely large. Industrial production, although damaged, was not crippled, and even the main railway line remained severed for only four days.

- ³ The resulting firestorm blazed in the centre of a city clotted with refugees fleeing the encroaching Russian army. Fifteen square kilometres of Dresden were destroyed. The death-roll, whatever its final figure, was substantial. This, and the destruction of the historic heart one of Germany's finest cultural treasures, became the Focal Point of impassioned post-war debate about the respective crimes of the Allies and the Axis. It has proven hard to disentangle the strategic merits or limitations of Allied bombing from the ethical implications. Opinions have been divided between those who have seen the British bombing campaign as in some way as effective and therefore justifiable, and those who have condemned it not merely as ineffective but as calculated 'terror'.
- ⁴ The conclusion reached by most historians is that Dresden was bombed in an effort to kill German morale and damage beyond repair the German people's will to resist the invading Allied armies on the Eastern and Western fronts. The Soviet advance westward was to be aided by disrupting the German rail network and fouling the transport arteries with refugees. As with Hiroshima and Nagasaki an effort may well have been made to impress and intimidate the Soviet Union with Anglo-American air power. None of this, however, has succeeded in arguing away the impassioned moral debate which still surrounds the events of 13-14 February 1945.

(b) Irving's *The Destruction of Dresden*.

- ¹ Among the many authors to write on the bombing raids of 13/14 February 1945, Irving has perhaps attracted the most attention and has had the largest popular readership. *The Destruction of Dresden*, probably the most widely read of Irving's books, has gone through numerous editions and translations:

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- *The Destruction of Dresden*, William Kimber, London 1963 (two impressions).
- *The Destruction of Dresden*, William Kimber, London 1964 (third impression).
- *The Destruction of Dresden*, Corgi, London 1966 (revised and updated edition).
- *The Destruction of Dresden*, Corgi, London 1971 (reissue).
- *The Destruction of Dresden*, Elmfield Press, Morely 1974.
- *The Destruction of Dresden*, Futura, London 1980.
- *The Destruction of Dresden*, Papermac, London 1985.
- *Apocalypse 1945: The Destruction of Dresden*, Focal Point, London 1995 ('...thoroughly revised and expanded on the basis of material available since 1963.'). ”

- ² In Germany the book was preceded by a more general account of the bombing offensive against various German cities, serialised in 1961 in the *Neue Illustrierte*, a glossy magazine, and published in book form as *Und Deutschlands Städte starben nicht* [And Germany's Cities did not Die], in Zurich, 1962 and 1963. The translation of *The Destruction of Dresden* then likewise went into numerous editions:

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- *Der Untergang Dresdens*, Sigbert Mohn, Gütersloh 1964.
- *Der Untergang Dresdens*, Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbeck 1967.
- *Der Untergang Dresdens*, Heyne Allgemeine Reihe, 1977 (five editions by 1985).
- *Der Untergang Dresdens*, Ullstein, Frankfurt a.M. 1985. ”

(c) Misstatement, misrepresentation, misattribution.

As will become clear, Irving's account of the bombing of Dresden manipulates and invents material, misinterprets documents, and gives weight to unreliable documents. He also gives undue weight to eyewitness testimony when it suits him, and falsifies statistics in order to put the behaviour of the Allies and particularly Churchill, in a negative light.

(i) Misstatement of circumstances: low-level strafing in Dresden.

- ¹ The most authoritative book on the Dresden raids is by Götz Bergander, published in 1977 after almost two decades of research. Amongst his aims was to combat the many myths and legends which had come to surround the attacks. One such myth was the strafing of civilians and refugees by Allied fighters during the attack, an act most people today would condemn as a particularly despicable or even as a criminal act of war. Bergander points out that although other authors have cited witnesses for such an attack, Irving's is the last account in which any credence is given to the story. He then proceeds to disprove Irving's assertion that such low-level strafing of civilians took place, either by night or by day. Irving's documentation betrays his knowledge of the charge levelled at him.
- ² In his book Irving described the 20th Fighter Group's role in the American bombing of 14 February: "For this mission ... the Group was subdivided into two groups, denoted 'A' and 'B'.... 'A' Group pilots were briefed that as soon as the bombers' attack on Dresden was over they were to dive to roof-top level and strafe what were euphemistically referred to as 'targets of opportunity'.... Most of the pilots appear from eye-witness accounts to have decided that the safest attacking runs could be made along the Elbe river banks. Others attacked transport on the roads leading out of the city, crowded with columns of people. One 'A' Group P-51 of the 55th Fighter Squadron flew so low that it

crashed into a wagon and exploded. The other fighter-pilots were, however, disappointed by the lack of opportunities for combat, especially the crews of the 'B' Group aircraft."

- ³ Elsewhere in the same edition of his book (the Corgi paperback, published in 1966) Irving states as a matter of proven historical fact that: "it was the Mustang fighters, which suddenly appeared low over the streets, firing on everything that moved, and machine gunning the columns of lorries heading for the city. One section of the Mustangs concentrated on the river banks, where masses of bombed out people had gathered. Another section took on the targets in the Grosser Garten area. Civilian reaction to these fighter-strafting attacks, which were apparently designed to perfect the task outlined in the air commanders' directives as 'causing confusion in the civilian evacuation from the east', was immediate and universal; they realised that they were absolutely helpless. American fighters strafed Tiergartenstrasse, the road bordering the Grosser- Garten on the southern side. Here the remnants of the famous Kreuzkirche children's choir had taken refuge. Casualties on record here include the Choir Inspector, seriously wounded, and one of the choir boys killed. British prisoners who had been released from their burning camps were among those to suffer the discomfort of machine-gunning attacks on the river banks and have confirmed the shattering effect on morale. Wherever columns of tramping people were marching in or out of the city they were pounced on by the fighters, and machine-gunned or raked with machine gun fire." It is certain that many casualties were caused by this low-level strafing of the city, which later became a permanent feature of the American attacks.

- ⁴ Bergander's criticism of this account was devastating in its detail. Irving dates the strafing to the day of the 14th and attributes them to the Americans, but many witnesses likewise claimed to have been seen strafing during the British attack the night before. Bergander first explained how it was impossible that the British could have under-

taken such attacks on the night of the 13th and exactly why many people may have believed that dive-strafting was taking place. He pointed out that there never would have been enough surplus fuel on such an extended flight over Germany to descend slowly, circle and then regain height. He noted that it would have been unthinkable to risk such valuable machines in low level-flying, at night, over unknown territory. Lancasters were long-range bombers and unsuitable for such attacks; the smaller mosquitoes were used to drop the initial markers, and were likewise unsuitable for such attacks. Dresdeners who had not yet reached the safety of their cellars may well have seen the Mosquitoes at 300 meters drop their red markers. Finally, the practicalities of the situation made low-level strafing impossible. By all accounts the fire-storm threw immense heat and smoke into the air at great heights. To send planes into this cauldron to strafe civilians would have been pure folly.

(ii) Misrepresentation of eyewitness testimony.

- ¹ Irving's initial witness was taken from one of the first books on Dresden (minus the page number), describing the attack on the Tiergartenstrasse. Bergander approached the same witness who told him that he had been unconscious at the time and that those who related the details to him had been in a severe state of shock. He was hit by shrapnel, not by machine-gun fire. Most tellingly, as quoted by Seydewitz, the witness said that the attack to which he was victim, described by Irving as taking place during the following day, had taken place *at night* (i.e. the 13th). Irving transposed the story to substantiate his more believable allegation that the strafing of civilians took place during the day.
- ² Bergander added that in *Und Deutschlands Städte starben nicht* an eyewitness was cited by name who described how huge trees were torn out of the ground in the park [*Große Garten*] and thrown hundreds of metres into the eye of the fire storm. This passage was excised from *Der Unter-*

gang Dresdens because the ‘witness’ complained that he had said no such thing to Irving and that the story had been put into his mouth. Nevertheless the story remained in 1966 and 1995, albeit minus a source. Here is another example of Irving’s cavalier disregard for the truth.

(iii) False attribution of conclusions to reliable sources.

- ¹ The documentary evidence Irving quoted for the attack is likewise threadbare. Irving quoted the ‘account contained in the 20th Fighter Intelligence Bulletin for 14th February’. Bergander pointed out that this ‘source’ is ‘a partly quite free interpretation’ from ‘Kings Cliffe. The 20th Fighter Group’. Therein appeared the sentence: ‘Shortly after leaving the target ‘A’ Group hit the deck to strafe enemy transportation but found few targets.’ Out of this sentence Irving builds up a narrative which creates the impression that the pilots were somehow spoilt for choice and did not know what to hit first. The implication is also that the pilots were cowardly and that somehow the greed of one of them caused him to hit the truck. Nowhere does the ‘source’ mention a ‘briefing’ to dive over rooftops. Indeed the source mentioned explicitly that ‘Lt. Jack D. Leon (55th) was strafing a truck and either hit the truck or it exploded causing Lt. Leon to crash.’ Another member of the same sortie wrote to Irving that the one thing he distinctly remembered ‘was a friend of mine, Lt. Jack Leon, strafing a truck which exploded. He flew through the debris and evidently struck a piece which downed him.’
- ² More slipshod still Irving decided that his source referred to Dresden when in fact Bergander went into painstaking detail to show that the group had in fact attacked Prague! Irving himself had even been provided with a detailed report in 1961 by one of the participants who had gone into some detail to explain exactly how they had hit Prague by mistake. The German Army High Command diaries [*Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* – OKW] reported fighter attacks on

civilians and dive-bombers on 11, 12, and 13 February. On 14 February, the day that Irving quoted from to support a different point, attacks were reported from the upper and middle Rhine areas, but there is no mention of similar attacks on Dresden, although the OKW would have been amongst the first to receive any such reports.

- ³ How did Irving then proceed to grapple with his critics? Some of Bergander's criticisms came to Irving's attention in 1985, through a book review. Irving firstly tried to defend himself by saying that he had proof that *general* orders existed to fire on civilians, a point that Bergander never contested. He also claimed that the muzzle of a machine-gun could be seen on films of the British bombers taking part: 'This surely led to an understandable confusion on the part of the living, fleeing targets: but the word legend is rather rough.' Considering the prominence and care Irving took in the book to excite in the reader a feeling of revulsion against the attackers, his last refuge reads strangely: 'The question of dive attacks on fugitives on the banks of the Elbe and in the Große Garten is surely of ancillary importance.' It is not of ancillary importance in his book. Even if it were, that would in no way excuse his manipulation of the truth.
- ⁴ In the 1995 edition, rather than acknowledge, let alone tackle Bergander's criticisms, he exculpated himself with a disclaimer that: 'Memories may be fickle and eye-witness testimony is ever suspect' and then proceeded to relate the events anyway with the addition of one more eye-witness account. Thus the effect upon the reader remained the same one of revulsion, but Irving threw in the sop that in the 'opinion' of others the attack took place in Czechoslovakia. Thus his account is presented as fact: the actual truth is presented as 'opinion'.
- ⁵ To bolster his argument Irving quoted the Final Report [*Schlußmeldung* – see below for fuller details] of 15 March 1945 by the Dresden Higher SS and police leader [*Höhe SS- und Polizei Führer*]. It states that during

all the attacks ‘Strafing by machine gun’ [*Bordwaffenbeschuß*] had been ‘observed’ [*festzustellen*]. No mention is made here of the targets of such strafing, however, which could well have been military. Details of the strafing of *civilians*, including time and place, would have had ample time in the month following the attack to have been taken down and noted in this otherwise meticulous report. When noting the various causes of death of those killed in Dresden during the raid, the ‘Final Report’ contains no mention of machine gun deaths. These points had already been made by Bergander, but again Irving saw no reason to alter his account, despite the fact that they told heavily against his allegation of Allied aeroplanes machine-gunning fleeing civilians.

- ⁶ Although Irving had interviewed many of the participants in the events of 13/14 February 1945 in Dresden who claimed to have seen machine-gun fire he was likewise aware of the complete lack of any relevant documentary evidence. By his own count Irving had also interviewed two hundred British airmen and ‘about one hundred’ American bomber and fighter-escort crews for this and other sections of the book. He had ample opportunity to ask them to confirm or deny the story, but the strafing story is supported by not a single one of Irving’s three hundred airmen. He was aware of the fact that other reliable authors such as Bergander had destroyed the credibility of his use, or misuse, of these sources to claim that allied airmen engaged in the low-level strafing of civilians. Yet despite being confronted with the facts, Irving persistently repeated a story that he must know was an invention based on the misstatement of circumstances, the misrepresentation of the evidence and the false attribution of conclusions invented by himself to the testimony of reliable sources. It seems that in this, as in so many other cases, no amount of detailed refutation of his historical narrative can bring him to change it.

(d) Falsification of statistics.

(i) Introduction

- ¹ Irving has intimated that he will contest in court that estimates of the casualties vary between 35,000 and 250,000. This is indeed in a strict sense true. Georg Feydt, a Dresden civil defence engineer during the war, said that the number could not have been above 50,000, quoting an official figure of 39,773 fallen, but without naming his source. Hans Rumpf, General Inspector of the fire services in Germany during the war put the figure at 60,000, which in turn was the number first 'approximately' given by the German army. This figure of 60,000 gained acceptance in West German official circles after the war. The first post-war mayor of Dresden, Max Seydewitz, put the figure at 35,000, although conceding that it could be several thousand higher. This remained, with some exceptions, the official East German figure. Others, contemporary and later, have put the figure variously at between 100,000 and 400,000. None of these though can be considered with any degree of seriousness. Either they are content merely to quote secondary sources or each other, or repeat propaganda figures circulated immediately after the attack.
- ² The fact that various people have made widely varying estimates of the numbers of dead is completely beside the point. What is at issue is Irving's own estimate, or rather, as we shall see, estimates, and the question of whether or not he has falsified statistics in order to arrive at them.
- ³ Irving's own estimates of the numbers of dead have varied widely over time, and have changed from one edition of his book to the next and in his public speeches:
 - In the 1966 edition of *The Destruction of Dresden* the triple blow was 'estimated authoritatively to have killed more than 135,000 of the population...', but the 'documentation suggests very strongly that the figure was certainly between a minimum of 100,000 and a maximum of 250,000.'

- In the 1971 edition the triple blow was ‘estimated authoritatively to have killed more than 100,000 of the population...’
- In 1989 Irving told journalists whilst launching the ‘Leuchter Report’ in Britain that: ‘There were one million refugees in the streets of Dresden at the time that we burned Dresden to the ground, killing anything between 100,000 and 250,000 of them.’
- In 1992 Irving told the Institute of Historical Review that ‘a hundred thousand people were killed [in Dresden] in a period of twelve hours by the British and Americans.’
- In 1993, in a publicity video made for the Australian public, Irving stated that ‘over 130,000 people died in that particular air raid.’
- In the 1995 edition of *The Destruction of Dresden* the figure was no longer authoritative and the attack had ‘cost the lives of between fifty and one hundred thousand inhabitants...’ Elsewhere he dropped the lower figure and said the attack cost ‘up to a hundred thousand people their lives.’
- In 1996 Irving had changed this figure yet again in his *Goebbels: The Mastermind of the ‘Third Reich’*, where he notes of the Dresden raids that ‘Between sixty and one hundred thousand people were choked to death or burned alive...’

⁴ As will be demonstrated, these erratic fluctuations in Irving’s figures are entirely arbitrary and have never accorded to the changing state of research (either his own or that of others) into the Dresden death roll. The only consistency in his figures is that they have resolutely remained far in excess of the most reliable and agreed figures (i.e. those based on the most solid research and which command the most general assent). We shall now see how he has arrived at these inflated estimates, and what evidence that they are indeed far above the likely number.

⁵ In 1977 Bergander’s book appeared, which after painstaking research and sound reasoning came to the conclusion that the number which ‘came nearest to the truth’ was 35,000, even if he did not exclude the possibility of it being a few thousand more. This figure tallies with that given by Walter Weidauer and by the East-German authorities.

- ⁶ Many historians accept the 35,000 figure. For instance the historian Earl A. Beck said ‘the constant increase in estimates of the number killed in the raids does not comport with the facts. Official reports justify an estimate of between 25,000 and 35,000 killed. Figures that rose to 100,000 or 200,000 killed lost touch with reality.’ In 1994 research by the Dresden historian Friedrich Reichert was published, using a previously unused source, which convincingly reduced Bergander’s figure of 35,000 to 25,000. This figure can be regarded as close to definitive.
- ⁷ The Dresden City museum sent Irving a copy of the research in 1997. It seems unlikely he could have read it in 1994 before issuing his own revised edition (his manuscript is dated 1993), but from his reply to the defence plea it is clear Irving rejects these findings as well.

(ii) Unreliable evidence: the testimony of Hans Voigt.

- ¹ Irving’s falsification of these statistics is based on the use of an insignificant and unreliable piece of evidence to dismiss or ignore more substantial evidence that does not support his thesis. Through all the years it has been the evidence of only one source that has allowed Irving to argue that 135,000 people died in Dresden. Irving’s faith in Hans Voigt is enduring.
- ² Four days after the attack a missing persons search bureau was set up in the Saxon Ministry of the Interior. At the same time in each of the seven Dresden districts a register of missing persons was established. In one of these districts a central bureau of missing persons was set up to collate information from the six others. Hans Voigt, at the time an assistant school master, was put in charge of establishing a dead persons department for the bureau to collect the records and personal effects of those people already dead, and of those still buried in the ruins. Irving said that it was this department which was ‘responsible for the identification of the victims and for arriving at some final estimate of the death-roll.’

- ³ Voigt's office had four different filing systems for different data. The first were garment cards, onto which samples of garments taken from unidentified bodies were pasted, together with date, location and so on. Voigt told Irving that up to the time of the capitulation 'we had almost twelve thousand of these cards completed.' The second list was of miscellaneous personal belongings of the unidentified. The third was an alphabetical list of bodies identified by personal papers. The fourth was a list of wedding rings recovered from bodies. According to Irving in 1966, this had been done with bolt croppers. In 1995 he only claimed that they were cut off. Voigt told Irving that between ten and twenty thousand of these had been collected by the time the Russians entered Dresden. With these four indexes the dead persons department was 'able to clear up the identity of some 40,000 of the dead.' Thus Irving arrives at his 'absolute minimum' death roll of 40,000. This in turn would tally with the figure of 39,773 given by Georg Feydt.
- ⁴ However, Irving did not accept 40,000 as the actual figure because Voigt had told Irving that he himself 'estimated that the final number would have been 135,000'. In 1995 Voigt remained Irving's favourite source for a higher death roll. According to Voigt the Russians closed down his offices and quite "simply struck off the first digit" to arrive at their own official figure of 35,000. Irving repeated this story to a reporter in 1963 as his own opinion, but with an elaboration: "The Germans simply struck off the first digit to make the figure more acceptable to the Russians, who contended that Bomber Command was not a powerful weapon." This does not seem to be a particularly strong motive for such a blatant act of falsification. Strangely Voigt wrote to Irving as early as September 1962, asking Irving to correct the passage: 'It was probably not the Soviet officials who struck off the first figure, rather Dresden officials (especially the then mayor and later Lord Mayor Weidauer) reduced the figure out of fear of the "Big Four," so as not to speak ill of them.'

- ⁵ Voigt had first contacted Irving in February 1961 in response to an announcement concerning Irving's research in the *Dresdener Monatsblätter*. Voigt provided Irving with a long report of his experiences of the raids on Dresden. The crucial passage in his report read: "The number of dead people registered as "known" or "unknown" is, as long as I was working on it, as far as I remember at about eighty to ninety thousand. I think that with 135,000 approximately one would be near the correct figure for the death roll of these raids. " This opinion formed the basis of Irving's figure in the first editions of his book, and was the number he sought safety in again after having been forced to retreat from an even higher estimate.
- ⁶ It cannot be too heavily emphasised that this is all based on the spoken testimony of one man. No amount of bureaucratic detail about his former post can hide the fact that his statement is not backed up by a single piece of documentary evidence, wartime or otherwise, and cannot be authenticated. In other words, there is no corroborative evidence of any kind about the missing digit. Moreover Voigt was apparently not a popular man with the cold-war Dresden authorities. Weidauer decries him a 'virulent fascist', who had been rightfully thrown out of East Germany. Voigt, then living in West Germany, may therefore have had a political motive in accusing the Soviet and East-German authorities of falsifying the statistics. Weidauer added that far from being destroyed, the death register which Voigt claimed showed 80,000 to 90,000 dead was still extant in the Dresden Town Hall with a highest card number of 31,102 for an unidentified body. In addition the so-called street books, which were compiled based on the streets and houses where the dead were found, were likewise extant. The numbers in the street books exactly matched those on the registration cards.

(iii) The use of forged evidence: Tagesbefehl 47 [Order of the Day no. 47].

- ¹ Between the English editions of 1963 and 1966 and the German editions of 1965 and 1967 Irving acquired a copy of the now notorious Order of the Day no. 47 [*Der Höhere SS und Polizeiführer, Dresden: Tagesbefehl Nr. 47, Luftangriff auf Dresden*, henceforth TB 47]. TB 47 was dated 22 March 1945 and attributed to a Colonel Grosse. It introduced itself as ‘a brief extract from the concluding statement of the Police President of Dresden’, i.e. an earlier document. Irving’s copy of the report, besides detailing other physical damages, put the final death-roll at an incredible 202,040 and expressed an expectation that the figure would rise to 250,000 by the time all the victims had been recovered. Irving gave the document full prominence in the English edition of 1966 and the German edition of 1967, and reproduced it in both as an appendix.
- ² It must be borne in mind at this point that Irving was not in fact the first person to have seen or written about TB 47. Max Seydewitz had photographically reproduced a dissected copy of it and had dismissed it as forgery as early as 1955. Irving had in fact cited Seydewitz in 1963 himself and branded the document an ingenious piece of propaganda and ‘spurious’! In changing his mind, Irving reported that he had previously not seen the report himself. Seydewitz had only quoted a few sentences, but on seeing the ‘*whole*’ Irving could no longer agree that it was a forgery.
- ³ Irving was coy in print in naming his source, other than referring to him as a ‘Dresden private citizen’ and a ‘doctor’ who had been one of many medical officials and local officers to have received the document through ‘official channels’ in March 1945. From Irving’s collected documents it is clear that the indirect source was indeed a Dresden citizen, Dr. Max Funck. In 1995 Irving claimed that by 1965 he had seen two other copies of TB 47, one which had been shown to the playwright

Rolf Hochhuth. Although Irving claimed that the original had not been found, he described Hochhuth's copy as a 'typed original with several hand-written corrections.'

- ⁴ In fact Irving had not obtained TB 47 directly from Funfack but from a Dresden photographer, Walter Hahn, who was a friend of Funfack's. Funfack had 'confidently' shown Hahn the document and 'without Funfack's knowledge, Hahn copied the entire document, and made a typewritten copy of it.' Irving in turn had visited Hahn on 18 November 1964 and had chanced upon the document on Hahn's desk whereupon he asked him to copy it. Hahn's wife began to type a copy, "while in the sitting room I, Hahn and [Walter] Lange [Director of the Dresden City Archive] began to discuss the implications of the "200,000" figure. Lange had not realised that it gave this figure, and I at once realised why Hahn had seemed reluctant to show it to me (in fact he had had that probably since 1950 or so, yet he had not shown it to me on any of my previous visits in 1962 and 1963). As soon as Lange began to expostulate on this document being a patent forgery, Hahn became very worried, and when his wife brought in the typed copy, plus four carbon copies, and I took one of the copies, he urgently asked me to give it back to him – but realising that they could not very well fight me for it if I was the guest of the Lord Mayor I folded it up and put it into my wallet and assured them that I too thought it highly unlikely that the figure mentioned was genuine.... "
- ⁵ Irving's proposal to visit Funfack that day was rejected by Lange and Hahn, and Irving apparently sufficed himself with an intention to write to Funfack on his return to England. In the following discussion it is important to remember that what Irving had obtained in Dresden was a copy of a copy of a document, unauthenticated by any distinguishing marks such as a signature or an official stamp of any description.

- ⁶ Irving was obviously ecstatic at his 'find'. No sooner had he returned to England than he wrote to Donald McLachlan of *The Sunday Times* apprising him of its existence: 'Having now examined the document minutely myself, I am satisfied of its authenticity. It remains to be established whether the "200,000" figure contained is equally genuine.' On 28 November he wrote to his German publisher, Dr Dieter Struss, that the figure was a 'sensational' piece of information, and suggested they publish as an appendix if a new edition of his book were to appear in German. Now that he had seen a copy 'with my own eyes' he no longer had any doubts as to the 'authenticity of the document'. In a letter to the Provost of Coventry concerning Irving's suggestion that an exhibition of Walter Hahn's photographs of the raid on Dresden be staged, he wrote that TB 47 should be reproduced 'in large type' to 'drive home the impact of the exhibition' because 'its nonchalance and the casualties it mentions have a shattering effect.'
- ⁷ His mounting excitement was hard to conceal when he breathlessly explained to *Stern* magazine concerning a forthcoming serialisation that the death roll 'constantly grows'. 'Is that not very impressive?' Likewise he wrote to his Italian publisher reassuring her that if anything the 135,000 figure was too low and asked if an insertion could be made in the next Italian edition of TB 47.
- ⁸ What reason did Irving have for so wholeheartedly embracing a document he himself had branded a forgery in print only a year previously?

(A) Misattribution of authorship and responsibility.

- ¹ Irving's first line of confirmation was Funck's alleged connection to TB 47. On 6 December 1964 he had written to the Provost of Coventry [the underlining is Irving's]: '**I am myself in no doubt as to the authenticity of the document** in view of having obtained it indirectly from the Dresden Deputy Chief Medical Officer responsible for disposing of the victims....' Likewise in December 1964 Irving and his German publisher, Sigbert Mohn, set about marketing TB 47 as authentic to the English

and West-German public. A reader's letter from Irving's publisher, Dr. Dieter Struss, to a West-German newspaper on 10 December read: "...Mr. Irving has found a new document a copy of which I enclose to you. The document has been examined and has been established as authentic. The figures originate with the then deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Max Funfack. Therefore the dead of Dresden need in future no longer be guessed. They are precisely counted and they were 202,040 in all. The truth is therefore much worse than one had previously imagined."

- ² On 18 December the German edition of *The Destruction of Dresden* was reviewed in the right-wing *Deutschen Nationalzeitung und Soldatenzeitung* again naming Funfack as the author of the new figures.
- ³ It remains a mystery where Irving first gleaned this information from, but it had appeared in his account of his visit to Walter Hahn in November 1964, albeit with a question mark in ellipses. On 19 January 1965, after six weeks of frantic marketing, Irving received a letter from Funfack: "Why I should now, after twenty years, be put in the spotlight with the mention of my name in the West German papers and be named as a witness to the number of dead is a complete mystery to me. Exactly like every one else effected I have only ever heard the numbers third-hand: from city commandants with whom I was friends, from the civilian air-raid protection etc. But the numbers always differed greatly. I myself was only once present at a cremation on the *Altmarkt*, but otherwise completely uninvolved. Likewise I was never Dresden's Chief Medical Officer or even deputy Chief Medical Officer; rather I was always worked as a specialist urologist in a hospital. How one comes to such suppositions, is incomprehensible to me. I did not have the slightest to do with rendering any such services. The photos of the cremations on the *Altmarkt* as well as the "Order of the Day 47" were also given to me by acquaintances. Therefore I can give no firm [*verbindliche*] information about the figure of the dead but only repeat what was reported to me. "

- ⁵ From his reply on 28 February 1965 to Funfack's letter it is clear that Irving had in fact made no effort whatsoever to contact Funfack. He had made no attempt to establish the provenance of Hahn's copy, no attempt to check Funfack's for stamps or signatures if it were an original, and no attempt to confirm Funfack's alleged hand in TB 47 before going to press. Irving apologised for his delay in replying to Funfack's letter in that had only reached him a few weeks earlier. In a mixture of German and English he excused himself in that he was currently still travelling: "I am afraid that I am partly to blame for the naming *Ihres Namens im Bundesrepublik* ['your name in the Federal Republic']. I obtained a copy of the *Tagesbefehl*, and was told that you had a copy, and I mentioned this to my publishers in Gütersloh [...] [T]hey misunderstood me, and thought that you had **signed** (*unterschrieben*) the *Tagesbefehl*, and told *Die Welt* and other West German newspapers about that. Please accept my humble apologies for this mistake. I have explained this to Sigbert Mohn Verlag and they are very sorry too." This was a disingenuous excuse for a number of reasons.
- ⁶ Firstly, Irving had already found time on 27 January to follow up Funfack's suggestion that he contact the International Red Cross, on 10 February to write a second letter to the Red Cross, and on 20 February to write to the former leader of the Red Cross delegation in Dresden. Why had he delayed a month in writing to Funfack?
- ⁷ Secondly, Struss had not claimed that the report was signed by Funfack, but that Funfack was the person who had collated the figures, repeating faithfully exactly what Irving had informed him in November 1964. Irving had written: 'This information [the 202,040 dead] is naturally sensational, and because it comes from the then deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Max Funfack, there is no doubt as to authenticity of the document.'

- ⁸ Thirdly, Irving used Funfack's rebuttal as further proof of TB 47's authenticity. On 27 January he enclosed a copy of Funfack's letter to an editor of the German *Der Stern* magazine. Funfack's suggestion that the Red Cross, unlike Funfack himself, might be in a position to provide reliable information as to the number of dead reported at the time, was manipulated to read that Funfack's suggestion 'shows that his information [*sic*] is 100% reliable' because Irving had learned from other sources that a Red Cross delegation had indeed been in Dresden at the time.
- ⁹ Fourthly, and more insidiously, both Irving and his German publisher wrote further letters defending TB 47 in the West-German press, Irving in full knowledge that Funfack explicitly denied being the author of TB 47. On 12 February 1965 Dr. Dieter Struss wrote to *Die Welt*, 'besides Mr. Irving found the doctor who had calculated the figures and reached the conclusion that the figure of 202,040 dead was not propaganda, but is authentic.' Struss then announced the intention to give TB 47 full prominence in a new edition of the book. In an accompanying letter Irving defended his rejection of Seydewitz's conclusion that TB 47 was a fake and pompously held forth, 'One learns from this that one should not accept everything one reads in books as facts. Two thirds of an historian's efforts lie not in getting hold of exact facts, but in verifying the authenticity and reliability of his sources and documents [*sic*].' Irving piously rounded off his defence of TB 47 with the words 'God knows, I as an Englishman have the least grounds to exaggerate the effects of the air raid on Dresden.'
- ¹⁰ As evinced from his letter to the Red Cross, Irving had received Funfack's complaint on 27 January *at the very latest*, yet he had made no attempt to disabuse either his publisher or his public. Moreover in a draft article written in February for the *Sunday Telegraph* propagating the new source, Irving continued to insinuate that Funfack had an official connection to TB 47 [the underlining is Irving's]: "The document's pedigree is certainly impressive. It came out subsequently that my

host [Walter Hahn] had obtained a copy of it some years before from one Doctor Max Funfack, who still lives in and practices in Dresden. **Funfack, during the war a senior medical officer (Oberstabsarzt) in the German army, was in 1945 Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dresden District; as such he was responsible for supervising the disposal and cremation of all the city's air-raid victims during the three months following the attack.** According to Funfack, the report had reached him during the war through the normal official channels. ”

- ¹¹ As late as May 1965 Irving triumphantly sent a copy of TB 47 to the RAF historian Dr Noble Frankland informing him that he had ‘obtained’ it ‘from the doctor (still in Dresden) who during the war was Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the city.’ Funfack had explicitly denied holding any such position and Irving had not obtained the document from him. Evidently nothing was going to stand in the way of Irving’s eagerness to capitalise on his new found belief in TB 47.

(B) Suppression of internal inconsistencies.

- ¹ Might Irving then have had reasons to authenticate the document on internal grounds?
- ² The main piece of evidence Irving cited to support his change of mind was that the figures for the physical damage overlapped with those in other documents, as indeed they do. But even in arguing for it’s authenticity Irving himself had outlined the disturbing contradiction, which pointed to its pedigree as a forgery: “It seems hardly possible that somebody not in an official position in the Dresden A.R.P [Air Raid Precaution] organisation could have forged his statistics so consistently well as in this report; and conversely it is remarkable that not one of the report’s figures is known to be wrong, apart from the death-roll statistic, of course.”

- ³ A number of further facts spoke for the document being propaganda. In early March 1945 an unsparing report on the attack on Dresden appeared in the Nazi weekly *Das Reich* in which it was stated that the allied intention to force the German population into capitulation through mass murder was now manifest. At the same time as the fake TB 47 was circulating in unusual numbers in Dresden in March 1945, a 'top secret' version of the same was circulating in Berlin. As R.H.S Crossman had written retrospectively in 1963, presumably referring to TB 47: 'In his secret propaganda, Dr. Goebbels did even better [than in his public propaganda] by leaking to the neutral press a fictitious top-secret estimate that the casualties had probably reached 250,000.' The figures cited therein made an appearance in Nazi foreign broadcasts in the final weeks of the war, and it would seem to have been circulated to offices where it was sure that the figures would be leaked to the foreign neutral press before the war was over.
- ⁴ As hoped, the figures hit a real vein of revulsion in the neutral press during the final phase of the war, especially Swiss and Swedish newspapers. They duly dwelt on the extent of the destruction, the apparently immense death roll, and questioned the military sense of the action. Previous to TB 47 the neutral press had merely guessed at how many might have been killed. The *Dagens Nyheter* of 16 February 1945 had reported 'several tens of thousands' dead and the *Svenska Morgonbladet* of 17 February 1945 that 'Currently 100,000 dead are talked of.' Following the deliberate leaking of TB 47 the *Svenska Dagbladet* of 25 February 1945 wrote: "No one knows with certainty how many people lost their lives because thousands of corpses remain buried under the rubble and will long stay there. But according to information compiled a few days after the destruction the figure is closer to 200,000 than 100,000. "
- ⁵ The propaganda effect was therefore twofold: to shock the world and to shock the German people. Thus the Allies were portrayed as monsters in a believable way whilst at the same time the German population was

goaded on to vain efforts at final resistance. This also explains how an inflated number so resolutely remained in the minds of the Dresden population and higher Nazi officials for long after the war.

- ⁶ But the contradictions in the report were more numerous and profound than just this. A number of facts should have alerted the common-sense reader that the document was a clumsy forgery.
- ⁷ A close examination quickly reveals a number of serious problems of plausibility and authenticity, quite apart from the distinct lack of official stamps or a signature. The document started off, 'In order to be able to counter wild rumours, there follows a brief statement from the concluding statement of the Police President of Dresden' and closed: 'As the rumours far exceed the reality, open use can be made of the actual figures. The casualties and the damage are grave enough.' This is the key sentence. It indeed appears true that rumours did circulate at the time of around 200,000 dead. But what rumours could be so outlandish as to 'far exceed the reality' of 250,000 dead? With a figure of 202,040 dead the sentence is nonsense.
- ⁸ Even if the attack on Dresden can be considered the worst of the war, the number of deaths would still have remained in some proportion to the extent of the physical destruction. In raids that had cost Hamburg 3.3% of its population, 48% of dwellings became uninhabitable; in Kobe the destruction of over 50% of its dwellings went with the death of 1% of its population. Even allowing for the unique circumstances in Dresden, a figure of 250,000 dead would mean that 20-30% of the population was killed, a figure so grossly out of proportion to other comparable attacks as to raise eyebrows, even if the population was inflated by refugees.
- ⁹ Then again, how is it imaginable that 200,000 bodies could have been recovered from out of the ruins in less than a month? It would have required a veritable army of people to undertake such work and hun-

dreds of sorely needed vehicles to transport the bodies. The effort actually undertaken to recover bodies was considerable, but there is no evidence that it reached the levels required to remove this number.

- ¹⁰ Thirdly, TB 47 gives a figure of 68,650 dead having been incinerated on the Dresden *Altmarkt*. This refers to the decision by the Dresden authorities two weeks after the attack to burn some of the corpses dug from the rubble to avoid the spread of typhus. Common sense should have made Irving pause for thought before swallowing this. After all, it was he who brought the gruesome photos of the cremations on the *Altmarkt* to light in the first place. He himself gave prominence to the cremations and talked of ‘scores’ of police helping in the last-ditch attempt to identify the bodies. The *Altmarkt*, which everyone agrees was the only place where bodies were burned, is 100m by 125m large, a market place half taken up by a huge water tank clearly visible in photos. It would have taken weeks and an army of men and materials to burn such a vast number of corpses. As Irving points out, gallons of gasoline were needed for each pyre at a time when it was ‘sorely needed’ by the military. None of Irving’s sources or anybody else’s even hinted at an undertaking of such vast dimensions. In the pre-publication publicity, Irving had indeed spoken of ‘the mass cremations of the tens of thousands of victims behind police cordons.’ By the time it came in to print, it was apparent that this was a contradiction that Irving was unable to solve. Bewilderingly for his readers, Irving reproduced TB 47, including its figure of 68,650 cremated, but elsewhere in the book he put the figure of those burned on the *Altmarkt* at only 9,000. At no point did Irving seek to explain this contradiction.
- ¹¹ Fourthly, and quite basically, how does he explain the incongruity of the 250,000 figure with Voigt’s 135,000, on which he also placed considerable weight? Voigt had given his minimum figure of 40,000, recorded according to Voigt at the very end of the war. At no point in the revised account of 1966 did Irving attempt to reconcile the figures.

- ¹² Despite these problems, Irving learned from his original publisher, William Kimber, in May 1965, that Corgi were to publish the paperback edition of *The Destruction of Dresden*. Irving requested that ‘one sensational document’ be inserted as an index. None of the further correspondence with Corgi has been discovered and neither was it reproduced in his microfilmed records, but at some later date Irving sent Corgi 21 pages of amendments that he wanted inserted into the original Kimber text, much of them concerning TB 47.
- ¹³ When TB 47 appeared in print in the 1966 English edition of his book what additional evidence had Irving managed to garner to allow him to so confidently reject the opinion that the document was a fake and to resolve the document’s flawed nature?

(C) False attribution and manipulation of corroborating testimony confirming the authenticity of TB 47.

- ¹ Irving claimed to have been able to talk to a number of Grosse’s ‘war-time police associates’ who ‘have spoken out for its *general* authenticity.’ However Irving has never identified any of them in his published work. He wrote to the Bundesarchiv, the German Federal Archive, in December of 1964 asking them to comment on TB 47, and to help him establish its authenticity. They replied that they could not comment on the authenticity of the document, but supplied Irving with the address of Frau Grosse and five former members of the Dresden police. Thus Irving was able to establish that there had indeed been a Colonel Grosse, chief of staff to SS Major-General Oberheidacher, but was no closer to vouching for the document’s authenticity.
- ² In fact it was not Irving who followed up the names provided by the Federal Archive. In March 1965 the German illustrated magazine *Der Stern* conducted investigations into TB 47 (presumably at Irving’s suggestion). On 15 March Irving received the results of their researches. Of the five people named in the letter from the Federal Archive, two would seem to have died and one was marked as ‘away.’ A reporter had

managed to interview Major Ludwig Nölke, one of those people suggested to Irving by the Federal Archive. Nölke was unable to comment on the authenticity of TB 47. He had not seen it at the time as it lay outside his area of competence. However, Nölke was willing to comment on the figures in TB 47 based on his position as the then police commander of Dresden Middle: 'Based on his experience and memory the figures about buildings in the Order of the Day could be correct, but not the figure of the dead. Nölke considers the figure of 35,000, which was given by the Lord Mayor Weidauer after the war and that the Soviet officials also adopted, as correct.'

- ³ *A reporter likewise interviewed Wolfgang Thierig apparently at the suggestion of Frau Grosse, who had been responsible for air-raid precautions in Dresden.* Apparently at the suggestion of Frau Grosse, a reporter likewise interviewed Wolfgang Thierig, who had been responsible for air raid precautions in Dresden. Thierig considered the document authentic including the number of dead. Irving had no way of knowing it, but, as will be discussed below, Wolfgang Thierig's signature was to turn up a year later on a document which recorded that as of 10 March 1945 (i.e. 12 days before TB 47) the police had been able to establish 18,375 persons as 'killed.' Thierig was lying.
- ⁴ Irving would seem to have only contacted one former official himself. In June 1965 Irving approached Werner Bühlmann, a former army officer in Dresden, again at a later suggestion of Herr Teske of the Federal Archive, asking him if he would care to comment on TB 47. Bühlmann wrote back that he was unable to comment on TB 47 as he had been hospitalised in Bad Elsten from 20 February 1945 until the end of the war. Taken together these three statements would not amount to an endorsement of the 'general authenticity' of the document by any stretch of the imagination.

- ⁵ We also have Irving's interview with Frau Eva Grosse, the wife of Oberst Grosse. He reproduced his notes of the interview with her on July 10, 1965, as appendix 5 in the German edition.
- ⁶ Let us pause for a moment and consider the particulars. Irving had in his hand in 1965 a document which, if genuine, would have gone a long way to proving that nearly quarter of a million people died in the attacks on Dresden. To date he had no supporting documentation for TB 47. Of the three of Grosse's former colleagues Irving had been contacted one had been unable to help and one had doubted the authenticity of the death-roll given in TB 47. Only one witness *thought* the figure to be correct and was lying. The Dresden archivist Walter Lange had clearly told Irving that TB 47 was a fake when he had snapped it away from an unwilling Hahn. Max Funfack, whom Irving had named as the source of the document, denied being such.
- ⁷ Irving then met the wife of TB 47's dead author, so it would seem from the details, for the first time. Since *Der Stern* had contacted her in February on Irving's behalf, Frau Grosse had collected and sorted all the papers of her husband, and at the time of Irving's visit was occupied with her son in sifting these papers for reference points to TB 47's authenticity.
- ⁸ All well and good. His papers consist of a) his military identification, driving licence etc. b) military assessments of his superior officers from 1930 to 1943 and c) Frau Grosse's correspondence with the Allied authorities to secure her husband's release. The only papers Frau Grosse had that could provide any comparison on which to confirm the authenticity of TB 47 were letters her husband had written to her during his imprisonment after the war.
- ⁹ Never a man to be deterred, and without even the slightest note of irony, Irving solemnly declared in point 10 of his interview that indeed: 'There are clear similarities between the style and expression of the Order of the Day and some of Grosse's letters from the period May

to July 1945.’ TB 47 was of course typewritten, so the similarity alleged by Irving referred to the content of the letters and the report, not to the handwriting. But he provides no evidence whatsoever to show what these supposed similarities were, beyond the fact that both were presumably written in German. Did Frau Grosse’s emotional nourishment during the painful period of uncertainty and separation from her husband consist, then, of letters written in the style and expression of a bureaucratic police document such as TB 47? Surly not.

- ¹⁰ Nevertheless Irving obviously concluded that he had been able to confirm the authenticity of a report putting the Dresden death-roll at three times that of Hiroshima. Irving’s notes recorded that the interview had lasted from 9.30 p.m. until 10.30 p.m. Allowing a minimal amount of small talk and perhaps ten minutes’ perusal of the documents which Frau Grosse handed him to glean the background information contained in points 1-9, we could even whittle this achievement down to the result of half an hour’s work.
- ¹¹ Irving also claimed that Frau Grosse confirmed to him that her husband had mentioned the final figure of 250,000 to her. Point 8 reads that Frau Grosse ‘...remembers very well how her husband confided in her the daily number of victims found in the weeks after the attack – it grew daily from a figure of 10,000. She remembered his *prediction* [*Vorhersage*] that the final figure *would be* a quarter of a million.’ In the 1966 English edition of his book Irving writes that Frau Grosse ‘confirmed to the author that her husband spoke of the death-roll *as having been* a quarter of a million.’ In reporting the details of the interview in 1995, Irving again fails to include the word ‘prediction’. In Irving’s hands, the future tense becomes the past, and a prediction becomes a report.

(D) Unreliable testimony: the Red Cross, Walter Kleiner, and Karl Mehnert.

- 1 What else did Irving have to follow up? Funfack, who in the meantime had fallen foul of the East German authorities as a result of being named in right-wing and nationalist West-German newspapers as the source for a figure of over 200,000 dead at Dresden, continued to be as helpful as possible to Irving. This despite Irving's unscrupulous use of Funfack's name without his permission, let alone his knowledge. Funfack refused to comment on the death-roll contained in TB 47 or to send Irving a copy, but he did offer to show him his copy if Irving were to obtain permission from the East-German authorities. He also suggested a number of people Irving might find it useful to contact: "Therefore I can give no firm [*verbindliche*] information about the figure of the dead but only repeat what was reported to me. The city commander Herr General Mehnert spoke on about 22 February 1945 of 140,000, Herr Professor Fetscher of the civilian air defence of 180,000. Nevertheless I have never seen written documentation to this effect. I set great store by these facts to tell the truth. The International Red Cross delegation headed by a Swiss man should actually know best. All the figures were put at their disposal when they as commissioners enquired about prisoners of war. Unfortunately I do not know their names, but was briefly with them at a meeting. "
- 2 Irving duly wrote to the Red Cross asking if they could confirm that a Red Cross official was shown the official casualty figures at the time, and if so could they send him the report it might be contained in.
- 3 The Red Cross replied: 'It is correct to say that one of our delegates, Mr. Walter Kleiner, was in the Dresden area during the period you mention, for the purpose of carrying out his duties of visiting camps. We have in fact in our possession the reports he made at the time on prisoner-of-war camps. We have, however, no information concerning the victims of the Dresden air raids.' In a second reply to a second letter, presumably inquiring into the exact contents of Kleiner's report, the

Red Cross replied, 'There were no PoW camps in Dresden itself, consequently Mr. Kleiner's reports did not even allude to the air raids on the town. Moreover, the ICRC's rule is only to hand its delegates' reports to the Detaining Power and to the prisoners' Power of origin.' The Red Cross appended Kleiner's address of 1945, but Irving's letter to Kleiner was returned to him 'not known.'

- ⁴ In his second letter, responding to the detailed questions which Irving should have put to Funfack four months earlier, before going to press, Funfack reiterated: 'I was only more or less a witness to the attack and one of those badly effected and have had no official function, as for example counting the dead, whatsoever.' He also informed Irving that unfortunately both Karl Mehnert and Professor Fetscher were dead.
- ⁵ Never a man to be deterred by a lack of corroborating evidence, Irving then proceeded to distort Funfack's suggestions in order to give more credence to TB 47. In the published version, Irving wrote that Mr Walter Kleiner, the Swiss leader of an International Red Cross delegation, toured Allied PoW camps in the Dresden area on 22 February 1945 and 'was in the presence of witnesses informed by the Dresden city commandant, General Karl Mehnert, that the current death-roll was 140,000'. The source reads that 'information on Kleiner's visit to Dresden was supplied by the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva; the figures given him were provided to the author by a third party, a Dresden private citizen.' Both sources were in a strict sense correct. The Red Cross had informed Irving that they had had a representative in the area and the private citizen was of course Funfack, whom Irving was no longer at liberty to name since Funfack had distanced himself from TB 47. But the account had become subtly altered. Funfack had indeed written to Irving that General Mehnert had spoken of a figure of '140,000,' but stressed that he [Funfack] had he 'had never seen written documents about it.' Moreover Funfack did not mention Mehnert and the Swiss Red Cross official in the same context; rather he had named himself as the person who had heard Mehnert's

figure. There is no evidence, in other words, not even of an indirect nature, that a figure of 140,000 was supplied to the Red Cross. This small slip gives the story a glimmer of authenticity to the unsuspecting reader by associating the figure with the Red Cross, whereas in fact no such association existed.

- ⁶ Moreover, in the 1966 edition of his book, Irving added that General Mehnert, the Dresden City commander who had accompanied Kleiner's visit, 'was "amazed" at the figure of 35,000 published in the central German press by the authorities.' Irving gave no source for Mehnert's alleged amazement. In fact again Mehnert's amazement was likewise reported second-hand in one of Funfack's letters. He had written that in the years following the war: 'We [Funfack and Mehnert] were both astonished at the low figure of 35,000 which took root here in the press.'
- ⁷ Even on the most basic level Irving cannot disguise the fact that this is not an eyewitness account. It is a story told him at third hand by Funfack, a man who had himself denied being in a position to relay any reliable evidence on the numbers killed, other than his own opinion or repeating gossip and rumour. This is hardly evidence enough to confirm the deaths of a staggering 250,000 people.
- ⁸ In 1995, Irving cryptically wrote that: 'It is also known that on February 22 a representative of the International Red Cross had visited Dresden to inquire after the fate of the prisoners of war; his report to Geneva may well have contained other information than about the number of prisoners amongst the casualties.' But the Red Cross had expressly told Irving that Kleiner's report 'did not even allude to the air raids on the town' and Irving's own letter to Kleiner stated that 'they [the Red Cross] have informed me that you made no reference to the air raid in your reports, as of course there was no reason why you should.' So Irving's suggestion about his report was demonstrably invention. All that was left to Irving in 1995 was a last passing jibe at Funfack:

“Grosse’s figures were allegedly provided by Dr med. Max Funfack, described as the deputy surgeon-general of Dresden. Funfack, still living in the Soviet zone, protested at having his name dragged into the newspaper columns of West Germany as a witness for the death-roll figures. He claimed to have learned such figures at third hand only, and never to have been surgeon-general.... He will have had good reason in the Soviet zone to express himself thusly. He did not however take the opportunity to repudiate the figures.”

- ⁹ This is pure sophistry. Funfack had quite clearly stated he was in no position to comment on the figures. There is no reason to doubt that he was telling the truth, and no evidence that it was because he was under pressure from the East-German authorities that he denied having provided the figure of 250,000. On the contrary, Funfack was surprisingly frank in expressing his personal doubts about the official East German figure of 35,000, even after he had fallen foul of the authorities thanks to the unsolicited exposure Irving had given him in the media.

(E) Suppression of contradictory evidence: testimony of Theo Miller.

- ¹ Irving had no chance to interview Mehnert, who had died in the late 1950s or early 1960s. But Irving corresponded with Theo Miller, a member of the Dresden Clearing Staff [*Aufräumungsstab*]. In his first letter of February 1965 Miller described his work to Irving (in English): “At the wall of my bunker [the Staff Quarter in the bunkers under the Brühl’sche Terrasse] I had pinned up a big map of the town. Every evening the commanders of rescue units had to report on the figures of corpses found and on the shelters which had been cleared of deads [*sic*]. The streets and shelters which had been cleared of corpses I marked with red colour in my map. Furthermore, I had to keep book on the figures of deads [*sic*]. In the middle of March, 1945, our task was almost completed. The town was free of corpses. I then received the order to return to my division in Latvia. Soon after the attack we heard in the radio Joseph Goebbels reporting on the attack on Dresden. He

spoke of 300,000 deads *[sic]*. In your book you mention the figure of 135,000 victims. My records at the Clearing Staff showed 30,000 corpses. If you assume the amount of deads completely burnt etc. would reach 20%, the total figure of victims will not exceed 36,000. Still this figure – two full divisions – is terrible enough. ” In a second letter of 25 February 1965 Miller gave more detail to his book keeping.

- 2 He first outlined how, in an attempt to prevent double book-keeping, army logistics had confiscated all brandy and cigarette stocks in Dresden and offered SS salvage teams 15 cigarettes and a half-bottle of brandy if they reported their figures to the army team. “One day General Mehnert visited our Staff. I had seen the general the last time in summer 1939 when he had inspected our battalion. In March 1945 he looked like a very old, broken man. He asked me for the figures of deads *[sic]* and I showed him my book-keeping, and the map showing the freed areas. He shook his head and said: These figures are much too low, I do not believe them, it must be much more, I have seen them.” Well, he was an old man and completely deseperated *[sic]* like we all, but generally nobody, no police man, no civilian believed my figures. Maybe only the Lord in Heaven knows whether my figures were right or wrong. However, I had figures to count based on the reports of all salvage units and my counterparts only estimated figures. Their figures, so I believe, were an expression of the dantesque pictures of horror they saw everywhere on their ways through the town. My counting system was very simple. I used a thick book like that of a book-keeper. In this book I wrote down exactly the names of the reporting unit, the name of the reporting officer, the figure of corpses found and the areas of the town, where they had been collected, and the place they had been buried. When I left the Staff on about March 20 with the order to return to my tank-division in Latvia, I handed this book over to another officer. My last figure of deads was about 30,000 – this figure I remem-

ber well, because after my return to my division I was asked by many of my comrades, who were born in Dresden and did not know anything about their relatives.”

- ³ Miller added ‘P.S. By the way, the figures of deads *[sic]* were reported every day to a Central Air Defence Staff. This authority was in Berlin.’ In a postscript typed a day later Miller wrote: “P.S. I have again to come back to the high figures of victims which I deny as far as they overgo 50,000. It is a fact that all corpses found have either been buried or burnt on the Altmarkt. Now we come to mathematical problems: Do you believe it possible to burn in about three weeks 110,000 corpses on a fire-grate of railway rails with a dimension of about 70 x 10 meters? In fact we started collecting corpses not before February 17 when the town stopped to burn and enough transport media had been brought together from other cities. The burning of corpses started about February 21 (one week after the air raid) and **only** on the hermetically closed Altmarkt because we feared the reaction of the population. The burning was finished to the best of my knowledge about March 15. When you can find out how long corpses are burning you will believe that a maximum amount of 10,000 – rather 7,000 – has been burnt. For the transportation of the deads we had only horse-drawn carts (*Panjewagen*) and some rickety trucks which run with producer gas (*Holzgasgeneratoren*) due to the lack of diesel oil or gasoline. This poor transport capacity could not transport the gigantic figures of deads overgoing 100,000 which are mostly reported. You must check again this problem as one of logistics. But can anybody really imagine what also 40,000 corpses mean? If you put them down in a line foot by head it is a street of 42 British miles! The inner district of Dresden has only a dimension of 2 times 4 miles! So the streets of Dresden looked to the frightened population like overflowed with corpses, and as a normal human reaction the survivors reported gigantic figures out of their phantasy.”

- ⁴ Here was a lucid, sober, and detailed account by a witness who had obviously taken some time and care to recollect his activities following the bombings. Miller, like Voigt, had apparently occupied a key position in the attempts to record the death roll, and was therefore ideally suited to give an estimate, albeit like Voigt from memory, of the numbers killed. Miller's figures corresponded roughly to those given by the East-Germans, by the engineer Feydt, and to Voigt's minimum. He had given apposite information on Mehnert's state of mind, information that at the very least needed to be judiciously weighed against Funck's, at the most invalidated it. He gave a perfectly plausible explanation of why some eye witnesses exaggerated the figures. Moreover he had raised some telling points about the sheer logistics of any death roll put at higher than 50,000.
- ⁵ Irving may have had a sound reason to ignore Miller's testimony, but if he did it is not apparent from his microfilmed records. As it was, Miller, his testimony, and his criticisms remained unmentioned. TB 47 was obviously too compelling to be questioned.

(F) Use of unreliable testimony: two United States Strategic Bombing Survey interrogations.

- ¹ In the published account Irving recounted that two German medical officers (Desaga and Hurd) were interrogated by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey on 19 July 1945. They had stated that "the most badly damaged town in their opinion is Dresden, with an estimated death-roll of 250,000" As usual Irving provided no exact reference and no information as to who these doctors even were. There is no indication that they were in a position to do anything more than repeat rumour and nothing to link their statements to TB 47, other than of course to confirm that it was an effective propaganda figure. It is probably in connection with this source that official USAF historian Joseph W. Angell wrote in a report formulated in 1952–1953 (but not declassified until 1970): "The most distorted account of the Dresden bombing

– one that may have become the basis of Communist propaganda against the Allies, particularly the Americans, of recent years – was prepared by two former German general officers for the Historical Division, European Command (U.S.A.) in 1948. In this account, the number of dead from the bombings was declared to be 250,000.”

- ² Angell concluded “That this figure may be the “probable” number of dead, multiplied by ten for the sake of exaggeration...” by comparing death rolls and physical damage in other German cities.
- ³ A second USAF historian wrote an account of the bombing raids on Dresden in 1954, and did not even mention the original United States Strategic Bombing Survey report, preferring rather to approvingly to cite Rumpf’s 60,000 figure as ‘closer to the correct figure.’ Irving’s supporting source has thus been decisively described by official USAF historians as unreliable.

(G) Use of unreliable evidence: testimony of Wilfred von Oven.

- ¹ In 1995 Irving quoted the post-war diaries of Goebbels’s propaganda ministry official, Wilfred von Oven, that ‘with Dresden, Churchill has fulfilled his first quota [as agreed at Yalta with Stalin] of 300,000 at one fell swoop.’ This is nothing but von Oven’s personal opinion, or more likely a regurgitation of the propaganda of the time. Moreover it is not a contemporary, but a post-war record (which Irving uses despite his declared suspicion of post-war records of any kind). Von Oven had every motive to put himself and his work for the Nazis in a favourable light in this way, by exaggerating the numbers killed at Dresden and falsely claiming that the Allies had apportioned ‘quotas’ of German dead to each other (a claim for which there is no documentary evidence).
- ² In fact there is much better evidence available for the contemporary estimate of deaths at Dresden circulating in the Reich Propaganda Ministry, where von Oven worked.

- ³ One of the witnesses to Hitler's vengeful desire to start shooting Allied soldiers in retaliation for allied bombings was Hans Fritzsche, radio propaganda chief under Goebbels. At Nuremberg he stated: "Dr Goebbels explained in the often mentioned "11-o'clock-midday conference" that 40,000 victims were to be lamented in Dresden. At the time one did not know yet that the figure was considerably higher. Dr. Goebbels added to the announcement that one way or another this terror had to now be stopped and that Hitler was absolutely determined to have the same number of English, American, and Russian pilots shot as the residents of Dresden who had died. "
- ⁴ This is proof enough that in the Propaganda Ministry and in Hitler's headquarters a far lower number was available than that given out as official propaganda, the spurious number merely repeated by von Oven.

(H) Falsification of statistics: official estimates.

- ¹ In 1966 Irving wrote that the 'competent authority in Berlin for air raid relief and welfare services accepted an estimate of between 120,000 and 150,000...' There is no source given for this. In 1966 Irving wrote further that 'according to the Federal Ministry of Statistics in Wiesbaden immediately after the attacks the local authorities were estimating the figure as 180,000 to 220,000.' The source runs simply, 'Dr. Hans Sperling, Federal Ministry of Statistics'. Without Dr Sperling's letter to see what these estimates consist of the reader is hard put to comment on their provenance. Irving does not care to enlighten us further. In 1995 we are no nearer the source. Again he attributes the figure 180,000 to 220,000 to 'official sources in Berlin' and this time a lower figure of 120,000 to 150,000 to 'the authority responsible for relief measures in blitzed cities'. Dr. Sperling's letter is still quoted. This figure of 120,000 to 150,000 makes a reappearance in the 1995 edition, again attributed to 'the Berlin authority for responsible for welfare in

blitzed cities'. Bizarrely the upper figure of 150,000 cited in 1966 has become 'half a million' by 1995, while still being attributed to the same source as previously.

- ² Sperling's letter is included in Irving's microfilmed documents pertaining to Dresden. Indeed Sperling had informed Irving that: 'Immediately after the attack their number [the dead] was estimated by local authorities at 180,000–200,000. A few days later the competent authority in Berlin for relief of those cities effected by air raids reckoned with a loss of 120,000–150,000.' Sperling made no mention of a figure of 500,000. Moreover he provided a clear proviso to these figures: 'As a result of the shock the offices in the badly affected cities and the higher authorities directly involved were, out of experience, in the habit of being prone to initial overestimation. A typical example is the attacks on Hamburg in July 1943 when the losses were initially estimated at more than double.' Sperling then proceeded to outline a number of difficulties in establishing the number of those killed in Dresden, concluding: 'Besides, as a result of the number of those fleeing the destroyed city being hard to estimate people were counted as dead who had actually fled the city and later returned. After weighing up all demographic factors and technical numeral [*zähltechnischen*] influences most probability is attached to a figure of 60,000 losses.' Irving deliberately garnered the highest possible figures from Sperling's letter, suppressed his proviso, and suppressed the then official West German figure in this context.
- ³ By 1977, however, there was good evidence that a lower number was circulating in March 1945. Situation Report no. 1396 of the chief of Berlin's police force [*Ordnungspolizei*] concerning air attacks on the Reich, 14 March 1945, contains an appendix from the commander [*Befehlshaber*] of Dresden's police force which states 'some 12,000 fallen recovered until now'. Bergander argues that the appendix was penned at the beginning of March 1945 and there is no reason to doubt him.

- ⁴ Thus in publishing TB 47, Irving had no evidence to support the document. On the contrary, he was forced to rely on hearsay, gossip, and speculation by unattributed sources, whilst suppressing and manipulating more valuable sources. His evidence has no historical credibility whatsoever. TB47 was cited by him in the face of far more reliable evidence for the true figure of deaths in the Dresden bombing raid, evidence of which he was only too well aware at the time.

(iv) The ‘Final Report’ of 15 March 1945.

- ¹ As if Irving’s new evidence were not already threadbare enough, the single most important document to date in helping historians decipher the true Dresden death-roll was discovered just as he set about publishing his own ‘sensational’ source. Following a lecture in Bad Schandau in East Germany in 1965, a Frau Jurk showed Walter Weidauer a document belonging to her father-in-law. It was the ‘Final Report’ issued by the Dresden police on 15 March 1945. Max Jurk had formerly been with the Dresden police. He had been a colleague of Wolfgang Thierig, the police Colonel responsible for the report. The ‘Final Report’ bore Jurk’s dictation initials and was signed by Thierig. This was the document that Irving had often claimed had not survived the war, and the very document on which TB 47 claimed to be based. The document contained exact details of all the material damage the city had sustained. The key passage read: ‘Until early 10.3.1945 established: 18,375 fallen, 2,212 badly wounded, 13,718 slightly wounded, 350,000 homeless and long-term re-quartered.’ Unlike the copies of TB 47 the ‘Final Report’ bore both an identifiable signature and was stamped ‘secret.’ It ended with the commentary, ‘The above report was given [*erstattet*] after agreement on the documents with the district committee of the NSDAP.’ Weidauer was the first to publish the document in 1966 in a second edition of his book *Inferno Dresden*.

- ² The Dresden City archivist Dr Walter Lange kindly informed Irving of the existence of this crucial document on 5 April 1966. Irving replied: ‘As you know I continue to believe in the authenticity of *Tagesbefehl* signed by *Oberst* Grosse’ based on its stylistic similarity with other documents signed by Grosse. Lange then sent Irving a copy of the document on 27 May 1966 informing Irving that he would be interested to have his opinion on it. This should have been the final piece of evidence any self-respecting historian would need to halt the printing of TB 47 as authentic.
- ³ Simultaneously, on 13 May, the West German archivist Dr. Boberach drew Irving’s attention to the discovery of a document in the Federal Archive in West Germany that confirmed the authenticity of the ‘Final Report’. Amongst the ‘Situation Reports on Air Raids on Reich Territory’ dated between 23 February and 10 April 1945, Situation Report No. 1404 of the Berlin Chief of Police, dated 22 March 1945 had appeared, a document dated the very same day as TB 47. In it the same data was recorded as in the ‘Final Report’, including the then current death roll of 18,375, a predicted death roll of 25,000, and a figure of 35,000 missing. As Boberach informed Irving: ‘These figures are in complete contradiction to the Order of the Day [i.e. TB 47] of the BdO [*Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei*] Dresden, likewise dated 22.3. The number of dropped bombs and destroyed buildings mentioned deviate only slightly or not at all from the figures in the Order of the Day.’ Boberach refrained from pushing the implications of this find further, but the inescapable conclusion was that 1) the ‘Final Report’ was authentic beyond doubt and 2) that someone had tampered with the death-roll in Irving’s copies of TB 47.
- ⁴ A further passage in the document drew attention to a possible source of statistical confusion in Voigt’s earlier statements to Irving of a minimum figure of 40,000. “Exact establishment of the number killed first possible when police bureau of missing persons and registration office

establish which people have left Dresden. At the moment some 35,000 missing persons entries have been submitted to the bureau of missing persons and the city authorities.”

- ⁵ Apparently Voigt’s office had also collated information on those registered as missing, but who may well have fled Dresden following the attack. This would shed possible light on the deviation between Voigt’s minimum of 40,000 and the East-German figure of 35,000.
- ⁶ The last document to strengthen this substantial chain of evidence was published by Bergander on 13 February 1975. The last wartime document to quote a figure for those who had died in Dresden was Situation Report No. 1414 of the Berlin Chief of Police, dated 3 April 1945. It read: ‘BdO. [*Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei*] Dresden. Up to 31.3.45 the number of killed recovered numbers 22,096 persons.’
- ⁷ With the appearance of the ‘Final Report’ it was conclusively proven that no weight could be given to TB 47 and that it was more likely than ever a forgery. Irving was forced to make a humiliating climb-down. In his pleadings in the case Irving has made great play of his probity and responsibility in this affair, and how he did not flinch from his ‘dilemma’. On 16 May 1966 he informed Dr. Boberach that he fully realised the implications of the document of which Boberach had apprised him, and announced his intention to give the facts ‘fullest prominence’ [*Zuerkennung*] in both England and Germany to counter the ‘false impression’ given by TB 47. Unfortunately he would have to delay any announcement by ‘about a month’ on ‘diplomatic grounds’ [*sic*] as the new edition of his book had appeared only fourteen days earlier. In fact Irving waited six weeks.
- ⁸ Irving has disclosed none of his correspondence with Corgi surrounding their new edition, and until the exact publication date has been established one is obliged to take Irving’s excuse at face value. Whatever the exact publication date, Lange had informed Irving of the existence of the ‘Final Report’ on 5 April. Taking Irving’s stated publication date

of 2 May 1966 (i.e. fourteen days before his letter to Boberach) this still perhaps allowed Irving a chance to at least halt printing in early April while he gave himself time to peruse Lange's document and weigh up the supposed merits of TB 47.

- ⁹ A letter, first drafted and discussed on 29 and 30 June, duly appeared in *The Times* on 7 July 1966. Irving brought readers' attention to the new documents, finishing off that he had 'no interest in promoting or perpetuating false legends'. Likewise he wrote to the *Sunday Telegraph* asking them if they would help him 'to correct what might otherwise become a dangerous legend.' This was too little, too late. Irving had had no grounds to print TB 47 in the first place. As Mr L.A. Jackett, Chief Historian to the Air Ministry commented in a memorandum shortly after Irving's letter to *The Times* had appeared: 'It is practically impossible to kill a myth of this kind once it has become widespread and perhaps reprinted in other books all over the world.'
- ¹⁰ Although there is no evidence that Irving undertook a similar effort in Germany he wrote to Kimber and to his Italian publishers in August outlining the alterations which needed to be made in light of the 'Final Report'. Likewise Corgi wrote to Irving in September, presumably in reply to a similar request, to say that as no new edition of his book on Dresden was planned in the foreseeable future the changes could not be made. In reply to Corgi, Irving wrote that he hoped that Corgi did not think he was pushing them for a new edition, only that 'otherwise I would lay myself open to charges of having done nothing to bring this to the attention of my various publishers' attention.'
- ¹¹ So far so good. However even Irving's recantation was not as whole-hearted as it might at first glance seem. On the very day his letter appeared in *The Times*, Irving recorded his conversation with a journalist from the *Sunday Telegraph* as follows: 'I told him that I had lost faith in statistics now, but was still a little suspicious of the new Dresden figure as the man who wrote the report was responsible for civil defence in

the city.’ Likewise in answer to a reader’s letter he wrote: ‘You probably detected the note of reservation I introduced into my letter to *The Times*, because it is unlikely that the Germans could have counted accurately the large numbers of victims in such a short time, and in a catastrophe like that who was there left to register relatives as “missing” anyway?’ This begs an obvious question. If Irving in July 1966 doubted the police’s ability to count 18,375 dead by 10 March, why had he never previously doubted their ability to count 202,040 dead by 20 March? In reply to another reader who expressed the opinion that the real figure was nevertheless still much higher Irving wrote: ‘I share your disbelief regarding the authenticity of the number of losses given by the Dresden police officer...’ Irving then turned down a request from his Italian publishers to print his letter to the *Times*. ‘They [the alterations] are not too sweeping because despite what I wrote to the Times I do not think too much importance can be attached to the figures given in the new German documents. On the other hand, they cannot be ignored.’

- 12 Reading the documentation presented to the court one might falsely gain the impression that Irving did his best to rectify the damage done by his frantic marketing of TB 47. But for reason best known to himself Irving recanted on his recantation. The new German edition appeared in October 1967, but TB 47 was still given the same prominence as in the Corgi edition of 1966. Neither had Irving seen himself as obliged to revise his ‘most probable’ figure of 135,000. Worse still the requested changes were not instituted in the Corgi edition of 1971, despite Irving’s prior communication to this publisher of his book about the evidence of the ‘Final Report’. TB 47 was still printed in the 1971 Corgi edition as an appendix and the text was entirely unaltered, save for one change.
- 13 Irving has claimed in the pleadings that he had no control over or responsibility for the cover of the 1971 Corgi edition, but the text of the book had in fact been altered. Both his own preface and Sir Robert

Saundby's foreword, written for the original Kimber edition, now contained the figure 100,000 dead as the authoritative death-roll as opposed to the figure of 135,000 given in the preface to the 1966 edition. Irving had written to Corgi in August 1966, enclosing all the changes he wanted made, and added 'The only point which might require checking is the alteration I have made in Saundby's Foreword; this might need his approval, although I hardly feel he will object.' No attempt was made to explain the contradiction between the continued inclusion of TB 47 as an authentic document and Irving's revised authoritative death roll, or indeed between the latter and Voigt's estimate. This begs the question why of all the changes he had initially requested this was the only one carried out? Irving has not disclosed his further correspondence with Corgi, so the question remains an open one as to whether the continued inclusion was due a change of heart by Irving or the vagaries of the publishing industry.

(v) The real TB 47.

- ¹ In 1977 TB 47, which had long been strongly suspected as a forgery, was conclusively proven to be so, and a last stone in the mosaic fell into place. A copy of the original document was discovered by Bergander. Bergander had found a reservist, Werner Ehlich, who reliably reported that not only that he had had the original in his hands, but, as a then member of the Dresden police force, had also made one typed and one hand-written copy of it. The copy was still in Ehlich's possession. It started 'In order to be able to counter wild rumours....', and proceeded to list all the details listed in the version of TB 47 used by Irving: with one crucial difference.
- ² In this new, authentic Ehrlich copy the death figure was put at 20,204, the expected dead at 25,000, and the number cremated at 6,865. What had clearly happened was that someone had crudely doctored the doc-

ument by simply adding an '0' to the end of each number it contained. What Irving had claimed as authentic documentary evidence was a crude forgery.

- ³ In neither England or Germany had Irving made an effort to revise his book in light of the mounting documentation and had thus ignored new evidence that not merely contradicted, but invalidated his findings. It was not until 1977 in Germany that Irving finally described TB 47 as a Nazi fake, as Seydewitz had argued all along, although he still reprinted it as an appendix, and published the 'Final Report' as an appendix alongside it. And it was not until 1995 that Irving was at last willing to come clean with his English-language readers and make Seydewitz's explanation his own again, that TB 47 was in fact a product of the Propaganda Ministry's 'machinations'. Without expanding on the information given by Weidauer, Irving wrote imperiously to the Dresden City Museum: "We have recently re-published my work about the massive Allied attack on Dresden, which will be well known to you.... In this volume...I have revised the number of losses, and independently from the research named by you, I come also to the conclusion that the so-called *Tagesbefehl* 47 is a forgery of the Ministry of Propaganda."
- ⁴ How or on what grounds Irving's conclusions were arrived at 'independently' he did not make clear. In fact, of course, this was pure bluster, and there was nothing independent about his change of mind at all. The truth seems to be in fact that he felt unable to persist with his allegiance to TB 47 in the light of the overwhelming weight of evidence, dating back twenty years, indicating that it was a forgery.
- ⁵ Despite having been finally forced to disown TB 47 Irving has continually kept the legend of a higher death roll alive and sown the seeds of doubt amongst the unwary and the ill-informed. How has he been able

to continue to maintain that the death roll in Dresden was anywhere between 60,000 and 150,000 despite such strong documentary evidence that the number was around 30,000?

(vi) Further bending of reliable sources.

- ¹ In 1985 Irving wrote to a Munich newspaper, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, claiming that the police chief responsible for the 'Final Report' had the 'most reason to minimise the losses', because he was the person with air-raid protection. Irving was implying therefore that the figure of 18,375 given in the 'Final Report' was a politically-motivated underestimate. Yet Irving is quite happy in other places to accept the authenticity of police statistics on air-raid losses. As he himself commented with regard to the October 1943 attack on Kassel, the Germans '...kept records of all air raid losses with meticulous care – even those on live-stock.' After the September 1944 raid on Darmstadt he wrote in the 1995 edition of the Dresden book: 'Once again the police chief's post-raid report provides the best documentary description of the attack.' Irving, indeed, quoted the 'Final Report' no less than eighteen times in 1995. Why therefore should it be unreliable? Moreover TB 47 itself had also been signed by the police chief for Dresden. Yet for a long time Irving had accepted the figure of 250,000 given in the forged version of the document as entirely plausible. Here is yet another example of the double standard Irving applies in the evaluation of evidence which suits his case, and evidence which does not.

(vii) Further misuse of figures: refugees, burials, and excavations.

- ¹ Although the existence of the 'Final Report', he wrote in 1995, 'must inevitably cast doubt' on higher estimates, the report was by nature 'interim', concluded a mere three weeks after the attack. This again begs the question asked above. If Irving once again doubted the police's ability to count the dead by 10 March, why had he never previously doubted their ability to count 202,040 dead by 20 March? Yet, Irving

went on, there are too many ‘unknowns’ to allow anyone the luxury of wholeheartedly relying on it: “... I am still reluctant to adopt it without question. March 10, 1945 – the status of the death-roll estimates – was still too early for final figures ... Nobody could, or can, be precise about the final figure. Countless people in Dresden that night vanished from the human race as surely as the man of whom only a shadow remained etched into the wall against which he had been standing.”

- ² The city had been overcrowded, it had had no shelters and no defences worth talking of, and no expectations were current of raids on such a scale (contradicting the earlier statements by Irving that the Dresden populace had already experienced 172 air raid alerts). These factors, coupled with the most violent fire storm in history, ‘must inevitably have caused casualties substantially greater than in Hamburg’. Later Irving stated that: ‘The key element is probably, over and above the identified death-roll, the vast number of missing people which even the Dresden Police Chief put at thirty-five thousand.’
- ³ Irving thus implies that the difference between the ‘Final Report’s’ 25,000 and his minimum of 60,000 is accounted for in the number of unidentified nameless refugees and those still buried or never found and therefore never counted.
- ⁴ The night Dresden was hit it was, according to Irving, ‘swollen to twice its peace-time population by the [massive] influx of refugees from the East, Allied and Russian prisoners of war, and thousands of forced labourers.’ Dresden had had a ‘permanent’ population of 650,000 and ‘hundreds of thousands of refugees’. In the 1995 edition they had become ‘the million or more refugees who flooded into the city after January 1945’. In 1966 the Dresden pre-war population is figured at 630,000, in 1995 at 642,143. Elsewhere, while in the 1966 edition the city is ‘palpably overcrowded’, in the 1995 edition it is ‘swollen with one or two million refugees’; a population ‘between 1,200,000 and 1,400,000 citizens’ of whom ‘hundreds of thousands had no roof over

their heads'; a city which 'twelve hours earlier had sheltered a million people and their property.' As the increases which they have undergone between the 1966 and 1995 editions of his book would suggest, these figures are entirely arbitrary. At no point does Irving give a source for any of them. They are figments of his own imagination.

- ⁵ Dresden was undoubtedly hit in the early part of 1945 by a wave of refugees fleeing westwards from the advancing Red Army. Schools and pubs, cinemas on the Prager Straße, and even the palace in the *Große Garten* were given over to accommodating refugees. None of them though were meant to stay longer than three days, and all available manpower was committed to keeping the trains and carts flowing through Dresden. Undoubtedly some became stationary in Dresden, but 500,000 or 700,000? How were so many refugees accommodated? According to Irving, they were not. 'These endless, well organised refugee "treks", each with its own designated "Führer", had been directed one after another to the designated reception areas – like the *Grosse Garten*'. In other words they slept under the open skies.
- ⁶ In the Corgi edition of 1966 Irving claimed that the Dresden City authorities had issued a total of 1,250,000 ration cards to the city's population by the time of the raids. Here would be official documentary proof of the number of people in Dresden at the time of the attack. The source reads simply 'Ration statistics were provided by Mr. Howard Gee who was given them during a visit to Dresden in June 1963.' This is once again typical of the infuriating, perhaps deliberate, poverty of so many of Irving's source-references. Who is Mr Gee? A British statistician, perhaps, or a tourist friend of Irving's? Who had given him the information and in what form? Maybe a typed statement from the Dresden archives? For all the reader might know it could be a conversation overheard on a park bench between two Dresden drunks. Without this information this apparent 'fact' remains nothing more than hearsay. Irving saw fit to allow the 'fact' to disappear from the 1995 edition. Why? Because in the meantime the truth about the

1,250,000 ration cards he claimed had been issued to the Dresden population had now become clear to him. Far from being genuine, many if not most of them had been produced by the Allies in order to confuse the population and hamper the local Nazi administration. In 1995, and in the 1985 German edition of his Dresden book, Irving admitted he had made a 'mistake' on this point in 1966, and conceded that to add to the long-term dislocation the RAF dropped 'millions of fake ration cards'. He quoted the 'Final Report' of March 1945, which recorded that such cards had been dropped 'in large masses' [*größere Massen*]. Yet this openly admitted mistake did not prevent Irving continuing to claim that Dresden was packed with immense numbers of refugees in early February 1945.

- ⁷ As early as 1953, the Dresden civil defence engineer Georg Feydt had struggled to defeat the myth of the city saturated with refugees. He wrote: 'I cannot imagine a more peaceful and calm picture than Dresden on the afternoon of 13 February 1945.' Bergander likewise confirmed from his own memory that at no point did Dresden become crammed with refugees. He himself had been called on to help place refugees in accommodation, and apart from those stragglers around the station and the influxes which came with each train, he remembered most being somehow quartered. Bergander then proceeded to calculate that the number of refugees in Dresden could sensibly be put at 200,000; 9,000 in the stations (through which the majority came), 6,000 who had trekked with carts spread out over the whole of Dresden, and 85,000 in emergency accommodation. He doubled the number to include all those who might have somehow found their own lodgings that night. Bergander admitted that this was also a guess, but at least a sensible one arrived at through due process. To have accommodated some half a million refugees would have required one of two measures, neither of which took place: either forced billeting in private homes on a massive scale, or huge temporary camps.

- ⁸ The Dresden historian Reichert went one step further. He likewise quoted witnesses who attested that no refugees were billeted in Dresden houses and that no billeting took place in the parks or squares. He then pointed out that the Dresden population could of course not be expected to have been at its pre-war level because of the numbers of men away on active service. Not 630,000, but 567,000 were resident in the city at the time. To that he added 100,000 refugees. This was already a very considerable number in view of the city's overall population; but nowhere near the 'one or two million' suggested by Irving in 1995.
- ⁹ How many of these are likely to have been killed? The total figure of just over '18,000' given by the 'Final Report' of course included refugees as well as local citizens. Irving, as we have seen, implied that many thousands of those killed were officially only listed as 'missing' and so were excluded from the official death roll. Section E of the 'Final Report' headed 'loss of life' listed under the difficulties in identifying the number of dead: 'migration of large parts of the population, transport of a large part of the wounded out of the city.' The 'Final Report' put the 'missing' figure known to the register of missing persons and the city administration at 35,000, but with the proviso that 'Exact ascertainment of the number of killed only possible when it becomes established through the register of missing persons and the police offices of registration how many people have left Dresden.' 10,000 of those missing were later found to be alive.
- ¹⁰ Given the chaotic situation of the last weeks of Hitler's Germany, with millions of refugees streaming through Europe many more might have escaped official attention. Irving himself obliquely concedes that a mass exodus took place from Dresden after the bombing raid. He quoted a Swedish newspaper of 18 February that 'Dresden had been so destroyed that the order for its final evacuation had been given.' In the same paragraph he quoted a refugee: 'None of the neighbouring towns could send help [after the attack] because all the approaches to

Dresden were crowded with refugee columns, peasant carts, pushcarts and army vehicles.’ Thus even on Irving’s own evidence, the ‘missing’ must have included many thousands who had left the city immediately after the raids were over. This was a complicating factor that Dr. Hans Sperling of the Federal Office for Statistics had already brought to Irving’s attention in 1962. Even if a considerable number of those registered as missing had in fact been killed in the raids, it still remains the case that they would have added no more than a few thousand to the overall death-roll, not the numbers needed by Irving to make up the shortfall between the ‘Final Report’ figure of 18,000 and his own estimate of 100,000 or even 250,000. As it is, it is now clear that the Dresden authorities took great pains to count all the dead, identified and unidentified.

- 11 Conclusive evidence is supplied by burial figures. According to Irving ‘history relates that the last mortal remains of 28,746 air the raids’ victims found their last resting place on the Heidefriedhof cemetery.’ The figure of 28,746 in the Heidefriedhof comes from the cemetery’s head gardener Zeppenfeld, who is quoted by Seydewitz as having given this total from the head-count of those buried and the ashes of 9,000 bodies burnt on the Altmarkt. In fact, as we know, 6,865 people were burnt on the Altmarkt. Bodies were also buried at the Johannisfriedhof cemetery. Weidauer quotes the director of administration that 3,660 victims of the attack were buried there. In 1993, new official material was found from the Dresden burial offices [*Marschall- und Bestattungssamt*] confirming the exact number of those buried. Quite contrary to Irving’s image of chaotic and botched mass-burials, the counting of the dead was conscientiously carried out, with the figures being reported regularly to the city administration. Exactly 17,295 bodies had been buried in the Heidefriedhof cemetery, including the ashes of the 6,865 people burnt on the Altmarkt. In addition to the 3,462 burials in the Johannisfriedhof cemetery, 514 were buried in the Neue Annenfriedhof cemetery. This gives a total of 21,271 registered burials. Head garden-

er Zeppenfeld's figure of 28,746 thus overestimated the true number by more than 7,000, unsurprising perhaps, given the fact that it lacked any written authentication and was arrived at only in a rough and ready way. The official figures are far more likely to be closer to the truth.

- ¹² Another possible point of statistical confusion, according to Irving, lay in the fact that many people searched for missing relatives to 'spare them the indignity of mass burial in a common grave' or even resorted to digging up their next of kin already buried in mass graves. Even if one were to concede the point, and there are witnesses quoted elsewhere as rescuing bodies from the rubble themselves, it seems highly unlikely that people broke open sealed mass graves in the hope of finding their relatives amongst the number buried there. Moreover, this in no way precluded the victims from appearing on one of the official lists. On the contrary, people who had by then of course identified their relatives would have been bound to have reported their death to the authorities, or would Irving have us believe that thousands were secretly buried on unconsecrated grounds and their deaths for some strange reason kept secret from the authorities? Reichert adds that the burials in the smaller graveyards were scrupulously recorded and did not exceed 2,000. The total number of burials, therefore, approximates well to the total figure of deaths in the raid already known from other sources such as the 'Final Report', namely 21,000 compared to 18,000.
- ¹³ Irving's last refuge was to claim that too much of Dresden remained unexcavated to say how many bodies might still be buried. More, of course, did lie hidden beneath the rubble and were not discovered until later. Weidauer points out that from 8 May 1945 until 1966, exactly 1,858 bodies had been dug from the ruins of Dresden. Only in four instances had it been impossible to establish the number of victims in one place. The total for the four could not have been higher than a hundred. He likewise makes clear that by all accounts the majority of victims had died through suffocation and that only in a small number of

cases were bodies so mutilated or burnt that the exact number could not be ascertained. Reichert quotes a slightly smaller figure for between October 1945 and late 1957 of 1,557 bodies. Irving, although he must have been aware of Weidauer's figures, still wrote in 1995 of an immediate post-war Dresden 'where thousands of victims were still being recovered each week from the ruins'. He argued that too little of Dresden had been excavated to determine how many bodies lay undiscovered. Yet he himself had written in 1963 that 'most of the bomb sites in Dresden's Inner City have been cleared anyway.' Reichert adds (1994) that not a single body had been found since 1990, despite heavy building and despite archaeological excavations on the Altmarkt and around the Taschenberg Palace.

- 14 When Reichert added the three sums together cited above he came to the inescapable conclusion that the final number of deaths for the raids of February 13/14 and April 17 was 25,000, corresponding to the real TB 47's prediction of the same number, and all of it based on documentary evidence.
- 15 How reliable, finally, are these official figures? Widely accepted for many years, the fact that the Communist authorities in post-war Dresden were among those who treated the figure of 35,000 as accurate is an irrelevancy. What interest did the Communists have in playing down the numbers killed? Even if they had, the figure of 25,000–35,000 comes not from the Communists but, as we have seen, from the Nazi authorities themselves.

(3) Dresden and Holocaust Denial

- 1 Even as a young writer Irving seems to have used his manipulations of the evidence on the bombing of Dresden to peddle an as then relatively inarticulate and 'soft' form of 'revisionism'. Irving has variously claimed that his interest in Dresden was first awakened by 1) reading an article in the German magazine *Stern* in March 1960 or 2) convers-

ing with fellow workers whilst employed at a steel mill in Mülheim. In April 1961 he placed adverts in British and American newspapers to trace the surviving air personnel. William Kimber was one of the people to answer his advertisement and subsequently became his publisher.

- ² That Kimber's relationship with Irving was an uneasy one is borne out by the documents. Kimber wrote to Irving on 3 April 1963, after his legal advisers had suggested he check the proofs for 'certain allegedly historical statements'. Once they had started, wrote Kimber, "it became abundantly clear that the first proofs were riddled with falsifications of the historical facts. The picture painted by these falsifications led to the inescapable conclusion that your book could be interpreted as the work of a propagandist for Nazism who had not scrupled to distort many facts and omit numerous others in order to vilify the British War Government and in particular Winston Churchill.... I have no doubt that it was a scoop for the Germans to find an Englishman prepared to concoct a mixture of fact and fiction which would vindicate or extenuate Nazi actions (because of course there is an extensive movement trying to achieve this aim in Germany and elsewhere) and at the same time to denigrate English leaders."
- ³ Irving stiffly denied this and argued that in Germany he had been accused of being a lackey of British Air Command and that now Kimber was branding him a Nazi propagandist.
- ⁴ According to Irving Kimber then instituted a number of textual changes against his wishes. He altered chapter headings, softened criticism of Churchill and Harris, and erased the more 'harrowing' details of the attack; all testimony to Kimber's 'sincerely held belief that, after all, perhaps the Germans had merely been repaid, with interest in their own coin.' Although Irving told his readers in 1995 that it was 'several years before I noticed these little modifications' we have documents to the contrary. In the same letter of April 1963 Kimber had

written to Irving informing him that after ‘intensive work’ by the office staff checking and changing the proofs ‘we now believe the book to be cleansed of its somewhat evil undercurrents’. Later in April Irving berated Kimber for changing some of the historical sections in the book.

- ⁵ Irving wrote to Kimber in 1963 that the crime of World War Two was not genocide but ‘innocentocide’ (sic), the killing of civilians, and that therefore the Eastern and Western powers were equally guilty in his eyes as the Germans and the Japanese. For him Dresden was a crime. Nowhere in the earlier editions though was there an *explicit* effort to draw the parallel, but the whole tenor of the argument was unmistakably in this direction. In his own notes Irving commented on his discovery of TB 47 that put the death-roll at 202,040 that the document, if authentic, showed that the Dresden death-roll ‘was well over the combined death-rolls of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Tokyo.’
- ⁶ Instead, Irving allowed others to draw this obvious conclusion and then somewhat disingenuously congratulated them on their independence of mind. Thus he wrote to Sydney Silverman MP, who had reviewed the book in *Tribune*: ‘I am not someone who holds political views similar to your own, but I really must congratulate you – in spite of this – for having stuck your neck out so firmly and unmistakably by drawing a parallel between the Nazis’ atrocities and what happened in Dresden; this is something I myself did not claim in my book’. This may be literally the truth, but as we have already seen with reference to his presentation of the history of the bombing raid on Pforzheim, there can be no doubt that Irving actually did, and does, believe in a parallel of this kind between Allied bombing raids, of which Dresden was the most famous, and Nazi war crimes.
- ⁷ In 1995 the ‘innocentocide’ refrain was repeated. In answer to the rhetorical question if there is a parallel between Dresden and Auschwitz Irving replied: ‘To my mind both teach one lesson: that the real crime of war and peace alike is not Genocide – with its implicit requirement

that posterity reserve its sympathy and condolences for a chosen race – but Innocenticide. It was not the Jewishness of the victims that made Auschwitz a crime; but their innocence.’ There is of course no implication in the concept of genocide that posterity should reserve its sympathy and condolences for a ‘chosen race’ – this is purely Irving’s invention, for the concept can apply, and has been applied, to many other victims of genocide besides the Jews.

- 8 Whilst to his readership Irving has always maintained a more balanced tone, in his public speaking Irving’s opinions have become increasingly strident. Despite his frequent rhetoric against the propagating of other myths in history, especially the ‘myth’ of the Holocaust, and despite his earlier pronouncements to the contrary, Irving is proud of his own role in keeping alive the very real legend of the Dresden death roll. At a speech in South Africa in 1986 he told his audience: “I realised that I was being told [about Dresden] of what we would now call a Holocaust I suppose, of which we English at that time, 1961, knew absolutely nothing at all. Of course now everybody talks about Dresden in the same breath as they talk about Auschwitz and Hiroshima. That’s my achievement ladies and gentlemen. I’m a little bit proud when I look at the newspapers every 15th or 14th of February, when the anniversary comes and they mention Dresden, because until my book was published on that subject the outside world had never heard of what happened in Dresden when 100,000 people were killed in one night by an RAF and American air force air raid on one undefended German town at the end of the war. ”
- 9 In Ontario in 1991 Irving told his audience: “...Germany, a country that should be grateful to me, the Englishman who first revealed to the outside world what we British and Americans did to Dresden, where we killed over 100,000 people, burned them alive in three hours in one night in February 1945. Nobody outside Germany knew about it until my book *The Destruction of Dresden* was published. The country which should have given me every medal I suppose.” [Applause] ”

¹⁰ It would seem to be more than coincidence that Irving, his mind perhaps constrained by a convenient symmetry, has stubbornly maintained a false figure of 100,000 deaths in Dresden in the face of all evidence to the contrary, while at the same time he has manipulated his figure of deaths at Auschwitz down to a similar number. In a television documentary screened on 28 November 1991 Irving made the comparison explicit in the following interchange: “Interviewer: “So what’s the point in quibbling about the exact number of Jews that were killed by Hitler? Irving: “Exact numbers are important. Look at Auschwitz. About 100,000 people died in Auschwitz. Most of them died of epidemics, as we now know, from code breaking. So even if we’re generous and say one quarter of them, 25,000, were killed by hanging or shooting. 25,000 is a crime, that’s true. 25,000 innocent people executed by one means or another. But we killed that many people burning them alive in one night, not in three years, in a city like Pforzheim. We killed five times that number in Dresden in one night. Interviewer: “So we’re as bad as that? Irving: “I’ve pleaded for equality in the writing of history. Not just truth but also equality. Interviewer: “So lining up Jews in pits and machine gunning them was as bad as bombing Dresden? Irving: “I see very little difference. ”

¹¹ In addition Irving’s utterances connecting Dresden and Auschwitz have become increasingly bizarre. Launching the ‘Leuchter Report’ in 1989 he told journalists: “Obviously if the gas chamber now turns out to have been phoney then we have to try and explain what happened to the figures. Now, one possible reason is the large number that turned up in the state of Palestine, what’s now the state of Israel. The Jews that were in Israel didn’t come from nowhere. Another part of them, when Auschwitz was liberated were set out on the roads to be shipped westward where they ended up in cities like Dresden. I don’t have to tell you what happened in Dresden three weeks after Auschwitz was evacuated by the Germans. There were one million refugees in the streets of Dresden at the time that we burned Dresden to the ground, killing any-

thing between 100,000 and 250,000 of them. Large numbers of people on the streets in Europe that winter also suffered normal deaths of exposure and starvation epidemic. I'm offering to you alternative solutions to where the people went. "

- 12 Irving repeated this explanation in a 1993 promotional video intended for Australia: "Many concentration camps as the Russians approached were evacuated and set out on the long cold march through the European winter of December 44, January 1945 to the West. The concentration camp inmates arrived in Berlin or in Leipzig or in Dresden just in time for the RAF bombers to set fire to those cities. In Dresden million-and-a-half people camping out in the streets on the night of February 13, 1945. Nobody knows who they were. Refugees, concentration camp prisoners, citizens of Dresden itself. After the bombers retired, 45 minutes later another wave came, and at then at noon on February 14 the American air force joined in. Over 130,000 people died in that particular air raid The same kind of raids took place on Leipzig, Berlin, Cottbus: refugee centres up and down the centre of Germany. Nobody knows how many Jews died in those air raids, nobody knows how many Jews died on the roads of hunger or starvation or just sheer cold. "
- 13 The so-called death marches took place in the closing months of the war as the Nazi authorities cleared concentration camps and ghettos in the East in the face of the victorious Red Army. Between 17 and 23 January 1945 some 60,000 prisoners of Auschwitz were evacuated, mainly on foot. Many of them died of cold, physical exhaustion, thirst and hunger, or were beaten or shot to death on their way to other concentration camps within the Reich. There is no evidence that those prisoners forcibly evacuated from Auschwitz passed through Dresden, and although Dresden had its own prisoner-of-war camps, it would seem incredible that the deporting authorities would have quartered thousands of starving and emaciated Jews in the historic heart of

Dresden. The suggestion that the Allies were somehow responsible for killing Auschwitz prisoners in Dresden in what were their last agonising weeks of suffering is completely fantastic.

(f) Conclusion.

- ¹ It is clear that Irving has played a pivotal role in keeping the myths of the Dresden attack persistent in the public mind. From the above examination of Irving's account it is clear that this has involved the deliberate falsifying of statistics, mistaking circumstances, misrepresenting testimony, attributing false conclusions to reliable sources, using evidence which he should know to be unreliable or forged, and bending reliable sources to fit his argument in order to arrive at conclusions that are historically untenable. His estimation of the purposes and biases of those compiling historical sources varies not according to the sources themselves, but according to how useful Irving finds them in his attempt to maximise the numbers killed.
- ² Irving's overriding purpose has been to drive up the figure of those killed in the raids by any means until it becomes many times greater than the actual number, and begins to achieve implicit comparability with the mass murders carried out by the Nazis at Auschwitz and elsewhere. In the light of his consistent and deliberate falsification of the historical evidence to this end, it was hypocritical of him to ask the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a reputable Munich newspaper, in 1985: 'Is the question of the number of deaths really of consequence?', and say to *The Times* that, 'It is odious to debate whether we killed 200,000 or "only" 35,000 that night.'
- ³ Few would now wish to defend the Allied bombing raids on Dresden on 13/14 February 1945. No-one would want to underestimate the terrible cost they wrought in terms of human life and suffering, or ignore the wanton destruction of some of Europe's most beautiful and significant buildings, whose reconstruction is still not complete more than

half a century later. But the way to reach a reasoned judgement on these events is not to falsify the evidence, which is already horrifying enough: all that does is to obscure the issues. Irving's manipulations and exaggerations have merely got in the way of a proper discussion of these events, rather than assisting it.

- ⁴ Although his inaccuracies and distortions of the truth have long since been exposed, he persists in presenting them to his readers as an accurate depiction of the historical record. Perhaps the best way of dealing with his version of the destruction of Dresden was found in 1985 by his German publishers, who appended to the title page of his book the description, 'a novel'.

5.3 The evidence of Hitler's adjutants

(a) Background

(i) Introduction

- ¹ We now turn our attention from Irving's treatment of one particular historical event to his use of one specific type of historical evidence. We have repeatedly seen how Irving uses double standards when evaluating the post-war testimony of survivors of the 'Third Reich'. He dismisses the evidence of victims, while giving serious consideration to the evidence of the perpetrators. He uncritically accepts the testimony of members of Hitler's entourage when it is suitable to his arguments, but ignores it, suppresses it, manipulates it, or attempts to discredit it when it is not. The centrality of this evidence to Irving's arguments requires that it now receive a more systematic consideration.
- ² When *Hitler's War* was first published in 1977 the claim which caused most consternation was that Hitler, although ultimately responsible for the murder of the European Jews, had known nothing about the crime itself: "There are documents which strongly suggest that Hitler's responsibility – as distinct from Himmler's – was limited to the decision

to deport all European Jews to the east, and that responsibility for what happened to the Russian Jews and to European Jews after their arrival in “the east” rested with Himmler, Heydrich, and the local authorities there – who took full advantage of the atmosphere of hatred and contempt for human life created by their Führer.” Irving expressed his thesis more clearly in a letter in February 1974: “It is important for me to ascertain if there was a difference in Hitler’s eyes between the ‘deportation’ and ‘liquidation’ of the Jews at the turn of 1941/1942 and also later. From the documentary material available so far one could almost suspect that as far as the Jews of Western Europe were concerned Hitler believed that it was only a matter of deportation, in his eyes, and that he believed that there in the East they were being put to work, albeit under hard circumstances. This belief seems to have stayed with Hitler for the whole of 1942. Only in April 1943 does one find formulations, which might possibly point to a different attitude on Hitler’s part.”

- ³ Irving’s thesis rested on three strands of argument. First, the absence of a written order signed by Hitler, such as existed for the euthanasia action. Second, the ‘chain of documents’ discussed earlier in this report. Third, the argument that Hitler had never talked about the destruction of European Jewry in the close private circles surrounding him.
- ⁴ This part of the Report concentrates on the third point, namely, Irving’s claim that Hitler’s surviving adjutants, secretaries, and staff stenographers have *all* uniformly testified that never once was the extermination of either the Russian or the European Jews mentioned, even in confidence, at Hitler’s headquarters. Irving clearly makes use of the alleged testimony of Hitler’s retinue as to the absence of any discussion of the extermination of the Jews amongst Hitler’s intimate circle to support his thesis that Hitler did not know about the matter. In his dispute with the *Sunday Times* in 1977, over an article written by Lewis Chester and Gita Sereni, Irving wrote to the Press Council a let-

ter which appeared to deny the connection: “But the matter is totally unimportant, as I never, at any time, anywhere, based my case on these five staff members and it is dishonest of Miss Serenyi [*sic*] to suggest that I did. Let her state precisely where I claimed that these people supported my case. Once they inform me, as they did, that they never heard any mention of Jewish liquidations at Hitler’s HQ, and that they themselves learned of it only after the war, what possible purpose was there in my questioning them further about it, let alone basing my case on them?”

- ⁵ If we refer to the structure of the relevant passages in the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War* this is pertinently not the case. The passage falls squarely in a section of the book which sought to propound Hitler’s ignorance of the ultimate fate of those Jews deported to the east.’[...] no direct report by Himmler or Heydrich to Hitler on the barbarous massacres of Russian Jews they themselves had witnessed has ever come to light.’ Irving then added (and it is to be borne in mind how unequivocal he is): ‘Hitler’s surviving adjutants, secretaries and staff stenographers have *all* uniformly testified that never once was the extermination of either the Russian or European Jews mentioned – even confidentially – at Hitler’s headquarters.’
- ⁶ Irving relies on four varieties of evidence from these people: contemporary documents, such as letters and diaries; his own ‘exhaustive’ interviews; post-war interrogations, interviews and affidavits (usually in connection with one or other of the post-war Nuremberg trials); and memoirs composed after the war. Of the four, contemporary documents are, without doubt, of most value to the historian, as Irving himself has argued in a general manner; the other categories of evidence are not to be dismissed, but have to be treated with a high degree of critical caution.

⁷ As we have seen, it is Irving's stock in trade as a Holocaust denier to become cautious with certain types of evidence when it contradicts the revisionist line. For instance Irving criticised Gerald Fleming's book *Hitler and the Final Solution* (London, 1983), which set out to refute Irving's central thesis that Hitler knew nothing of the 'Final Solution', by pointing out that Fleming relied heavily on war crimes trial testimonies 'which are anything but safe'. Yet Irving has presented the court with precisely five such pieces of testimony in document 1856, to support his claim that Hitler's adjutants were as ignorant as Hitler was himself. In his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving draws heavily on testimonies and affidavits from the Nuremberg trials. Yet he has also said: 'I myself know that one has to be very careful with personal questioning. I put a lot of worth on personal letters from this time, on personal diaries, on war diaries, and on documents, which are demonstrably authentic. Only then come people....' Despite this, all of the evidence presented to the court is post-war testimony, and little of it is pertinent other than to establish Irving's contact with certain individuals. It should also be taken into account that none of the documents presented to the court, apart from the correspondence with Hitler's secretary Christa Schroeder and the extract from the Krause memoir, have been presented in an original form. Rather they constitute Irving's notes on the same.

⁸ It is not proposed in this report to tackle each and every member of Hitler's staff individually to prove the extent of their knowledge. But, using the printed documents and memoir literature at hand, it will be shown that:

- Hitler did talk about the 'Final Solution of the Jewish question', or better said aspects of it, to his personal staff.
- Hitler was often disingenuous in his conversation, but that the listener who chose to understand him, either at the time or in reminiscing after the war, was perfectly able to.

- Despite the claustrophobia and cloistered nature of life in the *Führerhauptquartier*, aspects of the 'Final Solution' were common knowledge amongst members of Hitler's staff, either through rumour, gossip, or what they themselves saw and heard at first hand.
- Members of Hitler's staff were not only witness to Hitler's role in the 'Final Solution', but also perpetrators themselves.
- While some of Hitler's staff tried to exonerate Hitler in various ways after the war, similarly some of them were in no doubt that the 'Final Solution' could not have taken place without Hitler's knowledge and express orders.
- Those members of Hitler's staff who sought to exonerate him had many good reasons after the war to disguise or deny what they saw, heard, or did during their time in Hitler's service. This is a factor which Irving conveniently chose to ignore.
- Irving's findings and interpretations were not the result of a flawed methodology or a naive credulity. In full knowledge of the historical detail Irving subjectively filtered, bent, and manipulated his sources to his own political and ideological desire to exculpate Hitler.

⁹ In this section, we will start with a survey of the general background of knowledge about the extermination of the Jews in Nazi Germany, and the post-war ideology and purposes of the surviving members of Hitler's immediate circle and the pressures operating on them. These general considerations have an important bearing on the evaluation of the quality of their evidence. We shall then move on to a consideration of selected individual members of Hitler's entourage, and conclude with some wider reflections on Hitler's decision-making process as reflected in the evidence of those who worked closely with him on a daily basis.

(ii) General Knowledge of the 'Final Solution'

¹ None of the witnesses Irving cited (save Karl Wolff) was prominent enough in the 'Third Reich' to have been subject to individual historical scrutiny, in other words to have had the veracity of their post-war recollections weighed against the documents and the testimony of others. It is therefore apposite to consider briefly how much of the 'Final

Solution' was public knowledge in Germany and thereby to set a rough standard by which to judge how much credence can be given to individual staff member's claims to have known nothing.

- ² Most accounts assessing how much of the 'Final Solution' was common knowledge are based on the 'Reports from the Reich' [*Meldungen aus dem Reich*] composed by the German security services, particularly the SS Security Service [*Sicherheitssdienst* – SD], to gauge the mood of the German public. Members of the Security Service in civilian clothing listened to conversations in public places and gathered information from various other sources with the aim of informing the regime about the public mood, sometimes generally, sometimes in relation to specific events such as a speech by Hitler or Goebbels or an important event of some kind. The source is not without bias. Information supplied by the local stations was purposefully deleted and suppressed by the authors of the national digest, whilst other aspects were put into relief. For example the reports do not reflect popular knowledge of the euthanasia program and popular opposition to it, although we know both to have been large. Interestingly, during a speech given in 1996, Irving claimed that there was not a single reference to the 'Final Solution' in the SD Reports: '...and there's the entire series of SD *Berichte* [reports] from the beginning of the war right through until nearly the end, and never once is there any reference to the Holocaust in them. The people just didn't know what was going on, whatever it was.' This claim was advanced despite numerous publications that used the selfsame source to show exactly the opposite: i.e. that reference was made to aspects of the Holocaust and people did know about aspects of it.
- ³ There is a general consensus amongst historians on the following points: First, the daily discrimination and violence, especially of the so-called 'evacuations' [*Aussiedlungen*] of the Jews to the east, was impossible to overlook, although the fate of the deportees may not have been clear to everyone. The beatings, the forced marches, and the savagery of some of the deportations, even when carried out late at night,

were impossible to hide from the populace. Likewise the number of Jews committing suicide before each impending round-up must have penetrated even the most stubborn of minds. These deportations took on ever-larger proportions throughout the Reich from October 1941 onwards.

- ⁴ Secondly, the appreciation was widespread that the war in the east was a war of extermination, and was being fought with a hitherto unknown barbarism. Those soldiers and administrators who saw duty in the east, be it in Poland or Russia, often came into direct contact with aspects of the 'Final Solution', either as witnesses or perpetrators, foremost to the *Einsatzgruppen* shootings. Prince Ferdinand von der Leyen wrote in his memoirs that: "It may well be true that apart from the perpetrators who remained silent, the whole extent of the horror was hardly known to anyone. But those who were in the east, especially in the [Polish] General Government, must have at least have heard of the destruction of the Jews, even if the immense numbers and the bestial implementation which were spoken of remained unverifiable [...]. This much is certain: there was no one in Germany who did not know that something evil happened to the Jews [...]."
- ⁵ A SD report of May 1942 from Erfurt indicated that a remarkably accurate idea of the *modus operandi* of the *Einsatzgruppen* in Poland and Russia was current in the town: "Thus the rumour has been circulating among the population that the Security Police have been given the task of wiping out Judaism in the occupied territories. Jews by the thousands have been collected together and shot, after they have dug their own graves beforehand. At times the shooting of the Jews assumed such proportions that even members of the execution squads suffered nervous breakdowns. "
- ⁶ Thirdly, as Germany began to suffer reverses, especially on the eastern front, and with the increasing severity of the aerial bombardment of German cities, general fears increased of retaliation for the fate inflicted

ted on the Jews. These mounting guilt complexes were particularly evident at the time the German authorities sought to make capital from the mass killing of Polish officers by the Soviets in the Katyn forest in April 1943. The SD reported that many people found it 'remarkable' and 'hypocritical' that 'German propaganda has now revealed its concern for the Poles.' As some observed, 'We have no right to work ourselves up about these measures of the Soviets, because on the German side Poles and Jews have been done away with in much larger numbers.' Others remarked that 'we ourselves have not exactly been fastidious in handling Poles, Jews and Bolsheviks.'

- ⁷ Fourthly, the full monstrous scope and all the details of the crimes being committed were known to fewer. Rumours, talk, and hints of gassings did circulate, but it is harder to substantiate how much was known about the mass exterminations in the concentration camps using gas. For many such ideas were quite simply beyond rational comprehension, as they indeed remain for many today. But, although details were distorted and blurred, something was known of the gassings.
- ⁸ An ordinary citizen like Karl Dürkefälden learnt of the murder of the Jews of Kiev in October 1942, and the gassing of French Jews, from a soldier on leave from Vilna. Lilli Hahn living in Hessen was told that the last two transports of Frankfurt Jews had been killed near Minsk. Artilleryman Peter Perchel heard a similar story in May 1943 travelling to Bucharest as a courier for the Supreme Command. An Engineer Corps colonel told him that he had witnessed the gassing of a trainload of Jews in Poland. The cars had been shunted into a tunnel and decoupled. The tunnel was sealed and trucks were left running to kill the Jews with diesel fumes. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich in Berlin recorded in her diary on 2 December 1942 'The Jews are disappearing in droves. Terrible rumours are circulating about the fate of the evacuated. Of mass shootings and death from starvation, of tortures and gassing.'

- ⁹ Fifthly, Himmler and the killing apparatus, the Nazi party leadership, and the various participating organs of state made considerable efforts, to keep the operation secret. No one had to know, and no doubt the stench of murder was hidden for some by the nature of war. But there was scarcely anyone who was unable to know or understand if he or she chose to do so. Hence the large number of persons in Resistance circles who were well informed about what was going on.
- ¹⁰ The diplomat Ulrich von Hassell, who had numerous contacts within the Foreign Office and was always promptly and reliably informed about the inner workings of the Foreign Office, noted in his diary on the 15 May 1943: “Shocking reports come in from the good [Max] Fraunendorfer [administrator in the General Government] in Poland. While [Hans] Frank publicly declares he wanted to give Poland a dignified and free existence, and while the gang tries in vain to befuddle world opinion about [better ‘with’] the Katyn murders, the SS in Poland carries on most shamefully. Countless Jews have been gassed in specially built chambers, at least 100,000. [...] Meanwhile the unhappy remnants of the Jews [in Warsaw] prepared to defend themselves, and there is heavy fighting which will certainly lead to their complete extermination by the SS.”
- ¹¹ Von Hassell was not the only Foreign Office official to know what was going on. Others were quite well informed as well.
- ¹² Curt Prüfer, the former head of personnel in the Foreign Office and later ambassador to Brazil returned to Berlin in 1942. After conversing with friends and acquaintances he confided to his diary on 12 November: “I was told terrible stories this morning about the treatment of the Persians. They have been massacred in large numbers – men, women, and children – by asphyxial gas or by machine gun. The hatred, which will obviously be engendered, will never be extinguished. Every child today knows this in all its details.”

- ¹³ Furthermore, on 17 November 1942, General Alexander Stahlberg visited the headquarters of Army Group Centre at Smolensk, where he spent the evening with Major General Henning von Tresckow and his aide Lieutenant Fabian von Schlabrendorff. These were figures who, like von Hassell, were involved in the plot to overthrow Hitler which culminated in the unsuccessful attempt on his life on 20 July 1944.
- ¹⁴ According to Stahlberg, the conversation turned to the General Staff, Hitler, and the course of the war: "After a pause I asked him [Tresckow] if there was anything in the rumours of SS incursions against the civilian population in the rear areas. The rumours were true, he said, but with the rider that this was not a matter of occasional raids but of the planned extermination of human beings. Reliable information had reached Army Group that special SD and SS units had been formed for the carefully organised execution of the plan, on a scale that transcended imagination. "
- ¹⁵ Several months later Stahlberg was charged with delivering a letter from Manstein to Colonel-General Beck through General Oster or Admiral Wilhelm Canaris in Berlin.
- ¹⁶ On his mission Oster showed him a copy of a summarised report from SD *Einsatzgruppen* on the liquidation of Jews in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* which listed the executions carried out by region, 'tens of thousands of them, adding up to six figures.' In October 1943 the Senior Quartermaster of Army Group Centre, Colonel Eberhard Finckh reported from Vinnitsa to Stahlberg that two General Staff Officers had witnessed a mass execution of Jews. An SS officer had told the General Staff Officers that they had already executed more than 100,000 Jews. Stahlberg passed the information on to Manstein that evening, who refused to believe the enormity of the figure.
- ¹⁷ In considering how far this kind of knowledge could and did percolate downwards to secretaries and office workers, it is instructive to quote Erika Scholz, a secretary in Adolf Eichmann's Section IV-B4 of the

RSHA. She told a court in 1969 at the trial of Eichmann's specialist for transport, Franz Novak: "I did not know the details about what went on in the concentration camps, but I knew that the final solution of the Jewish question consisted of the extermination of the Jews. [...] I knew the word 'special treatment' [*Sonderbehandlung*] from my Berlin days. It was never talked about in the department, also with friends. [...] But everyone who was involved in it knew what the whole thing meant. "

- 18 Irving is himself content to quote Karl Wolff's claim that only 70 people had an intimate knowledge of the full scale and mechanisms of the 'Final Solution'. Yet over 100,000 people were directly involved in the murder of European Jewry, not to speak of those who directly witnessed or heard at first hand or through rumour of what was happening.
- 19 The self-serving nature of Wolff's absurdly low figure is obvious; if very few people knew, then his argument that he himself knew nothing of the extermination becomes to seem a little more plausible than it might at first glance be the case.

(iii) General Problems of Oral History and Memoir Literature

- 1 Adalbert Rückerl, the former head of the Central Agency of the *Länder* for the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes, based in Ludwigsburg, who died in 1986, commented that the absolutely objective, i.e. independent and unprejudiced witness, does not exist. By this he meant one who in complete command of his or her faculties takes in an event, memorises it, and finally can repeat it without mistakes after the passage of time. A 'neutral' witness is hard to find because witness statements are inevitably, by their very nature, a recounting of events subjectively experienced at the time and further filtered over the years. The most exciting witnesses for the historian are those who have a wider mental horizon, whose powers of perception and interpretation of events are

above the normal. Usually though, the historian faces the hard task of weighing up the objective truth of a statement against possible corruption of memory of one sort or another.

- ² Rückerl listed a number of specific problems concerning witnesses to Nazi crimes and their willingness to talk. Some of them correctly fear that if they give a truthful account, they themselves may be prosecuted. Some of them are silent because they are genuinely ashamed to have known about these things and to have kept silent at the time. Some witnesses have genuinely repressed their memories of events, but Rückerl adds the proviso that: "The extent of apparent loss of memory, which many of these witnesses in the courtroom try to demonstrate, is nothing short of shocking and disgraceful. Time and time again in NS trials it is shown that those persons, apart from the accused themselves, who could be most effective in establishing the truth, are the very ones who impede matters."
- ³ The age of the witnesses and the time-span between events and their retelling often poses problems, as does the tendency to fill holes with products of their fantasy to retain credibility. The historian is also confronted by the possibility of an ongoing exchange of ideas and memories between members of a particular group, so that that which has been experienced and that which has been received become intermingled and hard to disentangle.
- ⁴ A comparative approach is imperative when evaluating investigations. Only by reviewing as broad a sample of statements as possible are discrepancies, distortions and omissions likely to be revealed. Moreover, only by comparison with the existing documents can such statements be placed in their proper historical and individual context, and thus allow of an informed conclusion. With well-documented individuals one is often in the position to reject witness statements as a reflected self-image, based on a desire for exculpation. It must also be remembered that a genuine repentance and critical distance to their former life is

rare amongst former Nazis. For instance only three of the twenty two accused at the main Nuremberg trial admitted their guilt: the General Governor of Poland Hans Frank, the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories Alfred Rosenberg, and the *Einsatzgruppenführer* Otto Ohlendorf. Albert Speer made a show of declaring his guilt, but in fact to his dying day never admitted that he had known about the extermination of the Jews. Very few are those who wish to unburden themselves, legion are those who seek to prove their innocence.

- ⁵ It is a recognised phenomenon amongst oral historians of the ‘Third Reich’ that witnesses to NS crimes are often only in a position partially to reveal their knowledge. Often an episode is disguised as having been told to the person interviewed by a third party, coupled with a disclaimer that he or she had not realised the full significance of the episode as related to them at the time. Oral historian Gabriele Rosenthal concluded that when the statement is made that the interviewee ‘knew nothing’, they mean that they knew nothing about the factory-like murder of the Jews in death camps or all of the circumstances and details which became public after the war. The witness deliberately overlooks the significance of those particular details known to themselves, and thereby avoids a confrontation with the realities of the past.
- ⁶ A further problem is that matters that are related as incriminating or as having preyed upon the mind, may not be what they pretend to be. A defensive barrier is erected whereby a partial revelation maintains the fiction of a certain morality and simultaneously blocks a fuller (self-) investigation into actions and responsibility. The claim to have known ‘something’ also maintains a certain plausibility as regards the rest of the story. Often the Nazi era is rejected out of hand as being too far in the past to be worth reminiscing about and provokes the blanket sentiment ‘we had nothing to do with it.’ It is also a recognised phenomenon that interviews, if granted at all in the first place, are often refused publication, often out of the revulsion experienced from listening to their own recollections.

- ⁷ Not only are witness statements recollections of things past, and therefore subject to retrospection, but the context of a criminal or historical investigation itself may provide additional incentives for distorting the truth. This is a factor that must be taken into account by the interviewer. Oral historian Ela Horning discussed her experiences interviewing Austrian soldiers who had fought for the German *Wehrmacht*. She established that many of her interviewees, either consciously or subconsciously, sought to equate the sufferings of the victims of National Socialism with their own privations suffered on the eastern front or during post-war imprisonment. Some of her witnesses had revisionist interests and expectations. They hoped that, with the historian as an ‘accomplice’, their sufferings in Soviet camps could finally become a historically subjective part of history. Thereby they could negate their complicity in the crimes of war and National Socialism. The intention was, Horning concluded, that ‘The culprits should become victims’.

(b) Hitler’s entourage and its post-war evidence

(A) Irving’s misrepresentation of Hitler’s staff as ‘ordinary people’

- ¹ For the sake of simplicity we can distinguish between three main groups in Hitler’s intimate circle:
- Hitler’s own personal staff of valets, servants, secretaries, body guards, and chauffeurs.
 - His social circle, including many well-known Nazi socialites and dignitaries.
 - Hitler’s adjutants and representatives from the various military, ministry, and party organisations.
- ² The distinctions between the three groups were in reality often blurred. As the war ground on Hitler increasingly limited his social circle to his immediate surroundings. Adjutants not only attended official conferences and discussions, but joined Hitler’s evening table alongside visiting officials like Reich Marshal Hermann Göring or Pro-

paganda Minister Joseph Goebbels. The extent to which members of one of the three groups were privy to larger or smaller aspects of Hitler's world varied from individual to individual, according to the position and confidence they enjoyed with Hitler.

- ³ Distinct from these three groups were those who dealt with the logistics of running of the *Führerhauptquartier*: technicians, stenographers, wireless and telephone operators, and the like. They enjoyed a lower security clearance and formed no part of the 'inner circle', save when exercising their official duties.
- ⁴ As early as 1978 Anthony Seldon brought Irving's attention to a very simple but crucial point regarding this group: 'What your so-called "witnesses" recount 30 years after Hitler's death is namely neither original nor spontaneous. These people have had time, at least 30 years long, to justify themselves. Besides they were often in a position where they had to justify themselves.' In notes provided by Irving on the craft of oral history he warned only of the danger that witnesses might exaggerate or boast of their own role, or that of their own organisation. He left unmentioned the constant danger with Nazi witnesses that they might have good grounds to do exactly the opposite, namely to deprecate their own role or deny any knowledge or complicity. Yet it is incumbent on the historian to consider the ulterior motives which a particular witness might have for relating that which he or she has done in the past. A number of aspects of the collective biography are apposite here, aspects which Irving wilfully ignores.
- ⁵ Irving is at pains to represent the group as being composed in some sense of ordinary people. To the journalist Ron Rosenbaum he said "what struck me early on [...] is that you're dealing with people who are educated people. [Hitler] had attracted a garniture of high-level educated people around him. The secretaries were top-flight secretaries. The adjutants were people who had gone through university or through Staff College and had risen through their own abilities to the

upper levels of the military service. So they were educated people with insight. [...] This is the point. These people without exception, spoke well of him. Coming as I did with an as-yet-unpainted canvas, this was really the seminal point, the seminal experience – to find twenty-five people of education, all of whom privately spoke well of him.”

- ⁶ Yet all of these people worked for years amongst the top echelons of the Nazi State. A shared quality amongst Hitler’s staff was a fervent loyalty, reverence and personal devotion towards the person of the Führer, bordering on the sycophantic and fawning. Many of Hitler’s servants and adjutants were ‘old fighters’ from the ‘Time of Struggle’ [*Kampfzeit*] from 1919–1933. Irving himself described Otto Günsche as ‘Hitler’s most faithful bulldog.’ Max Amann was an old First World War comrade of Hitler’s. Wilhelm Brückner and Fritz Wiedemann were both provided for in Hitler’s will of 2 May 1938. Many of them likewise enjoyed high ranks within the SS.
- ⁷ Far from being ordinary people, the term ‘old Nazi’ is apt for many of the survivors of Hitler’s circle. Astrid Lang defined ‘old Nazis’ thus: “People who were functionaries under National Socialism, or to be more precise in the NSDAP and its subsidiary organisations (e.g. the Hitler Youth) as well as former members of the so-called elite units (SA, SS). Most of this circle gloss over the National Socialist era and deny participation in the crimes, if not the crimes of the regime themselves as a whole. ” Three of Hitler’s adjutants will suffice to illustrate this point.
- ⁸ First, Irving has submitted Julius Schaub’s statement at Nuremberg. “Hitler never spoke of the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Question or about the destruction of the Jews in my presence. Such subjects were never talked of in Hitler’s surroundings; neither in the Führerhauptquartier nor elsewhere. Conversations about the KZs [concentration camps] never occurred. I myself learnt nothing of the so-called Jewish Question or a destruction of the Jews until the capitulation.”

- ⁹ Julius Schaub was imprisoned with Hitler in Landsberg after the attempted Putsch of 9 November 1923 and was Hitler's personal servant from 1925 onwards. By all accounts he was one of Hitler's most loyal and trusted confidants. Christa Schroeder described Schaub as 'a mystery-monger par excellence amongst the adjutants. Naturally he was informed about what was happening and he quite obviously enjoyed such situations.' Already in his last will and testament of 2 May 1938 Hitler had provided for Schaub in the event of his death with an intended lump sum of 100,000 Marks and a monthly pension of 500 Mark. His loyalty to Hitler was such that Hitler entrusted Schaub to burn his documents in the *Berghof* after he realised that the war was lost. Questioned at Nuremberg in March 1947 Schaub confirmed that he was still loyal to Hitler. He was also directly involved in killing operations himself. He thus had every reason to minimise Hitler's knowledge of the Holocaust, as well, of course, as his own.
- ¹⁰ Secondly, Franz von Sonnleithner was a Foreign Office adjutant to Hitler and party to the deportation of the Jews of Denmark and Rome to extermination camps in the east. In his post-war memoirs he made little effort to disguise his antisemitism, his resentment at any tarnishing of the German past, and his belief that Nazi crimes were equalled by those of the Allies. 'Today the ability of the Germans to judge has been so distorted that everyone who was loyal to Hitler is considered stupid if not criminal.' His memoirs have a thoroughly tendentious tone. Choosing his words with some care von Sonnleithner implied that the Nuremberg Trial was a Jewish revenge tribunal. He noticed the number of allegedly Jewish names on office doors at Nuremberg and commented: "I thought to myself at the time that I would have considered the Jewish people cleverer than to take such a prominent role in the prosecutor's office as, so to speak, a chorus of revenge. I felt sorry that there were people who would never learn how to conduct

themselves so as to get rid of pent-up aggression. The German people were so affected at the time that they would have jumped at the chance to let bygones be bygones.”

- 12 Elsewhere he wrote: “In Ossweil we were led into a gym to be shown a film about the horrors of the German concentration camps. [...] As humans we naturally felt sorry for our fellow human beings who had suffered any horrible fate, but we equally knew precisely that not only we had conducted the war harshly but that the other side had done a few things which amongst us would certainly have been labelled as war crimes. Besides only a very few of us were responsible for the resulting action.”
- 13 Here too, therefore, we are dealing with an unrepentant, active Nazi who continued after the war to justify the crimes of Nazism and deny all responsibility for them.
- 14 Thirdly, Heinrich Heim was not only one of earliest of Hitler’s followers (old party membership number 1782), but a man his editor described as ‘a convinced national socialist’.
- 15 In notes on Heim made by the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, following the above conversation, the author recorded that ‘...Heim lives in a dream world and still reveres Hitler in a completely unrealistic way.’ Francois Genoud, the copyright holder of many major Nazi documents and himself no stranger to Nazi apologetics, described Heim to Irving in 1971 as ‘an old Nazi’ [*einen alten Nazi*]. Heim apparently wanted to use some of the proceeds from the sales of his book to form a museum in Hitler’s memory in Linz, and continued to be unashamedly antisemitic in his political writings. Again, therefore, his loyalty to Hitler after the war was an important factor in predisposing him to exculpate his leader.

(B) Pressures on Hitler's entourage after the war

- ¹ Although in the formal sense few of Hitler's staff who survived the war were guilty of crimes against humanity (save Hitler's doctor Karl Brandt, Karl Wolff, Otto Dietrich, and SS General Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich), the real or perceived danger of imprisonment hung over those who admitted too much about their actions. As members of Hitler's entourage, the people Irving encountered were considered prominent Nazis immediately after the capitulation. The Allies, like Irving, presumed that people who had spent so much time in Hitler's immediate surroundings could provide them with valuable insights into the workings of the 'Third Reich' and Hitler's mind. The unlucky ones fell into Soviet hands and faced up to a decade of hard labour. Those in the British and American zones were subject to 'automatic arrest', three or four years' internment, and even upon release were immediately subject to *Spruchgerichtsverfahren*, denazification and a catalogue of fines and confiscations.
- ² For instance a BBC team went to film Grand Admiral Dönitz in 1973 after a string of revelations had come out about the navy and himself, particularly his preamble to Himmler's Posen speech of October 1943. Dönitz refused to be drawn on Hitler, in the words of the producer 'as if terrified he would be whipped back into Spandau.' Karl Wolff is another case in point. At the time Irving became aware of Wolff's existence Wolff was a free man, having escaped his 15-year prison sentence on grounds of ill health. Writing about a recent visit to Karl Wolff, Irving's research assistant Elke Fröhlich informed Irving: 'He is definitely of the opinion that Hitler had nothing to do with the Final Solution. Wolff is rather ill though, if not unfit to be imprisoned. His friends are meant to have forbidden him to blab anything more.'
- ³ This fear of prosecution may have been real or imagined, but it certainly must be considered as a possible factor stopping Hitler's staff from telling all. Another factor was peer-group pressure. The 'inner circle' was a close-knit and secretive group after the war. Although rent

by the intrigues and animosities forged in their days under Hitler, they were bound by a devotion to their dead 'boss'. Hitler's former secretary Johanna Wolf explained to James P. O'Donnell, the Berlin *Newsweek* correspondent, that 'I was taught long ago that the very first and last duty of a confidential secretary is to remain confidential.' Another of Hitler's secretaries, Gerda Christian, explained why none of them had remarried after the war: 'How could any of us have remarried, after having known a man like Adolf Hitler?'

- 4 Individuals in the 'inner circle' often fell foul of group constraints and duress, by writing or expressing the wrong ideas. Albert Speer's name became anathema amongst former staff because of his supposed betrayal of Hitler. It is related that Hitler's secretary Christa Schroeder returned a copy of Speer's *Inside the 'Third Reich'* because she had been 'ordered to do so.' Speaking of the circle of the 'formers' [*Ehemaligen*] Christa Schroeder's editor Anton Joachimsthaler wrote: 'Everyone had some sort of notes, but few of them published them because thereby criticisms from the others immediately ensued.' Heinz Linge related that: "A story which irresponsible journalists made up was circulated as the 'Linge report' and did me a lot of damage. Former comrades from Hitler's surroundings turned their backs on me and accused me of making money with completely fictitious claims. [...] Now that I no longer have to fear being put back in prison and penal camp because I served in Hitler's immediate surroundings for ten years, I can hope to be able freely and openly to tell what I witnessed."
- 5 Added to this certain prominent witnesses came under pressure from outside. SS Lieutenant Colonel [*SS-Sturmbannführer*] Wilhelm Höttl of Office VI of the RSHA testified for the prosecution at Nuremberg. Most importantly he stated that Adolf Eichmann had told him that some four million Jews had been murdered in the concentration camps and that a further two million had met their deaths in various other ways. For his sins Höttl entered the black list of revisionists and neo-Nazis. Journalists who interviewed him in the late 1980s explained his cam-

era-shyness. 'The reason is not the fear that he could be compromised by his role in the 'Third Reich'. No, the old SS man is scared. Scared of all people of German neo-Nazis, who consider him a traitor for his statement in the Nuremberg trials and have threatened him for years with obscene letters and postcards.'

- ⁶ It is, moreover, noticeable that very few high Nazis were prone to moral self-examination after the war. Although not in the formal sense criminal, Hitler's staff must have been vaguely aware that what they had actively or tacitly supported was morally reprehensible. Many of them tried to mitigate their guilt or passivity by claiming the overwhelming influence on them of Hitler's charisma and aura. Hans Frank described Hitler as 'a sort of superman' in whom he had believed 'without reservation' and whom he saw as being right 'in all decisive matters'. Hitler's 'power' becomes a self-defence. Their complete submission to the Führer made them blind, trusting and naïve (i.e. they were somehow deceived or tricked by Hitler). This defence implies a recognition of the criminal endeavour which was under way, so that the safest and simplest reflex becomes to deny any knowledge whatsoever. Although this defence may ultimately be incredible, at least it is simple and immune to being prey to internal inconsistencies.
- ⁷ But a third variant is conceivable, one which combines strands of duty to Hitler and a desire to exculpate oneself. By claiming that Hitler himself knew nothing of the 'Final Solution' the logical conclusion is that neither did those in his service. This argument repeats aspects of the first, in that Hitler rather than the individual themselves becomes the misused idealist. It also has a pedigree in the myth, which grew up in the 1930s, 'if only the Führer knew!' This sentiment is common to any number of monarchical or dictatorial systems across the ages. It rests on the presumption that the 'good' ruler is somehow hood-winked by his advisers, otherwise his good nature would oblige him to rectify particular abuses. He has not addressed the abuses therefore logically he does not know of them.

- ⁸ Therefore all of Hitler's staff had any one of many possible vested interests in making exculpatory statements. And so it is. Thus although very few of Hitler's retinue are themselves holocaust deniers, they are all explicit or implicit apologists to varying degrees. This can take a variety of forms. At its most transparent it is the stated intention to rehabilitate Hitler; usually a crude furthering of stock National-Socialist myths, such as a naive reverence of Hitler, either as person, politician, or military leader. At its most benign it is the intention to depict Hitler, not as an historical figure, but as a person. This was a reaction to the tendency in the immediate post-war years to depict Hitler as mad, demonic, or depraved. Heinz Linge, for instance, wrote his memoirs with the express wish to contradict the image of Hitler as a mad 'carpet eater' and a 'psychopath with permanently hysterical reactions'.
- ⁹ This kind of memoir was often content to limit itself to the anecdotal; Hitler the dog lover, Hitler the wit, Hitler the children's friend, Hitler the vegetarian, and so on. It therefore requires the very least of critical acumen to realise that Hitler's staff might have a vested interest in exonerating him. Yet Irving does not waste even a single word to make this fact salient. With good reason, since such exoneration is extremely well suited to his purposes and arguments. That is why, in dealing with them, he chooses not to exercise the critical methods that he regards as so indispensable in other contexts.

(C) Irving's relations with Hitler's entourage

- ¹ How did Irving obtain entry into this close-knit group of people after the war? He described his admission to the circle to Ron Rosenbaum: "In return for collecting documents for the archivist of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, Dr. Anton Hoch, Hoch gave me a lot of help identifying to me the important people and all the addresses of Hitler's private staff, who at the time kept their heads very, very low. They kept down. They were a small circle of very frightened people who were putting up with grave indignities and who had a very tough

time. Christa Schroeder, Hitler's secretary, had been held in prison by the Americans for three or four years, and that is a very unpleasant experience for a young girl. "

- ² Schroeder was the key to the 'magic circle', but his real entry came when he translated the memoirs of Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel. He traced Keitel's son to ask him about ellipses and omissions in the published version of his memoirs. Keitel's son, impressed by Irving and indignant at the German publishers, offered to introduce Irving to Otto Günsche in 1967.
- ³ Gaining access to Hitler's surviving staff and having ferreted out papers from them is an obvious source of pride to Irving: 'Hitler's closest staff (secretaries, adjutants – the "inner ring") spoke only with me and at great length; they refused to talk to [John] Toland, with one or two unimportant exceptions'. Talking of one particular adjutant, Irving said to the journalist Ron Rosenbaum: 'He [Günsche] was Hitler's most faithful bulldog. And he has never spoken to anyone except me. I got ten hours of recordings of Günsche, which he's never given to anyone except me.' This journalistic scoop approach meant that Irving seemingly considered Hitler's staff as exclusively his source. Journalist Gitta Sereny questioned some of those quoted in *Hitler's War* only to be rebuked by him: 'Irving was most upset by the fact that we had spoken with his sources, angrily accusing us of "pressuring his witnesses."' "
- ⁴ At first sight *Hitler's War* appears to have been based on an impressive collection of previously unused sources. Nevertheless it remains pertinent to weigh up the importance of the various sources marshalled and, more importantly, their effect on Irving's interpretation. Irving's most significant discovery was undoubtedly the diary of Walter Hewel, Ribbentrop's Hitler's confidant at the *Führerhauptquartier*. But, as Charles Sydnor commented: "For all his self-congratulation about digging and burrowing in the sources, Mr. Irving's mining efforts have yielded more lead than gold. The collective testimony of those at

Hitler' court, his wartime intimates, minions and attendants, the records of their meetings with him and the records of those who met with Hitler singly and infrequently – however laudable Mr. Irving's efforts to find them all and induce them to talk – are simply inadequate for such a full portrait of Hitler, much less a credible revisionist argument about what he did or did not know, order, do. ”

- ⁵ One critic pointedly said that Irving's over-reliance on such sources meant that *Hitler's War* was nothing more than the 'valet perspective' on Hitler.
- ⁶ Certainly an interpretation which concentrates on such material, inevitably blocks an historical understanding of Hitler and his epoch. It also gives the book its curiously unreal quality. While the readers learn the intimate details of life in the *Führerhauptquartier* they learn nothing of the sufferings of the millions of victims of the horrors of Hitler's war, despite the very title of the book. The book becomes a literary reproduction of the privileged milieu around Hitler, cushioned from the unsavoury and the distressing.
- ⁷ At its kindest therefore, it would be fair to say that Irving in demolishing the alleged myths and 'caricaturing process' surrounding Hitler merely replaces them with further myths and caricatures. But this would be to miss the central point. This is not the result of an unfortunate methodological flaw in Irving's work. In claiming to be merely writing about Hitler's 'inner mind', or describing the man as he was to those around him Irving is thinly disguising his real intention. It is a veiled excuse for his attempt to exonerate Hitler. *Hitler's War* and all the manipulations, bias, and suppressions it involved boil down to this point.
- ⁸ As the 'revisionist' purveyor of Holocaust denial literature, the *Journal of Historical Review*, put it, 'numerous survivors of the Second World War era who are often mistrustful (often with good reason) of establishment historians' are willing to talk to Irving or entrust him with

private papers. Irving himself explained, 'I have interviewed scores of the principal German officers and personnel involved, including many of Hitler's close staff who have hitherto refused to talk to anybody, but who felt able to talk at length to me because of the nature of my previous books ("The Destruction of Dresden", etc.).' Irving gained access to the 'inner circle' where others had not, not because of his supposed objectivity, but precisely because of his sympathetic attitude to Hitler.

- ⁹ But given the continuing devotion of certain members of Hitler's staff to their Führer there is obviously a reverse side to this process: 'Once they'd won your confidence and they knew you weren't going to go and report them to the state prosecutor, they trusted you. And they thought, well, now at last they were doing their chief a service.'
- ¹⁰ It therefore becomes hard to distinguish the more culpable party: Irving as Hitler's 'ambassador', or Hitler's staff who were 'at last doing their chief a service'? The symmetry between Irving's agenda and that of many of those he interviewed is perfect. The resulting history is inevitably tendentious. Seen in this light a piece of advice Irving offered to historians becomes paradigmatic for his revisionism, though presumably not in the way he meant it: 'You need to talk to the people at great length, steep yourself in their way of thinking, and learn to see things through their eyes. The documents take on different meanings.'
- ¹¹ Even so, Christa Schroeder dedicated a whole appendix to her memoirs headed 'Even David Irving who is advertised as "serious" and "upright" is not charmed against [...] imprecisions or however one wants to call it.' Nicolaus von Below wrote in 1980 that he could not understand how Irving could make the assertion in 1975 in *Hitler und seine Feldherren* [*Hitler and his Generals*] that his diaries were 'probably in Moscow' as he and Puttkamer had destroyed them in 1945. Irving repeated his claim in 1991 that the diaries were 'probably' in Moscow without offering an explanation for his continued assertion in the face of von Below's claim to the contrary. Von Below added: "Another com-

ment of I.[rving]'s amazed me. I am meant to have "made unpublished contemporary manuscripts and letters available" and made the effort to – amongst other things – "work through many pages" of "the resulting text". I well remember on a couple of visits from I.[rving] when I answered his questions. But I must categorically deny his claims above and beyond this as not tallying with the truth. "

(D) Conversation in Hitler's inner circle.

- ¹ Before weighing up the sources at hand it is worthwhile to consider the moot point of with whom and to what extent Hitler revealed his thoughts on 'the Jewish question' and the 'Final Solution'. It would seem that, at least in social intercourse, the concrete fate of the Jews was taboo, or at best only alluded to in a general, indirect way. Irving himself has written that "The "Jewish problem" was taboo at the Berghof." The film directress Leni Riefenstahl similarly describes Hitler's absolute refusal to be drawn on the Jewish problem with her. At first glance this would tie in with other known aspects of Hitler's personality – for instance, his refusal to hear of bad news, or his pathological aversion to visiting the retreating fronts, or Germany's bomb-ravaged cities once the tide of war had changed. As the war progressed, Hitler increasingly shunned the company of military men, intellectuals, and bureaucrats: or in other words, people who were liable to bring news and views from the outside world. Gitta Sereny concluded that Hitler's silence was a psychological reflex, and that Hitler tried to stop people in his intimate circle from associating his person with deeds, which would have disturbed the harmony of their relationship.
- ² Bormann's adjutant's Henry Picker, who like Heinrich Heim recorded Hitler's evening 'Table Talk', wrote that: 'Thereby it was astonishing that even on the most exciting days he [Hitler] rarely opined on actual problems of war rather, he could lecture about the harmfulness of smoking or such like, even when in the military conferences before lunch the differences of opinion were explosive.' Heim concurred: "In

assessing Hitler's monologues one thing has to be constantly borne in mind. His need for relaxation and displacement [*Verdrängung*] was such that in the winter months of 1941-2 not a word was said of the huge crisis on the eastern front, the straits of the population in the escalating air war, the supply difficulties, and the initial weakening of Italy. The need for recuperation was no less visible in the memories of the sunlit past, the tales of interesting encounters and experiences, in discussions on questions of art."

- ³ Schroeder claimed that for Hitler, tea evenings were a source of relaxation and that 'nothing political would be spoken of.' "After Stalingrad Hitler could no longer listen to music. From then onwards we spent the evenings listening to his monologues. But it was always the same conversation: his youth in Vienna, the time of struggle, the history of mankind, the microcosmos and the macrocosmos and so on. With most subjects we already knew in advance what he would say, and so the evenings often became quite tiresome. Events in the world or on the front could not be touched upon during the tea times; everything to do with the war was taboo."
- ⁴ By all accounts Hitler was obsessive about secrecy, not only with the destruction of the Jews, but with all state and military secrets. Picker wrote that "At the same time the astonishing thing was that even on the days of the highest tension he hardly ever commented on current war problems. Rather he knew how to chat about the harmfulness of smoking or the like, even when opinions in the military conferences before lunch, before dinner, or at midnight had clashed violently."
- ⁵ Picker added; "In any case it was his skill to present something so effectively to his guests that the harshness and brutality of his attacks, especially against foreign statesmen, the bourgeoisie, church, Jewry, lawyers, and diplomats would be easily overlooked. Nevertheless his ever alert instinct never left him, even whilst highly excited, never to forget to camouflage the things for which those in his company had no

resonance, exactly the same as the wide mass of our population. Take only for example the horrors of the persecution of the Jews, which he veiled with the preparations for the founding of a Jewish national state in Madagascar or inner Africa.”

- ⁶ This desire for secrecy was formalised in Hitler’s ‘Fundamental Order Number 1’ [*Grundsätzlicher Befehl Nr. 1*] of 25 September 1941. It ordered that no member of a party, government, or military agency was to be informed or seek to know more than was required for the enactment of his or her duties.

“

1. No one; no department, no official, no staff, and no worker may learn of a matter which is to be kept secret if they do not absolutely need to know of it for official reasons.
2. No department, no official, no staff, and no worker may learn more of a matter, which is to be kept secret than is absolutely necessary to carry out their duty.
3. No department, no official, no staff, and no worker may learn of a matter which is to be kept secret, or more precisely the part which is necessary to them, sooner than is absolutely necessary to carry out their duty.
4. The thoughtless spreading of decrees, orders, communications whose being secret is of critical importance is forbidden, especially re any sort of general distribution lists. ”

- ⁷ Many of Hitler’s staff cite this order, not to claim that Hitler himself was ignorant of the ‘Final Solution’, but to give a plausible reason for their own ignorance. Schroeder wrote that ‘If Hitler’s ‘Fundamental Order’ ever was strictly followed then it was by Hitler’s personal adjutants. It was always only to be guessed when something special happened or was supposed to happen.’ In her notes on Hitler written for the Nuremberg psychiatrist Douglas M. Kelly, she wrote: “Hitler only needed the secretaries for simple dictation and thereby it was impossible for them to get a full picture of the plan or the success of an operation. This tactic corresponded with Hitler’s principle to never let

anyone know anything that they did not have to know out of necessity. He informed those who really had to be initiated into something only at the moment it was absolutely demanded [...] However this example [the invasion of France] is no exception because all events took place under similar secrecy. Evidently this had to do with the fact that Hitler did not completely trust anyone. I had the impression that Hitler only trusted the individual to a very specifically determined extent, as far as the circumstances and the situation allowed. This universal suspicion on Hitler's part infected his whole staff and resulted in a generally oppressive atmosphere."

- 8 Elsewhere she wrote: "With the same amazing control Hitler could keep secrets. He was convinced that each individual only had to know that which was absolutely necessary to carry out his offices. He often said that "a secret shared by two people is no longer a secret" He never spoke of his secret intentions and plans and also never even gave a hint of an impending operation or such like."
- 9 Both Heinz Linge and Nicolaus von Below agreed. Linge wrote: "Because biological anti-Semitism was one of the main aspects of national socialism, a fact that not only every German certainly experienced in some form or another between 1933 and 1939 even without having read Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' or the 'Stürmer', such comments from Hitler could surprise us least of all. Quite the opposite. Even I, who really should have known more, knew as little as the military about Himmler's special authorities. Hitler's ability consistently to safeguard secrets was without parallel. No one learnt more than he had to know in a particular situation, and no one was excepted, neither Bormann, Himmler and Göring, or [Eva] Braun."
- 10 Von Below said that: "Like many others I believed at the time the excuse given for the deportation of the Jews to the east, a deportation which could not remain unknown, that they were recruited for work detail in tasks important for the war. This seemed perfectly plausible

to me considering the increasing use of domestic and foreign labour potential. I know now that I was subject to a terrible deception. It is inconceivable to me how this mass murder could be successfully covered with the impenetrable veil of secrecy. Nothing forced its attention upon our ears through immediate channels, including through relatives, friends, and comrades, because my family and my wife's family had no Jewish friends or acquaintances, and because we lived in a certain isolation during the war. The 'Führer Order No. 1' of 1941 had effect here. Certain themes were taboo, also in our circle, in a system such as the National Socialist regime with an excellently functioning secret police which did not even stop short of dealing with the military.

- 11 With Irving's unequivocal statement in mind that Hitler's staff '*all* uniformly testified that never once was the extermination of either the Russian or European Jews mentioned [...]', it is interesting that few of Hitler's staff quoted above inferred from this (alleged) silence that Hitler was in any sense ignorant of the 'Final Solution'. In the same sense none of them assumed that Hitler was ignorant of forthcoming campaigns or political events, merely because they remained unmentioned by him. Rather the conclusion was that Hitler's silence and dissembling were part and parcel of his persona.
- 12 The journalist Gitta Sereny contacted five of Hitler's former staff for a 1977 article which took issue with *Hitler's War*, and concluded that '...all stated that while they had indeed told Irving that Hitler had never spoken of the extermination camps in their hearing, none of them was of the opinion that Hitler did not *know* about what was happening to the Jews.' The stenographer cited by Irving conceded his doubts: "In the Führer conferences, which I reported in shorthand, there was never any mention of the atrocities against the Jews. For the present it must remain an unanswered question, whether Hitler himself issued specific orders [...] or whether orders issued in generalised terms were executed by subordinates and sadists in this brutal and vile manner."

(E) The ‘Table Talk’

- ¹ Martin Bormann commissioned his adjutants Heinrich Heim and Henry Picker to make surreptitious notes of Hitler’s table talk. These notes took on a semi-official role. Bormann would work through the notes; correct, reformulate and comment on them. Although marked ‘secret’ the contents of the table talks were passed on to ministers, *Gauleiters* and *Reichsstatthalter* as Hitler’s official line. For instance Alfred Rosenberg received a letter from Bormann on 23 July 1943, repeating all that Hitler had said about the eastern questions a few days previously. The ‘Table Talk’ became embroiled in much legal wrangling at the time of publication, mainly because Picker published parts of Heim’s notes without the latter’s permission, and because the Swiss Nazi François Genoud claimed to be the rightful owner of the document. Of importance is that Picker seems to have toned down some of Hitler’s language and Heim made a habit of omitting all military matters for security reasons. Both are facts that might have had a filtering influence on what was recorded of Hitler’s talk on the fate of the Jews.
- ² Irving has submitted his notes on a conversation between Heinrich Heim and an interviewer from the Munich Institute for Contemporary History as part of his case: “Heim believes” – according to a talk of 17 July 1952 – “that Hitler knew nothing of the happenings in Auschwitz etc. and also would not have sanctioned it.” ... “The whole measure against the Jews is far too doctrinaire, as to have come from Hitler’s mind. In addition Hitler knew about the appalling labour shortages [...]” ... “The whole action fitted Himmler much better. Kaltenbrunner once gave a presentation on the Jewish action, whereupon Hitler had immediately ordered Himmler to stop the measures.” ”

- ³ Against this we can weigh what Schroeder told Gitta Sereny. Sereny mentioned to Schroeder that Heim had told her that he did not think that Hitler knew about the extermination of the Jews. Schroeder is reported as having replied “ Oh Heimchen – he’s too good for this life. Of course Hitler knew! Not only knew, it was *all* his ideas, his orders.”
- ⁴ Henry Picker was rather more circumspect: “Over state secrets, Hitler was totally uncommunicative. He told us nothing in his table talk about the extermination of the Jews in the concentration camps; as late as July 24, 1942, he spoke of setting up a Jewish national state on Madagascar. His conversations nevertheless revealed his deep-rooted and fanatical hatred for all other races.”
- ⁵ He added: ‘The mass murder was completely hidden, even from the majority of the FHQ staff. [...] I ask myself then [because of Himmler’s obsessive secrecy] did Himmler want to spare Hitler a confrontation with the brutal realities of the concentration camps? Or did he want to preserve his [Hitler’s] anonymity [...] as a “desk bound murderer”?’
- ⁶ Hitler’s antisemitism is a constant refrain monologues, and his statements have been quoted at various points in this submission. There is a central ambiguity in Hitler’s private conversations, the same one in fact as in official propaganda. On the one hand the genocide was evoked and rhetorically justified in general terms: but on the other hand the political reality of the genocide, the physical process of carrying it out, was denied and treated as a state secret. In propaganda terms this dichotomy explains the pains that the Nazis took to avoid public discussion about what was happening to the Jews. The Nazis had learned a valuable lesson from the uproar against the euthanasia killings in summer 1941: that they could not take public support for granted. But, although the ‘Final Solution’ was a secret, at least partial public knowledge of what was going on was required to fulfil the basic terror function it was intended to exercise. It was, in other words, a kind of ‘open secret’.

- ⁷ Hitler's coded language and euphemisms mitigated moral responsibility and guaranteed a harmony amongst his guests which certainly would have been strained, if not broken, by an open admission of the fate of the Jews. It also guaranteed that the Hitler myth remain unsullied. As a prophet Hitler could demonstrate his charisma and his ability to bend history to his will, he could also guarantee in this way a measure of personal unaccountability. Hitler saw himself as the agent of deterministic forces, convinced that he knew the 'eternal laws of nature' and that his duty was merely to validate them. These private and public 'prophecies' employed a technique of implicit presuppositions, so that it was the listener who became responsible for what he or she understood from the statement. Vagueness was cultivated because it enhanced uncertainty. A lack of detail avoided uncomfortable discussion. It therefore remains ultimately a subjective question as to what Hitler's individual staff took from these monologues. But, with the benefit of hindsight and the ability to peruse the documentation, few could pretend that despite Hitler's attempts to mask his murderous plans the meaning of such statements was anything short of transparent.

(c) Individuals in the entourage

(i) Double standards in dealing with a source containing material counter to Irving's arguments: the diaries of Gerhard Engel.

- ¹ Amongst the private diaries Irving collected in the course of his research was the diary of Gerhard Michael Engel [1906-1976], army adjutant to Hitler from 1936 to 1943. Irving's research itineraries for December 1970 and February to March 1971 showed his intention to interview Engel. The entry under March reads: '[...] and read his diaries'. His research itinerary for April to May 1971 showed an intention to allot two-and-a-half days out of a total of 5 days in Germany to a visit to Engel's offices in Düsseldorf. In January 1972 he described it as 'a really excellent diary' to prospective publishers Collins.

- ² By the time the diaries were published by the Munich Institute for Contemporary History in 1974, Irving claimed they had long troubled him. He wrote to his research assistant Elke Fröhlich in February 1974 that in late 1972 he had begun to have his doubts, having been warned by Major i. G. Kehrig of the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* of their ‘problematic nature’. In 1979 he lambasted the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, ‘a body which distinguished itself by publishing in 1974 the diary of Gerhard Engel [...] although knowing it to have been faked post-war, as [Professor Martin] Broszat has now conceded to me in a recent letter’. In 1979 he wrote to the German weekly *Die Zeit* defending his dismissal of the diaries, claiming that while the Institute had proven the diaries to be post-war with a chemical analysis as late as 1974, he himself had recognised this as early as the late 1960s, because of ‘discrepancies in the contents’ (a claim contradicted by his letter to Collins of 28 January 1972 and his letter to Fröhlich of 15 February 1974). In 1991 he included the Engel diary amongst those works which sought to ‘pillory’ Hitler after the war. He also wrote in the 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War* that the diaries had unfortunately ‘been published’ although they were written years after the war.
- ³ Irving’s main doubt about the Engel diary is in the dating. He criticised Johannes Fischer’s study of the Stalingrad airlift decision in the journal *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* because it ‘relies too heavily on the since-discredited “Engel diary” for its dates.’ Nevertheless Irving quoted the Engel diary no less than eight times in the 1977 edition of *Hitler’s War*. He also used the very same diary to place Hitler in Berlin on 11 November 1938 during the Night of Broken Glass [*Kristallnacht*]. This would seem to suggest either that he was lying in his letter to *Die Zeit* claiming he had recognised the diaries as forgeries several years earlier, or that he knew the diaries were fakes but used them all the same in 1977 when it suited him.

- ⁴ What are we to make of these contradictory evaluations? It is certainly true that the Engel Diaries are problematic. First and foremost because they are not diaries, but post-war comments and insights hung on to the framework of contemporary notes and diary-like sketches. By the time Engel came to deposit his papers in the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, the original diary had been 'lost'. As Engel's editor explained. Engel kept his diary from Spring 1938 to Autumn 1943. After the war, Engel was often asked to explain various political and military decisions by Hitler, to put particular events into context, and to add detail to the military directions of World War II. Engel developed the habit of writing his answers down parallel to the chronology given in his prewar notes. By the time he deposited his papers in the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, the original notes were no longer extant.' But this was not mischievously hidden from the reader, as Irving implies. Engel's editor introduced the diary as 'a mixture of contemporary substance and memoir' and urged caution on the historian in relying on Engel's dating., as it was no longer possible for either editor or author to distinguish the two source elements from one another: "In some cases the contemporary case will be stronger, in others the product of memory will dominate." Other historians have also expressed their caution when using the Engel diaries. This does not mean that they are in any way 'forgeries'. Regardless of whether they were presented to the Munich Institute for Contemporary History as original diaries or not, they still represent the memories, albeit hung on a diary form, of an insightful observer, who for seven years was privy to Hitler's ruminations and decision-making. It is therefore a source that enjoys equal ranking with any of Irving's other post-war testimonies and certainly should be weighed against them.
- ⁵ One example should suffice to illustrate the quality of Engel's observations on Hitler's role in the Final Solution' On 2 October 1941 Engel placed Hitler at the *Wolfsschanze* in the presence of Chief of the OKW Jodl, Himmler, Heydrich, adjutant Rudolf Schmundt, and later General

Walter Warlimont. “Himmler reports about the evacuation of foreigners (Jews), comes to the situation in the Baltic and Ruthenien, mainly Riga, Reval and Minsk. Raises a question about the Jewish population in Salonika saying that Salonika was a city with one of the largest Jewish communities; danger of an entwinement of Jews and Levantines. F.[ührer] agrees with him and demands that the Jewish elements be removed from S.[alonika] To this end Himmler demands authority and receives it. SD commandos will be deployed with reinforcement. Keitel asks if military command should be engaged. F.[ührer] answers only if urgently need be. But asks Keitel to inform military command that *Reichsführer SS* [Himmler] had received authority that was not to be interfered with. Sch.[mundt] and I happy that armed forces and troops will not become involved.”

- 10.6 Salonika was one of the leading centres of European Jewry, known proudly to its Jewish inhabitants as the ‘Mother of Israel’. After Greece was divided up between the Axis powers the fate of the Jews in the Italian and German-controlled areas diverged sharply. The Italians successfully resisted all German pressures to introduce antisemitic measures and the Germans were forced to go ahead with preparations for the ‘Final Solution’ in the areas they controlled, first and foremost in Salonika.
- 11 7. The first public action against the Jews *en masse* took place in July 1942 when the army commander of northern Greece, General von Krenzski, mobilised the city’s Jewish population for forced civilian labour. The great Jewish cemetery of Salonika was demolished in December. Adolf Eichmann appointed his ‘Jewish expert’ Dieter Wisliceny to direct the planned deportations. In early February 1943 Wisliceny and his colleague Alois Brunner arrived in Salonika. With the help of the military administration ghettos were created pending the deportations which began in March with the arrival of a police unit from Belgrade. The majority of Salonika’s Jews were deported between 15 March and early June, although the last transport left in early Au-

gust. Almost all of the transports were destined for Auschwitz. Of the 48,974 Jews who arrived there from northern Greece as a whole, 37,386 were immediately gassed.

- ⁸ According to Himmler's recently published appointments diary, Himmler was on a tour in the occupied Eastern territories and at Kiev on 2 October 1941, so he could not have been in Hitler's headquarters as Engel claimed. However, while the published version of Engel's 'diaries' gives 2 October, the date in the original transcript is 2 November. On 2 November 1941, Himmler was indeed present at Hitler's headquarters, as corroborated by two separate sources. This turns the possibly problematic nature of Engel's entry into a crucial source for Hitler's knowledge of the fate of the Jews in the East. It also renders Engel more credible and reliable as a witness. We must recall at this point that in the long extract above, now dated to 2 November 1941, Engel recorded that Himmler was reporting to Hitler personally about the 'evacuation' of Jews to Riga and Minsk, and that these two towns were the scenes of mass killings of Jews deported from the German Reich at precisely this time. It strains credulity to imagine that Hitler remained ignorant of what was happening to German Jews in Riga and Minsk when Himmler reported to him on 2 November as reported by Engel.
- ⁹ The dating in the 'diaries' has thus certainly become confused, but with a little patience it is possible to disentangle it. Engel made two visits to the Institute for Contemporary History: one in 1959 and another in 1960. On both occasions he read extracts of his 'diary' to staff at the institute, from the recordings of which transcripts were drawn up. These presumably formed the basis of the published edition. In 1959 he read out the entries up to and including 26 August 1942, and in 1960 further entries 'including' those entries from 'the entire second volume' from 30 August 1942. It was left to the staff of the Institute to reconstruct the chronology, as Engel on his second visit returned to earlier entries missed out on his first visit.

- ¹⁰ The Engel files in the Institute include Engel's 'original' shorthand notes of his manuscript memoir/diary (hence Engel's role in reading out his notes to staff): one set of copies from microfilmed originals, one set of copies from paper originals, and the Institute's typed transcripts of Engel's two visits, corrected by hand.
- ¹² Irving chose to ignore what Engel related to him when Irving interviewed him on 5 April 1971. According to Irving's own notes of the interview with Engel, when asked about Hitler's "association [sic.] with the Judenausrottung [extermination of the Jews] he confirmed broadly Karl Wolff's statements, and added that the 'Führerbefehl' frequently resulted from remarks F[ührer] made at his late discussions, wo 'Hitler dozierte Stundenlang' [where 'Hitler lectured for hours'] (he referred to the Hewel Tagebuch [diary] as proof.) He never summarised the conclusions of these discussions. Each was left to pick his own meat from the talk – Himmler in his way, quiet, but efficient (that was how the 3/4 million strong Waffen SS had been born) and Bormann more crudely, issuing edicts on Party notepaper, beginning, 'Der Führer had befohlen...' [The Führer had ordered...], etc..²⁶" In other words, Engel, precisely in the context of being asked by Irving about Hitler and the 'Final Solution', offered a lucid explanation of the mechanics of how Hitler's orders were formulated, an account collaborated by others on Hitler's staff, as we shall see later in this Report. Rather than confront the account and all that implied for his arguments about Hitler, Irving chose to ignore it.
- ¹³ In conclusion, it is clear that Engel's diaries have demonstrable weaknesses; but they also have demonstrable strengths. These can be identified only in a cas-by-case critique of the individual entries, in each case carefully comparing the shorthand originals, the typed transcripts, and the final published version and checking them against other relevant sources. Irving had free access to the original shorthand diaries. He was in a position to confirm those entries if he had care to do so. Instead, he chose to dismiss the whole source out of hand, rather

than doing the hard work of detailed comparison; and he clearly chose to do this because it contradicted his *a priori* thesis about Hitler's role in the 'Final Solution'. As illustrated by the above discussion, the Engel diary is in fact a significant historical source on Hitler and the extermination of the Jews. No serious historian can sweepingly dismiss it out of hand in the way Irving has done.

(ii) Uncritical treatment of a biased source favourable to Irving's argument: the diaries of Wilfred von Oven

- ¹ It is enlightening to once again consider the dynamics of Irving's source criticism. As a pendant to Irving's rejection of the Engel diary he has long been happy to use the 'diary' of Wilfried von Oven, *Mit Goebbels bis zum Ende* (Buenos Aires, 1949-50). In his biography of Goebbels he justified this with the following: "Oven's 'diary' was evidently written up only after the war [...] His dates are often late [...] Some parts, e.g. J[oseph] G[oebbels]'s views on Gauleiter Weinrich and the entry of Jun[e] 5-6, 1944 seem derived from Rudolf Semler (whose 'diary' had been published in London in 1947 ...). There are syntactical oddities [...] However Oven probably did use contemporary notes [...]"
- ² In other words exactly the same 'problems' as Irving took to task in the Engel diary. Why then might Irving criticise one diary and remain content with the other?
- ³ Wilfred von Oven was Propaganda Minister Goebbels's last adjutant, and spent some of the post-war era in Argentina. At the time of composing his diaries von Oven was contributing to *Der Weg*, a German language newspaper started in June 1947 with strong antisemitic leanings. Fellow founder and contributor to *Der Weg* was the 'unrestrained antisemite' Johann von Leers. Since the 1970s von Oven has been the editor of *Deutschland in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Grabert Verlag) and a writer for the *Deutsche Monatsheft* and the *Huttenbrief für Volkstum, Kultur, Wahrheit und Recht*.

- ⁴ *Deutschland in Geschichte und Gegenwart* is an extremist, right wing quarterly journal, whose authors included Holocaust deniers Robert Faurisson and Wilhelm Stäglich. The *Huttenbriefe* is the publication of the *Freundeskreis Ulrich von Hutten*, a 1982 creation of the former Socialist Reich Party [*Sozialistische Reichspartei - SRP*] leader Otto Ernst Remer (the SRP was constitutionally banned in 1952 as neo-Nazi). Von Oven was an activist in the Belgian AGIR, which had close links to the German *Volk und Heimat*. He is also a regular contributor to Dr. Gerhard Frey's newspapers, leader of the German People's Party [*Deutsche Volkunion*].
- ⁵ In 1997 von Oven was awarded the 'Ulrich-von-Hutten-medal' by Germany's largest extreme right-wing cultural-political association, the 'Society for Free Journalism' [*Gesellschaft für freie Publizistik*]. This was set up in 1960 by former Nazi Party and SS members as a public forum to combat what it alleged were distorted portrayals of National Socialism in German history, and to demand a revision of the 'dominant doctrine' about the origins of the Second World War. Previous prizewinners included Ribbentrop's widow Annelies von Ribbentrop. Perhaps rather predictably the circle closes itself neatly. The Society's yearly congresses offer apologists for National Socialism an open platform. Past speakers have included revisionists and Hitler admirers Robert Hepp, Peter Dehoust, Hans-Dietrich Sander, Adolf von Thadden, and Emil Schlee. And of course Irving.
- ⁶ Irving regards Von Oven's diary as unproblematic, because Von Oven is an apologist for Nazism, and therefore acceptable to Irving; Engel is critical, and therefore is not. The nature of the two sources is almost exactly the same.

(iii) Suppression of relevant information: the memoirs of Nicolaus von Below

- ¹ In the documentation presented by Irving, von Below is quoted, in a note headed by Irving ‘Destruction of the Jews: nothing known of it in the FHQu.’, as having said: “The measures against the Jews that became known after the war were never the object of official discussions. Neither do I remember any private conversations about the subject. I did not even know the names of the persons named in the meantime in court cases as organisers of the destruction of the Jews, such as Eichmann, [Rudolf] Hoess etc. None of them were ever present in the *Führerhauptquartier*.”
- ² This was an affidavit given in April 1948 in defence of a fellow member of Hitler’s staff, press spokesman Otto Dietrich.
- ³ Yet in March of the same year von Below had been more open with his interrogators. The following exchange about the systematic murder of Russian Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen* is included in the same files as the above statement: “Question: I’m talking about the activities of the SD *Einsatzgruppen*, that is the people who carried out the shooting of Jews on the basis of the Führer order. You think that you first learnt about it immediately after the beginning of the war [with Russia]? Answer: Approximately. Anyway I learnt that about these *Einsatzgruppen* that they existed. Where and what they individually did, that I also didn’t learn of. Question: Did you know about this Führer order? Answer: No, that’s a matter that was agreed between HITLER and HIMMLER.”
- ⁴ The question was repeated: “Question: When did you first learn that these Commandos had executed Jews? Answer: I learnt that in Summer 1942. Question: Can you still remember the occasion? Answer: During some meeting or another as we were in the Winizza headquarters [Hitler’s headquarters in the Ukraine]. Question: What was the re-

action like? Answer: We were surprised and we regarded it as unwelcome and inhuman. There was at the time a very strong opposition to this question, but nothing could be done against it.”

- ⁵ None of this is mentioned by Irving. In other words, Irving has filleted from the files the material that fitted his argument, but suppressed that which did not. Moreover it is hard to overlook that nowhere in the affidavit of April 1948 did von Below say that Hitler did not know about the ‘Final Solution.’
- ⁶ In his memoirs von Below was again rather more circumspect, admitting that he should have realised what the fate of the European Jews was, if he had pondered more carefully. He described the ‘many evening conversations by the fire’ where Hitler ‘spoke a lot of his ideas of the state which would one day rule Europe. His aim was to combat Jews and Bolsheviks and to destroy their influence on world events in every form.’ Von Below found that Hitler’s ‘repeated antisemitic attacks made a particularly embarrassing impression on me.’ “Naturally after the war and from some conversations whilst imprisoned I gathered circumstantial evidence together which should have actually even then given me cause for thought, such as Hitler’s ever increasing antisemitic outbursts towards the end of the war, or casual remarks by higher SS leaders.”
- ⁷ But, whilst disclaiming any actual knowledge of the ‘Final Solution’, von Below made clear who he thought was ultimately responsible: “Nevertheless I am completely convinced, even without written evidence, that the extermination of the Jews originated in an express instruction from Hitler, because it is inconceivable that Himmler and Göring would have undertaken such a thing without his knowledge. Certainly Himmler did not inform Hitler in every detail, but he acted in this matter with his approval and in complete accordance with him.”

- ⁸ Von Below also made clear that reports of atrocities did seep through to the *Führerhauptquartier* and to Hitler's staff. "During the residence in the camp in Winniza a terrible report reached me one day. A young lieutenant from the FHQ intelligence service told me that he had been witness to a mass execution near Winniza. Whilst laying connections he came across a troop of SS men in a large hollow, who were busying themselves with shooting a number of men and women. This action had made a horrifying impression on him and he had to report it. I spoke to the SS leader's representative, *Gruppenführer* [Karl] Wolff about the event and asked him to investigate it and report to me. After a few days he gave me an evasive answer to my question, referring to acts of sabotage in the rearward area. But he requested that I take no further steps. I was satisfied and did not follow the matter up. I never heard anything again of similar actions in the following months and years."
- ⁹ It is important to note how the events described in 1948 have become dislocated in this account.
- ¹⁰ For what originally was an action that – in the 1948 affidavit – had come to von Below's attentions in a general form through official meetings in the *Führerhauptquartier*, now – in the later memoirs – becomes a divorced one-off atrocity reported at second hand. In the 1948 document the *Einsatzgruppen* killings had, according to von Below caused a general and prolonged unease amongst a number of members of staff; in his later memoirs he is supposedly tricked by Himmler's adjutant into letting the matter rest. Thus von Below argues away the guilt implicit in his 1948 confession.
- ¹¹ It should be remembered that von Below was also witness to Hitler's last political testament, composed hours before he killed himself. The document bristled with antisemitism and at least one point Hitler was brutally clear about the fate of the Jews of Europe: "I also made it quite plain that, if the nations of Europe are again to be regarded as mere

shares to be brought and sold by those international conspirators in money and finance, then Jewry, the race which is the real criminal in this murderous struggle, will be saddled with the responsibility. I further left no one in doubt that this time millions of Europe's Aryan peoples would not die of hunger, millions of grown men would not suffer death, nor would hundreds of thousands of women and children be allowed to be burnt and bombed to death in the towns, without the real criminal having to atone for his guilt, even if by more humane means."

- ¹² Hitler left his audience, including von Below, in no doubt whatsoever about the fate of the Jews who had fallen into the hands of the Nazis during the war. Irving read von Below's then unpublished memoirs whilst researching *Hitler's War*, yet did not feel that it was incumbent upon himself to qualify his statement that nothing was known about the 'Final Solution' in the *Führerhauptquartier*.

(iv) Manipulation of two further affidavits: Karl Jesco von Puttkamer and Wilhelm von Brückner.

- ¹ Irving has presented two other affidavits, or better said his own index card notes on the same, in defence of press spokesman Otto Dietrich's in 1948 during Nuremberg trial number 11, the so-called 'Ministries Case' [*Wilhelmstraße-Prozess*]. One is from Admiral Karl-Jesco von Puttkamer, Navy adjutant to Hitler, [1935-1938, and 1939-1945] and one from SS Lieutenant-General [*SS-Obergruppenführer*] Wilhelm Brückner, Hitler's head adjutant [dismissed October 1940]. Both adjutants did indeed deny any knowledge of the 'Final Solution', but Irving has in both cases omitted sentences that in fact make clear that both men thought Hitler at least sanctioned if did not order the murder. Karl-Jesco von Puttkamer declared that: "The measures against the Jews that first became known to me after the collapse of 1945 were never privately or officially discussed. This was not possible for the very reason that

knowledge of these things must have been restricted to very few people, who I naturally can not name individually. Names like Auschwitz and Majdanek were completely unknown.”

- ² So far Irving’s own notes. But von Puttkamer added a crucial sentence that Irving chose to overlook: “I can state with certainty that Dr. Dietrich knew nothing of such things. Because of his [Dietrich’s] sensitive nature Hitler would have completely oppressed him with the knowledge of it, and Hitler, who knew precisely this quality in Dr. Dietrich, took care, alone on these grounds, not to initiate him.”
- ³ Quite the opposite to an exculpation of Hitler, von Puttkamer’s affidavit indicates Hitler as the man who chose whom to take into his confidence about the ‘Final Solution.’
- ⁴ Wilhelm von Brückner stated that ‘Hitler never talked in my presence about the so-called final solution of the “Jewish question” or “extermination of the Jews”. This applied equally to the whole of Hitler’s surroundings.’ Crucially von Brückner added: ‘These questions were probably left to the close and competent circle, to which Dietrich did not belong.’ Nowhere did von Bruekner deny Hitler’s presence in this close circle that von Brückner identified as responsible for the ‘extermination of the Jews.’

(v) Manipulations and suppressions: the evidence of Hitler’s stenographers.

- ¹ The order of the day at the *Führerhauptquartier* was determined by the staff war conferences that were held twice daily. As a result of an altercation between Hitler and General Alfred Jodl in September 1942, in which Jodl quoted Hitler’s own orders in defence of a subordinate general, Hitler ordered that henceforth all military conferences were to be stenographically recorded and written up as protocol. This record served the double purpose of protecting Hitler against any false interpretation of his orders, but equally to establish for posterity the mis-

takes of his incorrigible generals, secure in the belief in his own military infallibility. The Stenographic Service [*Stenographischen Dienst im Führerhauptquartier*] eventually consisted of some 103,000 sides of written protocol, which were deliberately destroyed at the end of the war. All that was recovered from the ashes were the partial remains of around 50 conferences, less than one percent of the original. The stenographers were immediately set to work by the Americans to reconstruct the remaining fragments. The almost complete destruction of the protocol and the method of reconstruction make the source a problematic one.

- ² Irving claimed in *Hitler's War* that 'all' the surviving members of the stenographic service were 'closely interrogated' about Hitler's involvement in 'the Jewish atrocities' [*sic*]. Irving has provided the court with a number of documents pertaining indirectly to the stenographic service, including his correspondence with Horace A. Hansen, the Chief Prosecutor of the War Crimes Trial at Dachau. Hansen wrote to Irving in 1974, informing him that he possessed written statements by the stenographers Buchholz, Jonuschat, Krieger, Reynitz and Thöt made in connection with the War Crimes Trials held in Dachau. These are presumably the interrogations referred to in *Hitler's War* and elsewhere in documents provided to the court. Irving has not seen fit to include the actual statements given by members of the stenographic service, nor has he included details of his interviews with Krieger, Peschel, or Thöt. Peschel, for instance, informed Irving that 'naturally I would have something to say on the subject [Hitler and the Jews]', but Irving has not seen fit to disclose the further correspondence, making it impossible to ascertain what Peschel did or did not hear.
- ³ When the documents themselves are examined it becomes clear that far from being 'closely interrogated about Hitler's involvement in the Jewish atrocity' Hitler's stenographers gave loosely formulated statements to Hansen. Three of them chose not to mention the Holocaust at all.

- ⁴ As an example Irving gave a note he claimed he had found amongst Krieger's private papers dated 13 December 1945 which read (the ellipse is Irving's): "In the Führer conferences which I reported in shorthand there was never any mention of the atrocities against the Jews. For the present it must remain an unanswered question, whether Hitler himself issued specific orders ... or whether orders issued in generalised terms were executed by subordinates and sadists in this brutal and vile manner."
- ⁵ This is a stylistically improved version of the statement which Krieger gave to Hansen. The ellipses in Irving's footnote are revealing. In the original version Krieger wrote: "I wish to state that in the meetings with the Führer, written down by shorthand by me, never those atrocities against Jews or prisoners of concentration camps were mentioned, which I myself and the other stenographers, and, surely, the most German people only learned after the end of the war. It remains a problem first unsolved whether Hitler himself issued the orders of such cruelties or authorised men as Himmler or Bormann to do so or whether generally held orders were carried out by subordinate organs and sadists in such a brutal and vile manner."
- ⁶ It is impossible to fathom from Irving's records whether Krieger wrote two versions on the same day, one in faulty English and one fluent, or whether these 'improvements' came from Irving's pen. The difference between the two versions is subtle but important. The sentence 'It remains a problem first unsolved whether Hitler himself issued the orders of such cruelties or authorised men as Himmler or Bormann to do so or whether generally held orders were carried out by subordinate organs and sadists in such a brutal and vile manner' obviously puts more emphasis on Hitler's decisive role than the sentence 'For the present it must remain an unanswered question, whether Hitler himself issued specific orders ... or whether orders issued in generalised terms were executed by subordinates and sadists in this brutal and vile manner.' But Irving also failed to quote the following sentence that

weighs even more heavily against his argument: 'But on the other hand it seems impossible that Hitler who always consulted with his advisers, did not know these important affairs.' This is another manipulation of the source material.

- ⁷ Irving also decided to suppress comments by Buchholz: "The treatment of political prisoners in concentration camps was never discussed in the briefings with Adolf Hitler at which I was present. The reason lies in the fact that the question did not immediately concern the conduct of the war but was of a police and administrative character. Therefore, the Führer did not mention this matter to his military. [...] The circle of those in the know had been kept very small, and the topic was also not touched upon unofficially, for reasons which I fully understand only now. I am convinced that such questions have always been treated between the Führer and the Reichsführer SS Himmler in strict confidence. Especially in the last half year, such conversations between these two often took place, usually before or after a briefing at which Himmler appeared."
- ⁸ Likewise Irving failed to bring his reader's attention to the opinion of stenographer Ewald Reynitz: 'I even doubt whether he [Hitler] personally knew all about the concentration camp atrocities to the last shocking detail. But I am honestly convinced that he would have approved them following his general philosophy that the end justifies the means,'
- ⁹ Only by dint of these manipulations and suppressions could Irving claim the statements by Hitler's stenographers as evidence for a conclusion that was not only unsupported by the sources he quoted, but openly contradicted.

(vi) Double standards in the evaluation of evidence: the memoirs of Karl Wilhelm Krause

- ¹ Krause was personally chosen by Hitler to be his manservant. He started work in the *Obersalzberg* in September 1934. Irving has presented an extract from Krause's memoirs to support the quote in *Hitler's War* that Hitler's orders were brutally carried out by Bormann and Himmler, without Hitler's knowledge because 'Hitler lived in a world of his own – he liked to believe in good rather than evil of people.' The full extract runs: "One told us also that only people were put there [presumably the concentration camps] who were really guilty of an offence, but on the other hand not so grave that one could immediately punish them with prison or penal servitude. For me personally it is still today a complete mystery how secretly the whole thing must have been handled by the highest authorities, that one knew absolutely nothing about it. It was only then possible that very, very few people knew about it and they really let nothing be known of it. I want to maintain once again that this affair, and also the fight against the church, originated with Bormann and Himmler. They only reported to Hitler in as far as they felt it necessary to properly fan the flames. Undoubtedly one also left Hitler in the dark about the real conditions in the camps, and otherwise only informed him of the best side. – If one asks me how I come to this view then I say: I infer it because many small instances were known to me in which it would be explained: "the Führer has commanded, or more precisely ordered..." when I knew precisely that Hitler had not the faintest idea of it. Thereby though it had to do with personal matters and which hardly interested wider circles. Nevertheless they throw a light on the way certain wirepullers were in the habit of treating Hitler's name. To give only one example, Bormann came to Munich one time and reported on the situation in Warsaw. A secret radio transmitter existed in the ghetto that was in contact with abroad. Hitler thought and said that if the report were true then punitive intervention would have to be undertaken. However there was no clear-cut order. It remained up to Bormann, Himmler, and the commander of

Warsaw, how punishment would take place. It can be added in this context that Hitler lived in a sort of illusory world. He believed good rather than evil. If for example one told him that the SS had wreaked havoc in such-and -such-a-place he answered that his boys did not do such things, and if they really had done then nothing remained but to punish them.” Irving’s interpretation in this respect is almost identical to Krause’s.

- ² Although Krause’s memoirs are entitled ‘Hitler’s Valet, 1934-1943’ he remained Hitler’s manservant only until 10 September 1939, when he was fired for lying to Hitler. In other words, apart from the first week and a half of the occupation policy in Poland, Krause was no longer privy to Hitler’s thoughts and actions. As of 1 March 1940 he returned to the Navy and took part in the battle for Norway. He was commandeered to the *Liebestandarte SS Adolf Hitler* (LSSAH) as an *Oberscharführer* of the Waffen-SS on 2 November 1940 and, in December 1943, was sent to the front with the 11th. SS tank division ‘Hitler Jugend’.
- ³ Yet again we are confronted by Irving’s double standards. From the passage above it is clear that Hitler’s supposed innocence was merely inferred by Krause from small personal incidents. But Irving himself has told the court: ‘A scrupulous historian is not impressed by what sources either “imagine” or profess themselves incapable of “imagining.”’ Neither does the passage necessarily disallow of other interpretations. Hitler’s phrase that ‘his boys’ did not do such things falls squarely in to the repertoire of Hitler’s evasions. Krause’s example of the radio transmitter concluded: ‘However there was no clear-cut order. It remained up to Bormann, Himmler, and the commander of Warsaw, how punishment would take place.’ As will be discussed below this does not exclude the fact that this was a deliberate facet of Hitler’s personal style of leadership, and that he anticipated the very ramifications Krause saw as an abuse.

(vii) Deliberate suppression of relevant evidence: the testimony of Heinz Linge

- ¹ Heinz Linge [1913-1980] was an SS Captain and Hitler's personal servant from 1935-1945. His testimony is one of the more important pieces of evidence from Hitler's personal entourage; Irving has long been aware of it, but chooses not to use it. What does it reveal? Re-counting events surrounding the invasion of Poland Linge wrote: "At the time of the Polish campaign Hitler remarked some time that already the impressions gained during drives through the country demanded that the Jewish question be solved as soon as possible, also in Poland as an area of German influence from now on. Although the Jews in Poland had not exercised any particularly great influence in politics it was necessary to take more consequential drastic measures in this respect than had been envisaged in the Reich in the Nuremberg Laws. The ghettos being prepared in Lublin and Lodz were not enough. Evidently he had not planned this far in advance, probably not even thought about it, because in his discussions with the deputy Danzig Gauleiter Arthur Greiser and the Gauleiter Albert Forster, neither he nor they held unified views. He said though that the Franconian Forster was too soft, in contrast to Greiser, that he did not know the Poles, and that he advocated a politically naive "Army attitude of a necessarily lenient Poland policy". But he trusted Greiser and above all Heinrich Himmler who had had to first install a very harsh and rigorous police chief in Danzig."
- ² This collaborates the thoughts which, as the report has already noted, were recorded by Engel that the conquest of Poland was a caesura in Hitler's thinking on how the 'Jewish Problem' best be solved. 'Originally it had only been within his power to break the power of the Jews only in Germany, now the aim must be to eliminate the Jewish influence in the whole domain of the Axis.[...] He thought about some things differently now, not exactly more friendly.'

- ³ Albert Forster was the *Gauleiter* of the newly created Danzig-West Prussia, Arthur Greiser *Reichsstatthalter* of the newly created Warthegau. Both areas were incorporated into the German Reich: the Warthegau with approximately 400,000 Jews, Danzig-West Prussia with some 30-40,000. Although Foster was responsible for the expulsion and murder of Poles, Jews, and the mentally ill, he had been in constant conflict with Himmler and Himmler's Head of Police in Danzig, Hildebrandt, since 1937. The simmering conflict centred on Forster's competence and methods in the 'Germanisation' The men's mutual dislike was an open secret in Nazi circles: Forster is famously meant to have said of Himmler: 'If I looked like him, I would not speak of race at all.'
- ⁴ The Warthegau's large Jewish population made it one of the centre points of Jewish policy in the newly expanded Reich. Greiser managed to maintain good relations with Himmler and engaged himself energetically to solve the 'Jewish Problem' in his Gau. As early as September 1939 he took part in RSHA discussions and tried to start deporting the Warthegau Jews under the aegis of Himmler's deportation order of 30 October 1939. The project soon fell foul of Hans Frank of the General Government, whose area was seen as a dumping ground for deported Reich Jews. Frank managed to block Greiser's early strenuous efforts to deport the Warthegau Jews to the General Government, but Greiser remained tenacious in his claim that Frank was obliged to take them.
- ⁵ Greiser turned to a short-term program of ghettoisation of the Jewish population, notably the ghetto of Lodz. As the possibility of deportation receded into the future, Greiser developed a dual policy of exploiting the ghettos, whilst allowing the weak and infirm to die of the rigours of hunger and disease. The murder of the Jews in his *Gau* was discussed in summer of 1941. Building at Chelmno, the first death camp in Poland, began in November 1941, and the first gassing took place on 8 December with a gas van and staff of the former euthanasia action. Ac-

cording to Polish sources more than 300,000 people were murdered at Chelmno between December 1941 and April 1943. Between 1939 and 1945 some 630,000 Poles and Jews were murdered or expelled from the Warthegau and replaced by 537,000 Volksdeutsche. Linge testified to the fact that the Führer's will was for the harsher of the two policies in occupied Poland. It also shows Hitler's dislike of half-measures and his trust in those advocating his more radical line, in this case Himmler and Greiser.

- ⁶ Linge also recounted Hitler's thinking during his last days in Berlin. "What appeared to me to be most remarkable was what Hitler said about the Jews in the last weeks and days of his life. Contrary to his earlier remarks in speeches etc., in which he always spoke of the 'Jewish race', he now said that seen genetically and anthropologically such a thing as a Jewish race did not exist and that we only spoke of a Jewish race 'out of linguistic convenience'. Jewry did not represent a particular race, but rather a spiritual community, which not least embodied their common fate of persecution since time immemorial. Yet even this interpretation led to the assertion that Jewry, whose existence he interpreted as 'the wretched superiority of the spirit over the flesh', were responsible for all disasters in history, and that one day they would be brought to book. He had made a start of the extermination of Jewry, from whom humanity had to be 'freed'. There could be no question of a principled turning – away from his doctrine. I was as none the wiser than I was before."
- ⁷ This ties in and strengthens what we have already cited from Hitler's last will and testament. Irving read Heinz Linge's memoirs in the course of his researches for *Hitler's War*. But he chose not to use them, because what they revealed of Hitler's views ran directly counter to the argument he wished to put forward.

(vii) Deliberate suppression of evidence: the annotation of Hans Pfeiffer

- ¹ Hans Pfeiffer [d. 1944] was one Hitler's staff officers from October 1939 until his death. On 29 December 1942 Himmler presented Hitler report number 51 in a series on SS so-called anti-partisan operations [*Meldungen an den Führer über Bandenbekämpfung*]. The report detailed the number of Soviet partisans captured and executed between August and November 1942. It contained a section on 'partisan helpers and suspected partisans' [*Bandenhelfer und Bandenverdächtige*] which had a separate section for 'executed Jews' [*Juden executiert*]. Of a total of 386,033 people shot, the report separately lists 363,211 'Jews executed'. The report was typed up on the 'Führer typewriter' (so-called because of its large type to compensate for Hitler's bad eyesight) and bore the annotation 'presented 31/12' in Hans Pfeiffer's handwriting and with his initials. Irving himself mentions this report on page 436 of *Hitler's War*, minus the annotation, thus giving the impression that Hitler did not read the report, whereas in fact the typewriter and annotation indicate that Hitler was expecting the report, and people in his entourage knew he was receiving it.

(ix) Suppression of relevant information: the diary of Otto Bräutigam

- ¹ Otto Bräutigam was a diplomat and subordinate to Alfred Rosenberg in the latter's newly created Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories [*Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete* or *Ostministerium*], responsible for the civilian administration of the occupied east (initially the two Reich Commissariats Ostland and the Ukraine). Bräutigam became the *Ostministerium's* representative to the Army High Command, and later to Army Group A [*Heeressgruppe A*]. In 1956 when Bräutigam was head of the eastern section of the West-German Foreign Office, the East-German authorities published his war diaries. A critical edition of the same diary was published in 19879.

- ² A single episode will illustrate the fact that Hitler's adjutants were not merely passive witnesses to Hitler's thoughts. Rosenberg had heard that on 28 August 1941 the Soviet Head of State, Kalinin, had ordered that the 400,000 Volga Germans be deported to Siberia. Bräutigam noted in his diary that 'it was clear that a large number would not survive the banishment, or even the transportation.' Rosenberg urged Hitler to approve the immediate deportation of German Jews in retaliation. What applied to the *Volksdeutsche* certainly applied to the Jews. Rosenberg's proposal calculated the fatal consequences of transporting Jews to the east, independently of the direct preparations for extermination. Bräutigam brought Rosenberg's proposal to Hitler's *Wolfsschanze* in East Prussia. He recorded in his diary: "As a reprisal the *Reichsleiter* [Rosenberg] had considered the deportation of all central European Jews to those eastern territories which are in our control. I received telegraphed orders to induce the Führer to approve this project [...] Finally I found Colonel Schmundt, and to my great surprise he immediately asked for the memorandum, saying that it was something very important and urgent which the Führer was very interested in."
- ³ The next day Bräutigam was informed that the matter would be personally discussed between Hitler and Ribbentrop. A meeting duly took place on 17 September.
- ⁴ Leaving aside speculation about the exact role of Rosenberg's suggestion in the formulation and timing of a final order to exterminate the Jews of Europe, the entry is important for a number of reasons. It shows that Hitler's adjutants (in this case Schmundt) were well-informed about current measures against the Jews. Indeed Schmundt was well enough informed about Hitler's thoughts that he could decide, on his own initiative, that Rosenberg's idea was 'something very important and urgent which the Führer was very interested in.' It again shows Hitler's position as the ultimate recipient of information as well as adjudicator.

- ⁵ It also demonstrates the inherent problem with Nazi memoir literature and reminiscences. Needless to say Bräutigam made no mention of Rosenberg's proposal or his own part in it in his official memoirs. Neither did he mention his knowledge of the notorious pogrom in Kowno in his official memoirs. Yet in his diary for 11 July 1941 he wrote: 'With our tacit permission numerous Jewish pogroms were undertaken by the Lithuanian police.'
- ⁶ Bräutigam's diary is well known to Irving. It is listed as 'DI-97' amongst his own microfilm records [*Irving Collection*] lodged at the Institute for Contemporary History. He also used it as an example to illustrate the historian Charles Sydnor's 'sad ignorance of the wider archival sources available' on Hitler in reply to a critical review of *Hitler's War*. Once again Irving saw no reason even at least to qualify his statement that none of Hitler's staff heard the 'Final Solution' mentioned at the *Führerhauptquartier*.

(x) Misrepresentation of source material: the evidence of Hitler's secretary

- ¹ Christa Schroeder [d. 1984] was Hitler's personal secretary from 1933 to 1945. Irving interviewed her a number of times and remained in contact with her until her death. This contact is an obvious source of pride for Irving who has superfluously presented the court with a number of letters and postcards from his correspondence with and about her, without any ostensible relevance to the case. Schroeder provided Irving with a part of her wartime correspondence with a friend, some of it in an adapted form. In her posthumous memoirs Schroeder wrote of how she regretted the decision: "In the 1950s my friend Johanna Nusser returned my letters written to her from the Berghof and the *Führerhauptquartier*. The following extracts come from them. I once rashly put a part of them at David Irving's disposal. I

passed on (parroted) the judgements expressed therein from Hitler's conversations, for instance about the Russian mentality. Today I am horrified about these views thoughtlessly taken from Hitler."

- ² Irving has made none of these original letters available to the court. Schroeder's evidence would seem to be clear at first glance. "In all the conversations that we attended Hitler always stressed that everything he did resulted from the wish to give the German people a better future. He never spoke of matters which had to do with concentration camps or persecution of the Jews. He acted towards us as if such things did not exist. When from time to time he mentioned the fact that the war was a necessary thing, that millions of human lives were destroyed, that afterwards life would resume its peaceful path, so his face took on a cold, decisive expression. The cruelty one sensed in this way of talking was mitigated to a certain extent by the sympathy he showed when one told him of the misfortunes of an individual."
- ³ But Schroeder had given another account of herself as early as 1949, albeit written up by Albert Zoller, a French interrogation officer she met during her internment. Irving rejected this first account as 'spurious' and listed it amongst those documents which sought to 'pillory' Hitler: 'The anonymous "memoirs" of the late Christa Schroeder [...] were penned by Albert Zoller, a French army liaison officer to the US Seventh Army.'
- ⁴ This dismissal is misplaced and wilful. Once again Irving's source criticism rests solely on his desire to ride roughshod over sources which contradict his thesis. Schroeder herself was certainly unhappy at Zoller's financial double-dealing, but this is not ground enough to dismiss the accuracy of the contents of Schroeder's first account. The historian Gerhard L. Weinberg called for a critical source investigation of the Zoller book in 1961. Happily, Schroeder's 1985 memoirs were given an exemplary critical apparatus by her editor Anton Joachimstahler. He wrote: "Frau Schroeder said that the Zoller book was also

based on the interrogations of Heinrich Hoffmann [Hitler's photographer] and Julius Schaub in the camp in Augsburg (CIC Centre of the 7th. US Army). In a copy [of the book] she had crossed out all the passages which were not by her. When one flicks through the book one can approximately say that of 238 pages about 160 to 170 originate from Frau Schroeder. However, according to her comments, there are also individual passages changed by Zoller, i.e. reproduced with other words or significance. Frau Schroeder did not doubt the truth of the statements in the least, only that they were polemically distorted in some details and not represented quite exactly. At this point it is also to be established that Zoller's interviews were undertaken shortly after the internment of the persons in question and that the truth of these statements under the pressure of events at the time is to be given more weight than those which were made later. Seen thus the Zoller book represents a contemporary source that is to be taken seriously, as for example Gerhard L. Weinberg has explained."

- ⁵ What did Schroeder (or Schaub or Hoffmann respectively) tell Zoller during internment? With regard to Hitler and the murder of the European Jews the book was unequivocal. "I can categorically affirm that Himmler meticulously informed Hitler about the events in the concentration camps. He regarded all the atrocities as measures necessary to maintain his regime. But here as in all other areas he was very concerned about his good reputation. He thought it unbearable that his name be brought into connection with the actions in the camps that flew in the face of all humanity. For this reason he played his most hypocritical role exactly here and abused the good faith of his numberless adherents. / It is characteristic that he always held all his discussions with Himmler in private and behind carefully locked doors. Only Bormann was occasionally admitted. If in the conferences the talk came to the rumours of the mass murders and torturing in the concentration camps then Hitler would not answer or brusquely broke off the conversation. Only very rarely did Hitler deign to answer, and

then only too deviously. He would have never have admitted, in front of witnesses, the inhuman severity of laws issued by him. / One day Himmler was confronted by a few generals about the atrocities committed in Poland. To my surprise Himmler defended himself with the assurance that he was only carrying out the 'Führer's' orders. But he immediately added: 'The Führer's person may on no account be brought into connection with this. I take on full responsibility.' "

- ⁶ Schroeder, perhaps more likely Schaub in this case, was equally detailed in describing Hitler's attempts to force other foreign dignitaries to follow Germany's example in their policies against the Jews. "Hitler systematically tried to drum his hatred of those opposed to him into those close to him. In the process he did not even spare the leading men of the allied states. I was impressed time and time again by the sharp words with which he repudiated the attempts of Mussolini or Horthy to bring him to a more conciliatory stance in the Jewish Question. At this moment Hitler would dispense with every diplomatic form and allow himself to paint the Jewish danger in the shrillest colours to his partners. He always closed his long explanations with the demand to 'eliminate' the Jews. He never used a stronger expression, but always spoke the word 'eliminate' with such a vehement malice that no one could be in doubt as to his true meaning. Hitler was always visibly satisfied when he could tell us that foreign visitors had given him information about hard anti-Jewish measures in their own land. Antonescu clearly went up in his estimation on the day he informed him of the 'disappearance' of the Jews from Bessarabia. In comparison it was incomprehensible to him how Horthy attempted to explain to him with warm-hearted arguments "that in the end one could not simply throw the Jews onto the street or kill them". Even during diplomatic negotiations Hitler allowed himself unbridled comments against his political opponents. He never missed the opportunity to demand that his visitors to finish off their political opponents in the same way as he used in the concentration camps."

- ⁷ Gitta Sereny spoke to Christa Schroeder in 1977 whilst researching into Irving's *Hitler's War*. Schroeder told Sereny '“ [...] Of course Hitler knew! Not only knew, it was *all* his ideas, his orders “ ‘ and added: “I clearly remember a day in 1941, I think it was in early spring ... I don't think I will ever forget Himmler's face when he came out after one of his long, ‘under four eyes’ conferences with Hitler. He sat down heavily in the chair on the other side of my desk and buried his face in his hands, his elbows on the desk. ‘My God, my God,’ he said, ‘what am I expected to do.’ Later, much later ... when we found out what had been done, I was sure that that was the day Hitler told him that the Jews had to be killed.”
- ⁸ Even Irving himself described a talk with Schroeder about the murder of Ernst Röhm and scores of others on Hitler's personal orders in 1934 in the so-called ‘Night of the Long Knives’ in which she said (in Irving's own words) “‘You know, he [Hitler] could be quite cruel. I don't think that you're right about Hitler's Jewish problem. He could be very cruel.”’ Thus Irving's key witness was explicit in her belief that Hitler not only knew of, but ordered the ‘Final Solution’

(xi) The suppression of relevant evidence: the memoirs of Franz von Sonnleithner

- ¹ Franz von Sonnleithner was Ribbentrop's Foreign Office adjutant in the *Führerhauptquartier*. Irving appears not to have interviewed von Sonnleithner, whose memoirs appeared posthumously in 1989. At Nuremberg he told the defence ‘that I did not believe that it was Hitler who gave this order for the extermination measures.’ Elsewhere he wrote that ‘Hitler never said anything to me about the treatment of the Jews.’ This assertion is contradicted though by other passages in his memoirs, and by documentary evidence linking him to the deportation of the Jews of Rome and Denmark to Auschwitz.

² Sonnleithner related a famous episode in the *Führerhauptquartier* in 1944: “During a military conference some time in Autumn 1944 the Reich press spokesman [Otto] Dietrich came [...] with an English report, a newspaper article which had reached us, I believe, from the last gateway to the world, namely Lisbon. In the newspaper piece it was claimed that the Russians had taken a German concentration camp called Majdanek. People had been in there that had, without doubt, been exterminated. Pictures showed large racks upon which a very large number of well ordered chambers were to be seen, just as a foreigner would expect from a German institution. I believe that other fittings could also be seen, cells or even incineration chambers, although I’m not sure now. The text said that people had been exterminated there. Dietrich presented the press article to Hitler and we waited expectantly for what he would say about it. The answer came quickly: “That is the same as the hacked-off hands of Belgian children during the First World War, nothing but enemy propaganda.” I believe that I have quoted Hitler’s statement word for word. Anyway a weight fell from all of our shoulders, one could positively hear the sighs of relief. I myself telephoned the head of the security police [*Sicherheitspolizei*] Dr. [Ernst] Kaltenbrunner that same day to ask for the papers for a corresponding denial, which he agreed to. [...] as I had heard nothing from the *Staatspolizei* for a number of weeks I rang Kaltenbrunner and reminded him of his support for a denial. He answered word-for-word: “A public contradiction of the matter means lending the matter too much importance.” After the discussion of the situation to which I had referred was over, and I have also delivered my report, Hitler said to me that the Allies had already claimed in the First World War that the German troops who marched into Belgium in 1914 had chopped off the hands of Belgian children or hung them upside down in bell-towers so that children’s heads had served the function of clappers. All that was new to me, so I have a volume brought up from the archive with retractions by the “Times” a few years after the war...We therefore believed that every new English press report was as untrue as the reports

from the First World War.” It would seem that this episode in the *Führerhauptquartier* had a wide resonance. Hitler’s press secretary Heinz Lorenz also related the story to Irving.

- ³ Irving also cited a post-war interrogation of Ribbentrop on 11 August 1945 to the same effect, in his book *Nuremberg. The Last Battle*. Ribbentrop’s answer to the question if Hitler knew of the fate of the Jews in the concentration camps ran thus: “I know one thing, that after the Russians had taken over the concentration camp in Poland, Majdanek I think it was called, that was the first time I heard of these persecutions in concentration camps, misdeeds, atrocities. This was the first thing I heard when our representatives from abroad sent telegrams that Russian propaganda was making a tremendous row in neutral countries. I got these telegrams and placed them before the Führer. I said that if this were true in any respect it would be quite impossible to make foreign policy. So he took the matter in hand and said it was not my business to discuss this. That’s the only thing I heard.”
- ⁴ To the Nuremberg psychologist Gilbert, Ribbentrop is likewise quoted as having said: ‘You know, I didn’t know anything about the exterminations – until the Majdanek affair came out in ‘44 [...].’
- ⁵ In this case Hitler deliberately played on a psychological obstacle current not only in Germany, but amongst the Allies and even the Jews themselves, namely the historical impact of British propaganda during the First World War. This was expressed in a deep reluctance to give credence to the news that slowly filtered out about the mass murder of the Jews.
- ⁶ World War One was of course not the first war in which allegations had been made of cruelty and savagery, but such campaigns had never been conducted so systematically, on such a large scale, and with such success as by the British (and French). British propaganda attributed all sorts of horrors to their enemies, such as that the Germans had

hacked of the hands of children in Belgium, that the bodies of fallen soldiers were being used to make soap, and even that the Austrians and Bulgarians had killed 700,000 Serbs using an asphyxiating gas.

- ⁷ Unlike the hacking-off of the hands of Belgian children, the reports filtering out into the world about Majdanek were not Allied propaganda. Majdanek was built near Lublin in the General Government in Poland at the orders of Himmler during a visit he made to Lublin in July 1941. At first it was run as a prisoner-of-war camp under the aegis of the SS, but on 16 February 1943 it was re-named a concentration camp.
- ⁸ There are only rough estimates of how many died in Majdanek. Some 500,000 people passed through the camp and at least 250,000 met their deaths there, perhaps as many as 360,000. 60% died from hunger, filth, disease, torture and sheer exhaustion. 40% were executed by shooting or murdered in gas chambers making Majdanek a death camp. The zenith of the executions came on 3 November 1943, when 18,000 Jews were shot in the camps of the Lublin district in an action code-named Harvest Festival.
- ⁹ Whilst a Polish source dates the first gassings in Majdanek to September 1942, the Düsseldorf court which tried members of the camp personnel between 1975 and 1981 said that the gassing facilities were operational in October 1943 at the latest. The method of gassing in chambers, the immediate selection process of those too old, young or infirm to work, and the camouflage were all similar to those tried and tested in Auschwitz. The majority of those killed with gas were Jews, many deported from all over Europe. This combination of work, deprivation, and murder made Majdanek 'the model of a future camp of gradual annihilation combined with a camp of immediate extermination.'
- ¹⁰ The camp was liberated in the night of 22-23 July 1944 by the Soviet army. 480 prisoners regained their freedom, mainly crippled Soviet PoWs and Polish peasants from 'pacified' villages. In their haste to evacuate the camp the Germans had failed to destroy all the evidence

of Majdanek's murderous purpose. With the forced evacuation of the prisoners the camp authorities had burned most documentation and the main crematorium. But most of the prisoner's barracks, the gas chambers, smaller crematoria and ditches for mass executions with the corpses of shot prisoners gave witness to the camp's nature. A joint Polish-Soviet investigation committee began its work the same month.

- 11 At the very least, the episode gives yet again the lie to the Irving's claim that none of Hitler's adjutants (in this case had heard anything of the mass exterminations in the East). As Schroeder told Zoller of Hitler's abhorrence of any discussion on the 'Final Solution': "If in the conferences the talk came to the rumours of the mass murders and torturing in the concentration camps then Hitler would not answer, or brusquely broke off the conversation. Only very rarely did Hitler deign to answer, and then only too deviously. He would have never have admitted in front of witnesses the inhuman severity of laws issued by him."
- 12 It was Irving himself who offered another piece of proof that staff at the *Führerhauptquartier* had heard Hitler talk of the concentration camps. Irving related the following to an audience in New Zealand in 1986: "I remember right at the end of the war [*sic*] I asked one of Himmler's staff, 'Did you know nothing about the concentration camps, the extermination of people in concentration camps?' And he said, 'Nothing was told.' He said, 'I was with Hitler right through [Unintelligible – 'when was it now?'], from August 1944 right through until the last days in the bunker.' This man's name was SS Colonel Johannes Göhler. He was the adjutant to Himmler's liaison officer to Hitler [Fegelein], and as such attended all the main conferences with Hitler. And he says, 'In any of the conferences no where was there any discussion of the extermination of the Jews or anything.' And I say, 'Well yes, you've got to say that haven't you.' He says, 'Wait a minute. I remember one conference where something similar came up, but not quite the same.' He says, 'I remember Himmler saying to Hitler, two weeks before the end of the war, three weeks perhaps before the end of the war,' Himmler

being the chief of the SS, “Mein Führer we’ve got this terrible problem. The Americans are approaching Weimar. They’re on the point of over-running the concentration camp at Buchenwald.” The famous concentration camp at Buchenwald. “What do we do with the inmates?” And Hitler says, “Herr Reichsführer, wait and see me after the conference is over.” Göhler says, ‘I remember after the conference was over Hitler sat on the edge of the conference table, swinging his legs. He says, “Herr Himmler, this concentration camp [Unintelligible – “that is next to?”] Buchenwald, I want all the inmates liquidated before the Americans get them.”’

(xii) Suppression of relevant information: Karl Brandt

- ¹ Karl Brandt [1904-1948] was personal physician to Hitler and his staff [*Begleitarzt*]. From 1934 onwards he was a permanent member of Hitler’s Obersalzberg social circle. He was given the rank of major general in the Waffen-SS and, despite his limited experience, was appointed Reich Commissioner for Health and Sanitation in July 1942; a position strengthened by decrees dated 5 September 1943 and 25 August 1944. As the Nuremberg court which tried him commented, Brandt’s appointment and Hitler’s decrees ‘disclose his [Hitler’s] great reliance upon Karl Brandt and the high degree of personal and professional confidence which Hitler reposed in him.’
- ² In October 1939 (back-dated to 1 September 1939) Hitler empowered Brandt and the Reich Leader [*Reichsleiter*] Philipp Bouhler of the Führer Chancellery to take the necessary steps to start the ‘euthanasia’ action, or in other words, the mass murder by gassing, later by starvation and lethal injection, of up to 200,00 mentally and physically handicapped men, women, and children. “Reich Leader Bouhler and Dr. Brandt are charged with the responsibility for expanding the authority of physicians, to be designated by name, to the end that patients considered incurable according to best available judgement of their state of health, can be granted a mercy death.”

- ³ The backdating is usually attributed to Hitler's belief that a direct connection with the outbreak of war would render the German population more amenable to the project. Brandt recalled that in 1935 Hitler had told Wagner, the Reich Doctors' leader, "that if war should break out, he would take up the euthanasia question and implement it [...] because the Führer was of the opinion that such a problem would be easier and smoother to carry out in wartime, since the public resistance which one would expect from the churches would not play such a prominent role amidst the events of wartime as it otherwise would."
- ⁴ There was also a deeper psychological relationship between euthanasia and war. As Dr. Pfannmüller put it 'The idea is unbearable to me that the best, the flower of our youth must lose its life at the front in order that feeble-minded and irresponsible asocial elements can have a secure existence in the asylum.'
- ⁵ In choosing his own escort physician and close confidant Dr. Brandt to supervise the programme Hitler demonstrated his trust in him and simultaneously his desire to bypass the state apparatus while retaining some measure of legal procedure and fiscal accountability. Brandt's involvement in this programme of mass murder was central. Even after the cessation of the euthanasia action Brandt had ample knowledge of the concentration camps and the murder and cruelty committed in them. There exist a number of documents linking Brandt to the pseudo-medical human experimentation that fed off the death camps. These experiments were only facilitated by the certain death that ultimately awaited the camp inmates. For instance, the *Reichsarzt SS und Polizei* (chief SS physician), Dr. Ernst Robert Grawitz, who was involved in the sterilisation experiments in Auschwitz and Ravensbrück, wrote to Himmler on the 1 June 1943 confirming that '8 prisoners condemned to death, preferably of a young age, be placed at disposal' from Sachsenhausen, for a Dr. Dohmen to undertake experiments as required by Dr. Brandt. Besides being found guilty for the euthanasia action after the war, Brandt was declared culpable for various

human experiments on concentration camp inmates: sulfanilamide experiments at Ravensbrück concentration camp; epidemic jaundice experiments at Sachsenhausen concentration camp; mustard gas experiments at Natzweiler concentration camp; and freezing, malaria, bone muscle and nerve regeneration and bone transplantation, sea water, sterilization and typhus experiments Karl Brandt was sentenced to death by the Nuremberg Military Tribunal and executed after the war. Here was one member of Hitler's close entourage who did not just know about mass murder, but was a perpetrator of it on a considerable scale. Even Irving admits his close involvement in the 'euthanasia' programme, and notes that he was a member of Hitler's entourage until September 1944.

(xiii) Neglect of relevant information: the reports of Hermann Fegelein

- ¹ Similar things may be said of Hermann Fegelein [1906-1945], who became Himmler's contact man to Hitler when Karl Wolff was named plenipotentiary to Italy. Fegelein married Eva Braun's sister and as her brother-in-law was a frequent guest at the Berghof. Hitler ordered him shot in the closing weeks of the war when he was caught in civilian clothes preparing to escape through the encroaching Russian lines around Berlin.
- ² Fegelein was obviously, therefore, until the very last stages of the war, a member of Hitler's entourage. Did he too know nothing about the mass murder of Jews being carried out behind the Eastern front? On the contrary, as an SS cavalry commander in Himmler's personal Commando Staff of the RFSS [*Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS*], he actually took part in them. On the back of the Polish campaign the Commander of the Security Police [*Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und der SD*] of Warsaw ordered the executions of numerous Jews and Poles in November 1939. Fegelein's 1st. SS cavalry division carried out a series of mass shootings in the following month. Polish sources date the com-

mencement of the shootings on the 7 and 8 of December 1939 in the Kampinos forest near Palmiry outside Warsaw. According to the post-war West Berlin public prosecutor 'more than 1,700' people were shot. Fegelein's division also undertook executions in the Parliament Gardens in Warsaw itself.

- ³ In the Russian offensive Fegelein led his 1st SS Cavalry Regiment in operations in Rear Central Army Group Area. His cavalry formation was involved in the liquidation of the 'bearers of the Jewish-Bolshevik system'; in other words the systematic murder of Jews and Communists euphemistically disguised as anti-partisan warfare. His regiment played a key role in the escalation process of September 1941 in the Army Area Middle [*Heeresgebiet Mitte*] as the army became increasingly involved in the murder of Jews and civilians.
- ⁴ Part of Fegelein's Cavalry regiment carried out a 'cleaning-up' operation [*"Säuberungs"-Unternehmen*] between the 27 July and 11 August 1941 in the area of the Pripjet marshes. Order number 42 of the SS-Cavalry Regiment, signed by Fegelein, plainly stated that 'Jews are mostly to be treated as plunderers' in the forthcoming 'final pacification' [*endgültigen Befriedigung*] of the area. Himmler gave this order greater precision when he instructed that 'All Jews must be shot, female Jews [*Judenweiber*] are to be driven into the marshes.' This order has an uncanny echo in Hitler's table talk of 25 October 1941 when he said 'Nobody can tell me: but we can't send them [the Jews] into the morass.' The action met with a positive resonance in the army. The head of the general staff of the Rear Central Army Group reported to the OKH on the 10 August: "The SS-Cavalry Brigade has essentially completed its cleaning-up operation between runway 1 and Pripjet. Those alien to the area, as well as Red Army members and Jewish commissars, were seized by the SS and mostly shot. With the insertion of mayors, the creation of a reserve police, and the oppression [*sic*] of the Jews the area could be considered pacified."

- ⁵ What an ‘oppression’ of the Jews involved was made clear in the final report of the 1st SS Cavalry Brigade of 13 August. It reported a ‘total’ of ‘13,788 plunderers shot’ at a cost to the Brigade of ‘2 dead, 15 wounded, thereof some seriously wounded’.
- ⁶ Fegelein observed in a report dated 3 September 1941 that ‘Jew-free’ localities were often attacked by partisans and that it had been shown that ‘above all Jews’ served as intermediaries to the partisans. This echoes Hitler’s selfsame thoughts on the Jews in Russia as recorded by Heim on 5 May 1942 ‘The banditry in Estonia and Lithuania has died down quite a lot. But one has to know when one does not eradicate the Jews then none of it is any use – the Jews are the contacts [*Telephon-strippe*].’ Fegelein’s report was marked with approving marginalia by army officials and the commander of Rear Army Group Middle ordered his security divisions to concentrate on the Jews in future, following the model laid down by Fegelein. Here was a later member of Hitler’s entourage, therefore, who knew only too well what was going on behind the Eastern front, a context in which Irving refers to him as ‘a young SS brigadier on the Eastern front?’

(xiv) Use of an unreliable source: the testimony of Karl Wolff

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- ¹ Irving’s star witness is SS ‘Colonel General’ [*SS-Oberstgruppenführer*] Karl Wolff. In his biography of Hitler, Irving wrote “[...] the written testimony of Karl Wolff is persuasive; Wolff, who was also Himmler’s Chief of Staff, believes that Himmler desired, in some bizarre way, to perform great deeds for the “Messiah of the next two thousand years” – without having to involve his Führer in them.”
- ² Elsewhere he stated: ‘Even SS General Karl Wolff, Himmler’s Chief of Staff and liaison officer to Hitler, was at this time [September 1942] ignorant of the program that now got underway.’ This rests on document 121 as presented to the court, presumably the same document re-

ferred to when Irving wrote ‘SS General Karl Wolff estimated – in a confidential post-war manuscript – that altogether probably only some seventy men, from Himmler down to Höss, were involved in the liquidation program.’

- ³ Wolff [1906-1982] was Himmler’s right-hand man and a close confidant of Hitler’s. From August 1939 until February 1943 he was Himmler’s liaison officer to Hitler, or better said Himmler’s eyes and ears at the *Führerhauptquartier*. It was Wolff’s job to inform Himmler about daily events, political and war decisions, new plans, and the general mood. Hitler personally appointed him the military governor of north Italy and plenipotentiary to Mussolini in 1943. He surrendered his troops in Italy to Allen Dulles, which probably spared him from being one of the accused at Nuremberg. He was freed in August 1949.
- ⁴ On 9 June 1958 SS Lieutenant-Colonel [*Obersturmbannführer*] Dr. Otto Bradfisch, the head of *Einsatzkommando* 8 was questioned by the Munich State prosecutor about the shooting of Jews and communists in Minsk in mid-August 1941. In his defence Bradfisch claimed that the executions were legal, as proven by the presence of Himmler and Wolff at the shootings. Bradfisch was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment in 1961. His statement increased pressures on the German authorities to try Wolff. In September 1964 the Munich *Landgericht* finally sentenced Wolff to 15 years imprisonment. He was found guilty of being an accessory to murder [*Beihilfe zum Mord*] in ‘at least 300,000 interconnected coincidental cases’.
- ⁵ Wolff was tried in Munich on two charges: the Minsk shootings and his part in the deportation and murder of at least 300,000 Jews from Warsaw at Treblinka and Sobibor. The Munich court refused to believe Wolff’s defence that he had had no knowledge of the extermination of Europe’s Jews. Neither did the court believe his defence that ‘Himmler and others had purposefully deceived and misled him because it was clear to them that he, the accused, did not sanction such crimes and

would not have gone along with carrying them out.’ Instead the court judged that Wolff ‘learnt of Hitler’s instruction in early 1941 to exterminate the Jews in the areas conquered by Germany or in those area within the orbit of German influence, because they were “subhumans”, “parasites”’. Further the court judged that Himmler entrusted Wolff with commissions ‘which could only be carried out by someone who enjoyed his highest confidence, someone he could rely on in every eventuality.’ The court likewise refused to accept Wolff’s defence that he had helped individual Jews. The court pointed out that both Hitler and Himmler had helped individual Jews, but that it would be absurd to therefore declare them innocent of mass murder.

- ⁶ In the pleadings only one portion of the Munich case has been contested, namely the exchange between *SS-Gruppenführer* Harald Turner and Wolff. The Munich court in fact presented no fewer than twenty-eight separate pieces of evidence to prove Wolff’s knowledge of and complicity in the ‘Final Solution’. For the sake of brevity it is not intended to detail each piece of evidence separately, rather to refer first to the contested Turner letter and then to selected documents or incidents which shed light on Irving’s thesis and his manipulations.

(A) Harald Turner’s letter

- ¹ On 11 April 1941 SS Lieutenant-General [*SS-Gruppenführer*] Dr. Harald Turner wrote to Wolff about the use of a gas van at the Semlin concentration camp in Belgrade: “Already months ago I had all the Jews we could catch in this country shot, and concentrated all Jewish women and children in one camp. With the help of the SD we have obtained a “delousing-car” thanks to which we will clear this camp within 14 days to four weeks.”
- ² Despite his misgivings, Irving concedes that the document ‘may be genuine’, but adds ‘there is no indication that Karl Wolff himself did receive it. The hand-written initial on it is apparently that of [Werner] Gr[othmann], Himmler’s adjutant, familiar on documents from

Himmler's files; Grothmann will no doubt clarify this at the trial of this action.' This concurs with what Wolff himself argued at his trial; that he could not remember any such letter and that his own signature was missing from the letter.

- ³ The Munich court, however, was convinced that Wolff had read the letter on two grounds. First, the letter was a personal letter from Turner to Wolff. The letter paper had a letterhead 'Staatsrat Dr. Turner'. The letter opened 'Dear comrade Wolff' [*Lieber Kamerad Wolff*] and closed 'I am, as always, your follower' [*bin ich wie stets Ihr getreuer*]. Secondly, the court heard the evidence of Wolff's adjutant SS Major [*SS-Sturmabführer*] He.
- ⁴ He. declared that it was outside his remit to direct personal letters to Wolff on into official channels on his own authority. Personal letters were presented to Wolff, or at least their contents were orally made known to him. After this had occurred He. would stamp the letter with 'it has been brought to Chief P.'s attention' [*Chef P. hat Kenntnis*]. Only then would the letter be passed on further, according to Wolff's instructions. The top right hand corner Turner's letter bore the inscription:

“

1. Obstub. Dr. Brandt (side 2)
2. It has been brought to Chief P.'s attention
3. To be filed He.”

- ⁵ The court inferred that the witness He. had showed the letter to Wolff, hence the comment 'Chief P. knows'.
- ⁶ After Wolff had seen the letter he had instructed his adjutant to bring the letter to the attention of Himmler's personal aide SS Lieutenant-Colonel [*SS-Obersturmbannführer*] Dr. Rudolf Brandt, especially the second page in which the destruction of the Jews is spoken of. Wolff instructed his adjutant to treat the letter as official correspondence be-

cause of its contents. To this end it was filed as confidential amongst the papers of Himmler's personal staff under act number AR 21/B. This would explain Grothmann's initials on the document; a fact that in no way detracts from or contradicts the proof that Wolff had seen the letter. Irving is deliberately trying to fool the court.

(B) The Minsk Shooting

- ¹ In mid-August 1941 Wolff was part of the entourage which accompanied Himmler to Minsk, where he was met by the Head of the SS and Police [*Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer*] of Russia, von dem Bach-Zelewski and the leader of *Einsatzgruppe B*, SS Lieutenant-General [*SS- Brigadeführer*] Arthur Nebe. Himmler and Wolff witnessed the execution of some 100 to 120 Jews and 'partisans'.
- ² Irving states in his pleadings that at Wolff's 1964 trial the SS General von dem Bach-Zelewski testified 'that in his view "Hitler knew nothing of the mass destruction of the Jews" and that "the entire thing began with Himmler." This is close to the views expressed by the plaintiff.' In fact von dem Bach-Zelewski was called before the court to prove that Wolff knew of the fate which awaited the Jews in early 1941. He testified that both he and Wolff were present at the Wewelsberg in March 1941 where Himmler talked about the impending war with Russia and the coming 'special assignments' [*Sonderaufgaben*] which the SS, SD and police units would perform: "About the meaning and aim of the campaign he said that it was a question of existence and therefore a struggle of the peoples [*Volkstumskampf*] of unparalleled bitterness would break out in the course of which, through acts of war and [illegible], 20 to 30 million Slavs and Jews would die. Himmler's comments remained fresh in his mind because of their importance and their consequences, and because of the dramatic way they were presented."

- ³ Irving's citing of von dem Bach-Zelewski to prove that Hitler knew nothing of the 'Final Solution' is openly contradicted by another piece of evidence von dem Bach-Zelewski gave during Wolff's trial. He was one of no fewer than eight witnesses who testified that during the shootings in Minsk, Himmler stated that he and Hitler alone bore responsibility for the extermination of the Jews: "Himmler declared after the shootings that the hard struggle that the German people [*Volk*] had to undertake made harsh measures such as this imperative. The Jews were the bearers of world Bolshevism and they must therefore be destroyed. He and Hitler had assumed responsibility for this before the court of history. The task was difficult, but it had to be carried out."
- ⁴ Von dem Bach-Zelewski's account of Himmler's words was corroborated by no fewer than seven other witnesses at the trial. "The witnesses Dr Otto Bradfisch, von dem Ba.[ch- Zelewski], Paul N., Kl., Klae., Me., Str. and T. concur in this. The court believes these statements."
- ⁵ The head of Einsatzkommando unit 8, Dr. Otto Bradfisch put the question to Himmler: "As soon as Himmler arrived in Minsk, I turned to him and asked him who was taking responsibility for the mass extermination of the Jews. Himmler made this conversation the occasion for a speech, in which he told the members of Einsatzkommando 8, as well as those members of the Security Police who were present, not to worry – the orders had been personally given by Hitler. It was a question, then, of a Führer-order, which had the force of law, and he and Hitler alone bore the responsibility for these orders."
- ⁶ Himmler's private reply to Bradfisch before the execution had been no different: 'Himmler answered me in a fairly sharp tone that these orders had come from Hitler as the supreme Führer of the German government, and that they had the force of law.'

(C) The correspondence between Wolff and Dr. Albert Ganzemüller

- ¹ The clearing of the ghettos in the General Government in Poland began in 1942, beset sometimes by transportation blockages, the first in June and the second in July. In July the railway line to the killing centre at Sobibor broke down and had to be repaired. On 16 July 1942 Wolff telephoned State Secretary [*Staatssekretär*] Dr. Albert Ganzenmüller of the transport ministry for help. Ganzenmüller looked into the matter and discovered that it had already been solved locally. 300,000 Warsaw Jews had been diverted from Sobibor to Treblinka. Beginning on 22 July 1942 a train a day, each packed with some 5,000 Jews was to leave Warsaw for Treblinka, while twice weekly another train was to run from Przemysl to Belzec. Wolff wrote in thanks: “ Dear Party Member G[anzenmüller]: For your letter of 28 July 1942, I thank you – also in the name of the *Reichsführer-SS* – sincerely. With particular joy I noted your assurance that for two weeks now a train has been carrying, every day, 5,000 members of the chosen people to Treblinka, so that we are now in a position to carry through this population movement at an accelerated tempo. I, for my part, have contacted the participating agencies to assure the implementation of the process without friction. I thank you again for your efforts in this matter and, at the same time, I would be grateful if you would give these things your continued personal attention. With best regards and Heil Hitler! Your devoted W.”
- ² Wolff’s defence was simple. Himmler and Higher SS and Police Leader [*Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer* - HSSPF] Odilo Globocnik had lied to him. Himmler had told him in July 1942 that because of increasing partisan activities he had been forced to dissolve the large and small ghettos in Poland and to herd them together in a sort of reservation in Lublin. The fertile earth and the fact that many Jews were able craftsmen would allow some of the Jews self-sufficiency. Others would work in large concentration camps manufacturing German armaments.

Himmler asked him to look into the transportation problems that were preventing moving Polish Jews to the Lublin area. He had taken Himmler's explanation at face value.

- ³ The fact that he was ignorant of the ultimate fate of those transported from Warsaw was proven, he claimed, by the fact that his letter of thanks bore no secret stamp and the fact that he explicitly spoke of a 'population movement' [*Bevölkerungsbewegung*]. He had not approved of the expression 'chosen people' [*ausgewähltes Volk*], but the letter had been drawn up by his assistant at Himmler's field commando post in Shitomir. Wolff was alone in the *Führerhauptquartier* in Winniza and did not want to delay matters by demanding a redrafting. The court found that it did not believe Wolff's line of defence 'because it is not the truth'.
- ⁴ Irving quoted the notorious Wolff-Ganzenmüller exchange, but added that Wolff was 'as ignorant as Ganzenmüller of the true functions of Treblinka extermination camp.' Irving's own files contain a further piece of incriminating documentation. On Wolff's instructions, extracts from Ganzenmüller's letter of 28 July were forwarded to the very men most responsible for the murder of the Jews in the General Government of Poland: Globocnik and HSSPF Friedrich Krüger, as well as *Obersturmbannführer* Rudolf Brandt of Himmler's Personal Staff. Ganzenmüller himself faced a court in Düsseldorf in 1973 where he claimed to have seen and known nothing about the fate of the Jews. The presiding judge asked him incredulously if he was supposed to believe Ganzenmüller's claim to have signed, but to have taken no notice of the content, of a secret letter addressed to the office of the second most important man in the 'Third Reich'. There can be no claim that Irving was unaware of the grounds for Wolff's prosecution and imprisonment, as Elke Fröhlich had informed him as early as 1971 that: 'The Jewish affair is making progress. For example the indictment in the court case against Wolff of 19. 4. 63.'

(xv) Additional evidence.

- ¹ The following three accounts all appeared subsequent to the re-issue of *Hitler's War* in 1991. Characteristically, Irving has not mentioned them anywhere, although he is usually quick to post up any new documentary or other discovery on his website. One assumes that as an avid reader and collector of the testimony of members of Hitler's inner circle and other Nazis and their associates, Irving is none the less aware of their existence. However, these accounts are not presented as examples of Irving's manipulation and suppression of historical evidence, but as additional pieces of evidence deriving from, or reporting statements by, further members of Hitler's entourage. This further undermines his argument and support the view that contrary to Irving's persistent and repeated claims, aspects of the 'Final Solution' were well known amongst Hitler's staff.
- ² The first piece of additional evidence comes from Jutta Rüdiger, who was the Reich Leader of the Hitler Youth for Girls [*Bund deutsche Mädel*]. In 1997 she told a BBC interviewer about an episode during her post-war internment. "After the war I was interned with Hitler's secretaries and one of them told me that Hitler had said "If the Jews really manage to push America and Germany into war against each other, I will have no mercy. On all sides, good, valuable people are losing their lives, be it in England or in Germany or in France. But the Jews are never willing to bring a sacrifice, they stay in the background and pull the strings, and I will have no mercy."
- ³ The second, and perhaps more significant testimony comes from Alfons Schulz, who was a switchboard operator in the *Führerhauptquartier* from January 1942 until April 1945, with the exception of a single ten-day holiday. His memoirs were published in 1997. He recalled an episode from 1942 that is quoted here at length. "On one particular morning, it must have been mid-May or so, Walter Meiendresch who also belonged to "our circle" came in deathly pale from his night shift. He vomited several times and we thought that he was seriously ill. He was

actually unfit to work for several days. Finally on the second or third day Dr. Fliegner found out the cause of this sudden collapse. Walter was in fact very robust and hardy in his nature. In the night in question he had listened in on a conversation between Himmler and Bormann. In it the *Reichsführer SS* [Himmler] conveyed a “pleasant piece of news from Auschwitz” to the *Reichsleiter* Bormann, intended, as he said, for the *Führer*. Once again, exactly according to plan, 20,000 Jews had been “liquidated”, “er” he corrected himself immediately, “evacuated” there. Whereupon Bormann had shouted at him furiously and sharply reminded him that as agreed such reports were only allowed to be in writing and delivered by couriers who were SS officers; delivered to him personally to be passed onto the *Führer*. He vigorously forbade any such further reports about this subject be delivered in any other way. For the first time the mass murder forced its way somewhat into the naiveté that held sway even in our communications centre. To be sure we restricted those who knew about this overheard conversation to our closest circle on grounds of security. With the exception of Walter Meindresch, who was quite simply no longer capable of listening in on conversations, we tried to find out more precise information. In vain. Only some of the staff officers of the OKH, who as was later to be found out were hanged as accomplices to the assassination attempt of 1944, intimated something to higher officers in the FHQ whom they apparently trusted. They referred to rumours which came to them from reliable regiment and division commanders and not through the official channels. These rumours were of the mass murder of Jews and other “undesirables”. No one knew any concrete facts though. Considering what we know today it seems that it was practically impossible, also for someone who did not belong to the SS, to learn anything more precise.”

- ⁵ Despite the obvious attempt at self-exculpation, this is none the less an important fragment of testimony about the importance of the use of euphemism and circumlocution by the leading Nazis in the discussion of the mass murder of the Jews.
- ⁶ Finally, there is the testimony of General Gerd Schmückle, who described in his memoirs a visit he and *Oberst* Fröhlich made to Field Marshal Kluge at the headquarters of Army Group Centre in the second week of May 1942. Fröhlich intended to tell Kluge that the war was lost and that the front should fall back to the old borders of the Reich. “At headquarters everything turned out differently. We had to wait in an outer office. The officer in charge of the bureau said that the Field Marshal was negotiating with a intermediary of Hitler’s. That is to say, Kluge had threatened to resign his Marshal’s staff to Hitler because the SS had driven Jewish men and women out of Minsk, stripped them in a forest clearing, doused their heads and pubic hair in petrol, and set them on fire.[...] Finally Hitler’s messenger left, an *SS-Führer* who saluted us strictly.”
- ⁷ These, then, are a few additional pieces of the mosaic of evidence that cumulatively undermines Irving’s claim that the mass murder of the Jews was not known or talked about by Hitler and his intimate circle.

(d) Hitler’s decision-making process.

- ¹ Irving’s argument that Hitler and his entourage did not know about the extermination of the Jews rests not only on a manipulation and suppression of specific sources, but also on a much larger contortion of the realities of the power structures and decision-making process in the ‘Third Reich’. This distortion too involves suppressing or ignoring general statements by members of Hitler’s entourage about his way of taking decisions and issuing orders.

- ² Irving's thesis that Hitler was ignorant of the final fate of those deported east is a corollary of his general idea that 'while Adolf Hitler was a powerful and relentless military commander, the war years saw him as a lax and indecisive political leader who allowed the affairs of state to rot. In fact he was probably the weakest *leader* Germany has known this century. [...] Domestic policy was controlled by whoever was most powerful in each sector, [...].' The logical consequence of this was that 'He knew even less than the rest. He allowed himself to be taken for a sucker by everyone' (SS General 'Sepp' Dietrich quoted by Irving). Likewise Karl Krause, whom Irving quotes as having said: 'It can be added in this context that Hitler lived in a sort of illusory world. He believed good rather than evil.'
- ³ This is contradicted by what is generally known about Hitler's personal style of decision making. It is also contradicted by what others amongst Hitler's staff said. For instance von Sonnleithner wrote that 'The threads of the military and civilian leadership always converged in Hitler' In fact, Nazi decision making was a synthesis of initiatives from below and set priorities and decisions from above. A legacy of the *Kampfzeit* and the early years of power was that the Nazi party was essentially a 'Führer party' in nature, tied to emotionally powerful but loosely defined aims embodied in the person of the Führer and held together by a Führer cult. The path to power and advancement lay in anticipating the 'Führer's will', and, without necessarily waiting for explicit orders, to promote what were presumed to be Hitler's wishes. In this way a continuum of radicalisation was assured and sustained, precisely in those areas most closely associated with Hitler's own ideological fixations.
- ⁴ One part of this political system was neatly outlined by the State Secretary in the Prussian Agricultural Ministry, Werner Willekens, when he said in 1934: "Everyone with opportunity to observe it knows that the Führer can only with great difficulty order from above everything that he intends to carry out sooner or later. On the contrary, until now

everyone has best worked in his place in the new Germany if, so to speak, he works towards the Führer. Very often, and in many places, it has been the case that individuals, already in previous years, have waited for commands and orders. Unfortunately, that will probably also be so in the future. Rather, however, it is the duty of each single person, in the spirit of the Führer, to work towards him. Anyone making mistakes will come to his notice soon enough. But the one who works correctly towards the Führer along his lines and towards his aim will in the future as previously have the finest reward of one day suddenly attaining legal confirmation of his work.”

- 5 The reverse side to this was Hitler’s own style of leadership. Linge wrote: “Hitler mostly outlined tasks and aims very vaguely and happily left everything else be taken out of his hands if “it” went “in principle” as he had imagined it. Thereby he preferred to allow two authorities or people to undertake the same thing and to observe who asserted themselves better (or also against competitors). It was obvious that this policy had too often lead to friction, delays, double the strain, and contrary results.”
- 6 The sociologist and historian Rainer C. Baum commented: “That this [style of leadership] was just an accident of personal idiosyncrasy, moreover seems rather doubtful. More likely it derived from an astute appreciation of how one could combine rule by interest constellation with the dynamics of a social movement forging east, for this style of leadership involved a structural preference for disorder at home. Interinstitutional, interorganisational, and interpersonal conflicts and competitions were encouraged. Attempts to delineate clear lines of authority and responsibility were discouraged, as were traditional jurisdictions of offices.”
- 7 This form of rule had a number of practical consequences beyond mere bureaucratic chaos. It invited radical initiatives from below and offered the prospect of them being taken up in as far as they con-

formed to Hitler's broadly defined goals. Four examples have been cited of Hitler as the adjudicator in this radicalisation process: Engel on the deportation of the Jews from Salonika, Linge on Hitler's enthusiasm for the 'hard' line followed by Greiser in the Warthegau, Linge on politics in the occupied Ukraine, and Bräutigam on Rosenberg's retaliatory deportation plans. Both Engel and Linge commented on Hitler's anger at army unease with the actions of the SS.

- ⁸ This system also promoted ferocious competition amongst rival institutions, and the individuals within them, to anticipate and fulfil the Führer's will. No single institution or organisation could accumulate a reliable power base for its operations. The leaders of such institutions had to exert all their energies to maintain and expand their control over resources and to maintain their political relevance. Hitler himself welcomed these overlappings in competence, the lack of clarity, and the resultant unending demarcation disputes. He consciously avoided all attempts to produce a more rational authoritarian state structure because the process cemented his own autonomy within the regime in his position as Führer.
- ⁹ This command technique of deliberately leaving it up to the executive organs (for example the *Einsatzgruppen*) to place limits on how an order was interpreted was a form of issuing orders which relied upon an interaction as almost old as the Nazi party itself. The Nazi Party Supreme Court [*Oberstes Parteigericht der NSDAP*], which was given the task in 1938 of deciding what was to be done to those party members who had committed crimes during the *Reichskristallnacht* pogrom, explained that it was "[...]obvious to active National Socialists from the *Kampfzeit* [...] that orders for campaigns in which the party does not want its role as organiser to be known need not be completely clear and detailed. They are also accustomed to reading more into such an order than is written or said, just as the issuer of this order has often become adept, in the Party's interest (especially in the case of illegal political rallies), at leaving the order unclear and at merely sketching out its aim."

- ¹⁰ Von Below gave a clear picture of this interaction between Führer and subordinates: “Until Autumn 1941 though, Hitler had very rarely given a direct order. He confined himself to convincing those listening, so that they realised his ideas on their own initiative. This explains the often lengthy discussions with Hitler. As of December 1941, when Hitler took over the leadership of the armed forces, he slowly started to implement his ideas by giving direct orders. He also continued to try and win over those he talked to his views with partly lengthy explanations. Only in the last year of the war did he make more use of clear orders, at a time when the possibility of carrying out orders in the sense he intended was already very limited.”
- ¹¹ In this light the testimony of Krause cited by Irving becomes understandable: ‘Hitler thought and said that if the report [about a radio transmitter in Warsaw] were true then punitive intervention would have to be undertaken. However there was no clear-cut order. It remained up to Bormann, Himmler, and the commander of Warsaw, how punishment would take place.’ This suggests strongly that some similar kind of arrangement was involved in the genesis of the ‘Final Solution’, personally sanctioned by Hitler but not necessarily ordered by him in detail or method.
- ¹² In exculpating Hitler from the murder of the European Jews the onus was on Irving to find another culprit. His choice fell naturally on the *Reichsführer SS* [RFSS] Heinrich Himmler. Yet as head of the powerful SS *imperium* Himmler was personally subordinate only to Hitler, an autonomy that was repeatedly confirmed by Hitler himself. The SS as an organisation saw the realisation of Hitler’s *Weltanschauung* as its central aim. Quoting a speech by Himmler on 5 May 1944 in which Himmler referred to ‘executing this soldierly order’ in solving the ‘Jewish problem’, Irving added ‘Never before, and never after, did Himmler hint at a *Führer* Order [...]’. This assertion is wilfully wrong. It is highly improbable that a written order will ever be found”. As Eichmann told his Israeli interrogator: “A Reich law is not necessary, Herr Captain.

There are also decrees. There are orders. It was said ... it was not only said, it was a certain fact that – quotation marks – “the Führer’s words have the force of law”. Orders given by a commanding general also don’t appear in law gazette.”

- ¹³ Although the decision itself may never be conclusively dated, Irving chose to ignore abundant evidence that it was indeed Hitler who entrusted Himmler with the murderous ‘Final Solution’. Himmler realised the full horrors of the task Hitler had assigned him, but resigned himself to his task in the belief that it was deigned by the Führer and therefore ordained by providence.
- ¹⁴ In a letter to Otto Berger, head of the SS Main Office [*SS-Hauptamt*], dated 26 July 1942, Himmler wrote ‘The occupied eastern territories will become free of Jews. The Führer has put the responsibility for completing this very difficult order on my shoulders. In any case no one can relieve me of the responsibility. So I forbid all discussion [*Mitreden*].’ In an order of 9 October 1942, demanding that all Jews still at work in the armaments industry in the districts of Warsaw and Lublin be put in concentration camps, Himmler added ‘But there too [in the General Government] the Jews will one day disappear, according to the wishes of the Führer.’ Hitler’s personal secretary Christa Schroeder has given us her version: “I can categorically affirm that Himmler meticulously informed Hitler about the events in the concentration camps. He regarded all the atrocities as measures necessary to maintain his regime. But here as in all other areas he was very concerned about his good reputation. He thought it unbearable that his name be brought into connection with the actions in the camps that flew in the face of all humanity. For this reason he played his most hypocritical role exactly here and abused the good faith of his numberless adherents. [...] One day Himmler was confronted by a few generals about the atrocities committed in Poland. To my surprise Himmler defended himself with the assurance that he was only carrying out the ‘Führer’s’

orders. But he immediately added: 'The Führer's person may on no account be brought into connection with this. I take on full responsibility.'"

Ich kann mit Bestimmtheit versichern, dass Hitler von Himmler über die Vorgänge in den KZ-Lagern genaustens unterrichtet war. Er sah alle die Scheusslichkeiten als für die Erhaltung seines Regimes notwendige Massnahmen an. Aber auch hier wie auf allen anderen Gebieten war er sehr auf seinen guten Ruf bedacht. Er hielt es für untragbar, dass sein Name mit den in den Lagern verübten, aller Menschlichkeit hohnsprechenden Handlungen in Verbindung gebracht wurde. Deshalb spielte er gerade hier seine grösste Heuchelrolle und trieb Schindluder mit dem guten Glauben seiner zahllosen Anhänger.[...]

Eines Tages wurde Himmler von einigen Generalen wegen der in Polen begangenen Greuel zur Rede gestellt. Zu meiner Überraschung verteidigte er sich mit der Versicherung, dass er nur die Befehle des 'Führers' ausführe. Aber gleich darauf fügte er hinzu: "Die Person des Führers darf aber auf keinen Fall damit in Zusammenhang gebracht werden. Die volle Verantwortung übernehme ich." (Zoller, pp. 194-5.)

- ¹⁵ Further evidence, from Bach-Zelewski and Bradfish, is quoted above. Even Irving's witnesses themselves are incredulous that Himmler could have acted alone. 'Himmler's last adjutant, Werner Grothmann, whom I interviewed in 1970, felt it unlikely that the Reichsführer SS would have dared act on his own initiative, and Himmler's surviving brother Gebhard – formally a high civil servant – told me the same in 1968 [...].' And yet Irving, without explanation, decided that it was Wolff's account that was 'persuasive'. He paraphrased Wolff as having said that 'Himmler desired, in some bizarre way, to perform great deeds for the "Messiah of the next two thousand years" – without having to involve his Führer in them.' This is based on document 121, a page of Irving's hand-written notes on a statement deposited by Wolff in the Munich Institute for Contemporary History in 1952. Even allow-

ing for the bias in Irving's note taking the passage in no way contradicts those documents and witnesses quoted above, rather it rounds out the picture. "Bormann and Hitler were [well] of the opinion that the Jewish question had to be dealt with, without Hitler getting his fingers dirty in the process.[...] Himmler was bizarre and religious in his own way and took the view that he had to assume tasks which had to be solved for the greatest commander [Hitler] in the greatest war of all times; to realise Hitler's ideas without involving him personally. Around August 1942 the RFSS [i.e. Himmler] gave dark hints: Wolff had no idea what one had to take on for the Messiah of the next 2,000 years [Hitler], so that he personally could remain free of sins. No one could help him (RFSS [Himmler]). He had had to take things on his shoulders for the German people and the Führer that no one dare know about. [...] Wolff tends towards the opinion that Hitler did not touch on the question of the destruction of the Jews even with Himmler and in this sense kept his distance from the matter. The small group protected by Bormann and Himmler simply explained they were acting on an order by the Führer, without this having explicitly been given."

- ¹⁶ In a record quoted in other respects by Irving, Bormann's adjutant Heinrich Heim was recorded as saying: "Bormann had the great gift to put himself entirely in Hitler's place, to fully adapt to him, and the ability to resolutely suppress all his own wishes and views in favour of him [Hitler]. In this way he was in a position to decide many questions of a lesser importance exactly as Hitler would have decided them. Bormann never did anything that was not in accord with Hitler and he was able to completely suppress his own intentions. His principle was not to trouble the Führer with anything that he could carry out himself, but also not to withhold anything that only the Führer could decide. [...] It fits that in the first years after the war Bormann was made into a scapegoat for Hitler. Even many old National Socialists painted Bormann in particularly black shades to exonerate Hitler."

- ¹⁷ Von Sonnleithner wrote ‘...and another thing: the trained official who knows his master would never bother him with every detail. He would first try to resolve difficulties which arose himself.’ Finally Hitler himself described his system of issuing orders in his table talk of 14 October 1941: “Where would I be if I did not find people I trusted to undertake the work which I cannot direct myself; hardened people of whom I know they take tough measures just as I would. The best man for me is he who troubles me the least in that that he undertakes 95 out of 100 decisions himself. To be sure, there are always cases that in the end have to be decided by me alone. ”
- ¹⁸ The ‘Final Solution’ was surely one such case. Hitler did not want to ‘get his hands dirty’, Himmler was, it seems, resigned, but willing in his fanatical devotion to Hitler, to shoulder a task with which Hitler’s name could not be associated for fear of destroying the myth of the Führer.

(e) Conclusion

- ¹ Irving’s working methods are fatally flawed: not because of a naive credulity towards those he interviewed and the documents he read, but because of his overriding desire to excuse Hitler’s role in the ‘Final Solution’. Irving deliberately ignored the most basic cautions when interviewing the surviving members of Hitler’s staff. The symmetry of aims and means between interviewer and interviewees is perfect. Irving resorted to the very same methods of excusing Hitler as those he interviewed had adopted in excusing themselves.
- ² Irving’s work with historical material is characterised by his utterly tendentious choice and interpretation of documentation. The greater wealth of statements directly implicating Hitler’s role in the ‘Final Solution’ is rejected out of hand, whilst those rather fewer statements exculpating Hitler are adopted as ‘persuasive’ without any explanation as to why greater emphasis should be put on one set of statements

than another. Likewise, Irving deliberately fails to take into account a number of key considerations when using his material. For instance, rather than Hitler not knowing about the 'Final Solution' he may quite explicably have lied to certain members of his staff. Only by taking the sources at face value can he mould them to his pre-conceived ideological aims.

- ³ Neither is it coincidental that at no time does Irving enter into source criticism, save when the aim is to dismiss a source that contradicts his theory. Irving has written: 'In fact I have been startled by the number of such 'diaries' which close scrutiny proves to have been faked or tampered with – invariably to Hitler's disadvantage.' Almost invariably these rejections are either unfounded or involve crass double standards on Irving's part. Wolff's trial, Engel's diary, and Zoller's book are but the three most blatant examples amongst a veritable myriad of distortions, suppressions, and manipulations.
- ⁴ Irving requires absolute standards of proof from those sources which contradict him, yet requires no such proof from those which support him. For instance Irving rejects those like von Below who said: "Nevertheless I am completely convinced, even without written evidence, that the extermination of the Jews originated in an express instruction from Hitler, because it is inconceivable that Himmler and Göring undertook such a thing without his knowledge. Certainly Himmler did not inform Hitler in every detail, but he acted in this matter with his approval and in complete accordance with him."
- ⁵ Irving discredits the statement by resorting to the phrase 'A scrupulous historian is not impressed by what sources either "imagine" or profess themselves incapable of "imagining."' And yet both Wolff and Krause too stated what they believed, or better said what they wanted to believe. Nowhere does Irving seek to reconcile these contradictions.

- ⁶ Irving was unequivocal when he said ‘Hitler’s surviving adjutants, secretaries, and staff stenographers have *all* uniformly testified that never once was the extermination of either the Russian or European Jews mentioned – even confidentially – at Hitler’s headquarters.’ This is contradicted by the evidence cited above. By looking at the documents and statements from Hitler’s former staff, not only does Hitler’s personal role in the murder of the European Jews become apparent, but it becomes clear that concrete episodes in the ‘Final Solution’, such as *Einsatzgruppen* killings and even the death camps, were talked about at the *Führerhauptquartier*. Any idea that members of Hitler’s entourage knew nothing about the mass murders in the East is similarly contradicted in the evidence.

5.4 Explaining Nazi Antisemitism

(a) Introduction

- ¹ As this Report has shown above, Irving does, like other Holocaust Deniers admit that a limited amount of antisemitic actions were perpetrated by the Nazis, up to and including murder. However, his portrayal of such actions is far from objective or unbiased. Irving generally tries to dismiss an example of an antisemitic action or policy by the Nazis as non-existent, or invented by critics long after the event, or committed by criminal mavericks operating without orders under the harsh conditions of war. If he is unable to do this, he frequently attempts to blame it on the Jews themselves. He does this either indirectly, by supplying ‘information’ which will encourage readers to regard the Nazis’ antisemitic beliefs with sympathy, or directly, by attributing antisemitic actions by the Nazis to provocation by the Jews.
- ² This tactic is entirely characteristic of the arguments used by Holocaust deniers, as summarized earlier in this Report. Irving has already been quoted as saying that the Jews only have themselves to blame for their misfortunes, up to and including the Holocaust. He also employs

this general argument in a number of specific historical instances. A detailed consideration of some of these provides another opportunity to examine the methods Irving uses in interpreting the past to see if they also conform to the kind of falsification of history which Lipstadt attributes to Holocaust deniers in general. As we shall now see, they do indeed fall into these general patterns. Irving's attempts to pin the blame for antisemitic actions in the 'Third Reich' on the Jews themselves can be discussed, indeed, as examples of various types of manipulation and distortion of the historical record. These include, as we shall now see, manipulation and misinterpretation of statistics, use of unreliable sources, suppression of relevant evidence, and the skewing of evidence to fit a preconceived argument. The following subsections will take each of these in turn, in the chronological order of the events in the history of Weimar and Nazi Germany to which they refer.

(b) Jewish criminality in Berlin

- ¹ In one of his speeches, Irving claimed that Goebbels only became anti-semitic in the 1920s when he realised the dominance of the Jews in Berlin, and that much of Goebbels's anti-Jewish propaganda was based in fact: "Well, if you remember when the Nazis came to power, which was in 1933, Dr. Goebbels made a great deal of mileage out of the fact that certainly in Berlin, the Berlin that he arrived at in 1926, that was very largely dominated by the Jewish lawyers, the Jewish politicians, the Jewish police chiefs, the Jewish ministers and so on. And he made a lot of mileage out of that and it was a very unhealthy political situation for Germany. In fact, the odd thing is before Goebbels came to Berlin in 1926 he wasn't anti-Jewish. He turned anti-Jewish by what he saw."
- ² This theme is also taken up in Irving's writings, with particular emphasis on the alleged dominance of Jews in the criminal underworld of Berlin. For instance, in his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* (1996), Irving states that Goebbels "would highlight every malfeasance

of the criminal *demi-monde* and identify it as Jewish. In the closing years of the Weimar republic, he was unfortunately not always wrong. In 1930 Jews would be convicted in forty-two of 210 known narcotics smuggling cases; in 1932 sixty-nine of the 272 known international narcotics dealers were Jewish. Jews were arrested in over sixty percent of the cases concerning the running of illegal gambling dens; 193 of the 411 pickpockets arrested in 1932 were Jews. In 1932 no fewer than thirty-one thousand cases of fraud, mainly insurance swindles, would be committed by Jews.”

- ³ Similarly, in 1995 article, Irving wrote; “As Goebbels orchestrated the rise of the Nazi party in Berlin, part of the problem for the democrats there was that much of what he said was true. The Jewish community not only dominated the legal and medical professions in Berlin, they also dominated the crime scene. In my biography I’ve quoted Interpol figures of the percentage of Jews among those arrested for drug dealing and narcotics. Moreover, three-quarters of the pickpockets in Berlin were Jewish. It was quite easy for Goebbels to draw attention to such facts, and to embellish them in a propaganda campaign.”
- ⁴ Irving’s claims about the dominance of Jews in various professions are highly misleading. In 1930, around a third to a half of all doctors in Berlin were Jewish. In statistics drawn up by the Nazis, about half of all the lawyers in Berlin were classified as Jews. Many fewer Jews joined the judicial service, from which they had been excluded before the 1920s. Only around one-fifth of the higher judicial officials (*höherer Justizdienst*) were classified as Jewish by the time of the Nazi seizure of power, and Jews played a minor role in senior positions in the civil service. Irving himself describes the Vice-President of the Berlin Police in the late 1920s, Bernhard Weiss, as ‘the first Jew ever to be accepted for the Prussian higher civil service’. Similarly, Jews played no dominant role in Berlin politics. From 1918 to 1933, only a total of eight deputies with Jewish origins were elected to either the *Reichstag* or the Prussian parliament to represent the various Berlin constituencies. And after

the murder of Foreign Minister Rathenau in 1922, hardly any Germans with Jewish origins were appointed as Reich Cabinet Ministers.

Moreover, the figures given by Irving in *Goebbels* suggests that ‘only’ 47% of all pickpockets in Berlin were Jewish, not 75%, as he claimed in the 1995 article. And in the passages quoted above, Irving provides no example of Goebbels having used these figures in his propaganda. More importantly, perhaps, it is possible to examine in detail Irving’s claims about the dominance of Jews in the Berlin criminal underworld in the Weimar Republic. Irving gives the following detailed footnote reference for his claims: “Interpol figures, in Deutsche Nachrichten-Büro (hereafter DNB), Jul 20, 1935; and see Kurt Daluege, ‘Judenfrage als Grundsatz’, in *Angriff*, Aug 3, 1935 (Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei files, BA file R. 19/406); on the criminal demi-monde of 1920s Berlin, see Paul Weiglin, *Unverwüstliches Berlin. Bilderbuch der Reichshauptstadt seit 1919* (Zürich, 1955) and Walther Kiaulehn, *Berlin: Schicksal einer Weltstadt* (Munich, 1958).”

- ⁵ On checking out these references, which are, typically, without specific page numbers, it becomes clear that while there are indeed sections in Kiaulehn’s and Weiglin’s books which deal with the Berlin criminal underworld, there is not a single reference in either of the books which could back up Irving’s claim regarding the dominance of Jews in the crime scene in Berlin in the 1920s.
- ⁶ Next come the ‘Interpol figures’, as quoted in the *Deutsche Nachrichtenbüro*. This source, which sounds very authoritative, is clearly regarded by Irving as the key evidence for the claims advanced both in *Goebbels* and in his 1995 article. However, on closer inspection this document turns out to be nothing more than a piece of Nazi propaganda. The *Deutsche Nachrichtenbüro* (DNB) was not an independent news agency, but a mouthpiece of the Nazi leadership. Since its creation in December 1933, it had been controlled directly by Goebbels’s Propaganda Ministry and was subject to the same controls and directions as any other part of the Nazi news media.

- ⁷ Second, the article of 20 July 1935 in the DNB does not report any ‘Interpol figures’, as Irving claims, but rather consists of a transcript of a press conference by Kurt Daluege on the ‘Jews and criminality’.
- Daluege is anything but an objective source. He was a committed Nazi, who had joined the NSDAP as early as 1926 and entered the SS in 1930. In the Spring of 1932, he was elected as a Nazi deputy to the Prussian Parliament. Immediately after the Nazi ‘seizure of power’, Daluege was appointed by Göring in February 1933 to the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. In September 1934, he was awarded the rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer* and in April 1935 he was promoted to *General-leutnant der Landespolizei*. It was in this capacity that he gave his press conference on 20 July 1935. During the Second World War, Daluege was responsible for the involvement of the German order police (which he had headed since 1936) in the Nazi extermination of Jews in the East. In January 1943, Daluege described the Second World War as a ‘struggle of annihilation against the world enemies, Jewry, Communism, which is led by Jewry, and plutocracy...’ Daluege was also responsible for Nazi occupation policy in Czechoslovakia in 1942-43 (when he served as deputy *Reichsprotektor für Böhmen und Mähren*). In October 1946, Daluege was executed for his crimes against the Czech population during the war.
- ⁸ Daluege’s press conference in July 1935 was a blatant propaganda exercise, designed to justify the brutal Nazi persecution of the German Jews. Daluege complained that while the ‘Jew-subservient’ (*judenhörigen*) sections of the world press reported the ‘alleged’ persecution of Jews in Germany, none of these journalists went to the trouble to discover the reasons “that compel the German people to take up its defensive struggle against Jewish arrogance and against Jewish criminality. I am in a position to supply to all those who out there in the world make themselves out to be so concerned about the allegedly endangered position of the German Jews material which will make their mood more reflective.”

- ⁹ Daluege went on to present figures detailing the alleged participation of Jews in criminal activities in Germany which proved the ‘danger of Jewry for the German people’. Daluege’s implication was clear: it was not Nazi Germany which posed a danger for the Jews, but it was the Jews who threatened Germany. “When one reflects on the fact that according to the latest statistical investigations there are 7.6 Jews per 1,000 Germans, and that the Jew is at the top of the figures with 80 per cent in particular types of crime and in others again at least a quarter of all convictions, one can be really happy that the German people has been freed from a large part of this evil. We want to deal all the more energetically with the other part, which now as before is mounting its thieving raids against the property and the health of our people.”
- ¹⁰ This antisemitic propaganda by a fanatical Nazi is utterly useless as a statistical source for the participation of German Jews in the Weimar Republic in criminal activities.
- ¹¹ Contemporary figures from the Weimar period do not indicate that Jewish criminality was particularly important. For instance, in 1925, an average of 1.05 per cent of all inmates in Prussian penitentiaries (*Zuchthäuser*) were Jewish, and 1.79 per cent of inmates in larger Prussian prisons. It is typical for Irving’s disregard for even the most basic conventions of historical scholarship, that he presents Daluege’s figures as objective facts (‘Interpol figures’). This uncritical use of Nazi propaganda material is indefensible.
- ¹² This is also true for the final source cited by Irving for his claims about the dominance of Jews in the Berlin criminal underworld, Daluege’s article of 3 August 1935 in *Der Angriff*. (incidentally, this article could not be located in the file referred to by Irving). *Der Angriff* was one of the most important Nazi propaganda papers, originally set up by Goebbels in 1927. Daluege in this article defended the material he had presented at the press conference on 20 July 1935: “If a section of the foreign press is trying to portray the official statistical material on the

criminality of the Jew as an attempt to justify the legal measures which are to be expected against the increasing presumptuousness of the Jews, that is either malicious, or at least a lack of understanding for the standpoint of the German people in the Jewish question.”

- ¹³ As an objective source, Daluege’s article is just as worthless as is his preceding press conference of 20 July 1935.
- ¹⁴ Not only does Irving uncritically use Daluege’s propaganda as an objective source, he even fails to cite Daluege’s figures correctly. For instance, in the original text of the press conference, Daluege claimed that in 1933, there were a total of 31,000 fraud cases recorded in Berlin. By 1934, there were only 18,000 such cases. According to Daluege, ‘a considerable part, if not the largest (part)’ of these perpetrators in 1934 were still Jewish. In Irving’s text, this passage is rendered in the following way: ‘In 1932, no fewer than thirty-one thousand cases of fraud, mainly insurance swindles, would be committed by Jews’. As is plain to see, this does not correspond to Daluege’s original text. First, Daluege’s figure of 31,000 fraud cases refers to 1933, not 1932. Second, not even the Nazi propagandist Daluege claimed, like Irving does, that *all* of these 31,000 fraud cases involved Jews. Irving thus further inflates the figures presented in Daluege’s propaganda material. Thirdly, Daluege nowhere claims that these fraud cases were mainly insurance swindles, as Irving does. It would have been easy for Irving to have verified his account against other sources. Thus the official German Criminal Statistics for the year 1932 recorded a total of 74 persons convicted of insurance fraud (paragraph 265 of the German Criminal Code) *in the whole of Germany* – a far cry from Irving’s figure of *over 15,500* cases of insurance fraud committed in 1932 by *Berlin* Jews alone.

(c)The Boycott of 1 April 1933

- ¹ In his book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'*, Irving justifies the Nazi-sponsored boycott of Jewish shops and businesses on 1 April 1933 as a legitimate reply to an irresponsible anti-Nazi press campaign instigated by Jews and Communists. In the last days before the March 5 elections in 1933, he writes, “the Jews and communists who had fled to Prague, Paris, and London poured vitriol over the new Hitler government. Irresponsible foreign journalists did the rest. Even ex-chancellor Brüning, still in Germany, watched in fury as they filed blatantly untrue stories exaggerating the plight of the Jews. At that time (Spring, 1933), he (Brüning) pointed out, hardly any Jews had suffered except for the leaders of the communist party. This year, 1933, was however the year of the big lie.”
- ² These exaggerated reports, Irving continues, led to a boycott of German goods started by the international Jewish community, and thus ‘Goebbels secured from Hitler – or so he claimed – approval to threaten a short, sharp counter-boycott of the Jews’, on 1 April. This was ‘crude but effective’. But, Irving continues, ‘untrue’ foreign press stories alleging for example (in 1935) that shops were refusing to serve Jews, continued to appear.
- ³ Irving has made similar claims elsewhere. For instance, in 1996 he told an audience in California: “Dr. Goebbels was the man who had the Jews in his power...Dr. Goebbels was the one who made the decisions. Well, there are some of the reasons for his motivation in the book [Irving’s biography of Goebbels]. The first piece of motivation is the episode of the Nazi boycott of the Jews in 1933. Very famous. Everybody knows about the Nazi boycott of the Jews, April 1, 1933, it took place on a Saturday. What nobody knows is that one week previously there had been a Jewish boycott of the Nazis, worldwide. And this is one of those facts of history which is suppressed. Cause and effect. Only the cause is never mentioned in the history books.”

- ⁴ In an article published in 1995 he similarly claimed that the Nazi boycott of Jewish shops on 1 April 1933 was merely a response to a boycott of German goods by Jews: “We must not overlook the fact that the world’s Jewish community lost no time in striking at Nazi Germany. We all too readily talk about the book-burning and about the Nazi boycott against the Jews as if those things happened in a vacuum. They didn’t. The Nazi boycott against the Jews on April 1, 1933, was a foolish reprisal by the Nazis in retaliation for the Jewish boycott against Germany. As soon as the Nazis came to power the world Jewish community announced an international boycott campaign against Germany.”
- ⁵ Irving once again tries to distance Hitler from any actions taken in Nazi Germany against the Jews: “It was Goebbels who organized that boycott, even though, if you read his diary, you can get the impression that Hitler authorized it, sanctioned it, and possibly even suggested it. But there’s no doubt at all in my mind that this is another case of Goebbels having an idea, of putting it into effect, and then playing a trick by writing in his diary that he’d gotten Hitler’s approval in advance.”
- ⁶ There may be no doubt in Irving’s mind. But there is absolutely no warrant for this supposition either in the Goebbels diary or anywhere else.
- ⁷ There are many problems with Irving’s account of the April, 1933 boycott. To begin with, he is wrong to repeat Brüning’s claim that ‘hardly any Jews had suffered except for the leaders of the communist party’: wrong on two counts. First, the leaders of the Communist Party were predominantly not Jewish. Indeed, by late 1932, not one of the 100 Communist deputies in the German Reichstag was Jewish. Secondly, many Jews had suffered in a variety of ways. Immediately after the elections on 5 March 1933 there were violent anti-Jewish disturbances in Berlin. On 9 March 1933, the SA seized dozens of East European

Jews in Berlin and took them off to concentration camps. Among the first German Jews to die in Berlin were Dr. Ascher and the journalist Leo Krell, killed on 16 March. Those attacked included American Jews who happened to be in Berlin. One of them, Herman Roseman, was kicked by an SA man on the street on 10 March and then the 'SA man continued to attack me, struck me in the face, wounded me in the eye and continued to do me bodily harm', he reported the following day.

⁸ Another Jew, Jean Klauber, was attacked in her home on 10 March by Nazi thugs who said to her 'Jews. We hate you. For fourteen years we have been waiting for this, and tonight we'll hang many of you', before beating her husband unconscious. In the town of Gedern in Hesse, the SA forced their way into Jewish homes and beat up the inhabitants 'with the acclamation of a rapidly growing crowd'. In Bünden, many resident Jews were taken off to a local pub on the evening of 15 March 1933 and beaten up by SA men.

⁹ Numerous other incidents of this kind were reported by officials. The later March report of the governing president of Bavaria noted: "On the 15th of this month, around 6 in the morning, several men in dark uniforms arrived by car at the home of the Israelite businessman Otto Selz in Straubing. Selz was taken by them from his house in his nightclothes and abducted in a car. Around 9.30 Selz was found, shot to death, in a forest near Weng, in the Landshut district. The car is said to have arrived from the direction of Munich-Landshut and to have departed in the same way. It carried six uniformed men and bore the sign II.A....Several people claim to have noticed that the car's occupants wore the red armband with the swastika."

¹⁰ The American consul in Leipzig reported in the following terms on 5 April, recounting the anti-Jewish violence which had occurred since the elections of 5 March, a month before: "In Dresden several weeks ago uniformed "Nazis" raided the Jewish Prayer house, interrupted the evening religious service, arrested twenty-five worshippers, and tore

the holy insignia or emblems from their head-covering while praying. Eighteen Jewish shops, including a bakery, mostly in Chemnitz, had their windows broken by rioters led by uniformed “Nazis”. Five of the Polish Jews arrested in Dresden were each compelled to drink one-half litre of castor oil...Some of the Jewish men assaulted had to submit to the shearing of their beards, or to the clipping of their hair in the shape of steps. One Polish Jew in Chemnitz had his hair torn out by the roots.”

- 11 SA troops attacked a Jewish-owned department store in Breslau on 11 March, and on the same day several SS men, on the orders of the local SS leader, raided two Jewish-owned department stores in Braunschweig and caused as much damage as they could, ruining the interiors and smashing many shop windows. Local Nazis in Göttingen broke in the windows of almost all the Jewish-owned shops in the town, while in Mannheim Jewish shop-owners were forced to close their shops by the local SA.
- 12 Jews suffered in other ways and other walks of life too. For instance, almost immediately after the election of 5 March 1933, Nazi violence started against Jewish judges and lawyers. On 9 March 1933, the local SA forced their way into the district court in Chemnitz, forced Jewish officials to leave the building, and took several of them into protective custody. On 11 March 1933, Jewish judges and lawyers in Breslau were forced onto the streets by the SA and physically assaulted; many of them were prevented by the SA and police from returning to work. Similar incidents had taken place in Kaiserslautern and Zweibrücken the previous day, and the courts were also occupied in Oels on 18 March, Gleiwitz on 24 March, Görlitz on 29 March and Königsberg on 31 March. On 14 March 1933, the Nazi association of jurists demanded that all Jewish judges in Germany should be suspended immediately and that all Jewish lawyers should have their licences revoked within four years. The Nazi newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, demanded on 19 March 1933 that the Berlin courts should be ‘cleansed’ of Jews.

- ¹³ The Nazi boycott of Jewish shops and businesses on 1 April 1933 has to be seen first of all in the light of all this preceding violence. Contrary to what Irving claims, there was no organized boycott of German goods by the international Jewish community; indeed the leaders of the Jewish community in Palestine sent a telegram to the Reich Chancellery ‘offering assurances that no authorized body in Palestine had declared or intended to declare a trade boycott of Germany’.
- ¹⁴ There were, to be sure, protests outside Germany against Nazi attacks on Jews, but these were based not on reactions to irresponsible reporting and exaggeration but on accurate representations of what the Nazis were actually doing to Jews in the weeks following the elections of March 5th. The Nazi boycott of Jewish shops and businesses on 1 April was not, as Irving claims, a ‘counter-boycott’. The German Jews were in no way responsible for the actions of American Jews, and in any case the movement amongst Jews in the USA to boycott German goods was neither organized nor co-ordinated, and certainly not undertaken at the behest of the German Jews.
- ¹⁵ Indeed, the idea of a boycott of Jewish shops and businesses was not first mooted as a response to foreign criticism of Nazi policies in March 1933 but had been frequently proposed by a variety of Nazis over the precious two years. Nor, finally, was it undertaken on 1 April on Goebbels’s initiative and without Hitler’s approval, as Irving claims; on the contrary, Hitler told the cabinet meeting on 29 March 1933 that he supported the proposed boycott and said he himself had called for it. Once more, Irving’s attempt to exonerate Hitler from measures taken in Nazi Germany against the Jews is totally discredited by contemporary documentation. Once more, too, it is apparent that he has borrowed a long-established ‘revisionist’ assertion, lifting it, as he does so much else, from other Holocaust deniers. In this instance, Irving seems to have based his claims on an article published by the notorious antisemite Ingrid Weckert in 1985, in which she wrote: “No legal measures were taken against the Jews in Germany until after the

international Jewish “Declaration of War” against Germany, as announced, for example, on the front page of the London *Daily Express* of 24 March 1933. This “declaration” took the form of a worldwide boycott of German goods. A week later there was an officially sanctioned boycott of Jewish shops and stores throughout Germany. This action was in direct response to the international Jewish boycott of German goods already in effect. ”

(d)Chaim Weizmann’s alleged ‘declaration of war’ on Germany in 1939>

- ¹ In his Pleadings to the court, Irving claims that Deborah Lipstadt in her book *Denying the Holocaust* presented him as a historian ‘who has inexplicably misled academic historians like Ernst Nolte into quoting historically invalid points contained in his writings and who applauds the internment of the Jews in Nazi concentration camps’. This too relates to the argument, pursued in various places by Irving, that the Jews were in some way responsible for their own misfortunes in the ‘Third Reich’. However, it has a special status because it is a specific subject of dispute between the Plaintiff and the Second Defendant in the present case. Let us first examine the comments by Deborah Lipstadt to which Irving objects.
- ² In her book, Lipstadt refers to Irving and Nolte in two different instances. First, she argues that the German historian Ernst Nolte used a declaration given by the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann at the outbreak of war in 1939, in which Weizmann pledged that the Jews would fight on the side of the democracies, to argue that Hitler had ‘good reason’ to be convinced that his enemies wanted to annihilate him. Lipstadt continues: “When Nolte was criticized on this point in light of prewar Nazi persecution of Jews, he said that he was only quoting David Irving, the right-wing writer of historical works. How quoting Irving justified using such a historically invalid point remains unexplained,

unless one wishes to see it as a reflection of Nolte's personal predilections. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, Irving...has become a Holocaust denier. ”

- ³ Lipstadt comes back to this point briefly at a later stage in her book where she argues: ‘As we have seen above, Nolte, echoing David Irving, argues that the Nazi “internment” of Jews was justified because of Chaim Weizmann’s September 1939 declaration that the Jews of the world would fight Nazism.’
- ⁴ These statements by Lipstadt include three distinct elements: first, that Nolte claims to have drawn in his argument on the works on David Irving; second, that the interpretation by Nolte and Irving of Weizmann’s letter as a declaration of war by the Jews of the world against Germany is historically invalid; third, that Nolte (and Irving) regard the declaration by Weizmann as justifying the Nazi ‘internment’ of the Jews. We will first turn to the interpretation of the Weizmann note by David Irving. In a passage in the English edition of *Hitler’s War* (1977), Irving writes: “Now, in September 1939, Hitler was upon the verge of world war. And Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Jewish Agency, had written to Neville Chamberlain promising explicitly that all Jews everywhere stood by him and would fight on the side of the democracies against Nazi Germany. *The Times* published Weizmann’s letter on September 6, and Hitler no doubt considered it an unorthodox Jewish declaration of war. He often referred to it in later years.”
- ⁵ Irving reprinted this passage almost unchanged in his 1991 edition of *Hitler’s War*. One of the few changes is that Irving now argued that Hitler ‘no doubt considered it a Jewish declaration of war’ – thus Irving has cut the word ‘unorthodox’ when referring to the Weizmann document.
- ⁶ Irving first referred to the Weizmann note in the German edition of *Hitler’s War*, published in 1975, the version which was apparently later used by Nolte. Here, Irving’s account is crucially different from his

later versions. In his subsequent books, Irving argues that it was *Hitler* who saw the note as a declaration of war. But this qualification is missing in the 1975 account. Here, it is *Irving* who describes the note as a declaration of war. Thus, Irving writes that in September 1939 “Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the President of the Jewish Agency, had underlined ‘most emphatically’ in a letter to the British government that all Jews, wherever they might be, stood behind Chamberlain and would fight on the side of the democracies against Hitler. This open declaration of war certainly reached Hitler’s cognisance when *The Times* published the letter on 6 September, for he based his statement in the summer of 1942 that World Jewry was Enemy Number 1 on it.”

- ⁷ These claims by Irving were later taken up Ernst Nolte, a retired professor of modern history in Berlin, specialising in the history of fascism. In recent years, Nolte has moved increasingly to the right-wing fringe of the German historical profession. For instance, in an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Nolte argued in 1994 that radical right-wing thought should be supported and that there had been various positive elements and tendencies within National Socialism. Nevertheless, in the past Nolte has distanced himself from Irving’s claim that Hitler was not informed of the extermination of the Jews: “The thesis of David Irving is astonishing not least because in *Fuhrer und Reichskanzler* he himself reported on the basis of Himmler’s interview notes that Himmler was obliged to report to Hitler on 19 November 1939 on the ‘shooting of 380 Jews in Ostro’. The idea that he was not obliged to report two years later on the planned and in part already executed killing of millions is just absurd.”
- ⁸ Nolte also characterised Irving as a holocaust denier. In his 1993 book *Streitpunkte*, he argued that Irving, after joining the group around the *Journal of Historical Review*, ‘then came more and more to the conviction that the whole final solution as a programme of systematic extermination was an invention of British propaganda.’

⁹ However, Nolte did draw on Irving's interpretation of the Weizmann note. He first referred to it *in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in 1980 and then in a contribution to a volume edited by the historian H.W. Koch and published in 1985. In this essay, Nolte discussed various books on Nazi Germany, including the (as he called it) 'revisionist' book Hitler's War (German edition 1975) by David Irving. Nolte argued that while Irving's general aim was 'undisguisedly a vindication of Hitler', "not all of Irving's theses and references can be set aside so easily...it can hardly be denied that Hitler had good reasons to be convinced of his enemies' determination to annihilate him much earlier than when the first information about Auschwitz came to the knowledge of the world. The 1940 pamphlet 'Germany must perish' by Theodore N. Kaufman has often been mentioned in the literature, but I do not remember seeing it in any of the more important German books I have read about Chaim Weizmann's official declaration in the first days of September 1939, according to which Jews in the world would fight on the side of England. Anyway, I have to reproach myself for not knowing this statement in 1963 and not having made use of it, although it can be found in the Archiv der Gegenwart* of 1939, and it might justify the consequential thesis that Hitler was allowed to treat German Jews as prisoners of war and by this means to intern them..."*

¹⁰ Here Nolte acknowledges that it was Irving who first brought his attention to the Weizmann note. He repeats this point in several of his later articles and interviews, when challenged about his interpretation of the Weizmann note. In October 1986, he tried to distance himself from David Irving's thesis that Weizmann's note 'was to be regarded as a kind of declaration of war'. Nolte now denied that he had accepted this thesis; he had only wanted to discuss it. As he explained in an interview on 17 April 1987 with the Israeli newspaper *Ha-Aretz*: 'Certain statements by Irving are to be regarded as wrong on logical grounds. Of other statements this can not be said, they must be discussed, they require debate.' Nevertheless, Nolte clearly continued to be sympathetic to Irving's interpretation, and has come back to it several times in

recent years. For instance, in 1994 he argued that Chaim Weizmann's statement might indeed be interpreted as a 'declaration of war against the German Reich' by the Jews.

- 11 Nolte is here taking over an element in the Holocaust denial arsenal of arguments that make the Jews responsible for their own fate under the 'Third Reich'. Let us look at the origins and background of Weizmann's note of 1939. Chaim Weizmann was the President of the World Zionist Organisation, as well as the Leader of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. He took part in the Zionist Congress, which opened on 16 August 1939 in Geneva, and wound up on 25 August under the impression of an impending war. He returned to London, and on 29 August 1939, he sent the following letter to Prime Minister Chamberlain, which was later, on 6 September, published in the *Times*: "In this hour of supreme crisis, the consciousness that the Jews have a contribution to make to the defence of sacred values impels me to write this letter. I wish to confirm, in the most explicit manner, the declaration which I and my colleagues have made during the last months, and especially in the last week: that the Jews "stand by Great Britain and will fight on the side of the democracies." Our urgent desire is to give effect to these declarations. We wish to do so in a way entirely consonant with the general scheme of British action, and therefore would place ourselves, in matters big and small, under the co-ordinating direction of His Majesty's Government. The Jewish Agency is ready to enter into immediate arrangements for utilising Jewish man-power, technical ability, resources etc. The Jewish Agency has recently had differences in the political field with the Mandatory Power. We would like these differences to give way before the greater and more pressing necessities of the time. We ask you to accept this declaration in the spirit in which it is made."
- 12 Weizmann's offer to use Jewish manpower and technical ability in the war effort, probably with the aim of forming a Jewish army, 'met with an icy response from the outset'. Chamberlain did not commit himself in his reply on 2 September. He stated that he noted with pleasure that

‘Britain can rely upon the whole-hearted cooperation of the Jewish Agency. You will not expect me to say more at this stage than that your public-spirited assurances and welcome aid will be kept in mind.’ He refused to go any further than this.

- ¹³ This was thus something rather less than a declaration of war. Moreover, in issuing his letter, Weizmann was not claiming to speak for ‘all Jews everywhere’, as Irving suggests. As is clear from the letter to Chamberlain, Weizmann in the first place spoke on behalf of the ‘Jewish Agency’, a representative body of the ‘World Zionist Organisation’ in Palestine. Weizmann also mentioned in the letter the support for Britain by his ‘colleagues’ in the World Zionist Organisation. However, this organisation in 1939 only comprised around 6% of all Jews living in the world, and only a small fraction of German Jews, very many of whom opposed the idea of Zionism. Just before the Nazi seizure of power, only around 20,000 of Germany’s 500,000 Jews were members of the German Zionist Association (*Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*). The idea that Weizmann was in any way a leader of world Jewry in 1939 belongs solely to the fantasy world of antisemitic conspiracy theory.
- ¹⁴ Quite apart from the fact that Weizmann could only claim to speak for a small minority of Jews, neither he, nor the World Zionist Organisation, nor the ‘Jewish Agency’ was in any position to declare war on Germany. The notion that Zionist pressure groups, without territory, army, government or international recognition, could somehow act as a sovereign state with the ability to declare war according to international law, has been widely dismissed by serious historians. One also ought to note that Weizmann wrote the letter to Chamberlain *before* the outbreak of the war, on 29 August 1939, and not after, as Nolte states and Irving implies, or in other words, at a time when no sovereign state had so far issued a declaration of war. Chamberlain, as has already been pointed out, also did not see the letter as a declaration of war on Germany.

- ¹⁵ Irving's interpretation of the Weizmann note as a 'declaration of war' was first advanced by the Nazis themselves as a justification for their murderous conduct during the war. Thus Hitler declared on 24 July 1942 that "In this Second World War as a struggle for life and death it must never be forgotten that following the declaration of war of the World Zionist Congress and its leader Chaim Weizmann (in his message to England's Prime Minister Chamberlain), World Jewry is the unrelenting opponent of National Socialism, the enemy Number 1." Irving's claim that Weizmann's statement was a declaration of war, as well as his equation of Zionism with all Jews living in the world, are both taken straight from Hitler himself.
- ¹⁶ After the Second World War, like other claims made by the Nazis, the argument was soon again taken up by right-wing propagandists, Nazi apologists and Holocaust deniers. Irving was by no means the first writer in the post-war period to claim that Weizmann's statement amounted to a declaration of war. In June 1963, a Hamburg Professor of Psychology, Peter Robert Hofstätter argued in an article for the weekly paper *Die Zeit* that one might be able to describe the Jews exterminated in the 'final solution' as victims who had fallen in the war which they had declared against the Nazis. Hofstätter used this argument to call for some kind of amnesty for Nazi criminals, as their crimes had in reality been acts of war, ordered by the Commander of the German troops, Adolf Hitler. In the following months, a heated debate ensued in Germany about Hofstätter's claims. In a letter to the *National-Zeitung* on 16.8.1963, Hofstätter argued that Hitler and the NS state had 'quasi declared war on the Jews'. In an interview with the magazine *Der Spiegel* in September 1963, Hofstätter linked Hitler's supposed declaration of war against the Jews (in particular focusing on the Reichstag speech of 30 January 1939) with Weizmann's letter of 1939 to Chamberlain. Hofstätter declared that he was convinced 'that there was a declaration of war on the German Reich by Chaim Weizmann in August 1939.' Other commentators in the 1960s used Hofstät-

ter's arguments to advance their claims that the Jews and the 'Third Reich' had been in a state of war, so the Jews were partly responsible for the Final Solution. Since the 1960s, the Weizmann note has become a fixed part of the literature put out by revisionists and Holocaust deniers.

¹⁷ Nolte also argued that Weizmann's statement, as a declaration of war, could be used to justify the internment of Jews by the Nazis, a point he had first made in 1985. Thus, he commented that Weizmann's statement 'might justify the consequential thesis that Hitler was allowed to treat German Jews as prisoners of war and by this means to intern them.' Nolte again claimed that this interpretation was based on Irving's work. In 1987 Nolte commented on the Weizmann note that 'this statement possibly, as Irving also hints, justifies Hitler interning the German Jews as civil internees, just as it is well known that the French interned the Germans and the English the Germans on the outbreak of war.' Nolte repeatedly drew attention to what he described as Irving's thesis that 'Chaim Weizmann's letter to Chamberlain at the beginning of September 1939 is possibly to be regarded as a kind of declaration of war which gave Hitler the right to intern the German Jews as enemy aliens.' 'Internment', as has been pointed out, 'is far too mild a word for the harsh, brutal, and eventually murderous discrimination meted out to Jews by the Nazis', long before Weizmann even wrote his letter. From 1941 onwards, Jews were not treated as 'civil internees' by the Nazis, but gassed, shot and starved to death. And in any case, extreme measures had been taken against them by the Nazis well before the outbreak of war, including the deprivation of citizenship and incarceration of large numbers of them in concentration camps in 1938.

¹⁸ Nolte provides no footnotes for his assertion that he based his argument on suggestions made by Irving. As no corresponding argument can be found in Irving's book *Hitler's War*, it would seem as if Nolte was wrong in attributing this argument to Irving. There is, however, no indication that Irving ever wrote to Nolte to object to this misrepresenta-

tion. On the contrary, Irving himself later endorsed Nolte's interpretation. Thus, in 1995, Irving described the Weizmann statement of 1939 as a 'crucial error because – as Professor Ernst Nolte and some other historians have argued – it somewhat justified what the Nazis then did to the Jews: the Jews declared war on Germany and Germany declared war on the Jews'. One should note that Irving goes much further than Nolte. Nolte had argued that Weizmann's note might justify the internment in some form of the Jews living in Nazi controlled territory. Irving, however, speaks of the note somewhat justifying 'what the Nazis then did to the Jews'.

- ¹⁹ By inference, this includes not only imprisonment, but also, for example, the mass murder of Soviet Jews by SS task forces from late June 1941 onwards, which Irving accepts as historical fact. Thus, Irving attaches a far wider significance to the Weizmann note than Nolte had done. Also, he presents the supposed German declaration of war against the Jews as a consequence of the Weizmann note, ignoring the years of persecution of Jews since 1933 at the hands of the Nazis and also ignoring Hitler's public threats on the Reichstag of 30 January 1939.
- ²⁰ Lipstadt's claim that Nolte echoed Irving's argument that Weizmann's declaration justified the Nazi 'internment' of Jews is therefore not quite correct. She repeats Nolte's claim that he had relied on Irving's work, yet it seems that Irving had not made this particular claim about the 'internment' of the Jews at the time at which Nolte wrote his article. However, it is difficult to see the grounds on which Irving can object to Lipstadt's allegation. His claim that the Weizmann letter was an 'open declaration of war' on Germany by the Jews was indeed taken over by Nolte. He has never written to Nolte to complain about the latter's use of his work to justify the 'internment' of the Jews, or repudiated this view in public. Indeed, he has subsequently attached an even greater significance to the Weizmann note than Nolte has, implying that it justified not only the 'internment' of Jews but also their murder.

(e)The Eichmann memoirs

- ¹ Irving even retrospectively supports the Nazi policy of expelling the Jews from Europe and suggests that the mass murders of the Jews by the Nazis during the war, to the extent that he admits they actually took place, were ultimately the responsibility of the Jews themselves. In a speech delivered on 11 October 1992, Irving argued that in the Eichmann papers recently given to him, Adolf Eichmann clearly meant by the word *Endlösung* or ‘final solution’ the idea of taking “all the Jews of Europe...to Madagascar, where they would be on an island where they couldn’t bother any of their neighbors and where none of their neighbors could bother them. I’ve always said and I say it here again – even though I risk making a few enemies – that I think that would have been an ideal solution to a perennial world tragedy.”
- ² Irving surely knew that the plan to deport Europe’s Jews to Madagascar was murderous in its intent.
- ³ For there is every reason to believe that the transport itself would have been carried out in inhumane conditions comparable to those obtaining on the cattle-trucks which took the Jews to Auschwitz and Treblinka, and in which many thousands died because of overcrowded conditions, and lack of sanitation, food and water. Conditions on the island itself were extremely inhospitable and it is extremely unlikely that the Nazis would have made any effort to have supplied the Jews deported there with the necessities of life. As with Jewish emigrants and deportees from Germany itself, money and valuables would have been taken from them before they set off, leaving them without the means of paying for supplies. ‘Madagascar’ was in effect another euphemism for mass murder, as Irving surely knows.
- ⁴ Irving then went on to recount, without comment, Eichmann’s speculation, repeated throughout the papers, that it was the Jews themselves who were responsible for the Holocaust. ‘Was the Holocaust something that they themselves inflicted on their own body’, he reported Eich-

mann as asking, ‘in order to bring about their Zionist cause in the long run?’ Eichmann justified the cruelties he saw in Auschwitz – the burning of bodies in an open pit – by referring to Allied air-raids (‘what they were doing to us at that time’, ‘they’ obviously meaning the Jews, though Irving does not comment on this assumption either).

- ⁵ Here once more, Irving implicitly adopts the antisemitic fantasy of a leading Nazi as his own point of view; for his failure to dissociate himself from it means that he is consciously offering it to his audience as a plausible hypothesis. It need hardly be added that there is no evidence at all for Eichmann’s charge. ‘The Jews’ were not behind Allied air-raids on Germany; nor, as we have already seen, was there any causal connection at all between the raids and the Nazi extermination of the Jews. Finally, it is worth noting that Irving, once again, steers carefully clear of referring to the Holocaust as the systematic extermination of millions of Jews, and merely quotes Eichmann as referring to the burning of bodies in an open pit at Auschwitz.

(f)The ‘Kaufman plan’.

- ¹ In the passage quoted by Irving above, Eichmann also justified the Holocaust by reference to ‘the Jews’ plans for Germany’ after the war. Once again, Irving does not dissociate himself from this suggestion. Indeed, he actually backs this up by referring to “a sensational book, *Germany must Perish*’, in which ‘American writer Theodor N. Kaufman proposes the sterilization of all male Germans. *Time* magazine lauds his book. In August 1941 Goebbels translates it for the troops and uses it to persuade Hitler to tackle the Jewish problem now.”
- ² This statement appears as a caption to a picture of the book in the illustrations between pages 332 and 333 of *Goebbels*, under the heading: ‘FINAL SOLUTION’, a term, it will be remembered, conventionally used for the Nazi extermination of the Jews, though not employed by Irving in this sense. In fact, Goebbels did not translate the book, or even have

it translated by someone else. An examination of the Goebbels Diaries for August 1941 shows that Goebbels had a pamphlet made about the book, with extracts. In his entry for 13 August 1941, he mentioned that he had had to abandon the idea, originally mooted in his entry for 3 August, of translating the whole book, because he feared the consequences for German publications in America of breaching the copyright law in such a blatant fashion.

- ³ In his entry for 19 August, Goebbels did indeed write that ‘the mass pamphlet on the book of the American Jew Kaufman, doctored for the war needs of the German people, finds the approval of the Führer’. However, this is only towards the end of a lengthy report of a conversation with Hitler, some time *after* the two men had discussed the ‘Jewish problem’ and after they had gone on to other subjects. In other words, Hitler had *already* agreed to more radical measures against the Jews – more rapid deportations of Berlin Jews to the East, and the imposition of the obligation to wear the identifying yellow star on Germany’s remaining Jews- some time *before* the Kaufman book had been brought to his attention by Goebbels. The diary entries show clearly that Goebbels considered the pamphlet, together with the yellow star, to be propaganda weapons in influencing German popular opinion against the Jews; nowhere does he mention using the pamphlet to persuade Hitler to do anything at all. Thus Irving has skewed the diary entry to make it look as if the pamphlet was discussed before the ‘Jewish problem’, and invented a connection between the two for which there is no evidential basis whatsoever.
- ⁴ The publicity generated by Goebbels’s translated extracts from the Kaufman book, and the commentary he had appended to them, ensured that it was widely known amongst German troops and civilians during the war and remained lodged in the memory of Nazi apologists long afterwards, not least because of Nazi claims that it represented official US policy. In a press conference called by the Reich government on 23 July 1941, a representative of the German Foreign Ministry said:

‘We know that Roosevelt dictated individual chapters himself. This programme of annihilation of Roosevelt’s deserves the sharpest possible repudiation. It really is a programme of Roosevelt’s policy.’ Following this claim, the Nazi daily newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, ran the story on 24 July 1941 under the headline: ‘Roosevelt demands the sterilization of the German people.’ The publication date of the book, which actually had been at the beginning of 1941, was manipulated to place it just after the signature of the Anglo-American Atlantic Charter in August, to give it a further appearance of being official Allied policy, ‘the cornerstone of thousand-year-long Jewish plans for world domination’.

- ⁶ When extracts from the book were published in German translation as ordered by Goebbels, the commentary made clear what the implications were. ‘Who shall die?’, ran a page-heading for example: ‘The Germans or the Jews?’ The commentary on the text continued in the following way, drawing out its significance for those who might still have some difficulty in getting the message the Propaganda Ministry was trying to get across: “Here a modest reference may be permitted: There are some 20 million Jews in the world. How would it be if instead of the 80 million Germans, these 20 million Jews were treated according to the recipe of their racial comrade Kaufman? At all events, peace would then be secured. For the Jew is the trouble-maker, the disturber of the peace in the whole world.”
- ⁷ Not surprisingly, long before Irving came to quote it in his own work, Holocaust deniers were using the ‘Kaufman plan’ to suggest that if anything bad happened to the Jews during the war, it was their own fault. The Holocaust denier Paul Rassinier (1906-1967) wrote in 1963: “Hitler ordered the book to be read out on all radio stations. One can imagine the kind of impression this made on the public opinion of Germany. I myself have met Germans who said to me that from the day this plan became known, the necessity of physically destroying the Jews began to be talked of, in the people, in the army, in the police and

everywhere. The hope was expressed that Hitler would give an appropriate order, and very frequently people were even convinced that such an order had already gone out to Himmler or Heydrich...In short, the reading-out of Theodore Kaufman over the German radio unleashed popular rage against the Jews.”

- ⁸ Similarly, in 1970 another Holocaust denier, former SA member Heinz Roth, argued that the Wannsee Conference was less harmful than the ‘Kaufman plan’ because it only dealt with ‘emigration’ not extermination or sterilization. Adolf Eichmann’s claim, advanced in his memoirs, that the book acted as a trigger in the Nazi leadership for ‘killing measures against Jews’, as he quite openly called them, belongs essentially to this literature of retrospective justification as well. Thus, as in other aspects of his Holocaust denial, Irving here is not reporting research of his own, but simply lifting arguments from others, or in other words, engaging in what he calls ‘inter-historian incest’ with other Holocaust deniers.
- ⁹ In fact, not even Irving went so far as to repeat Nazi propaganda claims that the book was dictated by Roosevelt or formed part of official Allied policy towards the Germans. These claims indeed had no foundation in reality at all. The compiler of the Propaganda Ministry’s translated extracts, Wolfgang Diewerge, went out of his way to argue that Kaufman was ‘no nameless loner, no fanatic rejected by world Jewry, no deranged crank...rather a leading and well-known Jewish personality in the United States’, indeed an adviser to President Roosevelt himself. But actually Kaufman had no connections with the US Administration. He was also a completely marginal figure in the Jewish political scene. *Germany must Perish!* was self-published by Kaufman and had no financial backing from anyone else. The ‘American Federation of Peace’ was not a mainstream political organization, but largely a figment of Kaufman’s own imagination. It had few members and lacked any kind of influence on the establishment.

- ¹⁰ The book did indeed advocate the postwar division of Germany and the sterilization of the entire German population. But as *Time* magazine pointed out in an article, entitled 'A Modest Proposal', on 24 March, 1941, on the foundation of the 'American Federation of Peace' establishment by Kaufman in 1939 Kaufman had declared that its aim was to petition Congress '1) to keep the U.S. out of Europe's wars or 2) to sterilize all Americans so that their children might not become homicidal monsters.' 'In step with the times', commented *Time*, 'Sterilizer Kaufman had simply transferred his basic idea back to the enemy'. This presentation gives the lie to Irving's claim that *Time* magazine received Kaufman's book with praise. On the contrary, the magazine made it clear that it was the work of an eccentric, and noted that readers might wonder 'whether the strange book was a landmark, the first appearance of the Streicher mind in the U.S.', referring to the notoriously violent, rabid racism of the prominent Nazi Julius Streicher, publisher of the vulgar antisemitic paper *Stürmer*.
- ¹¹ Reporting on 9 August 1941 that the Jewish residents of Hanover had been herded together in the mortuary of the Jewish cemetery in an antisemitic action justified by the town's mayor as a response to the 'Kaufman plan', the *New York Times* cited Kaufman himself as saying: 'The Nazis are merely finding a scapegoat for their barbarities. They have hounded the Jews since the beginning of the Nazi regime, and I am sure anything I have written could not make their atrocities worse.'
- ¹² The critical reception the book received in the American press was in fact well known to Goebbels and the Propaganda Ministry, who took what brief biographical details there were about Kaufman – his foundation of the so-called American Federation of Peace, and so on – from 'A Modest Proposal', *Time* magazine's article on him published on 24 March 1941. Not only did Goebbels know, therefore, that *Time* magazine had dismissed the book as eccentric, he was also well aware of the fact that, as he put it in his diary entry for 3 August 1941, Kauf-

man's book demonstrated a 'complete lack of realism' and was therefore not to be taken seriously; his use of it as a propaganda measure bore all the usual hallmarks of his cynical disregard for the truth.

- ¹³ Irving's appropriation and uncritical repetition of Holocaust denial myths surrounding Theodore Kaufman's *Germany must Perish* are characteristic of his attempts to suggest that Nazi antisemitism was somehow a reaction to a Jewish threat; those attempts in turn are characteristic of the wider antisemitic context of Holocaust denial, just as is the crude and obvious falsification of the relevant historical evidence which it involves. As in his attempts to provide a documentary basis for his exculpation of Hitler from the charges of antisemitism and mass murder, Irving engages in a knowing and conscious manipulation of the historical record in order to lend a semblance of credibility to his insinuation that the Jews were to blame for their own misfortunes. A similar manipulation was also observable in his allegation that a Jewish organization was behind the assassination of the German diplomat vom Rath in 1938, as this Report showed above in its discussion of Irving's account of the pogrom of 9-10 November 1938. As in that instance, so in the case of the Kaufman book, a critical examination of his work reveals examples of all the dishonest techniques of manipulation and falsification with which Lipstadt has charged him.
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6. General Conclusion

- ^{6.1} This examination of Irving's work has demonstrated that there is abundant evidence of his beliefs and activities since 1988 as a Holocaust denier; that is to say, he has actively propagated the view that the Holocaust as conventionally understood did not happen. According to Irving, there were no functioning gas chambers, there was no systematic extermination of the Jews by the Nazis, the number of Jews killed by the Nazis in the Second World War did not amount to more than a

few hundred thousand at most, and the evidence on which historians have relied for their accounts of the Holocaust was fabricated by the Allies during the war and further invented afterwards in the interests of sustaining the new state of Israel. Irving has manifold connections with well-known Holocaust deniers in a number of countries, and uses his website to propagate Holocaust denial on the Internet. He has repeatedly implied that such antisemitic outrages as did occur under the 'Third Reich' were the responsibility of the Jews themselves, who in his view gave rise to them as a result of various acts of provocation which they committed. And he has consistently sought to portray the crimes of the 'Third Reich' during the Second World War as no more serious, indeed possibly a good deal less serious, than the crimes, if that was what they were, committed by the Allies most notably the bombing of German cities.

- 6.2 Irving is a particularly dangerous spokesperson for Holocaust denial because over the years he has consistently portrayed himself as a scrupulous historian with an unrivalled knowledge of the archival sources and an unerring eye for forgeries and falsifications. As we saw in Part I, he has repeatedly claimed that he is waging a 'campaign for real history' against legend and myth, truth against falsehood. 'Real history', he says, is based on the archives, not on copying other historians' work, which is how academic, university-based historians in his opinion proceed. Many reviewers, and still more journalists, have been at least partly taken in by this ceaselessly propagated self-promotion and have paid tribute to Irving's skill and energy as a researcher. But even if they have done so, they have often gone on to complain that Irving manipulates and distorts the sources he uses. If, like Peter Hoffmann, Charles Sydnor, Martin Broszat, Hugh Trevor-Roper, David Canadine, or Eberhard Jäckel, for instance, they have themselves been familiar with these sources, their condemnation of Irving's work for its inaccuracy and bias has been particularly detailed and unremitting.

- 6.3 Irving has claimed in a posting on his website that there is at least one positive view of him by a professional historian with expertise in the areas on which he works. 'New Zealand's leading Holocaust historian has a word or two to say about David Irving', he proclaims. The competition to be New Zealand's leading historian of the Holocaust is, in truth, not very intense. However, the historian to whom he refers – Dr. Joel S. Hayward of Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, is not a specialist on Nazi antisemitism at all, but a military historian who has worked on the role of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Stalingrad. Irving quotes Hayward as saying that he has read all of Irving's books, and has also 'conducted extensive research into Irving's character and career, this information forming a substantial part of my Master's thesis on the historiography of Holocaust Revisionism'. Hayward's verdict, based, he says, on a knowledge of many of the documents Irving has used and cited in his work, is that 'I can't find serious flaws in his methodology and I have never found a single example of deliberate falsification of evidence....Irving is a researcher, biographer and military historian of outstanding aptitude. Many of his works are excellent.'
- 6.4 However, although he holds an academic post, Hayward is far from being an unbiased witness. In fact, he hovers on the fringes of Holocaust denial, to put it no more strongly, himself. His only work on the Nazi extermination of the Jews was an M.A. thesis entitled 'The Fate of Jews in German Hands: An Historical Enquiry into the Development and Significance of Holocaust Revisionism', which was quoted by anti-semites in New Zealand as a justification of Holocaust denial. Charged with being a Holocaust denier, Hayward replied that he was young and inexperienced when he wrote the thesis, admitted that it contained errors of fact and judgement, and confessed that he was embarrassed by some of the things he wrote in it. It is clear, however, that the thesis was extremely sympathetic to the Holocaust deniers. Moreover, in his reply to his critics, Hayward admitted that 'European Jews suffered dreadfully during the 1930s and especially during World War II, when Ger-

mans and others maltreated, enslaved and murdered great numbers', but did not admit that gas chambers had existed, that five to six million Jews had been murdered, or that the Nazi extermination was in any way systematic. Moreover, Hayward has published an article in the Holocaust Revisionist periodical the *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung* (first issue of 1999, pp. 4-16), and is listed as an author by the periodical's publisher, the *Vrij Historisch Onderzoek*, a Dutch revisionist organization devoted (as it proclaims on its website) to '*Revisionismus pur*', alongside well known deniers such as Austin App, Robert Faurisson and Günther Deckert (Irving is another author whose work is available via this website). Neither from the nature of his associations, nor from the quality and range of his research, which insofar as it has dealt with the Nazi extermination of the Jews, has been in considerable measure, if not quite completely, disowned by its author, can Dr. Hayward be called an unbiased or trustworthy witness on the quality of Irving's work. As this Report has made abundantly clear, Hayward's own views on Irving's research are completely without foundation.

- 6.5 Irving's claims to be a historian are bogus for a number of reasons. He has repeatedly condemned other historians for supposedly neglecting or suppressing key documents and for merely plagiarising each other; but how can he possibly do this, when on his own admission he never reads their work, and so can have no idea what is in it? At the Zündel trial in Canada, for example, he was even forced to admit that he had not read the standard work on the extermination of the Jews by Raul Hilberg. How can one take seriously the opinions of such a man on what professional historians do or fail to do? In fact, as we have seen, specialist historians do not merely rely on each other's work, but base their investigations on research in the archives that is at least as extensive as Irving's, and in most cases a good deal more rigorous. They cite other historians because other historians have carried out work on archival sources themselves, which it would be otiose to repeat. How-

ever, historians always provide precise references to the archival sources on which they base their conclusions, enabling their colleagues to check their accuracy and subject their arguments to critical scrutiny, and this is what commonly occurs when they use each other's work. By contrast, as we have seen, Irving frequently fails to provide proper source references, is often vague about the documents he claims to have used, and sometimes appears to cover his tracks by making it particularly difficult for his readers to track his sources down.

- 6.6 Moreover, far from reaching his conclusions about the Holocaust as a result of independent research, Irving, who admitted to a conference of the Institute of Historical Review in the mid-1980's that he had never investigated it in any detail since it was not his primary concern, has simply copied them from the existing literature of Holocaust denial, in the kind of incestuous and plagiaristic procedure which he has repeatedly and falsely alleged is common practice among academic historians. Examining the views of App, Butz, Faurisson, Rassinier, Staeglich, Christophersen and others quoted and summarized in this paper, it is clear that many of them have been taken over completely by Irving without acknowledgment and presented as his own. Thus his argument that Zyklon-B was only used for delousing and hygiene – for saving lives rather than taking them, in other words – was put much earlier by Butz. So too was his claim that the failure of Yad Vashem to collect six million names showed that six million did not in fact die. Irving's assertion that Auschwitz was no more than an industrial plant also appears to derive from Butz. His belief that most Jews who died there died of typhus can also be found in Butz's *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, published long before Irving announced in public his conversion to Holocaust denial. He follows Butz in his semantic disputation of the meaning of terms such as *Judentum* and *Ausrottung*. He echoes Austin App in the suggestion that a large number of the Jews who allegedly died in the Holocaust went to Israel and were not killed

at all. These examples can easily be multiplied with reference to other well-known works of Holocaust denial. All that Irving does in this respect is to repeat the arguments that had become standard clichés of this literature in the decades before his conversion. Indeed he himself, writing in his diary on 24th July 1986, admitted that it was Faurisson who first got him ‘thinking very hard’ about the evidence for the Auschwitz gas chambers. There is no evidence that he has carried out any serious research on the Holocaust since the late 1980’s, and none at all that he did any in the run-up to his ‘conversion’ in 1988.

- 6.7 The Holocaust denial literature which he has copied is light-years away from the kind of careful, archivally based historical scholarship which Irving has become accustomed to describe as ‘real history’. Take for example the arguments put forward in the 1980s by ‘Richard Harwood’, quickly revealed as a pseudonym for Richard Verrall, the editor of *Spearhead*, the journal of the National Front, which at the time was the leading racist and neo-fascist political organization in Britain. In 1974 ‘Harwood’ published a booklet entitled *Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth at Last*. In 1978 ‘Harwood’ brought out a second pamphlet, entitled *Nuremberg and other War Crimes*. Among other things, these brief tracts engaged in the kind of semantic disputes which we subsequently find in the work of Irving. Harwood declared, like Butz, that in his trial at Nuremberg, leading Nazi Alfred Rosenberg ‘was able to show that “*Ausrottung*” had been mistranslated; in fact it meant uprooting. Likewise, “*Judentum*” did not, in Harwood’s view, following Rosenberg, mean “Jews” as individuals (this would have been *Juden*), but should be translated as “Jewry” or “Jewish power”.’ Harwood also claimed, as Irving was to do subsequently, that Nazi antisemitism was a response to attacks on Germany by ‘international Jewry’. As Irving was to do later, he argued that the Allies fabricated photographs alleged to be of concentration camp victims. Although the author of the pamphlet had never carried out any documentary historical research, Irving subsequently rated it as over 90 per cent factually accurate and

took over many of its arguments entirely uncritically, although he himself had not done any documentary historical research in this area either. In fact it is a complete falsification of history, as is all the work of the Holocaust deniers, including Irving's.

- 6.8 An examination of Irving's own work, for example with reference to the origins of such instances of Nazi antisemitism as he is prepared to concede actually did happen, or the statistical calculation of the number of German civilians killed in the Allied bombing raid on Dresden in February 1945, confirms that he shares the principal historical methods of Holocaust denial. These include especially skewing and manipulation of documents, intentional suppression of evidence, conscious falsification of statistics, reliance on sources known to be unreliable if they fit the argument in hand, unjustified dismissal of reliable sources if they do not, false attribution of conclusions to books and sources which in fact say the opposite, knowing mistranslation of German sources and use of known mistranslations when this suits the argument, and deliberate misconstrual or even invention of the historical record. We have repeatedly encountered examples of all of these methods of distorting and falsifying the historical record in Irving's work, both in connection with his contention that Hitler did not know of, or insofar as he did know, disapproved of antisemitic acts during the 'Third Reich', and in connection with other aspects of the history of the time, such as the Allied bombing raid on Dresden in February 1945.
- 6.9 In looking at one particular kind of source, especially prized by Irving, namely the postwar testimony of Hitler's surviving staff, we have seen again how he lacks all consistency in applying critical criteria to source material and judges it not by its provenance, the intention and position of its authors, or its internal consistency and its consistency with other relevant sources, but solely and simply by the extent to which it supports his attempt to exculpate Hitler. The same can be said of Irving's use of the Goebbels diaries, of which he has made so much in recent years. When Goebbels writes something that fits Irving's ar-

gument, Irving praises it as accurate. When he writes something that does not, Irving suggests, usually without any solid grounds for doing so, that Goebbels had ulterior motives in writing it, and that it cannot be relied on.

6.10 Irving's claim to be a scrupulous historian is completely bogus. His attitude to source material which runs counter to his argument is neatly summed up by his discussion of a passage in Eichmann's memoirs which he evidently found somewhat inconvenient to his attempt to argue that Hitler neither ordered nor even knew about the extermination of the Jews. In the memoirs, Eichmann says how in July 1941 Heydrich said to him: 'I've come from the Reichsführer SS. The Führer has given orders for the physical destruction of the Jews. Irving told an audience at the Institute for Historical Review: 'You've only got to change one or two words and you get a completely different meaning.' Eichmann, he claimed, was worried when he was writing his memoirs in case he was later arrested and put on trial. So he tried to place the responsibility on Hitler in order to advance the argument that he had only been obeying orders. 'Eichmann', concluded Irving, 'may well have adapted the sentence that Heydrich actually uttered to him'. In other words, if the source doesn't fit, then argue it out of existence if you can't ignore it altogether. If you want to alter a few words in a document in order to make it support your argument, then either do so (which, as we have seen, is the case with some of Irving's translations) or argue that the author would have done so had he been telling the truth.

6.11 There are some, of course, though they do not include Irving, who argue that this kind of way with sources is what historians do anyway, and that arguments about Hitler and the Holocaust are simply arguments of the kind that historians commonly indulge in between themselves. 'Revisionism' according to this view is what historians not only do, but actually should engage in all the time, and the 'Revisionists' such as Irving and his associates at the Institute for Historical Review are doing no more than the customary business of the historian. The

libertarian journalist David Botsford, for example, has recently argued along these lines: “Whether one likes the fact or not, these ideas have gained considerable ground since the mid-1970s, and are no longer dismissed by historians as merely the ravings of a neo-Nazi fringe seeking to restore the ‘Third Reich’. They are beginning to creep into the margins of respectable academic history....Holocaust revisionism is increasingly considered by historians to be an extreme, radical, dubious and highly controversial interpretation, but an interpretation nevertheless that must be taken into consideration in the writing of the history of the second world war.”

6.12 And Botsford goes on to argue against the proposition that ‘historical arguments aimed at exonerating Hitler and the Nazi regime simply cannot be equated with those relating to other historical problems’. ‘No historical question can ever be regarded as finally settled’, he concludes, not even that of the Holocaust.

6.13 But this is a cynical and in the end inaccurate depiction of the historian’s business. Of course historians disagree. One pertinent example is the long-running controversy between so-called ‘intentionalists’, who argue that everything in the ‘Third Reich’, including above all the extermination of the Jews, happened because Hitler intended it to happen, and the so-called ‘functionalists’, who argue that the ideological radicalism of the Nazi movement generated its own dynamic, and that many things, including at least the beginnings of the ‘final solution’, happened because of various pressures acting upon Nazi functionaries on the ground, whose actions eventually forced Hitler to ratify their policy and give it a systematic character. From this point of view, leading ‘functionalists’ such as the German historians Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen went on record in the 1970s as accepting Irving’s argument that the final solution did not happen because Hitler planned and ordered it from the outset. Broszat and Mommsen pointed in sup-

port of their arguments to factors such as the casual and often opportunistic nature of decision-making in the 'Third Reich', and the absence of any written order by Hitler for the extermination of the Jews.

6.14 But none of these historians actually disputed the fact that the extermination of the Jews, however it began, eventually, by the middle of 1942 at the latest, became a co-ordinated and systematic action. None of them disputed the fact that between five and six million Jews were eventually killed. None of them denied the fact that millions of them were killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka and other murder centres. And none of them accepted Irving's contention that Hitler never knew about the extermination, never approved of it, and never ratified it. Botsford is wrong to say that Holocaust denial is one interpretation amongst many; it is indeed unnecessary for him to do so in order to justify his fundamental argument, which is that there should be no law against it, for from his libertarian point of view, it does not matter how absurd an argument is: freedom of speech is absolute. The fact is that academic historians have not come to consider Irving's argument about Hitler, or other elements of 'Revisionism' as in any sense legitimate or come to believe that they have to be taken into account. The handful who have, such as the German historian Ernst Nolte, or the American historian Arno Mayer, have done so from political motives (respectively, right and left) and their views have not been taken seriously by mainstream historians.

6.15 Two general questions are of vital importance here. They are inter-linked and to a large extent interdependent. The first is, what are the boundaries of legitimate disagreement among historians? The second is, how far do historians' interpretations depend on a selective reading of the evidence, and where does selectivity end and bias begin? The answer to both is fundamental to the business of being a historian. Historians bring a whole variety of ideas, theories, even preconceptions to the evidence to help them frame the questions they want to ask of it and guide their selection of what they want to consult. But once

they get to work on the documents, they have a duty to read the evidence as fully and fairly as they can. If it contradicts some of the assumptions they have brought to it, they have to jettison those assumptions. The pursuit of history, as Thomas Haskell has argued, 'requires of its practitioners that vital minimum of ascetic self-discipline that enables a person to do such things as abandon wishful thinking, assimilate bad news, (and) discard pleasing interpretations that cannot pass elementary tests of evidence and logic.'

6.16 Those historians who have abandoned, or in some cases never acquired, this faculty of self-criticism and the ability to recognise when the evidence confounds their hypotheses, have received short shrift at the hands of their colleagues. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, the young American Marxist historian David Abraham was shown by his critics to have cited his own, tendentious paraphrases of documents as if they were the originals, to have committed innumerable egregious errors of transcription, including the omission of the word 'not' from a quotation to make it look as if a document said the reverse of what it actually said, and to have selected material in order to back up his own preconceived arguments rather than to test them against the sources. He was denied tenure at Princeton University as a result and failed to get a job in any history faculty elsewhere. Selecting evidence to support a case is one of the worst sins a historian can commit. 'Far from just looking for evidence that may support his thesis', the late J. H. Hexter, Professor of History at Yale University, remarked, the historian '...needs to look for vulnerabilities in that thesis and to contrive means of testing them. Then, depending on what he finds, he can support the thesis, strengthen its weak points, or modify it to eliminate its weaknesses.'

6.17 It is no use for example merely selecting quotations from the Goebbels diaries to back up your argument; some other historian is bound to read them and refute your argument by selecting other quotations that tell against it. What a professional historian does is to take the whole of

the source in question into account, and check it against other relevant sources, to reach a reasoned conclusion which will withstand critical scrutiny by other historians who look at the same material. It is precisely for this reason that there is so much agreement amongst historians on so many aspects of the 'Third Reich', at least as much agreement as there is disagreement. Argument between historians is limited by what the evidence allows them to say. Perhaps the point may be best put in a metaphor. Supposing we think of historians like figurative painters sitting at various points around a mountain. They will paint it in different styles, using different techniques, they will see it in a different light according to where they are, and they will view it from different angles. They may even disagree about some aspects of its appearance, or some of its features. But they will all be painting the mountain. If one of them paints a fried egg, or a railway engine, we are entitled to say that they are wrong: whatever it is that he has painted, it is not the mountain sitting in front of him. The possibilities of legitimate disagreement and variation are limited by the evidence in front of their eyes.

- 6.18 Holocaust denial falls into this category of what is wholly unacceptable in terms of the evidence. It is not, indeed, an interpretation at all, but an attempt to make a statement, or series of statements, about historical fact. As we have seen, 'intentionalists' and 'structuralists' dispute the origins of the Nazi extermination of the Jews. Each side is advancing an interpretation based on a different reading of the available evidence. Neither side disputes the evidence for what happened. Holocaust deniers, by contrast, ignore, suppress, misinterpret or dispute the evidence itself. In the same way, astronomers, geographers and geologists argue about how to interpret the history and structure of the Earth and the solar system, but only within the limits imposed by the evidence; none of them argues for example that the earth is flat, or that the sun orbits the earth and not vice-versa. Holocaust denial falls

wholly outside the confines of what it is reasonable or legitimate to argue in terms of historical evidence for the events that took place in Europe between 1939 and 1945.

- 6.19 Matters stand a little differently with the question of whether or not Hitler ordered, knew about or approved of antisemitic actions before and during the 'Third Reich', up to and including the extermination of the Jews. It is no part of this paper to argue that he did any of these things, however. In terms of the allegations levelled by Lipstadt against Irving, all that is necessary is to show that Irving has manipulated and falsified the historical record in order to support his contention that Hitler did none of these things. The point at issue is not what Hitler knew or thought, but what Irving writes and says. The many examples presented in the present paper demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt that Irving has repeatedly engaged in the falsification of the historical record.
- 6.20 Reputable and professional historians do not suppress parts of quotations from documents that go against their own case, but take them into account and if necessary amend their own case accordingly. They do not present as genuine documents which they know to be forged just because these forgeries happen to back up what they are saying. They do not invent ingenious but implausible and utterly unsupported reasons for distrusting genuine documents because these documents run counter to their arguments; again, they amend their arguments if this is the case, or indeed abandon them altogether. They do not consciously attribute their own conclusions to books and other sources which in fact, on closer inspection, actually say the opposite. They do not eagerly seek out the highest possible figures in a series of statistics, independently of their reliability or otherwise, simply because they want for whatever reason to maximise the figure in question, but rather, they assess all the available figures as impartially as possible in order to arrive at a number that will withstand the critical scrutiny of others. They do not knowingly mistranslate sources in foreign lan-

guages in order to make them more serviceable to themselves. They do not wilfully invent words, phrases, quotations, incidents and events for which there is no historical evidence in order to make their arguments more plausible.

6.21 At least, they do not do any of these things if they wish to retain any kind of reputable status as historian. Irving has done all of these things from the very beginning of his career. Not one of his books, speeches or articles, not one paragraph, not one sentence in any of them, can be taken on trust as an accurate representation of its historical subject. All of them are completely worthless as history, because Irving cannot be trusted anywhere, in any of them, to give a reliable account of what he is talking or writing about. It may seem an absurd semantic dispute to deny the appellation of ‘historian’ to someone who has written two dozen books or more about historical subjects. But if we mean by historian someone who is concerned to discover the truth about the past, and to give as accurate a representation of it as possible, then Irving is not a historian. Those in the know, indeed, are accustomed to avoid the term altogether when referring to him and use some circumlocution such as ‘historical writer’ instead. Irving is essentially an ideologue who uses history for his own political purposes; he is not primarily concerned with discovering and interpreting what happened in the past, he is concerned merely to give a selective and tendentious account of it in order to further his own ideological ends in the present. The true historian’s primary concern, however, is with the past. That is why, in the end, Irving is not a historian.

6.22 In reaching this conclusion, I have understood that my overriding duty is to the Court. My paramount obligation, as I have been advised by my Instructing Solicitors, is to assist the Court on all matters within my expertise regardless of whom my instructions are from and who is paying my fees. I confirm that this report is impartial, objective and un-

biased and has been produced independently of the exigencies of this litigation. I believe that the facts I have stated in this report are true and that the opinions I have expressed are correct.

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Expert report

David Irving and the Right-Wing Extremist Scene in Germany

Electronic edition

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Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt

Royal Courts of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, case 1996-I-1113

Edition of 2003, original report filed for trial in 2000

1. Introduction

1.2 Scope of the report.

- 1.2.1 The following expert opinion is given in the suit David Irving has brought against Deborah Lipstadt, especially with reference to the ‘defence of the second defendant’(1996 I. NO. 1113). In particular it will be examined that,
- i) that the plaintiff has on numerous occasions denied the holocaust;
 - ii) that the plaintiff holds extremist views, and has aligned himself with others who do so, including individuals such as Dr. Robert Faurisson and Ernst Zündel; and that,
- 14) Moreover, the plaintiff has strong links with Ewald Althans, the leading Neo-Nazi in Munich, who is anti-Semitic and racist (and proud of it). Althans booked the plaintiff’s hotel in Munich for him under a pseudonym in May 1992, and sells and distributes the plaintiff’s books, videos and cassettes.
- 15) As a result of the plaintiff’s aforesaid views and activities, the plaintiff has been deported from Austria (inter alia, for his extremist views and his connections with the German extremist group, the DVU), and banned from entering Australia, Canada and Germany. The plaintiff has also been banned from the German state archives.
- 1.2.2 And to the plaintiff’s ‘reply to the defence of second defendant’ that “6. (i) it is denied that the plaintiff has denied the holocaust; it is denied, that the plaintiff has denied that gas chambers were used by Nazis as the principle means of carrying out that extermination... (ii) it is denied that the plaintiff holds extremist views. He has on occasion taken issue with both, Faurisson and Zündel and with their views, and they have taken issue with him...”
- 1.2.3 And further “ (15) (ii) it is admitted that the plaintiff is currently banned from entering Germany... it is denied that the plaintiff has extremist views, and also that he has connections with any extremist

German group. The DVU (German People's Union) is a long standing democratic and lawfully constituted German political organization which has competed in the national and municipal elections."

- 1.2.4 The following text will address in particular the plaintiff's denial that he holds extremist views and that he has connections to extremists in Germany. To address these points, it is necessary, to refer to the definition and concept of right-wing extremism [henceforth RWE] within the German official institutions responsible for the defence of the constitution, in particular the office responsible for defending the constitution [Bundesamt *für Verfassungsschutz*, henceforth OPC, i.e. office for the protection of the constitution] and the definition within the social and political sciences.
- 1.2.5 We will first describe and analyse the peculiarities of RWE in Germany after 1945, in keeping with the definition of right-wing extremism outlined. In the second part of the first chapter we will reconstruct the development of the organizations and persons with RWE views in Germany, in so far as it is of importance to understand with whom David Irving has connections and with whom he co-operates.
- 1.2.6 We will further address the ideas and the strategy of the German People's Union [Deutsche Volksunion – DVU] and of its leader Dr. Gerhard Frey, as one of the central representatives of RWE in the 1980s, and further the specifics of David Irving's connections with the DVU. We will also look at the DVU in the context of the development of RWE in this period and beyond.
- 1.2.7 In the third chapter we will describe the changes within, and the radicalisation of RWE in the 1980s and early 1990s. We will outline the connection between these groups and the role of radical revisionist ideology in mobilizing their supporters. In the second part of the third chapter we will reconstruct the connections David Irving has had with these radicalized extremists and especially with Germany's neo-National Socialists [henceforth neo-Nazis] in the early 1990s, such as the

National Offensive [Nationale Offensive – NO], National List [Nationale Liste – NL], or Ewald Althans and the Althans Sales and Publicity Organisation / Office for People’s Enlightenment and Publicity [Althans Vertriebswege und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit / Amt für Volksaufklärung – AVÖ].

- 1.2.8 We will also illustrate how in the late 1980s David Irving decisively took on extremist views on Auschwitz and the Holocaust, and moved into the radical revisionist camp around Robert Faurisson, Ernst Zündel, and Fred Leuchter. Together they constituted the core international propagators of the so-called ‘Auschwitz lie’[‘die Auschwitz Lüge’]. It is also important to consider the structural confluence of interest that bound the denialist or revisionist upsurge of the 1990s with the resurgent neo-Nazi movement in Germany.
- 1.2.9 Finally the report will discuss how Irving knowingly and wilfully violated the current laws of the Federal Republic of Germany, not in his self-appointed capacity as an historian, but as a political agitator for the revisionist cause, RWE, and neo-Nazi groups. This will involve an analysis of why the German authorities fined David Irving, banned (partially or fully) his speeches, and finally asked him to leave Germany and banned him from re-entering in 1993 – measures that give empirical weight to the OPC’s analysis of Irving’s political activities in Germany.
- 1.2.10 The main body of the report will concentrate on the years 1988/9 -1993, as these are the years involved in most of the accusations concerning David Irving’s political activities. There would be much to say about the overlaps between David Irving’s political activities in Germany and those in Austria, but by necessity I have chosen to deal exclusively with Germany. Persons named in the body of the text can be referred to in the appendix.

- 1.2.11 In the conclusion we attempt to answer the question posed in the introduction, especially if David Irving has connections with extremists in Germany and to what degree he co-operated with them? Does David Irving hold extremist views and in what form has he presented them to the German public?

1.3 Sources.

- 1.3.1 The arguments and opinions set out below have relied on those set out by the Plaintiff and the Defendant as set out their respective pleadings. In the course of writing I have relied mainly on the documents and materials released in the Plaintiff's further discovery.
- 1.3.2 It is important at this juncture to comment on two items in the further discovery. David Irving's diaries, although named such, are not what one would consider diaries in the normal sense. Only rarely does David Irving comment on political activities or political issues. Much more they constitute a listing of daily occurrences and business (political or domestic). References in the diaries indicate that Irving at times gave copies to friends or used them to substantiate legal issues. This would suggest that they have been 'sanitised' for other readers, and thus do not constitute a private but rather a public diary. As will be set out below important passages in Irving's diaries have not been released to the defence, sometimes consisting of a few days, sometimes weeks or even months. David Irving has also released many hours of video and audio material. As will become apparent Irving and those he associated with were almost obsessive in their recordings of David Irving's speeches in Germany. The suspicion is that some crucial speeches have not been disclosed. Where this suspicion arises it is noted.
- 1.3.3 Part of the duties of the German office for the protection of the constitution [Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz – OPC] is to monitor those activities within Germany seen as extra-constitutional and more importantly anti-constitutional (see below). Since the late 1960s the OPC has published their monitoring activities and their judgements on

parties, groups, and individuals. These findings are published in Germany at both a national and state level in the form of annual constitutional reports [Verfassungsschutzberichte, henceforth VSB]. They constitute an invaluable and authoritative source on extremism in Germany and more importantly on what activities and individuals are officially considered extremist in Germany by the authorities. In this sense the VSBs can be viewed as an equivalent in politics to say yearly government economic reports. The reports are consequently cited frequently in my report.

- 1.3.4 A certain amount of secondary literature has been relied on, particularly in identifying some of the more obscure figures and organisations Irving came into contact with. Some of it is what David Irving would consider ‘anti-fascist’, although it has mostly been written by experienced and conscientious academics and researchers. In my own experience I have found that the material contained in such reference books is reliable, and that any short-comings are inherent to the secretive and conspiratorial nature of individuals and groups concerned.

2. The definition and concept of right-wing extremism [RWE], especially in the 1980s.

- 2.1 What constitutes RWE in Germany is well defined by the official institutions set up to defend the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany [Bundesrepublikdeutschland – FRG] and also in the political and social sciences.
- 2.2 The importance and significance of the official definition of RWE are related to the peculiarities of West Germany’s post-war democratic development to a system of values encompassing human and civil rights. As opposed to other classic western democracies, with their long tradition of freedom and rule of law, West Germany had to build a new

democratic system of liberty, basic human rights, and a democratic political system, following the terroristic and anti-democratic rule of an ultra-nationalistic right-wing extremist regime between 1933–1945. Part of the ideological core of this system had been a deadly friend-foe dichotomy (described amongst others by the professor of constitution and law, Carl Schmitt), and a racist anti-Semitism.

- 2.3 The Basic Law of 1949 represents the endeavour to return to a (western) liberal tradition of freedom and individual rights. Contrary to some other long-lasting democracies like Britain it laid out explicit standards and values as immediate, direct laws. In other words, basic human rights are legally binding and written into the Basic Law, the constitution of the FRG. For example the basic human rights of the dignity of man, individual freedom, equality before the law, freedom of belief, conscience and religion, etc. This represents a divergence from some other democratic traditions, but is clearly anchored in the uniqueness of recent German history.
- 2.4 The constitution's right to protect itself is also enshrined in the Basic Law. One of the 'fathers' of the German constitution, Professor Carlo Schmid, posed a fundamental question during the debates of the Parliamentary Council charged with drawing up the constitution. "Should equality and liberty be granted absolutely and without any restriction? Should it also encompass those who singularly strive to achieve power and then having done so destroy freedom? I personally believe that the principles of democracy in itself cannot nurture the means for its removal. Democracy rises to more than a mere product of usefulness only where courage is found to believe in it as something that is necessary to preserve human dignity. Should this courage be found, then so should the courage to be intolerant of those who abuse democratic principles to destroy it."

2.5 This idea is expressed in the German idea of a ‘militant democracy’ [streitbare Demokratie]. In article 73 of the Basic Law it is stated that the federal government can exclusively legislate in the defence of constitutional rights to ensure their continuity and the security of the German federation and of the individual federal states. According to article 87.1 a federal law can initiate and establish central offices to collect information necessary to uphold the constitution. Thus state institutions also include a federal office for the defence of the constitution and an executive arm. It aims to guarantee the constitution and protect against its enemies. Part of its activities are to monitor extra-constitutional and anti-constitutional activities, individuals, and groups, and to publish its findings.

2.6 The OPC defines as extremist all endeavours aimed at abusing, fully or in part, constitutional law and all efforts to replace it with a totalitarian nationalistic system, efforts often based on ideas of dictatorial order. The principles protected are set out as follows:

- respect towards basic human rights as set out in Basic Law
- democratic sovereignty of the people
- division of power
- accountability of the government
- lawfulness of the administration
- independence of the judicial system
- a multi-party system
- equal opportunity for all political parties
- right to build democratic opposition

2.1 The question of a ban on extremist activities in the German legal system.

2.1.1 Although the definition applied to the protection of the constitution is very clear, the one applied to banning political parties is more diffuse. This is due to the decisive role political parties play within the political system, as defined by the constitution. According to article 21 of the

Basic Law, political parties have a special role to play in the realization of the democratic sovereignty of the people. As this privilege is guaranteed by constitutional law, only the Federal Constitutional Court [*Bundesverfassungsgericht* – BVG] can rule on if a political party violates this law. The initiative to ban a political party can only come from a constitutional institution, for example the federal government, or the upper and lower houses of parliament. The constitutional court has decided to ban a political party only twice since 1949. This was the case with the Socialist Reich Party [*Sozialistische Reichspartei* – SRP] in 1952 and the German Communist Party [*Kommunistische Partei Deutschland* – KPD] in 1956. The argument was essentially that the constitutional law had been infringed by both parties.

2.1.2 To repeat: only constitutional organs are entitled to ask for a ban of a political party. And they in turn are free to decide whether to ask for such a prohibition or not. This means that a party that is not banned, but is nevertheless described as extremist by the OPC, is by no means necessarily democratic. It is therefore wrong to suggest, as Irving does in the case of the DVU, that a party is not extremist if it is not banned. In the case of the DVU the OPC is absolutely clear that the party is extremist and has extremist views (see below).

2.1.3 The procedure involved in banning political groups and associations (as opposed to parties) is different. In practice it is easier for official institutions to prohibit associations and societies that violate the Basic Law. This can be taken at the initiative of the Interior Ministries or ministers, both at a federal or state level. For instance in 1980 the militant military sport group ‘Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann’ was banned as was the neo-Nazi group ‘Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/ Partei der Arbeit’ and its youth wing ‘Junge Front’ in 1982. Michael Kühnen’s neo-Nazi National Socialist’s Action Front [Aktionsfront Nationale Sozialisten – ANS, later to become the ANS/NA, NA for National Activists] was likewise banned in December 1983. There were also a series of bans in the 1990s (see below).

2.2 Additional definitions from the political and social sciences.

- 2.2.1 Although there is a debate as to what the definition of RWE legitimately encompasses, there is wide academic consensus that RWE is essentially anti-democratic, in that it stands contrary to the tradition of human rights and the constitutional state. Ethnocentricity, often in the form of overt racism and nationalism, are at the core of an ideology that claims superiority over all other values. The values of universal human rights (of individual liberty, freedom, equality, respect of human dignity) are despised, rejected, or denied – as well as fundamental rights of freedom of speech, thought, conscience and religion. RWE is directed against parliamentary and pluralistic democratic political values and systems, against the sovereignty of the people and the division of power. RWE aims to achieve an authoritarian, totalitarian and centralized power system, often in the form of a hierarchical anti-democratic one-party movement, ruled by a strong leader.
- 2.2.2 Uwe Backes and Eckhard Jesse, prominent academic experts on extremism in Germany, define RWE as a collective name for various anti-democratic beliefs and efforts. The core of this doctrine denies the basic claim of equality represented by equal rights. These extremists principally advocate inequality and an aggressive nationalism that breeds resentment against ethnically foreign groups; a phenomenon often leading to an advocacy of naked racism. They seek a strong state that will realize the ‘objective’ interest of nationalist values, even by military means.
- 2.2.3 This ideological impulse to fight back is often not confined to mere political rhetoric. Within the framework of political culture and political psychology, the aggressive authoritarianism of RWE presents a specific view of perceiving the world as one surrounded by dangerous enemies, so that fighting back is essentially the only solution to survival (although the perceived enemies are merely scapegoats). As this tendency towards authoritarian aggression against weak scapegoats solves

neither the social nor the personal problems of the aggressor, these aggressions have an addictive quality. Consequently right-wing extremists perceive themselves, as recognised by Adorno and Alport, in a paranoid way as ‘persecuted persecutors’. RWE’s ideology of inequality and denial of human rights leads to advocating violence. RWE is often connected with an ideology and/or a practical tendency towards violence, militancy, and terror (see especially the neo-Nazi groups in eastern Germany).

- 2.2.4 Thus the belief system inherent in RWE is the perception of dangerous enemies within and without that have to be defeated if their own world and values are to survive. These internal ‘enemies’ are often migrants, foreigners, or others of different opinion who are perceived as threatening their supposed homogenous society and state system. These foreigners are often the scapegoats for the existing social miseries in society, and as such the targets of political violence. Such racist perceptions of the outer world lead externally to ideas of containing or even conquering this outer world by expansion (a new Reich) or an aggressive foreign policy.
- 2.2.5 In general RWE tendencies and groups can arise in many forms, not only in Germany, but in Great Britain (the National Front), France (Jean Marie LePen), Austria (Jörg Haider’s Austrian Federal Party – FPÖ) or in Belgium (Vlaams bloc).
- 2.2.6 However German RWE is particular in its ambivalent relationship to the most extreme form of nationalism in German history – National Socialism [henceforth NS]. Despite the *de facto* military and moral disaster of NS, the resulting destruction and self-destruction (the genocide of Jews, gypsies and Slavs), many right wing extremists see in NS a point of orientation. In many ways historical NS acts as a model for RWE within the FRG. NS, although tactically criticised, may be fully identified with, its characteristics applauded, and its symbols used as

an efficient means of bringing out confrontational behaviour. To serve this purpose various tactics are used to ‘save’, ‘rescue’, or rehabilitate the NS ideology (sometimes in the Italian version of fascism) by:

- relativising and playing down the its atrocities
- denying some of these atrocities
- in its most radical form, rehabilitating the system by a form of radical negation and denial, so called ‘revisionism’ or ‘denialism’

2.2.7 These tactics are of interest when analyzing the shape and the format of post-war RWE in Germany. This ideological affinity with NS and the resulting attempts to free NS of the burden of its crimes is of pivotal importance for national and international ‘networking’ within the RWE scene, both in Germany and elsewhere in Europe and North America.. The revisionist campaign of Auschwitz denial since the late 1980s plays a key ideological and organisational role in this effort.

2.2.8 To summarize. RWE strives towards a hierarchical, anti-democratic, and even totalitarian state, based on cultural or racist subordination, the rejection of ‘others’, especially so-called inferior races, foreigners, and other scapegoats. Implementation of this ideology of subordination often takes the form of advocating and using physical violence.

2.3 ‘Old’ and ‘new’ RWE

2.3.1 The terms old and new RWE are clearly defined in academic literature. *Grosso modo* the old RWE (sometimes referred to as the ‘ewig Gestrigen’ – literally ‘eternal stick-in-the-muds’) align themselves to more state-orientated modes of extreme nationalism. They identify with the fascist traditions of authoritarianism that were prevalent for example at the end of the Weimar Republic or with traditions of the Weimar Harzburg front, which combined the ultra-nationalists ‘Deutsche Nationale’ with Hitler’s National Socialist German Workers Party [Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – NSDAP].

- 2.3.2 The new RWE presents itself as an updated, so-called ‘modernized’ version of the same basic idea. They pay lip service to a non-racist recognition of ‘other’ ethnic groups, conceptualized as ‘ethno-pluralism’, which is *de facto* ethno-pluralistic racism. They *de facto* also do not accept principles of Enlightenment and the universality of basic human rights. They have intellectual links to the far right and extreme nationalists within the ‘conservative revolution’ of the late Weimar Republic (with persons like Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, or Möller van den Bruck). For some of the new RWE, the belief systems encompassed in Judeo-Christianity, Marxism and the idea of basic equality are themselves eliminatory of the Celtic or Nordic traditions, the ‘justification’ for the ‘greatest genocide’ in history. Thus the new RWE appeals to the peoples of the world to rejuvenate their unique cultural heritages and demand the basic right to be ‘different’. The belief propagates animosity towards multi-racial society and other cultures and belief systems.
- 2.3.3 Parts of the new right try to disguise their RWE affiliations by presenting themselves as the new ‘democratic’ right, in as far as they fear the attentions of the OPC might oust them from the democratic system. Having styled themselves as democratic these groups can broaden their sphere of influence, using this democratic stance to build bridges between national conservatives and RWE. Thus in the late 1980s the RWE parties of the so-called ‘Republicans’ [die Republikaner] and the German People’s Union [Deutsche Volksunion – DVU] positioned themselves accordingly. Nevertheless they are perceived as anti-constitutional by the OPC.
- 2.3.4 Part of RWE supports national revolutionary politics, often arguing and agitating for a third way between capitalism and socialism, that of nationalist liberation and a corresponding movement (like the neo-Nazis in the 1990s in eastern Germany). These groups often see parallels between themselves and similar groups in the NS movement of the 1930s, and are avid exponents of a socialist version of a nationalist, racist movement. Examples of this are the present neo-Nazis, the revital-

ized neo-Nazi youth organization of the German National Democratic Party [Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands – NPD] the Young National Democrats [Jungen Nationaldemokraten – JN] or the NS-oriented groups centred around Michael Kühnen, Christian Worch and Ewald Althans, with whom Irving had strong ties in 1990 -1993 (see below).

- 2.3.5 This process of radicalisation within RWE has been particularly militant in the former German Democratic Republic [Deutsche Demokratische Republik – GDR] immediately prior to, during, and after German reunification. This opened a ‘space’ for neo-Nazi agitation and propaganda. The male youth of eastern Germany has proven particularly recipient to such ideas.

2.4 Features and peculiarities of old and new RWE in Germany after 1945.

- 2.4.1 After 1945 the RWE world was inhibited for decades by the total political, moral and military defeat of NS. But despite the Allied repression of extremist attitudes in post-war west Germany the west-German population continued to display anti-Semitic prejudices in one way or another. According to first polls taken by the American occupying forces up to 40 % of the population identified with right-wing, anti-Semitic attitudes. In the late 1970s the well-known Sinus-study considered 13 % of the population as having a full scale RWE belief system. Similarly in the late 1990s according to different polls up to 30 % of the population identified with anti-foreigner sentiments or anti-Semitic beliefs.

- 2.4.2 Politically the FRG has experienced at least three waves of RWE:

- in the late 1940s (resulting in a ban on the SRP).
- in the late 1960s (centred on the NPD and, after its 1969 election defeat, on Dr. Gerhard Frey’s DVU).

- since the late 1980s with Franz Schönhuber's newly founded Republicans, the DVU, and NPD, coupled and with militant neo-Nazi activists, operating partially beyond the pale of the 'established' RWE.

2.4.3 According to Richard Stöss RWE secured 1.4 million votes in the 1949 election (that is 5.7 % of the population). During the second RWE-wave in the late 1960s RWE secured 1.4 million votes (that is 4.3 % of the votes). The NPD narrowly failed to get into parliament because of the 5 %- hurdle in the German voting system. In 1989 during the third RWE wave the Republicans, together with the DVU and NPD secured 2.5 million votes (that is 8.8 % of the votes in the European parliament's election).

2.4.4 Official membership of the 'organized' RWE went through ups and downs. First counts in 1954 registered 80,000 persons as members of organized RWE. By the early 1960s this membership had decreased to 20,000, before the numbers increasing again to 40,000, boosted by NPD memberships. The late 1960s saw an ebb back 20,000. In the early 1990s RWE membership was reckoned at some 40.000 again.

3. David Irving and the right-wing extremist German People's Union [Deutsche Volksunion – DVU], the German National Newspaper [*Deutsche Nationalzeitung* – DNZ], Dr. Gerhard Frey.

3.1 Irving's earlier activities in Germany, 1978–1981.

3.1.1 Based on his publishing (particularly his biographies of Hitler and Field Marshall Erwin Rommel) Irving's earlier tours in Germany and Austria had involved such bodies and organisations as banks, bookshops, student fraternities [Burschenschaften], US-Army Corps sta-

tioned in Germany, and so on. At the same time Irving became increasingly feted by national-conservative and right-wing individuals and organisations in Germany, some of them RWE.

- 3.1.2 Foremost was Dr. Gert Sudholt, head of the Druffel Verlag, and his Society for free Communication [Gesellschaft für freie Publizistik – GfP]. Sudholt was at the time a member of the NPD in Munich and owner of the Druffel Verlag, that in turn specialised in publishing important NS figures. The GfP had been set up in 1960 by the former Reich deputy-spokesman of the NSDAP, Helmut Sündermann. Although ostensibly a cultural organisation to allow former NS authors an open forum, the GfP vehemently combated what it saw as the ‘untrue descriptions of the causes and backgrounds to both world wars and the defamation of German soldiery’.
- 3.1.3 Irving also spoke to other organisations with connections to the GfP, such as the ‘Collegium Humanum’ in Vlotho, the ‘Deutsches Kulturwerk Europäischen Geistes’, the ‘Bund Heimattreuer Jugend’, the ‘Verein für Kultur und Zeitgeschichte’, and Dietmar Munier of the Arndt-Verlag and his group ‘Sturmwind’. All these groups and individuals can be counted likewise as right-wing and/or with links to the right-wing extremist circles. Some of them were to remain loyal supporters of Irving in the 1990s.

3.2 Irving’s activities for the DVU, 1981–1987

- 3.2.1 After the SRP was banned in 1952, RWE had fallen into disarray until in the early 1960s a new collective organisation, the NPD, was formed. The NPD had appointed a moderate leader, Friedrich Thielen, so as to appeal more to national conservatives, although the cadre itself was in fact far more right-wing. Subsequently in state elections they made relative gains (in the mid 1960s up to 9.8 % of the votes). However in 1969 they failed to take any seats in the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament. After this defeat the NPD faltered despite a change of leadership.

- 3.2.2 As a result of the NPD's defeat in 1969 the DVU was formed in 1971, with the aim of gathering together the splinter group's alienated from the NPD and in an attempt to galvinize a fragmented RWE. The DVU thus constituted a collecting tank for the remnants of the NPD, particularly the so-called 'ewig Gestrigen', the national conservatives and old Nazis who partially or fully still identified with the ideals, ideas, and even practices of NS. Thus this organization led by Dr. Gerhard Frey had within it far right-wingers, and since the 1980s has been considered to constitute the hardcore of old RWE in Germany
- 3.2.3 The DVU's effectiveness lay in organizing their members through subscription to Frey's newspapers, especially the *German National Newspaper* [*Die Deutsche Nationalzeitung* – DNZ] which by 1980 had 10,000 subscribers. Another effective organizational instrument was their annual rally, normally in Passau.
- 3.2.4 In 1986 the DVU and NPD formulated a common election strategy and put forth a joint list for the Bavarian state election and the federal election in 1987. It then became known as the DVU – Liste D [List Germany]. The OPC described this list as having an anti-constitutional goal because the organizations concerned and Dr. Gerhard Frey's magazines were considered RWE. According to the office, Frey, through his publications, incited anti-Semitism and hatred against foreigners, distorted historical truths about NS, glorified the leading persons of the NS-system, and defamed the present day representatives of democratic parties. In their opinion the party merely paid lip service to its declared belief in democracy and in the constitutional and free democratic basis of the Federal German ['freiheitlich demokratische Grundordnung'] for tactical reasons.
- 3.2.5 This should be matched against Irving's statement that the DVU is a long standing democratic party. Neither the OPC nor academic social-science research would accept this opinion. The DVU as well Dr. Gerhard Frey's DNZ has for decades been declared RWE (or radical right

wing) by the OPC. As early as 1971 the OPC stated in a report that Dr. Gerhard Frey's DNZ had maintained a leading position in radical right-wing journalism. For example the 1985 VSB of Lower Saxony outlined the party platform and its profile as 'Hatred against foreigners, anti-Semitism, playing down of the national socialist terror regime and disparagement of democratic institutions and persons.'

- 3.2.6 The contents of the DNZ can be described as a 'secondary anti-Semitism', designed to address the 'ewig Gestrigen' mind-set. For instance Jewish representatives are held responsible not only for the widespread stories about alleged atrocities committed against the Jews, but also for the fact that the Germans have to continually pay a financial, moral, and political price for the Holocaust. This variant of anti-Semitism is often fused with the 'old' one.
- 3.2.7 So-called revisionism was also identified by the OPC as playing a strategic part in DVU propaganda. Long before the debate on the 'Auschwitz-lie' was intensified by the Leuchter Report, Frey tactically relativised or even denied major NS crimes. As early as 1977 the radical revisionist Arthur Butz, who denied the existence of gas chambers in his denialist classic 'The hoax of the 20th Century' was presented with the DNZ honorary award for political victims of persecution. The book was also serialized in the DNZ in the same year. In 1979 the book was officially labelled as one that invoked racial hatred and played down the atrocities of the Nazi regime.
- 3.2.8 Finally Frey partially co-operated with more militant and extremist fringes of the RWE scene, groups whom in public he criticises for tactical reasons, namely the NPD and even RWE terrorists. For example Frey co-operated with the terrorists of the Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann, whom he used as body guards at DVU rallies in 1977. Roland Tabbert, who co-ordinated the DVU's 1987 election campaign, was later president of the anti-Semitic Anti-Zionist Action [Anti-Zionist Action – AZA] within the neo-Nazi movement. Members of the militant

neo-Nazi Free German Workers' Party [Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiter Partei – FAP, banned in 1995] were present at the DVU annual meeting in Munich in 1986. Violent rightwing attacks against foreigners were also executed by DVU members.

3.2.9 Irving's 'soft' revisionist themes of the 1980s (Winston Churchill as a warmonger, 100,000 to 250,000 dead in Dresden, the debunking of the 'myth' of Erwin Rommel as a hero of the resistance against Hitler, the stylising of Rudolf Hess as a martyr for freedom etc.) were all themes which exercised the German public mind, but in particular found a resonance in national-conservative and RWE circles. This corresponded with the DVU's political attempts to relativise the crimes of NS, particularly the question of Germany's war guilt and the Holocaust, and overlapped with the DVU's latent anti-Semitism. In short Irving was an important spokesman for the DVU to win over to their party.

3.2.10 Irving was first informed that he would be welcome to address DVU meetings in 1981, and by 1982 had managed to win Irving's services as a star speaker for the DVU. In that year Irving spoke for the DVU in 10 German cities on 'the unatoned Holocaust – the expulsion of the Germans' ['Der ungesühnte Holocaust – die Vertreibung der Deutschen']. On 9 May 1982 Irving received the DNZ's European Freedom Prize ['Europäischen Freiheitspreises der Deutschen National Zeitung']. By the end of 1982 the DVU had apparently paid Irving somewhere in the region of DM 100,000 for his speeches and 'services' ['Verdienste']. A model of blocks of 10 speeches, initially at a fee of DM 2,000 per speech, later reduced to DM 1,500, was to continue until 1987.

3.2.11 Irving later wrote that he 'always spoke as an **historian**, never as a **politician**' to the DVU. Although in the strictest sense Irving spoke on 'historical' topics, the very platform he spoke on (DVU meetings and rallies) gave them an explicitly political character. Added to this is the convolution between the attractions of Irving and his topics to old

RWEs and that these same people constituted the bedrock of DVU support. The topics Irving was requested to talk on were both historically and politically tendentious, in the sense stated by the OPC when they talked of the DVU's playing down of the crimes of National Socialism.

3.2.12 For instance Frey wrote to Irving on 23 July 1983, giving him precise instructions for his forthcoming lectures. "... we agreed during our phone-call yesterday, that you should tackle the topic of the guilt of aerial terror in your September lecture series. You might perhaps take the occasion in the various towns to briefly go into the corresponding attacks. Regarding the topic as a whole there is a general interest everywhere in who began when and where with aerial terror and in what way? Which related planning occurred from what reasons and under what conditions when and where? What aerial attacks were allowed for in international law and which break international law? How are the three main accusations against the Germans since then [World War II], namely Warsaw, Rotterdam and Coventry, to be judged? [...] Why were attacks preferred on working-class areas to attacks on exclusive residential districts? What was the German answer and how did it correspond to the bombardments of allied planes in terms of the number of bombs dropped, the intensity of detonation, the loss of housing and the death rate? How are the Allied bombardments of 1945 to be classified, for example Dresden, when the war had long been decided? How many deaths did the Allied attacks on concentration camps and ships with concentration camp prisoners cause? Perhaps the lecture should finish with an examination of the Nuremberg trial and Rudolf Hess. [...] Please leave Hitler and the Jews unmentioned."

3.2.13 As well as orchestrating the contents of Irving's speeches, Frey carefully controlled their timing in order for the DVU to maximum political impact from them. In 1982 an American drama series entitled 'Holocaust' was to be repeated on German television. The first showing in 1979 had been watched by millions of Germans and despite the controversy surrounding it is considered as representing a mile-stone in

German public consciousness about the Holocaust. With respect to Irving's forthcoming lectures Frey wrote to Irving, "I suggest the next series of lectures begin on Friday 12 November [1982] and end on Sunday 21 November (10 meetings) on the same conditions. A theme worth considering could be "Who bears responsibility for the unatoned holocaust of the expulsion?" [i.e. of the Germans from former Reich territories which fell to eastern Europe]. I hope we will formulate this more succinctly and impressively. In the enclosed copy you'll find the dates for the repeat of the Hollywood-Holocaust soap on "German" television. During these days you will speak, at a different time, about the expulsion holocaust and provide the true historical accompanying music to the horror slush. Please again leave Hitler and the Jews out completely."

- 3.2.14 Irving's speaking tour of 1982 was indeed titled 'The unatoned Holocaust – the expulsion of the Germans' ['Der ungesühnte Holocaust – die Vertreibung der Deutschen'] and was a political attempt to counteract the TV-series 'Holocaust'.
- 3.2.15 Irving's DVU sponsored speaking-tours coincided with carefully contrived publicity-campaigns in the DNZ. His latest speeches and books were heralded and marketed by Frey's publishing concerns. Irving also played an important part in the DVU's veneration of former Nazi heroes. For instance on 9 January 1983 Irving delivered a memorial speech ['Gedenkrede'] on the death of Oberst Hans-Ulrich Rudel.
- 3.2.16 As of 1987 Frey also invited Irving to contribute articles to the DNZ although Irving had long fed Frey with documents he felt might interest him, the DVU, or the readers of the DNZ. For instance in 1984 Irving offered Frey and the *National News* [*National Zeitung*] photos taken in the immediate aftermath of the ' "freeing" ' ["Befreiung" – Irving's quotation marks] of Dachau concentration camp, purporting to show executed camp guards. If the photos were to be used Irving hoped he would receive his usual commission ['Verwendungsgebühr']. In 1984

Irving was asked by Frey if he had anything ‘exonerating’ [‘Entlastendes’] in the case of the notorious Klaus Barbie, and if so to send it to Barbie’s daughter.

- 3.2.17 In 1984 Irving was requested on Frey’s behalf to investigate certain names in the Berlin Document Centre for their backgrounds and activities during the Third Reich. He was offered DM 2,000 for the work plus costs and was to pass the documents on to the DVU. The list of over 100 names included many prominent left-wing and liberal personalities in Germany such as Rudolf Augstein, Joseph Beuys, Heinrich Böll, Marion Gräfin von Dönhoff, Günter Grass, Eugen Kogon, Erich Kuby and Harry Ristock. Frey wrote to Irving that the DVU themselves were not in a position to do the work because the ‘incriminated person’ [‘Belastete’] would have to be mad [‘verrückt’] to allow them access to their files. Irving duly wrote to the Berlin Document Centre claiming that he was researching the names as part of his work on Reich Marshall Hermann Göring. The Director Daniel P. Simon politely told Irving that ‘...you should know that Mr. Frey, who is not authorized to receive information from our files, has on several occasions in the past tried to obtain information from the BDC.’
- 3.2.18 In his reply Irving made clear that his activities for Frey and the DVU were political. “It is true that I am familiar with Dr Gerhard Frey. He is a strange character, his own enemy sometimes, but one of the few people on the Right putting his money where his mouth is in the fight against the Far Left. That is why I place my oratory at his disposal. It helps to keep the Right Wing in the fringe, I hope.”
- 3.2.19 It would seem that the list was declined by the Berlin Document Centre, but alone Irving’s attempt to undertake such work for Frey speaks for the political nature of Irving’s relations to the DVU.
- 3.2.20 The case became public in 1988 surrounding a scandal about documents being purloined from the Centre. In the course of the discussion Irving himself admitted the details of his political work for the DVU in

1984. In 1989 Irving tried to re-approach the Centre for research materials, and was reminded of his statements to the media and informed that passing materials on to ‘someone whom you knew had been refused access to the BDC...with the prospect of receiving money’ constituted ‘a grave misuse of the privilege of access to the BDC.’ As he recorded in his dairy 5 July 1989: ‘...writing long letters..., and to the Berlin Document Centre, apologizing for my 1984 lapse (Dr Frey asked me to “research” there for him). I don’t think it will work.’

3.2.20 More importantly perhaps, and interestingly for Irving’s later fortunes in Germany, Irving consistently acted as a pawn in the DVU’s strategy of using ‘the court-room as political forum’ [‘Der Gerichtssaal als Forum der Politik’]. Until 1988 there seems to have been little danger that Irving would in any way damage the DVU by questioning the reality of Holocaust as such. Nevertheless Frey made it repeatedly clear to Irving that he was on no account to even talk about Hitler or the Jews, particularly for benefit of the DVU’s media image. This included Irving’s pet thesis at the time that Hitler had not ordered or even known of the Holocaust.

3.2.21 It is clear that the strategy related to the limits the law in Germany sets on denialist statements, and the DVU’s good democratic image. On 29 April 1983, Frey wrote to Irving that “...during the forthcoming lecture series I ask you strictly to observe that we should give even the malicious no chance whatsoever to unpunishably accuse us of any glorification of Hitler or the NS era, let alone justification of the persecution of the Jews.... On no account do we want the vanished NS, the dead Hitler, and as always leave out everything which directly or indirectly touches on the Jews.”

3.2.21 In discussing his forthcoming lecture series on the Nuremberg trial Frey wrote to Irving in 1985. “At the same time I am presuming that you will steer completely clear of Hitler and the Jews, because both topics could only be our ruin. Even if you say something absolutely ac-

curate about the two topics it will be turned around, misinterpreted, and in the end must even serve for bans and other prosecutions. The more objective your presentation, the more unassailable.”

- 3.2.22 The DVU’s strategy was thus a tactical and preventative one, strictly avoiding all possible excuses for incurring adverse publicity or the unwelcome attentions of the authorities. From 1981 to 1987 Irving, who at the time can be considered a ‘soft’ revisionist, would seem to have no trouble conforming to Frey’s requests. If such publicity nevertheless surfaced then the DVU’s practiced legal machinery was brought to bear. In the mid 1980s the DVU and Irving mounted a number of successful legal attacks, serving injunctions on newspapers and organisations who suggested that Irving in any way denied the Holocaust or was a supporter of the so-called ‘6 million lie’.
- 3.2.23 Although Irving himself had had connections with German right-wing radical organizations since the 1970s, he was only mentioned for the first time in the OPC’s 1982 report. “The British writer David Irving (44), who spoke in 5 series of lectures in numerous German cities was the most frequent speaker at DVU rallies including on the “Nuremberg Trials – Justice or Arbitrary Law”, the “Truth about the Morgenthau Plan” or “The Guilt of the Holocaust of Aerial Terror”.”
- 3.2.24 The Schleswig-Holstein VSB noted his speeches in 1982 and commented that as a speaker for the DVU Irving was keeping company with the old Nazis like Otto-Ernst Remer and Hans-Ulrich Rudel. The 1982 Baden-Württemberg VSB stressed that Irving had been a speaker at DVU meetings ‘for quite some time’.
- 3.2.24 In 1983, Irving’s speech at the Munich rally honouring the RWE and former Wehrmacht Colonel, Hans-Ulrich Rudel was noted. He was identified as one of the DVU’s ‘principal speakers’ apart from Frey himself.

- 3.2.25 In 1984 Irving's speech to the DVU rally on 10 March 1984 was noted, when Irving spoke on 'Freedom for Rudolf Hess'. He had stated that Hess was lured to Great Britain and tortured there. His June 1984 tour was likewise noted. He spoke at the annual DVU rally in Passau on the 4 August 1984 about 'The martyrdom (ordeal) of Rudolf Hess and its true background' and was also noted as accusing Winston Churchill of having executed an underhand warmongering policy.
- 3.2.26 1985 was the first year in which some of the VSBs described Irving as a 'right-wing extremist publicist' or as a 'right-wing extremist historian'. Irving was noted as having spoken at several DVU rallies. These lectures dealt with Rudolf Hess, the question of war guilt, the Nuremberg Trial, and the Nazi leadership. He lectured several times in southern Germany on the topic 'The 8th of May: Should the Germans pay forever?' Importantly the OPC noted that Irving 'questioned the extent of the extermination of the Jews.'
- 3.2.27 In June 1985 he was given the 'Hans-Ulrich-Rudel-Award', donated by Gerhard Frey. The award was officially presented to Irving for his service. Saxony noted that 'Irving in his speeches and writings plays down the unjust system of the Third Reich. He supports the opinion that Hitler neither ordered the extermination of the Jews nor did he know anything about it. Irving tries hard to improve the reputations of former leading Nazi politicians.' In November 1985 he again lectured several times in Bavaria on the Nuremberg Trial. 'He proclaimed the Nuremberg War Tribunal to be a sham in which evidence was falsified and manipulated, testimonies bought and confessions acquired through torture.'
- 3.2.28 On the 19 January 1986 Irving spoke at a DVU rally honouring the former fighter pilot Colonel Walter Dahl. Irving described the deceased as the 'perfect German soldier'. He participated in additional DVU meetings dealing with the issues of Rudolf Hess and the 'depriving of the German people of its rights'.

- 3.2.29 In 1987 Irving remained a frequent DVU speaker. He spoke at the annual DVU rally in Passau in August 1987 on ‘The secrecy of the martyrdom of Rudolf Hess’.
- 3.2.30 Thus in the 1980s Irving was a leading speaker in what is described as the tradition of ‘old’ RWE represented by the DVU. This old RWE line of thought included playing down the crimes of the NS period, questioning the extent of the extermination of the Jews, questioning German war guilt, denouncing the Nuremberg Trial as a sham, praising military and political personnel who actively identified with the Nazi system (like Dahl, Rudel, or Hess), and an aggressive rhetoric against the Allies. Irving pandered to a barely disguised fascination with the ‘heroes’ of the Nazi regime amongst the adherents of old RWE, particularly with his praise for the alleged martyrdom of the deputy ‘Führer’ Rudolf Hess, and would imply a certain fascination his own part. Most importantly he himself had been labelled a right-wing extremist by the German constitutional authorities.

3.3. Irving’s activities for the DVU, 1990 -1993.

- 3.3.1 Whilst Irving’s position in 1988/9 had changed radically as a result of the Leuchter report (see below), the DVU continued to be cited in OPC reports along lines already established in the early 1980s.
- 3.3.2 The VSB of 1993 stated that the DNZ published anti-Semitic articles, repeatedly using the anti-Semitic metaphor of the avaricious and meddling Jew. It cited two examples. ‘The Zionist world congress and its leader, Edgar Miles-Bronfman described as a Canadian resident, industrialist and a loyal Israel supporter have been accused of intervening in the German debate on Weizsäcker’s [the then Federal German President] successor.’ The *German Weekly / German Advertiser* [*Deutschen Wochenzeitung / Deutschen Anzeiger* – DWZ/DA], the DNZ’s sister papers in the Frey press imperium, presented one Hungarian-born son of a Jewish lawyer as the ‘finance guru of the world’, a master of financial

speculation, who through his dealings undermines the German mark. The DWZ made the point that the economic recovery of central Germany was jeopardised by Jewish restitution claims.

- 3.3.3 The 1993 VSB noted that racist rhetoric against foreigners had become particularly aggressive in the DVU. The DVU advocated an ethnically pure Germany with phrases like ‘Germany for the Germans’ and declaring its aversion to a ‘mix of people’. The DVU was noted as advocating a worldwide-system of apartheid. As an example the report quoted Hans Otto Weidenbach, a DVU-member of the Bremen state parliament as having said ‘Kick out the swindlers and scoundrels, the criminals of multi-ethnic origin, the Turkish heroin dealers, the negro cocaine dealers, the gypsy looters, the Polish swindlers and criminal car dealers, because by tolerating them, you only breed hatred for foreigners.’
- 3.3.4 The 1992 VSB described such sentiments as racist and claimed that they were designed to incite anti-foreigner sentiment, especially against asylum seekers. ‘This systematic aggressive incitement against ethnic minorities aims to suggest that immigrants abuse the asylum laws and are criminals and parasites.’ The report singled out the DNZ and DWZ/DA as vehicles for such sentiments. Propaganda headlines like ‘Gypsy terror – Germany a victim?’, ‘Opposition will be suppressed’, ‘Gypsies – danger for Germany?’, ‘Crimes of foreigners – danger to all of us’, ‘The civil state is in danger – result of crime and abuse of asylum seeking law’ gave the impression that immigrants were inferior and in essence criminals.
- 3.3.5 Irving’s endorsement of the Leuchter Report and his conversion to radical revisionism (see below) did not prevent Irving appearing as a star speaker at the DVU’s annual Passau in March 1990, after not having spoken at DVU functions for a year-and-a-half. His allotted topic was ‘Moscow’s new policy to Germany’. Originally Irving had cancelled his appearance at Passau (‘for economic reasons’ as he told Frey) in fa-

vour of a meeting in Belgium arranged by Ewald Althans (see below), but changed his mind at the last minute when the meeting was banned. On 9 March 1990 the city of Passau banned Irving from appearing altogether as a speaker. Irving described his appearance at Passau on 10 March in his diary. “Here [in a side room of the hall in Passau] I was handed a police Verordnung [ordinance] issued under the Ausländergesetz [law governing foreigners] **banning** me from even attempting to speak there or anywhere else in Passau today, on the grounds of what I had allegedly said at Landshut. Schweinerei [disgraceful]. Bruno Wetzel appeared, said I should comply, and Frey would litigate for damages. Vigorous applause as I went on the stage. Hall was packed, galleries overflowing, over 8,000 people present....When Frey announced, with me standing next to him, [“disgusting”] that the police had banned my speech, there was a colossal tumult of cheers, boos, shouts of “Pfui”, etc.”

- 3.3.6 The city of Passau had justified its ban, according to later appeal documents, with the fact that at Landshut on 23 February 1990 Irving had presented his theory ‘that there had never been a gassing of Jews’ and that ‘The figure of 6 million murdered Jews was described by the plaintiff thereby as a life lie [‘Lebenslüge’] by the state of Israel as a means of permanent financial and political blackmail.’
- 3.3.7 On 15 October 1990 Frey wrote to Irving in an irritated tone that ‘The court case for your right to speak in Passau, for which I am not responsible because it was caused by other appearances, is costing me many thousands of marks...’ He reminded him that ‘We have so often repeated our agreement that you do not talk of Hitler or the Jews at all at our events, that I will content myself with this short reminder also for our events in the future.’

- 3.3.8 On 29 January 1991 the Regensburg administrative court found partially in the DVU's favour and the city of Passau retreated to a position of allowing Irving to speak in Passau in the future so long as he obliged himself to refrain from mentioning certain topics.
- 3.3.9 Enclosing the court ruling to Irving Frey pointed out that the original ban had been based on statements Irving had made outside the DVU's meetings and that this was an important factor in allowing them to appeal the ban on Irving's behalf. "We would fall under the banning order if these other theses were to be spread with us. Nevertheless I know from your numerous previous speeches with the DVU that you would not even touch upon the topics Hitler or the Jews. [...] If Hitler or the Jews were even touched upon in your speech it would be a decisive blow against our position and enough grounds for us never to get the Nieblungen hall [in Passau] again, which we have been able to gain in court victories year for year. As always I trust in the full observance of our agreement."
- 3.3.10 Irving's opinions on the Holocaust were not the only thing to worry Frey and the DVU. They were also concerned about Irving's new political allies in Germany, especially with Ewald Althans and his AVÖ. As early as December 1989 Bernd Dröse of the DVU's publishers wrote to Irving warning him about 'a man called Ewald Althans' and advised 'caution' ['Vorsicht'] in his dealings with him.
- 3.3.11 Regarding an illegal demonstration in Munich after the international revisionist conference in Munich on 20 April 1990 (see below) Irving wrote in his diary. "8.20 a.m. phoned DVU's [Bruno] Wetzlar, he says they are alarmed by the press reports, they couldn't imagine that I **would** have marched on the Feldherrenhalle. I said, greatly exaggerated. He asked if Althans was on the square (inappropriate metaphor). I said, so far as I can see. But he's a hothead, needs curbing."

- 3.3.12 In 1991 Irving's alleged presence on this demonstration continued to disturb the DVU. An AVÖ flyer advertising the second Munich revisionist congress of 23 March 1991 celebrated the exploits of the previous one, writing that '300 participants joined David Irving in a spontaneous demonstration to the Feldherrenhalle after our event.' The DVU brought the flyer to Irving's attention and Irving requested Althans correct his statements.
- 3.3.13 But Frey was equally unhappy about Irving's willingness to attend this second congress. After thanking him for his 1991 Passau appearance, Frey wrote that he had just received a flyer for the forthcoming conference. 'I fear this will be the cause of a final residency ban ['Aufenthaltsverbot'] in the Federal Republic, which I am very sorry about.' A few weeks later Frey again wrote to Irving expressing his concern, and apparently turning down a suggestion by Irving that he tour for the DVU again. "In that you are announced to speak on 23.3. on a topic that does not coincide with the contemporary political legal order, I fear serious drawbacks for you, that could also influence presentations you give on legally harmless topics. [...] At the moment I have considerable doubts if we could in practice carry through a speaking tour with you, even if we continually won in the courts."
- 3.3.14 Two weeks later Frey reiterated his concerns. "...I have just received some documents about the supposed congress that is meant to take place in the "German Museum". I consider the whole venture in no way accords with the current legal system, presume that the congress will not take place at all, and considerable disadvantages with consequences will arise in the matter of your entry [to Germany]. With regard to our long-standing connection I do not want to be able to say that I neglected to explain this to you yet again."
- 3.3.14 Evidently, although aware that Irving's statements to other organisations had become far more radical, Frey trusted that Irving would not become a liability for the DVU. Irving faxed back immediately that 'as

always' ['wie immer'] at DVU events he would say nothing of the Jews or death camps. Frey entreated Irving again to be more careful a week later, asking him to avoid all 'other activities' ['anderweitige Aktivitäten'] in Germany in the run up to the Passau rally of 1991, especially anything which might give cause for another ban. Frey warned Irving that the authorities were waiting to deport him or ban him from Passau. 'It would be madness if you walked in to the open knife that is plain for all to see.'

- 3.3.15 On 6 February 1991 the city of Passau banned Irving again from mentioning the theses contained in the Leuchter Report. This being only a partial ban meant that Irving spoke at Passau on 'Germany's new role as a great power' ['Deutschlands neue Rolle als Großmacht.'] on 16 February 1991, the audience obviously charged by his previous ban. 'At 4 p.m. I spoke: the audience came alive, began cheering, roaring with laughter, chanting my name (first time), "Ir-ving, Ir-ving!" I made what I consider to be my finest political speech so far.'
- 3.3.16 At this point the Irving's documentation becomes sketchy. It would appear that Irving spoke again at Passau on 14 March 1992, but for the October 1993 rally Irving was informed by Bruno Wetzel that the DVU had 'put together a program with other speakers for a number of necessities', thus bringing to an end a 12-year political alliance.

3.4 Initial conclusions.

- 3.4.1 Irving has been one of the main speakers and agitators for the RWE DVU, from the early 1980s until he was banned from entering Germany in 1993. The DVU is itself a party that propagates hatred against foreigners, anti-Semitism, revisionism, incites violence, and has a record of repeatedly co-operating with the NPD and sometimes even with the RWE militia groups.

3.4.2 Not only was Irving, apart from Frey himself, one of the principal speakers at the DVU's annual meetings and rallies, but he also co-operated systematically with the DVU. Both the OPC and the social sciences consider the DVU to be RWE and subsequently view Irving's activities for them in the same category. Irving at no time distanced himself from any of these central DVU positions. On the contrary it would appear that the DVU felt itself obliged to distance itself from Irving as his position on the Holocaust and his new-found allies in Germany were even more extremist. This not for a lack of political empathy, but out of a necessity for the DVU to maintain its democratic clothing.

4. Double-radicalization of RWE from the late 1980s and the role of Holocaust denial.

4.1 German neo-National Socialists (neo-Nazis).

4.1.1 The third RWE wave that started in the second half of the 1980s and continued through the early 1990s, had fundamental repercussions on the development of RWE organizations and their organizational networks. The significant factors were:

- the co-operation between DVU and the more extreme NPD.
- the creation of a new party, the Republicans, a splinter group of the Bavarian CSU. Their leader Franz Schönhuber presenting it as a modernised version of RWE
- in the early 1990s a lurch in the NPD youth organization the JN, towards neo-Nazism. Günter Deckert, with whom Irving had many contacts in the 1990s, oversaw this process as leader of the NPD from 1991 to 1995.
- the emergence of committed and militant neo-Nazis groups around Michael Kühnen, Christian Worch, and others, who succeeded in developing new organizations with roots in a violent neo-Nazi youth movement and linked to a prolonged spate of attacks on foreigners in eastern Germany that shocked Germany and the world.

- 4.1.2 In the following sections we will first deal with these movements and then, in a chronology of Irving's activities in Germany from 1989 to 1993, demonstrate Irving's close and enduring connection to these neo-Nazi groups. In the process it will be demonstrated that the rejuvenated international revisionist movement (following the Leuchter Report), of which Irving was a main pillar, and German RWE in general and the German neo-Nazi movement in particular, were firm and mutual allies.
- 4.1.3 One of the most influential and notorious neo-Nazi leaders was Michael Kühnen (and with him later Christian Worch, Ewald Althans, Arnulf Priem, and the Austrian Gottfried Küssel).
- 4.1.4 In 1977 Kühnen founded the National Socialists Action Front [Aktionsfront Nationale Sozialisten – ANS, later to become the ANS/NA, NA for National Activists] with amongst others, former NPD cadres. This overtly neo-Nazi group was banned in 1983. However a sizeable number of its activists moved into the neo-Nazi scene through the more traditional Free German Workers' Party [Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiter Partei – FAP].
- 4.1.5 The FAP had been founded by Martin Pape in 1979, who had started off as more of a national-conservative with neo-Nazi leanings. Pape was not strictly averse to 'infiltration' by the neo-Nazis around Michael Kühnen which swelled the FAP's membership figures to about 500 in the mid 1980s. They created a series of sub-organizations like 'Gaue' [the NS term for administrative geographical units during the Weimar Republic and in the Third Reich], as well as local community and county-based organizations. At the same time specific political splinter organizations were created like the German Women's Front [Deutsche Frauen Front – DFF], and the Preparation Committee for the Celebrations of Adolf Hitler's 100th Birthday [Komitee zur Vorbereitung der Feierlichkeiten zum 100. Geburtstag Adolf Hitlers – KAH]. Kühnen's homosexuality sparked a bitter conflict amongst the 'com-

rades' within the FAP. The faction around the FAP leaders Friedhelm Busse and Jürgen Mosler distanced themselves from Kühnen and it was not until his death in 1991 that a reconciliation took place.

- 4.1.5 The FAP explicitly strived for a Germany along NS lines and towards recreating a Greater Germany within the Reich's 1939 boundaries (which would include Austria and Czechoslovakia). The party platform was extremely nationalist, racist, anti-Semitic, and embraced violence as an instrument to achieve their aims. The degree of racism and hatred directed at foreigners is illustrated by the following phrases that were used internally: 'We won't put up with the niggerization of Germany', 'The people's wrath is on the rise! Asylum seekers will be repeatedly set on fire. We as National Socialists are the only ones who foresee the civil and racial war.'
- 4.1.6 Even prior to reunification, the FAP had good connections with right-wing oriented skinheads and hooligans in the former GDR. One of these activists was Christian Wendt. FAP rallies often resulted in violent attacks against foreigners, as was the case in Rostock in August 1992. The party co-operated with the Danish National Socialist Movement [Dansk Nasjonal Sosjalitisk Bevaegelse – DNSB] that published propaganda leaflets against liberals and leftists calling for personal retaliation ('Einblick'). In September 1993 the federal government announced that it would put in a request that the party be banned, which duly occurred in 1995.

4.2 The Party of the Like-minded New Front [Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front – GdNF], National List [Nationale Liste – NL], German Alternative [Deutsche Alternative – DA], and National Alternative [Nationale Alternative – NA].

- 4.2.1 The GdNF, an overtly neo-Nazi organization and more influential than the FAP, was founded in 1985 by Kühnen in an attempt to subvert the ban on the ANS. It had similarities to the FAP in that it had former ANS

‘comrades’ within its ranks. The GdNF went through similar conflicts as the FAP on the question of whether to align the party towards the ideologies of Ernst Röhm’s SA or more towards the SS, the latter position favoured by Mosler. The GdNF under Michael Kühnen’s control perceived themselves as a ‘society of like-minded, convinced and self-confessed national socialists, who strive to overcome the ban on NS and to forge new foundations for the NSDAP as a legal party.’ They see themselves politically within ‘the tradition of the SA and of the revolutionary faction of the historic NSDAP’. They aim to achieve a second NS revolution and perceive Hitler as a ‘sacred hero of the Aryan race’.

4.2.3 Kühnen, in his 1988 text ‘The Second Revolution – Belief and Struggle’ stated:

“Our aim is a national socialist revolution, from which the Fourth Reich will emerge and with it a new order for the white race suitable to our sort and natures.[...] To achieve that, we have to strive for and to carry out various intermediary aims in the present time of struggle:

- to overcome the ban imposed on the NS
- to set up the NSDAP anew
- a reform of the state
- unification of all ethnic German regions in one unified sovereign and socialistic Great Germany.”

4.2.4 The GdNF further fights against ‘foreign infiltration’, against Americanisation, environmental destruction and for the ‘purity of the Aryan Germanic race’.

4.2.5 In 1989 and 1990 a lot of tiny, very active neo-Nazi organizations were founded often within the immediate orbit of the GdNF. Core activists were, to name but a few:

- Michael Kühnen himself
- Christian and Ursula [Uschi] Worch in Hamburg
- Arnulf-Winfried Priem
- Frank Lutz and Andreas Storr in Berlin
- Frank Hübner in Cottbus

- Heinz Reisz in Hessen
- Thomas Dienel in Halle
- Michael Swierczek in southern Germany
- Ewald Althans in Munich
- Gottfried Küssel and Günther Reinthaler in Austria

- 4.2.6 We will show that between early 1990 and 1993 Irving had close political contacts and connections with more than a few of the above. His contact with Christian and Ursula Worch in Hamburg and Ewald Althans in Munich were particularly intense and long-lasting, with Christian Worch to the extent that he and Irving used the informal ‘you’ [du] form when addressing each other.
- 4.2.7 How are the growing neo-Nazi activities and groups in the decisive period of Germany reunification from 1989 to the early 1990s best characterised? One of those who knew the neo-Nazi ‘scene’ best before he renounced it and dropped out is Ingo Hasselbach, originally from east-Berlin. He described in his book ‘The Reckoning’ that the GdNF perceived itself as a new SA and that Kühnen had for years been the unassailable ‘Führer of the neo-Nazi movement’ [‘Führer der Bewegung’]. His stated tactic was to use terror in Germany to destabilize the given social and political system to pave the way to a new NS revolution. Christian Worch, Gottfried Küssel, and Ewald Althans were amongst his closest followers. Hasselbach described Althans as Kühnen’s ‘talented pupil’ [‘gelehrigen Schüler’]. Hasselbach portrayed him as Kühnen’s true successor, although in later years Küssel vied with him for the title. Kühnen’s alleged homosexuality made him to a controversial figure. Althans separated himself from Kühnen in the late 1980s and allied himself to Ernst Zündel.
- 4.2.8 According to Hasselbach, Christian Worch was different in that he was Kühnen’s closest political friend. Worch, whom Hasselbach described as a true ‘national socialist’, was ‘able to subordinate himself without being humiliated....’ Unlike Althans who was unpredictable in his utterances and actions (something Irving often complained of) Worch

was very controlled in what he said and has never fallen victim of an uncontrolled craving for recognition. As far as the comments on Irving's connections with both men are concerned it is important to bear in mind that both were direct successors of the real founder and leader of the neo-Nazi movement, Kühnen.

- 4.2.9 The centre of this outbreak of neo-Nazi activities was the newly opened former east Germany. The power vacuum (especially a disillusioned, lax, and disorientated police and judicial system) that ensued in the GDR with the collapse of the eastern block provided the neo-Nazi cadres from the west with an open space for their activities and a home-grown east German militant youth culture that since 1986 had shown a frightening readiness to physically attack foreigners, leftists and liberals.
- 4.2.10 One of the tactics used to widen their influence was to ground a bewildering number of different types of organizations to avoid identification and suppression. We will briefly describe the organizations which were founded and active in that period.
- 4.2.11 In March 1989 various neo-Nazis from Hamburg, like Christian Worch and Thomas Wulf, founded the National List ['Nationale Liste' – NL]. In May 1989 a legal political arm of the GdNF, the German Alternative [Deutsche Alternative – DA] was founded, followed shortly afterwards in January 1990 by its east German equivalent, the National Alternative [Nationale Alternative – NA].
- 4.2.12 The east German NA is of particular importance. The founding members had been active in the pre-1989 neo-Nazi scene in east Berlin and the GDR such as Ingo Hasselbach, supported by western comrades like Arnulf-Winfried Priem, Gottfried Küssel, Günter Reinthaler, Christian Worch, and Michael Kühnen. Some of them knew each other from the so-called Lichtenberg-Front in east-Berlin and from the so-called Movement 30 January [referring to the beginnings of the Nazi-regime on 30 January 1933]. The NA perceived itself as a militant NS avant-

garde. It organized and ran militia-camps, and formulated concepts for fighting the perceived enemies under their code of defence. In this document the NA argued that its enemies like left-wing activists of the democratic parties should be systematically categorized, observed, and fought against.

4.2.13 The NA set up house in the now notorious 122 Weitlingstrasse in east Berlin and co-operated with several tiny and obscure neo-Nazis sub-organizations, like Arnulf-Winfried Priem's Ministry of Education, Wotans People's [Hauptschulungsamt Wotans Volk im Asgarde-Bund e. V]. The NA strove to form a joint 'organization of all nationals' and together with Worch and Heinz Reisz of the Hessen FAP sought to extend this joint effort beyond just east Berlin. To carry this out, they co-operated with Frank Hübner from Cottbus, who was active in the Anti-Zionist Action [Anti-Zionistische Aktion – AZA], one of the many sub-organizations of the neo-Nazi scene. By the end of 1989 these activists had managed to organize the first official Central (i.e. east) German Comradeships [mitteldeutsche Kameradschaften] in Cottbus and Dresden, that included members of the GdNF, the DA, and the Central German SA [Mitteldeutsche SA], all of them self-confessed national socialists aimed at building a national socialist cadre organization in the former GDR.

4.2.14 Their activities also included militia-camps, like the first joint east-west militia camp in the Schorfheide in 1990. They also committed violent attacks on the housing of foreign contract-workers in the former GDR. The group even armed themselves by searching various World War II battlefields for weapons, or buying them from impoverished and departing Russian soldiers. Their political schooling was based on texts like Adolf Hitler's, 'Mein Kampf' and Michael Kühnen's 'What is national socialism?'. Gary Lauck, from the internationally organized NSDAP/AO, were present during the party convention in July 1990 near Cottbus. Thus the neo-Nazi NA is defined not so much by its pub-

lic support, but by its militant, military, and partially terrorist quality of attacking those considered alien to Germany and the body politic, like left-wing punks and guest workers.

- 4.2.15 One year later the NA had practically disbanded. Some of the former activists quit and others, members of a new generation, like Kay Diesner, moved into the Social Revolutionary Nationalists [SRN], again forming a militant cadre, some of them terrorist.
- 4.2.16 The Nationalist Front [Nationalistische Front – NF] also fell within the GdNF network. This group was founded in the mid 1980s and later came to prominence through its leader Meinolf Schönborn, who was active in the Bielefeld region. They likewise subscribed to the SA-tradition and positioned themselves as social and national revolutionaries within the neo-Nazi spectrum. The group is known for its so-called National Task Force [Nationales Einsatzkommando – NEK], a kind of military group. The NF was amongst the first neo-Nazi groups to be banned by the Federal Minister of the Interior in 1992.
- 4.2.17 We will discuss other splinter groups of the neo-Nazi scene below, but two more are worthy of note.
- 4.2.18 The German National Party [Deutsche Nationale Partei – DNP] was founded in early 1992 in Wechselburg in Saxony by Thomas Dienel, a former local NPD leader in Halle. Like other groups the DNP was founded to obstruct a nationwide ban on the neo-Nazis. The DNP aimed to continue the ‘central German revolution of 1989 in a national sense’. The party stood for a revisionist presentation of German history and for the denial of the crimes of the Third Reich, stating such crimes were propaganda put out by the Allies and Zionism. They demanded the abolition of the system of holding land in tenancy to a landlord and the integration of the individual into an ethnically-pure German national community through work. According to the 1992 VSB, the DNP took over core elements of the NSDAP-programme of 1920. As leader of this new party Dienel was a virulent public racist and anti-Semite.

According to the 1992 VSB report, Rudolstadt County Court sentenced him to two years and eight months in prison for racial incitement and slander.

- 4.2.19 Another GdNF sub-organisation was the National Offensive [Nationale Offensive – NO]. The NO was founded on 3 July 1990 and banned on 22 December 1992. Its base lay in Bavaria and Saxony, counting some 150 members. NO leader Michael Swierczek had formally belonged to the FAP and played a role in the KAH, that in turn had close links to the NO. In February 1991, NO activists like Swierczek were accused by a court of being active in the banned ANS/NA.
- 4.2.20 The NO was banned at the end of December 1992.

4.3 Günter Deckert's radicalized NPD.

- 4.3.1 The NPD was particularly affected by the radicalization of the neo-Nazi movement. After the relative electoral successes of the Republicans and the DVU, for example in Hesse in 1989, the NPD began to wane as a RWE party. According to the 1992 VSB new hopes pinned on the leadership of Günter Deckert failed to materialise. Deckert's activism and his sympathy for radical revisionism were not welcomed by parts of the NPD. Also the NPD youth organization JN failed to gain influence, although it underwent a process of radicalization in the 1990s.
- 4.3.2 It was only after several neo-Nazi organisations were banned that the JN gained more influence. According to the 1992 VSB their agitation became much more radical, citing a JN sentiment 'We should persist! Ethnically pure collectivism is the alternative to a multicultural and multinational society; the "blood of the Germans" is very special stuff and is different to "evil smelling slime."' The 1993 VSB stated 'Each NPD anti-Semitic action is combined with playing down Nazi crimes.' The JN and their leader Andreas Storr were more radical. Storr stated that the JN was fighting for a new system, that of a nationalist people's state and describe the JN as the avantgarde of a new Reich. The 1993

VSF further observed that the JN had intensified their connections and co-operation with neo-Nazis groups like the FAP, the NL and the Viking Youth (another Neo-Nazi organization). JN leaflets advocated the neo-Nazi concept of the so-called free national zones, where the party exercises *de facto* power in an area or town, a concept implemented by violence and terror.

- 4.3.3 The JN thus became the most influential organization within the neo-Nazi and militant camp in the second half of the 1990s, especially in east Germany where the JN swallowed a lot of the other tiny neo-Nazi organizations and its members. This dangerous success was the result of deliberate radicalization of the party orchestrated by Günter Deckert, Andreas Storr, and others.
- 4.3.4 The relative successes of radical RWE and the neo-Nazis movement is the result of the social and political crisis that accompanied the reunification process, and of the internal radicalization of the RWE network itself in terms of ideology and action. Thus the neo-Nazi network in Germany intensified its influence from the late 1980s onwards and especially during the early 1990s. The influence of these groups spread so quickly and was so politically alarming that Ministers of the Interior decided in 1992 and 1993 to ban several of these organizations, at the same time as Irving was expelled from entering the country.
- 4.3.5 As will be discussed below Irving had strong and consistent connections with many of these neo-Nazi organizations between 1990 and 1993. He repeatedly and systematically co-operated with and supported the most radical elements within RWE, i.e. the neo-Nazi network around the GdNF, Kühnen, Worch, Dienel, and others. He sometimes even co-operated with organizations that were officially blocked or even banned later in the same year, such as the NO. Even before their banning considerable portions of this network were prone to physical violence, often terrorist, against their alleged enemies like foreigners. Between 1990 and 1993 more than 70 people were killed in political

racist violence in unified Germany. In 1993, for example, officially 10,561 criminal acts were committed with proven or suspected right-wing motives. This third RWE wave has been the most bloody seen since 1945.

4.4 Irving's conversion to Holocaust denial and Holocaust denial (radical revisionism) as a core element of the German neo-Nazi Network.

- 4.4.1 In January 1985 a trial started by the Crown against Ernst Zündel in Toronto, Canada. He was charged with reprinting and distributing Richard Harwood's denialist "classic", *Did Six Million Really Die?* On 25 March 1985 Zündel was found guilty of peddling anti-Semitic propaganda and was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment. Because of technicality in the trial proceedings the judgement was lifted and a second trial was ordered, that commenced in January 1988. The Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson commissioned a specialist, Fred Leuchter, to undertake a scientific investigation of the gas chambers and the de-lousing facilities in Auschwitz for the court. Faurisson hoped thereby to prove the non-existence of the gas chambers in Auschwitz. Leuchter flew to Auschwitz and on 5 April 1988 presented his 132-page report to the court. Against the wishes of Zündel's lawyer, the report was not accepted by the court, either as an expert opinion or as evidence, but it was appended to the trial files for documentary purposes. It was first printed in London in June 1989 as *The Leuchter Report: The First Forensic Examination of Auschwitz* with a foreword by Irving.
- 4.4.2 The *Leuchter Report* appears to have convinced Irving to abandon his previous belief in the existence of a concerted plan for the physical destruction of the Jews and the existence of gas chambers in Auschwitz, and other Nazi death camps, although Irving never seems to have been very far from becoming a full-blown denialist. In 1983 he explained to an audience at the International Revisionist Conference the full scope

of what he was certain of, which considering the systematic nature and vast scale of the Holocaust was very little. “I would specify as follows: I would say I am satisfied in my own mind that in various locations Nazi criminals, acting probably without direct orders from above, did carry out liquidations of groups of people including Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, mentally incurable people and the rest. I am quite plain about that in my own mind. I can’t prove it, I haven’t investigated that particular aspect of history but from the documents I have seen, I’ve got the kind of gut feeling which suggests to me that that is probably accurate.”

- 4.4.3 In public in Germany before 1989 Irving endorsed the 6 million figure. For instance in a legal affirmation of 1982 he wrote ‘I do not support the “six-million lie”, nor do I underpin it in scholarship. The opposite is true. I myself speak in my works of the extermination of 6 million Jews.’ Yet in private he would seem to have had his doubts about the overall figure. In a letter to Günter Deckert of the NPD in the same year he wrote ‘One could therefore present my opinions on the “Final Solution” (in short: it happened, more than a million people certainly died, but on whose orders?)’
- 4.4.4 Following the *Leuchter Report*, Irving saw himself obliged to remove all previous references to Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Majdanek as extermination camps from his subsequent publications, starting in Germany in 1989 with a book based largely on previous works. In his foreword to the *Leuchter Report* Irving wrote: “For myself, shown this evidence for the first time when called as an expert witness at the Zündel trial in Toronto in April 1988, the laboratory reports were shattering. There could be no doubt as to their integrity.... Until the end of this tragic century there will always be incorrigible historians, statesmen, and publicists who are content to believe, or have no economically viable alternative but to believe, that the Nazis used “gas chambers” at Auschwitz to kill human beings. But it is now up to them to explain to me as an intelligent and critical student of modern history why there is no signif-

ant trace of any cyanide compound in the buildings, which they have always identified as the former gas chambers. Forensic science is, I repeat, an exact science. The ball is in their court.”

4.4.5 In the press release accompanying the launch of the *Leuchter Report* Irving wrote: “In April last year I was called to give expert evidence at the Toronto appeal hearing of Ernst Zündel. The defence attorneys there showed me the forensic test results on the buildings identified by Holocaust historians as Auschwitz gas chambers. The results have convinced me that the buildings were not, at any time, gas chambers. There is no trace of cyanide compounds in their fabric, and there should be.”

4.4.6 Similarly he explained his conversion to the Tenth International Revisionist Conference in a talk held under an exhortation to ‘Sink the Auschwitz.’ “This is how it was when I was in Toronto a couple of years ago. I was called as an expert witness as a historian to give evidence at the Ernst Zündel case, where Zündel’s researchers showed me the Leuchter Report, the laboratory tests on the crematoria and the gas chambers. As a person who, at the University in London, studied chemistry and physics and the exact sciences, I knew that this was an exact result. There was no way around it. And suddenly all that I’d read in the archives clicked into place. You have to accept that, if there is no evidence anywhere in the archives that there were any gassings going on; that if there’s not one single German document that refers to the gassing of human beings – not one wartime German document; and if there is no reference anywhere in the German archives to anybody giving orders for the gassings of people, and if, on the other hand, the forensic tests on the laboratories, of the crematoria, and the gas chambers and Auschwitz and so on, show that there is no trace, no significant residue whatsoever of a cyanide compound, then this can all only mean one thing.”

- 4.4.7 The international revisionist network intensified and radicalized its activities in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Germany being no exception. This development was in some senses coincidental, in others integral to the growth and force of the German neo-Nazi network. It must suffice to comment that the interdependence of the neo-Nazi movement and radical revisionism was mutual, and indeed in the cases of individuals like Ernst Zündel or Ewald Althans one-and-the-same.
- 4.4.8 Most extreme neo-Nazi groups closely identify with the Nazi regime and its leadership, explicit in their efforts to revive the central ideas of the Third Reich and play the role of an avantgarde paving the way towards a second National Revolution ('Fourth Reich'). Integral to a rehabilitation of NS was the attempt to deny the realities of Auschwitz and the Nazi regime's mass crimes. For the groups subsumed in the GdNF the ideological propaganda tool of the radicalised version of revisionism, 'the Auschwitz lie', was of decisive ideological importance, and was an important bond between groups, a common point of reference. The GdNF network saw revisionism as an important element in creating a neo-Nazi oriented totalitarian regime. Strands of revisionism which blame Jewish propaganda for the lie of Auschwitz gave added ammunition to attack Jews and others seen as hindering them in achieving their goals.
- 4.4.9 Thus radical revisionism was to become a central ideological and organisational factor in the neo-Nazi network in Germany. Irving himself was brilliantly prepared after his conversion to denial to spread the denialist gospel in Germany (and indeed in the rest of the world).

5. Chronological breakdown.

5.1 1989: 'German historians – liars and cowards'

- 5.1.1 Irving visited Germany three times in 1989: from 8 July to 24 July, 30 September to 7 October, and 2 to 13 November.
- 5.1.2 From 8 July to 24 July 1989 Irving was ostensibly in Germany as an 'consultant historian' to an American film team on a series entitled 'Remembering World War II', mainly organising interviews with former Nazis. During the visit Irving met Ewald Althans and Karl Philipp, two men who would be decisive in organising many of Irving's activities in Germany until his expulsion in 1993.
- 5.1.3 Irving would seem to have first met Althans after a speech in Toronto on 4 March 1989. He recorded in his diary, 'One of [Franz] Schönhuber's lieutenants there, Ewald ---, asked if I would speak for Sch.: ja-wohl [yes sir].' On 6 March he '...breakfast with Ewald --- to discuss if and how I could help Schönhuber. Handed a letter to him setting out my willingness, and orally told him my terms for a proposed lecture tour.'
- 5.1.4 Initially Irving seems to have had some doubts about Althans on seeing him in London, writing that he seemed 'a bit of a Nazi, but helpful.' A month later Irving was obviously more impressed. 'Ewald Althans has arrived by plane and is full of plans for a new tour by me of Germany, France and Spain in late February. Althans makes a very good impression, businesslike and ambitious, keen, and organized. He has learned a lot already.' Althans was obviously already a requested commodity in revisionist circles as it would seem that he flew to Irving after having visited Pedro Varela, 'organiser' of Irving's Spanish tour of 17–20 November 1989.

- 5.1.5 On the 15 or 16 July 1989 Irving met Karl Philipp in Germany for the first time ‘for a meeting’. In his diary he described Philipp as ‘...a rather rightwing friend of Tony Hancock, he says. (Something makes me suspect he may be a stoolpigeon however). He is willing to arrange an Austrian speaking tour for me in November.’ On the 22 July Irving met Philipp a second time at Vlotho, in the Collegium Humanum to arrange Irving’s November tour of Austria. At the meeting ‘with various rightwing gentlemen’ to whom Irving ‘delivered a ten minute pep talk’, were Professor Haverback of the Collegium Humanum and Major Otto-Ernst Remer ‘hero of July 20 1944 in Berlin’. Irving was not loath to use Philipp’s journalistic contacts to neo-Nazi and denialist newspapers like *CODE*, *Sieg*, or the *Remer Depesche*. For instance Philipp later asked Irving to fax him an article from the London *Jewish Chronicle* to enable Philipp to write up an article on the propaganda campaign against Irving. The two men likewise enjoyed contacts to Franz Schönhuber.
- 5.1.6 The first days of Irving’s October visit to Germany were spent perfecting a protest against the Berlin radio station Transmitter Free Berlin [Sender Freies Berlin – SFB]. Irving had been invited to take part in a round-table discussion with historians. Upon their refusal to take part if Irving attended because of the repugnance of his views, Irving orchestrated a protest in front of the radio offices under the title ‘German historians – liars and cowards.’
- 5.1.7 The protest had already been planned in advance with the help of Althans and Philipp. Ernst Zündel had offered to pay DM 500 towards Irving’s flight and provide willing ‘Zündelists’ for the protest. Irving, conscious of his image in Germany, planned in advance to hold two brief unannounced demonstrations, thus avoiding both illegality and at the same time avoiding incurring a counter demonstration. Irving had also asked the DVU if they could send any demonstrators. On 1 October Irving met Althans and Philips in Berlin. The next day he ‘...addressed a briefing session for the helpers for tomorrow’s demonstrations. Twenty-three people, some quite rough.’

- 5.1.8 In the morning of 3 October Irving held a press conference in the Kempinski Hotel. Philipp had previously given publicity in Germany for the original launch of the *Leuchter Report* in London on 23 June 1989. This time he obliged with a transcript of the press conference in Berlin published in *Sieg* and *CODE*. The conference, that ran under the motto ‘Truth frees’ can be considered a German press launch of the *Leuchter Report*. Irving told journalists ‘The result of this report is final. There was no mass murder with poison gas.’ Two other passages will suffice to give the tenor of Irving’s views. “Journalist: ‘Mr Irving, you describe the gas chambers as a fairy tale, better said propaganda. In that case who invented this fairy tale or this propaganda?’ Irving: ‘We, the English, invented it. The Political Warfare Executive had already thought up this propaganda lie in 1942.’ Journalist: ‘In your opinion what was Auschwitz?’ Irving: ‘A work camp. One needed forced labour for industry.’ Journalist: ‘Why is Auschwitz called an extermination camp then?’ Irving: ‘I don’t. Only you and the German historians. It is a defamation of the German people if one talks of extermination camps or death camps.’”
- 5.1.9 Irving held two brief demonstrations before and after the radio program in an attempt to confront the other participants in the radio show.
- 5.1.10 On 3 November Irving spoke to a closed meeting organised by Althans in the Bayrischer Hof in Munich. Amongst the 86 guests was Dr. Gerd Sudholt. From the 4-10 November Irving was on a troubled speaking tour through Austria, planned accompanied at times by Philipp and Althans. The tour had been advertised in *Sieg*, which had announced that Irving would answer the question ‘if there were gas chambers in German concentration camps for the mass murder of humans with Zyclon-B.’ Of note for the report is a meeting of 7 November. After a Linz restaurant refused to allow Irving to speak there, he and 120 invited guests were allowed to hold the meeting in castle Hochscharten outside Markflecken Waizenkirchen. The castle belonged to Robert

Wimmer. When the Austrian police arrived Irving appeared with his mouth demonstratively covered with masking tape. He was not allowed to speak and had to make do with signing autographs. “Meanwhile some 300 people had packed into the castle’s little schoolroom to hear me, overflowing into the outside rooms. I appeared amongst them with a sticking plaster covering my mouth, and a notice stuck to my back reading: “Sorry, can’t speak – but can sign books!” Ewald [Althans] delivered my lecture, from memory, using notes I had prepared for him. He is a fine speaker, and when he relied on his own material rather than mine he was very good.”

- 5.1.11 On 11 November Irving drove back to Germany with Althans and gave a dinner speech at the behest of Lars de Flon of the Alverlag in Bad Neuenahr. Before the meeting Irving had tea with de Flon ‘and his old Nazi (SS) friend Woltersdorf’.
- 5.1.12 The next day Irving drove to Hagenau, Alsace ‘with Ewald and his skin-head friend ---...’, for a revisionist conference organised by Thies Christophersen. To begin with, and despite Irving’s conversion, he seemed to have balked at attending the congress. Irving’s ultimate presence in Hagenau is proof of how far he had swung since the 1970s and 1980s. Christophersen had been long interested in Irving, although Irving less so in him. He had written to Irving in 1979, bringing Irving’s attention to his book ‘*The Auschwitz Lie*’ and expressing his admiration for Irving’s form of revisionism. “You said during your presentation in Kiel when a listener mentioned the Auschwitz lie to you that you did not want to discuss the topic because you were not tired of life. I understand this completely. For this reason I will always continue to defend you. There enough historians today who can disprove the Holocaust. They are all silenced. It would be bad if you too were to be silenced. We are eternally grateful for your influence. You are doing the right thing. Please don’t allow yourself be deterred.”

- 5.1.13 Christophersen had also invited Irving to speak in Antwerp in 1982, mentioning that he and Irving had once met and spoken briefly with one another, and that Christophersen was the person who regularly sent him *Die Bauernschaft*.
- 5.1.14 Christophersen himself apparently did not attend the Hagenau conference because of the threat of arrest if he entered France, which could have entailed deportation to Germany to face charges. The conference was attended by amongst others, Robert Faurisson, Ernst Zündel, Arthur Butz, Christian Worch, Karl Philipp, Wilhelm Stäglich, Udo Walendy, and Christa Goerth.
- 5.1.15 Irving had initially wanted to be the only speaker, ‘this for optical reasons, but surely understandable to you’ [‘dies aus optisch, aber Ihnen sicherlich verständlichen, Gründen.']. Christophersen initially promised him a speaking slot to himself on a separate evening, but later tabled Irving to speak after Faurisson.
- 5.1.16 There is no direct record of Irving’s speech, but its gist can be reconstructed. After the conference Christophersen wrote to Irving enclosing a reader’s letter for *Die Bauernschaft* from a disgruntled reader who had attended an Irving speech in Austria. The reader took issue with Irving’s description in his speech of the shooting of 5,000 Jews in Riga on 30 November 1941. Christophersen’s comment on the letter was that ‘I invited David Irving [to Hagenau] because he has now arrived at the same realisation as us about the gas chambers.’
- 5.1.17 From a draft of the conference for his newspaper *Die Bauernschaft*, that Christophersen sent to Irving, it would seem that at Hagenau Irving gave his stock reasons for the lack of gas chambers in Auschwitz (British propaganda, Arno Mayer, the Auschwitz ‘death-books, etc.) so that ‘... fewer people died in Auschwitz during the whole war than in a single attack on Hamburg.’ Further, “On the question what happened to the Jews Irving said that certainly some were murdered, but that

was the least of them. Many died in flight exactly like the Germans after the expulsion [from eastern Europe]. But many disappeared and live under other names in Israel or New York.”

5.2 OPC observations 1989.

- 5.2.1 The VSB for 1989 explicitly placed Irving alongside revisionists like Christophersen, Zündel, Walter Ochsenger, and Gerd Honsik as belonging to one camp. The VSB Rheinland-Pfalz stated that ‘After 1988 Irving shares the conviction of right-wing extremist revisionists who see the Holocaust as a propaganda lie.’

5.3 1990: ‘Truth Frees’ [‘Wahrheit macht Frei’].

- 5.3.1 In 1991 Irving undertook at least eight visits to Germany: 11 February to 10 March, 10 to 11 April, 20 to 22 April, 3 to 10 June, 1 to 3 August, 26 to 31 August, 2 to 10 September, and 3 October. A note of caution is required because Irving’s diary entries from 22 November to 6 December are missing.
- 5.3.2 From February to March 1990 Irving toured Germany for more than a month, organised again with Althans, Phillip, and Zündel. All of them were obviously excited about the virgin terrain the former GDR offered for revisionism. Zündel wrote to Irving about the preparations. “Althans is going to be in the “DDR” for at least a week, he is en route there now, to see if he can get a University Forum for you to talk. This is new ground we are breaking there, so it will be a real test of Ewalds skills!”
- 5.3.3 On 13 February Irving spoke in Dresden on the anniversary of the Allied bombing. He was to hold a press conference at 2 p.m. in the foyer of the Hotel Gewandhaus and his speech at 5 p.m. in the Kulturpalast. The Kulturpalast had been booked by Althans and his German Youth Education Project [Deutschen Jugendbildungswerkes – DJBW]. Despite a large media presence, Irving seems to have felt little reason to re-

strain his opinions. The Swiss *Weltwoche* recorded Irving as saying ‘Do you know what I like about the GDR: here the people don’t have this tortured conscience as they do over there.’ He was also quoted as having said that Auschwitz was ‘A huge Allied propaganda lie.’ This would accord with a later statement by Althans, who wrote ‘...Irving spoke to almost 1,000 people in the Dresden Palace of Culture on the anniversary of the Anglo-American terror attack on Dresden. In the following podium discussion, Irving clearly declared his belief in revisionism.’ The Dresden speech was filmed by Sepp Geiger, but no copy has been made available in Irving’s discovery.

- 5.3.4 On 14 February attempts were made for Irving to address a meeting in Leipzig apparently because ‘Berlin is cancelled. [Franz] Schönhuber won’t go along’. On 23 February Irving spoke in Landshut to the Working Group Historical Truth [‘Arbeitskreis Historische Wahrheit’]. This was the speech, according to later appeal documents, on which the city of Passau banned Irving from speaking to the DVU on 10 March, because Irving had presented his theory ‘that there had never been a gassing of Jews’ and that ‘The figure of 6 million murdered Jews was described by the plaintiff thereby as a life lie [‘Lebenslüge’] by the state of Israel as a means of permanent financial and political blackmail.’
- 5.3.5 In the following days two planned meetings in Stuttgart and Augsburg fell through. Althans promised Irving a press conference in Nuremberg, but Irving was worried about Althans’s intentions. ‘I am suspicious of the press conf.[erence], it sounds as though he wants me to [Sic] disavow Frey. I don’t see the point of that.’ On 28 February Irving spoke in Cologne Deutz, organised by a certain Benscheid.
- 5.3.6 On 1 March Irving gave testimony in defence of Ernst-Günter Kögel before the magistrate’s court [Amtsgericht] in Remscheid. Kögel was charged with providing his own introduction to Irving’s London press conference of 23 June 1989 launching the *Leuchter Report*. It is not clear what form this report took, but it appears that Kögel had tried to

distribute it in some numbers. In a indication of things to come, Karl Philipp expressed surprise that Irving was admitted as a witness at all, because the existence of the gas chambers in Auschwitz was usually considered manifest [Offenkundig] in German courts.

5.3.7 In his report on Irving's court appearance Philipp wrote: 'In his statement the researcher of contemporary history [Irving] went into the Leuchter Report and reaffirmed his view, according to which it was not possible for there to have been gas chambers for killing people in Auschwitz, Birkenau, or Majdanek.' In this first instance the court found in Kögel's favour that he had only wanted to start a discussion. In the second instance in 1992 he was fined DM 12,600 on the charge of incitement to hatred [Volksverhetzung].

5.3.8 On 2 March Irving spoke in Kiel at a meeting organised through Dieter Munier of the Arndt Verlag. He stayed overnight with Munier, where he met Gerlind Möhring. The meeting had replaced one planned with Pedersen, someone known to Christophersen. The next morning Irving had a conference with Munier 'about his project for a polemical historical brochure by me on the ODER NEISSE territory. Agreed on a DM15,000 fee, of which he paid DM3000 at once...'

5.3.9.3 March was a delicate day for Irving. It had been long planned that he make his first appearance before the NL in Hamburg, at a meeting chaired by Christian Worch. This was an important meeting for Irving for two reasons. Firstly he had to make good a certain amount of bad feeling resulting from his speech in Hagenau the previous November. Worch had written to Zündel on 1 January 1990, concerning Althans' suggestion that Worch take responsibility for Irving's appearance in Hamburg during his forthcoming tour. Worch mentioned his doubts about organising a speech after Irving's 'small "faux pas"' ['kleinen "fauz pas"] in Hagenau "...when he had to bring up these stories about the Riga shootings. But Ewald [Althans] explained to me that Irving has

a choice of two presentations on this tour, with which we don't have to reckon with such irritating details for our listeners.[...] Naturally clearly more agreeable than the presentation in Hagenau!"

- 5.3.10 Zündel duly wrote to Irving chiding him for his 'poor tactics'. His comments in Hagenau had alienated supporters from northern Germany who, as a result, were considering no longer inviting Irving to speak. Secondly Michael Kühnen himself was due to appear at the meeting. Hence perhaps the unusually frantic security efforts. All this added to the importance of the meeting.
- 5.3.11 Worch had promised Irving, that although his appearance in Hamburg was organised by the NL and invitations had been sent out on NL stationery, it was in essence a meeting organised by him as a private person. Irving would be the only speaker, there would be no party emblems, and his appearance would not be 'politically "exploited"' ['politisch "ausgeschlachtet"']. But Worch was obviously overjoyed at the political resonance of attracting Irving as a speaker. He wrote to Zündel 'DM 1,000 for the speaker and DM 300 for the organiser seems to me decidedly cheap. It is worth double or triple the amount to me.'
- 5.3.12 Irving described the rest of the evening himself. "Rumours come that tonight there is to be much violence, etc., and Munier persuades me to cancel the Nationale Liste meeting – since (a) the press has got wind of it, and (b) Michael Kühnen is to be present; and to attend only the Burschenschaft Germania meeting later in the evening. This evoked consternation, then comprehension, in Althaus,.... Zündel (!)(in Toronto!) is somehow eingeschaltet [brought in]. I drove to Hamburg.... Meanwhile Althaus phoned from the NL venue, the Alte Mühle, insisting that I attend the NL function, major crowd there, 300, no trouble, no police, no problems. So I drove out there at speed, made a rousing speech, which was very well received, then zipped on to the Burschenschaft Germania.... There were surly faces against me at the NL meeting when I arrived. An attractive girl, 25 (who turned out to be

Christian Worch's wife), snarled at me that I had "disappointed" her by my earlier stance this day. But at the end of the meeting all were pleased. It was a good speech --- knorke [super], I think my current biographical subject [Goebbels] would say."

5.3.13 What this 'super' speech contained was Irving's gospel that there had been no gassings in Auschwitz, or indeed anywhere else for that matter. "But I no longer believe in this legend. I say the following. There were no gas chambers in Auschwitz, only dummies, built by the Poles in the years following the war, exactly like the dummies the Americans built in Dachau that had to be torn down by the Americans at the orders of the West German government because they were dummies. But the dummies are still standing in Auschwitz, because the German government has no sway there. And understandably that is a problem for you that you have a government in Bonn that allows its own people to be defamed by all the countries of the world, although in the meantime it is cried out that these things in Auschwitz, and probably in Majdanek, Treblinka, and in other so-called extermination camps in the east are all dummies."

5.3.14 Tellingly Irving openly admitted that what he was saying was illegal. 'We are always running the danger that we will be arrested...because what we say borders, that is very dangerous. Because what we say is [interrupted by commotion in the hall].' Later in the talk Irving asked someone who had entered the room why he had come in. After a long pause, during which the new arrival is escorted out Irving explained, 'It is clear that I am saying before you is pretty explosive. Very dangerous. I don't want to go to prison because he comes in with a unauthorized person and does as if he's [an] interested observer.'

5.3.15 Irving fails to mention in his diary if Kühnen was there or not, but the journalist Michael Schmidt was likewise present on the same evening in the Alte Mühle, in the company of Gerald Hess who gave him permission to try and film. Schmidt attests that Irving and Kühnen arrived

together. Whether Irving and Kühnen talked together or appeared on the same platform must remain speculation. From his diary it would seem evident that Irving was pleased with his appearance before the NL. Irving was likewise obviously pleased to have met the Worschs. He wrote to them thanking them for their friendly help and support, and expressing his hope to see them in Munich on 21 April 1990 at the coming revisionist conference.

- 5.3.16 Benedict gives the wider background to the meeting. The NL, the Lichtenberg neo-Nazi ‘comrades’, and ‘fighters’ of various neo-Nazi groups (DA, FAP, NA) and a hundred others from DVU and NPD were all in Hamburg that day. Parts of them were hindered by the police. Others demonstrated freely against the Soviet Consulate. Further she claims that Irving received applause from older members of the audience, especially SS veterans. She also mentions that this was a turning point for east-Berlin activists who up until the evening had not had fundamental doubts about the fact of the Holocaust.
- 5.3.17 On 4 March a hall was booked by Althans and the AVÖ in the Berghotel Porta Westfalica. Udo Walendy was the organiser. The meeting was re-located unnecessarily by ‘Wosch or Althans’ to the Kollegium Humanum in Vlotho. ‘Major meeting, around 350 people. Speech very well received. It was a good, heated, demagogic speech, with every punch line brilliantly delivered and hugely applauded.’
- 5.3.18 On 8 March Irving spoke about the ‘Future of the Germans’ in Hamburg. The meeting was organised by Ulrich Harder. Ulrich Harder was leader of the Hamburg NPD and one-time leader of the 1982 founded Hamburg List to Stop Foreigners [Hamburger Liste für Ausländerstopp – HLA]. Irving had known Harder since 1984, when Harder had worked for the Society for Culture and Contemporary History [Verein für Kultur und Zeitgeschichte] whom Irving had addressed. The meeting does not appear in Irving’s itinerary of 6 February 1990, and therefore may have been organised spontaneously.

- 5.3.19 On 9 March Irving spoke in Moers at an AVÖ meeting. Irving again gave his ‘Truth frees!’ talk. “Then [at the time of writing *Hitler’s War*] I believed these gentlemen [German historians] who said that something happened in Auschwitz. Now I no longer believe this story at all. Today I say the following: there were no gassings in Auschwitz. Today I say, that they are only dummies that the Poles built after 1945. Exactly as the Americans built similar dummies in Dachau. How do I know so precisely that they are only dummies? What convinced me? I was convinced two years ago in Canada by an expert’s report.”
- 5.3.20 Despite the ‘closed’ nature of the meeting Irving made its political nature of his message clear. “It takes something to stand up and say that there were no gas chambers. The existing gas chambers are only dummies built by the Poles or some other officials after the end of the Second World War for the purpose of the damnation and defamation of the German people in the world. [...] We’re gaining acceptance, but only with the help of the German population, the German people. You can support it yourself with letters to newspapers, through a whispering campaign, precisely by passing on what I have said to you tonight.”
- 5.3.20 During this tour Irving also began to become aware of the possibilities of publishing, recording, and generally marketing his speeches. In a later diary entry he recorded ‘...Althans phoned, with details of Karl Höf[f]kes’ offer. Wants five brochures, 4 month intervals [Sic]; will pay DM 5000 for Wahrheit macht Frei (Tagebuch einer Vortragsreihe [diary of a speaking tour]) brochure text of Moers speech....’ In an April entry ‘Worked all morning concluding the revision of the transcript of my Moers speech. It is better than I thought. Tightened it up, checked the facts, dates, and quotations. I must publish more of these.’
- 5.3.21 On 10 March Irving was banned from speaking to the DVU at Passau. His initial plan to speak at a meeting in Belgium organised by Althans indicates his preferences at the time. Althans was obviously irritated by Irving’s last minute decision to speak in Passau, although both men

agreed that there was political capital to be made from the ban for the forthcoming revisionist conference in Munich. “Althans was not pleased that I had gone to Passau, though he agrees his April 21 meeting [‘Wahrheit macht Frei’] will now be enhanced by the result of the ban. (I hope I don’t get banned there.) He arranges a last minute deal with me, whereby he will pay me DM5000 for right to publish a synopsis of this most recent Vortrag [Speech]. They’ll print 10,000. He is an ambitious man, and I like that.”

- 5.3.22 The synthesis of money, politics, and revisionism can be illustrated by referring to this one of Irving’s best documented tours.
- 5.3.23 The organisation was such that Althans and the AVÖ acted as Irving’s direct agent. Althans then ‘sold’ Irving on to other organisations by closing contracts with third parties at an agreed rate. The printed contractual equivalent agreement [‘Vertragsgleiche Vereinbarung’] between ‘X’ and Althans and the AVÖ, offered three topics: New Documents of Contemporary History [‘Neue Dokumente zur Zeitgeschichte’], Warmonger Churchill – the Fall of a Monument [‘Kriegstreiber W. Churchill – Ein Denkmal stürzt’], and Germany’s way to Unity – a Historian looks in the Future [‘Deutschlands Weg zur Einheit – Ein Historiker blickt in die Zukunft’].
- 5.3.24 The fee to be paid to Althans was set at either DM 650 or DM 1,300. Irving was guaranteed the right to sell and sign his own books, whilst the organiser was requested to restrict the amount of literature he or she himself could offer. The signator guaranteed that Irving would not be ‘misused for party politics’ [‘Herr Irving wird auf den Veranstaltungen nicht parteipolitisch mißbraucht werden.’].
- 5.3.25 Thus for instance the Arbeitskreis Historische Wahrheit [Robert Fronauer] booked Irving through Althans’s AVÖ to speak in Landshut on 23 February 1990. They paid an initial instalment of DM 650 to Althans, to be followed by a further DM 650 at a later date. The Arbeit-

skreis Historische Wahrheit in turn requested DM 10 contribution to expenses [‘Unkostenbeitrag’]. Of this DM 1,300 Irving received a DM 1,000 speaker’s fee [‘Rednerhonorar’].

- 5.3.26 Irving received DM 500 for some speeches (presumably his share from those who had paid Althans DM 650) and DM 1000 for larger speeches (presumably his share from those who had paid DM 1,300). In Dresden 13 February 1990 the speech was free [‘kostenlos’] or the turnover did not apply [‘Umsatz entfällt’], perhaps because of Irving’s eagerness to speak there. Althans also paid Irving DM 500 compensation for the cancelled Munich and Stuttgart speeches, and DM 1,000 compensation for the banned Antwerp speech. That Ernst Zündel was part of the financial dealings is clear from the same model contract between Althans and Christian Worch. For the meeting in Hamburg of 3 March 1990 Worch paid DM 300 to Althans and Irving’s DM 1,000 speaker’s fee direct to Zündel, as Worch’s preferred ‘middleman’ [‘Mittelsmann’] due to his and a general mistrust in Althans.
- 5.3.27 The three themes offered by Althans were evidently flexible or expendable. The Arbeitskreis Deutsche Wahrheit decided to advertise Irving to speak under the title ‘Is Germany alone Responsible for the War?’ [“Gibt es eine deutsche Alleinkriegsschuld?”] In its invitation to Irving’s speech on 11 March 1989, Stephan Raber of the Förderverein Junges Deutschland made it clear what the audience could expect. The speech was advertised as ‘The latest scholarly findings of historical research’ [‘Neueste wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse der Geschichtsforschung.’] The letter was headed with a quote from Irving: “Hundreds of millions of honest, intelligent people are being duped by extremely financially strong and brilliantly made post-war propaganda.” [“Hunderte von Millionen ehrlicher, intelligenter Menschen wurde durch extrem finanzstarke, wie auch brilliant gemachte Nachkriegspropaganda hinters Licht geführt.”] “Without falling prey to self-pity, we Germans can confirm that our people are by far and away the greatest victim of manipulation of the historical truth. [...] In his speech

Mr. Irving will discuss the sensational report of the American engineer FRED LEUCHTER, hotly discussed amongst experts, as well as present explosive statistics about the population numbers in Europe (before and after the war) and also discuss latest documents on the complicity of Prime Minister in the start of World War II. ”

5.3.28 Udo Walendy was rather more measured in his language in the invitation to the meeting in Porta Westfalica on 4 March 1990, but the message was clear. “This planned meeting is of enormous political importance because the British historian has caused a great stir, better said has considerably widened the breach in the change of opinions with numerous researches, with his unequivocal position on the most recent German past and revisionist research world wide – and once again in Dresden! [...] As others try to help politicians on their way with street demonstrations, so we want to assert in our way that “we are the people” by supporting the intellectual pioneer. ”

5.3.29 Robert Fronauer wrote to Althans: ‘Because it is supposed to be a closed meeting we have decided not to invite people in the name of the NPD. We believe that this way we can better attract national thinking people in our area to come.’ Indeed the meeting took place under the auspices of a ‘Working Group Historical Truth’ [‘Arbeitskreis Historische Wahrheit’], obviously a front set up purely for Irving’s meeting.

5.3.30 Ernst Zündel wrote a circular introducing Irving and his forthcoming tour to his ‘Zündel friends’ [‘Zündel Freunde’]. Zündel made an appeal for all kinds of help: cameramen, book carriers, alternative venues for any emergency cellar meetings [‘Katakomben-Versammlung.’] He also wanted volunteers for ‘strike troops’ [‘Eingreiftrupps’] to escort the audience unmolested to their cars. Zündel went on to explain the integrative nature of such events for RWE. “In this process, through the common struggle, we also grow together ourselves and bridge the existing divisive prejudices between “old” and “young”, from activists like the FAP compared to passive people like those from the DVU etc. ”

- 5.3.31 'He [Irving] is the best weapon in operation at the moment for truth also for our people!'
- 5.3.32 The clause in which the signator guaranteed that Irving not be politically used, was therefore a patent smoke screen The titles of the speeches were obviously catch-all, to pacify the authorities and perhaps to attract the unwary. The organisations Irving spoke to were fictitious fronts for organisations like the AVÖ or the NPD. Both Irving and his hosts were part of a political campaign to rehabilitate the German past.
- 5.3.33 In early April Irving made a short trip to Germany. Althans flew to London and both men flew on to Germany where Althans interviewed Irving and filmed the banned Passau speech. "We [Irving, Althans, and Daniel Knecht] met there [Bochum]. Althans' benefactor and great white hope, publisher Karl Höff[f]kes, who made a splendid impression on me, particularly because he talks cash, not postdated, rubbery cheques. During the day we set up a comprehensive long term marketing approach for my brochures, speeches, videos and audio tapes."
- 5.3.34 In January Christophersen had invited to attend a meeting in Nord-schleswig on 16 April 1990. He intended to rent a boat and sail across the Baltic, 'perhaps even as far as Rostock (GDR)' ['Vielleicht sogar bis nach Rostock (DDR)']. In a later letter he wrote that Dr. Wahl from Switzerland had agreed to come, but that whether Wolf Rüdiger Hess and lawyer Jürgen Rieger would take part was still unknown. Irving declined to take part because of 'a lack of time' ['Zeitmangel'] but 'perhaps next time' ['Das nächste Mal vielleicht.']
- 5.3.35 From 20–22 April 1990 Irving attended the first revisionist conference in Munich as its star speaker. On the evening before the planned conference Irving arrived in Munich, where he met Althans and Höffkes. Together they went to '...the dinner Althans "organised." It ended with a Trinkspruch [toast], spoken by him, to a certain statesman whose 101st birthday falls today [i.e. Hitler]. All rose, toasted; I had no glass,

as I don't drink.' Amongst the guests that evening were Dr. Stäglich, Carola Ott, Karl Phillip, Karl Höffkes, Alex Baaser, Armin Scherer, Ingrid Weckert, W.D.Kempkens, Prof. Schrocke, E. Franke Griersch, Tony Hancock, Arnulf Fröhlich, Daniel Knecht, Lothar Fontes, H. Forster, and Fabian Nledermeier.

- 5.3.36 The conference the next day had been organised by Althans's DJBW and Philipp. Under the slogan 'Truth Frees' ['Wahrheit macht Frei'], leading German RWEs and revisionists spoke in the Löwenbräukeller in Munich, including Althans, Raimund Bachmann, Phillip, Helmut Schroke, and Irving. In the audience were Remer, Ahmed Rami, Roeder, Stäglich, Florence Rost van Tonningen, and Anthony Hancock, members of the IHR, and other members of the GdNF and the FAP. Security was provided by Worch of the NL. Kühnen was observed as present by a local journalist. A DJBW flyer for the heralded the congress as the 'breakthrough of revisionism' ['Durchbruch des Revisionismus'] and gave the title of Irving's as 'Germany's way to unity and neutrality – an end to the victors' propaganda!' ['Deutschlands weg zur Einheit und Neutralität – Schluss mit der Siegerpropaganda!'].
- 5.3.37 An invitation to the conference made the synthesis of revisionism and this RWE faction clear. "The days of defensive revisionism are over. Revisionism (especially the Holocaust complex and the connected propaganda lies) like indiscriminate discussions about this theme in the media have achieved a scientific basis. **Rethinking** will be the beginning of the second revolution this century. **DAVID IRVING**, world renowned, respected but controversial, is only the tip of the iceberg."
- 5.3.38 This synthesis is striking and for some commentators the congress signalled the breakthrough of the GdNF within the fascist scene in Germany.
- 5.3.39 Despite tight security, and an internal ban on filming or recording, Irving's speech was partially filmed by journalist Michael Schmidt. A fragment of the speech is contained in his documentary. Irving was

filmed saying, “[Commentator fades out, Irving fades in]...in Dachau, in the early post-war years was a dummy, so the gas-chamber facilities that one can see as a tourist in Auschwitz, were built by the authorities in Auschwitz after the Second World War. The evidence is available, the facilities have been chemically investigated. We have now published the document [the *Leuchter Report*] in the whole world. And I can tell you ladies and gentlemen, that will stir things up. That will scare the wits out of our enemy.”

5.3.40 Some members of the audience wore donkey masks and hung notices around their necks which read ‘I still believe in the Holocaust – the ass that I am’ [‘Ich Esel glaube an die Vergasungslüge’] echoing a similar action carried out in 1978 in Hamburg involving Erwin Schönborn, Edgar Geiss, and further members of the ANS.

5.3.41 At the end of his speech Raimund Bachmann called on the audience to take to the streets, and 250 people followed him with the intention of marching to the Munich Feldherrenhalle, scene of Hitler’s unsuccessful 1923 putsch, until stopped by the police. In the course of the illegal demonstration Irving was arrested, interviewed, and freed on bail. Irving himself later claimed that he had been accidentally caught up in the demonstration. Althaus on the other hand claimed that Irving had had an active part in it. In video footage of the march Irving is clearly seen marching with a main body of the demonstration, if not at its head.

5.3.42 In a letter of June Christian Worch made clear to Irving who had organised the march, and who Irving was dealing with. The letter concerned Irving’s refusal to appear at Wunsiedel [the annual Rudolf Hess March] in August, because of the presence of Michael Kühnen. Worch saw himself obliged to forcefully remind Irving who his allies in Germany were. “The people, who after the hall event on the 21 April in Munich, made sure that things got moving despite a police ‘special commando’, that a demonstration happened at all, were Kühnen’s people. Ewald

Althans and Daniel Knecht or Althans' steward Alex or my local comrade Thomas Wulff, the leader of our local party and myself, could not have forced it alone. Of the 200 people in the 'Löwenbräukeller' who set off in the direction of the Feldherrenhalle, at least 30 or 40 were prepared to march if it came to the crunch, even if the police or somebody else broke their skulls. Three-quarters of them were Kühnen's people. Without them, 200 nice, good people would have allowed themselves to be stopped by 12 policemen until the police had managed to call in enough reinforcements to nip any march in the bud. It was the small radical minority who simply set off and gave the lead to the hesitant mass in their bourgeoisie caution who needed them to set themselves off.[...] As most of the active revisionists of today were still concerning themselves with their bourgeoisie careers or at the most once a year attended the large rallies of the DVU [i.e. Irving] or got together at the weekly back-room regular's tables of the NPD, it was Michael Kühnen who, together with the sadly in the mean-time dead Erwin Schönborn, put his men in donkey masks in 1978 and armed them with placards which read "I am an ass and still believe that Jews were gassed in Auschwitz" and demonstrated in the Hamburg city centre... (where he like myself was promptly sentenced to a few months imprisonment.)"

- 5.3.43 Irving himself wrote to Althans on 24 April 1990, complaining merely about the 'optical' problems of the congress. 'That was a good event and I congratulate you on the success. My only criticism: the skinheads and the flags. It only serves our cause up to the enemy on a plate.' He ended 'What are we doing next?' ['Was machen wir als nächstes?'].
- 5.3.44 Before flying back to London Irving breakfasted with Stäglich, Tony Hancock, and Ursula and Christian Worsch.
- 5.3.45 Irving's June tour of 'central Germany' was again organised in conjunction with Althans, Zündel, and Philipp. This second tour of east Germany was fuelled by a feeling of euphoria that the revisionist cause

was on the march. ‘...Philipp phoned...says we are being swamped (überrollt) by the Auschwitz debate now, just as we were by the Wiedervereinigung [reunification]. He will press Althans on organising a DDR [GDR] speech tour, perhaps Eisenach. I suggest title, “Ausflug in die Wahrheit.”[“Excursion in the truth”]

- 5.3.46 On the 5 June Irving held a press conference in Dresden attended by only three journalists and went on to speak in the Kulturpalast again, organised by an unidentifiable ‘German-European Community of the Persecuted of Totalitarian Systems’ [‘Deutsch-Europäische Gemeinschaft der Verfolgten totalitärer Systeme’, Leipzig/Munich]. Irving was accompanied by a journalist from the German magazine *Der Spiegel*. Some 150 people attended, but the success of February’s Dresden appearance was not to be repeated. ‘The audience awoke after an hour, became begeistert [enthusiastic], and then to my consternation sections of it began getting up and walking out. Evidently I trod on some susceptibilities.’
- 5.3.47 On 6 June Irving spoke in the congress hall in Leipzig, again under the auspices of the ‘German-European Community of the Persecuted of Totalitarian Systems’. After the meeting had had to switch to a smaller room in view of how few people were expected, Irving wrote: ‘I am philosophical: my job is just to speak, not to organize.’ Much to Irving and Philipp’s embarrassment Otto Ernst turned up at the same time as a photographer from *Der Spiegel* was present. ‘Fortunately the photographer seems not to recognize him. Philipp tells Remer the meeting is cancelled, and he leaves.’ On the 7 June Irving spoke in the Haus der Kultur in Gera, again for the ‘German-European Community of the Persecuted of Totalitarian Systems’ The hall had been rented by Jürgen Kraut. On 8 June Irving visited Höffkes in Essen and the next day Irving recorded several taped interviews with Althans to be marketed by Höffkes.

- 5.3.48 In August 1990 Irving briefly stopped in Germany, before travelling on to Switzerland and France. On 1 August Irving met Wolf Rüdiger Hess and Alfred Seidl for dinner in Munich. On 2 August Irving spoke in Stuttgart on ‘German history in the dock’ [‘Deutsche Geschichte auf der Anklagebank,’] under the auspices of ‘The Partyless National Opposition that Screams for Freedom’ [‘Die parteifreie, nationale Opposition, die nach Wahrheit schreit’] and Carl-Arthur Bühring. It had been planned that Irving would speak at Wunsiedel on 18 August, but after Irving’s me-or-him demand, Christian Worch turned him down in favour of Michael Kühnen (see below). On 27 August was briefly back in Germany again and met Althans and ‘guests’ including Reinhard Rade.
- 5.3.49 Irving toured Germany again in September. On 2 September Irving spoke in Weinheim on ‘contemporary history under the microscope’ [‘Zeitgeschichte auf dem Prüfstand.’] The meeting was organised by NPD leader Günter Deckert. Deckert was to be later imprisoned for chairing this meeting. On 7 September Irving held a meeting arranged through Walther Soyka and Althans. On 8 September Irving was to have spoken to the Rhein -Ruhr Circle of Friends [‘Freundeskreis Rhein-Ruhr’] in Duisburg on ‘Moscow’s new policy towards Germany’ [‘Moskaus neue Deutschlandpolitik’], but spoke in Oberhausen instead. On 9 September Irving recorded more tapes with Höffkes and Althans.
- 5.3.50 On 3 October Irving flew to Germany and back in an attempt to be heard at the trial of Frank Grieksch.

5.4 OPC observations 1990.

- 5.4.1 The 1990 VSB reported that “The important British revisionist David Irving (52), who spoke at the 10-3-90 DVU rally in Passau was not allowed to speak because the town administration put a ban on the meeting. Nevertheless he could express his opinions at meetings of right-wing extremists in Munich, Dresden, Leipzig, Gera, Stuttgart, Weinheim/Bergstrasse, and Oberhausen. The Minister for the Interior

ordered a ban on his entering the FRG. Irving was nevertheless not identified when he entered Germany, however, he distributes the Leuchter Report from London.”

- 5.4.2 In state VSBs it was observed that at several meetings that year Irving had stated the Holocaust was just a ‘propaganda lie’. In Munich he was quoted as having said that there ‘were never any gas chambers in Auschwitz’. Further ‘The British writer David Irving also shared the conviction that the Holocaust is just a propaganda lie put about by the allies of World War II.’ ‘Irving, in his books and lectures puts forth vehement opinions of the so-called revisionism that claims the Holocaust (gassing of deported Jews) did not occur.’

5.5 1991: ‘the total catastrophe’ and how Irving reacted.

- 5.5.1 Irving was in Germany at least seven times in 1991 12-27 February, 22-26 March, 7-14 May, 5-12 June, 23/24 [?]-31 June, 6-10 November, and December. Again important passages are missing in Irving’s diaries and attempts to reconstruct all of Irving’s activities in the year must remain inconclusive. The missing entries are 29 March-24 April (25 April incomplete), 26-28 April, 30 April-6 May, 27 August-22 October, 4-5 November, 19-29 November, 31 November-22 January 1992.
- 5.5.2 Irving’s February tour was mainly involved with seeking out NS witnesses for an American television documentary. On 12 February slept at Höffkes’s grandparents’ home and recorded his forthcoming DVU Passau speech ‘just in case I am arrested first.’ On 13 February Irving held a ‘sparsely attended’ press conference in Frankfurt. On 16 February Irving spoke at Passau (see above) and on 20 February he had dinner with Althans in Munich.
- 5.5.3 In March Irving was again invited to speak at the second revisionist conference in Munich. On 22 March Irving met Althans ‘at his office’ in Munich and had dinner with W. R. Hess.

- 5.5.4 On 23 March the revisionist campaign in Germany was meant to reach a new high point with a planned ‘international revisionist congress’ in Munich, organised under the title ‘International Annual Meeting of Critical Contemporaries’ [‘Internationaler Jahrestagung kritischer Zeitgenossen’]. This second revisionist conference was organised by Althans (and his AVÖ), Zündel, Reinhold Rade, and Stephan Niemannn Irving, who would seemed to have been still concerned about his public persona, wrote to reassure Frey ‘As far as the 23.3. is concerned, the theme of my talk is “Churchill in World War II”. I therefore expect no difficulties from the authorities.’
- 5.5.5 Althans had hired the hall of the German Museum in Munich that could hold 2,400 people. That the congress did not take place as planned was due only to the determination of the museum administration. A ban [‘Veranstaltungsverbot’] by the local district administration [Kreisverwaltungsamt] was overturned by the administrative court [Verwaltungsgericht], but the museum held firm despite the threat of claims for compensation. On the evening before the congress the higher administrative court [Oberverwaltungsgericht] decided in favour of the museum because of ‘wilful deceit’ [‘arglistiger Täuschung’] by Althans who had booked the hall under a false title. The revisionists were nevertheless allowed to hold a vigil [‘Mahnwache’] in front of the museum.
- 5.5.6 In the filmed record of the protest Althans announced that David Irving, Mark Weber, Ahmed Rami, Wilhelm Stäglich, Fred Leuchter, Dietlieb Felderer, Nancy Lang, Jerome Brennter, Ernst-Otto Remer, and Mrs. Rost von Tonningen were to have spoken. The speakers at the improvised protest meeting included Irving, Althans, Rost von Tonnin-gen, Ahmed Rami, Henri Rocques, Wilhelm Stäglich, Dietlieb Felderer, Christian Worch (responsible for “security”), Raimund Bachmann, and Pedro Varela who conveyed the greetings of Leon DeGrelle. The Bavarian VSB claimed that Meinolf Schönborn was also present. Zündel was unable to speak as he had been arrested the evening before.

- 5.5.7 Irving recorded the fiasco in his diary, no longer willing to incur arrest after his experience at the first conference. “Althans arrives around 9:30 a.m., and after discussion I agree we speakers should go to the hall steps to meet the press; but not to make speeches. At the steps..., I speak with Seipl, police commander; her [Sic] confirms that people will be allowed to speak **only** on the Vertragskündigung, [cancelled contract] nothing else. This again showed Althans lied to us – he doesn’t care if we get arrested. I consequently speak only two minutes, telling the crowd (around 400 hardy souls [Sic] braving the blustery weather) that I am not allowed to speak.”
- 5.5.8 The next day Irving attended a press conference given by Althans in Munich, but ‘no press’.
- 5.5.9 On the 25 March Irving attended ‘a new press conference by Althans (who was missing!) and Leuchter, who read out his report endlessly. Further shambles.’ The same day Irving met ‘local NPD agent’ Renate Werlberger to arrange details of a meeting for 12 May.
- 5.5.10 The period April to May is impossible to reconstruct with any degree of certainty. It is worthy of note that Michael Kühnen died of AIDS, 25 April 1991.
- 5.5.11 In May Irving returned to Germany. On 10 May Irving spoke in Rothenburg to the GfP on ‘the future of the German people between England and Russia’ [‘Die Zukunft d. dt. Volkes zwischen Engländern u. Russen.’ On 11 May Irving spoke in Munich to the Rudolf Hess Society [‘Rudolf-Heß-Gesellschaft’] on the fiftieth anniversary of Hess’s flight to England. ‘Frl. Fath (R[udolf]H[ess]’s secretary) was in the audience which made it so much better.’
- 5.5.12 On 12 May Irving talked to the Munich NPD. The meeting was organised with Frau Werlberger, ‘a local NPD agent’. According to later court documents the meeting had been advertised under the rubric, “The famous contemporary historian, under the topic “Germany’s future in

the shadow of political extortion”, will for the first time give his opinion “if the Germans and their European neighbours can still afford to tolerate contemporary history as a political instrument of extortion”. ”

- 5.5.13 The NPD was informed that the meeting could only go ahead if they took the responsibility that Irving only speak about the persecution of the Jews in the Third Reich as far as he did not deny it. Hence Werlberger wrote to Irving ‘We have only the request that you avoid mention of the word “Auschwitz”, in your own interest and in the interests of the party which is bound by the present conditions.’ Just how far Irving complied with the request is evident from a (incomplete) recording of the meeting. Referring to legends that he may not mention, Irving proclaimed, ‘In three, four years at the latest these legends will no longer hold water. The legend will be over and then the tables will be turned, then the whole [drowned out in applause]’ Few in his audience can have had any doubt as to which ‘legends’ Irving was referring to.
- 5.5.14 On 14 May Irving had breakfast with Reinhard Rade. Althans was due to have joined them but didn’t.
- 5.5.15 On 5 June Irving attended a function of the Danubia student fraternity [Studentenschaft] in Munich. The following day Irving met Althans. On 7 June Irving dined with Althans, Susie Töpler (Reinhard Rade’s fiancée), and other guests at Althans’s house. The company later went on to a beer hall where they met Ursula Worsch. On 8 June Irving signed books at Althans’ AVÖ bookshop in Herzog-Heinrich-Strasse in Munich. Irving recorded in his diary, ‘It is an impressive effort by Althans (though Susie [Töpler] told me later that Reinhard Rade has financed it and is the title holder, as Althans’s creditworthiness is not much at present). About 150 to 200 people came during the time I was there, including familiar faces.’ On 10 June Irving met the Worschs in Munich and spent the day with Töpler and Rade.

- 5.5.16 Intestine quarrels were slowly brewing between Althans and Philipp, crippling Irving's planned July – August tour. On 1 July 1991, Althans faxed Irving 'Two pages of hysteria', announcing the collapse of the forthcoming July / August tour. "...now it's come to this. The total catastrophe. The speeches of 25.07 to 17.08 will not take place. I have to give up. I can picture you now foaming with rage. And I am very scared that we will fall out again over this.[...] You yourself know what kind of a position I have been in since the Leuchter Congress. Now it's got worse."
- 5.5.17 Althans complained that he was plagued by the bailiffs, his phone had been cut off, and that trips to the former east Germany required time and money, neither of which he had. A banned meeting had been broken up with truncheons. The bookshop had become subject to numerous attacks making it necessary to guard it. Comrades, like Harder [Ulrich?] were proving incapable of acting responsibly or autonomously. Worst of all, Philipp was conducting a whispering campaign against him. "Thus for example K[arl] P[hilipp] has managed to incite Gen.[eral] Remer and presumably G.[erd] Honsik against me. They in turn have managed to stir things up more with their naive innocence (you know how much I value Remer and Honsik)."
- 5.5.18 Since February Althans had been on trial in Stuttgart and was threatened with a long imprisonment. "Perhaps one would have got somewhere if we had been at the meeting. There were a lot of people there upon whose supportive assistance I could have hoped. But Karl Philipp, who knew that you were coming because I was stupid enough to register you as a guest as required, lied to you that I wanted to use you to break up the event. You believed him and cancelled with me. So Philipp could tell people Althans is a liar, even David Irving doesn't like him and therefore doesn't come to the conference. And, as expected, I alone received no invitation."

- 5.5.19 This passage presumably relates to a meeting that had taken place between Irving and Althans in Munich on 11 June. '[Althans] Also suggests I come to Munich two days June 28 for a confrontation with Karl Philipp and Faurisson at Nuremberg. What the ---?'
- 5.5.20 This in turn is with certainty related to the NF's intention, announced at its national congress on 6 April, to also hold a revisionist campaign in June (originally in Roding in Cham, Bavaria) under the slogan 'Down with the Holocaust' ['Schluß mit dem Holocaust']. The list of those who were to speak was almost identical to that in Munich. The Bavarian VSB for 1991 recorded the intention to hold the same congress. Speakers were to have been NF leader Meinolf Schönborn, Faurisson, Remer, Stäglich, and Philipp. The conference was banned. Despite the ban 150 people gathered in Roding, only to be cleared out of the meeting rooms by police. Some 150 NF supporters fought with police, leading to two arrests and hurt policemen and neo-Nazis. An later attempt to hold the congress in the evening led to 38 arrests.
- 5.5.21 Karl Phillip wrote to Irving on 4 July boasting about the meeting in Cham where he had successfully held a meeting for Dr. Schaller and Faurisson despite a concerted police effort to break up the meeting. "That was a masterpiece by Meinolf Schönborn and his people. We should take it in mind to do something with him in late Autumn. He is really a soldier and everything goes off with military discipline and according to military organisation. He has almost 400 young people around him who follow his commands."
- 5.5.22 The nuances of the dispute are unclear, but the conclusions are inescapable. Irving was no mere hired speaker to the neo-Nazis or in the revisionist movement, but had the political weight to support or undermine political positions and alliances within both scenes. That Philipp, who had now known and worked with Irving for almost two years, should try and impress Irving with tales of his own conspiratorial skills and Schönborn's violent antics, speaks for Irving's tastes.

5.5.23 Irving promptly sent a circular to Karl Höffkes and Philipp asking if they, or anyone they knew, could fill in at such short notice and organise anything. Irving was willing to agree on ‘a topic acceptable to the authorities’ [‘ein den Behörden genehmes Thema vereinbaren’]. Irving likewise wrote to Zündel. “I am of course alarmed, sorry, and annoyed. It is unprofessional to say the least of Althans. We have been planning this four week tour of Mitteldeutschland [central Germany] since Leuchtercongeß [Leuchter congress]. For him to abandon it giving me three weeks’ notice is unhelpful. I have ordered a thousand books, etc. I am now left hanging around like a spare prick at a wedding! The only items that survive are Hamburg (which I arranged, after he failed to contact Ulrich Harder for weeks); Bonn, and (weeks later) Wunsiedel. I doubt personally that Wunsiedel will come off this year, but one must be an optimist. What can we do? Do you have any independent people there, anybody in the major cities who could set up isolated events for me on the lines of Stuttgart last September, which was a brilliant success? Needless to say, I have the utmost faith in you. You are a professional. You know the law in both Canada and Germany, and keep within it, so far as I can judge. [...] I do of course appreciate the serious personal problems Althans is facing, which must be a serious disappointment for him. Sometimes we have to hang strong. Those times are now. I am very sorry that we are losing Mitteldeutschland [central Germany] like this.”

5.5.24 Irving also asked Ulrich Harder if he could arrange anything at short notice. Harder regretted he could do nothing. “I’m sorry that I can’t give you any better news. You know that I have always made a great effort for you because I think you are simply fantastic and indispensable to Germany. And I certainly also have some contacts. Nevertheless not sufficient in central Germany, [as] we from the NPD are still in the process of initially building them up and this will still take a little time.”

- 5.5.25 Philipp likewise replied in the negative. Zündel wrote that he had contacted Carl-Arthur Bühring, Michael Schönborn, and had tried to contact Walendy for Irving.
- 5.5.26 Between Philipp, Althans, Harder, and Zündel the tour managed to go ahead. Irving toured accompanied by Susanne Töpler. Diary entries 21–24 July 1991 are missing, but Zündel had suggested a book-signing at the AVÖ bookshop in Munich on the 23 July, which he suggested he also attend ‘as an additional drawing card.’ Irving had been booked to speak in Augsburg, as arranged by Althans. This is possibly a meeting arranged with Michael Swierczek. There is no record of whether the meeting took place, but alone Irving’s willingness is indicative. Irving had originally planned to stay overnight with Althans.
- 5.5.27 On 24 July Irving spoke in Stuttgart (Degerloch) at the invitation of Carl-Arthur Bühring on ‘German history seen today’ [‘Deutsche Geschichte aus heutiger Sicht.’] Irving thanked Klaus Ewald for the meeting. On 25 July Irving visited Philipp in Frankfurt. Once again the milieu in which Irving operated is clear. ‘He [Philipp] showed us [Irving and Töpler] the latest paste up of the **Remer Depesche** on which he is working. It is good. I asked if Otto Ernst Remer is not fearful of being prosecuted: Ph.[ilipp] said that is what Remer **wants**.’
- 5.5.28 On 26 July Irving spoke at an NPD meeting in Hamburg (Harburg) arranged by Ulrich Harder. The meeting obviously produced a lot of resonance. Harder wrote to Irving over two months later, ‘Your speech in Hamburg in July is still being discussed. It was magnificent and you really are an outstanding contemporary.’ On 27 July Irving attended a garden party thrown by Dietmar Munier of the Arndt Verlag. On 30 July Irving spoke at a meeting at Bonn University given by Andreas Jahrow and organised by Althans.
- 5.5.29 On 17 August Irving was to have spoken at Wunsiedel at the annual Rudolf-Hess-Memorial March. Remembering that 1) Irving had refused to appear on the same platform as Kühnen at Wunsiedel the year

before, 2) that Worch had chosen Kühnen over Irving because the movement owed more to Kühnen (implying that Irving was nevertheless a contender), and 3) that in the meantime Kühnen had died, it is important to remember exactly what the march was. Worch's NL had played an important part in Rudolf-Hess-Memorial marches in Wunsiedel since 1989, and it constituted one of the main organisational focuses of the NL. The 1991 march (and the replacement demonstration) was organised together with the NO. The NA was likewise to have taken part in 1991. This made the march one of the annual highlights of the German neo-Nazi calendar.

- 5.5.30 A flyer for the meeting, under the title 'National Collective in need!['Nationale Sammlung tut not!'] give the tenor of the meeting. **"We won't put up with it any more! Don't be deterred[.]** Should a ban be made public again this year by the press and television, don't be deterred by it.! **Let's fight together!** In August 1990 we showed the anarchists what for – they ran like hares – ! The reds and anarchists must be driven from the streets! Comrades, the streets have to be ours again, because **>the right is coming again[.]**"
- 5.5.31 Worch writing to Irving in 1990 had justified his choice of Kühnen with the words, 'Especially – and this needs to be stressed here – because from the beginning Wunsiedel marches have been **political** events and not about historical revisionism.' Presumably nothing had changed in the meantime. The march was ultimately banned and 2,000 people demonstrated in Bayreuth against the ban. It is not clear up to what point Irving remained ready to appear.
- 5.5.32 On 8 September Irving had been asked to hold a speech in Neuss a meeting of the Neuss branch of the Association of Expellees [Bund der Vertriebenen], an invitation he accepted. The invitation was cancelled when the city hall in Neuss threatened to cancel the contract for the hall if Irving appeared as a speaker.

- 5.5.33 Irving's November tour had been originally planned for 1 -7 November. On 5 November Zündel was tried in Munich and a demonstration was planned by the AVÖ. Irving had recorded in his diary that he '...phoned Zündel. Using codenames, it turns out he and Leuchter will be in Munich for Z[ündel]'s trial Nov 5; that we shall all confer in Pforzheim, Nov 6.' On 29 October Zündel had asked Irving if he could arrive earlier in Germany. 'No change [chance?] of being in München for a press conference on the 4 and or 5th evenings? French National T.V. will send a crew and Bavarian T.V. as well.' The diary entries for 4 and 5 November are missing.
- 5.5.34 On 6 November the town hall in Pforzheim was booked for Irving's lecture on 'New Europe' ['Neues Europa'], but an advertisement in the *Pforzheimer Zeitung* led the hall to cancel, supported by the city administration [Stadthallenverwaltung]. Instead the meeting took place in the restaurant Adler in Büchenbron outside Pforzheim. Both venues were organised by Christian Democratic Union [CDU] politician Dr. Manfred Dreher. Dreher had contacted Irving through Zühdel. Dreher and Irving had met in London previous to the meeting, and Irving had even persuaded Dreher to buy surplus stocks of his books in Germany on his behalf, the money to be repaid later. Irving described the meeting. "We left for Dreher's factory, and waited there interminably. Dreher there, eventually joined by Zündel and Leuchter. Dreher has lost the town hall, moved the venue to a restaurant in nearby village. Spoke there, late, for two hours. British (Thames) and Danish, French and WDR TV there. Good atmosphere..."
- 5.5.35 The television teams Irving had unexpectedly brought with him, the presence of Zündel and Leuchter, Irving's deviation from the advertised topic, and Irving's notoriety all contributed to the subsequent scandal. Over the next two years Dreher, a highly respected member of the CDU, had to fight off several attempts to have him expelled from the party. Moreover, as a result of Irving's appearance, Dreher was stripped of the FRG's highest civil order [Bundesverdienstkreuz], an al-

most unique event in the history of the country. Although Dreher was later keen to distance himself from the content of Irving's speech it would appear that this was a cosmetic measure. On 12 July 1991 he had written to Irving saying 'I have already been thinking about how we can hold the event from a "neutral stand point".' Dreher also later dictated Irving's expected explanation of events to him.

- 5.5.35 On 7 November 1991: Irving spoke in Hamburg (Harburg) organised by the NPD's Ulrich Harder who was present at the meeting. On 8 November Irving spoke in Lentförden [Segeberg] to the 'Friends Circle "A Heart for Germany"' [Freundeskreis "Ein Herz für Deutschland"], again organised by Harder. The Minister of the Interior of Schleswig Holstein ordered a partial speaking ban ['eingeschränktes Redeverbot'] which was handed to Irving at the meeting. The ban demonstratively failed to deter Irving, who proceeded to read out its contents to the audience. Neither did the ban do anything to dampen Irving's feelings of success. He later thanked the Worchs for their efforts 'which lead to a successful event in Lentförden' [...die zur erfolgreichen Veranstaltung in Lentförden führten.].
- 5.5.36 The constellation of neo-Nazis Irving had failed to speak to at Wunsiedel were addressed by Irving on 9 November in Halle, an open-air rally he attended at the suggestion of Ursula Wosch 'as the meeting planned for Aachen has fallen through.' The rally had been organised by Thomas Dienel, in co-operation with Christian and Ursula Worch, as a nationwide affair. This well co-ordinated demonstration included groups and members of various neo-Nazi groups within the GdNF including the NL, 'Deutsches Hessen', the DA, and was attended by, amongst others, prominent neo-Nazis Gottfried Küssel of the Austrian VAPO and Otto Riehs.
- 5.5.37 Amid a sea of waving Reich war-flags and NL and DA banners Irving addressed a prominently skin-head audience. During the speeches given by Irving, Worch, and Dienel, the audience at times broke into

rhythmic cries of ‘Germany for the Germans’ [‘Deutschland den Deutschen’], ‘Foreigners out’ [‘Ausländer Raus’] and made the illegal Nazi salute ‘Sieg Heil’. Irving himself recorded that ‘I spoke first, a rabble rousing ten or fifteen minutes, with loud cheering, and alas some shouts of Sieg Heil to which I admonished, “Let’s have no calls from the past; it’s the [illegible word] that counts”.’ The video record of the meeting shows Irving merely making a weak gesture of disapproval.

- 5.5.38 As if Irving’s presence on a neo-Nazi platform were not enough, the rally took place at a time when Germany was in the grips of a vicious wave of attacks against foreigners.
- 5.5.39 Irving returned to Germany in December On 6 December he spoke at the first ‘nationale Großkundgebung’ of the DVU in Passau. From 9–11 December Irving was in Hamburg apparently in connection with a court case with the German publisher Rowohlt.

5.6 OPC observations 1991.

- 5.6.1 The importance of the revisionist campaign in 1991 is substantiated by the various VSBs, both on the federal and state levels. They noted that the revisionist campaign had become enmeshed in neo-Nazi strategies to widen their political influence, especially in eastern Germany and to initiate a new Neo-Nazi movement in Germany. “ The so-called revisionists intensified their endeavour to spread their opinions that no crimes were committed, certainly not the Holocaust which is a propaganda lie put about by the victorious Allies of World War II. Neo-Nazis and the

“national democrats” tried four times to arrange meetings with Holocaust deniers from Germany and abroad:

- the first attempt took place on the 23-3-91 in Munich...,
- on the 29-6-91 the NF leader, Schönborn tried to organise a meeting in Cham, amongst others with Faurisson...
- the third attempt was made by the NPD leader Deckert; this meeting, planned for the 1.9.91 in Weinheim was banned. Karl Philipp and Udo Walendy, (both former NPD members) were to address the gathering.
- finally Deckert was successful on the 10.11.91 and Leuchter addressed more than 100 people.”

- 5.6.2 The VS Report added, ‘But again the most active speaker on German soil was David Irving, who spoke in Passau, Rothemburg ob der Tauber, Munich, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Pforzheim, Lentföörden (county Seegeberg) and Halle an der Saale amongst others.’

5.7 1992: the ‘International Campaign for Real History’ falters.

- 5.7.1 Irving was in Germany at least four times in 1992; from 13[?] – 23 March, 3-18 May, in June briefly on his way to Moscow, and 10 -15[?] September. Again diary entries are missing, namely the entries for February 24 to March 22, and 10 and 11 (partially) May.
- 5.7.2 In an unusual move, Irving took the initiative into his own hands in attempting to organise the year’s tours. On 1 January, Irving sent a circular letter to his contacts in Germany offering his services [‘...ich stelle mich gern zu Verfügung’] and advising them of his availability during the forthcoming year. The letter went out to Günter Deckert, Christian Worch, Karl Höffkes, Klaus Ewald, Dr. Gerd Sudholt, Dr. Dreher [who passed it on to Dill], Renate Werlberger, Carl-Arthur Bühring, Joachim Siegerist, Lars de Flon, Pedro Varela, Althans, Arwed Sader, Thies Christophersen, Michael Swierzeck, Dr. Michael Koll, and Andreas Jahrow.

- 5.7.3 The March tour was organised by Worch and Michael Swierczek (who was meant to organise two meetings in South Germany), with help from Zündel. On 13 March Irving had planned to arrive in Munich and wanted to pick up books from Althans's book store. On 14 March Irving spoke to the DVU in Passau.
- 5.7.4 On 15 March Irving spoke in Hetendorf [Lüneburger Heide] near Hamburg on the destruction of Dresden, under the auspices of a "Dresden-Holocaust-Monument" project, thought up by Zündel and Worch. Worch had written to Irving in January trying to interest him in the project. In the process he ruminated on the day-to-day problems in Germany "The year begins for me with stress: street fighting got out of hand at Michael Kühnen's funeral, only the day after renewed confrontation with the left in Wilhelmshaven (but there without brawls), yesterday the news that Gottfried Küssel had been arrested in Vienna..."
- 5.7.5 In trying to interest Irving for the project, Worch explained that one of his problems was that although he could easily gather a 'powerful' ['schlagkräftiges'] public and although he could protect halls, speakers, and public against 'enemy attacks' [feindliche Angriffe] his 'powerful' public was not usually 'affluent' ['zahlungskräftig']. This was the job of Harder for example, or the people around the NPD, DVU, Republicans, and the independent national-conservatives, entities that could attract older people who paid an entry fee.
- 5.7.6 Worch added that the project had an important role for NL. 'It would be no problem with precisely such a project if the more radical wing, represented by me, unite with the more reserved moderate wing.' He suggested Irving speak in Hetendorf where there were some 'middle-class national associations, that are partly scared' ['bürgerlich-nationalen Vereinen, die Leilweise ängstlich sind.']. For instance an event with Fred Leuchter would be too dangerous for them.

- 5.7.7 If Irving had any scruples about the politics of his role, he repressed them in appearing.
- 5.7.8 On 16 March Irving spoke at the Bonn university, as arranged by the AVÖ's Stephan Wiesel. This is an important speech because the contents of Irving's stock speeches would seem to have remained constant. In a report on the speech Dr. Michael Koll reported Irving as having said, "Main thesis: "In 18 months the horrific episode with the gas chambers finished." Irving referred to the fact that earlier predictions of his had come true. "When this pack of lies (i.e. the "Holocaust" – M.K.) collapses, it will be very embarrassing for German politicians". The Germans payments for "gaschambers that did not exist" will be stopped and "without this money the state of Israel will collapse". The Jews according to Irving, have to free themselves from the Holocaust legend, "otherwise there will be a wave of anti-Semitism". [...] Comment: Concepts like "final victory", "total victory", "total truth" fall hard on the ears. [...] Quote Irving: "When Auschwitz falls then the Jews have lost the battle"."
- 5.7.9 On 19 March Irving would appear to have tried to speak in Ausburg, at a meeting arranged by Michael Swierczek. This might coincide with one of the meetings attributed to Irving in the VSB for 1992, which recorded Irving speaking to an NO meeting in Engen/Welschingenin near Konstantz in March 1992. On 23 March Irving breakfasted with Zündel in Munich.
- 5.7.10 In May Irving announced his intention to 'continue...his "International Campaign for Real History" in the FRG with speeches in Berlin, Munich, and Stuttgart.' On 4 May Irving gave a press conference in Munich. The room was booked for Irving by Althans. The hotel 'Bayerischer Hof' cancelled the room on learning that Althans had booked it on Irving's behalf and the press conference had to take place elsewhere. On 5 May Irving appeared before a Munich court, where he was fined DM 10,000 (see below).

- 5.7.11 During 1991 there had been new attempts to organize a bigger neo-Nazi camp, that would also include members of the Republicans, the NPD, and others. On the 31 October 1991 a new party was formed in Villingen-Schwenningen called the German League for People and Home [Die Deutsche Liga für Volk und Heimat – DLVH]. In Berlin the neo-Nazis around the DLVH organized a group to stand for elections, called ‘We Are The People’ [‘Wir sind das Volk’]. Early in 1992, they re-named themselves ‘the Nationals’ together with a group of known neo-Nazis like Peter Boche, Dr. Bernd Witte, Frank Schwerdt and Andreas Storr (the latter from the JN) and together they intended to stand in the forthcoming Berlin elections.> Thilo Kabus explained the change of name to Irving. “To steer round the guile of the Berlin electoral law a change of our name to “the Nationals” was necessary. Independently of this the number of members and sympathisers has approximately tripled. So everything is getting better.”
- 5.7.12 As part of their campaign to profile themselves in the forthcoming Berlin local elections a big rally was organized for the 9 May 1992, the day after the anniversary of the unconditional surrender of 1945. The venue was provocatively to be the former communist museum dedicated to the surrender in Berlin-Karlshorst. Irving was announced as the star speaker. In planning the rally Irving had long been in contact with prominent members of the Nationals, such as Dr. Bernd Witte, Thilo Kabus, and Frank Schwerdt.
- 5.7.13 Ultimately the rally was cancelled. This would seem to have been for a number of reasons, not all of them to do with Irving. As far as Irving was concerned, it was intended to ban his speech. But Salomon had written to Irving informing him that because of developments the organisers were of the opinion that they did not want to involve Irving in the ‘incalculable risks’ that had come up.

- 5.7.14 After a total defeat in the local elections, the strategy of the Nationals was altered and a decision was made to expand through decentralization and to concentrate on recruitment of youngsters. In the following years, this group became one of the successful organizers of the neo-Nazi Comradeship and adhered to the concept of so-called 'national-befreite Zonen', freed national zones, where foreigners were driven out.
- 5.7.15 The diary record for 10 and 11 May is mostly missing. A journalist for the *Independent* suggested that Irving spoke in Poland instead, and was then off to Auschwitz. 'Yesterday, he was due to address 800 Germans in Oppeln, a small town in Poland. [...] After that [meeting in Oppeln] he planned to head for Auschwitz to "have another look at the place" and, no doubt, to strengthen his conviction that the gas chambers there are fakes erected after the war for the benefit of tourists and those "clever opponents" seeking financial retribution from the German state.' To Althans Irving conveyed that he would be in Dresden.
- 5.7.16 On 11 May Irving ate dinner with Stephan Niemann, functionary in the AVÖ. From 12 to 14 Irving recorded with Althans his plea ['Schlußwort'] of his Munich trial 'which we shall now market as a propaganda tool.'
- 5.7.17 On 15 May Irving was in Echterdingen, outside where Stuttgart Irving's tour started to falter "Peter Müller broke to me here the news that the police have in writing banned tomorrow's function at Sindelfingen Holiday Inn. Sicne [Since] they cite "Auschwitz" as the motive, it is plain that the unauthorised National Offensive leaflet issued "from Munich" (I.e. by Althans!), which already muddled up the starting time, starting 3 p.m. instead of 5 p.m., is to blame. The leaflet gave no topic. I am furious. [...] I remain stoical, however, and hope another location can be found. Saur (NO) states: "Herrenberg", and by fax (for security) he informed us the location, Cafe Neumann'"

- 5.7.18 A meeting with the NO in Sindelfingen, near Stuttgart, on 16 May suffered a similar fate. The meeting had been organised with Hans Joachim Dill, Klaus Ewald, and Peter Müller. Klaus Ewald had assured Irving that Dill could ‘make a storage hall available, in which Ernst Zündel and Fred Leuchter spoke on 3 November 1991’ if the worst came to the worst. “...arrived at Holiday Inn, Sindelfingen, near Stuttgart. Here the manager whose staff had told us last night there was no problem, we could set up at 3 p.m., announced the meeting would not take place; no, not banned by the hotel, so they would not refund the rent; nor allowed either. Klaus Ewald arrived, got nowhere with them either. So we headed for the alternative venue [venue] at Herrenberg, 22km away. The Kripo [criminal police] arrived 5 minutes later, and in due course they banned the mee[ti]ng there. [...] I agreed to address a meeting of valiant remnants in a field 5km from Böblingen, and played to them the tape of my Schlußwort [plea] (which resulted in 13 sales immediately.) ”
- 5.7.19 After the disaster Dill wrote to Irving that ‘We will thoroughly discuss the lessons to be learnt out of this with Ernst Zündel. Meetings only in private circles with the registration of a topic which is not contestable. Only personal invitations...’ Irving replied ‘That really was an unlucky week! Five meetings in the FRG, all cancelled by the police.’
- 5.7.20 On 17 May disaster struck again for Irving in Schliersee where he had been booked to speak by Althans. “Arrived at Schliersee Bahnhof 12:30 p.m.; Althans arrived twenty minutes later, and told that a “catastrophe” occurred here too, namely the Kripo had arrived at 9:2 a.m. here and told the organisers not to let me speak. They of course knew nothing of my planned presence. Kripo knew more than they did. The 300 people at tables cheered as I walked in, but organiser confirmed to me that the police ban made it impossible for them to let me speak, as they depended on the town to let them have the hall each year...So it looks like the fifth meeting this tour is also K.O.d. [knocked out] I am fuming. ”

- 5.7.21 Irving stayed overnight on the AVÖ premises in Munich. In retrospect Irving was clear in his mind where the roots of disaster lay, and it was certainly not due to his own utterances. He wrote to Renate Werlberger of the Munich NPD ‘...my last journey to Germany simply a wash out. Five events all banned by the police with different excuses. I have Mr. Althans, better said the NO to thank for that.’ To Zündel he wrote ‘I don’t believe that I will speak for the Nat.[ionale] Liste, Nat.[ionale] Offensive or the AVÖ again. The two weeks (costs: 12,000,--) brought **nothing** in. Everything banned, mostly caused through stupidity.’
- 5.7.22 Obviously not the politics of such groups, but their lack of organisational skills was what disturbed Irving.
- 5.7.23 On 5 June Irving stayed in Germany briefly on his way to the Moscow archives, squeezing in a meeting in Hamburg for Ulrich Harder. Sometime in June Irving had also agreed to attend a think tank [‘Denkfabrik’] in Munich at the behest of the ‘the German Conservatives [‘Die Deutschen Konservativen’] of Joachim Siegerist, as mediated by Dr. Manfred Dreher. The event was cancelled. On 12 June Irving in was Germany on his return from the Moscow archives. The next day Irving flew from Munich to Rome, where he was promptly deported back to Munich. In Munich again (Irving was surprised that the Italians had not alerted the German authorities to his return) he spoke with Zündel at a meeting arranged by Althans. On the 14 Irving met Zündel again to plan his forthcoming Canadian tour.
- 5.7.24 On 11 September 1992 Irving was to have spoken to the Munich NPD on the Goebbels diaries, but received a speaking ban. On 12 September Thies Christophersen had invited Irving to attend a conference organised by him in Antwerp Irving accepted and drove to Antwerp with Pedro Varela, Althans, and friend Thomas [Dienel?]. Zündel and Worch also attended the conference, where Irving spoke on ‘Nuremberg.’ There are no nearer details of the conference. On 13 September

Irving had planned to speak at a NPD meeting in Cologne. On 14 September Irving planned to speak in Aachen, but apparently the meeting was cancelled ‘by the organisers.’

5.8 OPC observations 1992.

- 5.8.1 As in 1990 and 1991 the VSBs noted Irving repeatedly participating at neo-Nazi meetings, presenting his revisionist statements. As a leading representative of this international ‘revisionist campaign’ he was also described as *de facto* leading representative of neo-Nazi activities in Germany.

5.9 1993: expulsion

- 5.9.1 Irving’s diaries and documentation for 1993 being fragmentary, we will suffice ourselves with summarising the little that is reconstructable.
- 5.9.2 Between 11/12–14 January Irving was in Germany and Austria in the company of Althans and Susie Töpler. On 14 January spoke in Munich to a meeting of ‘the friends of Ernst Zündel’ organised by Althans, where Irving received a partial speaking ban.
- 5.9.3 Sometime between 17-23 May an international meeting was organised by Christophersen, which Irving would have appeared to have agreed to attend, if the event had not been cancelled because of adverse publicity.
- 5.9.4 On 26 June a conspirative meeting was planned by Worch for Irving outside Hamburg, although Worch refused to fax Irving exact details for fear of observation. Irving recorded, ‘Good speech on the problems and vicissitudes of the last twelve months; no police presence (I hope) so I spoke freely.’ On 27 June Irving spoke to the ‘Association for Culture and Contemporary History’ [‘Verein für Kultur und Zeit-

geschichte,'] in Hamburg organised by Ulrich Harder. On 5 July a meeting had been planned with Althans, which Irving himself apparently called off.

5.9.5 On 3 July Irving spoke to a NPD meeting in Mainburg. In his diary he wrote, 'Police presence, usual teilweise Redeverbot [partial speaking ban] handed to me. Backed up an hour later by warning that if I read it out I would be arrested. Democracies!' The ban was apparently based on that handed down to Irving in Munich on 11 January 1993. Interesting in this context is what Irving then said to the audience. Irving told the audience that he was banned from explaining his theses 'But that is not important. Because I am convinced that most of you knew what I would talk to you about, what my theses are, what I would say [laughter, applause]' Even when banned, Irving's mere presence and innuendo was enough to spread the denialist cause.

5.9.6 On 9 November Irving started a tour arranged by the AVÖ's Wiesel, arranged to start in Munich and Baden Württemberg and end in Dresden. Whilst in Munich he was requested to quit the country by the German authorities. Irving recorded the next two days in his diary. "Arranged dinner at Mövenpick [with Töpler] at 9 p. m.. Ten minutes later a Kriminalkommissar [police officer] Wolf of the Staatsschutz [security service] and a female officer arrived brandishing a thick envelope containing two copies of a 33pp. Aufenthaltsverbot [residency ban] issued against me and date stamped today, November 9. That's torn it. I read it through at leisure, and heard him remark that he had something even grimmer to do (or hand me) as soon as I had read it. He sent the female out to get it; I nonchalantly said I would of course have to phone my lawyer Herrmann, and rose to get his number from the car. "You're coming back?" asked the officer, and I said yes, before climbing into the car and speeding off, nearly colliding with a pack of Jews at the local Kristallnacht memorial. Drove to Wiesel's headquarter and left a message to him to meet me at Hotel Drei Löwen. Then phoned Susie [Töpler] and using coded language changed rendez-vous to same place

(“the place where I gave you that pen”). Wiesel turned up and I took him round the block then in car. It was obvious to me, the police intended to serve on me the latest Strafbefehl [summary sentence] personally, or perhaps even arrest me (Leuchter is still in jail!).”

- 5.9.7 Irving’s lawyers refused to take the case, whereupon Irving realised that he had to vacate Germany as quickly as possible to avoid the indignity of deportation. ‘...changed reservation from 9 p. m. flight to stand by on 5 p. m. flight to London, hoping thereby to loose any policeman who had checked the British airways computer... Dash to airport gate and just got on as they closed the doors. Back in London.’
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6. Judicial Sanctions.

The OPC differentiates between a wider and narrower (radical) version of revisionism. The wider concept includes all right-wing extremist attempts to relativise NS. The narrower concept concentrates on the denial of the mass murder of Jews in the gas chambers, that is to say on the ‘Auschwitz lie.’ This form of revisionism has been long punishable in Germany under articles 130 [incitement of the people – Volksverhetzung], 185 [slander – Beleidigung] and 189 [disparagement] of the criminal code [Strafgesetzbuch – StGB].

In the 1980s the revisionist campaign led to a sharpening of these laws. The Jews, as former inmates of concentration camps, were insulted by the denialist statements, but such was the burden of their experiences that it was anticipated that many would not want to relive them by bringing a case to court. Subsequently the law was altered in 1985 so that the state could initiate action on the part of the plaintiff. The law was sharpened once again in 1994 when denying the Holocaust (the so-called ‘Auschwitz-lie’) was expressly forbidden, punishable with up to 5 years imprisonment.

Up until 1988/9 when Irving's pronouncements on the Holocaust could still be considered as 'soft' revisionism, he could rely on the legal and financial weight of the DVU to decisively quash all commentaries which labelled him a 'denialist' or that he was an exponent of the 'Auschwitz lie.' With his whole-hearted embracement of the findings of the *Leuchter Report* Irving's legal position became at once more precarious, although he continued to a degree to exercise the same kind of caution practiced by Frey and the DVU. Although 1989 remained for Irving personally a period of grace as far as legal prosecution went, it was clear that the revisionist campaign initiated by the *Leuchter Report* was attracting the attentions of the police and courts. In justifying his expulsion from Germany the Munich authorities explained that 'To begin with your political activities were inconspicuous and largely took place unnoticed by the wider public. But as of summer 1990 you increasingly appeared at meetings of right-wing extremist groups, especially also in the new Federal states.'

It would be beyond the scope of this report to consider in detail all of the speaking bans (partial or complete) Irving received in the period 1990 -1993, not to mention the number of meetings banned at the initiative of the local authorities, or cancelled by those who offered premises to Irving's organisers. It is considered sufficient to examine in detail three exemplary instances of Irving's conflict with the German judicial system and to detail in the process the German courts' estimation of Irving's activities in Germany, leading up to his final expulsion in November 1993.

In light of Irving's later claims to the contrary, it is worth noting that Irving was fully aware of the laws that both he, and those around him, were infringing in Germany in denying the Holocaust. In the early 1980s the German embassy had written to him confirming that the DVU was not an 'illegal organisation'. Nevertheless the Consul General reminded Irving, that as a foreign national he was subject to § 6 section 3 of the German Foreigners Act of 1965 concerning political activ-

ities which forbade him to endanger the free democratic constitutional structure of the Federal Republic, or support any parties, groups or directions that did the same outside the purview of the German law. This was the self-same paragraph under which Irving was to receive his first speaking ban in Passau in March 1990. Thus Irving himself had long been aware of the laws he was in danger of infringing with his speeches. In Canada in October 1991 Irving told his audience the Bavarian Ministry of Justice, whom Irving described in the same speech as the ‘extended arm’ of ‘you know who’ [i.e. the Jewish people] “...wanted to talk to me about certain things I had done and said in Germany. Well what I do and say in Germany unfortunately does violate the law in Germany. I am well aware of that. And I go round from meeting place to meeting place in Germany now quite voluntarily sticking my neck out, because Germany is one of the most difficult places in the world to speak now.”

Watch
the
video

David Irving
at the
Bayerische
Hof, Milton,
Ontario,
October 5,
1991.
Videocassette
190, 18:06–
18:25.

6.1 Partial speaking ban [Redeverbot] of 8 November 1991.

- 6.1.1 On 8 November Irving was invited to speak in Lentförden [Segeberg] to the Freundeskreis “Ein Herz für Deutschland.” by Ulrich Harder. The Minister of the Interior of Schleswig Holstein ordered a partial speak-

ing ban [‘eingeschränktes Redeverbot’], defining particular topics Irving was forbidden to talk on, citing the law governing foreign nationals [Ausländerrecht] concerning disruption of the public peace [‘Störung des öffentlichen Friedens’]. The ban was handed to Irving at the meeting. This seems to have had little effect on Irving. He recorded in his diary that ‘Police handed me a Verordnung [ordinance] of Kreis Segeburg, what I am not allowed to say, in such detail that I could not reits [Sic] the temptation to read out the whole document, stressing at each paragraph, “I am not allowed to say that either...!” Irving later described the meeting as ‘successful’.

6.1.2 Ulrich Harder was not so glib. He wrote to Irving explaining to him why he had excluded the television teams Irving had brought with him to a meeting in Harburg the night before, and what such a ban might entail.

- I know that you don’t think much of law..., but I think it better for your future appearances in Germany if one tries to reverse such rulings. [...]
- A word about Harburg – you will understand my behaviour a little better after Lentförden. Naturally I have known you long enough to know that you would bring the television with you to the meeting place in Harburg in the end. Otherwise you would not be David Irving. It was clear beforehand that the owner, even if with great reservation, would allow the television into the pub. [...]
- On the other hand the meeting with you was a closed meeting. Let’s imagine there had been somebody in the hall, or had arrived, from the authorities. Then he would have been able, with the appropriate order in his pocket, to immediately dissolve the meeting if the television had been in the hall from the start or it had been recognisable that they would have come in. In judicial German it would have then ‘been produced for the public’ and a closed, private meeting would have become a public one and that one would have certainly banned. Therefore also the evasion in the last ten minutes.
- To explain all of this to you would have been too long-winded in Harburg. This is why I acted as I did and did not let the television into the anteroom.
- [...]You are an indescribable positive factor for our country! which we seek to serve in our way. Enough compliments?

- 6.1.3 Irving then employed [bevollmächtigte] Ulrich Harder to raise a objection [‘Widerspruch’] to the ban for him, which Harder duly undertook, in co-operation with H.J. Rieger.
- 6.1.4 In comparison to the judicial wrangling surrounding Irving’s fine of July 1991 (see below) Harder had to convince Irving that the proper course of action was to avoid politics in the courts. “You will hopefully have seen [in the action] I have not argued with the cause but legally. At the moment one does not get anywhere with the CAUSE itself, only with false application of the law. But I don’t mean a ‘secondary theatre of war’, as you say, rather flak cover for the main thrust. Without resistance the authorities could become over confident. That would damage you as regards the freedom of movement in Germany.”
- 6.1.5 Irving’s protest [Widerspruch] was considered and rejected on 15 November 1991 with a ruling [Widerspruchsbescheid] of 12 February 1992, which Irving in turn took action against on 4 March 1992. Irving claimed that his speech was not political but scholarly [Wissenschaftlich] and that the ban infringed his rights as embodied in the civil code [Grundrecht] Article 5, Paragraph 3 protecting freedom of scientific research and teaching. Even if the speech had been political he was protected by Article 5, Paragraph 1 ensuring freedom of expression.
- Editor’s note** Here, “protest” means the formal objection Irving filed against the speaking ban. The German word is *Widerspruch*; the text above misspells it as “Wiederspruch.” A *Widerspruchsbescheid* is the authority’s written decision on that objection. Article 5 is part of Germany’s Basic Law, not a civil code.
- 6.1.6 On 25 May 1992 the court ruled against Irving ruling that Irving’s speech had threatened to damage the image of the Federal Republic at a time of flux in Europe and as Germany’s neighbours looked on nervously with fears of a re-birth of a nationalist spirit in Germany. The court ruled that Irving had intended in his speech to influence public political opinion. “... your speech is suitable and intended to

raise up emotions in the audience to allow clear right-wing extremist statements to be aired in public. The thoughts of your like-minded audience can be further stimulated so that they express Nazi opinions in public, vociferously repeat slogans for a revival of Nazi rule. And further: His speeches are not the mere representation of historical events. The statements the plaintiff makes, especially those in which he refers to the so-called Leuchter Report, are primarily intended to supply points of argument to those social groups in the Federal Republic whose aim is a renewed spreading of National Socialist thought. You offer the pseudo-scientific background which provides right-wing extremist groups a legitimacy and in addition is meant to allow them to convince those who are generally openly disposed to right-wing theses, but faced with the crimes of the National Socialists are lost for arguments, of their ideas. The court ruled that In calling the racial murder by the National Socialists a lie, he [Irving] deprives the Jews the inhuman fate that they exposed too merely because of their origins. The tendency to free National Socialism from the stigma of the murder of the Jews is very clearly apparent in the plaintiff.”

6.1.7 Irving appealed again on 25 June 1992, calling for the original ban to be declared unlawful and the court ruling of 25 May 1992 to be changed. In the final instance before Schleswig-Holstein’s higher administrative court in October 1993 Irving’s appeal was rejected. The court concluded that because of numerous judgements Irving was well aware of legal sanctions against the public denial of the Holocaust, and that his continued statements despite this allowed the conclusion that he was conscious of the degrading character of his opinions.

6.1.8 It added that in as far as Irving supported his case with the Leuchter Report ‘this is completely unsuited to refute the historical fact of the Holocaust.’ Indeed ‘In as far as the plaintiff bases his findings on the so-called Leuchter report it is already very doubtful if his interpretation of history can be called research at all.’

- 6.1.9 Irving, who had ‘acquired himself the reputation as a right-wing extremist writer and historian [‘sich den Ruf eines rechtsextremen Schriftstellers und Historikers erworben.’] had committed a ‘considerable disturbance of the public safety and order’ with his statements on the Third Reich and the Second World War, statements that represented a ‘mockery’ [‘Verhöhnung’] of the victims of National Socialism.

6.2 Irving’s arrest as leader of an illegal demonstration, 21 May 1990 and the consequences.

- 6.2.1 Following an illegal demonstration to the Feldherrenhalle in Munich after the revisionist congress ‘Wahrheit macht Frei’ on 21 April 1990 Irving, Ewald Althans, and Christian Worch were the subjects of a preliminary investigation [Ermittlungsverfahren]. Irving was arrested during the investigation and later that night freed on bail.
- 6.2.2 Originally the investigation against Irving had been because of his part in the demonstration [Verstoß gegen das Versammlungsgesetz]. The Munich prosecutor [Staatsanwaltschaft] interviewed Peter Köpf, a journalist with the local Munich *Abendzeitung* who had been present in the Löwenbräukeller. Köpf mentioned that the meeting had been filmed by a team from *Spiegel-TV* from Hamburg, and the prosecutor duly invited the journalist concerned, Michael Schmidt, to give a statement. Schmidt ‘declared that he had actually recorded Irving’s speech. It is correct that he [Irving] said that Auschwitz was a dummy. In addition he said “We know that there were never gas chambers in Auschwitz. Auschwitz gas chambers were built in Poland for the tourists.” Mr. Schmidt declared himself willing to appear as a witness.’ At some date Irving underlined the quote and wrote in pen in the margin ‘This is dangerous.’

- 6.2.3 At some point in 1990 this preliminary investigation then became one for defamation and revealing the memory of the dead [Beleidigung und Verunglimpfung des Andenkens Verstorbener]. The investigation also resulted in an investigation into Karl Philipp's press releases and articles on Irving's activities.
- 6.2.4 The Staatsanwaltschaft Munich duly asked the British authorities that Irving be advised of the offence, the penal provisions, his right to consult a lawyer and 'to have the accused person interrogated by the police in regard to the described state of facts and to thereby grant to him the opportunity of being heard.' Irving's lawyer Michael Hubertus von Sprenger began preparations for the charges, asking Irving amongst other things for 'a copy of the tape recording of my speech'. Irving commented in his diary 'I may have inadvertently broken the law with my statements that there were no gas chambers'. Sprenger had represented Irving since the early 1980's through the DVU.
- 6.2.5 On 17 July 1991 the court found against Irving and issued a summary award of punishment [Strafbefehl]. As guilty of defaming the memory of the dead Irving was fined in absetia DM 7,000. The court recorded: "Amongst other things in your speech you said the following: "In the meantime we now know, I only need to mention this as a footnote, that there were never gas chambers in Auschwitz." Further you explained the following: "In the meantime we believe that just as the gas chamber which the Americans built in Dachau in the first days after the war a dummy is, so the gas chamber facilities, which one can now see as a tourist in Auschwitz, were built by the authorities in Auschwitz after the second world war.... Because the German taxpayers have had to pay a complete 13 thousand-million German marks as a punishment for Auschwitz...for a dummy."
- 6.2.6 Irving's lawyer von Sprenger duly appealed against the fine on 21 August 1991. The trial came to appeal before the Munich magistrate's court on 5 May 1992.

- 6.2.7 Despite ominous warnings that the facts of the Holocaust were regarded as manifest or evident [Offenkundig], and that German courts would accept no witnesses or documents to the contrary, Irving was eager to try and capitalize on the trial. This time the trial was to be fought with different tactics and with as much media attention as could be found.
- 6.2.8 In September 1991 Michael Hubertus von Sprenger wrote to Irving. “I presume that a court no longer investigates evidence if a gassing took place in Auschwitz or not. The court will see this as a irreversible fact. In the defence you also can not withdraw from it in that you say the results of the Leuchter expert’s report are correct. The point here is not the correctness or incorrectness of this expert’s report, rather your statement that there were no gassings in Auschwitz, it was all a fairy tale. If you really want to conduct a new “Auschwitz trial” here, I recommend you avail the services of a specialist defendant in such questions.”
- 6.2.9 One plank of Irving’s preferred strategy was a vain attempt to call the head of the Auschwitz Museum Archive, Dr. Franciszek Piper. This attempt had its roots in two occurrences.
- 6.2.10 Firstly, early in August 1989, Irving and Zündel discussed a video project at the same time as Irving made his first concerns about flaws in the Leuchter Report known to Zündel. The correspondence is not complete, but it would appear to have been some sort of attempt to lend the Leuchter Report more credibility, with Irving as authority. Zündel had written to Irving in August 1989, “Philipp seems to have an eager young publisher with some money and expert television crews and equipment interested in going back there to Auschwitz, Majdanek etc. You seem to get along with him. Could you not expand that LEAD into a full-fledged [] with you being the narrator on the scene both in German and English, on location. With proper [] Cameras, good footage, excellent still photos, possibly taking along a British expert in [] and a Ger-

man one as well as a “mobile notary”, to notarise samples taken on the spot. This would give you “instant expert” status let you talk more forcefully and convincingly with “eyewitness status”, I was there etc. It would make the whole thing a serious archaeological history finding endeavour.”

- 6.2.11 On the 2 August Irving wrote in his diary, “[Zündel] Discusses Karl Philipp expedition idea. I am warming to it: we could invite leading German historians (who will refuse), or their PhD students as representatives of a new, more open-minded generation! Lots of mischief there. However Sally is rightly concerned that these loonies are trying to haul me over into their corner, which orthodox publishers will not like at all.”
- 6.2.12 On the 29 August Zündel wrote to Irving ‘Good news. Our friend S.[epp] G.[eiger] is back [] from Poland with 22 [illegible prefix] samples and good video film! The bridgehead is therefore enlarged.’
- 6.2.13 On 3 October 1989 Irving had been filmed by Philipp’s ‘excellent video cameraman’ Sepp Geiger in front of the Reichstag in Berlin for ‘a 15 minute Einleitung [introduction] for the film on KZ Auschwitz’ for which Philipp paid Irving DM 5,000. Irving had seen Geiger’s videos the day before, and was obviously impressed. “...Sepp Geiger and Frau Hart arrived, former straight from Auschwitz camp where he has made eight first-rate, professional-standard videos which he showed us in his hotel, Econtel. They are impressive proof of evident falsifications there: a square hole chopped through one “gas chamber” ceiling to accord with eye witness testimony, but abandoned after the choppers found steel reinforcing bars! And crematorium chimneys which are apparently not even connected in anyway to the crematorium furnaces. Geiger is a strange type; he does not stand very close to the razor blades, it seems, but he is a dedicated, professional photographer who knows what he is doing.”

- 6.2.14 Secondly Irving had met a then friend, historian Professor Bernd Martin, on 4 September 1990. “He [Martin] has visited Auschwitz three times, says that Piper, Archivleiter [head of the archive], confirmed to him that [Sic] the Gaskammer [gas chamber] shown in Auschwitz I was built after the war for tourists to see, the “real” ones are in Birkenau. Logical questions were apparently not asked.”
- 6.2.15 In notes made on the same afternoon Irving also recorded that Martin had told him that ‘there were never any gassings in Auschwitz I, where there were not many Jews. The gassings were all in Birkenau (which he however did not visit).’ Irving promptly published this statement of Martin’s in the newspaper *CODE* as an extra piece of proof that there had been no gassings in Auschwitz. Martin demanded his right of reply and a reader’s letter was duly published explaining that the fact that the gas chamber in the Auschwitz main camp had been ‘partially reconstructed’ [‘teilweise rekonstruiert’] in no way negated what had happened in Auschwitz and that he had repeatedly told Irving to visit Auschwitz himself instead of relying on ‘rumours’ [‘Gerüchte’] to minimise the Holocaust. Martin added that in their conversation Irving himself had ‘admitted the fact of the extermination.’ [‘...hat Herr Irving selbst die Tatsache der Vernichtung zugestanden.’] Irving wrote to Martin to correct him. ‘...readers might think I admitted the Menschenvernichtung [human extermination] in **Auschwitz**, and this I certainly do not....’
- 6.2.16 Hajo Hermann wrote to Irving on 21 January 1992 “As you have said during other occasions, you did not hear Piper’s dummies from his own mouth, rather through Prof. Martin. On the assumption that Prof. Martin heard correctly Piper’s statement in court would have the same effect as a middle-sized atom bomb.”
- 6.2.17 Herrmann advised that Irving approach Piper, perhaps pressuring him with his statement to Martin, as a request from a lawyer might alarm Piper. A few days later Irving was informed by Hans-Rudolf von der

Heide, who knew the director of the Institute for Forensic Research in Cracow, who in turn had 'close contacts' with Piper, that Piper would be unlikely to come to Munich 'since he finds himself under severe pressure from Polish/Jewish authorities, for obvious reasons.' Nevertheless Irving's correspondent went on 'My friend suggest[s] that you should at any rate make sure that both Frantisczek Piper and Dr. Markiewicz are summoned to appear, if only for tactical reasons.'

6.2.18 Irving contacted Herrmann saying 'He [Piper] has told various people including Mr. Prof. Dr. Bernd Martin, that the "gas chamber" shown to the tourists is a post-war dummy – precisely what I established in the Löwenbräukeller on 21.4. 1990.' Hans-Robert von der Heide was in turn contacted by Hajo Herrmann and Heide again addressed himself to Irving on 28 February, suggesting Irving make an approach to a Dr. Dragquan [of the Polish Historical Society, Connecticut, spelt 'Dragon' by Heide] who had told von der Heide that 'he entertains friendly relations with both Piper and Markiewicz, and he would try to persuade the two gentlemen to come to Germany.' Heide continued "...he [Herrmann] came up with a fine idea. He said, rather than officially summoning the two persons from his office – which would most likely be ignored – somebody should suggest to Piper and Markiewicz to come to Germany as tourists or for some other "inoffensive" reason. Once these gentlemen are in the country, he could send them a summons to appear and they would have to comply. This might provide them with a perfect excuse for their "friends" in Poland who we suspect are not very keen about the idea of these men testifying before the Munich court. It might therefore be helpful to contact Dr. Dragon again and tell him about Herrmann's proposal. Another possibility would be to ask Tjuda Rudolph to write to Piper, but as far as I am concerned it is always better to travel on two tracks at the same time...."

6.2.19 Heide finished off 'I do not know Dr. Dragon personally, but I understand Ernst Zündel does.'

- 6.2.20 Despite Piper's refusal, Irving then made increasingly frantic efforts to persuade Piper to appear on his behalf. The aim of the exercise was laid out in a letter from Irving to Dr. Klaus Goebel on 23 April 1992. "Today I sent Mr. Dr. Piper (who is of Jewish decent, to be precise an old communist) the following fax: [followed by details of Irving's letter to Piper of 15 April 1992] It is clear to me that Mr. Piper will not appear. I intend, if you or to be precise Mr. Dr. Herrmann have nothing against it, to make capital. At a press conference to take place in Munich on 4 May I will distribute copies of the correspondence. The court will also be presented with the letters. After three or four days (i.e. something like 27 April), I will then pose this question to Piper in writing: After ignoring my written invitation, please allow me that I pose you at least one question in writing, that I would have otherwise asked you in the witness stand. **Question:** is it correct that in your position as the head of the Auschwitz state archive and museum you make no secret of the fact to many visitors and scholars that the 'gas chamber' in the Auschwitz main camp [Stammlager Auschwitz I] is a dummy that was built by the Polish authorities after the war [?] And is it correct that amongst others you told this to your friend Mr. Prof. Dr. Bernd Martin...as Mr. Prof. Martin confirmed to me on 4 Sept.? What do you think?"
- 6.2.21 Dr. Goebel had no problems with Irving's plan, merely adding that Irving should let it be known that he would make an application in court to hear him. To Ewald Althaus, Irving wrote: 'In my press release I will announce that F[ranciszek] P[iper] will be invited. When he cancels I will give the reason that he must be scared to tell the truth in this point on German soil, because he would also make himself punishable.'
- 6.2.22 This attempt to call Martin and Piper lay at the root of Irving's later somewhat inconsistent attempts to defend himself against his detractors and to partially rehabilitate himself. Ample evidence has been cited already (see above) that Irving repeatedly claimed that the *gas*

chambers in Auschwitz were *fakes*. Especially following his later expulsion from Germany Irving piously claimed that he had only asserted that the *gas chamber* in the Auschwitz main camp was *a fake*.

- 6.2.23 A room was booked for the press conference through Ewald Althans's AVÖ for 4 May 1992. Althans wrote to Irving: 'VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGE...the enclosed press release was sent by us to all the influential organs **IN GERMANY**. The hall has been contractually secured according to your wishes....The "staff" asked for are naturally available.' Althans enclosed the invitation to the press conference 'where he [Irving] will explain to you his tactic and motives.' It also quoted Irving's words of 21 April 1990: "' The gas chambers in Auschwitz are dummies" and mentioned Irving's invitation to Piper. The invitation finished in bold 'DAVID IRVING DOES NOT DEFEND HIMSELF- DAVID IRVING ATTACKS: AS HISTORIAN SWORN TO THE MOTTO: "TRUTH FREES!"'
- 6.2.24 Irving produced his own press release, which was more measured in its language. On the day of the trial Ewald Althans and the AVÖ continued their publicity. In a newspaper format, the *München Aktuell* [imprint Deutsches Jugendbildungswerk] announced the trial under the heading 'STATE GUARENTEED EVENT with DAVID IRVING[.] Topic: "THE AUSCHWITZ GAS CHAMBERS ARE DUMMIES". The article ran "But he will not come as the accused, appear humbled in front of the conventions of the justice of the Federal Republic – he comes as the accuser himself, as attacker with a suitcase full of new evidence to support his thesis that he expressed in the words: "THE GAS CHAMBERS IN AUSCHWITZ ARE DUMMIES".'
- 6.2.25 Irving's strategy was obviously two-pronged. Although eager to capitalize on the appeal trial (he did indeed set up his books to prove that he was not a nobody) he was equally eager to try and distance himself from more extreme individuals. This involved executing a precarious

balancing act between his reputation and the practicalities of his case on the one hand, and his own wishes and those of his political allies on the other.

6.2.26 Before travelling to America he wrote to Hajo Herrmann 'As you know I hope that you manage to invite Dr. Piper of the Auschwitz museum, but I also wish to do without "right-wing" witnesses.' Irving wrote to Karl Philipp that 'I fundamentally do **not** want it to come to rallies with this date, however I wish to make as much capital as possible with the press out of my appearance. Therefore let's think what we could do to this end.' To Hajo Hermann he wrote that he wished to do without Karl Philipp as a witness 'this for your confidential information' and announced his intention to bring his 'collected works in various translations, unload them on the table as silent witnesses to the fact that I'm not anybody, and that I enjoy a high reputation in the outside world (that means in the **free** outside world).' Nevertheless Irving enjoyed the explicit help of Ewald Althans and Karl Philipp, and the trial was given prominence by Ernst Zündel. Moreover the trial's nature is characterised by the presence in the courtroom of Leuchter disciple Germar Rudolf, at Irving's agreement. Germar Rudolf was in court to testify, but the application to hear him was refused.

6.2.27 Secondly Irving himself had tried to tactically and rhetorically retreat to a position that he had only said that one of the gas chambers (i.e. in the Auschwitz main camp) was a 'dummy' and not all of them. If the court had allowed Martin, and more importantly Piper, to give testimony, they would have been able, according to Irving, to confirm that the gas chamber shown to the tourists in Auschwitz was a post-war dummy ['Attrappe'] "...namely exactly that which I have been accused of in the prosecution demand, why I am standing before you. This admission was made in front of many credible witnesses, although with the comment that the "**real** gas chambers" were to be found some-

where completely different in the camp. (Which naturally allows the logical question to appear legitimate, why build a dummy **here** when the “**real**” ones can be seen **there** next door.”

- 6.2.28 This was a retreat doomed to failure because it was a lie. But even this tactical retreat was not as clear cut as it would have seemed. In his closing speech Irving stated: “I had hoped that you would seize the opportunity, Mr. Judge, to take up cudgels for the German people. Because a **blood lie** has been pronounced on the German people for fifty years by the enemies of the German people, beginning with the original English propaganda lie, that we ourselves put in circulation in November 1942 against the German Reich.”
- 6.2.29 All this, Irving’s claim to speak as a friend of the German people’ [‘Freund des deutschen Volkes.’], his self-attributed authority, and his claim that the trial was slightly reminiscent of a show trial, all failed to impress the court. Irving’s fine was increased to DM 10,000, because at the original meeting of 21 April 1990 ‘...the plaintiff in particular held view that Jews were never gassed in Auschwitz.’ The judgement continued that ‘Whoever denies the murder of the Jews in the Third Reich, and the accused consciously did that, as he acknowledged in the main trial [Hauptverhandlung], defames every Jew...’, and further that this denial was a ‘smear’ [‘Verunglimpfung’] on those Jews murdered.
- 6.2.30 In handing down punishment it was in Irving’s favour that he had admitted the ‘outward course of events’ [‘äußeren Ablauf’], but, pointing to the exhibiting of Irving’s books in the court room, that it weighed against him that he ‘also negates the National Socialist atrocities denied by the so-called revisionists to market his own works.’
- 6.2.31 The court was perceptive in identifying this mixture of denial and marketing. Irving’s closing speech was in due course recorded and marketed by Althans ‘which we will now use as a propaganda tool.’
- 6.2.32 In a later trial the court again rejected Irving’s appeal and raised his fine to DM 30,000.

- 6.2.33 On the 30 November 1993, Irving's higher appeal application was heard by the Bavaria's highest state court [Bayerischen Obersten Landesgericht], who confirmed the judgement of 13 January 1993. Irving received the decision in December 1993 calling judge Huber 'senile' and 'alcoholic'.

6.3 The speaking bans [Redeverbot] of 9 September 1992, 9 December 1992, and Irving's ultimate exclusion from Germany.

- 6.3.1 Irving had been the subject of an exclusion order since 9 March 1991, handed down by the Ministry of the Interior. The exclusion order had been issued in view of Irving's reputation as a right-wing extremist writer and historian, and was repeatedly renewed, for instance in February 1994. Although the order repeatedly gave Irving cause for thought when entering Germany, it proved ineffectual once he was in Germany. As the German authorities had to admit: 'The Federal Minister of the Interior had already instructed the frontier control authorities in March 1990 to send back Irving when attempting to enter the Federal Republic. In practice, however, this can only be done in an imperfect manner, since the frontiers between EC countries are wide open.'
- 6.3.2 On 11 September 1992 Irving was to have spoken to a branch of the Bavarian NPD in Munich on 'What is in the Goebbels's Diaries' In light of previous experience' ['bisherigen Erfahrungen'] the authorities responsible for foreigners [Ausländerbehörde] handed Irving a speaking ban. What was to have graver effects for Irving was that on the same day Irving was written a letter announcing that his exemption from meeting the requirement for a residence permit for short periods of residency had been withdrawn ['die Befreiung vom Erfodernis der Aufenthaltsgenehmigung für Kurzaufenthalte zu entziehen.']. In other words Irving was no longer covered by the normal exemption for fellow members of the EU from having to possess a residence permit for

short stays in Germany. In December the Munich authorities widened Irving's speaking ban to include mentioning a number of specific themes at any future meeting in the Federal Republic.

- 6.3.3 On 9 November 1993, the anniversary of the so-called 'Reichskristallnacht,' Irving arrived in Munich to start a tour arranged by Stephan Wiesel. Irving was expelled from Germany after it became known that he intended to take part in meetings on the 55th anniversary of Crystal Night. That same afternoon Irving was handed an indefinite residence ban [unbefristetes Aufenthaltsverbot] as an unwanted foreigner by officers of the Bavarian security police [Sicherheitspolizei] whilst Irving sat in the Café Mövenpick.
- 6.3.4 Irving was requested to leave Germany by 10 November 1993 and applied the ban nationwide. By choosing to leave Germany that same day Irving was spared the ignominy of being deported.
- 6.3.5 The 33-page explanation of Irving's expulsion is worth quoting at some length, especially in view of Professor Deborah Lipstadt's claim that 'Irving is one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial.'
- 6.3.6 After having pointed out that Irving's thesis followed the example set in the works of Fred Leuchter, Ernst Zündel, and Robert Faurisson, the authorities cited what had been established in previous trials involving Irving as defendant or plaintiff. "The court saw it as proven that it was only superficial intention of yours to paint a picture of history which deviated from the established research. In fact your intention was to deny the systematic mass murder of the Jewish population. This thesis undoubtedly insults the victims of National Socialism. In addition you met with wide approval, especially in right-wing extremist, neo-Nazi, and revisionist circles, or circles close to them. For a number of years increasingly right-wing extremist and xenophobic attitudes have been ascertainable in precisely these circles. This opinion of the court is based on the one hand on the widespread effect of your opinion. The

court considered it as proven that particularly neo-Nazi and revisionist groups endorse your theses and made use of your thoughts. On the other hand the judgement considered your lack of understanding. Even after the reporting of an offence [Strafanzeige] had been raised you persistently publicly represented your theses. [...] In the meantime [since summer 1990] you have become very famous. Your mere presence is enough to inflame moods. [...] That you yourself are not amongst the active members of right-wing extremist groups is insignificant. Decisive is that these groups use your thoughts, are strengthened by your theses, and enhance them. Your personal responsibility is that you use events of right-wing extremist circles as a supposed historian for your publications and thereby are at least aware of the consequences of your actions. Your conduct represents an endangerment of the inner security of the Federal Republic of Germany in the widest sense and in addition inflicts considerable damage on the external reputation of the German state. Your interpretation and expression of the thesis given under point I.1 is suited to endanger the peaceful co-existence of Germans and foreigners. They are considered the truth by a small but radical part of the population and ultimately motivate violence and racial hatred. [...] Although the largest part of the German population distances itself from such attacks [the judgement cited the murders and violent attacks on foreigners in Rostock, Hoyerwerda, Hünxe, Mölln, and Solingen] the most recent developments show the existence of grass-roots right-wing extremist motivated culprits who are willing to use violence. Precisely this circle of people is receptive to revisionist thoughts and feel themselves confirmed in their political opinions whereby they express their opinions with violence.”

- 6.3.7 These developments entailed an endangerment of the public safety and order, the danger of a further escalation of violence, and posed a threat to Germany’s economy and reputation. It was in turn considered that Irving contributed to these threats. “The interest of revisionist,

right-wing extremist and Nazi groups in your participation in future events remains undiminished. [...] Added to this is that, in view of your previous reputation in right-wing extremist circles, already your mere attendance at political events suitable to harm the interests of the general public, as stated above.”

6.4 Further appeals.

- 6.4.1 Irving was initially optimistic about his chances of overturning the expulsion. To his lawyer, Irving wrote ‘Anyway I don’t intend to appear in the FRG before the middle of next year, therefore it has time. As a first step I will enter into a working relationship with a German firm, so that I can demonstrate a reason for being in the FRG.’ On 30 December 1993 Irving wrote to Mainz lawyer, Dr. K A R Schütz: “Two ideas of mine: (a). I am in a working relationship with a small north German publishers, as has been recently confirmed in writing. (b) what if I stand for a seat in the European Parliament, perhaps as a NPD candidate? Would one administer a residency ban? Merely an idea.”
- 6.4.2 But all further appeals in Germany against his fine and his expulsion were rejected out of hand, or the courts found against him. They all pronounced along similar lines that the FRG had a right and a duty to protect itself from the extremist political efforts of the likes of Irving. “The Federal Republic of Germany must not become a playground for right-wing extremist authors. There is no demand for pseudo-scientific denials of the Holocaust that however have the aim of reaching a justification of the NS dictatorship.”
- 6.4.3 In the meantime an appeal to the European Commission of Human Rights, prepared with Zündel was likewise declared inadmissible. “The public interests in the prevention of crime and disorder in the German population due to insulting behaviour against Jews, and similar offences, and the requirements of protecting their reputation and rights,

outweigh, in a democratic society, the applicant's freedom to impart publications denying the existence of the gassing of Jews under the Nazi regime... ”

7. The containment of David Irving's activities and his shrinking influence since 1993/1994, but ongoing identification with Holocaust denial.

- ^{7.1} No sooner back in England after his expulsion, than Irving began to think of ways to make good the effects of the ban. 'Karl Philipp phoned twice, from Tony's and from Gatwick. I suggest I video a speech in German, for distribution. A great idea, he agrees. Working title "Ich komme Wieder." ["I'll be back"].'
- ^{7.2} On 23 November 1993 Irving wrote to Hajo Hermann "...in my absence my voice will continue to do service, i.e. I will produce a fairly open video recording in my own Focal Point publishing house with the title I'LL BE BACK, analogous to the video I distributed in Australia (incidentally completely legal). One has to be careful in the FRG because I don't want in any way to be accused of infringing whatever laws. I intend therefore to supply the videos with something like the following "health warning": This video film was filmed and produced in England in accordance with the laws prevailing there. Distribution takes place only for aims of scholarly research. Neither Focal Point publishers or Mr. Irving are responsible for the further distribution **inside** the FRG or for possible consequences resulting. Do you have any comments or changes to suggest for this small text? The preventative nature of the text should be clear to you. ”

- 7.3 Irving did of course concern himself with the distribution in Germany, namely through the AVÖ. Two days earlier he had written to the AVÖ's Stephan Wiesel "In the coming weeks I will produce a video presentation for Germany with the title "I'LL BE BACK". You could make good money out of it. I'll send you the advertising for it in the next few days. The film will be supplied from England to avoid problems with our traditional enemies."
- 7.4 The slickly produced self-promotional video is an interesting document, and a thermometer of Irving's views and resentments following his expulsion.
- 7.5 The video, which included Irving's catch phrase 'I can do without Germany, but can Germany do without me?' ['Ich kann auf Deutschland verzichten, aber kann Deutschland auf mich verzichten?'], included a detailed explanation of the Leuchter Report, Irving adding his own evidence that no gassings had taken place in Auschwitz, and that Auschwitz had been 'wrapped in a sort of conspiratorial plot against the truth' since the end of the war.'
- 7.6 Despite claiming to see his expulsion as 'the peak of my success' ['der Gipfel meines Erfolgs'] and that it proved that no one was in a position to refute him, Irving's pique with the German judicial system was free rein. "German justice has always been a special case since the beginning of the century, and it really has not changed at all. In the Weimar Republic, in the Third Reich, also in the Federal Republic, the jurists clap their heels together and say "yes sir". Nothing has changed only that they don't need to wear armbands anymore."
- 7.7 He described the judicial measures against revisionism as 'a terror of opinions in Germany, a police power without parallel.' "I can say that. If I say that as an expert in the history of the Third Reich then that can mean something ladies and gentlemen. As far as I am concerned one thing is absolutely clear and let it be established right now. During the Third Reich, during the Second World War countless masses of inno-

cent people were murdered on both sides. The Jews were shot in their hundreds of thousands in the East, not only by the Germans, but by the Ukrainians and Estonians and Letts and Lithuanians. [...] But the death factories did not exist. And whoever claims that [the contrary] puts up a blood-lie against the German people.”

- 7.8 Rather alarmingly, Irving not content with tastelessly comparing his fate and that of his fellow revisionists with that of the Jews under the Nazis, then called on his viewers to draw up lists of people who spread the ‘blood-lie’. “He must also somehow be called to account. To the viewers who are listening to my words, and who are looking at me in this moment, I call on you to write down the names of these people who go along with this blood-lie, this defamation of the German people. Write the names down because it can not continue for ever. One day the hour of revenge will come when we will avenge ourselves that we have been persecuted for years because we told the truth. And then there really must be compensation. A compensation not just for those who have made money for fifty years from their own supposed tragedy. A compensation for the simple school teachers, the lawyers and jurists and judges. The normal people who as patriotic German citizens wanted to establish and spread the truth about their own past and lost everything for it.”
- 7.9 At the time the ban had obviously taken Irving by surprise, and left him trying to tie up loose ends in Germany. On 21 November 1993 he wrote to Stephan Wiesel of the AVÖ’s Herzog-Heinrich Buchhandlung in which he had expressed the hope that Wiesel had been able to pick up ‘all the books etc.’ [‘die ganzen Bücher u.s.w.’] which Irving had left in ‘the Institute’ in Leonrodstraße ‘in time’ [‘rechtzeitig’]. He wrote to Wiesel again in December reminding him of the books and asking him *‘Please ring me up – from a telephone box, so that the commune doesn’t listen in on every word! I’ll then ring you straight back.’*

- 7.10 Irving's ban on entering Germany had much wider repercussions for him in Germany and the world, than Irving had apparently anticipated. In May 1994 he wrote to Hajo Herrmann that they had to take legal proceedings. 'I can not even visit my publishers!' More seriously has rather unexpectedly resulted in a blocking *of the whole world* to me.' In July 1994 he told Herrmann that the ban meant that 'in the meantime all my business in the FRG are waning.' In April 1995 Irving repeated the refrain. 'No longer in the FRG for two years, all my business with German publishers etc. has come to a standstill because of this, I can't even complain about my delivered manuscripts' As late as 1997 the GfP expressed its sorrow that Irving was unable to attend their congress, but were pleased to accept Irving's offer of a taped contribution 'for example a general contribution to the situation of revisionism...' ['allgemeinen Beitrag-zur Lage des Revisionismus etwa...'].
- 7.11 In 1995, under the pretence (see above) that he had been originally fined for claiming that only the gas chamber in the Auschwitz main camp was a dummy, Irving started a postcard campaign against the German authorities. As he explained to an American audience "...we're fighting back. I have a mailing list of people around the world; now some 3,000 wise and intelligent people of every walk of life, to whom I correspond and to whom, after I'd read this French article, I sent 20,000 postcards for them to mail to the German authorities. 20,000 postcards. In English and in German. All pre-printed. All they had to do was to cut them out, stick a stamp on, add a few words of their own, and then mail them. The post card said, "I understand the French magazine has reported this fact, that what they show the tourists is fake." In the original French the words are "Tu il est fau," everything in it is fake. Everything in that gas chamber building is fake. Why is it then that your government fined British historian David Irving \$22,000 for saying just that? Alternatively, is it now legal to say this in Germany? If it is legal then what is going to be done about the fine im-

posed on Mr. Irving? If it is still illegal to tell the truth like this in Germany, then what are you doing to punish the French magazine for publishing that fact, because it was also sold in Germany?" "

7.12 Irving exhorted his correspondents to send the postcards to foreign representatives of German newspapers in their own country, to German travel agents, to church dignitaries, and local German authorities. "Because my postcard isn't just going to be read by you and the man you're mailing it to. It's going to be read by his secretary too. It's going to be read by the mail carrier. It's going to be read by the FBI at this end. It's going to be read by the German FBI at the other end, or wherever in the world it is. Everyone's going to be asking questions about it."

7.13 Despite Irving's claim that 'This postcard campaign has caused immense damage around the world to the Holocaust legend', in the last four to five years Irving's public presence in Germany has shrunk to a bare minimum. He is still considered by the OPC as a leading revisionist, but as his ban on entering Germany has led to a growing public neglect of him, although his remaining reputation amongst supporters is undiminished.

7.14 His former main-stream publishers have ended their co-operation or are in conflict with him, although a small number of right-wing oriented publishers continue to distribute taped interviews and speeches.

7.15 So the 1994 Hamburg VSB merely stated that Irving was considered a contact person of the neo-Nazi circle around Ernst Zündel and was one of the authors of the extremist Arndt-Verlag. There was a court order to imprison him because he had not paid his fine. In 1995 he is again recorded as an author of the extremist Arndt-Verlag and as a member of the international revisionist campaign. In 1996 he was listed as one of the authors of the extremist Arndt-Verlag and of the extremist Verlags-gesellschaft Berg. In 1997 he is just named as an international active revisionist without further differentiation.

8. Conclusion.

- 8.1 According to the standards of the OPC and the social sciences extremism represents thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes that systematically attack the civil and public order [freiheitlich demokratische Grundordnung]. RWE involves an extreme, ethnocentric, and racist (or in the German sense *völkisch*) nationalism combined with a hatred of minorities and foreigners.
- 8.2 The DVU is a mainstay of RWE in the German political landscape. The party is extremist, anti-Semitic, and propagates racial hatred. From 1982 to 1992 Irving was a partner in a sustained political alliance with the DVU and its leader Gerhard Frey. Albeit not a member of the DVU Irving enjoyed a position of political prominence within the party. With his lecture tours and ‘star’ status at the DVU’s annual rallies, Irving not only publicly identified himself with the main aims of the party, but actively propagated them. In the process he first became indicted as a right-wing extremist in Germany.
- 8.3 Following his conversion to ‘hard’ revisionism with the *Leuchter Report* in 1988, Irving charted a course still further to the right. From this date Irving, alongside Zündel, can be considered international radical-revisionism’s most active and prominent exponent in Germany. This movement, and Irving as its ideologue, propagated ideas that played an important part in the third wave of RWE. Denial of the Holocaust became part of the standard political repertoire of neo-Nazi organisations. In turn the politics of neo-Nazism in Germany since the late 1980s has exhibited a profoundly alarming tendency to either condone ‘spontaneous’ acts of violence against the objects of its resentments or even to politically organise that violence.
- 8.4 Irving was not merely increasingly willing to appear on platforms of the radicalised NPD, but he entered into a methodical political alliance with neo-Nazi circles and organisations around Michael Kühnen and

his political heirs. For example Irving's political co-operation with Christian Worch and Ewald Althans was reciprocal and fruitful. Some of these organisations were banned in the same year in which Irving co-operated with them, for example the banning of NO at the end of 1992.

- 8.5 Any unease Irving felt in this alliance was not due to principled democratic or liberal political scruples. Irving's worries were pedestrian. His prime concern was the 'optical' damage incurred by any public association with persons such as Remer or Kühnen. Irving's self-propagated 'independence' ('an Englishman fights for the honour of the Germans') and his clean image were valuable and marketable political assets, cultivated and exploited by himself and his neo-Nazi allies.
- 8.6 Eager to maintain the rags of this 'independent' reputation, Irving sought to hygienically distance himself from individuals like Kühnen. In practice this sanitary divide was non-existent. The indigestible elements of neo-Nazism (and for that matter radical revisionism) for Irving was the sometimes lunatic packaging, not the political content *per se*. Although eager to distance himself from the excesses, in deed Irving committed himself wholeheartedly to the cause of revisionism and thus neo-Nazism in Germany. Any frictions in this alliance came down to personal rivalries and Irving's intolerance of sloppy organisation.
- 8.7 We would mistake the agency in this alliance were we to believe Irving's argument that he was somehow the political innocent in this process, forced onto a neo-Nazi platform by academic refusal to allow him a reputable forum and exploited by forces more calculating than he. The alliance accorded wholly with Irving's political tastes. Far from performing a passive function in the RWE scene in Germany Irving, like the message of denial he preached, was a catalyst. His person and his ideology were vital to the political 'effectiveness' of RWE in Germany.

- 8.8 Finally, Irving is author of his own misfortunes. By denying the Holocaust he wilfully and persistently violated the criminal law in Germany. His unconditional expulsion in late 1993 indicated the authorities' unwillingness to further tolerate his use of Germany as a 'playground' for his right-wing extremism.
- 8.9 In reaching this conclusion, I have understood that my overriding duty is to the Court. My paramount obligation, as I have been advised by my Instructing Solicitors, is to assist the Court on all matters within my expertise regardless of whom my instructions are from and who is paying my fees. I confirm that this report is impartial, objective and unbiased and has been produced independently of the exigencies of this litigation. I believe that the facts I have stated in this report are true and that the opinions I have expressed are correct.

Signed.....

Date.....

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Expert report

Hitler's Role in the Persecution of the Jews by the Nazi Regime

Electronic edition

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Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt

Royal Courts of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, case 1996-I-1113

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HITLER'S ROLE IN THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS BY THE NAZI REGIME

There can be no doubt that Hitler's behaviour during his entire political career – from the end of the First World War until the end of the Second World War – was characterised by radical antisemitism.

Hitler's actions betray a desire to – in one way or another – put an end to the existence of Jews within the “living space” (*Lebensraum*) of the German people. This objective carried a very high priority in his political practice.

Of course Hitler's antisemitic stance cannot by itself explain the persecution and murder of the European Jews by the Nazi regime; a history of the “final solution” must nevertheless take account of his central role in the decision making process.

1. General remarks about Hitler's Antisemitic terminology

- 1.1 An account of Hitler's role in the genesis of the final solution is complicated by the fact that the dictator avoided the use of explicit written directives relating to the murder of the Jews. When he came to speak on this subject he used expressions which, to say the least, leave a certain amount of room for interpretation. The meaning of the key words describing the aims of Nazi anti-Jewish policy changed over the years when antisemitic policy became more and more radicalized. There is no meaning to these terms independent of the time factor. To translate these terms properly, one has to take the reality of antisemitic policy into account. When the same vocabulary was used to describe Nazi aims towards other groups, the meaning might have been completely different. As far as the fate of the Jews is concerned, formulations such

as annihilation (*Vernichtung*), extirpation (*Ausrottung*), final solution (*Endlösung*) removal (*Entfernung*), resettlement (*Umsiedlung*), evacuation (*Evakuierung*) etc. were used by Hitler and leading National Socialists from mid 1941 onwards increasingly – and from Spring 1942 definitely – as camouflage for mass murder.

- 1.2 Before this time, the very same vocabulary was used by Hitler and leading Nazis in a different sense. As will be described in more detail in this report, an interpretation has to take into account the different stages of anti-Jewish policy. During the 1920's and up to the mid 1930's, the main aim of Nazi anti-Jewish policy was to undermine the legal and economic situation of the German Jews so as to force them to emigrate. The Jews would disappear from the vantage point of the Nazis from German public life and later on, from German territory. When the Nazis used the term annihilation (*Vernichtung*) during these early years, they referred on the one hand to the planned destruction of the alleged dominant position of the Jewish minority in German society. From the context of the relevant texts, however, it is obvious, on the other hand, that this term had a vaguely defined violent and even murderous component, by which Hitler and the Nazis signified their main goal – which was the “removal of the Jews”. In a cautious interpretation of this terminology, it would not be exaggerated to describe the meaning of annihilation here as ambiguous. The perspective of mass murder was already present here. In conclusion, one has to say, that during this period (the 1920's and the first half of the 1930's), the Nazis saw in the “final solution” a potentially violent “removal” of Jews from German public life and German soil.
- 1.3 At the end of the 1930's, the Nazis intensified the pressure for emigration or expulsion. During this period, terms like “removal” (*Entfernung*) or “final solution” (*Endlösung*) revealed an inconsistency with the notion of a further existence of a Jewish minority in Germany. The violent

aspect of anti-Jewish policy became more and more significant. In the last year before the outbreak of the Second World War the term extermination pointed clearly to the possibility of genocide.

- 1.4 Between the outbreak of war in Summer 1939 and the middle of 1941, the Nazis were looking for a so called “territorial solution” of the Jewish problem, i.e. they were planning to deport the Jews to a territory on the periphery of their empire where there were insufficient means to subsist and where they would perish. Technically the terms resettlement (*Umsiedlung*) or evacuation (*Evakuierung*) meant a kind of geographical relocation but one cannot disregard the fact that this vocabulary increasingly offered the perspective of the physical end of the Jews in Europe. The term “final solution” was used in this period in the same way.
- 1.5 Between the summer of 1941 and the spring of 1942 the meaning of this vocabulary changed. It was now increasingly used as a synonym for systematic mass murder. However, even in this period – particularly between Autumn of 1941 and Spring 1942 – this terminology can in some cases still be ambivalent. For an interpretation each phrase has to be analysed in its historical context. In particular, in a period in which one Jewish minority after another was being included in the process of systematic mass murder, one has to determine which Jewish minority was indicated by each of the relevant phrases.
- 1.6 One cannot exclude the possibility that, for example, up to May or even June 1942, i.e. during the phase when preparations for the systematic murder of European Jews were well underway, Hitler and the leading organisers of the murderous programme might have occasionally mentioned “alternative” murderous programmes for a “final solution”; they might, even at this stage, have referred to the earlier plan to deport Jews (particularly those from Western Europe, who before the summer of 1942 had not been included in the programme of systematic mass murder) to other areas than occupied Poland and to kill them

or let them perish. These “alternative” considerations should be interpreted as a kind of reluctance by Hitler and members of the leading circle of Nazis, fully to articulate the consequences of the decision to kill millions of people, a decision which in fact had already been made and implemented at this point.

2. HITLER’S EARLY UTTERANCES ON THE “JEWISH QUESTION”

- 2.1 Hitler’s very first political statement, his letter to Adolf Gemlich on 16 September 1919, already includes a clear declaration of his antisemitic position (Gemlich was a former participant in one of the political indoctrination courses organised by the military authorities in Bavaria, on which Hitler had taught). “Antisemitism of the emotional sort finds its final expression in the form of pogroms. Rational antisemitism on the other hand, must lead to a systematic legal opposition and elimination of those special privileges which the Jews hold, in contrast to the other aliens living among us (alien’s legislation). Its final objective must unswervingly be the removal of the Jews altogether.”
- 2.2 This outlook also characterises Hitler’s early public posture. The radicalism of his antisemitic statements at this point is remarkable; clearly his vision of a “removal” of the German Jews carried definite implications of violence. As early as 1920 he spoke of extirpation (*Ausrottung*) and annihilation (*Vernichtung*). Thus according to a police report of a NSDAP meeting on 6 April 1920 he declared: “We have no intention of being emotional antisemites who want to create the atmosphere of a pogrom; instead, our hearts are filled with an inexorable determination to attack the evil at its roots and to extirpate it root and branch. In order to reach our goal every means will be justified, even if we have to make a pact with the devil.”

- 2.3 In a talk before a gathering of National Socialists in Salzburg on 7 August 1920 he said: “Don’t think that one can fight against disease without killing the cause, without exterminating the germ; and don’t think that one can fight against racial tuberculosis without taking care that the peoples be freed of the germ of racial tuberculosis. The effect of Judaism will never disappear and the poisoning of the people will not end unless the cause – the Jews – are removed from our presence.”
- 2.4 In the first large mass meeting of the NSDAP after the refounding of the Party (which had been banned after the failed putsch of 1923) Hitler, on 27 February 1925, looked back on the founding of the NSDAP and explained: “The goal then was clear and simple: fight against the devilish power which has pushed Germany into this misery, fight against Marxism as well as the spiritual carrier of this world plague and epidemic – the Jews. Fight – not on the bourgeois model ‘carefully’ so that it doesn’t hurt. No and once again no.”
- 2.5 In another part of this speech Hitler spoke about the newly founded Party: “Who does this movement have to combat? Against the Jew as an individual and Marxism as his cause.
- 2.6 And in another passage, Hitler pointed once again to the chief objective of the National Socialists – to the struggle against the Jewish “poison” within the German people (*Volk*), in his view clearly a lethal danger: “The greatest danger is and remains for us the poison of foreign peoples in our body. All other dangers are limited in time. Only this alone is eternally present in its consequences for us. [...] The peace treaty can be abrogated, reparation obligations can be declared invalid and rejected, political parties can be disposed of, but blood that is once poisoned can never be altered. It remains and proliferates and pushes us down from year to year ever deeper. If you are surprised today about the inner turmoil of our people than consider the following: The blood which is at odds with itself is merely expressing itself in the inner tur-

moil of the German people. And there lies the greatest danger, that with the continuation of this poisoning in 10, 20 and 30 years we will be weaker than now, in 100 years weaker than after 30 and in 200 years more unconsciousness than after 100 years; one day however the time will come when our people will fall from its cultural heights and will finally hopelessly perish as a result of this blood poisoning...”

2.7 In his book, *MEIN KAMPF*, which appeared in 1926 and especially in a manuscript written in 1927, which remained unpublished until after 1945 (his “Second Book”), Hitler placed this radical view, which leads to the “removal” of the Jews from Germany, within the context of a theory which he tried to derive historically. According to this theory, the meaning of world history is a permanent struggle between the races or the peoples (*Völker*) over “living space” (*Lebensraum*). In this model the Jews, who are said to be unable to develop their own territorial state or culture, play the role of parasitic beings who seek to destroy from within (together with other Jews in a international conspiracy) the construction of *Lebensraum* empires by the superior races.

2.8 This “theory” is described most clearly in a lengthy section in his “second book”: “The Jewish people, because of their own lack of productive capacity, are not able to build up their own territorial state. Rather, they need the work and creative activity of other nations as a base for their own existence. The existence of the Jews themselves thus becomes that of a parasite within the life of other peoples. The final goal of the Jewish struggle for survival is therefore the enslavement of productive peoples. To reach this goal, which in truth describes the struggle for existence of Jewry in all times, the Jew uses all weapons which correspond to the whole complex of his being. Domestically, he fights within the individual nations first for equality and then for superiority. As weapons he uses cunning, cleverness, subterfuge, malice, dissimulation, etc..., qualities which are rooted in the essence of his ethnic character. They are ruses in his struggle for existence, similar to the ruses other peoples use in sword-fights. In terms of foreign policy,

he tries to make the peoples restless, distracting them from their true interests, pushing them into wars with one another and in this way, with the help of the power of money and propaganda to bring them under his dominance. His ultimate goal is the denationalisation, the promiscuous bastardisation of other peoples – the lowering of the racial niveau of the highest peoples as well as domination over his racial porridge through the extirpation of the *völkisch* intelligencia and its replacement by members of his own people. The end of the Jewish world struggle will thus always be bloody Bolshevisation, that means in truth the destruction of the spiritual elite which is bound with the peoples, so that he alone can ascend and become master of a mankind which has been rendered leaderless. Stupidity, cowardice and wickedness help him to achieve his goals. In the bastard he secures himself the first opening so as to break into the body of another people. The end of Jewish domination is nevertheless always the decay of all culture and finally the insanity of the Jew himself. Then he becomes a parasite of the peoples and his victory signifies the death of his victim as well as his own end.”

- 2.9 As is clearly demonstrated in his MEIN KAMPF and his “Second Book”, Hitler perceived the situation of Germany after the end of the first World War to be the consequence of an international Jewish conspiracy. Jews dominated “international finance capital” as well as the socialist movement: they were responsible for war, revolutions, the decline of national values and for the pernicious “mixing of the races”.
- 2.10 The language which Hitler used in this early period to refer to the Jews was filled with boundless hatred. Eberhard Jäckel once compiled a series of typical designations for Jews from MEIN KAMPF: The Jew is a maggot in a rotting corpse; a germ carrier of the worst sort; mankind’s eternal germ of disunion; the spider that slowly sucks the people’s blood out of its pores; the pack of rats fighting bloodily among them-

selves; the parasites in the body of other peoples; a sponger, who, like a harmful bacillus, continues to spread; the eternal bloodsucker; the peoples' parasite; the vampire.

- 2.11 An analysis of the public statements by Hitler in the second half of the twenties shows clearly that antisemitism had always played a central role in his thinking. In Hitler's speeches in this period, antisemitism was by no means a marginal element used only for demagogic purposes. Rather, antisemitism was the central component of the ideological structure which he endeavored – with stubborn perseverance – to convey to his listeners.
- 2.12 For even when Hitler concerned himself with political questions of the day, in the course of his public statements in the second half of the twenties, the large majority of his speeches and articles would usually return to the ideological train of thought which he had developed in MEIN KAMPF and in his second book. These ideological considerations were necessary for him so as to explain the precarious situation in which Germany found itself after the end of the first World War.
- 2.13 Central categories in Hitler's public statements continued to be "space" and "race": the future of the Germans as a racially valuable people depended upon the conquest of as great a space as possible. The fulfilment of this historical mission, which according to Hitler's central argument was decisive for the security of the existence of the German people, was obstructed by systematic attempts by the "Jewish race" to prevent it.
- 2.14 Over and over again Hitler repeated in his speeches his stereotypical grievances against the Jews: That they were not able to work productively and were unfit to create culture; that they lacked a positive attitude towards the soil; that instead they had others work for them and charged them interest. He therefore called the Jews "parasites" or "spongers" (*Schmarotzer*).

- 2.15 In Hitler's view, through clever activities they had gathered the economy in their hands. Although personally unable to create culture, they had been able to dominate the culture industry and the press and therefore controlled public opinion. The political parties were, in his view, dominated by the Jews. This was especially true for the Socialist parties. In a typical expression, he called "Marxism" the "greatest instrument for the annihilation of the Aryan peoples, for the annihilation of the intelligence of these Aryan peoples and for the constitution of a thin Jewish upper class". In the Soviet Union, this goal had already been largely achieved through Stalin's dictatorship, in his view.
- 2.16 On an international level, the Jews had also achieved a dominating position in the economy; he claimed that "international finance Jewry" used their position to put additional economic and political pressure upon Germany. Communism and capitalism were, in Hitler's view, both instruments in the hands of Jews for the attainment of a position of world domination: "Western democracy on the one hand and Russian Bolshevism on the other are the forms in which the present Jewish world conspiracy takes its form." The international order created by the Versailles treaty serves the Jews for the purpose of annihilating the German people.
- 2.17 In Hitler's view, the Jews had thus largely succeeded in infiltrating the German people and manipulating and splitting it. The Jews were responsible for the fact that the German people had already begun to turn away from their task which was decisive for their future – that of accumulating soil and working it. The inner division of Germany, the political conflict between the bourgeoisie and the workers was also the work of the Jews. In his speeches, Hitler frequently used the metaphor of a "body of the people" (*Volkskörper*) which a foreign element had penetrated, in order to describe the supposed dominant position of the Jews within the German "*Volk*": a cancer – which had to be removed.

- 2.18 From this chain of reasoning, Hitler came to the conclusion that Germany's problems could basically only be solved by means of the removal of the dominance of the Jews. Concretely, he developed specific suggestions which were entirely based upon the Party Programme of the NSDAP: this involved the elimination of the economic ascendancy of the Jews and – in the event that they did not submit – their physical removal: "If he conducts himself well than he can stay, if not than out." Hitler also prepared his listeners for the concept that this settlement of accounts with the Jewish mortal enemy would not be an easy task, but rather might involve a difficult and if necessary violent confrontation.
- 2.19 If one considers the function of antisemitism within Hitler's world view it becomes clear that it played the role of the central binding element in a hodgepodge of highly contradictory ideas. Hitler's public statements in the second half of the 1920's make it clear that his world-view (*Weltanschauung*) was unthinkable without his antisemitism. He promised his listeners that with the solution to the "Jewish problem" he could solve Germany's basic dilemmas in the areas of foreign and domestic policy, as well as in the economic, social and cultural realms.
- 2.20 After 1930, when the NSDAP had become a party with a mass base, the antisemitic element began to recede markedly. Clearly Hitler was aware of the fact that the number of his electors had surpassed the number of radical antisemites in the German population. A more precise analysis of his speeches reveals however that he had not in any way altered his basic ideology. For in fact in the years 1930 to 1933, as the NSDAP attained unprecedented electoral success, the basic elements of the Hitler ideology, "space" and "race", remained the center of his speeches. Hitler emphasized on different occasions that he continued to regard the "Jewish race" as the main enemy of the German people.

- 2.21 Thus on 29 August 1930, a few days before the greatest electoral victory of the Nazis in the *Reichstag* election, in a speech in Munich he announced, in regard to the Jews: “The head of another race sits upon the body of our people (*Volkskörper*); the heart and the head of our people are no longer one and the same.” In another speech a few weeks later, he portrayed the struggle against the Jews (without naming them) as a contract with divinity: “When we present ourselves as German and try to protect ourselves from poisoning by another people, then we are trying to return into the hands of the almighty Creator the very same creature which he bestowed on us...”
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3. HITLER AND THE BEGINNING OF AN ANTI-JEWISH POLICY IN 1933

- 3.1 From the very beginning, Hitler, as head of the National Socialist government, pursued a consistently antisemitic policy. Above all, he aspired to remove German Jews from public positions and to segregate them as much as possible from the German population. The decisive role which Hitler played in the enforcement of the Nazi government’s anti-Jewish policy is apparent in the organisation of the “boycott” of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933. Although it was Goebbels, Propaganda Chief of the Party and newly appointed Minister of Propaganda, who organised the embargo on Jewish establishments, the decisive initiative was Hitler’s. This was confirmed by Goebbels in his diary entry of 26 March 1933: according to this account Hitler called him to Berchtesgaden in order to inform him of his “resolution” according to which one could “only deal with the slanderous attacks from abroad if we lay hold of the originators or at least those who stand to profit from them- namely the Jews who live in Germany and who have remained unmolested.”

- 3.2 Moreover, Hitler took over the full responsibility for the call for a boycott committee consisting of leading NSDAP officials when he made it clear in the Ministerial Conference of 28 March 1933 “that he, the Chancellor of the *Reich* himself had arranged for the proclamation issued by the National Socialist party”. On 6 April 1933, Hitler once again explicitly acknowledged his antisemitic policy when on the occasion of a reception of leading medical officials he declared that “through the coming eradication of Jewish intellectuals from the cultural and spiritual life of Germany, Germany’s natural title to spiritual leadership, which is characteristic for it, must be done justice.³³”
- 3.3 Immediately after the boycott, still in April 1933, the Hitler regime passed three antisemitic laws: Jews were largely excluded from public office and the bar respectively and a quota for Jewish pupils and students was introduced. On the other hand, a series of utterances by Hitler from the first months of the “Third Reich” seem to give the impression, on first glance, that he might have been exercising a rather more moderate influence on the “Jewish policy” of the government and had turned against the more radical elements of the Party.
- 3.4 Thus a pronouncement by Hitler which was issued on 10 March 1933 opposed the “individual actions” (*Einzelaktionen*) of party activists which might disturb the functioning of Jewish and other businesses. Further, a planned campaign against the Federal Court of Leipzig by the local Party organisation was stopped by a personal directive by Hitler. In the cabinet deliberation on the law concerning lawyers on 7 April, Hitler opposed further plans for exclusion and took the position that one should “at the moment ... only regulate that which is necessary”; legal discrimination against Jewish doctors – an official proposal of this kind had been submitted to the cabinet – was considered “not necessary for the moment”.

- 3.5 Hitler's attitude of apparent restraint stemmed wholly from tactical considerations. Hitler wanted to avoid unnecessary quarrels with his conservative coalition partners; he didn't want to put new stress on the already difficult economic situation or to cement the "Third Reich's" isolation in foreign affairs. In his address to the recently appointed Reich Governors on 6 July 1933, Hitler explicitly articulated his foreign policy concerns: "To reopen the Jewish question means to agitate the whole world once again".
- 3.6 In fact, with the take-over of power in 1933, Hitler intended – over and above the assorted antisemitic laws – deliberately to create a special legal status for German Jews: to place them under "alien status" as had been projected in the NSDAP Party Programme of 1920, and gradually to diminish their position in German society. His earlier and considerably more far-reaching plans in the area of racial laws and the reasons why these plans had been deferred were clearly elucidated in the report of his speech to the Reich Governors' Conference, held on 28 September 1933: "As concerns the Jewish question, we were not able to give way. For him, the Chancellor, it would have been preferable if we could have aggravated the treatment of the Jews step by step – beginning with a citizenship law and from that point on becoming gradually more and more severe with them. The boycott instigated by the Jews however obliged us to resort immediately to harsh counter measures. Abroad they complain mainly about the legal treatment of the Jew as a second-class citizens. They argue that the most we can do is to refuse citizenship to Jews who present a danger to the State."

4. HITLER'S ROLE IN THE EMERGENCE OF THE NUREMBERG LAWS

- 4.1 A period of relative calm in the development of National Socialist policy concerning the Jews can be identified in the period beginning in the second half of 1933 and extending through 1934. During this period the regime tried to avoid a further radicalisation of the persecution of the Jews, because it would have deepened its foreign political isolation, worsen the unstable economic situation, inspire the radicalism of the SA (which the Party tried to bring under control in this period), and annoy their conservative coalition partners who were still in a relatively quiet mood. This situation changed in 1935, after the Nazis had their first success in foreign policy by winning the Saarland referendum, after the Nazi Party had eliminated the leadership of the SA and conservative opponents during the “night of the long knives” (30 June 1934) and secured their dominant power position, and when the economic situation became better.
- 4.2 Starting in 1935 however, Party activists once again triggered anti-semitic excesses in the whole empire; these became more numerous and more extreme in the Spring and Summer of 1935. Party activists repeatedly blocked Jewish businesses, perpetrated acts of terror against so-called “racial defilers”, organised demonstrations, and prevented marriages between Jews and non-Jews and assaulted Jewish citizens. By means of these abuses, the more radical antisemitic forces in the Party wanted to push through three objectives: 1) the introduction of a special citizenship for Jews 2) prohibitions against marriage as well as sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews and 3) economically discriminatory measures against the Jewish minority.
- 4.3 In August, statements were issued in Hitler's name not only by Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy in Party matters, but also by Minister of the Interior Frick, forbidding further “individual actions” (*Einzelaktionen*).

Once again, Hitler's sole concern was tactical – to subdue anti-Jewish abuses which were causing unrest and indignation in the population. In essence, however, he shared the same goals as the party activists.

- 4.4 This clarifies Hitler's role in the genesis of the Nuremberg laws whereby, in particular, marriage and sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews were forbidden and a special, inferior citizenship was defined for Jews. Hitler played a decisive role in the implementation of both of these basic early antisemitic demands of the Nazi Party. He preferred "rational antisemitism" instead of pogroms, as he had stated in 1920.
- 4.5 The decision to include an anti-Jewish law which contained the long-demanded prohibition against "racial defilement" (*Rassenschande*) in the *Reichstag* session during the Nuremberg party meeting was made on the evening of 13 September 1935 by a small circle of leading Nazis who had been gathered to meet with Hitler in a Nuremberg hotel.
- 4.6 The official in charge of the Jewish question (*Judenreferent*) in the Ministry of the Interior, Lösener, has described very vividly in a memoir written after the war how he was unexpectedly called to Nuremberg late in the evening of 13 September in order to help formulate these new laws. On the next day, according to Lösener's report, together with a group of officials from the ministry, he worked out numerous drafts for the law which was later called the Law for the Protection of German Blood (*Blutschutzgesetz*). Minister of the Interior Frick presented them to Hitler and then brought them back with specific proposals for amendment. On Saturday, 14 September, around midnight, Hitler demanded that four alternative drafts be submitted for the *Blutschutzgesetz* by the following morning. Further, according to Lösener's account, Hitler now asked the officials to prepare another law, namely a blueprint of a "basic law, a citizenship law" for the next day. On the following day Hitler decided for one of the drafts of the protection of German

blood law and had it passed in the *Reichstag*, together with the Reich citizenship law (*Reichsbürgergesetz*) which had also been drafted overnight.

- 4.7 After laws were passed, Hitler declared at the Nuremberg Party Conference that the law for the protection of German blood was “the attempt legally to regulate a problem by which in the event of repeated failure would definitely be transferred to the National Socialist Party by law in order to achieve a final solution”. He thereby made clear that he was prepared to use street terror by Party activists (which he had earlier condemned in public declarations) as an instrument for enforcing his policies.

5. HITLER AND THE ANTISEMITIC LEGISLATION OF 1936-1937

- 5.1 For the following years, it can be documented that Hitler personally directed anti-Jewish policy and regularly intervened in anti-Jewish legislation. The measures in question were mainly concerned with excluding the Jewish minority from the economy.
- 5.2 In the summer of 1936, Hitler charged Göring with preparations for the Four-Year-Plan (*Vierjahresplan*), by which the German economy was to be adapted for war. The memorandum which Hitler transmitted to Göring on this subject makes clear that preparation for war and further radicalisation of anti-Jewish policy were closely associated in Hitler’s thinking. Hitler’s position in this matter was that a war against a supposed Bolshevik-Jewish menace was unavoidable: “Since the outbreak of the French Revolution, the world has been moving ever faster towards a new confrontation. The most extreme solution to this con-

flict is called Bolshevism and its content and goals are the liquidation (*Beseitigung*) and replacement (*Ersetzung*) of the hitherto leading social stratum of mankind by international Jewry.”

- 5.3 In the memorandum, Hitler also explained that preparations for the coming war against “international Jewry” should in part be financed through expropriation of Jewish property. To this purpose he demanded two new anti-Jewish laws: the first, a law “which makes all Jews answerable for the damages which are inflicted upon the German economy and the German people by individual specimens of this criminality”; further, he called for the death penalty for what he called “economic sabotage”, (*Wirtschaftssabotage*) meaning the accumulation of currency reserves abroad. This demand – as further developments would show – was particularly directed against Jewish “economic sabotage”: It was satisfied by the law dealing with economic sabotage, promulgated in December 1936, which in fact called for lengthy prison terms or the death penalty for the illegal transfer of property abroad; in the following period it was primarily applied against Jews.
- 5.4 In order to put through the other law which Hitler had proposed in his memorandum on the Four-Year-Plan – the comprehensive accountability of German Jews – a draft of a “law concerning the compensation of damages incurred by the Jews to the German Reich” was prepared at the beginning of February 1937. After this draft was rejected, because of the anticipated negative implications for the economy, Hitler in April 1938 renewed his proposals for a special tax on Jews which could be raised “for the specific situation – behaviour by individual Jews detrimental to the *Volk*”. A proposal of this kind was issued by the responsible departments of the government but was once again rejected by Göring. Only after the November pogrom was the project realised and an “atonement payment” (*Sühneleistung*) of billions charged to German Jews.

- 5.5 But on the other hand, in the Spring and early Summer of 1937, Hitler decided not to follow through on two important antisemitic legislative projects for the moment. One was the third decree of the law of citizenship (*Reichsbürgergesetz*) by which among other things, a special trade symbol (*Gewerbezeichen*) was to be introduced for non-Jewish businesses; as Frick told Göring in February 1937, this proposal was to be enacted according to Hitler's specific order. Nevertheless, the project was once again not treated – and this at Hitler's explicit behest – since the incorporation of holdings by foreign Jews would create complications; it would not be enacted until one year later. Similarly, due to Hitler's specific orders, the project to enact a special document on citizenship (*Reichsbürgerbrief*) into law was not further pursued.
- 5.6 To conclude this section, one can say that Hitler continued to be intensely preoccupied with anti-Jewish policy in the years 1936-37 and was once again prepared to be flexible for tactical reasons in pressing his goals, as is apparent in the different treatment accorded to the diverse laws – in particular, in this time period, to the further economic discrimination against Jews. However, as the following paragraphs will show, he has not given up his basic aim: to remove the Jews from Germany.
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6. HITLER AND THE RADICALISATION OF THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS AFTER THE END OF 1937

- 6.1 By the end of 1937, concurrent with the transition to an expansionist foreign policy, a new, more radical phase in the persecution of the Jews began. Priority was given to the goal of expelling the Jews from Germany; this was to be accomplished especially through further discrimination, use of direct violence and greater economic pressure.

- 6.2 This more radical course was actually launched by the strongly anti-semitic address given by Hitler at the Reich Party Congress in 1937. In this speech, he turned against, among other things, what he called – in what was typical for his antisemitic vocabulary – “Jewish-Bolshevist subversion” (*jüdisch-bolschewistische Zersetzung*); the causative organism of the “disease” (*Krankheit*) Bolshevism was “that international parasite of the Volk which for many centuries has spread in the world, reaching once again full destructive magnitude in our time”.
- 6.3 On 30 November 1937 Goebbels recorded the following in his diary about a conversation with Hitler which had taken place the previous day: “Talked about the Jewish question for a long time... The Jews must disappear from Germany, yes out of all of Europe. That will take some time still, but it will happen and must happen. The *Führer* is firmly committed to this...” At the beginning of 1938 the Office for Foreign Affairs (*Aussenpolitische Amt*) of the NSDAP informed the German Foreign Office that Hitler had clearly declared himself in favour of Jewish emigration to Palestine.
- 6.4 In order to accelerate the expulsion of the Jews from Germany, a *Reich*-wide move to arrest Jews having a criminal record (even an insignificant one) began as early as the summer of 1938. Hitler frequently intervened directly in these “actions”. He personally gave the order to include Jews in a general action against “asocials” as is clear from a note by the Director of the Jewish department of the SD (Security Service, *Sicherheitsdienst*) of the Nazi Party) of 8 June 1938. “In a discussion on 1 June 1938, with C (=Heydrich, P.L), it was confidentially pointed out that – on the orders of the *Führer* – asocial and criminal Jews should be arrested and used for the purpose of earth-moving work.”
- 6.5 There also exists evidence that Hitler concerned himself with the details of the propaganda which accompanied the mass arrests. When in the course of the campaign against “asocials” and Jews Goebbels asserted in a speech that more than 3000 Jews had moved to Berlin – he

did this for the purpose of stirring up antisemitic feelings – Heydrich complained to the Ministry of Propaganda about this inaccuracy. He then learned that Goebbels had used the incorrect figures “with the permission of the *Führer*”.

- 6.6 Nonetheless, the arrests in the *Reich* capital degenerated: Goebbels’s ruthlessly kindled anti-Jewish excesses turned to riots by the Party base and threatened to endanger public order and led to critical reports in the foreign press. The excesses were put to an end “upon the *Führer*’s order”, as noted in a draft of a report of the Jewish Department of the *Sicherheitsdienst*.
- 6.7 On 24 August 1938, in a talk with Hitler, Goebbels once again confirmed that despite the break-up of the campaign he had Hitler’s basic agreement for a further radicalisation of the persecution. “We discuss the Jewish question. The *Führer* approves my procedures in Berlin. What the foreign press writes is insignificant. The main thing is that the Jews be pushed out. In 10 years they must be removed from Germany. But in the interim we still want to keep the Jews here as pawns.”
- 6.8 The last sentence already points to the fact that Hitler, in view of increased international tensions, was beginning to think of taking the German Jews as hostages. The German Jews would serve as pawns.

7. HITLER AND THE POGROM OF 9 NOVEMBER

- 7.1 The course of the November pogrom of 1938 also clearly demonstrates Hitler’s personal initiative. It is inconceivable that Hitler was taken by surprise during the party meeting commemorating the 9th of November, 1923 by the news of the death of the German diplomat vom Rath – the event which the Nazis used as an excuse for launching the pogrom. Rath died in the late afternoon (17.30 German time); Hitler had expressly sent his personal physician Brandt to Paris “for consultation

and for direct reportage”, according to the *Völkische Beobachter*. He must therefore have already been informed at first hand in the afternoon, before the party meeting had begun, along with Goebbels, *Gauleiter* (i.e. one of the regional chiefs of the Nazi Party) Jordan and the Foreign Office.

- 7.2 Before Goebbels held his speech that evening, in which he incited the assembled party leadership to the pogrom, he had already received clear instructions from Hitler, as he noted in his diary: “I am going to the party reception in the old City Hall. Huge crowd. I explain the matter to the *Führer*. He decides: allow the demonstrations to continue, Pull back the police. The Jews shall for once come to feel the anger of the people. That is correct”.
- 7.3 Eyewitness reports according to which Hitler seemed surprised and annoyed about the pogrom in the late evening, if they are credible at all, can only be related to the extent of the damages in Munich and elsewhere, not however to the fact that the party had organised an anti-Jewish “action” that night. The concept of an unsuspecting Hitler is misleading if only because already on 7 November, the day of Rath’s assassination, party activists had provoked violent anti-Jewish excesses in different parts of the *Reich* which were heralded by the Nazi press as a spontaneous reaction showing the anger of the German population.

8. HITLER ORDERS THE MEASURES FOLLOWING THE POGROM

- 8.1 After the pogrom, Göring was entrusted by Hitler with the direction and control of further “anti-Jewish policies”; while Hitler conferred upon Göring the task of investigating all decrees relating to the “Jewish question” before publication, in fact Hitler himself settled the details of further “anti-Jewish policies” in the months following the pogrom.
- 8.2 Thus Göring disclosed a series of concrete decisions by Hitler in a conference with leading representatives of the *Reich* and the Party on 6 December. According to these resolutions, there was to be no particular label for Jews; no prohibition against selling to Jews; a boycott against Jews (*Judenbann*) could be ordered for certain localities.
- 8.3 On 28 December 1938, after a discussion with Hitler, Göring communicated to central party and state officials the “authoritative expression of the will of the *Führer*” (*Willensmeinung des Führers*) on further measures to be taken against Jews. Accordingly, the law for the protection of tenants was not, in general, to be abrogated for Jews. On the other hand, in “individual cases” it was declared to be desirable to “proceed in such a way that Jews be quartered together in separate houses in so far as the contract situation allow”. The use of sleeping and dining cars was to be forbidden for Jews. The use of “certain public establishments” (*gewisse, der Öffentlichkeit zugängliche Eirichtungen*), such as bath houses or health baths, could be prohibited to Jews. Jews who were civil servants were not to be denied their pensions, but the possibility of reducing payments was to be investigated. Jewish welfare organisations were to be allowed to continue to exist. Jewish patents were to be “aryanised”. Further, Hitler gave specific orders concerning living accommodations for people in “mixed marriages” and the “aryanisation”

of their property. This catalogue is an excellent example of how precisely Hitler's detailed instructions were transmitted by Göring and translated into reality by the bureaucracy.

- 8.4 Thus the Reich Transport Minister (*Reichsverkehrsminister*) forbade Jews the use of sleeping and dining cars on 23 February, following Hitler's "will". By means of the law on rentals to Jews of 30 April 1939, the law for the protection of tenants was extensively curtailed thereby creating a legal situation according to Hitler's orders whereby Jews could be quartered together in separate houses. The law, once again based on Hitler's "will", however, ordered that German-Jewish mixed families with children be allowed to remain in their homes. With the circular put out by the Minister of the Interior on June 1939 Hitler's wish regarding the "*Judenbann*" was fulfilled whereby the presence of Jews in baths and health establishments could be curtailed.
- 8.5 As early as 12 November, at the meeting of leading representatives of the Party and State which was held under Göring's direction and which dealt with further measures of anti-Jewish policy, Göring announced that Hitler would "now finally make a foreign policy thrust, beginning with the powers who had raised the Jewish question, in order really to arrive at a solution to the Madagascar question. This is what he explained to me on 9 November. It doesn't work otherwise. He also wants to tell the other States: 'Why do you constantly talk about the Jews? Take them!'"
- 8.6 These foreign policy initiatives took concrete form in the following weeks. Hitler left the necessary steps to Schacht, President of the Reich Bank, who elaborated on a plan initiated by Fischböck, Economics Minister in annexed Austria: according to this plan, the emigration of German Jews would be financed by means of an international loan. In this way, within the period of the next three to five years, emigration would become possible for some 400,000 employable Jews and their dependants.

- 8.7 It was only after Hitler had expressly agreed to this plan in a general meeting with Schacht, that Schacht was able to begin with appropriate inquiries in London at the end of December, 1938, and later with concrete negotiations. They did not lead, however, to tangible results.
- 8.8 With this foreign policy initiative, “the Third Reich” tried to make the German “Jewish problem” into an international question. The conjuring up of the memory of the pogrom of 9 November and additional threats were intended to place pressure upon German Jews to hasten to leave the country as well as to prevail upon the international community of states to prepare to admit a greater number of Jews.
- 8.9 After Göring had already stated, in the meeting of 12 November, that in the event of an international conflict “an important reckoning with the Jews” would be “a foregone conclusion”, Hitler expressed himself in a similar way in the course of the following weeks and months: The South African minister of defence and economics minister, Pirow, who had offered Hitler among other things his intervention in finding an international solution to the German “Jewish question”, was told by his host on 24 November, 1938: “But the problem would be solved in the near future. This was his unshakeable will. It was not merely a German, but rather a European problem”. During the conversation, Hitler moved to an open threat: “What do you think Mr. Pirow, what would happen in Germany if I lifted my protective hand away from the Jews? The world can not conceive of what would happen.” With this remark, Hitler made it clear to his guest that the authority in the German anti-Jewish policy ultimately remained with him and that he was in a position to decide about a new pogrom at any time – to lift his protective hand, as he expressed it euphemistically. This expression was of course a deception. In fact, it was never Hitler’s aim to protect the Jews. By presenting himself as a “protector” of the Jews, he wanted to deflect from his own central role in anti-Jewish policy and intended to

portrait potential further anti-Jewish violence as a spontaneous outburst of popular fury. He followed here the official version which the Nazis had dissimulated after the pogrom of November 1938.

- 8.10 The report on Hitler's official reception of the Czech Foreign Minister Chvalkovsky on 21 January 1939, contains the following remarks by the "*Führer*": "The Jews would be exterminated here. The Jews will not get away with 9 November 1918. This day would be avenged".
- 8.11 In his speech before the *Reichstag* on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the take-over of power, on 30 January 1939, Hitler finally expressed himself in a pivotal and lengthier passage on the "Jewish question". "In my life I have often been a prophet and was generally laughed at. During my struggle for power it was mostly the Jewish people who laughed at my prophecies that I would some day assume the leadership of the state and thereby of the entire Volk and then, among many other things, achieve a solution of the Jewish problem. I believe that in the meantime the then resounding laughter of Jewry in Germany is now choking in their throats. Today I will be a prophet again: If international Jewry within Europe and abroad should succeed once more in plunging the peoples into a world war, then the consequence will be not the Bolshevisation of the world and therewith a victory of Jewry, but on the contrary, the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."
- 8.12 This threat by Hitler contained a new quality in that it no longer was aimed at putting further pressure on Jewish emigration. Rather, Hitler began to adjust to the fact that in the case of a war, a Jewish minority would continue to exist in Germany; he now intended to use this Jewish minority and the Jews of other countries, who in the case of war would fall under his domination as hostages so as to prevent an intervention by the Western Powers against his war policy. This is why his

menaces concentrated on a “world war” and not merely on “war”. The threatened “annihilation” (*Vernichtung*) of the Jews is here to be understood as a not clearly defined but in any case violent intimidation.

9. INTERIM RESULTS: HITLER’S ROLE IN THE PERSECUTION OF GERMAN JEWS 1933-1939

- 9.1 From the preceding sections it has become clear that Hitler – in accordance with his programmatic statements in the twenties – consistently pursued the policy of “removal” of the Jews from Germany in the years between 1933 and 1939: he did this, to begin with, through a policy of systematic segregation and discrimination, finally through the use of violence. Hitler’s direct influence can be demonstrated for all phases of the persecution of the Jews, although the dictator remained flexible: while in general he attempted to radicalise anti-Jewish policies, he could also check the radical course of the persecution of the Jews if and when for internal or foreign policy reasons this appeared opportune.
- 9.2 It has also become clear, however, that the persecution of the Jews played a central role in Hitler’s politics and that the dictator used anti-Jewish policy to try to gain advantages for his regime both within Germany and internationally. With the help of the boycott of 1933, international criticism of the terror of the Nazi regime was to be silenced; with the help of antisemitic laws, the hope of direct economic advantage, tied to antisemitic aspirations on the part of the party basis, would be satisfied; the arms programme was possible only by means of access to Jewish property; finally, Hitler intended to force the Western powers to take the Jews as hostages in order to force the compliance of the Western powers. Hitler’s antisemitic policy is therefore not merely

to be understood as the implementation of an ideological fanatic; it fulfilled a significant function in his policy to secure and expand his power position.

10. HITLER AND THE MASS MURDERS IN POLAND 1939/40

- 10.1 When Germany invaded and conquered Poland in September 1939, the Nazi Regime radicalised its anti-Jewish Policy significantly. During the war in Poland and in the months thereafter, German SS and police units shot many tens of thousands of people, members of the Polish elite, including thousands of Jews. These shootings were a part of the policy of the German leadership of rendering Poland leaderless and destroying it as a nation. This policy of mass murder was in accord with Hitler's ideas and orders.
- 10.2 When on 12 September 1939, the head of Military Intelligence, Admiral Canaris, drew the attention of General Keitel (Chief of the High Command of the Wehrmacht) to the existing plans for far-reaching executions in Poland, Keitel answered that "these things have already been decided by the *Führer*"; Hitler had made clear that "if the Wehrmacht doesn't want to have anything to do with this then it must also accept that the SS and the Gestapo act separately". On 2 October Hitler stated that whatever happens, it should be noted that "Polish masters should not exist, where Polish masters exist they should be killed, as tough as this may sound".
- 10.3 The very fact that Hitler at this time played a central role in all of these questions related to the persecution of the Jews is made clear in a note of 6 December 1939 issued from the Office "of Hess, Hitler's Deputy (in party affairs). At the beginning of December, 1939, proposals had been made by the Office of the *Führer*'s Deputy to approach Himmler so as to

be able to confiscate telephones still in Jewish hands and to decree a general identifying mark for Jews. Bormann, Chief of Staff of the Office and close personal co-worker of Hitler, let it be known “that the *Reichsführer* SS will discuss all measures against the Jews directly with the *Führer*”.

- 10.4 At the end of May 1940 at a meeting of leading representatives of the police, Hans Frank, the “*Generalgouverneur*” in Poland (i.e. the Head of the German occupation administration) explained the intended plan for “extraordinary pacification” (*Ausserordentliches Befriedungsprogramm*), a further chapter in the murder of Polish citizens which was to be discharged while the world was distracted by the War in the West. Frank said: “I admit openly that the planned pacification program will cost the lives of thousands of Poles, especially of those from the intellectual leadership of Poland. [...] The *Führer* told me: The treatment and security of German policy in the *Generalgouvernement* is the business of those men responsible for the *Generalgouvernement* alone. He expressed himself in the following way: Whatever leadership we have now identified in Poland, that is what is to be liquidated.”

11. HITLER AND THE PLANS FOR A “RESERVATION FOR JEWS” IN POLAND

- 11.1 Along with this program for murder in Poland, the further general anti-Jewish policy of the “Third Reich” in Poland planned above all to set up a “reservation” (*Reservat*) for all Jews under German domination. In this case as well, Hitler’s influence was decisive: in a meeting with his heads of departments (*Amtsleitern*), Heydrich, the chief of the Security Police on 14 September 1939, reported that Hitler was given

proposals regarding “the Jewish problem in Poland by the *Reichsführer* (i.e. Himmler, P.L.) which could only be decided upon by the *Führer* because they carried significant foreign policy consequences”.

11.2 On 21 September, Heydrich was able to report to the heads of departments of the Security Police that Hitler had in the meantime made a decision on the issue of the deportations: “The deportation of Jews into the foreign-language *Gau*, deportation across the demarkation line, is approved.” By “foreign-language *Gau*” was meant those occupied areas which were not directly annexed to the *Reich* but which were slated to become part of the *Generalgouvernement* later; “demarcation line” referred to the line to which the Soviet Union and the German Reich in Poland had agreed upon in order to divide their spheres of interest. Heydrich spoke further in his report on 21 September about the planned deportations: “However, the whole process was to take place over the course of one year: Jewry is to be brought together in the cities in ghettos in order to keep better control and to make later deportation easier. The first priority is the disappearance of the Jew as a small settler in the countryside. This action must be accomplished within the next 3 to 4 weeks.”

11.3 On 29 September, Hitler explained to Rosenberg, the Head of the Office for Foreign Affairs of the NSDAP, that the newly conquered Polish territory was to be divided into three strips: Between the Vistula and the Bug the Jews from the entire *Reich* were to be settled, as well as “all in any way unreliable elements”. At the Vistula an “East Wall” was to be built and on the previous German-Polish border a “broad belt of Germanising and colonising”, and between them, in the middle, a sort of Polish “state”. The idea of a “Jewish reservation” was addressed relatively frequently in the coming weeks by the Nazi leadership: Thus for example, it was expressly mentioned by Hitler to the Swedish industrialist Dahlerus when he visited Germany at the end of September, seeking to mediate between the *Reich* and Great Britain. The German press was also secretly briefed on these plans. To the Italian foreign minister

on 1 October, Hitler spoke of the idea of a re-allocation of land according to ethnic criteria, a “general purification policy” (*völkischen Flurbereinigung*) in the East. On 6 October Hitler declared in a speech before the *Reichstag* that the “most important task” which follows from the “collapse of the Polish state”, is a “new order in ethnographic relations, i.e. a re-settlement of nationalities”. In the second part of his speech, Hitler gave notice that in the course of the coming “ordering of the entire living space according to nationalities” (which was to include all of Europe under German influence) “an attempt to order and regulate the Jewish problem will be undertaken”.

11.4 Directly after this speech, on 7 October 1939, Hitler signed his edict on the “consolidation of German ethnicity” (*Festigung deutschen Volkstums*). Therein Hitler transmitted to Himmler two tasks: The first one was “to take in and settle within the *Reich* ... German people who were previously forced to live far away”; the second was to “organise the settlement of people’s communities in such a way as to set up better dividing lines between them”. Hitler transmitted to Himmler in this edict, not only the job of returning to the *Reich* the German nationals and ethnic Germans (*Reichs- und Volksdeutsche*) but also of “creating new German areas of settlement through deportation” and specifically the “exclusion of the damaging influence of those alien populations who imply danger for the *Reich* and the German people’s community”. In another section of the edict, Hitler specified that “those questionable population groups can be assigned to specific living areas”.

11.5 While Himmler started preparations to deport Poles and Jews from the annexed Polish areas, in accordance with these orders, Adolf Eichmann concerned himself with preparations to deport Jews from the rest of the “Great German Reich”, also, as he said, on orders specifically issued by Hitler. On 6 October Eichmann, at this point Director of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*) in Prague, which worked under Gestapo instructions to deport Jews systematically from the Protectorates of Bohemia and

Moravia, received the additional order from *Gestapo* chief Müller to deport Jews from the Kattowitz district (i.e the recently annexed Polish area) as well as from Moravian-Ostrava (in the Protectorate) and to send them to Nisko am San in the District of Lublin of the *Generalgouvernement*.

- 11.6 His assignment was soon extended, by virtue of orders from Hitler, to cover the deportation of all Jews from the *Reich*, including Austria and the “Ostmark”. Thus he stated to the *Gauleiter* of Silesia, Wagner on 10 October: “The *Führer* has for the present ordered the restructuring of 300,000 Jews from the old *Reich* and the Ostmark.” While visiting Vienna on 7 October, Eichmann explained to the Special Commissioner for Jewish questions in the Office of the Reich Governor for Austria: “According to strictly confidential information from the director of the Central Office for Emigration of Jews, the *Führer* has given the order that, to start the whole operation, 300.000 less well-off Jews from the Greater German Reich area” will be deported to Poland; in the meantime, those Jews still living in Vienna are to be seized and deported within the context of an operation which will take “at most 3/4 of a year”.
- 11.7 Just as this first extensive deportation programme took place under Hitler’s personal authority, so the crushing of the Nisko experiment is also traceable to a decision by Hitler. On 17 October, after the first deportation trains with altogether about 4700 people from Vienna, Moravia-Ostrava and Kattowitz had reached Nisko, Hitler made clear to Keitel that precautions must be taken because the future *Generalgouvernement* “as an extended glacis which has military importance for us, could be used as a deployment area”. This perspective was obviously not compatible with that of a “Jewish reservation”; the deportations to Nisko were stopped on the order of the Reich Security Head Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). From a long-term point of view, according to Hitler, nevertheless, the “leadership of the area ... must also

make it possible for us to clean the area of the *Reich* from Jews and Poles” – a further indication that he had in no way abandoned the basic idea of a “Jewish reservation” in the Generalgouvernement.

12. HITLER’S SUPPORT FOR PLANS TO DEPORT FOUR MILLION JEWS TO MADAGASCAR

- 12.1 After the victory over France in June, 1940, the plan to push the Jews into a “reservation” (*Reservat*) in Poland was replaced with another project for the territorial solution of the Jewish problem: the so- called Madagascar plan.
- 12.2 As early as 25, May Himmler had presented Hitler with a memorandum which included the following key sentence with respect to the fate of the Jews: “I hope to see that by means of the possibility of a large emigration of all Jews to Africa or to some other colony – that the concept of Jew will be fully extinguished”. In the same document Himmler had still rejected “the Bolshevist methods of physical extirpation (*Ausrottung*) of a people because of inner conviction, as un-German and impossible”. Hitler judged this memorandum to be “very good and correct”, according to Himmler’s note of 28 May. The document however was “to be held in the greatest secrecy”; Himmler was to show it to Frank at some point “in order to tell him that the *Führer* finds it correct”.
- 12.3 Plans for the re-settlement of altogether four million Jews to the island off the African east coast were worked out in the German Department of the Foreign Office as well as in the Reich Security Head Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). From the surviving records of the German Foreign Office it is clear that the Madagascar plan (like the plan of a “Jewish reservation” in Poland) was not a new variation of a solution

for emigration (*Auswanderungslösung*), but rather that here the Jews were to play the role of hostages; the Jews under German control would be used in this way to prevent the United States from entering the war. Thus in a note from the Jewish expert of the German Department, Rademacher, it is said that under a German “police governor” (*Polizeigouverneur*) “the Jews” should be set up as security under German control for the future good behaviour of their racial associates in America”; and in another note, the same expert wrote that the Security Police was “experienced with carrying out appropriate punishments which had become necessary because of unfriendly activities by Jews in the USA against Germany”. The mere fact that Madagascar lacked the basic conditions necessary for existence for four million European Jews makes it clear that the plan itself was a threat to the further existence of Jews in the area of German dominance.

- 12.4 Hitler’s extreme interest in the Madagascar plan is fully documented. Ribbentrop and Hitler sketched out the plan to the Italian Foreign Minister Ciano and Mussolini during their talks in Munich on 17 and 18 June. Hitler mentioned the Madagascar project on 20 June to the Commander in chief of the Navy, Raeder. On 12 July Frank passed on to his collaborators the following information from a conversation with Hitler which had taken place four days earlier: “Very important is also the decision of the *Führer* which came from a proposal of mine that there be no further transports of Jews into the *Generalgouvernement*. In general political terms I would like to say that it is planned to transport the entire Jewish clan from the German *Reich*, the *Generalgouvernement* and the Protectorat to an African or American colony in the shortest conceivable time span following the peace settlement. Madagascar is being considered; it would be separated from France for this purpose.”
- 12.5 At the beginning of August, Hitler in a discussion with his Ambassador to Paris, Abetz, returned to the plan of expulsion (*Vertreibung*) of all Jews from Europe; a similar statement of Hitler’s from the middle of August is mentioned in Goebbels’s diary.

13. HITLER'S PARTICIPATION IN FURTHER DEPORTATIONS AND PLANS FOR DEPORTATION

- 13.1 Hitler's particular interest in the furthering of "Jewish policy" becomes obvious especially through the fact of his personal involvement in subsequent plans for deportation.
- 13.2 The initiative for the deportation of 7000 Jews from the two *Gaue* (i.e. Party districts), Baden and the Saar-Palatinate area, to France on 22 and 23 October was most probably due to the intervention of the two responsible Gau chiefs, Bürckel and Wagner. These abductions were specifically approved by Hitler, as is clear from a handwritten note by the Jewish expert of the foreign office, Rademacher.
- 13.3 At the beginning of November, Hitler made a personal decision concerning the distribution of 200,000 ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) who were to be accommodated in the *Reich* before the end of the year, thanks to agreements with the Soviet Union and Romania negotiated in September and October. In this connection, on the occasion of a conference with leading military leaders on 4 November, 1941, he made a decision about the further deportation of Poles and Jews from the annexed Eastern territories: "Gouvernement: plus 150-160,000 Poles and Jews from the newly won territories".
- 13.4 On the very same day, discussions began on the agreement to a quota for those to be deported from the ex-Polish areas, as we learn from the Goebbels' diaries; According to this source, Hitler created "joyful peace" between the *Gauleiters* Koch (from East Prussia) and Forster (Danzig-West Prussia): "All would like to throw their rubbish in to the *Generalgouvernement*: Jews, the sick, the lazy, etc. And Frank resists. Not entirely without justification. He would like to make an exemplary country out of Poland. That is going too far. He can not and should not

do this. Poland should be a large work reservoir for us – this is what the *Führer* has decided. [...] And the Jews – we will throw them out of these areas later as well.”

- 13.5 At this same meeting or directly thereafter, deportation quotas were set for the two *Gaue* – and according to this commitment mass deportations of more than 47,000 Poles, Jews and non Jews from the annexed territories into the *Generalgouvernement* followed in the next months.
- 13.6 At the beginning of December, Lammers told Schirach (*Gauleiter* in Vienna) of his wish expressed two months earlier – that the deportation (*Abschiebung*) of Vienna Jews be approved by Hitler. This is further proof of Hitler’s direct involvement in the plans for deportation: “As *Reichsleiter* Bormann explained to me, the *Führer* has decided, on the basis of one of your reports, that in the *Reichsgau* of Vienna, 60.000 Jews who have housing should be deported to the *Generalgouvernement* as rapidly as possible, i.e. while the war is still going on, because of the housing shortage in Vienna.” In anticipation of this deportation, beginning in February and March, 5000 Jews from Vienna were deported to the *Generalgouvernement*.
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14. PLANS FOR THE DEPORTATION OF JEWS UNDER GERMAN DOMINATION INTO THE (YET TO BE OCCUPIED) SOVIET UNION

- 14.1 The Madagascar plan had become obsolete by the Fall of 1940 because of the continuation of the war in the West. And the comprehensive deportation of the Jews in German-dominated areas into the *Generalgouvernement* had proved to be difficult for various reasons. Thus Hitler assigned the responsibility for deporting the Jews to the occupied Soviet areas to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*. This decision, which was made parallel to the preparations for “Barbarossa” (the code word

for the military operations involved in the attack on the Soviet Union) around the end of 1940, beginning of 1941, can be reconstructed on the basis of a series of documents.

- 14.2 On 21 January, the Gestapo's Jewish expert in Paris, Theodor Dannecker, noted the following in a paper prepared for Eichmann: "According to the will of the *Führer*, the Jewish question should be carried to a final solution after the war within the German-controlled or dominated parts of Europe,. The chief of the Security Police and the SD (Heydrich, P.L.) has already received a mandate from the *Führer* – via the RF-SS (Himmler, P.L.) or through the *Reichsmarschall* (Göring, P.L.) to submit a proposal for a final solution project. On the basis of the wide experience of the departments of the *CdS* (Chief of the Security Police, P.L.) and SD in the treatment of the Jews and thanks to the lengthy preparations made in this domain, the most significant features of this project have been worked out. It is now in the hands of the *Führer* and the *Reichsmarschall*. It is clear that the execution involves an enormous amount of work and that it can only be successful if the greatest care is taken in its preparation. This must be based upon a comprehensive deportation of the Jews as well as upon the planning of a settlement action prepared to the smallest detail to take place in a territory which has not yet been decided upon."
- 14.3 In addition we learn from a statement to the Propaganda Ministry submitted on 20 March 1941 by Eichmann, who was head of the department in the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* responsible for "evacuations" (*Räumungsangelegenheiten*) as of December, 1939, that "Pg. Heydrich, who was commissioned with the final evacuation of Jews, had presented the *Führer* with a proposal 8 to 10 weeks earlier which had not been implemented for the sole reason that the *Generalgouvernement* was not at that point in a position to accept a single Jew or Pole from the old *Reich*".

- 14.4 If we piece these various bits of information together, it becomes clear that sometime before January 1941, Heydrich -through Hitler and via Himmler and Göring – had received a commission to prepare a first draft for a “final solution project” “after the War” for all Jews in a yet to be decided territory. This plan was ready in January, but because of the situation in the *Generalgouvernement* it was not implementable. For on 15 March the deportations to the *Generalgouvernement* were stopped due to the transport situation in view of the military preparations for the attack on Russia.
- 14.5 Apparently completely unimpressed by the blockade on deportations which had been imposed two days earlier, those who gathered at Hitler’s midday dinner table on 17 March conversed about further deportation programs, as Goebbels described it almost euphorically in his diary: “Vienna will soon be totally free of Jews. And now it is Berlin’s turn. I discuss this with the *Führer* and with Dr.Franck (sic!). He hires the Jews to work and they are also obedient. Later they must leave Europe entirely.”
- 14.6 Frank, in the meantime once again in the *Generalgouvernement*, also expressed himself on the issue of Hitler’s further plans in regard to the persecution of the Jews. Thus the minutes to a meeting of 25 March, read as follows: “SS-Ogruf (*Obergruppenführer*, P.L.) Krüger announced the provisional stoppage of the resettlement of Poles and Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*. Frank states that the *Führer* had told him that the *Generalgouvernement* would be the first area made free of Jews.”
- 14.7 From these statements by Frank and Goebbels we thus can conclude two things: first of all, the *Generalgouvernement* was not the final destination for the intended “evacuation of the Jews” because it was supposed to be made “free of Jews” and the Jews were supposed to “leave Europe altogether”. Secondly, the assurance which Hitler made to Goebbels and Frank that their respective areas of domination were to be made “free of Jews” could only be realised over the long- term. This

is because he gave this promise at a moment when the deportations had in fact been stopped; what Hitler's timetable for a "Germanisation" of the *Generalgouvernement* really was can be deduced from another statement by Frank, made on the same day: "The *Führer* is decided to make this area (i.g. the *Generalgouvernement*, P.L.) a purely German country in the course of the next 15 to 20 years." Shortly thereafter, Frank went on to occupy himself with the planning for the Warsaw Ghetto, which would provide the basis for at least a medium-term existence for the Jewish "residential district" in Warsaw. Also Goebbels' diary entry for 22 March 1941 shows that the Propaganda Minister had in the meantime understood that the "evacuation" from Berlin could only be implemented over a longer period of time; "The Jews can not be evacuated out of Berlin since 30,000 work in the armaments industry there."

- 14.8 In fact, by March 1941, at the very latest, the Nazi leadership was clearly aware of what was the destination planned for the Jews who were to be expelled over the long- range period "out of all of Europe" really was to be: They were to be deported to the newly conquered Eastern territories after the war against the Soviet Union for which Hitler had concretely begun preparations as early as the last months of 1940.
- 14.9 More evidence for this intention is supplied by a memo by Heydrich from 26 March 1941 concerning a discussion with Göring: "In relation to the solution of the Jewish question, I reported briefly to the *Reichsmarschall* and showed him my draft which he accepted with one alteration regarding Rosenberg's jurisdiction and ordered me to resubmit it."
- 14.10 By "Rosenberg's jurisdiction" was meant the latter's designated role as chief of an authority that was to administer the eastern occupied territories – what was later to become the Ministry of the East. Herewith it is clear that the planned "solution of the Jewish question" was to take

place in the soon to-be-occupied areas of the Soviet Union. The renewed submission of the draft was to take place on 31 July 1941, when Göring entrusted Heydrich with the responsibility of “preparations in organisational, technical and material aspects for the complete solution to the Jewish question in the German area of influence in Europe”, and stated that the “jurisdiction of other central authorities” should be taken into consideration; this was a general formula to solve the problem of Rosenberg’s jurisdiction.

14.11 What those involved in the phase of preparation of “Barbarossa” understood by the term “final solution” within the to-be-conquered Soviet Union is not clear. Before the beginning of Barbarossa, the German attack upon the Soviet Union, there had been no preparations made – not for a reservation nor for mass murder. Just as in the case of the plan for a reservation in Poland and in the case of a Madagascar plan, in the case of a deportation to the Soviet Union the European Jews would have found a situation in which the basic conditions for human existence were impossible – particularly since the essence of German policy was to systematically starve the Soviet population. Mass death would have been the consequence.

14.12 For the months before “Barbarossa” a series of concrete indications proves that Hitler, in particular, had declared himself in favour of such a comprehensive deportation “to the East”: Frank explained to Goebbels directly before the beginning of the attack on the Soviet Union that he was preparing for the banishment of the Jews (*Abschiebung*), as reported in the Goebbels diaries: “Dr. Franck (sic!) tells about the *Generalgouvernement*. There they are already pleased to be able to banish the Jews. Jewry in Poland is gradually decaying. A justified punishment for having incited the people and instigated war. The *Führer* has also prophesied this to the Jews.”

- 14.13 From statements which he made a few weeks later, it becomes clear where Frank got his certainty: to his staff he explained that there would be no further ghetto construction in the *Generalgouvernement*; according to a pledge which Hitler had made to him on 19 June, the Jews would be removed in the foreseeable future from the *Generalgouvernement*, which would then be made into a “transit camp” (*Durchgangslager*).
- 14.14 A further source is a complaint from the Romanian Head of State, Antonescu, to Hitler on 16 August 1941: Antonescu complained that Bessarabian Jews who had been expelled from their homes by Romanian troops and had been forced further to the east, to Ukraine, were now being pushed back from there by the Wehrmacht. This practice, according to Antonescu, stood in opposition to “the guidelines laid down to him by the *Führer* in Munich regarding the treatment of Eastern Jews”. Antonescu was instructed, according to this source, that the Jews of Eastern Europe were going to be deported to the conquered Soviet areas – which is what his troops did right away – without waiting for the end of the war – as Hitler had intended.
- 14.15 As a conclusion to this section, we can state that Hitler was well aware of the plans of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* for the deportation of the Jews in the to-be-conquered Soviet Union.
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15. HITLER AND THE MASS SHOOTINGS OF JEWS DURING THE WAR AGAINST RUSSIA

- 15.1 In the course of the preparations for the racist war of extermination against the Soviet Union, Hitler played a central role when it came to converting Nazi ideological thought into concrete instructions. On 3 March, Hitler gave instructions to the Chief of the Army Leadership Staff (*Wehrmacht-Führungsstab*), Jodl, for the new version of a proposal

presented to him by the High Command of the *Wehrmacht* (OKW) on the: “guidelines for special areas relating to instruction No. 21”, which was to constitute the basis for the occupation administration in the to-be-conquered Soviet territories. “This coming campaign is more than just a struggle of arms; it will also lead to the confrontation of two world views. In order to end this war it will not suffice by far merely to defeat the enemy army. [...] The Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia, the hitherto oppressor of the people, must be eliminated.”

15.2 Already one week earlier, the Head of the Armaments Office of the OKW, Thomas, had learned while reporting to Göring, that Hitler had stated that it was “most important to execute the Bolshevik leaders”. Explicit was also the tenor of Hitler’s statement of 17 March to the top officers of the army: “The intelligentsia installed by Stalin must be destroyed. The leadership machine of the Russian empire must be defeated. In the Greater Russian area the use of the most brutal force is necessary.”

15.3 On 30 March, Hitler made a speech with a similar tone to a meeting of Generals, recorded by the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, General Halder, in an abbreviated fashion: “Struggle of two world views against one another. Devastating judgement about Bolshevism – it is the same as asocial criminality. Communism unbelievable danger for the future. We must disavow the standpoint of soldierly camaraderie. The Communist is not a comrade, neither before nor after. We are talking about a war of extermination. If we don’t look at it this way than we might well beat the enemy – but in 30 years we will once again be faced with the Communist enemy. We are not waging war in order to conserve the enemy... war against Russia: extermination of the Bolshevik Commissars and the Communist intelligentsia.”

15.4 According to Hitler’s guidelines of 3 March and Jodl’s precise instructions from the same day, a “directive concerning the special areas of Barbarossa” was issued on 13 March by Jodl. In this directive it says:

“In the operation area of the Army, the *Reichsführer SS* is granted special responsibilities by order of the *Führer* for the preparation of the political administration; these special responsibilities arise from the ultimate decisive struggle between two opposing political systems. In the context of these responsibilities, the *Reichsführer SS* will act independently and at his own risk.”

- 15.5 What the military men understood by these “special responsibilities” becomes clear from Jodl’s directive of 3 March, in which he spoke of the “necessity of rendering all Bolshevik chieftains and commissars harmless without delay”.
- 15.6 The massacres of the four *Einsatzgruppen*, the task forces consisting of SS and police personnel subordinate to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, commenced with the beginning of the war in the East. They are extensively documented, above all in the situational reports (*Ereignismeldungen*) for the UdSSR, put out by the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*; these reports openly describe the murder of hundreds of thousands of people, more of 90% of them Jews. These reports were relatively widely circulated: for example 45 copies of situational report No. 40 of 1 August 1941 were distributed; they were sent not only to numerous offices of the SS and police but also to the Leadership staff of the *Wehrmacht*. In a radio telegram to the *Einsatzgruppen* on 21 August, *Gestapo* Chief Müller, who was responsible for the compilation of situational reports, ordered that “especially interesting illustrative material” should be sent to Berlin because “the *Führer* should be presented with continuous reports on the work of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the East from here”. The distribution list of the situational report No 128 of 3 November 1941, of which there were 55 copies, included the Party Chancellery (Hitler’s office responsible for communication between him and the Nazi Party). It is therefore not possible to argue that the mass murders by the *Einsatzgruppen* were kept secret from other agencies by the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*; in fact, these reports were available to many – including also to Hitler. The grounds for the mass executions which were given

by the *Einsatzgruppen* precisely correspond to the justifications offered by Hitler for the extermination of the “Jewish-Bolshevik complex” before the beginning of the war.

15.7 After these murders had begun on a large scale, Hitler once again demonstratively endorsed the brutal course which was being pursued; on 16 July in a conference with leading functionaries placed in the Eastern territories dealing with the ground rules of the future policy of occupation he said: “The giant area must naturally be pacified as quickly as possible; this will happen at best in that anyone who just looks funny should be shot.”

15.8 With the beginning of the massive murder of the Soviet civilian population in the summer of 1941, a stage was reached in which these statements and similar ones by Hitler could no longer be understood as general threats of violence. The “eliminator” language of the dictator must rather be seen in the context of the beginning mass murder of people by special commandos specially set up by “particular order of the *Führer*”. When Hitler now spoke of the “annihilation” (*Vernichtung*) of people his underlings must have understood it as it was meant: as direct or indirect orders for a radicalisation of the already begun mass murders.

16. HITLER’S ORDER TO BEGIN THE DEPORTATIONS FROM GERMANY

16.1 In the middle of September 1941 Hitler ordered the deportation of the Jews from the Greater German Reich into ghettos in Eastern Europe. He thereby set in process the deportation plans which he had pursued at the beginning of 1941, without waiting for the original precondition

– the military victory over the Red Army. Only a month earlier, in the middle of August, Hitler had spoken against the “evacuation” of Jews from the *Reich* area.

- 16.2 On the 18 September 1941 Himmler nonetheless announced to the *Gauleiter* in Warthegau, Greiser, the following: “The *Führer* would like the *Altreich* and the Protectorate from the West to the East to be emptied and liberated of Jews as soon as possible. I am therefore trying – hopefully still in this year – to transport the Jews of the *Altreich* and those from the Protectorate – at least as a first stage – into the Eastern territories, which had been acquired two years earlier; this is in order to push them further East in the coming spring. I intend to place about 60,000 Jews of the *Altreich* and the Protectorate in the Litzmannstadt ghetto, which I understand has enough room to accommodate them, for the winter.”
- 16.3 In the following weeks Hitler repeatedly confirmed his determination to deport the Jews from Central Europe to the East. On 6 October he announced to his lunch guests as he expiated over the planned penalties against the Czechs, that all Jews from the Protectorate must be “removed” (*entfernt*), and not just sent to the *Generalgouvernement* but rather “directly further, to the East”. This however, was not possible at the moment according to Hitler, due to the shortage of transport capacity. At the same time as the “Protectorate Jews”, the Jews from Vienna and Berlin were also to “disappear” (*verschwinden*).
- 16.4 On 25 October Hitler made the following remark at his table talk, after he had once again made mention of his “prophecy” of 30 January 1939: “This criminal race has the two million dead from the World War on its conscience, now again hundreds of thousands. No one can say to me: we can’t send them in the morass! Who then cares about our people? It is good if the terror we are exterminating Jewry goes before us.”

- 16.5 In fact the deportations from the *Reich* area began on 15 October 1941. Why did Hitler at this point make the decision to start deportations which he had begun to plan from the beginning of 1941 ? Leading functionaries of the regime demanded such measures: among others, the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Rosenberg, had suggested deportations in September – as a reaction to Stalin’s decision to deport the Volga Germans to the East. Several *Gauleiters* demanded at this time that Jews be pushed out of their living areas in order to create housing for those affected by the bombing raids. For Hitler it seems that yet another motive played a role; he wanted to put out a warning to “world Jewry” by means of the deportation of Central European Jews – in the sense of his “prophesy” of 30 January 1939. In this way he intended to prevent the entry of the United States into the war (the leadership of the US in his opinion was a puppet of “world Jewry”, a theme which was particularly conspicuous in German propaganda in the following few weeks).
- 16.6 Hitler’s motives become apparent from a memo written by the representative for the Eastern Ministry in Hitler’s headquarters, Koeppen, on 20 September. Koeppen wrote that the Envoy von Steengracht (representative of the Foreign Office in the headquarters of the *Führer*) had told him that Hitler was considering the question of postponing possible “*Pressalien*” (i.e. *Repressalien*; reprisals) against the German Jews “for an eventuality of an American entry into the war”. One of the elements behind the deportations of October 1941 which took place openly and which were registered by the international press was thus also the idea of using the Jews as hostages. This motive had also been involved in the projects of a “Jewish reservation” in Poland and a police government on Madagascar.
- 16.7 These different motives for the implementation of the deportations appear secondary however, when one keeps in mind that Hitler, from the beginning of his political career, had intended to get rid of the Jews within the German “*Lebensraum*” in one way or another and had

pressed forward with plans for mass deportation from the very beginning of the war: with the conquest of the enormous Soviet area it seemed to him for the first time that a practical possibility was available for the realisation of these plans.

17. RADICALISATION OF THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS BY HITLER AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR 1941-1942

- 17.1 Hitler's decision of September to deport the Jews from Central Europe did not yet include the resolution directly and systematically to murder them at the given destinations in occupied Poland and the Soviet territory (especially Lodz, Riga and Minsk). Clearly Hitler initially held on to the idea of deporting these people further to the East once the expected military victory over the Soviet Union had been achieved. When in November, 1941, a total number of 6000 Jews, coming on six transports from the *Reich* to Kovno and Riga, were shot on the orders of the local Security Police, Himmler ordered Heydrich to stop the executions. (In fact this order arrived too late.) This intervention, however, concerned only the Jews from the *Reich*. The policy of extermination continued in the Soviet areas undiminished.
- 17.2 With the declaration of war on the USA on 11 December, the idea of taking Western and Central European Jews hostage became obsolete. Now the final solution – i.e. the systematic mass murder – of all European Jews was launched; Hitler's pivotal role in this last step of the escalation process can be demonstrated once again.
- 17.3 One day after the declaration of war on the USA, on 12 December, Hitler addressed the Gau and Reich leaders of the Party. In this speech he returned once again to his prophecy of 30 January 1939 and now announced the approaching extermination of the Jews living under

German domination, as we can read in the Goebbels' diaries: "As concerns the Jewish question, the *Führer* is determined to make a clean sweep. He had prophesied to the Jews that if they once again brought about a world war they would experience their own extermination. This was not just an empty phrase. The World War is there, the extermination of Jewry must be the necessary consequence. This question must be seen without sentimentality. We are not here in order to have sympathy with the Jews, rather we sympathise with our own German people. If the German people have now once again sacrificed as many as 160,000 dead in the Eastern campaign, then the authors of this bloody conflict must pay with their lives."

17.4 Rosenberg, the Reich Minister for the occupied Eastern territories, reported in his diary that 14 on December he showed Hitler the manuscript for an address he was planning to give in Berlin. Rosenberg, who in a press conference of 18 November had openly spoken of a "biological eradication of the entirety of Jewry", was now, "after the decision", i.e. after the declaration of war on the United States, uncertain as to whether his initially planned "comments on the New York Jews did not perhaps have to ... be somewhat altered. [...] I took the position not to speak about the extirpation (*Ausrottung*) of the Jews. The *Führer* agreed with this attitude and said they saddled us with the war and they brought the destruction; it would be no wonder if they were the first to feel the consequences." Rosenberg's uncertainty was related to the propagandistic representation of "extirpation" – not the fact itself; here there was agreement between himself and Hitler.

17.5 On 18 December, Himmler noted these key words in his appointment calendar (recently re-discovered in Moscow) regarding a conversation with Hitler: "Jewish question/to be extirpated (*auszurotten*) as partisans". This memo does not, in my opinion, provide the decisive order to Himmler to start the systematic mass murder of the Jews of Europe, as has been recently argued, but rather can more reasonably be read as a confirmation of Hitler's intention to continue and to intensify the mass

murders of Soviet Jews, which had up until then already claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands, under the same rationale as before. This memo is thus significant proof of the direct and fundamental participation of Hitler in the decision-making process concerning the mass murder of the Jews.

- 17.6 The deportations which once again began on a large scale in the Spring of 1942, after the Wannsee Conference of 20 January, were preceded in January and February 1942 by a series of public declarations by Hitler, in which he unmistakably returned to his “prophecy” of January 1939, that in the case of a new world war the Jews of Europe would be exterminated. The recent entry of the USA in the war – thus the extension of the war to a world war – and the fact that in his statements Hitler continually mentioned the date of 1 September, 1939 – particularly underlined his threat.
- 17.7 Accordingly, in the *Führer’s* New Year address, Hitler said: “The Jew, however, will not extirpate the European people, but he will be the victim of his own attack”. In his address on the occasion of 30 January, Hitler exclaimed: “We are clear that the war can only end if either the Aryan peoples are extirpated or if Jewry disappears from Europe.” In a statement read on 24 February 1942, in the Munich *Hofbäuhäus*, on the 22 anniversary of the founding of the Nazi Party, Hitler once again allowed it to be announced (he was not present) that: “My prophesy will find its fulfilment in that through this war it will be not be Aryan mankind that will be exterminated, but the Jew will be extirpated.” At the same time, Hitler expressed himself in a smaller circle, among members of his entourage and private guests, in the same way: “The Jew must get out of Europe! The best would be if they went to Russia! I have no sympathy with the Jews. They will always remain an element which stir up the peoples against one another.”

- 17.8 Four weeks later, he expressed himself before a similar circle: “The Jew will be identified! The same battle which Pasteur and Koch had to fight must be led by us today. Innumerable sicknesses have their origin in one bacillus: the Jew! Japan would also have got it had it been remained open any longer to the Jew. We will get well when we eliminate the Jews.”
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18. HITLER AND THE BEGINNING OF THE SYSTEMATIC MURDER OF EUROPEAN JEWRY IN SPRING, 1942

- 18.1 In the period around the second half of April 1942, the hitherto existing *modus operandi* of the mass murder of Jews was altered: henceforth, the Jews of Central Europe would no longer be deported to the Eastern-European ghettos nor would the local population who were labelled “not fit for work” be murdered; from now on instead, in the period between April and July a step-by-step European-wide murder program was to be set in motion: Those Jews no longer fit to work would be deported directly to the extermination camps while those who could still work were to be killed through strenuous work under the most extreme conditions. This programme included the murder of those who had been previously spared, those Central European Jews already deported to the East.
- 18.2 A direct order by Hitler initiating this entire program has not been found. It is however unthinkable that these last steps in the escalation of “Jewish policy” of the “Third Reich” could have taken place without Hitler’s express consent. Hitler had expressed himself in the most drastic possible manner on the “solution” to the Jewish question from the beginning of the Russian campaign and would continue to do so until the end of his life.

- 18.3 As shown above, Hitler had been constantly involved with “Jewish policy”, had issued the most important orders in this area himself and had even occupied himself with the details. Over and over again, Hitler had personally radicalised the persecution of the Jews or recommended such radicalisation: he had urged the mass executions of Poles and Jews in 1939-40; he had repeatedly pushed forward the deportation plans in the years 1939 to 1941; through his guidelines, he had decisively influenced the ideological war of extermination against the Soviet Union; he had pushed forward the deportation of the Central-European Jews from 1941 on, and by means of various statements after 1941 on he had demanded the “annihilation” of European Jews.
- 18.4 Also in this phase, as in the years between 1933 to 1939, Hitler would sometimes slow down that radicalisation of the anti-Jewish policy which he himself had decisively accelerated; he did this when it came into conflict with other elements of his policy. Thus in the fall of 1939 he stopped the Nisko project and in the spring of 1941 he stopped the further deportations into the *Generalgouvernement* because they interfered with military campaigns. However, these measures to halt the persecutions were invariably introduced as tactical manoeuvres and were of a provisional nature; they must be seen in the general context of the policy of extermination which was decisively determined by Hitler.
- 18.5 As far as terminology is concerned, the concepts of “deportation” (*Aussiedlung*) or “resettlement” (*Umsiedlung*) or “evacuation” (*Evakuierung*) to the East were used in this phase of the policy, just as before: thus the concept of a “territorial final solution”, which would occur after the war, “outside of Europe” was still used. Illustrative for this is for instance the entry in Goebbels’s diary for 27 April 1942: “I spoke with the *Führer* once again in great detail about the Jewish question. His point of view on this problem is unyielding. He wants to push the Jews altogether out of Europe. That is also correct. The Jews have brought so much misfortune to our Continent that the most severe punishment

which could be imposed upon them would still be too mild. Himmler is at the moment carrying on the greatest resettlement of Jews from the German cities to the Eastern ghettos.”

- 18.6 One must proceed on the assumption that even those who were involved in mass murder up to the period May-June 1942 believed that the “real” “final solution” would only take place after the end of the war and that the murders taking place before then were only “provisional” measures, “anticipatory” measures to the “final solution”. Only in Spring and early Summer of 1942 did the realisation slowly come through that the “final solution” would take place during the war: it finally became clear which means would be chosen to achieve the “final solution”.
- 18.7 Even at the end of May 1942, when the preparations for the systematic murder of European Jews in extermination camps were in full swing, Hitler referred in a talk with Goebbels to the old plan to deport Jews to Africa, according to Goebbels’s diaries: “Thus I plead once again for a more radical Jewish policy, whereby talking to the *Führer* is like walking through an open door [...] The Germans only ever take part in subversive movements when the Jews seduce them to it. Therefore one must liquidate the Jewish danger, cost what it may [...] Therefore the *Führer* also does not wish at all for the Jews to be evacuated to Siberia. There, under the harshest living conditions, they would undoubtedly form an element of vitality once more. He would rather settle them in Central Africa. There they live in a climate that would surely not render them strong and capable of resistance. In any case it is the *Führer*’s aim to make Western Europe completely Jew-free. Here they will not be allowed to have any home any more.” To interpret this statement as evidence for a clear intention or a plan of Hitler to deport European Jews to Africa seems rather absurd.

- 18.8 However, even at this stage, only a few weeks before the deportations to extermination camps were being extended General Gouvernement, to Slovakia and Western Europe, one can not exclude the possibility that Hitler and leading organisers of the extermination programme were talking about “alternatives” to the “final solution”, i.e. deporting Jews from countries still not affected by the programme of systematic mass-murder to areas other than occupied Poland and to killing or letting them perish there. These eventual “alternative” considerations were clearly speculative and had nothing to do with the reality of mass murder which was unfolding at the same time. Hitler himself referred here to a wish (“he would rather...”) which was completely unrealistic at a time when Central Africa was entirely inaccessible to the Nazi regime. One can interpret his statement as an attempt to camouflage the consequences of the murderous decisions already taken. Even talking to his closest associates Hitler avoided speaking openly on mass killing. That he did not seriously consider stopping the preparations for the deportations to extermination camps is clear from his statement in the last sentence of Goebbels’s note that he wanted “in any case” to make “West Europe completely Jew free”.
- 18.9 Hitler’s statements after this point, i.e. from the Summer of 1942 on – about possible “resettlement projects” – are unquestionably diversions meant to deceive his listeners; for example, his remarks at his dinner table on 24 July 1942, when he tried to make his listeners (consisting of personal aids and private guests) believe that the “*Führer*” had nothing to do with the rumoured murder of the Jews: “After the end of the war, he will rigorously take the standpoint that he will smash to pieces city after city if the dirty Jews don’t come out and emigrate to Madagascar or another Jewish national state. [...] When it was reported to him that Lithuania was also free of Jews, that was therefore significant.”

- 18.10 In fact, the plan to deport Jews to Madagascar (occupied by British troops in May), had been officially abandoned in February 1942; according to the files of the Foreign Office, it was Hitler who had taken this decision. The fact that Hitler referred in the same statement to the fact that Lithuania had been made “free of Jews” (in fact the vast majority had been murdered, only those forced to work for the Germans had been spared) gives us a clear idea what the term “emigrate” represented.
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19. EVIDENCE FOR HITLER’S LEADING ROLE IN THE POLICY OF EXTERMINATION AFTER 1942

- 19.1 In the period 1942-1945 we have numerous further statements by Hitler that show that he continuously intervened in “anti-Jewish policy” and tried to push it forward in the sense of a radical “solution”. (1) From Goebbels’ diary entry of 29 May it emerges that Hitler on Goebbels’s insistence, agreed to order Speer to “be sure to see to it, as soon as possible, that Jews presently working in the German armaments industry be replaced by foreign workers”. In September 1942 once again speaking at an armaments conference, Hitler was supposed to have insisted that the “pulling out of Jews from armament works in the *Reich*” was an important priority. A few days later, Hitler communicated to Goebbels “once again his firm decision to bring the Jews out of Berlin under all circumstances”, according to the Goebbels’ diaries. In so far as this group of people were at all active in production, it would not be difficult to replace them by foreign workers.
- 19.2 (2) At the above-mentioned conference on arms in September 1942, Hitler had expressed agreement with a proposal from Sauckel (his special Commissioner for forced labour) to continue using qualified Jewish skilled workers in the *Generalgouvernement*, in view of the enormous

shortage of workers. Himmler then, on 9 October 1942, gave out the order that “so-called armament workers” in the textile firms etc. in Warsaw and Lublin should be collected in concentration camps. The Jews in the “real armament industries” were to be progressively released from these factories, so that there would finally only be “fewer Jewish Kl (=Konzentrationslager, concentration camps, P.L.) large-scale enterprises in the East of the *Generalgouvernement* if possible”: “Nevertheless, the Jews are supposed to disappear from there as well, according to the wishes of the *Führer*.”

19.3 (3) On 28 July 1942 Himmler wrote to Gottlob Berger, one of the senior SS-officials: “The *Führer* placed on my shoulders the implementation of this very difficult order. The responsibility cannot be taken away from me in any case.”

19.4 (4) On 29 December 1942, Himmler presented Hitler with the “report to the *Führer* on fighting against gangs”, No. 51.1 This report, which covered the period from August to November, 1942, and which referred only to a part of the occupied Soviet area (southern Russia, Ukraine and the district of Bialystok); included the following numbers concerning persons imprisoned or executed:

1. Bandits

a) established number of deaths after combat 1.337

b) prisoners executed immediately 737

c) prisoners executed after lengthy thorough interrogation 7.828

2. Gang helpers and suspects

a) arrested 16.553

b) executed 14.257

c) Jews executed 363.211.

19.5 According to this, from the altogether 387.370 people killed, more than 90% were Jews. This document shows that according to Hitler’s orders to Himmler of 18 December 1942, in fact Jews were exterminated as “Partisans” systematically and on a large scale.

- 19.6 (5) For a report to Hitler on 10 December 1942, Himmler set up a hand-written list of the points which he wanted to bring up. Under “II. SD and police affairs” Himmler specified as point 4 the following key word:
- Jews in France
 - 6-700 000
 - other enemies.
- ‘1. Banditen
- a) festgestellte Tote nach Gefechten 1.337
 - b) Gefanene sofort exekutiert 737
 - c) Gefangene nch längerer eingehender Vernehmung exekutiert 7.828
2. Bandenhelfer und Bandenverdächtige
- a) festgenommen 16.553
 - b) exekutiert 14.257
 - c) Juden exekutiert. 363.211.’
- 19.7 Next to these key words can be found a tick and in Himmler’s own handwriting the word “abolish” (abschaffen): Himmler had thus brought up these points with Hitler and received permission from him to “abolish” i.e. to liquidate the estimated 600.000 to 700.000 Jews in France as well as “other enemies”. After the meeting, Himmler sent a note to Müller, head of the Gestapo, in which he stated: “The *Führer* gave orders that enemies in France should be arrested and deported. This should take place, however, only once he has spoken with Laval about it. It is a matter of 6-700.000 Jews.”
- 19.8 Two months later, in February 1943, Eichmann, on a brief Paris visit submitted a maximum programme for the deportation of all Jews living in France including those with French citizenship.
- 19.9 At the meeting on 10 December 1942 Himmler presented Hitler with a proposal to set up a work camp for Jewish hostages from France, Hungary and Romania, for altogether 10.000 people. According to a hand-written note by Himmler, Hitler accepted this proposal. After the meet-

ing, Himmler sent an order to Müller to concentrate these 10.000 people in a “special camp” (*Sonderlager*). He stated: “Certainly they should work there, but under conditions whereby they remain healthy and alive.”

- 19.10 Himmlers handwritten notes about this meeting with Hitler and the orders sent to Müller confirm that it was Hitlers will that those French Jews which did not fall under this rule were not “to be kept alive “ (*am Leben bleiben*) but were to be “abolished”, i.e. to be murdered.
- 19.11 (5) On the occasion of an address by Hitler on 19 June 1943, Himmler learned of his decision “that the evacuation of the Jews, despite the disturbances this will cause in the next 3 to 4 months, is to be radically expedited and must be endured”.
- 19.12 (6) By the time of the so-called first Klessheim conference on the 17 and 18 April 1943, according to the protocol, Ribbentrop answered – in Hitler’s presence – Horthy’s question “what he then should do with the Jews” (“he [=Horthy, P.I.] can’t kill them after all”) by stating unambiguously that they must either be exterminated or brought to concentration camps”. Hitler thereupon noted, in regard to the Jews in Poland: “If the Jews there don’t want to work they will be shot...If they cannot work, they must rot. They should be treated like tubercular bacillus which could attack healthy bodies. That is not cruel – if one keeps in mind that even innocent natural beings like hares and deer must be killed so that no damage occurs.”
- 19.13 In various addresses over the years 1943-1944 Himmler expressed himself very clearly about the murder of the European Jews by his SS and at the same time referred to having received a commission for these mass murders. Also without naming names it was clear to his listeners from whom he had received this commission since as *Reichsführer* of the SS he was subordinate to only one person, namely Adolf Hitler.

- 19.14 On 6 October 1943, Himmler explained to Gau and Reich chiefs of the party in Posen: “I ask of you that that which I say to you in this circle be really only heard and not ever discussed. We were faced with the question: what about the women and children? – I decided to find a very clear solution to this problem – say, to kill or have them killed – and then allow the avenger in the form of the children to grow up for our sons and grandsons. The difficult decision must be made to have this people disappear from the face of this earth. For the organisation which had to execute this task, it was the most difficult which we had ever had.”
- 19.15 It is true that Himmler in this speech gives the impression that the murder of women and children was his responsibility, yet he refers at the end of the paragraph to the most difficult “task which we ever had” and not for instance to a task which he might have assigned to the SS.
- 19.16 In a speech on 5 May 1944 to generals of the *Wehrmacht* who joined an ideological-political training in Sonthofen, Himmler became even clearer: “The Jewish question has been solved within Germany itself and in general within the countries occupied by Germany. It was solved in an uncompromising fashion in accordance with the life and death struggle of our nation in which the existence of our blood is at stake [...] You can understand how difficult it was for me to carry out this military order which I was given and which I implemented out of a sense of obedience and absolute conviction. If you say: ‘we can understand as far as the men are concerned but not about the children’, then I must remind you of what I said at the beginning. In this confrontation with Asia we must get used to condemning to oblivion those rules and customs of past wars which we have got used to and prefer. In my view, we as Germans, however deeply we may feel in our hearts, are not entitled to allow a generation of avengers filled with hatred to grow up with whom our children and grandchildren will have to deal because we, too weak and cowardly, left it to them.”

19.17 A few weeks later, on 24 May 1944, he spoke once again in Sonthofen, again to a group of Generals of the Wehrmacht: “Another question which was decisive for the inner security of the *Reich* and Europe, was the Jewish question. It was uncompromisingly solved after orders and rational recognition. I believe, Gentleman, that you know me well enough to know that I am not a bloodthirsty person; I am not a man who takes pleasure or joy when something rough must be done. However on the other hand, I have such good nerves and such a developed sense of duty – I can say that much for myself – that when I recognise something as necessary I can implement it without compromise. I have not considered myself entitled – this concerns especially the Jewish women and children – to allow the children to grow into the avengers who will then murder our fathers and our grandchildren. That would have been cowardly. Consequently the question was uncompromisingly resolved.”

19.18 Himmler is thus speaking here – in the context of the murder of the Jews – unmistakably about an “order” and of a “sense of duty”. His way of formulating it – that he considered himself “entitled” to have the women and children killed as well- speaks for the view that this mass murder followed from a Himmler initiative; it also however shows that Himmler was firmly convinced that this decision was covered by Hitler’s authority and was in accordance with his will.

19.19 Even more clearly, a few weeks later Himmler spoke on 21 July once again in the context of an ideological-political training for the Generals: “It was the most terrible assignment and the most terrible task which an organisation can possibly get: the task of solving the Jewish question. I am allowed to say this once again quite openly in this circle a few sentences. It is good that we had the toughness to extirpate the Jews in our area.”

- 19.20 Hitler himself stated in a speech addressing high officers of the Wehrmacht on 26 May 1944: “By removing the Jew, I abolished in Germany the possibility to build up a revolutionary core or nucleus. One could, naturally, say to me: Yes, couldn’t you have solved this more simply – or not simply, since all other means would have been more complicated – but more humanely? My dear officers, we are engaged in a life and death struggle. If our opponents win in this struggle than the German people would be extirpated.”
- 19.21 Hitler described in the following sentences what sort of gruesome extirpation would take place and then went on to say: “Humanity would mean here as well as in general the worst atrocities against one’s own people. If I draw the hate of the Jews upon myself than at least I don’t want to miss the advantage of such hate. The advantage consists in that we will have a clean, organised body of the Volk, where no others can ever again meddle in our affairs.”
- 19.22 In his testament of 29 April 1945, Hitler once again, in what was literally his last written words, gave vent to his deep antisemitic hatred: “But I have also never left open any doubt about the fact that if the peoples of Europe were once again to be regarded only as packages of shares of these international monetary and financial conspirators, then that people would be held responsible, which is the true culprit behind the murderous struggle: Jewry ! I have also not left anybody in the dark about the fact that this time it would not only be millions of children of Europeans from the Aryan nations who will die of hunger, not only millions of grown men who will suffer death, and not only hundreds of thousands of women and children who will burn to death in the cities and be permitted to be bombarded to death, without holding the true culprit responsible for this crime, even though it may be by more humane methods. Above all I pledge the leadership of the nation and its followers to the scrupulous observation of the racial laws and to an implacable opposition against the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.”

CONCLUSION

- 20.1 Throughout his entire career – in the time span from the period immediately after the German defeat in 1918 until the end of the Second World War – Hitler’s behaviour and thinking was dominated by the idea of “removing” the Jews from Germany. Antisemitism was clearly the central binding element in Hitler’s political ideology, which in fact was a conglomerate of highly contradictory ideas. His language concerning Jews was full of hatred and threats.
- 20.2 Through the twenties and early thirties, Hitler wanted to achieve the “removal” of the Jews by emigration or expulsion which would, according to his view, be enforced by violent measures and even murderous acts.
- 20.3 From the beginning of his time in office, Hitler was continually occupied with anti-Jewish measures. He was not only actively engaged in the preparations for the central anti-Jewish enterprise (the “boykott” of 1 April 1933, the Nuremberg Laws and the pogrom of November 1938), but gave also orders and directions concerning detailed anti-Jewish legislation and other measures against Jews.
- 20.4 He took the initiative to radicalise anti- Jewish policy step by step. The fact that from time to time he was prepared to make tactical concessions and to postpone single anti-Jewish measures reveals how much he was engaged in the formulation of policy in this field.
- 20.5 After Kristallnacht, when Hitler realised that Jewish emigration might not be completed before the beginning of a war, he announced (prophesized?) at different occasions the “annihilation of the Jews” living in the territory under his control. With these statements Hitler threatened to use the Jews as hostages to prevent the Western powers from intervening on the continent. These statements clearly included the possibility of Genocide.

- 20.6 Hitler avoided giving a clear written order to exterminate Jewish civilians. He avoided speaking openly about killing in his entourage. However, there is clear evidence that he was deeply involved in the anti-Jewish policy during the war, particularly when it reached a murderous stage. In general, Hitler's comments on the "Jewish question" reveal his essential commitment to radicalise persecution to the extreme.
- 20.7 Hitler was fully responsible for the order for the mass executions in Poland in 1939 and 1940. He was also actively engaged in setting up plans for a Jewish reservation in Poland and he backed the Madagascar plan. He was continually preoccupied with further deportations and deportation plans.
- 20.8 In 1941 Hitler ordered the extermination of the "Jewish-Bolshevist intelligentsia" and the elimination of every potential enemy in the occupied Eastern territories. He was fully aware of mass executions of Jewish civilians in the occupied Eastern territories.
- 20.9 In mid September 1941 Hitler ordered the beginning of mass deportations from Germany to ghettos in Eastern Europe. During Autumn 1941 and the following Winter, when preparation for the "Final Solution" in Europe were in full swing, Hitler spoke at various occasions openly about the annihilation of the Jews in Europe. It can be ruled out that the massive preparations for the systematic murder of European Jews in extermination camps in Poland, undertaken in Spring and Summer of 1942, were taken without his consent or his knowledge.
- 20.10 Finally, from a number of letters and speeches of Himmler it becomes clear, that the Reichsführer SS referred to the Holocaust as a task which he had to carry out on the behalf of the highest authority in the Third Reich – Hitler.
- 20.11 I have understood that my overriding duty is to the Court. My paramount obligation, as I have been advised by my Instructing Solicitors, is to assist the Court on all matters within my expertise regardless of

whom my instructions are from and who is paying my fees. I confirm that this report is impartial, objective and unbiased and has been produced independently of the exigencies of this litigation. I believe that the facts I have stated in this report are true and that the opinions I have expressed are correct. Signed: Date:

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List of abbreviations

- AAAuswärtiges Amt
- Abt. Abteilung
- ADAPakten zur Deutschen AuswärtigenPolitik
- BABBundesarchiv Berlin
- BAMBundesarchiv/Miliärarchiv (Freiburg)
- BDCBerlin Document Center
- Bd.Band
- GestapoGeheime Staatspolizei
- HSTAHauptstaatsarchiv
- IMTInternational Military Tribunal
- IfZInstitut für Zeitgeschichte (Munich)
- MBliVMinisterialblatt für die innere Verwaltung NA National Archives (Washington)
- OSOsobi Archive (Moskow)
- PAAPolitiches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes
- RFSSReichsführer SS
- RGBlReichsgesetzblatt
- RMBliVReichsministerialblatt für die innere Verwaltung
- RSHAREichssicherheitshauptamt
- SASTurmabteilung
- SDSicherheitsdienst
- SipoSicherheitspolizei
- SKSonderkommando

- SSSchutzstaffel
- StAStaatsarchiv
- VBVölkischer Beobachter
- VfZVierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte
- vol.volume
- YVYad Vashem (Jerusalem)
- z.b.V.zur besonderen Verwendung
- ZStZentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen

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Expert report

The Systematic Character of the National Socialist Policy for the Extermination of the Jews

Electronic edition

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Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt

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I. Introduction

- ¹ After the Wannsee Conference of 20 January, in the Spring of 1942, the Nazi regime began to implement a programme aimed at the complete physical extermination of European Jewry. The victims were either deported to be murdered in gas-chambers in special extermination camps, or came to their death in other ways – whether by execution or due to the devastating living conditions prevailing during their deportation and in the ghettos and work camps.
- ² In order to carry out this mass murder of millions of people, the Nazis set up a complex machinery of destruction characterised by a division of labour. When closely examined, the individual elements of this machinery and the manner in which they were co-ordinated, leave no room for doubt that the murder of these people proceeded in a systematic way. The organisation and extent of the deportations; the “liquidation” of ghettos, the selection of those deemed “fit for work” from those “unfit”, the exploitation of those “fit” for work in a programme of forced labour which generally led to total exhaustion and death, the construction of regular “death factories”, the removal of the corpses and traces of the extermination process – these are all compatible elements of a system of planned mass murder.
- ³ This system for the implementation of the death of millions of persons “functioned” in its entirety as of July 1942. It thus took more than one year until the mass murder of Jews – initiated in the occupied Soviet areas in June of 1941, and extended to further areas in East and South-eastern Europe from the Fall of 1941 onwards – was transformed into a programme for the extermination of all European Jews.
- ⁴ The following report gives proof to the assertion that the mass murders of hundreds of thousands of Jews between the Summer of 1941 and the Summer of 1942 – which were still restricted to the areas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe – were systematic in character.

This is to say, these mass murders followed a unified pattern, were carried out on the basis of central commands, and must be regarded as representing a conscious expression of the policy of the Nazi regime. It will be shown that in this time period (Summer 1941 to Summer 1942) essential elements of the Nazi policy of extermination were developed with the goal of murdering more and more people in ever shorter time intervals. As of the Summer, 1942, these plans were assembled into one extermination plan for all of Europe. This report categorically rejects the notion that the murder of European Jews in the Second World War was the consequence of a series of isolated murder campaigns occurring without plan in haphazard and differing ways as a result of decisions by subordinate institutions- i.e. murder actions not displaying a common pattern or unified control.

- 5 The investigation will cover three complexes: a) mass executions in the occupied Soviet Union in the second half of 1941; b) the regional mass murder of the Jewish civilian population outside of the Soviet Union between the Fall of 1941 and Spring of 1942; c) the transformation of these mass murders into a unified deportation and extermination machinery in the area dominated by Germany in the Spring and Summer of 1942.

II Mass executions in the Soviet Union

- 1 The systematic character of the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of Jewish civilians in the occupied Soviet areas in the second half of 1941 will be demonstrated on the basis of two different groups of historical documents: the orders issued to perpetrate these murderous actions and the documented evidence for the activities of the killing units. It will be shown that this mass murder was centrally controlled, that it was the expression of a consciously followed policy of the Nazi regime and that it was executed according to a unified

scheme. (It should be noted that the term occupied Soviet territories will include those areas which were annexed by the Soviet Union after 1939.)

- 2 The executions of Jewish civilians in the occupied Soviet areas can be divided into the following phases:
 - In the beginning phase of the war, Jewish men were shot who occupied a vaguely described “leading position”.
 - These executions were quickly extended – already in the first weeks of the war – to all men of draft age.
 - Beginning at the end of July, the German units began to shoot men, women and children without distinction; some of the adults categorised as “fit for work” and their families were spared provisionally and enclosed in ghettos.
 - Finally, the entire Jewish population was murdered, i.e. the ghettos were liquidated step by step.
- 3 To begin, it must be established that the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of Jewish civilians in the occupied Soviet areas was an expression of the policy of the Nazi regime. The war against the Soviet Union was planned from the start by the Nazi leadership as a war of racial extermination with the purpose of decimating the population of the occupied territories. This intention of the Nazi leadership has been clear to the historical profession for a long time and is generally accepted by scholars.
- 4 The former Higher SS- and Police Leader, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, testified on this question during the Nuremberg trials: Himmler had already stated in a speech made before the beginning of the war, at the Wewelsburg, a cult site of the SS, that the war against Russia was intended to decimate the Slavic population by 30 million. This goal was to be achieved by means of a systematic policy of starvation of the indigenous population. Unmistakable statements to this effect by top Nazi leaders are available. Thus Göring indicated to the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, in November 1941 that in the course of the year “20-30 million persons will die in Russia of hunger”.

At a meeting of Secretaries of State on 2 May 1941, directives were set for the future economic exploitation of the Eastern territories to be occupied: it was stated therein that “without doubt umpteen millions of people will starve to death when we take what we need from the country”. The guidelines for the future economic organisation of the East (Agricultural Staff Group) from 23 May 1941 very clearly affirmed that, with respect to the industrialised areas in northern Russia (which were no longer to be supplied with goods from the southern areas): “Many tens of millions of people will be made superfluous in this area and will die or be forced to emigrate to Siberia.

- ⁵ The basic principles of this starvation policy were made clear in the directives which Göring issued for the economy in the newly-occupied Eastern territories, the so-called green portfolio. German policy towards the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union must be seen in the light of these plans which took for granted the death of millions of persons.
- ⁶ Because the Nazi leadership considered Jews especially “inferior” and dangerous and assumed that the Communist system in the Soviet Union was totally dominated by “the Jews” – the Nazis were particularly persevering in the persecution of the Jewish minority in the occupied Soviet territories. The murder of Jewish civilians cannot be attributed to the initiative of subordinate Nazi leaders. It is rather the result of a racially motivated and systematically planned extermination policy. This is reflected in the relevant orders to the *Wehrmacht* and the SS and police units.

A. Orders

- ¹ The *Wehrmacht* had been trained to view the Jewish minority as closely bound to the Soviet system and therefore as an enemy; this indoctrination had taken place even before the beginning of the war. On 3 March 1941 Hitler gave his Chief of the Leadership Staff of the *Wehrmacht* (*Wehrmacht-Führungsstab*), Jodl, the order to edit a draft of the “Guidelines for Special Areas relating to Instruction Nr. 21”, which was

to regulate the basic principles for administration in the occupied areas. According to Hitler, particular care was to be given to the following principles: “The Jewish-Bolshevist intelligentsia, the previous ‘oppressor’ of the people, must be eliminated.” This. “elimination” was not to be performed primarily by the army itself but rather by means of special SS commandos. Thus the final version of the guidelines “Richtlinien auf Sondergebieten zur Weisung Nr. 21” from 13 March 1941, in accordance with Hitler’s instructions from 3 March 1941, read as follows: “In the operational area of the army the *Reichsführer* SS [i.e. Himmler, P.L.] is to be given special duties according to orders from the *Führer* for the preparation of the political administration; these responsibilities are a consequence of the battle which is finally to be carried out between two opposite political systems”.

- ² A few weeks before the beginning of the war, members of the *Wehrmacht* were directly engaged to fight against the “Jews” as the supposed “carriers” of the Bolshevist system. In the Guidelines for the Conduct of the Troops in Russia from 19 May, which gave the company leaders the necessary reference points for an indoctrination of the soldiers in the coming ideological battle it was stated: “1. Bolshevism is the mortal enemy of the National-Socialist German people. This corrupt world view and its supporters warrant Germany’s struggle. 2. This struggle demands ruthless, energetic and drastic measures against the Bolshevik agitators, guerrillas, saboteurs and Jews as well as the complete removal of all active and passive resistance.”
- ³ In order to implement the above mentioned “special duties by order of the Führer which are the consequence of the battle which is finally to be carried out between two opposite political systems”, *Reichsführer* SS Himmler set up four special “*Einsatzgruppen*” (EG) of the Security Police and the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD) which included about 3000 men, divided into *Einsatz* and Special (*Sonder*) Commandos. They were ordered to move behind the front lines and to proceed against all “subversive endeavours directed against *Reich* and State”.

- ⁴ On the basis of written documents it can be shown that the Chief of the security police, Heydrich, issued two instructions to these groups before their departure for the occupied Soviet areas. These were orders (1) to initiate pogroms with the help of collaborationists from the region and (2) to liquidate Jews when they could be identified as members of some vaguely described Jewish elite or if they were in any other way “suspicious”.
- ⁵ We have two documents written by Heydrich which are based upon these verbal instructions. Heydrich’s note to the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen* of 29 June referred to the previously distributed order to foster “self-cleansing efforts” (*Selbstreinigungsbestrebungen*), i.e. pogroms of the Jewish population. These “self-cleansing efforts” by anti-communist or anti-Jewish groups in the area to be occupied, according to Heydrich’s instructions, were “not to be hindered”, rather, these efforts should be initiated but this should be done “without leaving a trace”, intensified, and when necessary “steered in the correct direction”. In a further note dated 2 July, Heydrich informed the Higher SS and Police Leaders – i.e. Himmler’s highest regional representatives in the areas which were to be occupied – about “the most important instructions by me to the *Wehrmacht* and the commandos of the Security Police and the SD”. Here it was stated once again that “self-cleansing efforts” (*Selbstreinigungsversuchen*) in the areas to be occupied were not to be hindered, but that on the contrary, they were to be encouraged – but without leaving a trace.
- ⁶ Furthermore, in the same note from 2 July, Heydrich listed under the key-word “executions” those groups of persons who were to be shot by the *Einsatzgruppen*:

“To be executed are all

- functionaries of the Comintern (as well as all professional Communists)
- the higher, middle and radical lower functionaries of the Party, the Central Committees, the district and regional committees
- people’s commissars
- Jews in Party and State functions
- other radical elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, assassins and agitators, etc.) ”

- ⁷ This order is certainly not to be interpreted as meaning that Heydrich intended to limit executions to those Jews who held “Party and State functions”. Given the fact that in the course of war preparations the supposedly close connection between Jews and the Soviet system was repeatedly emphasised, it can be concluded that the instructions to execute “other radical elements” was primarily directed against the Jewish population. Even the last word of this itemisation, “etc.” shows that the circle of “other radical elements” was by no means clearly delineated.
- ⁸ Further, the idea that efforts were made from the beginning to limit the set of Jewish victims precisely to “Jews in Party and State functions” is not compatible with the (stated) intention of allowing collaborators to initiate these “self-cleansing operations”, i.e. pogroms and massacres. A pogrom once begun cannot be confined to specific Jewish victims chosen according to their function.
- ⁹ That the *Einsatzgruppen* received explicit orders to murder Jewish civilians has been confirmed by all members of the leadership of the *Einsatzgruppen* who were questioned about this after the war. From this testimony we have consistent corroboration that in the period from Spring to the Summer of 1941 the *Einsatzgruppen* received orders for the mass murder of the Jewish civilian population in the occupied Soviet Union. Even though there are differences in the testimonies as to the exact time and place of the issuance of orders, it is nevertheless re-

markable that none of those interrogated disputed having been given the order to liquidate and that the large majority of the former leadership personnel testified that they received instructions for the indiscriminate liquidation of the entire Jewish population, including women and children.

- ¹⁰ An analysis of the available individual testimonies gives the following picture: a series of former leaders- whether of the *Einsatzkommandos* (EK) or the so-called Special Commandos (*Sonderkommandos*) who were interrogated on this question after the war, i.e. Walter Blume (Leader of the Special Commando 7 a), Martin Sandberger (Leader of the EK 1 a), Rudolf Batz (Leader of the EK 2), Alfred Filbert (Leader of the EK 9), as well as Karl Jäger (leader of the EK 3) testified that at the beginning of the war Heydrich had informed them of an order by the *Führer* which made clear that the Jewish population in the Soviet areas to-be occupied were to be liquidated; Paul Johannes Zapp (Leader of the Special Commando 11 a) testified further that this command also explicitly ordered the murder of women and children. Several other former leaders testified in this regard that precise orders for the liquidation of the Jewish civilian population were issued – but not until the war had been started – yet still in the Summer of 1941 by the *Einsatzgruppen* leaders; namely Erwin Schulz (Leader of the EK 5), Gustav Nosske (EK 12), Karl Tschierschky (member of the staff of EG A), Otto Bradfisch (Leader of the EK 8), and Erhard Kroeger (Leader of the EK 6). Two Leaders, Günther Herrmann (Leader of Commando 4 b) and Erich Ehrlinger (Leader of the EK 1b) testified only that they had been ordered by the *Einsatzgruppen* commanders to shoot Jewish men after the invasion of the Soviet Union.

B. The murders by the commandos

Evidence can be found to show that as early as the first days of the war against Russia the *Einsatzgruppen* initiated “self-cleansing pogroms” as well as the executions of Jewish men.

1. Pogroms organised by the commandos

- 1.1 The report of EG A, which was deployed behind the Army unit A, written after the middle of October, the so-called “Stahlecker-report”, contains a detailed description of the “self-cleansing efforts” (*Selbstreinigungsbestrebungen*) initiated by the EG: “The task of the security police must be to start the self-cleansing and to set it on the right track in order to reach the secret goal of purgation as quickly as possible. No less significant was the goal of creating established and provable hard facts for the future – that the liberated population, on its own, reach for the most severe measures possible against the Bolshevist and Jewish opponent – without leaving direction by the German authorities being recognizable.” In this context it was “obvious from the very beginning that the implementation of pogroms was possible only in the first days following the occupation”..
- 1.2 Besides, according to the Stahlecker report, “surprisingly” it was at first “not easy” to initiate the first pogroms in Lithuanian Kovno; they began after the Lithuanian partisan leader who was selected as the one to implement the pogrom was given appropriate “indications” from a small advanced party deployed in Kovno, as to how to do so “without any external signs of German organisation or German initiation”. During these pogroms, which took place between 25 June and 28 June and which cost the lives of about 3800 Jews, Jewish men were forcibly collected from their dwellings by Lithuanian “militiamen” and herded into in public places where they were killed or brought to military bases and shot.
- 1.3 Already at the beginning of July however, those in EG A concluded, as reported in an event report (*Ereignismeldung*), that in Kovno “further mass executions...were no longer possible”. They were therefore stopped.. In Riga the *Einsatzgruppe* was able to initiate a pogrom whereby 400 Jews were murdered, only however “by means of appro-

priate pressure upon the Lithuanian auxiliary police (*Hilfspolizei*). Further pogroms in the city were “not feasible” because the population had rapidly calmed down.

- 1.4 At the end of July, the EG A also reported pogroms in other Lithuanian cities; it was recounted for example that in “Mitau and surroundings ... the 1550 Jews still remaining had been ruthlessly eliminated by the population”.
- 1.5 Evidence for pogroms initiated by the Germans exist for EG C in the Ukraine as well. Thus Ukrainian nationalists committed mass murder in the area of Tarnopol under the direction of Special Commando 4 b: On 7 July, about 70 Jews were “brought together and exterminated by Ukrainians with a massive load of explosives”; the Commando also reported its activities in Tarnopol in the event report from 11 July, mentioning altogether over 127 executions and a further 600 people murdered by Ukrainians “in the course of the persecution of the Jews inspired by the EK”.
- 1.6 Further “self-cleansing measures” initiated by the EG C can be inferred by reading the event reports: “Thus in Dobromil the synagogue was set on fire. In Sambor 50 Jews were clubbed by the outraged crowd.” A few days later it was reported that “In Krzemieniec about 100 to 150 Ukrainians have been murdered by the Russians [...] the Ukrainians in self-defence killed 130 Jews with clubs in revenge”. In Tarnopol and Choroskow, according to the report, it was possible, by means of pogroms, “to finish off 600 and 110 Jews respectively.”
- 1.7 At the end of July, EG C was forced to state that “attempts at that time to cautiously inspire pogroms against Jews unfortunately did not show the hoped-for results.” The further the *Einsatzgruppen* penetrated inside the Ukraine, the more they were forced to admit that the local population was not prepared to incite pogroms.

2. Executions by *Einsatzgruppen* and police battalions in the first weeks of the war (Shooting of Jewish men)

2.1 *Einsatzgruppe A*

2.1.1 For three of the four commandos subordinate to the EG A, mass executions of Jewish men can be demonstrated in the first days and weeks after the beginning of the war:

- The EK 1b shot 1150 Jewish men in Dvinsk at the beginning of July, after they had been arrested by Lithuanian auxiliary forces which had been “strengthened in their work by the activities of the EK.”
- After the pogrom in Riga, over 2000 further Jews were killed “partially by the Lithuanian auxiliary police and partially by our own men” in the period up to the middle of July, 1941, as reported by the EK2. In Mitau, a unit of the EK 2 – supposedly in the first half of July – shot about 160 Jews, among them women and children.

2.1.2 The EK 3 organised mass executions of Jewish men from the beginning of July in the military base of Kovno. The Leader of the Commando, Jäger, reported on 1 December 1941 that the executions, which had been taking place since 4 July in Fort VII of the Kovno base, had been carried out “upon my orders and my command by the Lithuanian Partisans”; the victims, according to Jäger’s count, numbered 2530 Jewish men and 47 women. Three days later, according to Jäger, a group of men of his Commando began mass executions also outside of Kovno “together with the Lithuanian partisans” in which 1400 people, mostly Jewish men were murdered.

2.1.3 The EG A were helped by a Commando which was formed from members of the SD and the *Gestapo* in the German border town of Tilsit and which was known as “*Einsatzkommando Tilsit*”. This Commando also shot mostly Jewish men in the period directly following upon the onset of the war: on 24, 25 and 27 June they executed 201, 214 and 111 civilians in the area beyond the border of Lithuania, in the villages of

Garsden, Krottingen and Polangen respectively. This shooting, mostly of Jewish men was carried out in “retribution” for supposed civilian attacks upon the approaching units.

- 2.1.4 In the following days, the “EK Tilsit” carried on further “cleansing operations” in the border areas, for example on 2 July in Tauroggen, on 3 July in Georgenburg and in Augustovo and in Mariampol and Vladislav, in which altogether 3302 people were shot, according to the event report of 18 July. For the entire month of July, further executions by the commandos, especially of Jewish men, can be documented in varied places. The fact that in later reports on No. 465). Streim, *SWCA*, p. 6, pp. 333ff. executions in this area only the murder of women, older men and children were noted – not however the murder of men of draft age – is an indication that in fact all Jewish men of this age group had been murdered in the first wave of executions.
- 2.1.5 The executions were granted full endorsement by *Reichsführer SS*, Himmler, as well as by the Chief of the Security Police, Heydrich. From a teletype message from the *Gestapo* postal station in Tilsit, dated 1 July, it emerges that Himmler and Heydrich visited the border areas and were informed about the “measures” which had been implemented and approved them “completely”.
- 2.1.6 A few days later, Heydrich expressly confirmed – in a written order – that the executions of the EK Tilsit corresponded to his directions: in an order dated 4 July he explained to the *Einsatzgruppen* Chief that he had granted permission for commanders of the Security Police and the SD as well as for police stations (*Staatapolizeistellen*) “to carry out cleansing operations in the areas bordering upon the territories which had been newly occupied in order to relieve the *Einsatzgruppen* and commandos, and especially, to secure their mobility.

2.2 *Einsatzgruppe B*

- 2.2.1 The mass executions of Jewish men in the month of July can be documented for all four Commandos of the EK B: – The SK 7a in Vileyka “liquidated the entire male Jewish population”; this was done as early as the end of June or in the first days of July as recounted in an event report. Similarly, the SK 7 a was responsible for the shooting of 332 Jews in Vitebsk at the end of July – beginning of August as well as for a further “action” in Gorodok in which about 150-200 Jewish men were shot. Mass executions of Jewish men are documented for the SK 7 b in Borissov (July) and in the area of Orscha/Mogilev (end of July – beginning of August).
- 2.2.2 In Bialystok alone, at the beginning of July, the EK 8 initiated – among other events – two “actions” by which, according to the determination of German courts, at least 800 or at least 100 Jewish men were shot; later in Baranovice two further executions took place – with at least 100 Jewish victims shot in each case; finally, at the end of July and in August the EK participated decisively in mass executions in Minsk whereby more than 1000 Jews were killed.
- 2.2.3 A unit of the EK 8 was ordered to Slonim in the middle of July, where according to the event report of 24 July “in collaboration with the order police (*Ordnungspolizei*) a major action against Jews and other communist-linked elements was accomplished, whereby about 2000 persons were arrested for communist machinations and looting. Among these, 1075 were liquidated on the same day”
- 2.2.4 The leader of the EK 8, Otto Bradfisch, testified on this point that as early as the advance on Minsk he had already noticed that although no express order had been given “to exterminate the Jewish population in a place or area solely and alone because of its racial origin”, nevertheless in practice the orders given by EK B were so broadly conceived that “every Jew was to be regarded as a danger for the fighting troops and therefore to be liquidated”.

- 2.2.5 From the testimony of the Higher SS and Police Leader Russia Centre, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, given in 1966, we know that Nebe's attitude is to be traced to a Himmler directive. According to Bach's testimony, Himmler had already expressed to Nebe on his visit to Bialystok on July 8 that "basically every Jew is to be seen as a Partisan.." Three days later, the Commander of the Police Regiment Centre, whose headquarters were in Bialystok, determined that "all those male Jews of the ages between 17 and 45 taken as looters should be shot according to martial law". By means of this order the extermination of the able-bodied Jewish population was made possible without further restrictions.
- 2.2.6 In a report issued by EG B concerning the activities of Ek 9 in Vilna from July, 1941 it was claimed that "In Vilna the EK of that place have liquidated 321 Jews in the period before 8 July". The Lithuanian order patrol which was placed under the command of the EK after the dissolution of the Lithuanian political police was instructed to become involved in the liquidation of the Jews. For this purpose, 150 Lithuanian officials were called up; they captured the Jews and put them in concentration camps where they underwent "special treatment" (*Sonderbehandlung*) on the same day. This work had now begun and from then on "continuously on a daily basis about 500 Jews and other saboteurs were liquidated". The total number of Jews killed in the month of July in Wilna on the initiative of the EK 9 and the Lithuanians came to at least 4000-5000, but possibly more than 10,000 people.
- 2.2.7 Direct intervention by Himmler and Heydrich can also be ascertained in the area of the EG B. We have already mentioned Himmler's order given in Bialystok on July 8 to shoot Jews on principle as partisans; there was also an order given three days later by the Commander of the Police Regiment Centre to shoot Jews taken as looters according to martial law. In a report written in the first few days of July by the Leader of the EG B on the activities of the sub-unit of EK 9 in Grodno and Lida it was stated: "In Grodno and Lida to begin with – in the first few

days – only 96 Jews were liquidated. I gave the order that this was to be intensified considerably.” The background to this order was the fact that Himmler and Heydrich had criticised the low level of activity of the Commandos during their visit in Grodno on June 30. Heydrich, in a general order on 1 July demanded “more mobility in the tactical organisation of the deployment”. He criticised the fact that in Grodno – as many as four days following the occupation – no single member of the Security Police and the SD had yet made an appearance. On 9 July, Himmler and Heydrich were once again in Grodno and were apparently able to convince themselves that the EG B order to intensify the liquidation had in the meantime been obeyed – this according to the event report: “The activities of all commandos have developed satisfactorily. First of all, the liquidations which are now occurring daily in ever greater measure are functioning well. The enforcement of the necessary liquidations is in any case ensured for all events.”

- 2.2.8 This passage makes clear that in the case of the EG B, as early as a few weeks after the beginning of the campaign, the necessity for achieving a schedule of a certain quota of liquidations in a systematic way already existed as a concept.

2.3 Einsatzgruppe C

- 2.3.1 The shooting of Jewish men can be documented for the month of July for all four Commandos of EG C:

- Commando 6 shot at least 80 Jewish men in “retribution” for the supposed attacks by the parting Russian troops as early as 30 June in Dobromil, on the orders of the HSSPF Russia South, Jeckeln, and the Leader of the EG C, Rasch.

- The EK 5 and 6 together participated in the massacre of the Jews of Lvov which was organised by the Higher SS and Police Leader South, Friedrich Jeckeln, as well as the staff of Group C. As justification for this massacre, the *Einsatzgruppen* proposed “retribution”: this was supposed to be retribution for the murder by Soviet authorities – immediately before their departure – of Ukrainian nationalists found in the jails of the city. In the event report it is stated: “About 7000 Jews were collected and shot by the Security Police in retribution for these inhuman atrocities... Above all, Jews between 20 and 40 were seized, whereas artisans and specialists were set aside in so far as it was meaningful.”

- 2.3.2 After its participation in the massacre in Lvov, Commando 5 initiated different “actions” in Berditshev and in the nearby areas, such as Chmielnik, where a “retribution action” in which 299 people, mostly Jews, were shot, occurred. – The EK 6, after deployment in Dobromil and Lvov, spent the second half of July in the Ukrainian town of Winniza, where it undertook further executions, including one with 146 victims and another which resulted in the death of 600 Jews.
- 2.3.3 The Special Commando 4 a, according to its own report at the end of June, had already shot over 300 people who were first labelled “communists” and then “Jewish communists” in Sokal. At the beginning of July it perpetuated an even more extensive massacre in Luzk, where according to its own report, 2000 Jews were killed “as a measure in response to the murder of Ukrainians”. The Commando moved further towards Shitomir where in three “actions” in July over 600 Jewish men were murdered. On 7 August a further group of 402 Jews were shot.
- 2.3.4 In the second half of July, the SK 4 b shot at least 100 people in Winniza in the context of the so-called “intellegentsia action”. Their own report on this action makes clear the arbitrary character of their persecution of the “Jewish-bolshevist leadership” When an “overhaul of the city for leading Jewish personalities had produced scarcely satisfying results”, according to the report, the leaders of the Commandos “ordered that the leading Rabbi of the city appear before them and imposed upon him the duty to locate – within 24 hours – the entire Jewish intellegentsia who were required to appear for the purpose of registration.

When the first gathering proved numerically unsatisfactory, those *Intelligenzjuden* who had appeared were sent away with instructions to find more *Intelligenzjuden* on their own and to bring them in the next day. These measures were carried on for a third time with the result that in this way almost the entire class of *Intelligenzjuden* were re-registered and liquidated.”

- 2.3.5 The first conclusive report about the activities of EG C in Belorus from the beginning of July, 1941, contains an important indication that the group staff understood the given orders to execute as meaning that not only Jews in “party and state positions” were affected: “On the basis of the instructions issued by the RSHA, the liquidation of functionaries of the state and police apparatus in all the named cities of Belorus was undertaken. Concerning the Jews the same orders were followed.”
- 2.3.6 The event report of 20 August (EG C) describes an “action” and this description also very clearly exposes the use of “retribution” as a pretence. “In Januszpol, a city a quarter of whose population was Jewish, in the last few days especially the Jewish women have shown impudent and arrogant behaviour because of limitations imposed upon them. They tore their own and their children’s clothes off their bodies. As provisional retribution, the Commando which arrived for the purpose of re-establishing the peace shot 15 male Jews. Further retribution measures followed.”
- 2.3.7 When the *Einsatzgruppen* stated in this report that “retribution measures against looters and Jews continued to be carried out according to plan” it made clear that “retribution” was being carried out according to a scheme and independent of the existing situation.

2.4 *Einsatzgruppe z.b.V.*

- 2.4.1 In addition to the four Commandos of the EG, yet another Commando was deployed in the Ukraine in July by the Commander and Chief of the Security Police in Cracow which was sent to support the EG C in the

eastern Polish areas. This Commando perpetrated mass executions in July, in which the majority of the victims were Jewish men. This is documented in the event report of 3 August: "From 21 July to 31 July, 1941, 3947 people were liquidated." According to the event report of August 9, in Brest-Litowsk, 510 people, in Bialystok 296 people were liquidated.

- 2.4.2 This unit, which was immediately labelled as EG z.b.V.(for special tasks, *zur besonderen Verwendung*) presented a report at the beginning of August from the eastern Polish area which clearly reveals how excessively "retributions" were applied at this point, and that this term was actually used as camouflage language for mass murder: "In the area near Pinsk a member of the militia was ambushed and shot. For this 4500 Jews were liquidated."

2.5 Einsatzgruppe D

- 2.5.1 For all five Commandos of the EG D there exists documentation for mass executions of Jewish men in the period before August: – A sub-unit of the Special Commando 10 a was sent to the town of Kodyma because of a request from the *Wehrmacht* stating that the "Jews and bolshevists" from there were planning to sabotage the occupation powers. The sub-unit arrested 400 persons on the spot, mostly Jews, put them through an "interrogation" and then shot 98 people.
- 2.5.2 The Special Commando 10 b (which was subordinate to the 3rd Rumanian army) participated on July 8 and 9 in a massacre of Rumanian troops in Czernovitz where the Commando, according to its own report killed "100 Jewish Communists because German and Rumanian units who were approaching were allegedly shot at from the Jewish quarter". At the end of July, the EG D reported that "from about 1200 Jews who had been arrested, 682 had been killed in co-operation with the Rumanian police". Sub-units of EK 10 b performed further executions of Jewish men in other sites in the following weeks.

- 2.5.3 The Special Commando 11 a recorded at the beginning of August the liquidation of “now up to 551 Jews” in Kishinev, justifying it with “sabotage” and “retribution”. These executions took place in front of the Chief of the EG D, Ohlendorf, whose staff was situated in Kishinev and who witnessed at least this one execution.
- 2.5.4 The Special Commando 11 b began its first mass execution on August 7, 1941 in Thigina, where according to the event report of August 7, 155 Jews were shot.
- 2.5.5 The EK 12 performed two executions in Babtshinsky on July 20 and July 21 whereby 94 persons were killed according to the event report of 23 August 1941.

2.6 Police Battalions

- 2.6.1 However not only *Einsatzgruppen*, but also different battalions of the German Order Police perpetrated massacres on the Jewish civilian population in the first few weeks of the military advance in the occupied Eastern areas. – In Bialystok, the Police Battalion 309 committed a massacre as early as 27 June in which at least 2000 Jews, among them women and children were victims. In the course of this action, members of the Battalion forced at least 500 into the Synagogue and murdered them by setting fire to the building.
- 2.6.2 In Bialystok, Police Battalion 316 and 322 staged a massacre in the middle of July whereby altogether 3000 Jewish men were killed. A few days before this massacre, on the afternoon of 8 July, Himmler appeared in Bialystok together with the Chief of the Order Police, Daluge. In a meeting with SS and Police Officers Himmler stated, according to Bach-Zelewski’s testimony, that “basically every Jew was to be regarded as a partisan”. On the next day, Daluge announced in a speech to members of the Police Regiment Centre that “Bolshevism must now be definitively exterminated”. Two days later, on 11 July, the Commander of the Police Regiment Centre issued the order to shoot all

Jewish men between the ages of 17 and 45 convicted as looters. The police made it very easy to “convict” Jews as “looters”; three days previously, members of the Battalion 322 had searched the Jewish quarter and confiscated the goods therein as “loot”. Jews were thus *per se* “looters.”

- 2.6.3 The Police Battalion 316 perpetrated in Baranowicze a further massacre in the second half of July with probably several hundred dead; it was later involved in two mass executions in Mogilev, whereby on September 19, 3700 Jews (also women and children) were killed.
- 2.6.4 The Police Battalion 307 shot several thousand Jewish civilians in Brest-Litovsk around July 12; almost all were men between 16 and 60, it was a supposed “retribution measure” (*Vergeltungsmaßnahme*). Immediately before the massacre, Daluege, the Chief of the Police Regiment Centre, Montua, Bach-Zelewski and further Higher SS Leaders had assembled in Brest.
- 2.6.5 The Battalion 322 received a radio message from the HSSPF, directing them to “send a company to liquidate the Jews”. In the war diary of the Battalion for August 9 it is noted: “Company 3 captures all male Jews to be found between the ages of 16 to 45 in Bialovice and evacuates all other Jews of Bialovice.” And on the next day, it read: “Company 3 follows through on the liquidation of the male Jews in the prisoner assembly camp in Bialovice. 77 Jews aged between 16 and 45 were thereby shot.”
- 2.6.6 Once again Jewish men were shot by the same company of Battalion 322 a few days later in Marovka-Mala in the area near Bialovice. In the war diary of the Battalion for August 8 it is stated: “259 women and 162 children were evacuated to Kobryn. All male Jews of 26-65 (282 heads) and one Polish person were shot for plundering.” Later, it must have been between 10 August and 15 August, an order arrived which increased the age limit for Jewish men to be shot from 45 to 65.

2.7 Conclusions

- 2.7.1 From these numerous individual facts the following conclusions can be drawn:
- 2.7.2 For almost all *Einsatz* or Special Commandos and for a number of Battalions, the mass shooting of Jewish men of draft age – hundreds or thousands of people for each unit – can be documented for the period as early as the end of June or in July. These shootings were mostly carried out under the pretext of “retribution”, punishment for “plundering” or else portrayed as a struggle against “partisans”.. This behaviour corresponded to commands which the *Einsatzgruppen* had received at the beginning of the campaign. In some cases, as we have seen, the leaders of the units even made reference to having received orders to this effect.
- 2.7.3 The behaviour of the units followed a standardised pattern which however was not altogether uniform: the age limit of those to be shot varied from one unit to another; while in some places the entire male population in the designated age group was shot, the executions in other places included different percentages of the male population. Clearly the leaders of the units also had a certain amount of leeway as concerns the nature of the orders given to them; as we have seen, these were not always very precise and left a certain amount of room for interpretation.
- 2.7.4 This sort of “indirect” command, based upon the intuition and initiative of the subordinates, is characteristic for the Nazi system. It was employed especially when subordinates were being asked to do something which clearly violated the accepted law. The Highest Party Court of the Nazi Party had appropriately characterised this sort of “indirect” command in 1939, when it was asked to deal with the question of whether Party members were to be punished for capital crimes committed in the course of the November pogrom of 1938. The Highest Party Court concluded at that time that “for active Nazis from the early

period of struggle it was self-evident... that in actions where the Party does not want to openly appear as the organiser, orders are not issued with absolute clarity or in the smallest detail. He [the active Nazi, P.L.] is therefore accustomed to interpret more than is literally stated, just as those who give the orders often are accustomed – in the interest of the Party – not to state everything but to hint at what is to be achieved by the command. This is especially the case when it is a question of illegal political demonstrations.”

2.7.5 This technique of command-giving was also employed in 1941 in connection with the mass murder of Soviet Jews. The leaders of the individual units were granted a certain latitude, only however within the context of a framework determined by the SS leadership.

2.7.6 In order to assure that the basic policy intentions of the SS leadership were actually put into practice by the units, Himmler, Heydrich and Daluge undertook extended inspection tours in the occupied Eastern territories in the first few weeks of the war. In this way, they encouraged the units to continuously increase the number of Jewish men to be shot. The inspection trips thus constituted an important instrument for reinforcing the system of “indirect command”. The units continuously reported these shootings, as we have seen from the event reports; these reports were made known to a large number of agencies in the *Reich*.

2.7.7 Thus it is clear that the murders had a systematic character: they cannot be explained as spontaneous reactions of individual SS leaders to specific local situations; rather they followed a uniform pattern and were in accord with central orders.

3. Expansion of the shooting to the entire Jewish civilian population.

As will be shown in this section, the SS and police units in the Summer and Fall of 1941, as they extended the shooting to Jewish women and children, followed the same uniform pattern described above. The murder of the Jewish civilian population took on new dimensions with the employment of two SS brigades, one led directly by *Reichsführer SS* Himmler with the help of a Special Commando staff.

3.1 HSSPF Russia Centre and *Einsatzgruppe B*

- 3.1.1 In the area behind the central section of the Front, the character of the mass executions began to enter a new stage as a result of the use of the SS Cavalry Brigade. This Brigade carried out a first “cleansing operation” in the Pripet marshes between 29 July and 12 August under the leadership of the Higher SS and Police Leader, by which 13,788 “looters” (i.e. mostly Jews) were shot and 714 were held prisoner. On the side of the Brigade 2 were killed and 15 wounded. Between 17 August and 23 August the Cavalry Brigade initiated a second “action” by which, according to their own report, altogether 699 Red Army men, 1001 partisans and 14,178 Jews were shot. Shortly before these two “actions”, Himmler had visited Baranovice where he ordered the brigade to kill all Jewish men and the women as well – although in a different way. From a radio-telegraph text dated August 1 from the Second Cavalry Regiment we can read: “Explicit order of the RFSS. All Jews must be shot. Jewish women to be driven into the swamp.”
- 3.1.2 In fact at first the Cavalry Regiment was supposed to kill only the Jewish men. The fact that Himmler had given a clear signal at the end of July that women also were not to be spared, together with the fact that the number of Jewish men killed by the Cavalry Brigade (which lay under the personal responsibility of the HSSPF Russia Centre) had reached unprecedented dimensions – proved to have a radicalising effect for all units under Bach-Zelewski’s command.

- 3.1.3 The shooting of women in the HSSPF area Russia Centre began as early as the first half of August and it was done by the EK 9. In this time period – in the course of several “actions” in Wilejka – members of EK 9 shot at least 320 Jews, among them women and children. Filbert, the Leader of the EK 9, affirmed in his interrogation testimony that the order to shoot women and children was given to him by Nebe, the Leader of the EG B, at the beginning of August. After the executions in the Wilejka area, Commando 9 marched to Vitebsk in August, where several thousand people were murdered in multiple “actions” in the period up to October.
- 3.1.4 The Leader of the EK 8, Bradfisch – as he testified after the war – was also informed by Nebe that “there exists an order from the *Führer* according to which all Jews, i.e. also women and children, are to be exterminated”. Bradfisch testified further that shortly thereafter, when Himmler came to inspect an execution which Bradfisch’s Commando was carrying out in Minsk, Himmler said to him that “since an order from the *Führer* existed calling for the shooting of all Jews, this order had to be carried out, as difficult as this may be for us”.
- 3.1.5 The undifferentiated shooting of women and children which is announced here by Himmler can be documented in the case of the EK 8 only for the period beginning as early as September but occurring mostly after October. A sub-unit stationed in Bobruisk carried out at least seven executions in September-October 1941; among them, one single “action”, which must have taken place in the first half of September, involved the shooting of 400 men, women and children.
- 3.1.6 A “major action” (*Grossaktion*) in Lahoisk was carried out by a sub-unit of EK 8 (probably the one stationed in Borissov); it most likely took place in the first half of September with the support of a Commando from the SS division “*das Reich*”. According to event reports from 20

September, in this “action” 920 Jews were executed. Also in this case, since it was thereafter declared “free of Jews” (*judenfrei*) it follows that all women and children of the village must have been murdered.

- 3.1.7 The same sub-unit of EK 8, along with the units left in Minsk, shot 1401 Jews – men, women and children in Smolowicze around the end of September in a “major action” as reported in the event reports. In the appropriate event report it was stated further that: “After the deployment of this cleansing operation, there are no Jews left in the north, south or west of Borissov.”
- 3.1.8 As early as 1 September, the police battalion 322 in Minsk had shot “914 Jews, including 64 Jewish women”, following a meeting which had taken place there on August 29 between Bach-Zelewski and Daluge. In the war diary of the battalion the justification given for the shooting of a large number of Jewish women was that they were not wearing a Jewish star when arrested in a police raid.
- 3.1.9 On September 25, the Battalion 322, in the context of a training exercise which involved representatives of the *Wehrmacht* (including Division and Regiment Commanders) from the Police, and SD, cordoned off and searched a village. Concerning this “exercise” the war diary of the unit reported that no partisans could be found but that “an inspection of the population revealed the presence of 13 Jewish men, 27 Jewish women and 11 Jewish children. Of these – 13 Jewish men and 19 Jewish women were executed in conjunction with the SD.”
- 3.1.10 It was only after this bloody exercise in the beginning of October, in the area of EI B, that generalized murder of members of the Jewish population was carried out on a full scale. From this point on, massacres resulting in thousands of deaths of men, women and children became the rule.
- 3.1.11 On 2 October, a Company of the Police Battalion 322 in Mogilev (where Bach-Zelewski’s Headquarters were located) lead a “special action upon the orders of the High SS Police Leader”, in which “2208 Jews of

both sexes “ were involved. (This formulation reveals that children were included.) These people were shot without exception, together with Ukrainian militia men. On 19 October, four days before Himmler appeared for an inspection in Bach’s new headquarters in Mogilev, “an important action” against the Jews (*Judenaktion grösseren Ausmasses*), as it was called in the event report, “was carried out there, by which 3726 Jews of both sexes and all ages were liquidated”. This was a clear signal that once again children had also been victims. In this “action” the EK 8 and the Police Battalion 316 were implicated. With these two massacres in Mogilev, Bach-Zelewski began a whole series of further, similar “major actions” (*Grossaktionen*) in eastern Belorus.

3.1.12 From now on, in city after city, area for area, the entire Jewish population was shot – with the exception of a small remnant consisting of workers who were allowed to remain alive. In these “actions”, the commandos, order police and civilian administration as well as local auxiliary police troops were involved. The centre of the “actions” was in the larger cities where the Jews constituted a considerably large percentage of the population, especially in the eastern part of the occupied territories: in the course of these “major actions”, 6500 Jews were shot in the “clearing” (*Räumung*) of the ghetto of Borissov on October 20 and 21. This followed after 1500 skilled workers had been selected out. In Bobruisk, at the end of November and beginning of December, 5281 Jews were murdered by the EK 8 and the Police Battalion 316 in a “special action” and the city was declared “free of Jews” (*judenfrei*). In Vitebsk – also in December – the ghetto was cleared, whereby 4090 Jews were shot. In Gomel in December because of supposed “Partisan support” “2365 Jews were executed.”

3.1.13 The EG B registered for their area up to the end of October altogether 45,467 victims liquidated; in the course of this operation the EK 8 and 9 had an especially high number of victims (28,218 and 11,452 respectively).

3.2 HSSPF Russia South and *Einsatzgruppe C*

- 3.2.1 In the course of extending the murders into the southern part of the Front, the HSSPF Jeckeln as well as the 1st SS Brigade played a major role. The 1st SS Brigade, which was under the command of Jeckeln, moved to the murder of Jewish women when they took on a “cleansing operation” between July 27 and July 30 in the area of Zwiahel. In Jeckeln’s command to the Brigade it was stated that – apart from Front Commissars – also suspicious “female agents or Jews...were to be handled appropriately”.
- 3.2.2 As a result of this “action”, the Brigade reported that they had arrested, among others, 1658 Jews; 800 people, “Jewish men and women from 16 to 60 years old” had been shot. Subsequent to this “action”, on 4 August, units of this Brigade carried out further “actions” and shot 1385 people under the same pretext, among them 275 women and 1109 Jewish men.
- 3.2.3 In the following weeks Jeckeln ordered the 1st. SS Brigade to carry out further “cleansing operations”. Members of the Brigade shot 232 Jews on 7 August in Tschernjychow, 300 Jewish men and 139 women in Sarokonstantinow around 20 August, and “1009 Jews and Red Army men” and in the period between 2 September and 7 September .”
- 3.2.4 At the end of August, the Brigade under Jeckeln’s command carried out a massacre in Kamenetsk-Podolsk which exceeded all previous “actions”. According to the event report from 22 August, “a Commando of the Higher SS and Police Leader... shot 23,600 Jews” (men, women and children) within 3 days. The victims of Kamenetsk-Podolsk were mainly Jews who had been deported over the border into the newly conquered area in Galicia by Hungarian officials as “burdensome foreigners”. The proof that this massacre was systematically prepared is documented in the minutes of the meeting which was held on 25 August at the Headquarters of the Generalquartermaster of the Army in Vinniza. On this occasion, an officer of the staff of the Generalquarterm-

master referred to a pledge by Jeckeln to complete the liquidation of the Jews deported to the area of Kamenetsk-Podolsk by 1 September. From the number of Jews deported from Hungary, 18.000, it can be concluded that about 14.000 to 16.000 were shot at the end of August about 15 Km from Kamenetsk-Potolsk by Jeckeln's staff company, the Police Battalion 320 as well as by Ukrainian and Hungarian militia. In addition, thousands of local Jews were shot.

- 3.2.5 After the "altogether 44,125 people, mostly Jews" who were shot, in August alone, according to the event reports of the "Formation of the Higher SS and Police Leaders", Jeckeln continued the massacres; in the first days of September, in Berditschw, as stated in event reports, "1303 Jews, among them 876 Jewish women over 12 years old" were killed by a Commando of the Higher SS and Police Leaders Russia South. The murder of over 3000 Jews still living in the ghetto of Shitomir, on 19 September, in which the SK 4a was involved, must also have been largely Jeckeln's responsibility.
- 3.2.6 Finally, Jeckeln played a leading role in the massacre of the Jews of Kiev at Babi Jar, where the SK 4a, the Police Regiment South with the Battalion 45 and 303 and a Company of the *Waffen SS* were involved. This massacre, by which 33,771 Jews were murdered according to the event reports, was planned on September 16 in a meeting where Jeckeln, the Chief of the EG C, Rasch, the Leader of the SK 4a, Blobel as well as the City Commander of the *Wehrmacht* were present. This mass murder was justified as "retaliation" for a major fire in the city that was supposedly set by Jews.
- 3.2.7 Jeckeln also played a central role in the massacre of the Jews of Dnje-preprotowsk on 13 October, where according to the event reports, out of some 30.000 Jews in the city, "approximately 10.000 were shot by a commando of the Higher SS and Police Leaders on 13 October, 1941". In this series of massacres under Jeckeln's personal management up to October, 1941, more than 100.000 people were murdered.

- 3.2.8 This series of mass murders are the basis for the activities of EG C and the Police Battalion placed in the southern parts of the occupied Soviet Union in late summer and fall. These units were already in part directly involved in the major “actions” initiated by Jeckeln. Jeckeln was the one who gave the decisive impulse which lead the commandos and police battalions to go over to the total extermination of the Jewish population.
- 3.2.9 Erwin Schulz, the Commando Leader of EK 5 testified during his stay in Berditschew (where the unit was stationed between the end of July and the middle of August) that Rasch, Commander of the EG C, had called him to Shitomir in order to explain to him that not only those Jews who were employed but also their wives and children were to be shot. This order, according to Rasch, came from Jeckeln.
- 3.2.10 The total eradication of all inhabitants of a location, including the women and children by the EK 5 can be documented as of the middle of September. On 15 September, the town of Bogusslaw, as explained in an event report, “because of the execution of 322 Jews and 13 communist functionaries” was declared “free of Jews.” On 22 and 23 September, the EK 5 in Uman carried out a “major action” in which, according to their own report, 1412 Jews were shot. In Cybulow on 25 September, 70 Jews were shot, 537 Jews (men, women and children) on 4 October in Perejeslas and in Koschewatoje shortly thereafter “all Jews of this place.” were executed.
- 3.2.11 On the basis of the generalized order to murder issued in August, the number of the people killed by the EK 5 increased considerably: For the period from 7 September to 5 October, the Commando reported that “207 political functionaries, 112 saboteurs and looters as well as 8800 Jews had been liquidated”. A few weeks later, the Commando reported that “The number of those executed by the EK 5 was altogether 15.110 on 20 October 1941.

- 3.2.12 The EK 6 (sub-unit Kronberger) shot Jewish women starting in October in Kriwoj-Rog, after Himmler had inspected this place on 3 October. On 20 October, Krivoj Rog was declared “free of Jews” (*judenfrei*).” In the event report of 19 November Commando 6 stated that “1000 further Jews had been shot”.
- 3.2.13 In the area of Shitomir from the beginning of August, the Commando 4 a shot women in great numbers, shortly thereafter also children. Thus also in Bjelaja-Zerkow 500 men and women were shot on 8 or 9 August, the Jewish children on 19 August and on 22 August, by the advance party of SK 4a, which was scheduled to go to Kiev. According to the reports of the Commando, in the month of August, in Fastov “the entire Jewish population aged 12 to 60, altogether 252 head, shot”. In Radomyschle on 6 September, 1668 Jewish men, women and children were executed. Also in Shitomir, their main base where a ghetto had been set up, the Commando proceeded to murder all Jewish inhabitants regardless of age or sex. After multiple mass executions in the second half of August with several thousand people as victims, 3145 Jews were shot in the course of liquidating the ghetto on 19 September 1941, according to the report of the Commando.
- 3.2.14 The Police Battalion 45, which belonged to the Police Regiment South, proceeded to murder Jews regardless of their age or sex at the end of July-beginning of August. The first victims were the entire Jewish population of the town of Schepetowka, where the Battalion had been based between 26 July and 1 August, 1941; according to the declaration of the Battalion Commander, Besser, made after the war, this involved 40 to 50 men and women, probably however even more. Besser declared on this point that he had been following an order of the Commander of the Police Regiment South, who in turn referred to a general order for liquidation issued by Himmler.

- 3.2.15 In the following weeks, the Battalion repeated this pattern in other Ukrainian villages: among others, it killed Jewish men and women in Slawuta (according to the declaration of the HSSPF Russia South this included 522 persons), in Sudylkow (471 dead) as well as in Berditschew (1000 victims). When Besser's successor, Rosenbauer, was being briefed on his tasks as Battalion Commander by the Higher SS and Police Leader of Russia South, Jeckeln, he was given very clear instructions, according to his own statements: "Jeckeln said that the order of Reichsführer SS Himmler was the basis for the solution of the Judenfrage: The Ukrainians should become a Helot (slave) people who work only for us. We had no interest, however, in having the Jews multiply: therefore the Jewish population had to be exterminated."
- 3.2.16 Also the Police Battalion 314, which belonged to the Police Regiment South as well, shot women and children as early as July. This can be documented for the first time in the case of a company of the Battalion on 22 July in a place in the area of Kovel: in the private diary of a member of the Battalion it is stated that on this day 217 people, among them entire families, had been shot.

3.3 *Einsatzgruppe D*

- 3.3.1 The shooting of women and children in the area of *Einsatzgruppe D* is documented for the first time for the period at the end of August. Around 29 August in the region of Jampol, the *Einsatzkommando 12* shot several hundred women and children from a convey of more than 11.000 people which the Commando was driving over the Dniester bridge into Romanian-occupied territories.
- 3.3.2 Shortly thereafter, at least three, probably however all four of the comandos of *Einsatzgruppe D* proceeded to systematically murder the entire Jewish population of different villages. The decisive order for the transition to this new stage of mass murder came at the end of August – or the beginning of September from Ohlendorf. Nosske, Leader of the EK 12, stated on this point in 1969 that around the beginning of

September, Ohlendorf, together with Rasch, the Leader of EG C visited him and admitted upon this occasion “that from now there exists a *Führerbefehl* according to which all Jews are to be killed indiscriminately”. Until then, the murder of the Jews had been “only in the context of a general order for the security and pacification of the area behind the lines”.

- 3.3.3 A report of the *Einsatzgruppe D* of September 1941 reflected this new kind of procedure. Here it was stated that “the majority of the forces were employed for political pacification in places where the stirrings of Jewish and communists terror groups were to be noted, especially in the area of Ananjev and Dubossary. In this area the pacification was ruthlessly carried out”. In fact, “ruthless” pacification meant the murder of the entire population of both villages.
- 3.3.4 In Ananjev, the SK 10B on 28 August “shot about 300 Jewish and Jewish women”, i.e. all Jews who had entered the town.
- 3.3.5 A sub-unit of Commando EK 12, which stopped in Dubossary at the end of August -beginning of September, killed small groups of Jews practically daily in that town. Around the middle of September on the other hand, the unit at first murdered all of the approximately 1500 Jewish inhabitants of the town and a few days later a further 1000 Jews from the nearby areas. Drexel, the Leader of the sub unit stated on this point that he had received orders from a member of the staff of Ohlendorf’s group “to shot the Jews living in Dubossary”.
- 3.3.6 At the end of September, the SK 11a (together with a sub unit of the EK 12 and probably with support from SK 11 b) shot all inhabitants of the ghetto in Nikolajew, where the Headquarters of the Staff of EG D was located. This involved approximately 5000 women, men and children. Around the same time, probably a few days later, the entire Jewish population of Cherson was murdered by SK 11a.

- 3.3.7 The mass executions of Ananjev, Dubossary, Nikolajew and Cherson, which took place between the end of August and the end of September, marked the transition to the undifferentiated murder of the Jewish civilian population in areas of EG D. Also in this case, Himmler did not avoid the task of personally inspecting the mass murders, which now took on a new dimension: for the period from 30 September until 6 October, we have evidence that Himmler carried out an inspection tour in the Ukraine in which he also visited Nikolajew and Cherson, so that it is clear that he was present in both places either during or directly after the mass executions.
- 3.3.8 In the event report of 26 September the EG D reported in conclusion: “Working area of Commando made free of Jews: from 19 August to 15 October, 8890 Jews and communists executed. Total number: 13,315. At this time the Jewish Question in Nikolajew and Cherson is being solved. About 5000 Jews were seized.” About a week later, the event report states: “The clearing of the area of Jews and communist elements by the commandos was continued. In particular, the cities of Nikolajew and Cherson were freed of Jews and the functionaries were handled accordingly.”
- 3.3.9 Also in the following months, the EG D continued this murderous course: thus EG D reported for the first half of October: “The territories which have been recently occupied by the commandos have been rendered free of Jews.”
- 3.3.10 In the October report of the group it was said: “The solution of the Jewish Question was energetically attacked by the EG, the Security Police and the SD, especially in the area east of the Dnieper. The territories which have been recently occupied by the commandos have been rendered free of Jews. 4891 Jews were liquidated in the process. In other locations, the Jews were marked and registered. It was thereby possible to make available Jewish work groups as large as 10.000 to the authorities of the *Wehrmacht*.”

3.4 Intensification of the murders in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (area of the *Einsatzgruppe A*).

- 3.4.1 The transition to the shooting of women and children occurred at the end of July/beginning of August for the EK 3 as well as for the EK Tilsit; for the EK 2 this seems to have taken place during the month of August.
- 3.4.2 The comprehensive report of the Leader of the EK 3, Jäger, shows that from the very beginning, women were also shot in the executions of the EK 3 in Lithuania, although in far fewer numbers than men. At this point in time, the shooting of women was regarded as justified when there was any sort of even vague suspicion of communist activity or connection with the partisans. A basic change can be observed however, as in the case of other commandos, in the month of August: According the Jäger report, “in co-operation” with the Lithuanian Partisans”, the EK 3 shot 213 Jewish men and 66 Jewish women in Rassainiai on 5 August. A few days later, between 9 August and 16 August, the EK 3 shot “294 Jewish women, 4 Jewish children” in the same place. It is also noteworthy that overall for 1 August and 16 August, the shooting of “3200 Jewish men, Jewish women and Jewish children” in Rokiskis is reported. Not only is this number far above the previous executions, but also the overall form of the report (the distinction which had hitherto been made between women, men and children was now not mentioned) indicates a new procedure. It thus seems likely that between 5 August and at the latest on 16 August, the Commando charged with the murders received a new order: now it was in principle no longer necessary to discriminate between men and women and the murder of children was permitted.
- 3.4.3 Also in the following days, the number of the women shot by the EK 3 reached to some extent the same level as the number of men killed, in some cases even higher. The high number of children murdered points

to the likelihood that the transition had now taken place to an indiscriminate shooting of Jews of any age and both sexes. The statements in the Jäger report mentioned, among other items:

“

- Panevezys, 23 August: 1312 Jewish men, 4602 Jewish women, 1609 Jewish children;
- Zarasao. 26 August: 767 Jewish 1113 Jewish women, 687 Jewish children;
- Utena and Meletai 29 August 1941: 582 Jewish men, 1731 Jewish women, 1469 Jewish children;
- Marianpole, 1 September 1941: 1763 Jewish men, 1812 Jewish women, 1404 Jewish children. ”

- 3.4.4 On 2 September, the EK 3 reported the shooting of women and children also from Vilna: “Apart from 864 Jewish men, 2019 women also 817 children were shot.” In Dvinsk (Lithuania) a sub-unit of EK 3 shot more than 9000 Jews, among them a large number of women and children in the period between 13 July and 21 August in several “actions” with the support of Lithuanian forces.
- 3.4.5 The EK 2, which was stationed in Latvia, had liquidated almost 18.000 Jews up until September or had had them shot by Lettish collaborators. This high number of victims points to the possibility that this commando had also gone over to the shooting of women and children.
- 3.4.6 Already at the end of July – beginning of August, the EK Tilsit which was operating in the border areas had gone over to systematically extending the shootings beyond that of men of draft age. Members of the commandos returned to the ravaged places where surviving Jewish family members were imprisoned by the Lithuanian order patrol. Thus, with the support of Lithuanians, at the end of July – beginning of August, at least 100 to 200 Jews (women, old men and children) were shot in Georgenburg and Wirballen and in Garsden in August/Septem-

ber at least 100 women, children and older men were shot. Further executions up to September were catalogued by the District Court of Ulm during the post war trial against members of the unit.

3.5 Conclusions

- 3.5.1 The extension of the shooting to women and children took place in the case of some units as of the end of July, for others beginning only in September or early October. Some units moved from extending the shooting to women and children directly to murdering the entire Jewish population in certain districts. In the case of other units, the time lag between these two levels of radicalisation was several weeks. Those Jews who had survived the first wave of murders (for example, those needed as workers for the Germans) and those who were enclosed in ghettos, became victims of the ghetto liquidation measures which began after September /October 1941 and extended through the winter of 1941-42 and the entire year of 1941.
- 3.5.2 In order to force through the decisive stages of this radicalisation process – extending the shooting to women and children – the orders given at the beginning of the war had to be extended in the course of the summer. A reconstruction of the events leads to the conclusion that this was not done by means of a single written order sent to all units at the same time; rather, repeated verbal instructions must have come from the SS leaders to the unit leader who was then to take the initiative himself and extend the shooting to women and children. Important for this radicalisation process is Himmler's verbal order from 30 July to push "Jewish women in the swamps", as well as his speech in Minsk on 15 August in which he alluded to the coming shootings of women and children.
- 3.5.3 From statements made by different commando leaders it is apparent that they were likewise encouraged by their superiors to shoot women and children in August and September (Filbert and Bradfish from Nebe, Schulz by Rasch, Nosske and Drexel by Ohlendorf). Significant

here are the HSSPF Russia Centre and Russia South which were directly subordinate to Himmler and took the decisive initiative; by the employment of the SS brigades as well as by the use of “major actions” bringing together the EK, police battalions and other units, they increased the numbers of victims to hitherto unknown dimensions, including women and children. In this way, a larger number of units in the occupied Eastern territories were brought to direct participation in such “actions” and were thereby further radicalised. Repeatedly, Himmler appeared either shortly before or shortly after the “major actions” at the relevant places and strengthened the members of the SS and police in their murderous procedures.

- 3.5.4 The extension of the shootings to women and children in the Summer and Fall of 1941 – begun through the murder of the entire Jewish civilian population in the occupied Soviet areas – was perpetuated by means of the method of “indirect orders”: the SS leadership issued general instructions and the unit commanders were to execute them using their own initiative and intuition.

III. Regional mass murder of the Jews in 1941/42 outside of the Soviet Union

In the fall of 1941, the Nazi regime began to deport Jews from Central Europe into the Eastern European ghettos. From statements by leading representatives of the regime it becomes clear that at this point in time the intention was to deport these people further to the East following upon a victory over the Soviet Union. At the same time, the mass murder of the Jews was extended to certain areas outside of the Soviet Union and especially to those areas destined to receive the Jews pushed out of Central Europe.

A. The Beginning of the Deportations

- ¹ In mid-September 1941, Hitler made the decision to deport the Jews within the “Greater German Reich” to ghettos in Poland and the occupied Soviet Union. Himmler communicated Hitler’s wishes to the *Reichsstatthalter* (governor) of the Warthegau, Greiser, on 18 September 1941 (copies went to Heydrich and the HSSPF of the Warthegau, Kopppe): “The *Führer* wishes that, from the West to the East, the *Altreich* and the *Protektorat* be emptied and freed of Jews as soon as possible. I am therefore striving to transport the Jews of the *Altreich* and the *Protektorat in the* Eastern Territories that became part of the *Reich* two years ago. It is desirable that this is be accomplished by the end of this year, as a first and initial step in deporting them even further to the East next Spring. I intend to remove a full 60.000 Jews of the *Altreich* and *Protektorat* to the Litzmannstadt ghetto for the winter. This has, I have heard, the space to receive them.”
- ² Following the protests of Uebelhoer, the Head of the administration in the district of Lodz, and Thomas, the Head of the Armaments Office of the *Wehrmacht*, who emphasised the total overcrowding of the ghetto and likely obstruction of its production – the original plan was modified and expanded. In October it was decided to deport 25.000 Jews and Gypsies to Lodz. At the same time, new destinations were planned for two further groups of 25.000 Jews from the *Reich* – the ghettos of Riga and Minsk.
- ³ A variety of evidence can substantiate the original intention to deport Jews who had been previously deported from the *Reich* to camps in the occupied Soviet areas. This would be carried out at a later date, and if the military situation allowed it.
- ⁴ On 24 September, after a meeting with Heydrich on the previous day, Goebbels wrote in his diary that, “we must evacuate the Jews from Berlin as soon as possible”. This “will be possible as soon as we have cleared up the military situation in the East. In the end, they should all

be transported to the camps set up [by the, added P.L.] Bolsheviks. These camps have been constructed by the Jews; what would be more apt than to now have them peopled by the Jews. “

- ⁵ On 6 October, while propounding on measures to punish the Czechs, Hitler emphasised that all Jews from the *Protektorat* needed to be “removed” (*entfernt*) – and not into the *Generalgouvernement* first, but – “straight on to the East”. This was said to be impossible at the moment, due to lack of transport capacity. Parallel to the deportation of the “Protektorat-Jews” the Jews of Vienna and Berlin should “disappear” (*verschwinden*).
- ⁶ At a meeting in Prague four days later, on 10 October, at which Eichmann was also present, Heydrich said the following: “There are at this time about 88.000 Jews in the *Protektorat* as a whole, 48.000 of whom are in Prague. [...]” Due to the evacuations there have been difficulties. It was foreseen to begin this around 15 October, in order to let the transports eventually, until 15 November, reach the level of 5000 Jews – from Prague alone. ... Minsk and Riga are to receive 50.000. .. In the coming days the 5000 Jews should be now evacuated from Prague. SS-Brigadeführer Nebe and Rasch could take Jews into the camps for communist prisoners in the operational area. ccording to SS-Sturmbannführer Eichmann, this measure has already been initiated [...]” The Gypsies to be evacuated could be brought to Stahlecker in Riga, whose camp is operated along the lines of Sachsenhausen. As the *Führer* wishes the Jews to be brought out of the German sphere by the end of the year if possible, all open questions must be solved immediately.”
- ⁷ The deportations from the *Reich* did in fact begin in mid-October. In a first wave of deportations between 15 October and 5 November, 10.000 Jews from the *Altreich*, 5000 from each of the *Protektorat* and Vienna, and 5000 Gypsies from the Burgenland, were deported to Lodz in 24 transports. Between 8 November and 6 February, altogether 34 differ-

ent transports went to Riga, Kovno, and Minsk Originally this wave of deportations was to have ended at the beginning of December, and encompassed the deportation of 50.000 people. The deportations to Minsk, however, had to be broken off at the end of November due to problems of transportation. Up until this time, approximately 8000 people had been deported into the Minsk ghetto. The transports to Riga were completed at the end of February, having fulfilled the planned quota of 25.000 people deported.

- ⁸ Already in November 1941, however, the RSHA was assuming that the deportations which had not been completed in the course of 1941 as originally planned, would be continued in a third wave of deportation the following Spring. This can be taken from a note Goebbels made concerning a conversation with Heydrich on 17 November: “Heydrich has reported to me on his intentions concerning the deportation of the Jews from the *Reich* [...] The third consignment, which is due at the beginning of next year, shall follow the procedure which I have suggested – namely, evacuating city by city. Thus when the evacuation commences in a particular city, it will be completed as soon as possible, ensuring that the burden placed on public opinion does not last too long, or have too harmful consequences. On this question too, Heydrich is proceeding very consistently.” On 22 November 1941 Goebbels noted in his diary that Hitler had given his approval to the implementation of the “city-wise” deportation.
- ⁹ Drawing this evidence together we find: the deportations of Jews from the German REICH in the autumn of 1941 and the ensuing Winter proceeded on the orders of Hitler; they were implemented in several waves according to a plan; and, they were directed centrally by the RSHA. One can hence speak of a systematically prepared and implemented programme of deportations.

- ¹⁰ The RSHA's planning of deportations in autumn 1941, however, extended not only to Central Europe, but was already directed towards a wider perspective which encompassed the entire territory under German domination. This can be substantiated by a number of documents.
- ¹¹ The expert on Jewish Questions of the German Embassy in Paris Carltheo Zeitschel, succeeded (through the aid of Ambassador Abetz) in securing Himmler's fundamental approval for the eastward deportation of the foreign Jews interned in France. This was in mid-September 1941, that is, exactly at the time Hitler had decided to start the deportations from the *Reich*. (In his proposal Zeitschel had taken it for granted that the removal of this group represented only the first step in the deportation of all Jews under German domination to the occupied Eastern Territories.) In autumn 1941, the German military administration in occupied France fell in line with Zeitschel's proposal of mid-September. It decided to deport a large number of Jews and communists, who had been arrested in mass-raids in May and August 1941, into forced labour "to the East", presenting this as a repressive measure against the attacks of the French resistance movement. From December 1941 onward, Jews and communists were named and singled out. These "hostage-deportations", although initially put back by transportation problems, eventually started operation in March 1942.
- ¹² A further number of indicators dating from October and November 1941, support the view that while the deportations from the German *Reich* were being introduced, there were, in fact, already preparations being made for the deportation of all Jews within the German sphere of domination.
- ¹³ In a letter to the Generalquartermaster of the army of 6 November 1941, Heydrich defended his explicit approval of the attacks on seven synagogues in Paris, which had been perpetrated during the night of

2-3 October by an anti-Semitic French group. The proposal to carry out these attacks, Heydrich asserted, was “accepted by me only from that moment onward, when also the highest office characterised Jewry with utmost severity as the responsible firebrand in Europe who must finally disappear from Europe.”

- ¹⁴ In a meeting with representatives of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern territories on 4 October, Heydrich indicated the possibility of companies claiming Jewish workers. This, however, “would destroy the plan of a total evacuation of Jews from the occupied territories”.
- ¹⁵ Also the Head of the Jewish desk of the Foreign Office, Rademacher, still assumed at the end of October 1941 that the Serbian Jews who had survived the repressive measures of the *Wehrmacht*, would be “removed by ship into the transition camps in the East”. This was to happen as soon as “the technical feasibility within the general framework of the comprehensive solution of the Jewish Question” was established.
- ¹⁶ Was the deportation of Jews “to the East” at this time already a metaphor for the planned murder in the extermination camps? The state of contemporary research does not give sufficient evidence for this conclusion. Until early 1942, in fact, neither the Central European nor the French Jews were sent directly to extermination camps. Further, these camps were not significantly expanded until early 1942 and early summer 1942. Until the contrary has been proven, one should thus take the statements of leading Nazis literally – that the intention behind the deportations and the planning of Autumn 1941, was still to deport all European Jews to camps in the occupied Soviet Union, after victory had been achieved.
- ¹⁷ The RSHA’s programme of deportations for German Jews, and their broader plans for the deportation of Jews throughout the area under German control, were secured by a number of administrative measures. – The universal exterior labelling of Jews in the *Reich* was instig-

ated by Secretary of State Stuckart in August. After this proposal had found general approval at an inter-ministerial conference in the Propaganda Ministry on 20 August, the ensuing police directive of 1 September prescribed that all Jews over the age of six were to wear a yellow star with the inscription *Jude*, i.e., “Jew”.

- ¹⁸ - At the beginning of November 1941, the Finance Ministry issued regulations determining the confiscation of the property of “Jews to be deported to a city in the Eastern territories in the coming months”. The relatively complex directive determining the procedure of confiscation of property was significantly simplified by the eleventh decree of the Reich Citizen Law of 25 November 1941. This decree stated that a Jew “who has his usual residency abroad” – which meant, “is situated there under circumstances which can be recognised as not merely temporary” – would lose German citizenship. “With the loss of citizenship” his property “is forfeited to the *Reich* “. In the complementary directive of the Finance Ministry of December, the term “abroad” was defined to also include all the occupied territories – in particular, the *Generalgouvernement* and the *Reichskommissariate* Ostland and Ukraine, the administrative units which the Germans introduced in Poland and the Soviet Union respectively.
- ¹⁹ - While these administrative measures effected the Jews in the *Reich*, the ban on emigration for Jews of October 1941, applied to all Jews in the German dominated areas. Two memoranda of the Head of the German Department of the German Foreign Office Luther, mark the period of time within which a fundamental decision against further emigration must have been taken. On 13 October Luther noted that the proposal to deport the Spanish Jews in France to Spanish Morocco was, “a suitable contribution to the resolution of the Jewish Question in France”. Only four days later however, Luther recorded that the Reich Security Office had opposed these deportations “because of the necessary measures that would be required after the end of the war, to fundamentally solve the Jewish Question.” The decision to ban emigration

was thus made exactly at the same time as the deportations from the *Reich* began. It was a decisive precondition for the implementation of the still current plan, which envisaged the total deportation of all Jews under German domination into the occupied Eastern Territories after the end of the war.

- ²⁰ Himmler discussed the planned ban on emigration with Heydrich on 18 October. Eventually, on 23 October, the RSHA issued a directive in Himmler's name, imposing a general ban on emigration from the German dominated areas, although exceptions were foreseen.
- ²¹ Closely following the ban on emigration, the Foreign Office asked the governments of Slovakia, Croatia and Rumania in November, whether they had any objection to the deportation of their Jewish citizens residing in Germany. All three governments replied positively.

B. The Transfer of Technology for Killing by Means of Gas to Eastern Europe

- ¹ Parallel to the beginning of the deportations, the transfer of gas-killing technology into the Eastern European region was begun. This technology had been under development in the context of the "euthanasia" programme since 1939.
- ² This transfer was initiated after the programme of "euthanasia" had been stopped on 24 August 1941. The programme had comprised the planned murder of approximately 20 percent of all inmates of psychiatric institutions in the *Reich*. Altogether more than 70.000 people had been killed in the framework of the so-called "Operation T4" (*Aktion T4*) when it was brought to an end. Only a few weeks later, the first preparations can be documented for the construction of gas-chambers in Eastern Europe.
- ³ - The decision to build the first extermination camp in Belzec was made in mid-October. The killing was to proceed by means of exhaust from a permanently installed motor. Construction started at the begin-

ning of November, and the killing experts of Operation T4 were ordered to Belzec in December 1941. (This will be described in more detail in another section of this report.)

- ⁴ - Likewise in October 1941, preparations were put into place by the Chancellery of the *Führer*, which was responsible for Operation T4, to build gas-chambers in Riga. This can be taken from a letter of 25 October by Wetzel, the specialist for racial affairs of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, to *Reichskommissar* Lohse, head of the *Reichskommissariat* Ostland: “In reference to my letter of 18 October, I am writing to inform you that *Oberdienstleiter* [a rank in the Party hierarchy, P.L.] Brack of the Chancellery of the *Führer* has declared his willingness to participate in the construction of the required dwellings as well as the production of the gassing-apparatus. The appropriate apparatus are not available in the required quantity at present, and must first be produced. As Brack is of the opinion that the production of the apparatus would provide greater difficulties in the *Reich* than on-site, he considers it purposeful to send his people to Riga. His chemist Dr. Kallmeyer, in particular, will make all the necessary arrangements. [...] According to *Sturmbannführer* Eichmann, camps for Jews will be established in Riga and Minsk, into which Jews from the area of the *Altreich* will also possibly be brought. At the moment Jews are being evacuated from the *Altreich* who will be brought to, insofar as they are fit for work. According to this state of affairs, there are no reservations if those Jews who are incapable of work, are eliminated by the Brackian means. [...] Those fit for work, on the other hand, will be transported to labour in the East. ” Gas-chambers (here described as “dwellings” (*Unterkünfte*) were not in fact erected in Riga. Rather, so-called gas-vans were to be employed.
- ⁵ - These gas-vans were developed by the Criminal Police in autumn 1941 – parallel to the transfer of the technology of “euthanasia” to Eastern Europe. This started with Himmler’s visit to Riga in mid-August. After having an execution of Jews performed for his observation,

he demanded of Nebe, the Head of the EG B, that other methods of killing should be sought which were more “humane” than execution – methods, that is, which would put less strain on the firing squads of the SS and policemen.

- ⁶ Following this, Nebe, who was simultaneously Head of the Reich Criminal Police Office, ordered the Head of the Department for chemistry and biology of the Criminal-Technical Institute, Widmann, to Minsk. After a trial with explosives, in which a group of patients of an asylum for the mentally ill was murdered in the most gruesome manner, Widmann had a further group of patients poisoned with motor-exhaust in Mogilev in mid-September.
- ⁷ Based on this experience, the decision was made to create mobile gas-chambers for the EG’s. Already in 1940 the SK Lange had used such vehicles to murder asylum inmates in Poland. Now, however, instead of using carbon-monoxide gas bottles as previously, the exhaust of the vehicles was pumped directly into the passenger-carriage. At the beginning of November 1941, the first “testing” of such a vehicle took place in Sachsenhausen, where the Criminal-Technical Institute ran a workshop. About 30 prisoners were killed by exhaust fumes.
- ⁸ In the occupied Soviet territories, the gas-vans were first used to kill people in November or early December. By the end of 1941, probably a total of six gas-vans of the first series were deployed by the four EG’s.
- ⁹ - Around the same time, from October/November 1941 onward, the gas-vans were also deployed by the SK Lange in the Warthegau to murder of Jews. On 8 December, the killing began in Chelmno, where a permanent location of gas-vans was established – that is, a further variant of an extermination camp.
- ¹⁰ - While the mass murders were being prepared or already executed in Belzec, the Warthegau, and in the occupied Eastern territories with the help of exhaust fumes, the Commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp took another course. In September or December 1941, 600

Soviet prisoners of war, as well as a selected 250 sick prisoners, were murdered in the basement of Block 11 of Auschwitz by means of a high concentration of the extremely poisonous disinfectant Cyclon B. At a later point, in December 1941, a further 900 Soviet POWs were murdered by means of gas.

- ¹¹ In his writings from the Krakow prison after the war, the former Commandant of Auschwitz Höß described how he had discussed the question of the most suitable poison-gas to be employed, on the occasion of a visit by Eichmann. The date of this visit is still not certain – some of his comments indicate the autumn of 1941, others point to a later date somewhere in early 1942. Höß further states that during the time that he was not in Auschwitz himself, his deputy used Cyclon B to kill Soviet POWs on his own initiative.
- ¹² In November 1941, Topf & Söhne (of Erfurt), a company specialised in the construction of crematoria, received the assignment to build an enormous 32-chamber furnace in Mogilev, White Russia. This installation was needed – so the company was told – to hygienically dispose of corpses, due to the great danger of epidemics in the East. As the site was not completed, the ovens which were no longer needed went to Auschwitz. It is possible that this crematorium-installation was in fact planned as part of an extermination camp in Mogilev, whose function was taken over by Auschwitz and the Polish extermination camps in the following months.
- ¹³ From the above one can see, that at the end of 1941 preparations were underway for the construction of extermination camps in Riga, in the area of Lodz (Chelmno), in Belzec as well as in Auschwitz, and presumably also in Mogilev, that is, in the area of Minsk. Thus extermination camps were being planned in the proximity of all the ghettos which had been chosen as the destinations for the first to the third waves of deportations from the German *Reich*. The parallels in timing between the beginning of the deportations and the preparation and installation

of the murder-machinery reflect the plan of the Nazi regime to extend the strategy of “Jew-free” (*judenfrei*) areas – already implemented in the Soviet Union – to the Polish territories. In certain regions which were of central importance in the displacement of people within the framework of the racist “New Ordering”, the elimination of the Jewish population “unfit for work” was the minimum requirement. In the preceding months, attempts on all sides to develop or improve on technologies of mass-killing by means of gas are clear indications of comprehensive preparations to extend the scale of mass murder for the near future. (In the case of Auschwitz these preparations were concerned with the Soviet POWs, and not Jewish prisoners in the first instance.) It should be emphasised, however, that at this time the plans for the systematic mass murder of the Jewish population only extended to certain regions. As previously, the intention was to deport the remaining Jews to the occupied Soviet territories after the war.

C. Regional Killing and Planning, Autumn 1941

- ¹ In Autumn 1941, the systematic planning and implementation of murder was extended by the Nazi government to four regions outside of the occupied Soviet territory. In the Warthegau the murder of 100.000 Jews was set into motion. In Serbia the entire male Jewish population was killed – insofar as they could be captured by the Germans. In the District of Lublin in the *Generalgouvernement*, concrete preparations were being made for the systematic murder of all Jews considered “unfit for work”. In addition to these three areas, there was the special case of Galicia – the part of Poland which had been occupied by the Soviet Union from 1939 until 1941, and where the SS and police units had carried out mass-executions similar to those in the other occupied Soviet areas. Although this area became part of the *Generalgouvernement* on 1 August 1941, it followed the same pattern of

radicalisation of the mass murder, as seen in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union. As in those areas, the executions were extended to the entire Jewish population.

1. The Mass murders in the Warthegau

- 1.1 Since Hitler's decision to begin with the deportation of the Jews from the "Greater German Reich" in mid-September 1941, a continuous stream of transports arrived in the utterly overfilled ghetto of Lodz, starting in mid-October. They carried a total of 25.000 Jews and Gypsies who had been forcibly removed from the *Reich*.
- 1.2 Around the same time, probably still in October 1941, the mass murder of local Jews began in the area of Konin in the southern Warthegau. In an "action" lasting several days at the end of November, 700 Jews were killed in gas-vans at the camp of Bornhagen (Kozminek) in the area of Kalisch. This was carried out by the SK Lange which had already murdered thousands of mental asylum inmates in gas-vans in 1939/1940, and again in June/July 1941. In October 1941, Lange's unit was called to Novgorod by Himmler in order to kill the patients of mental asylums there. Lange's driver testified that he had been told to chauffeur Lange around the Warthegau in the autumn of 1941, in order to find a suitable place for a stationary murder-installation. After a suitable building had been found in Chelmno, Lange's unit started killing Jews there with the use of gas-vans on 8 December. At first, mainly local Jews who had been deported from various areas of the Warthegau to Chelmno were killed. From January 1942 onward, however, predominantly Polish Jews from the ghetto of Lodz were put to death at Chelmno.
- 1.3 A letter of the governor *Reichsstatthalter* of the Warthegau Greiser of 1 May 1942, gives important evidence in the reconstruction of the decision to carry out the mass murder of Jews in the Warthegau. In this letter to Himmler, Greiser writes that the "special treatment of around

100.000 Jews in my district [which was] authorised by you in agreement with the Head of the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* SS *Obergruppenführer* Heydrich” could be “completed in the next 2-3 months”. If Himmler and Heydrich had to “authorise” (*genehmigen*) this mass murder, then it is to be assumed that this suggestion was of Greiser’s making. The murder of the 100.000 people (Polish Jews “unfit for work”) which Greiser demanded of Himmler, was hence presumably the “quid pro quo” for the approximately 25.000 Jews and Gypsies (instead of the 60.000 originally proposed by Himmler) who were to be taken up in the ghetto of Lodz in October/November 1941.

2. Preparations for the Regional Mass murder in the *Generalgouvernement* and in the District of Lublin

- 2.1 From early 1941, the government of the *Generalgouvernement* had been working under the assumption that the Jews in their area would be deported to the conquered Soviet areas in the near future. In a private conversation of 13 October 1941, Frank renewed his suggestion to Rosenberg to deport the Jewish population of the *Generalgouvernement* into the occupied Eastern Territories. Rosenberg responded that there was no possibility of the implementation of such resettlement-plans at the moment. For the future, however, Rosenberg expressed his willingness to “promote Jewish emigration to the East, seeing that the intention to send all asocial elements of the *Reich* to the thinly inhabited Eastern Territories exists.” From this point onward, the government of the *Generalgouvernement* began to think about a “Final Solution” to the “Jewish Question” on its own territory.
- 2.2 A series of meetings of the government of the *Generalgouvernement* was of great consequence for the general radicalisation of policy with respect to the Jews in this area. These were arranged in the district capitals by Frank, immediately following his return from the *Reich* (14-16 October in Warsaw, 17 October in Globocniks district Lublin, 18 October in Radom, 20 October in Cracow, and for the first time in Lemberg,

21 October.) At the meeting in Lublin on 17 October, the Third Regulation Concerning Restrictions on the Right of to Leave in the *Generalgouvernement* was discussed. This regulation stated that leaving the ghetto was to be punished by the death penalty. It was issued only a few days later. On 20 October, at the government meeting in Cracow, Governor Wächter indicated “that an ultimate radical solution of the Jewish Question is unavoidable, and that no allowances of any kind – such as special exceptions for craftsmen – could be taken into consideration.” At the meeting of 21 October in Lemberg, the Head of the Chief Department for the Interior of the government of the *Generalgouvernement*, Eberhard Westerkamp announced, that “the isolation of the Jews from the rest of the population” should be carried out “as soon and as thoroughly as possible”. On the other hand, he pointed out that “the government order has prohibited the establishment of new ghettos, since there was hope that the Jews would be deported from the *Generalgouvernement* in the near future”, despite Rosenberg’s assertion only a few days earlier that this “hope” was an illusion.

- 2.3 While the treatment of the “Jewish Question” at these meetings indicated that the government of the *Generalgouvernement*. followed a unified anti-Jewish policy throughout the region under its control, two districts were to take the lead in the implementation of the “Final Solution”.
- 2.4 The fact that Galicia was absorbed into its territory on 1 August – an area in which mass-executions had taken place on a large scale and continued to do so – played an important role in the preparations for the “Final Solution” in the *Generalgouvernement*. The EK z.B.V. – which had been deployed in this area and which came under the administration of the Commander of the Security Police in the District of Galicia once Galicia had joined the *Generalgouvernement* – focussed its operations first against a vaguely-defined Jewish elite. From the beginning of October, however, the Security Police began to kill the Jewish population indiscriminately in Galicia as well. On 6 October in Nadvorna,

about 2000 women, men and children were murdered by members of the outpost Stanislau of the Commander of the Security Police in Galicia. According to a statement of the Chief of the Security Police in Stanislau, Krüger, this “action” had been planned down to the last detail, at a meeting with the Commander of the Security Police in Lemberg. From the beginning of October, massacres of this type were carried out almost every week. One particular massacre which deserves special notice was the so-called “Blood Sunday of Stanislau”. On 12 October 1941, 10.000 to 12.000 Jews were murdered. The Security Police of Galicia hence followed the same pattern of radicalisation – independent of the political subordination of the district – as the units in the occupied Eastern Areas. These mass executions necessarily radicalised the anti-Jewish policy throughout the *Generalgouvernement*.

- 2.5 Concrete preparations for the mass murder of Jews in the *Generalgouvernement* had also been underway since October in the district of Lublin, neighbouring on Galicia. This was the territory which had been foreseen as a “Jewish reservation” in 1939, and which in Spring, 1942 was to serve as a receiving area for the third wave of deportations from the *Reich*, as well as for deportations from Slovakia.
- 2.6 The SS and Police Leader of the district of Lublin, Odilo Globocnik, played a key role in the murder of Jews in this district. On 13 October, Globocnik met Himmler to speak to him about his proposal dating back two weeks earlier, to limit the “influence of the Jews”. According to this proposal, “security-political steps” against the Jews were required. It is presumably at this meeting that Globocnik received the assignment to build the Belzec extermination camp.
- 2.7 This can be taken from the fact that, at the beginning of November, two to three weeks after this meeting, and after the “Jewish Question” had been discussed by the government of the *Generalgouvernement* at several meetings, work began on the construction of the first extermination

camp Belzec, a relatively small grouping of barracks. By the end of the year, the delegated euthanasia personnel of the T4 Organisation had arrived in Lublin.

- 2.8 The fact that the killing-capacity of Belzec was still limited (it was to be considerably expanded early the following year), and that the construction of the remaining extermination camps in the *Generalgouvernement* only started early in 1942, indicates that, in autumn 1941 Globocnik had not as yet received the order to prepare for the killing of all Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*. His assignment thus presumably extended to the district of Lublin, and possibly also the district of Galicia.

3. The Mass murders in Serbia

- 3.1 On 22 June 1941, the day of the attack on the Soviet Union, the German military administration of Serbia arrested all leading communists, as well as persons that had fought against Franco in the Spanish civil war. The Jewish community of Belgrade was forced to provide a further 40 hostages daily. In “reprisal” for acts of resistance, there were almost daily shootings of hostages, communists and Jews held in German custody. In August, the arrests were extended to all Jewish men. As in the Soviet Union, the “measures of retaliation” in Serbia were thus directed against the image of the enemy as “Jewish Bolshevism”. Despite the shootings, the Serbian resistance against the occupying power continued to grow. After 22 German soldiers were killed in a further attack, the General in command in Serbia, Böhme, ordered on 4 October “the immediate shooting of 100 Serbian prisoners for each German soldier killed”, as a measure of “retaliation and punishment”. According to Böhme, the prisoners of the concentration camps Sabac and Belgrade – “mainly Jews and communists”, in particular – should be executed. About 2000 Jews and 200 Gypsies from these concentration camps were in fact killed, between 9 and 13 October. Böhme’s policy of directing his “retaliation measures” against Jews in the first

instance was explicitly supported by Luther, the Head of the German Department of the Foreign Office, and the specialist on Jewish Questions of the RSHA, Eichmann: in a letter of 16 September, Luther had directed the representative of the Foreign Office in Belgrad to treat the sum of the imprisoned Jewish men as hostages, and during a telephone conversation with the Department for Jewish Questions of the Foreign Office on 13 October 1941, Eichmann recommended that the entire group of persons in question should be shot.

- 3.2 On 10 October, Böhme issued the general command “to shoot 100 prisoners or hostages for every German soldier or ethnic German (man, women or child) killed or murdered”, and “50 prisoners or hostages for every wounded German soldier or ethnic German”. “Immediately” to be arrested as hostages were: “all Communists; all inhabitants suspected as such; all Jews to a man; a certain number of nationalistically and democratically minded inhabitants”.
- 3.3 In accordance with this scheme, a further 2200 men were shot a few days later, Jews and Gypsies once more among them. This was in response to 10 casualties and 24 wounded in battle of the *Wehrmacht* forces. In the two weeks following the order of 10 October, *Wehrmacht* units shot more than 9000 Jews, Gypsies and other civilians. By the beginning of November, 8000 Jewish men had been executed by the firing squads. The families of those murdered were interned in concentration camps during the winter, and murdered early in the next year in gas-vans.

D. Pronouncements by Leading National Socialists on the Exterminations

- 1 While the regional mass murders were being effected in the autumn of 1941, the pronouncements of leading representatives of the regime which openly addressed the impending “annihilation” of the Jews, were becoming ever more frequent. At Hitler’s “Table Talk” of 25 October, after having once again made reference to his “prophecy” of 30 Janu-

ary 1939, he made the following remarks: “This criminal race has the two million dead from the World War on its conscience, now again hundreds of thousands. No one can say to me: we can’t send them in the morass! Who then cares about our people? It is good if the terror we are exterminating Jewry goes before us.”

- ² In a lead article of the journal “*Das Reich*” of 16 November 1941, Goebbels returned to the subject of Hitler’s prophesy of 30 January 1939 under the title “The Jews are to Blame” (“*Die Juden sind schuld*”): “We are now experiencing the fulfilment of this prophesy; and Jewry is inspired by a fate which, although hard is still more than deserved. Here compassion or regret is completely amiss.”
- ³ His formulation, that “World Jewry” is “now” succumbing to “a gradual process of extermination”, made clear the fate which awaited the Jews who were being deported from the German cities for the past few weeks. Two days later, Rosenberg spoke at a press conference of the Ministry of the Eastern Territories of what was to come – the “eradication” of the Jews of Europe: “There are still about six million Jews in the East and this question can only be solved through a biological eradication of all of Jewry in Europe. The Jewish Question will only be solved for Germany, when the last Jew has left German territory; and for Europe, when there is no longer a Jew left standing on the European continent – up until the Urals [...] And for this it is necessary to push them over the Urals, or otherwise eradicate them.”
- ⁴ One day after declaring war on the USA, on 12 December, Hitler held a speech before the district (*Gau*) and Reich leaders) of the Party. Referring once more to his “prophesy” of 30 January 1939, he announced the “extermination” of Jews under German domination. This can be found in the Goebbels diaries: “As concerns the Jewish question, the *Führer* is determined to make a clean sweep. He had prophesied to the Jews that if they once again brought about a world war they would experience their own extermination. This was not just an empty phrase.

The World War is there, the extermination of Jewry must be the necessary consequence. This question must be seen without sentimentality. We are not here in order to have sympathy with the Jews, rather we sympathise with our own German people. If the German people has now once again sacrificed as many as 160.000 dead in the Eastern campaign, then the authors of this bloody conflict must pay with their lives.”

- ⁵ Thus at the end of 1941, leading National Socialists were urging to extend the mass murders started in the occupied areas East and South East for the purpose of a general annihilation of the Jews.

E. The Wannsee Conference

- ¹ The Wannsee Conference of 20 January 1942 served Heydrich in his intention to present the mass murders in the various occupied areas, as part of a general plan – ordered by Hitler and directed by the RSHA – for the “solution of the European Jewish Question”. The presence of a number of high-ranking functionaries of the Party and the SS, as well as leading ministerial officials, allowed Heydrich to implicate these groups and especially the ministerial bureaucracy, by virtue of their knowledge and responsibilities as accomplices.
- ² The central passage of Heydrich’s address concerning the general aims of the future “Jewish Policy” is as follows: “A further possible solution instead of emigration has come up. After appropriate approval by the *Führer*, the evacuation of the Jews to the East has stepped into its place.”
- ³ These “actions” – that is, the deportations which had already commenced – are merely “possible alternatives “ They were, however, “of vital importance in view of the impending Final Solution of the Jewish Question” due to “the practical experiences gathered”. Heydrich thus clearly distinguished two time periods: the “impending Final Solution”, and the provisional measures for the near future – “possible al-

ternatives". The coming "Final Solution", according to Heydrich, concerned a total of 11 million Jews. This figure was broken down according to country in a statistical addendum to the protocol. This list not only includes Jews living in areas under German control, but also those of Great Britain, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Turkey. Included in the 700,000 Jews figured for unoccupied France, are those of the North African colonies. Heydrich thus clearly separated the programme of deportations already set into motion from a far more comprehensive plan. The execution of the latter was said to be "dependent on the military development", and could only be fully realised after a German victory. According to the protocol, Heydrich made the following remarks concerning the "Final Solution": "Under the appropriate direction, the Jews shall now be put to work in the course of the Final Solution. Organised into large work gangs and segregated according to sex, those Jews fit for work will be led into these areas as road-builders, whereby, no doubt, a large part will fall out by natural elimination. The remainder who will survive – and they will certainly be those who have the greatest power of endurance – will have to be dealt with accordingly. For, if released, they would, according to the natural selection of the fittest, form the seed of a new Jewish regeneration."

- 4 Initially, the Jews should be brought to "transit-ghettos", in order to be "transported from there further to the East".
- 5 Heydrich thus developed the conception of a gigantic deportation programme which would only be fully realisable in the post-war period. The Jews who were deported "to the East" were to find death through forced labour. In the case that they should survive these trials, they would be murdered. The fate of those "unfit for work" – the children and mothers in particular – was not further elucidated by Heydrich. In the context of his speech as whole, however, it is clear that these too were to be killed. For as Heydrich said, he wanted to prevent the "seed of a new Jewish reconstruction" at all costs. Heydrich continued, that

“in the process of carrying out the Final Solution, Europe would be combed through from the West to the East.” The *Reich*, including the *Protektorat*, should be “first”. Here once more, the distinction is being made between the “Final Solution” realisable in the long-term, and the already implemented, smaller, “anticipated” steps. Jews over the age of 65, Heydrich went on to say, should be removed to an old-peoples ghetto or *Altersghetto* (Theresienstadt). This special regulation for the elderly, was designed to lend the idea of a labour programme in the East, a degree of added plausibility.

- ⁶ Heydrich’s exposition indicates that the RSHA was at this time still proceeding according to the plan followed since the beginning of 1941, of implementing the “Final Solution” after the end of the war in the Eastern Areas. Heydrich also made clear what was understood by the “Final Solution”: the Jewish people were to be annihilated through a combination of forced labour and mass murder. The fact that precisely forced Jewish labour was gaining importance at the turn of 1941/1942, speaks in favour of taking Heydrich’s remarks literally. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that there were already plans at this point in time to deport the Jews straight out of Central and Western Europe into extermination camps. On the contrary, the first deportations from non-German countries (Slovakia and France) which began in early 1942, as well as the simultaneous “third wave” of deportations from the *Reich*, were not to lead directly to the gas-chambers of the extermination camps. Neither immediately before nor after the Wannsee Conference, but only in late Spring 1942 was the capacity of the extermination camps suddenly and hurriedly expanded.
- ⁷ On the one hand, the protocol of the Wannsee Conference, makes it clear that a post-war solution was being adhered to. At the same time, however, the proposal was debated, whether the Jews in the *Generalgouvernement* and the occupied Soviet Areas should be exempted from this general plan, and killed in the short-term.

- ⁸ Already five weeks prior to the Wannsee Conference *Generalgouverneur* Frank had learned that the deportation of the Jews from the *Generalgouvernement* could not be counted on, even in the middle to long-term. He drew the consequences of this knowledge at a meeting on 16 December: “In Berlin they told us: what is the point of this trouble; we can’t do anything with them in *Ostland* or in the territory of the *Reich* either; liquidate them yourselves! Gentlemen, I must ask you to arm yourself against all considerations of compassion. We must annihilate the Jews, wherever we meet them, and wherever it is at all possible, in order to uphold the entire structure of the *Reich*.”
- ⁹ The method and time-frame for this mass murder were still open in mid-December 1941, as can be gleaned from Frank’s further remarks: “These 3.5 million Jews cannot be shot, we cannot poison them; we will however be able to make anticipatory steps, which will somehow lead to a successful extermination – in the context of the large measures from the perspective of the *Reich* – to be discussed. The *Generalgouvernement* must become just as free of Jews as is the *Reich*.. Where and how that happens is a matter for the authorities which we must create and employ, and whose usefulness I will report on to you in due course.”
- ¹⁰ The determination of the government of the *Generalgouvernement* to achieve this “successful extermination” in the short-term within the *Generalgouvernement* itself, is the background to the remarks of the representative of the government of the *Generalgouvernement*, Secretary of State (*Staatssekretar*) Bühler, near the end of the Wannsee Conference. He stated that “the *Generalgouvernement* would welcome the commencement of the Final Solution of this question in the *Generalgouvernement*, because the problem of transportation does not play a decisive role, for one, and that problems related to labour would not obstruct the course of this action. “ Added to this, the approximately 2.5 million Jews who were to be removed from the *Generalgouvernement*

“as soon as possible”, were overwhelmingly “unfit to work”. Bühler followed this with a clear proposal to murder the majority of the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* in the *Generalgouvernement* itself.

- 11 Following on from this, the question of how to then “eliminate” the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* and the occupied Soviet Areas was discussed – this is to say, a discussion of the concrete methods of murder ensued: “In the concluding discussion different possible solutions were talked about. *Gauleiter* Dr. Meyer [the representative of the Ministry for the occupied Eastern Territories, P.L.] as well as *Staatssekretar* Dr. Bühler represented the position that certain preparatory measures in the course of the Final Solution should be carried out in the relevant areas themselves, whereby however, the disquieting of the population must be avoided.”
- 12 The protocol, however, doesn’t give any evidence that the proposals of Meyer and Bühler were decided at the conference itself.

F. Extension of the Deportations

- 1 After the Wannsee Conference, the RSHA continued the planning of the deportation of the Jews in the Greater German *Reich* and expanded it to a first European deportation programme which encompassed a total of six states in the first instance.
- 2 In a express letter to the head and subsidiary offices of the *Gestapo* of 31 January, Eichmann made clear that “the recent evacuations of Jews from individual areas to the East” provided “the beginning of the Final Solution of the Jewish Question in the the *Ostmark* and in the *Protektorat* Bohemia and Moravia “
- 3 In a discussion between Eichmann and representatives of the head offices of the *Gestapo* of 6 May, it becomes clear that a further *Reich* -wide deportation programme had been set up within the RSHA: what Heydrich had already announced in November 1941 as “the third wave”. Eichmann explained that in the course of this next programme, 55.000

Jews would be deported from the territory of the *Reich* inclusive of the *Ostmark* and the *Protektorat*. He also announced that most of the remaining Jews of the *Reich* would most likely be forcibly removed to Theresienstadt in the course of the Summer or Fall. Theresienstadt was being cleared at that time.

- ⁴ Within the framework of this third wave of deportations, Jewish people from different parts of the territory of the *Reich* – from Vienna as well as Theresienstadt – would be forcibly removed between March and June 1942. These would be brought to the District of Lublin – especially to Izbica, Piaska, Zamocs and Trawniki. The inhabitants of these ghettos had been deported to the extermination camp Belzec shortly before. As a rule, the deportation-trains from the *Reich* stopped in Lublin, where those men “fit for work” were separated out in order to be put to work in the forced labour camp at Majdanek.
- ⁵ There is conclusive proof of 43 transports, which as a rule carried 1000 people each. There are however indications of further transports, amounting to a probable 60 trains in all.
- ⁶ The pattern of the deportation of Central European Jews and the extermination of the Eastern European Jews followed the same procedure as the first two waves of deportations in Fall 1941 and the following Winter. The living conditions in the ghettos in the District of Lublin led to a miserable death for the great majority of the deportees within few months of their arrival. Those who survived the conditions of the ghetto were generally deported to extermination camps in the *Generalgouvernement*. In March 1942, the deportations were also extended to two countries outside of the German *Reich*.
- ⁷ According to an agreement with Slovakia, young Jews who were “fit for work” were deported to Majdanek in the district of Lublin and to Auschwitz. Directly after this programme was introduced, following a request of the Germans, the Slovakian government declared their willingness to deport all Slovakian Jews (close to 90.000 people). The de-

portation of families was started 11 April. By June, 11 trains had arrived in Auschwitz and a further 28 had gone to ghettos in the district of Lublin, or the camp at Majdanek.

- ⁸ In France, the military administration had decided in December 1941 to send the first transport with hostages of 1000 Jewish men to the East. This transport had been organised since January 1941, but had not been sent off due to lack of a means of transportation.
- ⁹ After Eichmann had agreed to the deportation of these 1000 people on 1 March, a discussion within the RSHA of 4 March resulted in a decision to propose the deportation of a further “appr. 5000 Jews to the East” to the French government. This was recorded by Dannecker, the expert for Jewish questions of the *Gestapo* in Paris. Dannecker also told the Embassy staff-member in charge of Jewish affairs Zeitschel, that Heydrich had agreed that, after the deportation of the first 1000 people, “a further 5000 Jews would be transported in the course of 1942” and that he had “agreed that further even larger transports could be carried out.” While the first transport – which left on 27 March and arrived in Auschwitz 30 March – was still declared a repressive measure against the French resistance, the coming “hostage-transports” were to be part of the course of a concrete programme of deportations.
- ¹⁰ The deportation of 5000 people to Auschwitz, which Heydrich had announced at the beginning of March, was carried out between 5 June and 17 July. These five transports – as the transports of families from Slovakia which started in April – were at this point already part of the first European-wide deportation programme of the RSHA. An important piece of evidence as to the existence of this programme is found in a note from the office of the Slovakian prime minister Tuka, dated 10 April, concerning a visit by Heydrich. On this occasion, Heydrich explained to Tuka that the planned deportation of Slovakian Jews was only “a part of the programme”. At the time, there was an “resettle-

ment” of altogether “1/2 million” Jews “out of Europe to the East”. Aside from Slovakia, the *Reich*, the *Protektorat*, the Netherlands, Belgium and France were also affected.

- 11 On 11 June 1942, a discussion took place in the Department for Jewish affairs of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*. The German experts on Jewish affairs stationed in Paris, The Hague and Brussels gathered to discuss the occupied Western European part of the general European deportation programme. Dannecker, the expert for Jewish affairs of the *Gestapo* in Paris, made a note to himself stating that Himmler had given the order to “provide larger quantities of Jews to the Auschwitz concentration camp, to increase the work-force. This is on the primary condition that the Jews (of both sexes) be between 16 and 40 years old. 10% who are not fit for work can be sent with them. “
- 12 According to Dannecker's note, 15.000 Jews were to be deported from the Netherlands, 10.000 from Belgium and 100.000 from France, starting 13 July.

G. Mass murder in the Districts of Lublin and Galicia

- 1 Preparations for the “resettlement” of Jews from the Districts of Lublin and Galicia can be traced back to January 1942. By this time this was clearly a euphemism for their planned mass murder. In mid-March, the liquidation of the Lublin ghetto marked the beginning of the systematic murder of those Jews “unfit for work” of the District of Lublin, which had been in planning since the decision to build the extermination camp Belzec in Fall 1941. The bloody liquidation of the ghettos and the deportations to Belzec thus started precisely at the time that the deportation-trains were arriving in the area of Lublin from the *Reich* and Slovakia. Just as had happened the previous year in the Warthegau, and like the mass-executions in the ghettos of Riga and Minsk in November and December 1941, the local Jews were murdered in order to make “room” for the deported Jews. The presence of Himmler in Lublin on 14 March, two days before the clearing of

the ghetto, shows the prevailing interest the RFSS had taken in the “Jewish Policy” in the District of Lublin. At the same time as the mass murder commenced in the District of Lublin, in mid-March 1942, the liquidation of the ghettos and deportations began in the District of Galicia. The escalation of the extermination policy in this district should not be seen in the context of the programme of deportation in Central Europe. Rather, it should be seen in relation to the mass murders in the Soviet Union. This area had been occupied by the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941, and was conquered by the *Wehrmacht* in 1941. Since the summer of 1941, and with increased force in October 1941, mass executions had taken place. Already by the end of 1941, more than 60.000 people had been killed in this area.

- ² The remark in the Goebbels’ diaries that, one could “well state, that 60% must be liquidated while only 40% can be put into work”, is revelatory of the policy of extermination in both of these districts.
- ³ At the same time as the deportations proceeded from the Districts of Lublin and Galicia in mid-March 1942, the murder of those Jews who had survived the retribution actions of the past Fall was initiated. The RSHA informed the Commander of the Security Police in Belgrad of the impending arrival of a gas-van. With aid of this vehicle, about 500 men as well as about 7000 women and children who had been imprisoned in the Belgrade camp of Sajmiste, were murdered before the beginning of May 1942. About 90% of all Jews living in Serbia were thereby killed. In Serbia the German procedure followed the same schema as in the Soviet Union, only somewhat transposed: first the Jewish men were shot under the pretext of “retribution”, while in a later phase all of their relations were killed in accordance to plan.

H. Conclusions

- ¹ We can now establish that between Autumn 1941 and early 1942, while the killing of Jews in the occupied Soviet Areas continued unabated, further mass murders were being prepared or already ex-

ecuted in various further areas under German occupation. This proceeded in a thoroughly systematic manner: the relevant regional institutions tried to kill, via a certain method of murder a substantial part of the Jewish population within their own region in accordance with a uniform plan. In the Warthegau the initiative was in the hands of the governor Greiser, who had received Himmler's authorisation to murder 100.000 persons, and proceeded to do so with the aid of gas-vans. The murder of the Jews "unfit for work" in the Districts of Galicia and Lublin – by means of a stationary gas-chamber – was committed under the auspices of the SS and Police Leader in Lublin, Globocnik. In Serbia it was the *Wehrmacht* in the first instance, which had the Jewish men killed by mass-execution; then the initiative went over to the Security Police, which murdered the remaining Jewish population by means of gas-vans. In all these cases, one is dealing with programmes of extermination which proceeded according to a systematic plan.

- 2 These regional programmes of extermination must not be seen as campaigns by the regional authorities carried on their own initiative which proceeded independently of one another. The programmes of extermination were much more constituent parts of a higher and centrally organised policy.
- 3 The mass murders in the Warthegau and the District of Lublin proceeded in the context of a more comprehensive programme of deportations. This programme, first applied to the German *Reich*, was extended to Slovakia and France from early 1942 onward, and was to encompass the whole of Europe according to the planning of the Nazi leadership. The regional murder-campaigns were calculated to "make room" for the first wave of deportations in the respective areas. Greiser and Globocnik thus did not act autonomously, but sought the agreement of Himmler before they started the preparations for the mass murders in Chelmno and Belzec. The policy of extermination policy in Serbia – in which mass-executions were followed by the introduction of gas-vans – was no singular development. It followed the pattern of

the German policy in the Soviet Union, albeit somewhat transposed. The Commander of the *Wehrmacht* Böhme began the executions of Jewish men only once the appropriate go ahead had been received from the RSHA and the Foreign Office. The mass-executions in Galicia were at first a constituent part of the extermination policy in the occupied areas; later, the deportations to Belzec followed the same murder methods as had been applied in the neighbouring district of Lublin.

- ⁴ An important common characteristic of the operations in all of the four regions (the Warthegau, Lublin, Galicia, and Serbia), was thus the use of gas in the killing of people. Killing by means of gas was part of an overall policy which can also be shown to apply to Auschwitz (Cyclon B) and the occupied Soviet Areas (gas-vans) in the Winter of 1941/1942.

IV. The Escalation of operations in Early 1942

- ¹ A further escalation of the extermination policy can be observed in the period between May and June 1942. Previously the mass murders had been restricted to individual areas and had been represented as responses to problems arising in these areas by the responsible authorities. Now the politics of extermination was extended to the entire area under German domination. Until By the middle of 1942 a new conception had gained acceptance with the authorities: the regionally limited advances towards the “Final Solution”, which was previously intended to be accomplished in its full scope only after the end of the war, were now understood to enable the achievement of the “Final Solution” during the course of the war. This was to be achieved through an intensification and expansion of the killings, and by means of the killing -machinery originally intended for mass murders in the separate regions.

- ² - At the end of May/June, 1942, the systematic mass murders of Jews in the Districts Lublin and Galicia were extended to all Districts of the *Generalgouvernement*. The killing of the great majority of Polish Jews carries with it all the typical characteristics of an operation executed according to plan. Relevant here is that when HSSPF Krüger was appointed State Secretary for Security (*Staatssekretär für Sicherheitsfragen*) in May, an order of 3 June regulating his new position, gave him the mandate to take charge of all “Jewish Affairs” (*Judenangelegenheiten*). In May, the extermination camp Sobibor was opened, while Belzec was closed temporarily to enable an enlargement of its killing capacity. In May, or in June at the latest, the construction of a third extermination camp, Treblinka, had begun in the District of Warsaw. In the District of Lublin, systematic deportations from the localities began in May, independently of the arrival of transports from Central Europe. From the beginning of May, the transports from the District of Cracow to Belzec were started. The start of deportations from the other districts was delayed due to a barring of transportation which was imposed in mid-June. At a meeting dealing with police matters in Cracow on 18 June 1942, there was general agreement that “the problem of Jewish resettlement pushes us to make a decision”, as HSSPF Krüger put it. After the bar on transportation had come to an end, the “Jew-action should be carried out with greater intensity”. The deportations from the District of Cracow to Belzec were resumed in July immediately following the lifting of the bar on transportation. Between 22 July and 12 September, approximately 250.000 people were deported from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka, where they were murdered. At the beginning of August, the deportations from the District of Radom to Treblinka began.
- ³ - Likewise in mid-May, the systematic murder of the Jews of annexed Upper-Silesia was started. In the course of May and June, thousands of Jews were deported to Auschwitz to be murdered by means of gas immediately after their arrival.

- ⁴ - In May 1942, a fourth wave of deportations from the *Reich* was set into motion. The transports to Minsk were begun again, to which around 26.000 people were brought from the area of the “Greater German Reich” in 23 transports between May and September. The modus operandi of the extermination was new, however. The deportees were no longer imprisoned in ghettos. Instead, the trains went on to a station near the estate of Maly Trostinez. There almost all of the deportees were shot on the spot or murdered in gas-vans. In the period between August and December the remaining transports of the fourth wave of deportations from the *Reich* went, almost without exception, straight into the extermination camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka.
- ⁵ - Likewise, the Jews arriving from Slovakia and the District of Lublin, were no longer brought to ghettos from June onward, but were deported straight to the extermination camps of Sobibor. – The new level of escalation of early 1942, led to the abandoning of the concept of “transit-ghettos” for Jews coming out of Central Europe. This further radicalisation also had the consequence that between 4 and 15 May, the Jews who had been deported to Lodz from Central Europe the previous Fall – those almost 11.000 people who had survived the devastating conditions of life in the ghetto – were murdered by gas-vans stationed in Chelmno.
- ⁶ - From mid-July the programme of deportations from Western Europe had been set in motion. These transports went to Auschwitz. The trains from Slovakia had also now been redirected to Auschwitz, just as the first of the fourth wave trains from the *Reich*. After the completion of provisional gas-chambers in two farm houses (Bunkers I and II), the method first introduced in May in Minsk and in June in Sobibor was now begun in Auschwitz on 4 July. Starting with the transports from Slovakia, the SS went over to murdering the majority of the deported in the gas-chambers, immediately after a “selection” had taken place on the ramp.

- ⁷ In July, after the bar on transportation had been lifted, the European-wide programme of deportations and killings had thus come into operation in its full compass. Himmler, immediately after he had convinced himself that the programme of extermination was functioning during an inspection tour in July, established a concrete schedule demanding the extermination of the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* on 19 July; by the end of the year, the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* were to be killed, excepting only a small remaining group of Jews “fit for work”, who were to be placed under the control of the SS. Himmler’s demand had immediate repercussions on the deportations in the *Generalgouvernement* where from 22 July onward, 5000 people a day had been deported from Warsaw alone to the extermination camp at Treblinka.
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V. The machinery of mass murder in full operation (1942-1944)

- ¹ As has been stated above, in July 1942 a comprehensive programme to systematically murder the Jews in the areas under German control had been implemented.
- ² The organisation of the individual elements of this programme into a system designed for complete extermination is indisputable. It has been exhaustively described in the relevant scholarly literature, summarised for example in comprehensive texts such as those written by Gerald Reitlinger, Raul Hilberg or Leni Yahil.
- ³ This programme was instituted in the various countries under German control in separate intervals following different tempos: the basic elements however, were always the same. This system can be characterized as follows:

- ⁴ The Germans first assured that certain basic preconditions were met before beginning the deportations in the individual countries and areas under their influence. Jews had first been defined, ear-marked, and deprived of their rights and property. Mobility was restricted: they were either forced to live in ghettos (as in Poland) or in specifically designated housing (as in Germany). They were forced to join a designated Jewish organisation which took the responsibility for transmitting the orders of the German authorities to the Jewish population. In Germany, for example, it was the Reich organization of the Jews in Germany (*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*), in France the General association of Jews in France (*Union Generale des Israelites de France*) and in Belgium the Association of Jews in Belgium (*Association des Juifs en Belgique*); the Jewish councils (*Judenräte*) in the Polish ghettos served the same function. In his key book, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Raul Hilberg has described in detail the step by step process of the isolation and the deprivation of rights of the Jews in different countries under German control; he details how the Jews came to be placed at the mercy of the German machinery of destruction.
- ⁵ When the deportations to the extermination camps began, Jews were assembled and/or arrested and forced to remain in the transit camps or collection points. This was in order to make sure that enough people were available for a transport. Collection points of this sort were set up in places like the exhibition halls in Cologne, the dance hall “Clou” in Berlin or in the theater “Joodsche Schouwburg” in Amsterdam; larger transit camps were set up, for instance, in Compiègne and Drancy in France, Westerbork and Vught in the Netherlands or in Fossoli de Carpi in Italy. These are also described, for instance, in Hilberg’s book and in numerous detailed studies about the fate of the Jews in individual countries.
- ⁶ From the collection points and transit camps the Jews were deported in trains to the extermination camps in occupied Poland. The deportation from the individual countries (with the exception of Poland and

the USSR) was centrally organized by the Department for Jewish Affairs of the Reich Security Office. The death toll during the transports - carried out mostly in freight cars- was so high that the deportation itself can be seen as part of the system of murder.

- ⁷ Jews deemed “fit for work” were as a general rule not murdered immediately but selected either before the deportation, during the course of the deportation (when trains were stopped near labour camps – for instance in Lublin, near Majdanek or in Kosel, in Upper Silesia) or at the final destination, in particular in Auschwitz. Jews labelled “fit for work” were usually subjected to heavy and exhausting labour under completely inhumane conditions. Life expectancy for a Jewish prisoner assigned to hard labour was generally only a few weeks, seldom more than a few months. The SS invented the expression “annihilation through labour” (Vernichtung durch Arbeit) for this method of exploiting people to the point of death. “Annihilation through labour”, along with murder by execution commandos and in gas chambers became an important element in the comprehensive murder programme of the SS.
- ⁸ Those Jews who were not defined as “fit for work” were generally murdered immediately after arrival in the extermination camps. In the following extermination camps Jews were murdered in large numbers in gas chambers:
- ⁹ - Auschwitz-Birkenau: here between February, 1942 and January, 1945, Jews were murdered. They came from the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Germany, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Hungary and Poland. (See details in Jan van Pelt's expert report on Auschwitz).
- ¹⁰ - Belzec: here between March, 1942 and December, 1942, 500 to 6000,000 victims from Poland, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Greece were murdered.

- 11 -Treblinka: here alone between July 23 and August 28, 1942 at least 245.000 victims from the Warsaw Ghetto were murdered; up to the fall of 1943 altogether more than 800,000 Jews were killed. This included apart from Polish Jews also Jews from the Bialystok area), Slovakia, Greece and Macedonia.
- 12 - Sobibor: here between May, 1942 and September, 1943 between 150.000 and 250,000 Jews men from Poland, Slovakia, France, the Netherlands and the Soviet Union were murdered.
- 13 - Chelmno: In Chelmno, a station for gas vans, at least 150,000 Jews, mostly Polish Jews from the Warthegau, but also Jews from Germany and the Protectorate were killed between December 1941 and March, 1943.
- 14 Further, a gas chamber was built in the concentration camp of Maidanek. Among the approximate 60,000 Jewish victims in this camp, a significant number were murdered by the use of gas.
- 15 The murder of the Jews in the occupied Soviet Union followed a different pattern: they were generally not transported to extermination camps but executed or murdered in gas vans.
- 16 Those Jews not immediately killed or subjected to forced labour were also mostly victim to the systematic policy of annihilation. Thus for example, in the so-called "Operation Thanksgiving" (*Operation Erntefest*) on 3 and 4 November 1943 most of the surviving Jews in the district of Lublin were shot in the camps in this district, altogether over 42,000 men. Similarly, in the course of the clearing of the ghettos, forced labour camps and concentration camps Jewish prisoners were killed on the spot in a large number of cases.
- 17 Further, the efforts of the Nazis to destroy all traces of the extermination programme were systematic. As of the Summer of 1943, the corpses of those murdered in the course of the previous "murder actions" were dug up and burned in a special "action" (Aktion 1005) by

the Special Commando of the German police. The camps of “Aktion Reinhard” as well as the extermination camp Chelmno were methodically destroyed. Traces of the extermination process were removed when possible. The complete destruction of the concentration and extermination camps of Majdanek and Auschwitz was averted only because of the unexpectedly rapid advance of Soviet troops.

- 18 The systematic character of the Nazi murder of the Jews becomes all the more apparent when it is observed how one country after the other was pulled into the policy of extermination. The first measures affected Slovakia and France.
- 19 In February, 1942, the Foreign Office requested that the Slovakian government make 20.000 Jewish workers available to the Reich. In March, the Slovakian government declared its willingness, in accord with a further German request, to deport the remaining 70.000 Slovakian Jews. The transports began at the end of March; up to October altogether 57 transports with 58,000 people were deported to Auschwitz and the district of Lublin; from the beginning of June the “not fit to work” prisoners of these transports were murdered directly in the extermination camps.
- 20 In France, the preparations for the deportations began in December 1941. At first 1000 Jews were slated for a transport “to the East” as a reprisal for attacks by resistance organisations. At the beginning of March, already before this first transport had left for Auschwitz at the end of March, the RSHA raised the quota to 5,000 non-French Jews-who were then deported to Auschwitz in June and July.
- 21 In June the deportation programme was methodically extended to the entire area under German occupation in the West: On June 11, the RSHA set the quota for deportations for France at 100.000: this figure was modified to 40.000 on 22 June. Up to the end of the year 1942 approximately 42.000 people were deported from France.

- ²² On 11 June, the deportation quota for the Jews from the Netherlands was fixed, also at 40.000. These deportations began on 15 July. The quota set on 11 June, 1941 for Belgium was 10.000. The deportations began on 4 August.
- ²³ In the Summer of 1942, the “Third Reich” undertook efforts in several countries to further extend the deportations. These efforts concerned first of all Croatia and Rumania, both of which had already initiated relatively radical measures in their anti-semitic policies, so that the implementation of the deportations appeared technically possible.
- ²⁴ In July 1942, the German Police Attache in Croatia was ordered to convince the Croatian government to prepare for the deportation of Croatian Jews. On 13 August, the deportations began. Similarly in July 1942, the advisor on Jewish affairs at the German legation in Bukarest agreed with acting Prime Minister Antonescu on the deportation of the Rumanian Jews – to begin in September, 1942 This plan, however, was thwarted by the Rumanians. In addition, Himmler approached the Finnish Prime Minister Rangell – according to his own testimony – on the topic of the Finnish Jews; Rangell did not respond and the Finnish Jews remained unmolested. In September 1942 a basic decision to intensify the deportations and to extend them to all of Europe was made by the German leadership.
- ²⁵ Already on 24 September Ribbentrop gave the Undersecretary of state in the German Foreign Office, Luther, the order the evacuation of the Jews from the different European countries as soon as possible and to approach the Bulgarian, Hungarian, and the Danish governments. In view of the Italian occupation zones in Croatia the position of the Italians was to be carefully explored.
- ²⁶ Analogous moves by Germany were made towards Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy in October, 1942. These countries proved not yet ready to comply to the German request. In the case of Denmark, the newly appointed Reich deputy Werner Best did not develop an initiative for de-

portations. Instead, the German occupation authority undertook an “action” to arrest members of the small Jewish minority in Norway; most of these, however, were successful in escaping to Sweden.

- ²⁷ In February, 1943, the Bulgarian Commissar for Jewish affairs Belev and the “advisor for Jewish questions” (*Judenberater*) at the German embassy, Dannecker, signed an agreement concerning the deportation of 20.000 Jews from the territories in Thrace and Macedonia occupied by Bulgaria; this also included 6 to 8000 people from Bulgaria proper. In fact, in March, 1943, 11.400 Jews living in the Bulgarian zone of occupation in Greece were deported to the Generalgouvernement and murdered there. The Bulgarian government, however, refused to hand over the Bulgarian Jews.
- ²⁸ Similarly in February, 1943, Germany prepared for the deportation of Greek Jews. Between March and August, 1943, altogether 45,000 Greek Jews were deported from the areas of German occupation – most of them to Auschwitz.
- ²⁹ A further extension of German deportation policy can be ascertained for September and October, 1943. The suggestion of the German Reich deputy in Denmark, Best, to deport the Danish Jews was accepted by Hitler in September. Best’s endeavor followed upon his successfully warning the Danish minority of the coming deportation; most were able to escape to Sweden.
- ³⁰ After the capitulation of Italy in September and the occupation of the northern half of the country by German troops, the RSHA began in October, 1943 to deport Jews from Italy to Auschwitz. Following the Italian capitulation, the Wehrmacht took over the Italian occupation zones in Greece and Albania as well as in Montenegro and the Dodecanese – the eastern Greek islands which had belonged to Italy since 1912. Between March and July, 1944, the Germans were able to arrest Jews

living at the most extreme periphery of German control (insofar as the German side could identify them) and deport them to concentration and extermination camps.

- ³¹ The systematic character of the German persecution of the Jews also becomes apparent by virtue of the fact that the German regime attempted to include in the deportations Jews from occupied, allied but also neutral states- those who lived outside of their home countries but within the zone of German control. The governments of Rumania, Croatia and Slovakia had already declared their willingness to accept the deportation of their Jews into the Reich as of November or December of 1941. A second phase of such demands came as early as the Summer, 1942; this was directly related to the above-mentioned extension of the German deportation programme. The German side applied to the authorities in Bulgaria, Italy and Hungary in this regard – but without success. In 1943 these efforts to further expand the deportations were continued – also in regard to other states.
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VI. SUMMARY

- ¹ The murder of European Jews from the summer of 1941 onwards, can be seen to have gone through three phases. In a first phase between June 1941 and October 1941, the policy of extermination was limited to mass executions in the occupied Soviet Areas. These were extended step by step, moving from the shooting of Jewish men to the indiscriminate murdering of the entire Jewish population. Only a relatively small group of Jews who were “fit for work” would be exempt from these measures.
- ² In a second phase between the Fall of 1941 and early 1942, the mass murders were extended to further areas under German domination – to the Warthegau, the Districts of Lublin and Galicia, and Serbia. The

regional mass murders in the Warthegau and Lublin stood in the context of the programme of deportations of the RSHA. This programme initially covered Central Europe and then expanded into Western Europe – the murder of the local Jews was to “make room” for the deportees. The mass murders in Serbia and Galicia, on the other hand, followed the pattern first adopted in the Soviet Union. In this period, the use of gas as a method of murder was generally adopted. As a rule, only those “fit for work” were spared. At the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* made it clear that the killings in the individual areas were “anticipations” of the “Final Solution”, which was to be carried out in full after the end of the war. It thereby initiated the extension of the policy of extermination to the entire sphere under German domination.

- ³ This escalation began in early 1942, and reached its full extent in July 1942. In this period, the regional extermination programmes were transformed into a overarching programme of deportations and extermination, which encompassed the entirety of the area under German domination. The majority of the people who had been forcibly removed were now deported directly into extermination camps; only a relatively small number was put to forced labour, which – as the notion of “extermination through work” implies – led to the death of most people within the shortest period of time.
- ⁴ The systematic nature of the murder of the Jewish victims is not merely characteristic of this last phase, but also of phases I and II. This means that the mass murders followed a standardised pattern, were centrally directed and expressed the policy of the National Socialist regime.
- ⁵ I have understood that my overriding duty is to the Court. My paramount obligation, as I have been advised by my Instructing Solicitors, is to assist the Court on all matters within my expertise regardless of whom my instructions are from and who is paying my fees. I confirm

that this report is impartial, objective and unbiased and has been produced independently of the exigencies of this litigation. I believe that the facts I have stated in this report are true and that the opinions I have expressed are correct. Signed: Date:

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Expert report

The Van Pelt Report

Electronic edition

Robert Jan van Pelt

Professor of Cultural History, University of Waterloo

Irving v Penguin Books & Lipstadt

Royal Courts of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, case 1996-I-1113

Edition of 2003, original report filed for trial in 2000

Preface

1. The purpose of this report

This report is prepared for the purposes of assisting the Court in providing an expert opinion on the issue of David Irving's statements about Auschwitz, its gas chambers and incineration facilities, and its role in the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Problem, pursuant to the Order of Master Trench dated 15 December 1998 directing that each party may adduce expert evidence to address relevant issues in the proceedings

3. Material instructions

This report has been prepared on the instructions of Davenport Lyons and Mishcon de Reya, the First and Second Defendants solicitors respectively (my "Instructing Solicitors"). I received both written and oral instructions which consisted of a conversation held at the offices of Mishcon de Reya on 24 February, 1998, a letter received from Mishcon de Reya dated June 9, 1998, and a letter received from Davenport Lyons dated August 21, 1998.

In the letter from Mishcon de Reya, my task was described as follows: "You will be submitting a report on the gas chambers and exterminations at Auschwitz which will show that what Irving says about the camps in this respect is untrue." The contract for my work on the matter, which took the form of a letter from Davenport Lyons dated August 21, 1998, stated that there were five points of contention, two of which--(i) and (ii)-- directly concern my own expertise: The Defendants seek to justify the following:-- "(i) That Irving has on numerous occasions denied the Holocaust -ie the systematic extermination of Europe's Jewish population by the Nazis -and denied that gas chambers were used by the Nazis as a means of carrying out that extermina-

tion; (ii) That he holds extremist views and has allied himself with others who do so, including individuals such as Dr Robert Faurisson, and Ernst Zündel; ” After having established that the “[t]he burden of proof is on the defendants,” the letter continued as follows: “We would like to engage you to be one of the Defendants’ team of experts. Your role will be to provide a written report on the aspect(s) of the case within your area of expertise as instructed by us. You will obviously liaise with Richard Evans who is co-ordinating the expert team. You are specifically asked to provide a report in relation to the true numbers of Jews killed by gassing at Auschwitz and elsewhere, demonstrating that these numbers have been falsified by Irving and that Irving’s denial of mass gassings and of the existence of gassing facilities at Auschwitz and elsewhere is a falsification or distortion of history. Also to show that the supposed “scientific” evidence presented by Irving is false or misleading.” I accepted this description of my task by countersigning the two copies of the letter, returning one to Davenport Lyons.

This report addresses the issues raised in the letters of Mishcon de Reya and Davenport Lyons. It particularly addresses the core issues under dispute listed under sections 1 and 2 of the “Defence of the Second Defendant,” and in Irving’s “Reply to Defence of Second Defendant.” It will demonstrate that there were gas chambers in Auschwitz, that there is wartime archival evidence for this, that the silence in the SS ciphers about the gassings does not mean they did not take place, and that the absence of “one million cadavers ...produced by killing operations at Auschwitz” does not point at the absence of the crime--as Irving argues in his “Reply to Defence of Second Defendant”--but to the efficiency of the crematoria.

4. Relevant documentation in the action

I have been given access to the following documents which have come into the Defendants 'possession in the course of this litigation or have been created for the purposes of this litigation:

- (a) The pleadings:
 - (i) the Statement of Claim served on 5 September 1996;
 - (ii) the Defences of the First and Second Defendants served on the 12 February and 18 April 1997 respectively;
 - (iii) the Reply to both Defences served on the 19 April 1997.
- (b) Documents disclosed by the Plaintiff pursuant to his discovery obligations: various documents from the Plaintiff's various Lists of Documents as referred to in the footnotes to this report.

5. Relevant material and opinions

- (a) The relevant material on which I have based my report and conclusions is detailed in the footnotes to my report.
- (b) The material relating to the history of Auschwitz is derived from various evidential historical sources which can be categorized as follows:
 - (i) contemporaneous documents such as letters, blueprints, minutes of meetings held in the Auschwitz Central Construction Office, budgets, contractors' bids, requests for material allocations, invoices, and so on, which are found in the archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oswiecim, the Osobyi archive in Moscow (this collection has been microfilmed, and is available in microfilm format at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.), and the German Federal Archive in Koblenz;
 - (ii) unpublished transcripts of the trials of (a) Rudolf Höss, held in Warsaw in 1947; (b) the Auschwitz architects Walther Dejaco and Fritz Ertl, held in Vienna in 1972;
 - (iii) published transcripts of the trials of (a) Josef Kramer and others held in Lüneburg in 1945; (b) Hermann Goering and others held in Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946; (c) Adolf Eichmann held in Jerusalem in 1961; (d) Mulka and others held in Frankfurt in 1963, 1964 and 1965;
 - (iv) contemporary newspaper articles, magazine articles and other publications reporting on the situation in the concentration camps;
 - (v) contemporary documents and reports, such as the Vrba-Wetzlar report or the transcripts of the Höss interrogations in Nuremberg, published after the war in edited collections;

- (vi) memoirs, such as the autobiography of Rudolf Höss, written and published after the war;
 - (vii) academic historical studies published after the war.
- (c) The material relating to Holocaust Denial in general, the Faurisson Affair, the Zündel Trial and the Leuchter Report is derived from various evidential historical sources which can be categorized as follows:
- (i) contemporaneous documents such as letters that became available in Irving's Further Discovery;
 - (ii) unpublished transcripts of the trials of Ernst Zündel held in Toronto in 1985 and 1988;
 - (iii) the published writings of Holocaust deniers like Paul Rassinier, Robert Faurisson, Arthur Butz, Thies Christophersen, Wilhelm Stäglich, and Fred Leuchter;
 - (iv) contemporary newspaper articles, magazine articles and other publications reporting on Holocaust denial;
 - (v) published academic studies of Holocaust denial.
- (d) The material relating to David Irving's engagement with Auschwitz, the Holocaust, Holocaust Denial in general, the Zündel Trial, and the Leuchter report is derived from various evidential historical sources which can be categorized as follows:
- (i) contemporaneous documents such as letters, audiotapes and videotapes that became available in Irving's Further Discovery;
 - (ii) unpublished transcripts of the trial of Ernst Zündel held in Toronto in 1988;
 - (iii) the published writings of Irving;
 - (iv) contemporary newspaper articles, magazine articles and other publications reporting on Irving;
 - (v) published academic studies of Holocaust denial. In my research, I have considered that there is a hierarchy of reliability in respect of these categories of sources which I have taken into account when preparing this report. The most important reliable source is contemporaneous documents and the published and unpublished trial transcripts. The reliability of the rest of the categories depends on the context in which they have been produced, organized or extracted. I have avoided any over reliance on one evidential source.

I have taken into account the fact that archival records are invariably organized and structured in a particular way when they are first put together and are necessarily set up to serve a particular purpose. The re-

liability of oral evidence depends on their distance in time from the event they are recalling, their role in the particular event, the interests of the witness in giving his or her account of the event and of the interlocutor in recording the account. I know that historians may be predisposed to accept the information uncritically in order to show that they have made a new discovery, and have tried to consider the evidence in its context, having put aside all political or personal persuasions.

INTRODUCTION

Jean Cayrol, "Night and Fog," in Robert Hughes ed., *Film: Book 2--Films of Peace and War* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 234f.

(In color): *We are moving at a walking pace across a verdant landscape; a blue sky filled with fluffy clouds.*

[Narrator:] “A peaceful landscape ...”

Barbed wire nailed to high wooden posts. Then moving along another field; a cottage on the horizon; birds take wing.

“An ordinary field with flights of crows, harvests, grass fires.”

Moving along another fence, the wires severed and limp.

“An ordinary road where cars and peasants and lovers pass.”

Moving past abundant grass in bright sunlight. Two walls of wire appear, weeds growing high between them, a watchtower in the distance.

“An ordinary village for vacationers--with a marketplace and a steeple--can lead all too easily to a concentration camp.”

A camp today, surrounded by wires and posts cutting across the field.

“Struthof, Oranienburg, Auschwitz, Neuengamme, Belsen, Ravensbruck and Dachau were names like any others on maps and in guidebooks.”

Still moving, a closer view of the maze of wires, with weeds growing around the fence posts.

“The blood has dried, the tongues are silent. The blocks are visited only by a camera. Weeds have grown where the prisoners used to walk. No footstep is heard but our own.”

The following pages aim to assist the Court in gaining insight in the complex spectrum of issues embodied in the proper name “Auschwitz,” and the nouns “Holocaust,” and “Holocaust Denial,” and seek to establish the way David Irving has engaged this nexus, concentrating on the decade 1987 to 1997. The report attempts to provide material and a consideration of that material that can allow us to answer

what I see to be the central issue at stake in the complaint of the plaintiff against the defendants where it concerns my own expertise. This can be summarized in the following 10 questions:

- (i) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz was equipped with homicidal gas chambers, and has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that these gas chambers were systematically used?
- (ii) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz functioned between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944 as an extermination camp for Jews?
- (iii) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that most of the Jews who arrived in Auschwitz were murdered shortly after their arrival in the aforesaid gas chambers?
- (iv) Has it been established beyond reasonable doubt how many Jews were killed in the gas chambers upon arrival in Auschwitz, how many Jews were killed or died from the effect of incidental cruelty, general deprivation, exhaustion or disease whilst in the camp, and how many others died in the camp as the result of various causes?
- (v) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that Auschwitz had homicidal gas chambers and that these gas chambers were systematically used?
- (vi) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that Auschwitz functioned between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944 as an extermination camp for Jews?
- (vii) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that most of the Jews who arrived in Auschwitz were murdered shortly after their arrival in the aforesaid gas chambers?
- (vii) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny, without having done any serious research in the matter, the results of studies into the number of people who died in Auschwitz done by responsible scholars?
- (ix) Did David John Cawdell Irving ally himself with well-known Holocaust deniers, including individuals such as Dr Robert Faurisson, and Ernst Zündel?
- (x) Was David John Cawdell Irving, by the time Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* went to press, a Holocaust denier?

The report seeks to contribute material that allows us to answer these questions. To that end, it is organized in five distinct parts.

Part One, entitled “Concerning History,” seeks to introduce the reader to the most important elements that shape current knowledge of the Auschwitz extermination camp, and discuss the great complexity of the camp’s history and the way this occasionally creates confusion for the uninitiated and opportunity for those who seek to deny the Holocaust. In this section of the report, I will discuss why Auschwitz became the symbol of the Holocaust, and the attempts by modern scholarship to come to an assessment of the number of victims.

Part Two, entitled “Concerning Evidence,” presents and reviews the blinding evidence of the use of the camp as a site for mass extermination as it became slowly available during the war as the result of reports by escaped inmates, as it was narrated in the eye-witness accounts by former Auschwitz inmates immediately after their liberation in other concentration camps, as it was confirmed in forensic investigations undertaken in 1945 and 1946, and as it was corroborated by confessions of leading German personnel employed at the camp during its years of operation. In this section of the report it will become clear that it is highly implausible that knowledge about Auschwitz was a war-time fabrication by British propagandists, as Irving has claimed. Instead it will be shown how our knowledge about Auschwitz emerged from a convergence of independent accounts, how it emerged cumulatively, in geometrical progression, acquiring an epistemological status located somewhere in the realm framed on the one hand by a judgement that knows a fact “beyond reasonable doubt,” and on the other hand by the always receding horizon that promises unqualified certainty. It will be shown that, in the words of John Wilkins, we may assert as “moral certainty” the statement that Auschwitz was an extermination camp where the Germans killed around one million people with the help of gas chambers, and where they incinerated their remains in crematoria ovens.

Part Three, entitled “Concerning Documents,” discusses the few surviving German documents, produced during the war, that confirm the use of Auschwitz as an extermination camp, and allow us to gain an insight into the course of development that changed an “ordinary” concentration camp designed to incarcerate (political) opponents into an extermination camp for a whole ethnic group. Only a few documents survived the general systematic destruction of evidence which took place as the Final Solution unfolded in Auschwitz, and which was completed with the burning of the archives of the Auschwitz Kommandantur in January 1945. Together, the first three parts will amply establish beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz was an extermination camp that claimed by means of purposefully designed crematoria equipped with gas chambers the deaths of at least a million people, most of whom were Jews.

Part Four, entitled “Concerning Denial,” analyzes why Auschwitz became the focus of Holocaust denial, and reviews the most important aspects of the so-called “Faurisson Affair” which brought Holocaust denial into the public eye. It reviews the false dichotomy that forces everything that cannot be established as absolute truth into the rubbish-bin of manufactured falsehood, and refutes the hermeneutical and pseudo-scientific arguments created by various Holocaust deniers such as Paul Rassinier, Arthur Butz, Thies Christophersen, Wilhelm Stäglich, Fred Leuchter and, most importantly, Robert Faurisson to cast doubt or even reject the use of Auschwitz as an extermination site. Since the late 1980s, David Irving has made eclectic use of the trumpery produced by Rassinier, Faurisson, Butz, Christophersen, Stäglich and Leuchter. In his endorsement and subsequent publication of the Leuchter Report, Irving embraced the form of hard-core Holocaust denial developed, refined and propagated by Faurisson in the preceding years--a position that centered on the thesis that the gas chambers of Auschwitz did not work. Irving’s position regarding Auschwitz, in other words, is not one of his own invention. He very much

adopted Faurisson's line, and therefore one may legitimately claim that the resulting developments--the publicity Irving generated at the time of the trial when he was quoted as saying that as few as 100,000 Jews may have been killed, the account of Irving's participation in the trial given in Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* and the present legal case--are to be considered aftershocks of the original Faurisson Affair.

Part Five, entitled "Concerning Irving," finally discusses the way David Irving has used his contacts with Holocaust deniers, and arguments derived from their writings, to further his own ends. It will demonstrate how in the early 1990s he became, as a publisher and a public speaker, the most effective evangelist of the negationist gospel wrought by Rassinier, Faurisson and others, and how he changed his tactics, but not his strategy, in the mid 1990s.

The Conclusion will raise these questions again, and provide my answers.

Whilst having been commissioned by the lawyers for the defendants, I have written this report *salvo jure* towards the plaintiff. I do not believe that questions of history belong in the courtroom, and have opposed in the past the prosecutions of Holocaust deniers like Zündel in Canada, Faurisson in France, and Irving in Germany. If Irving had been the defendant in this case, I would not have consented to give, under instructions of a prosecuting attorney, the questions raised by the nexus of "Auschwitz," "Holocaust," "Holocaust Denial," and "David Irving" much thought.

Yet while I set out without prejudice to the plaintiff or the defendants, I did and continue to have a commitment to those who cannot speak for themselves. With Edith Wyschogrod, I believe that the primary responsibility of the historian is not to the living--may they be right or wrong, good or evil --but to the dead. The historian must be the spokesman for those who have been silenced.

“The promise to convey the truth about the past presupposes that the presentation of that which was is always already implicated in a pre-discursive ethics before it is a conveying of facts. But this space prior to historical description is one in which signs disappear, of designing. The historian when bound by a responsibility toward the dead for whom she claims to speak becomes what I call the “heterological historian.” She assumes liability for the other, feels the pressure of an Ethics that is prior to her construal of the historical object. Responsibility thus interpreted is Janus-faced: its moral authority is expressed in its disinterestedness, but its psychological force is experienced as a sense of inescapable urgency. The heterological historian is driven, on the one hand, by an impassioned necrophilia which would bring to life the dead others for whom she speaks. On the other hand, as “objective,” she consciously or otherwise assumed responsibility for a dispassionate relation to events.”

I believe that no historian can responsibly touch the world of Auschwitz without, in some way or another, becoming a “heterological historian.” I believe, too, that the first question one should ask about any historian’s attempt to deal with the history of an extermination camp--or for that matter any other atrocity-- is the way he or she either accepts or rejects the ethical responsibility that comes with all history, but especially with the history of Auschwitz. No historian should ever play games with the past--especially not a past such as that marked by the word “Auschwitz,” a past marked by the massive betrayal of human solidarity.

And so, while I wrote this report as an *amicus curiae* without prejudice for the defendant and against the plaintiff, I do declare my loyalty with the victims of Auschwitz and against their murderers. And with that, I declare my purpose to ensure that the aim of the men who conceived, constructed and operated the camp will not come to be--an aim sadly shared by most civilized people, because there is a fundamental collusion between the wish of the murderer to deny the crime, and the wish of the bystander not to bear witness. Alexander Donat, who ascribed his survival of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and his subsequent deportation to Maidanek Auschwitz to his sense of having been “charged with the sacred mission of carrying the Ghetto’s history through the flames and barbed wire until such time as I could hurl it

into the face of the world,” recorded in his *The Holocaust Kingdom* how a fellow inmate in Maidanek, Dr Schipper, anticipated the difficulties the survivors would have in preserving their story. Even if some were to survive, and

“write the history of this period of blood and tears--and I firmly believe we will-- who will believe us? Nobody will *want* to believe us, because our disaster is the disaster of the entire civilized world..... We’ll have the thankless job of proving to a reluctant world that we are Abel, the murdered brother....”

The Italian survivor Primo Levi recorded in his *The Drowned and the Saved* the following admonishment that the SS guard enjoyed to give to the prisoners.

“However this war may end, we have won the war against you; none of you will be left to bear witness, but even if someone were to survive, the world will not believe him. There will be perhaps suspicions, discussions, research by historians, but there will be no certainties, because we will destroy the evidence together with you. And even if some proof should remain and some of you survive, people will say the events you describe are too monstrous to be believed: they will say that they are exaggerations of Allied propaganda and will believe us, who will deny everything, and not you. We will be the ones to dictate the history of the Lagers.”

I believe that both Dr Schipper, Alexander Donat, and Primo Levi saw the central historiographical problem facing anyone who approaches the history of Auschwitz--historian, lawyer, survivor, bystander, perpetrator. And they touched on a metaphysical problem which, in the early 1980s, the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard subjected to his rigorous analysis.

“It’s not for nothing that Auschwitz is called the ‘extermination camp.’” [Auschwitz physician Dr. Kremer in his diary entry of October 3, 1942] Millions of human beings were exterminated there. Many of the means to prove the crime or its quantity were also exterminated.[....] What could be established by historical inquiry would be the quantity of the crime. But the documents necessary for the validation were themselves destroyed in quantity. That at least can be established. [....] But the silence imposed on knowledge does not impose the silence of forgetting, it imposes a feeling. Suppose that an earthquake destroys not only lives, buildings and objects but also the instruments used to measure earthquakes directly and indirectly. The impossibility of quantitatively measuring it does not prohibit, but rather inspires in the minds of the survivors the idea of a very great seismic force. The scholar claims to know nothing about it, but the common person has a complex feeling, the one aroused by the negative presentation of the indeterminate. *Mutatis mutandis*, the silence that the crime of Auschwitz imposes upon the historian is a sign for the common person.[....] The silence that surrounds the phrase, *Auschwitz was the extermination camp* is not a state of mind, it is the sign that something remains to be phrased which is not, something which is not determined. This sign affects a linking of phrases. The indetermination of meanings left in abeyance, the extermination of what would allow them to be determined, the shadow of negation hollowing out reality to the point of making it dissipate, in a word, the wrong done to the victims that condemns them to silence-- it is this, and not a state of mind, which calls upon unknown phrases to link onto the name of Auschwitz.--The “revisionist” historians understand as applicable to this name only the cognitive rules for the establishment of historical reality and for the validation of its sense. If justice consisted solely in respecting these rules, and if history gave rise only to historical inquiry, they could not be accused of a denial of justice. In fact, they administer a justice in conformity with the rules and exert a positively instituted right. Having placed, moreover, themselves in the position of plaintiffs, who need not establish anything, they plead for the negative, they reject proofs, and that is certainly their right as the defense. But they are not worried by the scope of the very silence they use as an argument in their plea, by this does one recognize a wrong done to the sign that is this silence and to the phrases it invokes. They will say that history is not made of feelings, and that it is necessary to establish the facts. But, with Auschwitz, something new has happened in history (which can only be a sign and not a fact), which is that the facts, the testimonies which bore the traces of here’s and now’s the documents which indicated the sense or the senses of the facts, and the names, finally the possibility of various kinds of phrases whose conjunction makes reality, all this has been destroyed as much as possible.”

Therefore Lyotard defined the task of the historian of Auschwitz as one that forced him or her not only to look at positive evidence, but also to venture forth “by lending his or her ear to what is not presentable under the rules of knowledge.” This, of course, applied to every fact of

history, in which one moves from the evidential to what it implies. Only in the case of Auschwitz, this applies even more. And Lyotard concluded that “Auschwitz is the most real of realities in this respect.”

Given this context, the question of whether Holocaust Denial serves some current purpose seems to me irrelevant compared to the question if it serves the historic interest of the men who conceived of Auschwitz and who operated with the aim of destroying not only countless human beings, but also the evidence of their own acts--men like Himmler, Heydrich, and Höss.

PART ONE *CONCERNING HISTORY*

I Auschwitz.

“The concentrationary universe shrivels away within itself. It still lives on in the world like a dead planet laden with corpses.”

“Normal men do not know that everything is possible. Even if the evidence forces their intelligence to admit it, their muscles do not believe it. The concentrationees do know....They are set apart from the rest of the world by an experience impossible to communicate.”

The great majority of people who know anything about the Second World War know that Auschwitz played a pivotal role in the National Socialist attempt to exterminate European Jewry--a deed which the perpetrators euphemistically called the *Endlösung der Judenfrage* (“Final Solution to the Jewish Question”), which the victims experienced as a *Sho’ah* or *Hurban* (“Catastrophe”), and which today is commonly known as the “Holocaust.” Since the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army (January 27, 1945), forensic reports and historical studies, undertaken by many different people from different backgrounds living in different countries, have resulted in an increasingly detailed and sophisticated understanding of the origin, context and development of

Auschwitz, and the way it assumed, as a result of often contingent circumstances and evolving ambitions, different and seemingly contrary functions during the almost 57 months of its existence.

In my own work, based on careful study of the site, primary archival sources and secondary studies, conducted in collaboration with Deborah Dwork over a period of ten years, I have distinguished ten functions.

1. A concentration camp to serve local German security needs (1940-45). After the fall of Poland Hitler incorporated large areas of Poland into the Reich--amongst them the former Duchy of Auschwitz, located in eastern Upper Silesia. Hitler charged *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler with the task to Germanize the annexed territories by deporting the local Slav and Jewish populations to the occupied territories, the so-called Government General, and by moving in ethnic Germans from territories promised to the Soviet Union in the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. As *Reichskommissar für den Festigung deutschen Volkstums* (Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of the German Nation), Himmler initially considered Auschwitz to be just one of the many towns in the annexed territories to be emptied of Poles and Jews and filled with Germans. But that formula did not work in Auschwitz. Due to the unique demographic and economic conditions in the German-annexed territory of eastern Upper Silesia, the Germans were unable to use mass-scale deportations of Poles into the adjacent Government General as a tool of repression. Some of the local Polish population could not be deported as they were employed in industry, and there were no skilled ethnic German workers to replace them. Therefore the SS created in 1940 a concentration camp in a suburb of Auschwitz to terrorize the Polish population of Upper Silesia's industrial area.

2. A production site for gravel and sand (1940-44). Through its subsidiary DEST (German Earth and Stone Works), the SS had been heavily involved in the production of building materials since the late 1930s. Auschwitz, famous for the high quality gravel and sand from the Sola river, became one of the production sites of DEST.

3. An execution site for the Gestapo Summary Court in Kattowitz (1940-44). Providing security, killing and cremation facilities, Auschwitz became an execution site for Poles condemned by the Gestapo Summary Court in Kattowitz. Those executed in the camp on orders of the Gestapo Summary Court (3,000 in total) were not registered in the camp.

4. An experimental farm (1940-45). The area around Auschwitz became the focus of a massive ethnic cleansing operation in 1940. In order to service the incoming ethnic Germans with expertise and livestock and facilitate German agricultural development of the area, Himmler decided to create a large experimental farm in Auschwitz, using concentration camp labour. The camp claimed increasingly larger territories for this new function, and Himmler began to see that its future might be different from what he had originally envisioned. As a concentration camp it was assumed to be a temporary facility; as an agricultural estate it claimed permanence.

5. A forced labour pool for the construction of the IG Farben Plant at Monowitz (1941-45). Himmler slated Auschwitz to be the jewel in his crown of the German East. From a small compound surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence the camp had grown into a 15-square mile SS "Zone of Interests." A huge influx of money and building materials was needed to develop this zone. In 1941 the camp became a pawn in Himmler's attempt to attract the huge chemical giant to Auschwitz. The terms of the bargain were that the camp was to supply inmate labour to construct Farben's synthetic rubber or Buna plant. In return, IG Farben was to finance and supply Himmler's Germanization project in the area with building materials.

6. A forced labour pool for the construction of an IG Farben company town (1941-43). In order to convince IG Farben to move to Auschwitz in Upper Silesia and not to Rattwitz in Lower Silesia, Himmler promised the IG Farben management that he would initiate the construction of a new company town to house the employees. One hundred thousand Soviet prisoners-of-war were to be concentrated in Auschwitz to provide labour for that project of urban (re)construction. When in early 1942 the promised 100,000 Soviet prisoners-of-war did not materialize, Himmler decided that Jews were to take their place. He had by then assumed full authority over the Final Solution of the Jewish Problem, and could dispose of the Jews within German-controlled Europe as he pleased.

7. An execution site for certain categories of Soviet prisoners (1941-42). In the summer of 1941 the SS, in agreement with the German army, began to separate various categories of prisoners (communist cadres, Jews, and so on) from the prisoner-of-war camps housing Soviet soldiers. Auschwitz became one of the execution sites for these selected prisoners.

8. A selection and extermination site for Jews (1941/2-1944). When large-scale mass murder of Jews began in the summer and fall of 1941 in the wake of Operation Barbarossa, the SS in Auschwitz was still fully committed to Himmler's project to develop the town and the region. It was when Göring directed Soviet prisoners of war from Auschwitz to German armament factories in January 1942 that Himmler began to consider the systematic use of the slowly emerging program for the Final Solution of the Jewish Problem within the context of what he called "The Auschwitz Project." In early 1942 Himmler was still very much committed to make Auschwitz the centerpiece of his racial utopia. Only now this was not to be created on the backs of Soviet prisoners-of-war: Jewish slave labourers were to take their place. The Wannsee Conference gave Himmler (through Heydrich) the power he needed to negotiate with German and foreign civilian authorities for the transfer of Jews to his SS empire. The first transports of Jews fit for labour started to leave Slovakia for Auschwitz-Birkenau soon thereafter. When the Slovak government suggested that Himmler also take Jews unfit for labour in exchange for cash payments, Himmler decided to transform a peasant cottage in Birkenau into a gas chamber. Two months later, on July 4, 1942, the first transports of Jews from Slovakia were submitted to selection. Those who could work were admitted to the camp. Those who could not were killed in the peasant cottage, now known as Bunker I. At that time, selected categories of Jews were killed at Auschwitz, but the camp still had not become the epicentre of the Holocaust. The main purpose of Auschwitz, *at this time*, remained construction (of a plant, a city, and a region), and not destruction (of Jews). The systematic extermination of Jews was still an auxiliary function of the camp. Around mid July 1942, Himmler increased his authority as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of the German Nation, and acquired the responsibility for German settlement in Russia--an authority that he had coveted for more than a year. His view of Auschwitz and his plans for Auschwitz changed rapidly and dramatically. The "Auschwitz Project," was no longer of interest to him--at least not for the duration of the war. The camp could be used to serve the systematic killing of Jews. In Auschwitz the by then well-established practice of mass-killing became policy. The camp architects got the order to design crematoria (4 and 5) equipped from the outset with homicidal gas chambers on 20 August, 1942. The two crematoria under development (2 and 3), were retro-actively fitted with homicidal gas chambers.

9. A forced labour pool for various German factories built in the surrounding region (1942-45). Following the precedent set by the agreement between the SS and IG Farben, the camp became a labour pool for other German factories, moved from the West to the Auschwitz area because of the threat of bombing. By 1944, the *Stammlager* Birkenau, and 27 satellite camps served these industries.

10. A transfer station for Jews selected for work in the Reich (1944). *In the Spring of 1944 the Germans, faced with a great shortage of workers, reversed their earlier policy not to allow any Jews within the boundaries of the German Reich. Hungarian Jews were sent to Auschwitz; those considered “unfit for work” were killed conforming to existing policy; many of those considered “fit for work” were temporarily held in transit until they could be transported to concentration camps in the Reich as slave labour.*

These different functions show that Auschwitz was a very complex place with a tangled, complex, and confusing history. In a sense, it would be possible to write ten histories of Auschwitz: Auschwitz as a concentration camp for Poles, Auschwitz as a production site for gravel and sand, and so on. Each of these histories has their own political, institutional and financial context, each its own unique spatial impact on the site and temporal regularities, variabilities, and times of crisis and change. At times these histories run at cross-purposes, at times parallel without interfering with one another, at times they communicate, converge, and unite. As a result, a historian who desires to make a judgement about any aspect of the history of Auschwitz must take into account an often labyrinthine context, which is made even more difficult to negotiate because of intentional camouflage of certain aspects of the camp's history during the war and the willful destruction of archival and other material evidence at the end of the war.

The following example, using extensive quotes from the book on Auschwitz that Debrah Dwork and I co-authored, will suffice to show some the problems. As I have observed above, in early 1941, the promise to build a camp at Birkenau (Auschwitz II) served as a tool of negotiation between Himmler and the IG Farben management. At the time that IG Farben engineers identified Auschwitz as one of two possible sites for

the establishment of a large synthetic rubber plant, Himmler had great financial and political interest in the area, and he believed that the influx of money and building materials, which would follow the establishment of the plant, would enable him to realize his own project to quickly Germanize the eastern part of Upper Silesia. “The creation of the camp at Birkenau, which by the end of 1942 had become a major center for the annihilation of Europe’s Jews, was directly connected to Himmler’s program to transform Auschwitz into a paradigm of German settlement in the East. To convince IG Farben that Auschwitz was the place to go, Himmler had to do more than make promises. On his first visit to the camp in March 1941 he therefore proposed not only to increase the camp population to 30,000, but also to establish a huge satellite camp of 100,000 prisoners in the agricultural estate area. Himmler “discussed this,” Höss recalled, “and pointed out the approximate area that he wanted me to use.” If Höss was surprised, the provincial authorities were chagrined. Upper Silesia was poor in water and they had identified the wetlands around Birkenau as a major water supply. Furthermore, they realized immediately that 100,000 prisoners would create a massive sewage problem. “Himmler just smiled and disposed of their objections saying, ‘Gentlemen, this project will be completed; my reasons for this are more important than your objections.’” Himmler’s visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau and his instructions to build what later became the site where more than one million Jews were killed was a carefully staged event to impress the directors of IG Farben. He had no intention of beginning construction right away--that order came more than six months later--but wanted to declare his commitment to the future of Auschwitz. By ordering the establishment of a 100,000-inmate camp Himmler had taken care of labour availability, which (as we have seen) was key to the development of the region. Furthermore, the precedent of using inmates for municipal projects had been established in December 1940 when the camp and the town had agreed that chain-gangs of prisoners would improve the dikes along the Vistula and the Sola, and the trajectory of the two rivers; a

few months later crews were put to work at demolition sites in the town. Himmler's gesture in Birkenau was to impress on the rest of the entourage that the camp would be able to service the town reconstruction project. All those present--IG Farben officials, Provincial Governor Fritz Bracht and other civic authorities, the SS liaison with IG Farben, Karl Wolff, and the SS head of agricultural affairs, Heinrich Vogel, as well as the camp officials--heard him, as did SS leaders a year later. The deployment of a massive army of slaves was a simple necessity in the cause of laying a stable foundation for a German future in the East, Himmler told his men. "If we do not create the bricks here, if we do not fill our camps with slaves--in this room I state these things precisely and clearly--with work slaves who will build our cities, our villages, and our farms, irrespective of losses, then, after a long war, we will not have the money to create settlements that will allow a truly Germanic people to live with dignity and to take root within one generation."

In early 1941 Himmler was not in a hurry to commit resources to the construction of the camp. When the IG Farben managers made the decision to establish the large synthetic rubber plant in Auschwitz, the immediate purpose of Birkenau, which was at that time a mere promise, had been fulfilled. Yet six months later IG Farben called Himmler's bluff, and the latter was forced to make good on his promise given at March 1, 1941. He negotiated the transfer of 100,000 Soviet prisoners-of-war from the army to his own SS, and ordered the construction of a camp in Birkenau to house them. Yet in the end only 10,000 of the 100,000 were to arrive in Auschwitz. By December 1941, the deal with the army fell apart. "No more Soviet prisoners-of-war arrived. As it became increasingly clear that Operation Barbarossa had failed as a Blitzkrieg, Germany had to mobilize all its resources to continue the war. With more men called up for service and more demands on German industry--especially the armaments industry--even the Soviet prisoners-of-war became a resource too precious to be wasted. "The lack of workers is becoming an increasingly dangerous hindrance for

the future of the German war and armament industry,” Field Marshal Keitel informed various military agencies and ministries on 31 October. “The *Führer* has now ordered that the labour of the Russian prisoners-of-war also should be utilized to a great extent by large-scale assignment for the requirements of the war industry.” A week later Reich Marshall Hermann Göring gained control over all prisoners-of-war and he promptly announced that the Russians would be primarily employed in mining, railroad maintenance, armaments industry, and agriculture. Building was given a low priority. Göring charged the Labour Allocation Division of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Four Year Plan with the creation and execution of a policy to exploit the labour potential of the Soviets. On 8 January the Division issued a decree. All prisoners-of-war were assigned to the armaments industry and to a selected number of other activities such as agriculture, forestry and mining. None could be employed for construction work. The decree of January 8 brought an end to Himmler’s plan to amass a large Soviet labour force to build the town of Auschwitz. He had to look elsewhere, and his eye fell on the Jews.”

Initially Birkenau was going to be filled with young and healthy Jews whom the SS considered to be fit for work. The SS decided to find these Jews in Slovakia, and in February 1942 the German and Slovak governments reached a deal that included the immediate deportation of Jews to Auschwitz. Yet once the agreement was signed, the Slovaks realized that with the deportation of the young and healthy Jews they were left with those “not fit for work”: the very young and old people. Unwilling to feed and shelter them, the Slovaks once more approached the Germans, in the person of Adolf Eichmann. Initially Eichmann refused to discuss the matter, but quickly someone in the SS realized that it would be possible to make some money out of the deal by charging the Slovak government 500 *Reichsmark* per Jew to be deported (and the Slovaks would be allowed to recover this expense by expropriating the deportees belongings). Slovakia was close to Auschwitz, and if the

camp was to be equipped with some discretely camouflaged extermination installation, the SS could take all the Slovak Jews, conduct a selection in Birkenau, admit those who could work, and kill the rest in an adjacent forest. “The Germans had a few practical problems to work out. As the Slovak Jews were to be brought to Birkenau and not to Auschwitz, and as killing them in crematorium 1 would interrupt the life of the main camp, they considered building an extermination installation close to the new satellite camp. [SS construction chief] Hans Kammler arrived in Auschwitz on Thursday 27 February to meet with [Kommandant] Höss and [camp architect] Bischoff. There are no minutes of this conference, but its content can be ascertained from a letter Bischoff wrote to Topf a week later. Kammler had decided to cancel their order for the back-up incinerators included in the Birkenau plan of 6 January, Bischoff explained. The large crematorium with five triple-muffle incinerators that had been designated for the main camp was to go to Birkenau instead. Obviously Kammler wanted construction to proceed quickly. Those furnaces had been ordered almost four months previously and he expected they would be available soon. Furthermore, the designs for the crematorium that was to house these incinerators had been both completed and approved. On paper, at least, everything was ready for the crematorium they had agreed upon the previous October. A blueprint of the prisoner-of-war camp shows that Kammler decided to locate the new crematorium in the north-western corner of Birkenau, adjacent to an abandoned cottage that had belonged to a Polish peasant named Wiechuja. The interior of this cottage, known as “the little red house,” was converted into two gas chambers within a few weeks... There is no doubt that Kammler’s visit led to the Germans’ reversal of their decision about the mass deportation of Slovak Jewry. Once Kammler had organized the construction of the crematorium in Birkenau, the Reich Security Main Office permitted the German Foreign office to negotiate seriously. On 3 March [Slovak Prime Minister]Tuka announced in the Slovak State Council that, pending certain financial arrangements, the Germans had agreed to

take the remaining 70,000 Jews. The Germans were doing them a favour and were to be compensated at the rate of 500 marks for every Jew deported. For this sum, however, the Slovak government was guaranteed that “the Jews accepted as part of the de-Judaization of Slovakia will remain permanently in the Eastern territories and will not be offered any possibility of re-immigrating into Slovakia. “The state was free to seize Jewish property left behind .”

With the creation of the gas chamber of “the little red house,” also known as “Bunker 1,” the mass murder of Jews mass became a fixture of life in Auschwitz, but it was not yet the camp’s primary purpose. It was, in a sense, what the Germans so aptly term a *Verlegenheitslösung* an emergency solution. Only later, when the construction of the town came to a halt and Birkenau lost its purpose as a labour pool for that project, did killing cease to be an auxiliary activity and became one of the main purposes of Birkenau. *But even then it competed with other functions.*

Each changing use the SS had for Birkenau deposited its own archival and physical sediment, creating a superimposed set of historical layers which, in the end, were to be disturbed in the cataclysmic upheaval of the genocide that occurred at that site. To make matters worse, the speed with which the various deposits settled was not the same, so that the ultimate consequences of earlier events were to appear sometimes after the effects of later events had already become apparent. For example: the transformation of the little red house into a gas chamber only took a matter of days, but the design and construction of crematoria 2 and 3 took more than 18 months, and in this long period the function of Birkenau shifted and changed numerous times. Many of the intended purposes of these crematoria were obsolete even before the blueprints were completed.

The historian of Auschwitz must not forget the Russian proverb that one cannot drive straight on a twisted lane. Anyone who seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of the history of Auschwitz must account for and contend with the historical complexity of the site. If, in the words of the historian Schleunes, the road to Auschwitz proved twisted, so did the road in Auschwitz. This implies that one should be very careful in assessing the evidence and the conclusions drawn on the basis of it. Irving, for example, has argued that “since documents have now been found in the Auschwitz files held in former Soviet archives indicating that Auschwitz prisoners were actually released to the outside world,” the camp was not an extermination camp because the documented release “seems incompatible with the character of a top-secret mass extermination centre.” Irving’s conclusion is the result of the combination of the following two syllogisms: “Released prisoners are free to divulge information. Prisoners were released from Auschwitz. Therefore Auschwitz was not a top-secret place. Mass extermination is a top secret-operation. Auschwitz was not a top secret place. Therefore Auschwitz was not a top-secret mass extermination center ”

Yet the syllogism is fallacious when applied to Auschwitz because the term Auschwitz covers a very manifold and complex reality. If Auschwitz had only been a (top-secret)mass extermination center, located in one place, such an argument may have been conclusive. Yet Auschwitz encompassed many different sites, and as an institution was engaged in many different functions, and furthermore functioned as a (top-secret)mass extermination center for only part of its history. If the released prisoners had included the so-called *Sonderkommando* who operated the crematoria, Irving would have a point. They did not. In fact, no Jews were ever included in the category of *Erziehungshäftlinge* or “re-education inmates,” the only prisoner category from which releases did occur. Most of the *Sonderkommando* were put to death after a few months on the job--to protect secrecy. The few who survived did so because they either escaped from the death march that concluded the

camp's history, or because, amidst the chaos of Germany's collapse, they were able to merge (after the death march) in the general camp population in the receiving] concentration camps in the West.

Given the dichotomy between the very complex nature and history of Auschwitz and the habit of many to consider the camp only as a "top-secret mass extermination center," many people, including bona-fide historians, survivors, and not so bona-fide holocaust deniers, often commit the fallacy of composition: they reason from the properties of the part of Auschwitz that was engaged with mass extermination to the properties of Auschwitz as a whole. A favourite example of the negationists is the so-called swimming pool in Auschwitz I. They argue that the presence of a swimming pool, with three diving boards, shows that the camp was really a rather benign place, and therefore could not have been a center of extermination. They ignore that the swimming pool was built as a water reservoir for the purpose of firefighting (there were no hydrants in the camp), that the diving boards were added later, and that the pool was only accessible to SS men and certain privileged Aryan prisoners employed as inmate-functionaries in the camp. The presence of the swimming pool does not say anything about the conditions for Jewish inmates in Auschwitz, and does not challenge the existence of an extermination program with its proper facilities in Auschwitz II.

Auschwitz is a prime example of a place where, in the words of Alexander Pope, "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." The labyrinthine history and the resulting intricacy of the evidence demands careful attention to both detail and circumstance. No Holocaust denier has ever come close to the level of historic professionalism that the study of Auschwitz demands. Least of all David Irving. Beyond that, of course, is another issue that transcends the simple issue of "professionalism." It is the recognition that anyone who seeks to understand Auschwitz must do so with a sense of humility in face of the evidence and diffidence in face of our own inability to truly grasp the historical reality that

was Auschwitz. As early as 1946 Hannah Arendt observed in a review of *The Black Book: The Nazi Crime Against the Jewish People*--an account of the Nazi destruction of European Jewry--that any attempt to write a history what a later generation was to define as "The Holocaust " was to end in failure. "The facts are: that six million Jews, six million human beings, were helplessly, and in most cases unsuspectingly, dragged to their deaths. The method employed was that of accumulated terror. First came calculated neglect, deprivation, and shame, when the weak in body died together with those strong and defiant enough to take their own lives. Second came outright starvation, combined with forced labor, when people died by the thousands but at different intervals of time, according to their stamina. Last came the death factories--and they all died together, the young and the old, the weak and the strong, the sick and the healthy: not as people, not as men and women, children and adults, boys and girls, not as good and bad, beautiful and ugly--but brought down to the lowest common denominator of organic life itself, plunged into the darkest and deepest abyss of primal equality, like cattle, like matter, like things that had neither body nor soul, nor even a physiognomy upon which death could stamp its seal. It is in this monstrous equality without fraternity or humanity--an equality in which cats and dogs could have shared--that we see, as though mirrored, the image of hell. *Beyond the capacities of human comprehension* is the deformed wickedness of those who established such equality. But equally deformed and beyond the reach of human justice is the innocence of those who died in this equality. The gas chamber was more than anybody could have possibly deserved, and in the face of it the worst criminal was as innocent as the newborn babe. Nor is the monstrousness of this innocence made any easier to bear such adages as "better to suffer ill than do ill. "What mattered was not so much that those whom an accident of birth condemned to death obeyed and functioned to the last moment as frictionlessly as those whom an accident of birth condemned to life (this is so well known, there is no use hiding it). Even beyond that was the fact

that innocence and guilt were no longer products of human behavior; that no possible human crime could have fitted this punishment, no conceivable sin, this hell in which saint and sinner were equally degraded to the status of possible corpses. Once inside the death factories, everything became an accident completely beyond control of those who did the suffering and those who inflicted it. And in more than one case, those who inflicted the suffering one day became the sufferers the next. Human history has known no story more difficult to tell. The monstrous equality in innocence that is its *leitmotif* destroys the very basis on which history is produced--which is, namely, our capacity to comprehend an event no matter how distant we are from it."

Thirty-five years later, philosophers were still grappling with the impossibility to grasp the world of the camps. "There is something in the nature of thought--its patient deliberateness and care for logical order--that is alien to the enormity of the death camps," the late Arthur A. Cohen wrote in his short but magisterial *The Tremendum: A Theological Interpretation of the Holocaust* (1981). "There is something no less in the reality of the death camps that denies the attentions of thought. Thinking and the death camps are incommensurable. The procedures of thought and the ways of knowing are confounded. It is to think the unthinkable--an enterprise that is not alone contradictory but hopeless--for thought entails as much as moral hope (that it may be triumphant, mastering its object, dissolving the difficulties, containing and elucidating the conundrum) as it is the investment of skill and dispassion in a methodic procedure. The death camps are a reality which, by their very nature, obliterate thought and the humane program of thinking. We are dealing, at the very outset, therefore, with something unmanageable and obdurate--a reality which exists, which is historically documented, which has specific beginnings and ends, located in time, the juncture of confluent influences which run from the beginnings of historical memory to a moment of consummating orgy, never to be forgotten, but painful to remember, a continuous scourge to

memory and the future of memory and yet something which, whenever addressed, collapses into tears, passions, rage. The death camps are unthinkable, but not unfelt. They constitute a traumatic event and, like all decisive trauma, they are suppressed but omnipresent, unrecognized but tyrannic, silted over by forgetfulness but never obliterated.”

Cohen’s insight must, in the end, apply to anyone who has seriously tried to understand the Holocaust in general, or Auschwitz in particular. Elie Wiesel recorded that, after the end of the Eichmann Trial, he met by chance one of the judges, a “wise and lucid man, of uncompromising character.” “He refused to discuss the technical or legal aspects of the trial. Having told him that side was of no interest to me, I asked him the following question: “Given your role in this trial, you ought to know more about the scope of the Holocaust than any living person, more even than those who lived through it in flesh and in their memory. You have studied all the documents, read all the secret reports, interrogated all the witnesses. Now tell me: do you *understand* this fragment of the past, those few pages of history?” He shuddered imperceptibly, then, in a soft voice, infinitely humble, he confessed: “No, not at all. I know the facts and the events that served as their framework; I know how the tragedy unfolded minute by minute, but this knowledge, as if coming from outside, has nothing to do with understanding. There is in all this a portion which will always remain a mystery; a kind of forbidden zone, inaccessible to reason. Fortunately, as it happens. Without that ...” He broke off suddenly. Then, with a smile a bit timid, a bit sad, he added: “Who knows, perhaps that’s the gift which God, in a moment of grace, gave to man: it prevents him from understanding everything, thus saving him from madness, or from suicide.”

Having studied for years the evidence this judge had to consider, it is difficult not to agree with him. For all our knowledge, the world of the camps continue to offer an ever-receding horizon that seeks to escape our understanding every time we seek to close in on it. It is with this in

mind that I present at the end of this first chapter the end of the last chapter of *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present*. The main protagonist, Sarah Grossman-Weil, is a very dear friend of mine, and an aunt of my co-author Debrah Dwork. Her testimony was one of the invaluable gifts that allowed us to write and complete our book--a gift that somehow helped us to negotiate that gap between knowledge and understanding. "In August 1944, as the Hungarian Action came to an end and the crematoria stood idle, Sara Grossman-Weil, her husband Menek, her mother and father-in-law Feigele and Wolf, her brother-in-law Adek, his wife Esther, their adolescent daughter Regina, and their little girl Mirka were herded into a train of cattle cars in Lodz, the last of the hundreds of ghettos the Germans had established to cleanse the German East of Jews. The ghetto of Lodz, which had been organized in early 1940 as a holding pen for the Nisko project, had survived at the expense of most of its inhabitants as a vast workshop. The German-appointed Eldest of the Jews, Chaim Rumkowski, had developed a policy to make the ghetto indispensable to the German war effort. If work would not set Jews free, it should at least guarantee survival. The Germans agreed, with a caveat: if the ghetto were an enormous workshop, only those who were capable of work could stay. Selections were instituted, and Sara put rouge on her gaunt cheeks to look healthy. "You would try to look straight, not to look sick. You would not bend, because this would suggest that you're not capable of doing the work you're doing. You would walk straight, or as well as you could, to show them that you are fit to remain." But there were those who could not be saved by all the rouge and posture in the world. In early September, 1942, the Germans decreed that those who could not work--children under ten and old people over sixty-five--would have to leave. Forcing Rumkowski, his Jewish Council and the Jewish ghetto police to share moral responsibility, the Germans ordered them to execute the order. Their families would be exempt. When the decree was made known, it seemed that the nadir of perdition had been reached. "The sky above the ghetto is unclouded," Josef Zelkowicz recorded. "Like yesterday and the day be-

fore, the early autumn sun shines. It shines and smiles at our Jewish grief and agony, as though someone were merely stepping on vermin, as though some one had written a death-sentence for bedbugs, a day of Judgement for rats which must be exterminated and wiped off the face of the earth.” Like Josef Zelkowicz and everyone else, Sara witnessed dragnet operations to catch infants, toddlers and elementary school children. “The children were taken away; thrown, literally thrown, on to the wagon. And when the mother objected, either she was taken with them, or shot. Or they tore the child away from her and let her go. And all the children, small children, little ones, five-, six-, four-, seven-year-old ones were thrown, literally thrown, into this wagon. The cries were reaching the sky, but there was no help, there was no one to turn to, to plead your case, to beg.” Mirka Grossman was one of the few children to survive the selection. With the action against the children and the elderly, the two-year death knell of the last Jewish community on Reich territory had begun. It ended on Wednesday, 2 August 1944 when the German mayor of Lodz informed Rumkowski that the ghetto would be resettled, workshop by workshop. “Factory workers will travel with their families,” Rumkowski’s final proclamation read. Sara Grossman-Weil left with her husband’s family. They were herded to the train station and ordered on to the cattle cars. “You couldn’t throw a pin in, one was sitting on top of the other, with the bundles. We were in this cattle car, this wagon, and we were riding, riding, riding. There was no end to it. And the little one asked, in Polish, ‘Daddy, isn’t it better that today it’s a bad day, but tomorrow it will be better?’ She was five years old. And her father said, ‘Today doesn’t matter, tomorrow will be much better.’” Tomorrow proved him wrong. The train with the survivors of the Lodz ghetto passed by Kattowitz and Myslowitz, and crossed the Vistula at Neu-Berun. They arrived at the station of Auschwitz. The train turned into a spur and stopped. When the sun began to set, the train backed onto another spur, through a gate, and entered the enormous compound of Birkenau. It came to a halt. The bolted doors were opened. Sara Grossman, her relatives, and the rest of the

people on the train were hauled out and told to form two columns, one of men, and one of women and children. I was standing there not knowing what's going on, overwhelmed with the amount of people around us, not believing that they threw us all out from these wagons in the manner they did. How they pushed and shoved and screamed. And these SS men with the dogs in front of us. I lost sight of what was going on. It's crazy. And I was standing with my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law with her little girl, when someone approached us, and said, "give this child to the grandmother." And my sister-in-law gave the child to my mother-in-law. They went to the left, and we went to the right. "

Sara and the other women considered fit for work entered the camp. "As we were marching, I saw columns of women marching on the other side in the opposite direction who were half naked, shaven heads, stretching out their arms. 'Food, food. Give me your bread!' Screaming, shouting. I was overwhelmed. I thought that I found myself in an asylum, in a madhouse, in a place with only crazy people." This was the place she had heard about, always in whispers and always with dread. "They always called it Auschwitz, but we didn't know what it meant."

They arrived at the delousing station, were registered, shaved and showered, and handed some rags and wooden shoes. "From there they gathered us again in columns, in rags like the people whom I had seen an hour ago in the columns marching in the opposite direction. We had the same look, except we weren't shouting. We looked like crazy people, just like the rest of them. We were led to a lavatory where we had to take care of our needs, and from there we went to a barrack, which was the house where we would be staying. In this barrack we were given a bunk. The size of the bunk was approximately the size of not quite a twin bed, I would say considerably smaller. And on this bunk bed, five people had to find their sleeping quarters. And this was our new home."

Sara remained in Birkenau for ten days, and then she was brought on another transport to a munitions factory at Unterlöss, 18 miles north-east of Celle. Most of the inmates were Hungarian women. Sara recalled that sulphur was everywhere, “in the air, and in the bread that you were given as a ration at work, and in your mouth, eyes, hands, fingers, everything turned yellow. I was sick with the smell.”

Production at Unterlöss came to an end in March 1945. The satellite camp was closed, and the inmates were sent to Bergen-Belsen where Sara was put in a barrack with hundreds of other women. “On the outside were hundreds of women dying of thirst, thirst, and thirst again.” “It was a sight that is beyond any description or understanding or imagination. You cannot, because when you see the pictures of the dead bodies, you just see pictures. You don’t see the bodies, the eyes that talk to you and beg you for water. You don’t see the mouths quietly trying to say something and not being able to utter a word. You see and you feel as I did, the agony of these people for whom death would be a blessing. They are just dying and can’t die.”

All around the camp were mounds of bodies, and Sara was ordered to move corpses to a large pit. “These mounds that you see on some of the pictures that are being shown about the Holocaust, they were real people. They were living, breathing, eating, feeling, thinking people, thousands upon thousands of them. Mothers and daughters and children. These pictures are real. And I saw it, I smelled it, I touched them. They were very, very real. This was Bergen-Belsen in March and the beginning of April in 1945.” Sara survived, and was liberated on her birthday, the 15th of April.

There were no mounds of corpses in Auschwitz. The crematoria took care of that. “I was standing with my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law with her little girl, when someone approached us, and said, ‘Give this child to the grandmother.’ And my sister-in-law gave the child to my mother-in-law. They went to the left, and we went to the right. And I

said, 'Why?' My mother-in-law took the little one and went to the left." None of the new arrivals knew what "left " meant, and no one who went to the left survived to give testimony. It is from the accounts and reports of the slave or willing workers, and from documents and drawings, that we can follow the route that Feigele and Mirka took. They went to the left, crossed a train track, and came to a road parallel to the rails, running from the gate building at their left to two relatively large buildings at their right. An SS man directed them to the right, towards the two buildings. Another SS man 500 yards down the road told them to turn left, into a compound surrounding one of the two identical brick buildings with their square, squat chimneys. They were not led to the large entrance below the chimney, but walked past the building and then, beyond, along a 70-yard-long terrace. At the end of the paved asphalt they were told to take a sharp turn to the left, and descend a staircase ending at a door leading into a basement.

Today, in 1995, that underground space, and a room connected to it at right angles, are shallow pits overgrown with grass. In 1944 this place, originally designed as a mortuary, served as the penultimate stage in a process of destruction that had begun with the identification of Feigele and Mirka as Jews, and had continued with their incarceration in the Lodz ghetto, their deportation to Auschwitz, and their selection at the station. Robbed of their home and financial assets in 1939, of most of their other property during the four long years in the ghetto, and of their suitcases at the Auschwitz station, they now were to surrender the last things they owned: the clothes they wore. The basement they entered served as the undressing room.

Very few of the hundreds of thousands people who entered that basement survived. One of them was Filip Müller. "At the entrance to the basement was a signboard, and written on it in several languages the direction: *To the baths and disinfecting rooms*. The ceiling of the changing room was supported by concrete pillars to which many more notices were fixed, once again with the aim of making the unsuspecting people

believe that the imminent process of disinfection was of vital importance to their health. Slogans like *Cleanliness brings freedom* or *One louse may kill you* were intended to hoodwink, as were numbered clothes hooks fixed at a height of 1.50 meters.”

Feigele, Mirka and the other Jews who had survived the Germans’ abuse until that point were told to undress, and then herded into a small vestibule. Someone pointed to the right, to the doors of an oblong white-washed room resembling the one they had just left. But, as Filip Müller knew, there were some important visible, and even more important invisible differences between the two rooms. “Down the length of the room concrete pillars supported the ceiling. However, not all the pillars served this purpose: for there were others, too. The Zyklon-B gas crystals were inserted through openings into hollow pillars made of sheet metal. They were perforated at regular intervals and inside them a spiral ran from top to bottom in order to ensure as even a distribution of the granular crystals as possible. Mounted on the ceiling was a large number of dummy showers made of metal. These were intended to delude the suspicious on entering the gas chamber into believing that they were in a shower-room.” Feigele, Mirka and the others were crammed in, the doors closed, and the lights were turned off.

While Feigele and Mirka were driven into the underground room, a van marked with a Red Cross sign parked along its side, which projected 1.5 feet above ground. Two “disinfecting operators “ climbed on the roof of the basement, carrying sealed tins manufactured by the Degesch Company. They chatted leisurely, smoking a cigarette. Then, on signal, each of them walked to a one foot high concrete shaft, donned a gas mask, took off the lid, opened the tin, and poured the pea-sized contents into the shaft. They closed the lids, took off their masks, and drove off.

Müller witnessed everything from a short distance. “After a while I heard the sound of piercing screams, banging against the door and also moaning and wailing. People began to cough. Their coughing grew worse from minute to minute, a sign that the gas had started to act. Then the clamor began to subside and to change to a many-voiced dull rattle, drowned now and then by coughing.” Ten minutes later all was quiet.

An SS man ordered Müller and the rest of the death squad workers to take the lift down into the basement. There they waited for the ventilating system to extract the gas from the room and, after some twenty minutes, unbolted the doors to the gas chambers. Contrary to Höss’s assertion that he had adopted Zyklon-B as a killing agent because it offered an easy death, the victims showed the marks of a terrible struggle.

This is the place where and the method by which Germans killed Feigele, Mirka, and countless other human beings. Within hours of their arrival in Auschwitz nothing of the Jews remained but smoke, ashes, and our memory of them. Their bodies were brought to the ground floor with the same lift that Müller had used to go down to the basement, and there they were cremated in one of the five incinerators with three muffles each in the center of the crematorium.

Today we know where Feigele and Mirka died: in a town the Germans always called Auschwitz. We know they built the town in 1270, and a Polish king bought it in 1457. We know the town declined under Polish rule. We know it had a modest existence along a major railway line in the nineteenth century. We know that the region became the object of German rage in the 1920s. We know the National Socialists annexed the town to the Reich in 1939. We know that they intended to repeat the initiatives of the middle ages.

Today we know that Feigele and Mirka died in a camp originally created as a labour exchange, that then served as a Polish army base, and that the Germans adapted into a concentration camp to terrorize a local population too useful to deport. We know that the camp accrued one function after another: it became a production site for sand and gravel, an execution site for the Gestapo in Kattowitz, the center of a large agricultural estate to support ethnic German transplantees, a labour pool to construct a synthetic rubber plant and a new town. We know that, throughout these transformations, Auschwitz remained the centerpiece of Himmler's ambitions in the recovery of German history in this one-time area of German settlement. We know that it became a centre of extermination when he lost interest in the town and the region, and that it also served as the heart of a network of satellite camps to service various industries in the region, and that it finally became a labour exchange again, only this time the labourers were Jewish slaves.

Today we know who designed the building: Georg Werkmann, Karl Bischoff and Walther Dejaco. We know who constructed the furnaces: the Topf and Sons Company in Erfurt. We know the power of the forced-air system (over 4 million cubic feet per hour) to fan the flames. We know the official cremation capacity (32 corpses) per muffle per day. We know that it was Bischoff who took the decision to change the larger morgue into an undressing room, and the smaller one into a gas chamber. We know that Dejaco drafted the plan that transformed a mortuary into a death chamber. We know the specifications of the ventilation system that made the room operable as a site for mass extermination: seven horsepower is required to extract the Zyklon-B from the gas chamber in 20 minutes. We know that the building was brought into operation on 13 March 1943 and 1,492 women, children and old people were gassed. We know about the difficulties the Germans had getting everything just the way they wanted. We know who paid the bills and how much was paid.

We know all of that. But we understand very little about many issues central to this machinery of death. Research about the history of the region, the intended future of the town, the development of the camp, and the changing design of the crematoria has been useful, but is not the whole story about the Holocaust at Auschwitz. It is the questions of the victims and the survivors which loom large.

When Sara Grossmann faced selection upon arrival at Auschwitz in August 1944, “I lost sight of what was going on. It’s crazy. And I was standing with my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law with her little girl, when someone approached us, and said, give this child to the grandmother. And my sister-in-law gave the child to my mother-in-law. They went to the left, and we went to the right. *And I said, ‘Why?’* My mother-in-law took the little one and went to the left. Regina, Esther, and I went to the right. To the left were all the people who were led to the gas chambers, crematorium, however you call it.”

“Gas chambers, crematorium, however you call it.” Half a century later, Sara Grossman was not precise. What mattered was that the men were separated from the women, and that the grandmother Feigele and the little girl Mirka went to the left, and the adolescent Regina, and the two sisters-in-law Esther and Sara to the right. And she is correct. That process of selection is the core and moral nadir of the horror of the Holocaust--the selection, and not the gas chambers and crematoria. The Germans and their allies had arrogated to themselves the power to decide who should live and who would die. “As though,” Hannah Arendt accused Eichmann, “you and your superiors had any right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world.”

Mirka, Sara, and hundreds of thousands of other deportees lined up for selection by a physician. Had he worked alone, he could have done little harm. But he did not. His work was but a small part of a system envisioned by ideologues, organized by bureaucrats, financed by in-

dustrialists, serviced by technocrats, operated by ordinary men, and supported by millions of Germans whose daily lives were improved by the goods shipped home to the Reich for their use.

And Sara's question remains: "And I said, 'Why?'"

II Auschwitz and the Holocaust

Our turn came. My mother, my sons, and I stepped before the "selectors." Then I committed my second terrible error. The selector waved my mother and myself to the adult group. He classed my younger son Thomas with the children and the aged, which was to mean immediate extermination. He hesitated before Arvad, my older son.

My heart thumped violently. This officer, a large man who wore glasses, seemed to be trying to act fairly. Later I learned that he was Dr. Fritz Klein, the "Chief Selector." "This boy must be more than twelve," he remarked to me.

"No," I protested.

The truth that Arvad was twelve, and I could have said so. He was big for his age, but I wanted to spare him from labors that might prove too arduous for him.

"Very well," Klein agreed amiably. "To the left!"

I had persuaded my mother that she should follow the children and take care of them. At her age she had the right to the treatment accorded to the elderly and there would be someone to look after Arvad and Thomas.

"My mother would like to remain with the children," I said.

"Very well," he again acquiesced. "You'll all be in the same camp."

"And in several weeks you'll all be reunited," another officer added, with a smile.

“Next!”

Auschwitz is the central site of the Holocaust. This is attested by the fact that, at least since the year 1951 when Theodor Adorno stated that “to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric,” the word Auschwitz has become a synecdoche for the Holocaust in general.

There are various reasons why Auschwitz is legitimately seen as the center of the Holocaust. First of all, it is the site where the single largest group of Jews were murdered. According to Raul Hilberg’s rather conservative figures, which I hold to be the most reliable estimate of total Jewish deaths, the Holocaust claimed 5.1 million Jewish lives. Of this number, over 800,000 Jews died as the result of ghettoization and general privation, over 1.3 million were murdered in open-air shootings, and up to 3 million died in the camps. Of these, Auschwitz had the highest mortality with 1 million Jews, followed by Treblinka and Belzec with 750,000 and 550,000 Jews respectively.

Theodor Adorno, “Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft,” *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I: Prismen. Ohne Leitbild* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 33. Adorno’s “after Auschwitz” became a popular figure of speech to denote the great historical rupture wrought by the Holocaust. See, for example, Ignaz Maybaum, *The Face of God after Auschwitz* (Amsterdam: Polak and Van Gennep, 1965); Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); André Neher, *L’exil de la Parole: du silence biblique au silence d’Auschwitz* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970); Hans Jansen, *Christelijke theologie na Auschwitz: Theologische en kerkelijke wortels van het antisemitisme* (The Hague: Boekencentrum, 1982); Peter Mosler, ed., *Schreiben nach Auschwitz* (Cologne: Bund Verlag, 1989); David H. Hirsch, *The Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz* (Hanover and London: Brown University Press, 1991).

It is important to note here that at least one prominent Jewish philosopher, the late Arthur A Cohen, protested against the use of “Auschwitz” as a synecdoche of the Holocaust, which he denoted with the term *tremendum* a word that denotes a vast terror. “Note that I have not referred to Auschwitz as the name by which to concretize and transmit the reality of the *tremendum*,” Cohen wrote. “Auschwitz was only one among many sites of death. It was not even the largest death camp, although it may well have claimed the largest number of victims. Auschwitz is a particularity, a name, a specific. Auschwitz is the German name for a Polish name. It is a name which belongs to *them* It is not name which commemorates. It is both specific and other.” Arthur A. Cohen, *The Tremendum: a Theological Interpretation of the Holocaust* (New York: Crossroads, 1981),11.

Second of all, Auschwitz is seen as the central site because the camp became the destination to a greater variety of Jews than any other. From at least twelve European countries Jews were deported to Auschwitz, and as such Auschwitz testifies to the pan-European character of the Holocaust.

Then Auschwitz may be seen as a particularly pointed attempt to destroy not only Jews, but also the soul of Judaism. As the great Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig reminded the generation that was to succumb in Auschwitz, the Jews were the first to understand that the son is born so that he may bear witness to his father’s father “The grandson renews the name of the forebear. The patriarchs of old call upon their last descendant by his name--which is theirs.” Thus God planted eternal life in the midst of the Jewish people. Rosenzweig observed how the Jewish concept of a linked sequence of everlasting life which goes from grandparent to grandchild will know its eternity to be present in the child of its child. Because of this, Jews could forego to claim its eternity by means of the possession of land. In the grandchild, the Jewish nation knew itself to “begin again.” As Elie Wiesel wrote in a commentary on the new beginning Adam and Eve made

after they had been thrown out of Paradise, “it is not given to man to begin.” This, so he argues, is God’s privilege. “But it is given to man to begin again--and he does so every time he chooses to defy death and side with the living.” This, in a nutshell, is the eternal foundation of a people which defines itself in the relationship between the old and the young. In Auschwitz the Germans annulled this link, and with that tried to destroy the very basis of Jewish existence: on arrival the old and the young, the grandparents and the grandchildren, were immediately sent to the gaschambers. And thus the linked sequence of the everlasting life which, for the Jews, goes from grandparent to grandchild, was to be destroyed from the very beginning. The generation in between was allowed to live for somewhat longer, in the barracks adjacent to the ramps where the selection took place, under the smoke of the crematoria. Auschwitz was, in the testimony of a survivor Yehiel Dinur given during the Eichmann Trial, a different planet. “Time there was not like time on earth. Every fraction of a minute there passed on a different scale of time. And the inhabitants of this planet had no names, they had no parents nor did they have children. There they did not dress in the way we dress here; they were not born there and they did not give birth; they breathed according to different laws of nature; they did not live--nor did they die--according to the laws of this world.”

In this world, the old covenants between people were destroyed--not only at the moment of selection, but also for those “lucky” enough to survive their initial confrontation with Auschwitz. The whole camp system was designed to make fathers strangers to their sons, mothers strangers to their daughters, to set brother against brother and sister against sister. Primo Levi commented in his *The Drowned and the Saved* that in Auschwitz “almost everybody feels guilty of having omitted to offer help.” “The presence at your side of a weaker--or less cunning, or older, or too young--companion, hounding you with his demands for help or with his simple presence, in itself an entreaty, is a constant in the life of the Lager. The demand for solidarity, for a human word, ad-

vice, even just a listening ear, was permanent and universal but rarely satisfied. There was no time, space, privacy, patience, strength; most often, the person to whom the request was addressed found himself in his turn in a state of need, entitled to comfort.” Those whose ancestors had given the world knowledge of a God who had created a good world from nothing were confronted with the truth of Auschwitz--the revelation that “man, the human species--we, in short--had the potential to construct an infinite enormity of pain, and that pain is the only force created from nothing, without cost and without effort. *It is enough not to see, not to listen, not to act.*” Therefore Auschwitz has remained such an enormous challenge to survival of Judaism, a religion that centers on a covenant of life between God and Abraham, a covenant that stipulates that the stronger will bear witness to the suffering of the weaker in a world that God acknowledged to be “good.”

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly for those concerned with the general cultural-historical impact of Auschwitz, the camp may be considered the center of the Holocaust because it was in its technology and organization thoroughly “modern.” For Henry Feingold, Auschwitz marked the juncture where the European industrial system went awry. “[I]nstead of enhancing life, which was the original hope of the Enlightenment, it began to consume itself.” Therefore Auschwitz was “a mundane extension of the modern factory system.” “Rather than producing goods, the raw material was human beings and the end product was death, so many units per day marked carefully on the manager’s production charts. The chimneys, the very symbol of the modern factory system, poured forth acrid smoke produced by burning human flesh. The brilliantly organized railroad grid of modern Europe carried a new kind of raw material to the factories. It did so in the same manner as with other cargo. In the gas chambers the victims inhaled noxious gases generated by prussic acid pellets, which were produced by the advanced chemical industry of Germany. Engineers designed the crematoria; managers designed the system of bureaucracy that

worked with a zest and efficiency more backward nations would envy. Even the overall plan itself was a reflection of the modern scientific spirit gone awry.”

As the nexus of technological prowess, bureaucratic discipline and ideological determination, Auschwitz was not only thoroughly modern, but also “civilized.” As Franklin H. Littell observed, the death camps were not planned, built and operated by illiterate, unschooled savages. “The killing centres were, like their inventors, products of what had been for generations one of the best university systems in the world.” The architect who designed Birkenau was a Bauhaus graduate. Dr. Josef Mengele had a degree in philosophy from the University of Munich, and a degree in medicine from the University of Frankfurt am Main, and believed himself to be a herald of a new era. Inspired by Mengele, the German dramatist Rolf Hochhuth had the camp doctor state in his controversial play *The Deputy* that Auschwitz marked the end of the old and the beginning of a new age. “The truth is, Auschwitz refutes creator, creation, and the creature. Life as an idea is dead. This may well be the beginning of a great new era, a redemption from suffering. From this point of view only one crime remains: cursed be he who creates life. I cremate life. That is modern humanitarianism--the sole salvation from the future.”

As Hochhuth’s doctor declares, the modernity of Auschwitz was partly embodied in the crematoria, which offered in their logical arrangement of undressing rooms, gas chambers, and crematoria ovens a carefully thought-out production facility of death. Yet the modernity of this technology of mass destruction is not merely embodied in the statistics that state that the gas chambers could kill so-many people in so-many minutes, and the ovens could reduce to ashes so-many corpses in so-many hours. It is also embodied in the anonymity of the killing procedure itself. Ancient German law, going back to the pre-Christian era, stipulated that sentences of death should be pronounced in the midst of the community in the open air, and the judges who had

condemned a person to death should be present at the execution, which likewise had to take place in full view of the community, and the gods. All of this embodied a profound sense that when humans decide to take the life of another human being on behalf of society, they inflict a wound in the created world, and should accept public responsibility of this. In the modern world, issues of personal responsibility and accountability tend to become diffused. At no point has this become so clear as in the case of Auschwitz, where Jews were executed without having been subjected to a clearly established judicial procedure, and where the killing itself took place hidden from the world, in (mostly) underground gas chambers.

It is at this point useful to quote the following consideration by Pierre Vidal-Naquet “In what way do the gas chambers have a specificity, not only in relation to the Gulag (which is obvious) or in relation to other methods of state sponsored terror, but also in relation to the Nazi concentration camp system as a whole, and even in relation to the collective murders carried out by the Einsatzgruppen in the USSR? Between death by gas and death by bullets, or even death by exhaustion or by the action of exanthematous typhoid, is there a difference in kind? My personal response is that there is a difference in kind. What, in the context of the SS State, do the gas chambers actually *represent* Not only, not essentially, do they represent the industrialization of death--by which I mean the employment of industrial techniques for purposes of killing and not for production (which was still being carried out, moreover, just besides the slaughterhouses). While the “crematory ovens” of Auschwitz were highly refined tools, the techniques used to operate the gas chambers were of a very low level. The essential issue does not lie there. The key point is the *negation of a crime within the crime itself*. The problem has been posed very well by a German lawyer, Attorney Hans Laternser, during the course of the Auschwitz trial (1963-1965). Starting from the moment the order to kill was given, those who *selected*, not--as is often said and as I myself once happened

to say--in order to separate those fit for work from those unfit but in order to separate those who would be sent to replace the disappeared work force from those who would be killed right away, were in reality not killers of Jews but saviors of Jews. This lawyer was expressing in his own way something real: the reality of the diffusion of responsibility, the reality of the near-disappearance of responsibility. Who, then, was the killer at Auschwitz? Was it the person who put the Zyklon B tablets under the lid that led into the gas chambers? All the operations from the directing of victims as they left the trains to the undressing and cleaning of bodies to their placement inside the crematoria were basically under SS control, of course. But all this was done through the intermediary of members of the *Sonderkommandos* who, in the end, were the only ones placed in direct contact with death." In other words, the very modernity of Auschwitz--that is the anonymity of the killing--is embodied in the uniquely modern phenomenon that has arisen from it: the fact of Holocaust Denial. As Vidal Naquet noted, "[t]he crime can be denied today because it was anonymous."

The American theologian Richard L. Rubenstein explored some other dimensions of the "modern humanitarianism" of Auschwitz. Rubenstein defined Auschwitz as the supreme example of absolute domination that, thanks to technology and bureaucracy, has become possible in the modern age. As a place which combined extermination with slave labour, Auschwitz constituted a new kind of society which allowed, so Rubenstein believes, a prophetic vision of a future increasingly confronted with the assumed problem of "surplus populations." "The death-camp system became a society of total domination only when healthy inmates were kept alive and forced to become slaves rather than killed outright. To repeat, as long as the camps [Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmno] served the single purpose of killing prisoners, one can speak of the camps as places of mass execution but not as a new type of human society. Most of the literature on the camps has tended to stress the role of the camps as places of execution. Regret-

tably, few ethical theorists or religious thinkers have paid attention to the highly significant political fact that the camps were in reality a new form of human society. Only when the doomed inmates were kept alive for some time did the new society develop. It was at Auschwitz that the most effective system of extermination, mass gas chambers using Zyklon B coupled with on-the-spot crematoria, was first put to use. It was also at Auschwitz that the most thorough going society of total domination in human history was established. Much has been written about the infamous Dr. Joseph Mengele, the physician at Auschwitz, who used to meet the new arrivals and separate those who were to be killed immediately from those who were to be worked to death as slaves. Such a selection process did not take place at camps like Treblinka because they functioned only as killing centers. At Auschwitz, the camp served two seemingly contradictory purposes: Auschwitz was both a slave-labor and an execution center. Given the nature of slavery as practised by the Germans, only doomed slaves could successfully be dealt with as things rather than as human beings.”

Rubenstein believed that, as things are going, Western urban civilization is doomed to end in Necropolis, the new city of the dead. As the Holocaust was to him “an expression of some of the most significant political, religious and demographic tendencies of Western civilisation in the twentieth century,” so Auschwitz was the terminal expression of the chalice of modernization: the city. “At Auschwitz, the Germans revealed new potentialities in the human ability to dominate, enslave, and exterminate. They also revealed new areas in which capitalist enterprise might profitably and even respectably be employed. The camps were thus far more of a permanent threat to the human future than they could have been had they functioned solely as an exercise in mass killing. An extermination center can only manufacture corpses, a society of total domination creates a world of the living dead.”

As not all deportees were killed on arrival, many more survived Auschwitz than any other of the death camps. Of the 1.1 million Jews who were deported to Auschwitz, some 100,000 Jews left the camp alive. Many of those survivors were to succumb during the death march to the West, or during their stay during the Spring of 1945 in concentration camps like Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen. Yet tens of thousands saw liberation, and testified after the war about their ordeal. And some even did so during the war. The most important war-time report on the German genocide of the Jews, sponsored by the War Refugee Board, was written by two escapees from Auschwitz, and described the extermination installation in some detail. And of the 100,000 gentile survivors of Auschwitz, of whom the Poles, with 75,000, were the largest group, all who could did bear witness to the use of the camp as an extermination center for Jews.

The technology of mass destruction as it existed in Auschwitz also points at another important issue: the significance of the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Problem as a state-initiated, state-sponsored, and state-controlled program of genocide. Like any major historical problem, there has been, is, and probably will remain legitimate disagreement between historians about various aspects of the history of the Holocaust. Yet there has been, is, and probably will remain a general consensus that the German destruction of at least five and possibly as many as six and half million European Jews was *not* the result of countless individual initiatives taken, as Irving phrased it in 1984, by “Nazi criminals, acting probably without direct orders from above.” The evidence of the operations of the Einsatzgruppen in the German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union, of the ghetto-clearings in Poland with the subsequent mass-killings in the Operation Reinhard death camps, and of the deportations of Jews from many countries over long distances to the killing centres in Poland reveals a high level of organization involving many state officials. Furthermore Auschwitz was constructed in the middle of the war, in a time that there was a

general building stop in Germany, with public funds. Many levels in the German bureaucracy were involved in the process, providing special construction permits and rationed building materials. The German state railways cooperated when it gave after careful consideration permission for the construction of a railway spur connecting the existing railway tracks at Auschwitz to the crematoria in Birkenau. As Dwork and I have shown in our book *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* the concentration camp at Auschwitz was originally not intended as an extermination center for Jews. Yet its staged transformation from a prison camp for Poles to a death camp for Jews occurred on the initiative of, and under control of, the state--primarily as it was embodied in *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler in his capacity as Chief of the German Police.

Finally, Auschwitz is considered the center of the Holocaust because enough of at least the two most important parts, the *Stammlager* and Birkenau, still remain to give the visitor a sense of the nature and scale of the operation. Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor, which together hosted the murder of 1.5 million Jews, were small camps demolished by the Germans at the end of 1943. Very little to nothing of the original arrangement can be seen. Only recently in Belzec, with the uncovering of the enormous mass graves, has it become possible to acquire, at the location of the massacre, some visual sense of the atrocities that passed there.

In Auschwitz I, and more importantly in Auschwitz II, this is different. When the SS evacuated the camps, they had been able to dismantle the gas chambers and blow up the crematoria. But the Soviets found the rest of the *Stammlager* and Birkenau largely intact. In 1947 the Polish Parliament adopted a law "Commemorating the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and other Nations in Oswiecim," and the Minister of Culture included both Auschwitz I and II in the new State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Given the many remains of the death camps--the guard towers, the barbed wire fences, the gatehouse, the tracks, the barracks, the ruins of the crematoria, and so on--it is not surprising that in a largely visual culture dominated by photography, film and television, the landscape of Auschwitz became an icon of the Holocaust. Alain Resnais' and Jean Cayrol's 1955 magnificent movie *Night and Fog* was largely shot in and around Birkenau. The opening scenes showed the banal, seemingly innocent fields around the camp. Filming the remains at Birkenau, Resnais allowed the horror to slowly emerge from the midst of banality. As the camera panned the empty barracks in Birkenau, the narrator immediately warned us not to take the image of the present for the reality of the past. "No description, no picture can restore their true dimension: endless, uninterrupted fear. We would need the very mattress where scraps of food were hidden, the blankets that was fought over, the shouts and curses, the orders repeated in every tongue, the sudden appearance of the S.S., seized with a desire for a spot check or for a practical joke. Of this brick dormitory, of these threatened sleepers, we can only show you the shell, the shadow." Resnais tries to evoke an impression of the deportations by filming what remained of the deportees, in the showcases of the museum at Auschwitz I. As he filmed their contents, the narration which until then had so quietly recalled and probed, become halting, as the unimaginable and unspeakable is brought home. Finally it stops -as if there is nothing more to say about the world of the camp. Resnais constantly returned to the fields of Birkenau, and with every scene he confirmed the factuality of the events that happened there, and the centrality of Auschwitz for the modern understanding of the world.

Revolutionary in its visual language, and brilliant in its counterpoint of image and sound, past atrocity and present landscape, *Night and Fog* simultaneously established and confirmed the central role of the landscape of Auschwitz in the modern imagination of atrocity. It is not surprising that, ever since, Auschwitz has become one of the world's most

important places of pilgrimage. The recollections of the American Konnilyn Feig stand for the experience of many. When she first visited Auschwitz, she was not very impressed with the place, which turned out to be the *Stammlager*: “It is truly like visiting just another museum.” Later that day, Feig discovered Birkenau-- by accident. “We left Auschwitz when it was dark, but a full orange Polish moon stood in the sky. Wrong turn, and suddenly, silhouetted starkly against the sky, the strangest, eeriest sight I had ever seen. No one was around. It was silent. We got out, walked to the gates, and then peered through the fences. I did not know what I was looking at, but it frightened me to my depths--a young American girl standing with a friend in Poland in the deserted countryside, at Birkenau. I felt an overwhelming sense of evil--not horror, as in the Auschwitz warehouses, but evil. God, it was awful. I stood with my eyes wide and my mouth open, speechless. I had no idea what it was, but I felt evil, and that moment, that time, has never left me.”

This brings me to an autobiographical note. Seeing *Night and Fog* as a high school student in the early 1970s, and reading Feig’s Hitler’s *Death Camps* as a doctoral candidate in the early 1980s, I became interested in Auschwitz as a symbolic landscape. I travelled there in order to make a pilgrimage to the central site of the modern world. Yet walking around Auschwitz, and noting not only the camp grounds, but also the substantial German wartime civic construction in the town of Auschwitz, I had to revise my view of the camp. I realized that having grown up in a culture that had defined itself as one “after Auschwitz,” I had also “mythified” Auschwitz, ignoring descriptions of historical contingency for the sake of assertions about some unchanging nature of the site, subsuming, in the case of Auschwitz, my general understanding as a historian for the complexity of human acts in a belief in the simplicity of essences, and taking statements of fact as explanations. Remembering Ronald Barthes dictum that the critique of a mythified object begins when we recall *that it once was made*, I began to

investigate the archives in Poland, and found evidence that increased my confusion. The camp in Auschwitz had been not merely built right next to an existing town, but one that the same men who had ordered the construction of the camp had designated as a centre of growth. National Socialist Auschwitz was to become the German capital of a German district, and the site of massive German industrial activity. It became clear that the mythification of Auschwitz, in which I had participated unwittingly, had blinded me for a more complex reality in which seemingly opposing things such as the design for a utopia and the construction of a dystopia existed alongside each other. I became a truly “revisionist” historian when, with the help of my friend and colleague Deborah Dwork, I decided to strip away the myth, to lay bare the place, and reconstruct the where, how, when, and finally why of Auschwitz. In our work, it became clear that while Auschwitz did become the largest death camp for Jews, it was not pre-ordained to become the major site of the Holocaust. Reclaiming the many different and contrary intentions the Germans had for Auschwitz, we became able to square the way Auschwitz became the central site of the Holocaust with the ways of the world--a world in which the mysterious, mythifiable forces of malevolence seem often so ludicrously irrelevant compared to the profane, utterly intelligible and very effective tendencies of insufficiency and expediency. As a result, our book, *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* recovers the ambiguous and often paradoxical realities that are at the bottom of the crisp, consistent and in many ways convenient scheme earlier historians accepted as the war-time history of Auschwitz.

The history of Auschwitz is not carved in stone, but like all accounts of the past it is subject to revision. Contrary to what Holocaust Deniers assert, serious historians who accept that Auschwitz was a central site of the Holocaust do not turn-off their critical faculties when they consider the topic. They do not consider the inherited history of the camp a religious dogma. At no point is this so clear as in the way the historical community has accepted and endorsed a major revision of the death

count of Auschwitz from 4 million to 1.1 million. I would like to review here, in some detail, the way and manner in which the responsible revisionist scholarship of Dr. Franciszek Piper, chief historian of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, has established these numbers.

Before we begin, it is important to note that the Germans did not keep any records as to the number of people killed in the gas chambers. There are many German testimonies to that effect. One of them is from SS-Unterscharführer Pery Broad, who worked in the Political Department at Auschwitz--the office that served among other things as a liason between Berlin and the camp for the purpose of the Final Solution. Immediately after the war, Broad gave some valuable information regarding record keeping. "When information was requested by the Reich Main Security Office concerning a past transport, as a rule nothing could be ascertained. Former transport lists were destroyed. Nobody could learn anything in Auschwitz about the fate of a given person. The person asked for "is not and never has been detained in camp," or "he is not in the files"--these were the usual formulas given in reply. At present, after the evacuation of Auschwitz and the burning of all papers and records, the fate of millions of people is completely obscure. No transport or arrival lists are in existence any more." Broad's statement was confirmed by Commandant Rudolf Höss, who wrote after the war in a document that was submitted and accepted as evidence in the Eichmann Trial that he had not been allowed to keep records. Eichmann was "the only SS officer who was allowed to keep records concerning these liquidation operations, according to the orders of the Reichsführer-SS. All other units which took part in any way had to destroy all records immediately." And Oswald Pohl, who ran the central administration of the SS, testified during his trial that while he received regular information about the mortality of registered prisoners, he was not informed about the number of deportees killed in the gas chambers upon their arrival in Auschwitz.

The first post-war attempt to establish within the context of a forensic investigation the total number of dead was undertaken by the “Extraordinary State Committee For the Ascertaining and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders and Their Associates On Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders in the Oswiecim Death Camp.” The committee came to the conclusion that four million people had been killed in Auschwitz. Their conclusion was based on an assessment of the capacity of the crematoria. The five crematoria would have been able to burn, at least in theory, 5,121,000 bodies. Added to that was the extra capacity provided by the pyres. “Making allowances for possible undercapacity operation of the crematoriums and stoppages, however, the Commission of technical experts established that during the existence of the Oswiecim camp the German executioners killed in it no less than four million citizens of the USSR., Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Holland, Belgium, and other countries.”

Apart from the engineering approach to the question how many people had died in Auschwitz a second method emerged to establish the number of victims. It was based on an analysis of the number of deportations to the camp. As early as 1946, Nachman Blumental, using this method, came to an informed guess that the number of victims ought to have been somewhere between 1.3 and 1.5 million. In the early 1950s, Gerald Reitlinger also tried to make a rough guess of the number of victims on the basis of the number of deportees. “As to the total number of Jews brought to the selection place at Auschwitz, it is possible to estimate fairly closely for the Western and Central European countries and the Balkans but not for Poland. There is no real guide to the percentage gassed. It was low before August, 1942, and generally low again after August, 1944, but in the meantime gassings might vary between fifty and nearly a hundred per cent. The following list makes allowances for a number of French and Greek transports sent to Majdanek and 34,000 Dutch Jews who went to Sobibor: Belgium 22,600

Croatia 4,500 France 57,000 Greater Reich [...direct transports only] 25,000 Greater Reich [via Theresienstadt] 32,000 Greece 50,000 Holland 62,000 Hungary (wartime frontiers) 380,000 Italy 5,000 Luxembourg 2,000 Norway 700 Poland and Baltic States 180,000 Slovakia (1939 borders) 20,000 840,800 (*uncertain) Of this total, 550,000 to 600,000 may have been gassed on arrival and to this must be added the unknown portion of the 300,000 or more, missing from the camp, who were selected. ”

It is important to note that Reitlinger systematically chose, if confronted with different estimates about the number of victims, the lowest one. The first reason was that exaggeration would serve those who wished to deny the Holocaust. The second one must be located in his unusually cheerful disposition vis-a-vis the whole story, which was rooted in his very bleak assessment of human nature: as he wrote the book, he always reminded himself that it could have been worse--a sentiment few have shared.

Finally there were different assessment made by witnesses. The most important of these was, without doubt, Commandant Rudolf Höss. During his initial interrogations, Höss seems to have confirmed an initial assessment done by his interrogators that three million people had been killed in Auschwitz. In Nuremberg, he gave different numbers at different occasions. During his interrogations he gave detailed list of numbers for each nationality that came to over 1.1 million deportees. In his affidavit, however, he stated that “at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated [in Auschwitz] by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total dead of about 3,000,000.” He confirmed this number in a conversation with the prison psychologist Dr. Gilbert. “He readily conformed that approximately 2 1/2 million Jews has been exterminated under his direction.” In a short memorandum which he wrote for Gilbert later in April Höss returned to the lower number. He now stated that the number of 2.5 million referred to the technical potential. “[T]o

the best of my knowledge, this number appears to me much too high. If I calculate the total of the mass operations which I still remember, and still make allowance for a certain percentage of error, I arrive, in my calculation, at a total of 1.5 million at the most for the period from the beginning of 1941 to the end of 1944.” Finally, in Poland, Höss re-affirmed that the number of victims had been most likely less than 1.2 million persons, commenting that “I regard the number of 2.5 million as far too high. Even Auschwitz had limits to its destructive capabilities.”

Thus, by the beginning of the 1950s, there were basically three estimates of the number of victims, each based on different sources: a high one of 4 million based on the assumed capacity of the crematoria, a low one of around 1 million based on the number of transports and Höss’s final assessment given to Dr. Gilbert in Nuremberg and Dr. Jan Sehn in Cracow, and a middle one of around 2.5 million, based on Eichmann’s number as related by Höss, and as initially substantiated by Höss in his Nuremberg affidavit.

Until the early 1980s no original scholarship was undertaken to come to a resolution of the unacceptably great range between the lowest and highest estimate. The Cold War was largely to blame: the figure of 4 million had been established by the Soviets, and the figure of 1 million had been first proposed in the West. As relations between the East and West deteriorated, with the largest part of Germany becoming part of NATO and with that country refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the post-war Polish annexation of the former German territories of East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia, the issue of the number of victims became an object of politics. The communist rulers of Poland were unwilling to give an inch on their claims against Germany as long as the Bonn government did not recognize the territorial integrity of the People’s Republic of Poland, and therefore they continued to maintain, as a matter of policy, that 4 million people had been killed in Auschwitz. In the West, most historians of the Holocaust who, given the

political climate, were unable to do original research in the matter tended to accept, with reservations, the middle figure of 2.5 million. Initially only Raul Hilberg, who did important statistical analysis into the number of victims of the Holocaust, supported the lower figure of 1 million. He reasoned--with justification--that given the total number of victims of the Holocaust (5.1 million in his conservative estimate), and given more or less reliable assessments about the number of Jews who died of general privation in the ghettos, who were executed in open-air shootings, and who died in other extermination and concentration camps, the total number of Auschwitz victims could not have been more than 1 million.

The advent of Solidarity and the election of the Pole Karol Wojtyla as Pope John-Paul II (1978) changed the intellectual climate in Poland. While the government was still committed to the official figure of 4 million victims, Dr. Piper of the Auschwitz Museum, who had been banned until then from researching the issue, began to focus his attention on the question of how many people had died in the camp. A catalyst for his research were new figures produced in France by Georges Wellers, who had come to the conclusion that 1,613,455 persons had been deported to Auschwitz (of whom 1,433,405 were Jews) and that 1,471,595 of them had died (of whom 1,352,980 were Jews).

Piper, brought his work to a first completion in 1986. Given the fact that he largely endorsed the figures that had been proposed in the West by Reitlinger and Hilberg, he decided to proceed carefully--a smart move considering that Poland was in the mid 1980s subjected to military rule. He first subjected his conclusions to a process of internal review within the museum, and then to a thorough external review by the leading Polish research institute on the Nazi era, the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland. In 1990, after endorsement of his findings (and with the first post-communist government in power), Piper made his new estimate of 1.1 million victims known to the international community. This figure has been endorsed

by all serious, professional historians who have studied the complex history of Auschwitz in some detail, and by the Holocaust research institutes at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.

When he began work, Piper realized that the remaining papers of the camp administration, which the SS had largely destroyed before they abandoned the camp, would provide little help in establishing the total number of people deported to and killed in the camp. All the deportees who had been selected for the gas chambers on arrival had never been registered as inmates, and so about them no administrative record within the camp had ever existed except for reports made by the head of the labour allocation of the inmates to his superiors in Berlin, stating that of such-and such transport that contained so many deportees a certain number had been selected as “fit for work,” while the rest, judged to be “unfit for work,” had been subjected to “Special Treatment” (“*wurden sonderbehandelt*”) or had been “specially lodged” (“*gesondert untergebracht*”)—an obvious euphemism for killing as firstly there was no accommodation in the camp to provide “special lodging” for those declared “unfit for work,” and secondly these people subsequently disappeared without a trace. Three of such reports survive. According to the SS man Pery Broad, who worked in the Political Department of Auschwitz, similar reports were sent by his department to Eichmann at the nerve center of the whole operation to kill the Jews: the Reich Security Main Office. None of these survive. As we have seen above, Broad declared that, immediately after the numbers had been dispatched to Berlin, the Political Department was under instruction to destroy all records.

Piper also decided not to make use of the estimates of the number of people murdered made by eyewitnesses. With one exception—Kommandant Rudolf Höss—none of the German personnel who confessed after the war, and none of the survivors of the camp, belonging either to the resistance organization within the camp, or who had worked in

administrative offices, or as *Sonderkommando* in the crematoria, had been in a position to gather sufficient aggregate data over the whole period of the camp's history to establish a credible figure.

Piper also discarded the early attempts, made by Soviet and Polish forensic investigators in 1945, to establish the total number of victims on the basis of the incineration capacity of the crematoria. As we have seen, the experts had decided that, over the period of their existence, the crematoria could have incinerated up to 5,121,000 corpses. To be on the safe side, they had assumed that the crematoria had operated on four-fifths of capacity, and therefore they finally assumed a number of four million. Given the fact that the investigators probably over-estimated the incineration capacity of the crematoria (on the basis of a multiplication of the official German figures for each crematorium and the time they were in operation, one would come to a figure of 2.6 million corpses) and underestimated the sometimes considerable time that the crematoria had been idle, Piper also concluded that it would be difficult to reach conclusions on that basis alone.

The best approach, so he argued, was to follow Nachman Blumental's method and proceed on the basis of research on the numbers of people who had been deported from the various countries to Auschwitz. Analysis of the transports had been the basis for Reitlinger's guestimate that some 900,000 people had died in the camp, and Wellers's conclusion that 1,471,595 people had died in Auschwitz.. Yet Piper was sceptical of Wellers's figures. Wellers, so he argued, had used some arbitrary premises, not considered data of great importance, and combined approximate figures with precise numbers. Failing to take into account transfers of inmates to other camps, inmates who had been released and who had escaped, he had underestimated the number of survivors by 80,000. Added to that, Wellers had overestimated the number of deportees to Auschwitz by around 320,000 people, chiefly by overcalculating the number of Polish Jews brought to the camp (622,935 instead of 300,000).

On the basis of archival research done by scholars in various countries, and especially the three-decade long project known in the Auschwitz archive as the “Kalendarium,” and undertaken by the Polish scholar Danuta Czech, Piper was able to come to an estimate of the number of Jews deported to Auschwitz. The Kalendarium--a day-by-day, fully annotated chronicle of the history of the camp--is a massive reference work which has been since 1956 the core of the long-term research policy of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Early instalments of the Kalendarium were published in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Work continued, however, throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, with constant refinements as more source material became available. Finally, in 1989, the German publishing house Rowohlt published the massive German edition of the Kalendarium, followed a year later by the English-language edition entitled *Auschwitz Chronicle: 1939-1945*. This work includes, after twelve pages of introductory remarks, 805 pages chronicling the pre-history of the camp from the outbreak of the war to the establishment of the camp in the Spring of 1940, and almost every day of the camp’s operation until its liberation on January 27, 1945. Added to that are 19 pages with short biographies of the major perpetrators, a four-page glossary, and an eight-page bibliography that includes 152 individual entries.

A typical entry, randomly chosen, reads as follows:

“ November 14 [1942]

- Prisoner No.69656 is shot at 5:40 A.M. By the SS sentry on duty at Watchtower B of the main camp “while escaping.”
- The standby squad is ordered to the unloading ramp at 1:45 A.M. to take charge of a transport.
- 2,500 Jewish men, women and children arrive with an RSHA transport from the ghetto of the Zichenau District. After the selection, 633 men and 135 women are admitted to the camp and receive Nos. 74745 -75377 and 24524 -24658. The remaining 1,732 are killed in the gas chambers.
- 1,500 Jewish men, women and children arrive with an RSHA transport from the ghetto in the Bialystok District. After the selection, 282 men and 379 women are admitted to the camp and receive Nos. 75378 -75659 and 24659 -25037. The remaining 839 deportees are killed in the gas chambers.
- 71 male and two female prisoners sent to the camp by the Sipo and SD for the Krakow District receive Nos. 75660 -75730, 25038, and 25039.
- The SS Camp Doctor makes a selection in the prisoners’ infirmary. He selects 110 prisoners, who are taken to Birkenau and killed in the gas chambers. ”

The Kalendarium must be regarded as the basis of any research into the history of deportations to Auschwitz, but it must be pointed out that it is not perfect. Especially with regards to the final liquidation of the Lodz ghetto, and the subsequent deportation of its remaining population to Auschwitz, the absence of a clear indication of the size of 11 of the 12 listed transports is troublesome. The transport of September 18, 1944 had a size of 2,500 deportees. If this was a typical transport, this would mean that the ten listed transports account for a total of 25,000 deportees. However, the Statistical Office of Lodz shows that in August and September 73,563 Jews were deported from Lodz, most of them were sent to Auschwitz. This means that all record of a maximum of 20 transports (some 50,000 people) are lost, at least in the account of the Kalendarium. This “disappearance” of up to 20 transports seems, in my opinion, to be the single greatest anomaly in the Kalendarium.

Using both the Kalendarium and the research done by historians in various countries on the precise number of Jews of each national group deported--in the case of France the total number of victims was established by Jacob Letschinsky in early 1947, in the case of the Netherlands all deportation lists were found intact and included in the Parliamentary Report on the German occupation, and so on--Piper was able to come to precise estimates of deportations to Auschwitz of Jews from the following national groups (rounded up or down to the next thousand for all numbers larger than 10,000):

“

- (i) France: 71 transports between March 27, 1944 and August 22, 1944; transport lists total to a number of some 69,000 deportees.
- (ii) The Netherlands: 68 transports between July 15, 1942 and September 3, 1944; transport lists total to a number of 60,000 deportees.
- (iii) Greece: 22 transports between March 20, 1943 and August 16, 1944; railway tickets show the deportation of some 49,000 Jews from Saloniki to Auschwitz, and transport lists show the deportation of another 6,000 Jews from Athens and Corfu to Auschwitz.
- (iv) Bohemia and Moravia: 24 transports between October 26, 1942 and October 1944; transport lists total a number of some 46,000 deportees.
- (v) Slovakia: 19 transports between March 26, 1942 and October 20, 1942; various other transports in the fall of 1944; transport lists total a number of some 27,000 deportees;
- (vi) Belgium: 27 transports between August 4, 1942 and July 31, 1944; transport lists total a number of some 25,000 deportees;
- (vii) Italy: 13 transports between October 18, 1943 and October 24, 1944; transport lists total a number of some 7,500 deportees;
- (viii) Norway: 2 transports between December 1, 1942 and February 2, 1943; transport lists total a number of 700 deportees.”

This brings a sub-total of some 290,000 deportees based on relatively straightforward archival information. All the deportees were either killed on arrival, and therefore not registered, or admitted to the camp, and registered.

The figures concerning the Jews from various other countries demanded more involved analysis. In one case there are precise figures for the number of deportees, but a significant number of those *not* killed on arrival were *not* admitted or registered in the camp. These so-called *Durchgangs-Juden* (transit Jews) were kept temporarily in transit, to be dispatched to concentration camps in the Reich.

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(ix) Hungary: according to a telegram dated July 11, 1944, sent by the German ambassador in Budapest to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, a total of 437,402 (438,000) Jews were deported to Auschwitz. The total number of transports was 148. Of the 438,000 Jews, as much as 25,000 could have been qualified as *Durchgangs-Juden*. ”

This brings a revised sub-total of 728,000 deportees--all Jews--from nine countries. In all the foregoing cases, Piper's numbers came close to those of Wellers.

Finally there are the countries for which the data, for various reasons, proved less straightforward, or for which, at one point or another, there has been substantial disagreement between scholars.

“

(x) Poland: there is relatively reliable information, based on records kept by the camp resistance movement, about the number of regular transports with Polish Jews (except those from Lodz) that arrived in Auschwitz between May 5, 1942 and August 18, 1944 (142). These transports averaged some 1,500 people each, with three going as high as 5,000 people (June 1942 from Bielsko-Biala, August 1942 from Bendzin, September 1943 from Tarnow), three exceeding 4,000 people (June 1942, January 1943 from Lomza, November 1943, from Szebnie), and thirteen transports of between 3,000 and 4,000 people. The usual size of Polish transports was either 1,000 or 2,000 people. Thirty-six transports counted less than 1,000 people. The total number of deportees from these transports were some 221,000 people. Added to this number should be the transports that liquidated the Lodz ghetto in August and September 1944. Of these ten transports are listed. In July 1944 the ghetto counted a little below 74,000 people. By the end of September there were none. Most of the transports went to Auschwitz. Hence the total number of Polish Jews deported to Auschwitz was between 280,000 and 290,000. Piper rounded this up to 300,000 people to accommodate possible discrepancies. This round figure of 300,000 Polish Jewish deportees to Auschwitz seems also confirmed by a consideration of the fate of all the Jews of prewar Poland. Before the war, some 3.1 million Jews lived in Poland. After the Polish Campaign of 1939, the Germans gained control of some 1.8 million Polish Jews. With Operation Barbarossa, another million Polish Jews came under German control, which brings a total of 2.8 million Jews. Of these 100,000 survived. The Polish historian Czeslaw Madajczyk determined that of these some 200,000 were executed through shooting by *Einsatzgruppen* or police units, and 500,000 died in the ghettos. Some two million Polish Jews were killed in the German camps. Madajczyk estimated that between 1.6 million and 1.95 million Jews were killed in Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor and Chelmno; Hilberg estimated the number at 1.7 million. Of these 1.7 million, 100,000 victims came from Germany, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia, and the rest (1.6 million) from Poland. Which leaves (2 million - 1.6 million =) 400,000 Polish Jews unaccounted for at this point in our calculation. Between 50,000 and 95,000 Polish Jews were killed in Maidanek, from which one may conclude that at least 300,000 and possibly as much as 350,000 Polish Jews died in Auschwitz. This figure is roughly half the figure of 622,935 Polish Jews assumed by Wellers.

(xi) Germany and Austria: according to research done by the German Federal Archive in Koblenz, 38,574 German Jews were killed in Auschwitz. Of these, a number had, before the war, found refuge in France, Belgium and Holland, and were included in transports from those countries to Auschwitz. Others were first deported to Poland, or Bohemia and Moravia (Theresienstadt), and were included in transports from those places. In order not to count these people twice, their number (some 15,000) must be deducted from the 38,574. As a result some 23,000 German Jews were deported directly from Germany to Auschwitz.

(xii) Yugoslavia: the data for Yugoslav Jews is confusing. Between 60,000 and 65,000 Yugoslav Jews were killed during the war. Most of them were killed in Yugoslavia, either through public executions, pogroms, or in camps organized by Croats or Serb fascists. From some of these camps Germans deported groups of Jews to Auschwitz--some 5,000 in total. After the Italian capitulation in 1943 the 4,000 remaining Jews in Croatia were deported to Auschwitz in May 1943. Adding in some smaller transports in 1944, Piper estimates the total number at around 10,000."

This brings a revised sub-total of 1,061,000 Jews deported to Auschwitz.

Finally, a number of Jews, some 34,000 in total, arrived in Auschwitz from other concentration camps (not including Theresienstadt, or the transit camps in the various countries mentioned above). This brings a final total of 1,095,000 (1.1 million) Jews deported to Auschwitz.

How many of these deportees were killed on arrival? There are precise data for the number of registered inmates. The registration numbers ran consecutively, and once a number had been issued, it was never re-issued again. In total 400,207 numbers were issued for six categories of prisoners:

“

- a. General number system, given to gentiles and Jews (May 1940 and later): 202,499 men and 89,325 women. Total: 291,824 inmates.
- b. Jews, A series (May 1944 and later): 20,000 men and 29,354 women.
- Total: 49,354 inmates.
- c. Jews, B series (May 1944 and later): 14,897 men.
- d. Re-education prisoners: 9,193 men and 1,993 women. Total 11,186 inmates
- e. Soviet prisoners of war: 11,964. Total 11,964 inmates.
- f. Romani: 10,094 men and 10,888 women. Total 20,982 inmates.
- Total: 400,000 registered inmates. ”

Groups b and c total 64,251 Jewish inmates. On the basis of calculations taking into account the fact that virtually no Jews were registered in the camp before March 1942, and that after that date all the transports sent by the Reich Security Main Office contained exclusively Jews, Piper came to the conclusion that slightly less than half of the 291,824 inmates registered under the general number system were Jews. This brings a total of some 205,000 (64,000 +141,000) registered Jews.

Given the fact that 1,095,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz, and 205,000 were registered as inmates in the camp, it follows that 890,000 Jews who arrived were not registered. Of these some 25,000 would have been *Durchgangs-Juden*, which leads to the conclusion that 865,000 Jews were killed on arrival.

The mortality of the registered Jews is more difficult to determine. It is clear that, of the registered inmates, 190,000 were transferred to other concentration camps--most of them after the death marches of January 1945. A total of 8,000 inmates were liberated by the Red Army on January 27, 1945, some 1,500 inmates were released, and some 500 escaped. This means that some 199,500 inmates, or roughly half of all the registered inmates, are accounted for. The rest, or 200,000, must have died in the camp. According to Piper, the mortality rate for the

general camp population (mainly Poles and Jews), was around 50 per cent over the life of the camp--for the Soviet prisoners- of-war and the Romani it was much higher. As a result Piper came to a rough estimate of 100,000 registered Jews that died in the camp. The result is that the total mortality of Jews in Auschwitz was 960,000.

Added to this number are a number of other victim groups, such as un-registered Poles sent for execution to Auschwitz by the Gestapo Summary Court, registered Polish inmates, unregistered Romani, registered Romani, unregistered Soviet prisoners-of-war sent for execution, registered Soviet Prisoners-of-war, and others (Czechs, Russians, Belorussians, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Frenchmen, Germans, Austrians and so on):

1. Jews: 860,000 unregistered and 100,000 registered inmates. Total 960,000 victims.
 2. Poles: 10,00 unregistered and 64,000 registered inmates. Total 74,000 victims.
 3. Romani: 2,000 unregistered and 19,000 registered inmates. Total 21,000 victims.
 4. Soviet prisoners-of-war: 3,000 unregistered and 12,000 registered. Total 15,000 victims.
 5. Others: 12,000 registered inmates. Total 12,000 victims.
- Total: 1,082,000 victims.

Since its publication, Piper's assessment that some 1.1 million people died in Auschwitz has found only one substantial challenge. In 1993 the French researcher Jean-Claude Pressac came to the substantially lower figure of around 800,000 dead in a five page appendix to his *Les Crématoires d'Auschwitz*. The major reason for Pressac's disagreement with Piper is in the former's belief that both the number of Hungarian and Polish Jews killed in the camp were substantially lower than Piper assumed. Pressac agreed with Piper that 438,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to Auschwitz, yet assumed that 118,000 of these had been *Durchgangsjuden* who had been transferred to other camps imme-

diately after selection. Piper had assumed that only 25,000 of these Hungarian Jews had been *Durchgangsjuden* which meant that Pressac felt justified to reduce, on the basis of this assumption alone, the mortality of Auschwitz with $(118,000 - 25,000 =) 93,000$ people. Pressac also assumed, on the basis of a very quick and rough calculation that instead of 300,000 only 150,000 Polish Jews had been deported to Auschwitz. As a result, Pressac came to a total number of 945,200 Jews deported to Auschwitz, of whom 118,000 were *Durchgangsjuden* (Piper's number is 1.1 million, of whom 25,000 were *Durchgangsjuden*, and subtracting from that number 200,000 registered Jews, Pressac assumed that 630,000 Jews were gassed on arrival (Piper's number is 860,000). Because Pressac also assumed a lower mortality for registered inmates (130,000 instead of 200,000) whilst assuming the same numbers for the Soviet prisoners-of-war (whilst "forgetting" the Romani!), he arrives at a total mortality of $(630,000 + 130,000 + 15,000 =) 775,000$ dead (or roughly 75 % of Piper's numbers.

In the German translation of *Les Crématoires d'Auschwitz* which appeared in 1994 under the title *Die Krematorien von Auschwitz: Die Technik des Massenmordes*, Pressac had changed his mind. Now he presented in an eleven-page appendix a substantially lower figure of at least between 631,000 and 711,000 dead. This new range of figures was the result of a new assumption that the number of Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz was substantially lower than both Piper and Pressac himself had assumed. Instead of 438,000 Hungarian Jews, Pressac now used a number of between 160,000 and 240,000. As a result, Pressac came to a total number of between 667,200 and 747,200 Jews deported to Auschwitz (Piper's number is 1.1 million), and subtracting from that number 200,000 registered Jews, Pressac assumed that between 470,000 and 550,000 Jews were gassed on arrival (Piper's number is 860,000). Because Pressac also assumed a lower mortality for registered inmates (126,000 instead of 200,000) whilst assuming

the same numbers for the Soviet prisoners-of-war and the Romani, he arrives at a total mortality of between 630,000 and 710,000--or roughly between 57% and 65% of Piper's number.

Are Pressac's challenges to Piper's numbers to be taken seriously? Let us first consider the general credibility of his research. There is no doubt that Pressac has rendered important service to the historiography of Auschwitz through his research on the development of the gas chambers and the crematoria. Yet it is also true that, having achieved a deserved recognition through the study of one aspect of the history of Auschwitz, Pressac did not hesitate to pronounce himself, at least in my own presence, not only the ultimate expert in all matters relating to the history of Auschwitz, but even to claim expertise in all matters relating to the Holocaust. As a result, Pressac did not hesitate to make far-reaching claims on issues he had not studied, and which were beyond his judgement. His desire to "escape" the narrow perspective of his study of the gas chambers by offering his contribution to the question of the number of victims is a case in point. His lack of true expertise becomes clear when one considers how he radically changed his assessment of the number of people murdered in Auschwitz from one edition to the next.

Reviewing his arguments, it seems to me that Pressac could have a point, which he however fails to prove, when he claims that Piper was too low in his assessment of the number of Hungarian Jews who were qualified as *Durchgangsjuden* on arrival in Auschwitz. Given the German policy during the Hungarian Action to use Auschwitz as a selection station, I have always had some problem with Piper's number--but would have no data to prove him wrong. If Pressac were to be right, or somewhat right on this issue, then it could be that the total number of Jewish people murdered in Auschwitz would be lower than 960,000, and that the total number of victims would be closer to 1 million than the 1.1 million people which Piper calculated. Pressac's argument that 150,000 and not 300,000 Polish Jews were deported to Auschwitz is,

however, based on some very arbitrary observations regarding the liquidation of the ghetto of Bendin and Sosnowitz in early 1943. It is clear that, in the first week of August, more than 30,000 Jews from these ghettos arrived with convoys of either 2,000 or 3,000 people in the camp, and that more than 22,000 of them were killed in the gas chambers. Pressac reasons that the average killing and incineration rate should have been close to 4,000 per day during this period. Theoretically, this should have been possible, given the fact that the official daily incineration capacity of the crematoria was 4,756 corpses. Pressac reasons, however, that in the first week of August the total incineration capacity of the camp had been less than halved because of problems with crematoria 2 and 5, and that as a result the camp incinerators could not have “accommodated” within the given period the (close to) 22,000 victims. Hence, Pressac assumes that because the incineration capacity of the crematoria was half during this period, the number of victims was half, and that therefore the number of Bendin and Sosnowitz Jews deported to Auschwitz was half--ignoring the fact that there was independent confirmation from the chief of police of Sosnowitz of the number of 30,000 deported Jews. Undeterred by this, Pressac reasons that because the number of deportees was half, the size of each of the transports was half (that is 1,000 or 1,500 people per transport and not 2,000 or 3,000 people per transport) and, committing the fallacy of composition, he now assumes that all transport of Polish Jews were half of what they were supposed to have been, and that therefore the total number of Polish Jews had been half of the 300,000 people Piper assumed. Thus a potentially legitimate observation that during the first week of August 1943 half of the ovens were out of order led Pressac to conclude that, over the whole history of the camp, only 150,000 and not 300,000 Polish Jews had been deported to the camp. And he “saves” these 150,000 Polish Jews in an argument that takes a little over a page.

It will be clear that Pressac's methodology, and hence his revision of the number of Polish Jews deported to Auschwitz, is not to be taken seriously. As a result, Piper's numbers remain the only ones that are supported by substantial investigation into the matter. As a scholar working on the history of Auschwitz, I reviewed Dr. Piper's methodology and his conclusions both in conversation, through study of his writings, and by considering the evidence he has presented, and I fully join the scholarly consensus that he has put the matter to rest. And while it is not impossible that at some future date they could be revised if, for example, more information becomes available about the number of Hungarian *Durchgangsjuden* I do not expect such a revision to be beyond a range of about 10 per cent. Even if the total number of Jewish victims of Auschwitz were to be closer to 900,000 than 1,000,000, Auschwitz was to remain the center of the Holocaust, and as such the likely focus of Holocaust denial.

PART TWO *CONCERNING EVIDENCE*

III Intimations, 1941–1945

“We do not exactly know how things have happened, and the historian's embarrassment increases with the abundance of documents at his disposal. When a fact is known through the evidence of a single person, it is admitted without much hesitation. Our perplexities begin when events are related by two or by several witnesses, for their evidence is always contradictory and always irreconcilable.”

More than fifty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, serious scholars have reached a consensus that some 1.1 million people died in Auschwitz. If it has taken considerable research to establish the number of victims, it has been relatively easy to establish the manner in which these people were brought to their deaths: while epidemics may have caused some 10,000 deaths in Auschwitz, and the violence of the guards and the deprivation of the inmates may have caused ten times

as many victims, the vast majority of people who died in Auschwitz were murdered in gas chambers, and their bodies were incinerated in crematoria. Knowledge about the existence and operation of the gas chambers as the main means of mass-extermination was already wide-spread before the liberation of Auschwitz, and was confirmed and further detailed through forensic investigations of the site and study of the remaining documentation, and through post-war statements by witnesses and confessions by perpetrators alike.

I will now present some of the most important pieces of evidence for our knowledge of the genocidal function of Auschwitz. My discussion consists of two parts: in this and the following two chapters, organized as Part Two, I seek to establish the historiographical context within which this evidence became available. In Part Three, I seek to discuss one particular class of evidence: the documents and blueprints which the Germans produced during the war, and which were preserved in the archive of the *Zentralbauleitung der Waffen SS und Polizei, Auschwitz O/S* (Central Building Authority of the Waffen SS and the Police, Auschwitz in Upper Silesia)--the construction office that oversaw the building of the gas chambers and the crematoria. By means of both accounts, I seek to establish, beyond reasonable doubt, that there is substantial and positive evidence that Auschwitz was a site where gas chambers and crematoria operated as instruments of genocide. I will not offer the evidence for the historical and institutional context for the development of Auschwitz as an extermination camp. In our book *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present*, Debórah Dwork and I reconstructed this dynamically evolving context in great detail, and presented both the direct and circumstantial evidence for our reconstruction in our end-notes.

Before we begin with an account of the slow development of our knowledge about Auschwitz, it is good to consider the context of that development. A basic argument of Irving, expressed for example at the press conference convened on June 23, 1989, to celebrate the launch

of the so-called Leuchter Report, is that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek were a piece of atrocity propaganda. The flyer that announced the press conference claimed that “[b]y writing the introduction to the U.K. Edition of The Leuchter Report, [Irving] has placed himself at the head of a growing band of historians, world-wide, who are now sceptical of the claim that at Auschwitz and the other camps there were ‘factories of death’ in which millions of innocent people were systematically gassed to death.”

“Irving has a record of exposing fakes and swindles: he once used City of London fraud laboratories to discredit cleverly-faked “diaries” of Hitler’s Intelligence chief Wilhelm Canaris that had been offered to William Collins Ltd., and in April 1983 he was the first to unmask Adolf Hitler “diaries” as fraudulent, creating a sensation at *Der Stern*’s Hamburg press conference until the magazine had him evicted. Now he is saying the same thing about the infamous “gas chambers” of Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek. They did not exist--ever--except, perhaps, as the brainchild of Britain’s brilliant wartime Psychological Warfare Executive (PWE).” The gas chambers were a piece of allied atrocity propaganda which, after the war, no-one had ever wanted to correct. During the press conference, Irving discussed this issue in some detail, changing his accusation against the Psychological Warfare Executive insofar that he dropped the explicit charge that the accounts of mass gassings were instances of atrocity propaganda manufactured by a British government agency to bolster morale to replace it with the thesis that propagandists presented unproven rumors about the gas chambers as proven facts

“I think that, as I have said often before, that in wartime governments produce propaganda. The propaganda flywheel starts to spin, [and] nobody at the end of the war has a motive to stop the propaganda flywheel spinning. It should be the job of the historians, but the historians have become themselves part of the propaganda process. Now we find in the British archives a lot of evidence that we willingly propag-

ated the gas chamber story because it was a useful propaganda line for us to take. However it was based on such tenuous evidence, as you can see from the document in the press pack, that the people who themselves spread the lie then urged that Her Majesty's Government should not even attach their name because for fear that eventually it should be shown up."

Whatever the particular elements of Irving's shifting position of what the Psychological Warfare Executive actually did, the core of his thesis --which he shares with most other Holocaust deniers--remains constant: the idea that the gas chamber story belonged to a genre of official disinformation that took its inspiration from the well-documented atrocity stories from the First World War. In the following pages I will show that this is highly implausible: during the Second World War the general public showed a great reluctance to believe accounts of atrocities because they remembered how they had been fooled by wild stories and outright lies of a quarter-century earlier.

Many of the English who went to war in 1939 remembered Arthur Ponsonby's best-selling 1928 study *Falsehood in War-Time*. Chapter 28, entitled "The Manufacture of News," consists of only one page, and offers an account of five short newspaper clippings recording the fall of Antwerp.

| "The Fall of Antwerp *November*1914"

By the end of the 1930s Ponsonby's account of the living clappers had become the staple of textbooks, and his more general conclusions, such as that "in war-time, failure to lie is negligence, the doubting of a lie a misdemeanour, the declaration of the truth a crime," had become part and parcel of common parlance. The overall effect of the relentless exposure of the atrocity stories was, however, a general resentment of the public against those who had roused its passion, inflamed its indignation, exploited its patriotism, and desecrated its highest

ideals by government initiated concealment, subterfuge, fraud, falsehood, and trickery. Significantly in the context of the history of Auschwitz, the most notorious symbol of the atrocity story was the gruesome account of the *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* (corpse exploitation establishment), operated behind the front lines by the *DAVG-Deutsche Abfall-Verwertungs Gesellschaft* (German Offal Utilization Company inc.). This is the manner in which George Sylvester Viereck described the origin of the story in his *Spreading Germs of Hate* (1930) “By Jove!” Brigadier General J.V. Charteris exclaimed. He whistled softly. The Chief of the British Army of Intelligence was fingering a series of photographs. Chuckling to himself he summoned his orderly. A uniformed youth answered the summons. “Bring me,” the Chief asked, “a pair of shears and a paste pot.” Charteris, his face one broad grin, was comparing two pictures captured from Germans. The first was a vivid reproduction of a harrowing scene, showing the dead bodies of German soldiers being hauled away for burial behind the lines. The second picture depicted dead horses on their way to the factory where German ingenuity extracted soap and oil from the carcasses. The inspiration to change the caption of the two pictures came to General Charteris like a flash. When the orderly arrived, the General dexterously used the shears and pasted the inscription “German cadavers on Their Way to the Soap Factory” under the picture of the dead German soldiers. Within twenty-four hours the picture was in the mail pouch for Shanghai. This is the genesis of the most perfect specimen in our collection of atrocity stories. The explanation was vouchsafed by General Charteris himself in 1926, at a dinner at the National Arts Club, New York City. It met with diplomatic denial later on, but is generally accepted. General Charteris dispatched the picture to China to revolt public opinion against the Germans. The reverence of the Chinese for the dead amounts to worship. The profanation of the dead ascribed to the Germans was one of the factors responsible for the Chinese declaration of war against the Central Powers. General Charteris did not believe that the story would be taken seriously anywhere outside China.”

In fact, it was taken seriously. Charteris's account of the *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* appeared in *The Times* on 17 April 1917. Its source, so the editorial introduction claimed, was a Belgian newspaper published in England, which in turn had received it from another Belgian newspaper published in neutral Holland. "The factory is invisible from the railway. It is placed deep in forest country, with a specially thick growth of trees about it. Live wires surround it. A special double track leads to it. The works are about 700 ft. long and 110 ft. broad, and the railway runs completely around them. In the north-west corner of the works the discharge of the trains takes place. The trains arrive full of bare bodies, which are unloaded by workers who live at the works. The men wear oilskin overalls and masks with mica eye-pieces. They are equipped with long hooked poles, and push bundles of bodies to an endless chain, which picks them with big hooks, attached at intervals of 2 ft. The bodies are transported on this endless chain into a long, narrow compartment, where they pass through a bath which disinfects them. They then go through a drying chamber, and finally are automatically carried into a digester or great cauldron, in which they are dropped by an apparatus which detaches them from the chain. In the digester they remain for six to eight hours, and are treated by steam, which breaks them up while they are slowly stirring the machinery. From this treatment result several procedures. The fats are broken up into stearin, a form of tallow, and oils, which require to be redistilled before they can be used. The process of distillation is carried out by boiling the oil with carbonate of soda, and some of the by-products resulting from this are used by German soap makers. The oil distillery and refinery lie in the south-eastern corner of the works. The refined oil is sent out in small casks like those used for petroleum, and is of yellowish brown colour."

It was a lie, but it was plausible, and it was incapable of complete refutation during the war. In the weeks that followed *The Times* published many letters that seemed to corroborate the account. On April 25 the

satirical magazine *Punch* included a cartoon entitled “Cannon-Fodder--and After,” showing the Kaiser and a German recruit. Pointing out of a window to a factory with smoking chimneys and the signs “*Kadaververwerkungs[anstalt]*,” the Kaiser tells the young man: “And don’t forget that your Kaiser will find a use for you--alive or dead.” On April 30 the issue was raised in the House of Commons, but the government refused to endorse the news. In the months that followed, the account of the *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* gained international circulation but, remarkably enough, never expanded beyond the few lines printed in *The Times*. No eye-witnesses ever appeared, nor did any report amplify the original report. By the end of the war, the story of the *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* died, only to be revived by General Charteris in an after-dinner speech at the National Arts Club in New York. On his return to Great Britain, Charteris denied that he had claimed authorship for the story, but enough passions were raised to make the story once more a topic of discussion in the House of Commons. On December 2, 1925, Sir Austen Chamberlain declared in Parliament that “the Chancellor of the German Reich has authorized me to say, on the authority of the German Government, that there was never any foundation to it. I need scarcely add that on behalf of His Majesty’s Government I accept this denial, and I trust that this false report will not again be revived.” Finally, in 1928, the legend of the corpse factories was put to rest in Ponsonby’s *Falsehood in War-Time*.

The long term effect of stories that told of human clappers in Belgian towers or human bodies used as raw material for the production of soap was that few were prepared to be fooled once again by such a fabrication. Indeed, during the late 1930s and 1940s most people tended to disbelieve anything that did not fit their customary, liberal view of the world. The English historian Tony Kushner described this resistance in his excellent *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* (1994). Before the war German Jewish refugees were often not believed when they told what had happened to them. The physician Dr. Ludwig Gut-

mann, one-time director of the Jewish hospital in Breslau, recorded that when he told his acquaintance the philosopher Professor F.A. Lindemann of the events of Kristallnacht, the latter “somewhat sneeringly interrupted me, saying ‘You must not tell me atrocity legends.’” And Lindemann was a staunch anti-Nazi.

The fear to be taken in once more by atrocity propaganda combined often with an either latent or even open antisemitism within mainstream British society. The case of the widely read author Douglas Reed is particularly interesting. The correspondent of *The Times* in Berlin in the early 1930s, Reed published extremely popular accounts of the rapid developments in Central European politics, and predicted, among other things, the Austrian *Anschluss* and the course of the Czechoslovakian crisis that was to end with Hitler’s absorption of the Czech lands within the Reich. As a result, Reed was widely perceived as one of the very few Englishmen with any understanding of Hitler’s Germany.

Disgrace Abounding (1939) proved one of Reed’s most popular books, and it did not only describe Hitler’s machinations to fool the English and French governments, but also the manner in which the Jews had been able to draw attention to their suffering in the British media. According to Reed, the suffering of the Jews under Hitler was negligible compared with the “holocaust” of the Chinese under Japanese occupation. “In China nearly a million men had been killed or disabled-- *killed or disabled, nearly a million men*--and the Japanese had butchered *several tens of thousands of civilians* and had rendered destitute and homeless *some 30,000,000 more*.” Yet the British government had paid scarcely any attention to that suffering. Instead, they were concerned about the fate of the German Jews. “Just as the Jews tend to monopolize the callings and professions into which they penetrate, when there is no anti-Semitism, so did I find them monopolizing compassion and succour when there was anti-Semitism, and as their numbers are small compared with the great mass of non-Jews who are suffering from brutality and persecution in our times, I thought this to be the old evil, the

squeeze-out of non-Jews, breaking out in a new place. The organized Jewish communities in the countries where anti-Semitism exists, or which it is approaching, have complete command of the technique of enlisting foreign help and sympathy. They understand it; this looking across the frontiers is in their blood. If a group of twenty Jews is put into no-man's land, the British and American Legations and Consulates in the nearest capital are stormed, the British newspaper offices too, the next day the entire British and American Press rings with the story, photographs appear, bishops write letters, committees get busy, soon the Jews are released and are on their way to a new land. Not far away 300 or 400 non-Jewish refugees may be starving in a hut. They have no organized community to care for them, to raid the Legations and newspaper offices on their behalf, nobody visits them, nobody knows that they are there or cares about them. They may rot." Reed repeated the same litany at various other places in the same book. It was, obviously, very important to him.

During the war reports of German atrocities were commonly interpreted at best as exaggerations. *Time* mockingly referred to news from Poland as "the 'atrocities' story of the week," and when the Polish government-in-exile published in March 1940 a long report of the Nazi policy of terror in German-occupied Poland, one American editorial felt the need to warn its readers that, twenty years earlier, "a great many of the atrocity stories which were so well attested and so strenuously told, so indignantly believed and so commonly repeated, were found to be absolute fakes." When in April 1940 the British Foreign Office received a fully corroborated account of Jewish life in German-occupied Poland, Assistant Under-Secretary Reginald Leeper dismissed the report. "As a general rule Jews are inclined to magnify their persecutions," Leeper commented. "I remember the exaggerated stories of Jewish pogroms in Poland after the last war which, when fully examined, were found to have little substance." Three years later, when

the British government had become well aware of the mass extermination of Jews, senior Foreign Office officials still refused to believe what they knew.

The attitude of Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, was typical. He believed that Polish and Jewish sources were unreliable because they had a vested interest in exaggerating German atrocities. Therefore, as late as the summer of 1943, Cavendish-Bentinck opposed the British government to make, at the allied conference in Quebec, a public statement about the systematic gassing of Jews. "It is true that there have been references to the use of gas chambers in other reports; but these references have usually, if not always, been equally vague, and since they have concerned the extermination of Jews, have usually emanated from Jewish sources. Personally, I have never really understood the advantage of the gas chamber over the simple machine gun, or the equally simple starvation method. These stories may or may not be true, but in any event I submit we are putting out a statement on evidence which is far from conclusive, and which we have no means of assessing." On August 27, 1943, Cavendish Bentinck made the following observation: "In my opinion it is incorrect to describe Polish information regarding German atrocities as "trustworthy". The Poles, and to a far greater extent the Jews, tend to exaggerate German atrocities in order to stoke us up. They seem to have succeeded.... I think that we weaken our case against the Germans by publically giving credence to atrocity stories for which we have no evidence. These mass executions in gas chambers remind me of the stories of employment of human corpses during the last war for the manufacture of fat, which was a grotesque lie and led to the true stories of German enormities being brushed aside as being mere propaganda." And so one of the most senior officials in the Foreign Office refused to believe what should have become obvious by then. Tragically the noble intentions of Ponsonby's book had such unintended negative consequences.

Douglas Reed added his own voice in his popular *Lest We Regret* (1943). Reed assumed that the purpose of all the millions of Jews in Europe was to leave for Britain, and that the only reason the British government would let them in was because of their persecution at the hands of the Nazis. If that persecution would stop, the door to Britain would be closed too. This, Reed argued in 1943, was the condition that led to all the talk about the German extermination of the Jews in late 1942. "In November 1942 a great campaign began about the "extermination" of the Jews. At that very moment the prospect of our victory first loomed distinct. The Eighth Army conquered Libya; Italy showed signs of distress; the Germans failed to take Stalingrad; that Germany would be beaten, possibly even in 1943, became clear (and I wrote a play foretelling Hitler's disappearance). Victory, then approached. If it came, and found those Jews still in Europe, they would remain there. If they were to *leave* Europe (if "the problem" was to be solved by transferring it to *us*) they would need to come away before Victory arrived. Also, the British Government had suspended immigration to Palestine. The "extermination" campaign began. The power which this particular interest wields over our public spokesmen and Press stands revealed as gigantic. Some newspapers gave more space to this matter than would be devoted to any other in any circumstances which I can imagine. The word "extermination" was printed billions of times. It was used habitually, without flinching, by Ministers, politicians and the B.B.C. Any who care to keep note of the things which were said, and to compare them in a few years' time with the facts and figures, will possess proof of the greatest example of mass-misinformation in history. All sound of the suffering of the non-Jews who are Germany's captives was drowned."

These words initiated a very-long rant against the statements of the government, the clergy, the editors and all others about Hitler's policy regarding the Jews. Reed knew better. "I saw Hitler's work with my own eyes, from the day he came to power until the eve of this war," he

claimed. "Nineteen-twentieth of the inmates of his concentration camps were non-Jewish Germans; nineteen-twentieth of his victims outside the German frontiers are non-Jewish non-Germans." And then he juxtaposed all the contradictory information coming from Europe and all the contradictory statements about them by politicians, and subjected them to a mocking analysis. "Readers may compare these quotations for themselves. "Extermination *was* ordered; it was *not* ordered, but strongly suspected; it was ordered for *half* the Jews in Poland; for *all* the Jews in Poland; for all the Jews *in Europe by the end of* 1942. Two out of three-and-half million were already dead, on December 4th; one million out of seven million were already dead, on the same day; 250,000 were already dead, three weeks later. Thus spoke our leading men." Reed refused to believe it. He claimed to be better informed than most people making public statements about the extermination of Jews and observed that "I know of no 'oft-proclaimed intentions' or 'orders' to exterminate the Jews." He added that "Hitler is noticeably reticent on that theme," reserving his threats for the British, the Bolsheviks, "and other things" such as the "Czechs, Poles, and Serbs."

Reed's rants were exceptionally virulent in their antisemitism, but nevertheless fitted neatly in the general reticence to give validity to the stories about Jewish suffering in Europe. Arthur Koestler, a Hungarian-Jewish refugee in Britain, expressed often in public his great frustration with the English unwillingness to believe the news that trickled in from Poland. "The trouble with being a contemporary in times like this," Koestler said in a broadcast talk, "is that reality beats the imagination every step.... For an educated Englishman it is almost easier to imagine conditions of life under King Canute on this island than conditions of life in, say, contemporary Poland." In an article published in early 1944 in the *New York Times Magazine*, Koestler lamented how so very few were prepared to believe the reports of the exterminations. Nothing seemed to make a difference. "At present we have the mania

of trying to tell you about the killing, by hot steam, mass electrocution and live burial of the total Jewish population of Europe. So far three million have died. It is the greatest mass-killing in recorded history; and it goes on daily, hourly, as regularly as the ticking of your watch. I have photographs before me on the desk while I am writing this, and that accounts for my emotion and bitterness. People died to smuggle them out of Poland; they thought it was worthwhile. The facts have been published in pamphlets, White Books, newspapers, magazine and whatnot. But the other day I met one of the best-known American journalists over here. He told me that in the course of some recent public opinion survey nine out of ten average American citizens, when asked whether they believed that the Nazis commit atrocities, answered that it was all propaganda lies, and that they didn't believe a word of it. As to this country, I have been lecturing now for three years to the troops, and their attitude is the same. They don't believe in concentration camps, they don't believe in the starved children of Greece, in the shot hostages of France, in the mass-graves of Poland; they have never heard of Lidice, Treblinka, or Belzec; you can convince them for an hour, then they shake themselves, their mental self-defence begins to work and in a week the shrug of incredulity has returned like a reflex temporarily weakened by the shock. Clearly all this is becoming a mania with me and my like. Clearly we must suffer from some morbid obsession, whereas you others are healthy and normal. But the characteristic symptom of maniacs is that they lose contact with reality and live in a phantasy world. So, perhaps, it is the other way around: perhaps it is we, the screamers, who react in a sound and healthy way to the reality which surrounds us, whereas you are the neurotics who totter about in a screened phantasy world because you lack the faculty to face the facts. Were it not so, this war would have been avoided, and those murdered within sight of your day-dreaming eyes would still be alive."

Koestler did not mention names, but he could well have thought about Bill Lawrence, the *New York Times* correspondent in the Soviet Union. When, for example, Lawrence reported in the Fall of 1943 on the mass killing of Jews in Babi Yar near Kiev, he employed a language not much different from that used today by more sophisticated negationists. After mentioning that "Kiev authorities asserted today that the Germans had machinegunned from 50,000 to 80,000 of Kiev's Jewish men, women and children in late September 1941," Lawrence made it absolutely clear that he regarded the claim with great scepticism. "On the basis of what we saw, it is impossible for this correspondent to judge the truth or falsity of the story told to us. It is the contention of the authorities in Kiev that the Germans, with characteristic thoroughness, not only burned the bodies and clothing, but also crumbled the bones, and shot and burned the bodies of all prisoners of war participating in the burning, except for the handful that escaped, so that the evidence of their atrocity could not be available for the outside world. If this was the Germans' intent, they succeeded well, for there is little evidence in the ravine to prove or disprove the story." After the war Lawrence showed considerable embarrassment about his scepticism, and explained it as a direct result of the atrocity propaganda of the First World war. "I grew up in the generation between the two world wars--a generation which had a natural scepticism and inherent disbelief of all wartime atrocity stories. In our most formative years, we had found out that the propagandists for the Western Allies, including our own government, had fabricated some of the most lurid tales of German behavior to arouse their people to wartime fervor....So by the time I headed off to war in 1943, I was unsure just what to believe of all the stories I had heard and read coming out of Europe about Hitler, his SS troops, and the Nazi armies as they marched east across Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and into the Soviet Union. I had no doubt that Hitler had treated the Jews badly, forcing many of them to flee to the sanctuaries in the West, including the United States. But I was not prepared for, and in my mind did not at first accept, the systematic ex-

termination campaign that Hitler and his minions had conducted.” Lawrence related at length his interrogation of the principal witness, Efim Vilknis, but as it defied credulity, and as there was no supporting evidence, he remained sceptical. Even the fact that the Kiev Jewish community, which had counted more than 100,000 persons before the war, had disappeared, did not help him change his mind. He acknowledged that it was odd that there were no Jews left in Kiev, but he was only prepared to say that “where and how they had departed remained a mystery.”

Even when the war came to an end and the allied armies liberated the camps their remained a great resistance to face the facts. One of the 500 diarists, who kept a daily record for the English social survey organization Mass Observation, wrote after the liberation of Bergen-Belsen that the revelations were beyond belief. “I have not forgotten the recent controversy over the last war atrocity stories, and to me they have always smacked of propaganda--the Germans are our enemies, therefore we must hate the Germans, so additional evidence must be given us to whip up this hatred.... Cruelty has obviously been one of the trade marks of Nazism ever since 1933....It is hard to believe, however, that this mass cruelty has been perpetrated on so many thousands of victims.”

General Dwight D. Eisenhower made it his business to change such attitudes. Immediately after the liberation of the concentration camp at Ohrdruf he visited it, as he wrote to his superior General Marshall on April 15, “in order to be in a position to give *first-hand* evidence of these things if ever, in future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to ‘propaganda.’” He cabled Marshall on April 19 the proposal to give others the opportunity to do the same. “We continue to uncover German concentration camps for political prisoners in which conditions of indescribable horror prevail. I have visited one of these myself and I assure you that whatever has been printed on them to date has been understatement. If you would see any advantage in

asking about a dozen leaders of Congress and a dozen prominent editors to make a short visit to this theater in a couple of C-54's, I will arrange to have them conducted to one of these places where the evidence of brutality and cruelty is so overpowering as to leave no doubts in their minds about the normal practices of the Germans in these camps."

President Truman accepted Eisenhower's proposal, and on April 22 a plane left Washington for Weimar via Paris with six senators and six representatives. The next day a plane with a similar destination left New York. On board were 18 prominent American journalists. Many were sceptical. Malcolm W. Bingay, editor-in-chief of the *Detroit Free Press* admitted a month later in a meeting at the Economic Club of Detroit that he was "frankly sceptical about the atrocity charges. Having lived through the first world war, I realized too many of them had been exploded as myths and I went over in the attitude of 'being from Missouri.'" Joseph Pulitzer, the publisher of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, also changed his mind. "I came here in a suspicious frame of mind, feeling that I would find that many of the terrible reports that have been printed in the United States before I left were exaggerations, and largely propaganda, comparable to reports of crucifixions and amputations of hands which followed the last war, and which subsequently proved to be untrue. It is my grim duty to report that the descriptions of the horrors of the camp, one of many which have been and which will be uncovered by the Allied armies have given less than the whole truth. They have been understatements." Responding to such reports, the American Society of Newspaper Editors felt that it was time to address the issue directly. In an article entitled "Reflections on Atrocities," published in the *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*, Gideon Seymour argued that the press should be prepared for possible difficulties in the months ahead. "For when the American prisoners of war get back and say that they and their colleagues were fairly well treated, except for underfeeding, and that few or none of their numbers experi-

enced such brutalities as have been reported from Dachau, Buchenwald, Ohrdruf, etc., a lot of Americans are going to say, "Well then all those atrocities stories were bunk and propaganda." Therefore journalists should take care to make careful distinction in their reports between prisoner- of-war camps and concentration camps.

In the end even the most stalwart supporters of the thesis that all the stories about the systematic extermination of the Jews had been merely atrocity propaganda had to face the facts for what they were. The American magazine *The Christian Century*, which in 1944 had still chided American news papers for giving much attention to the discoveries made by the Soviets in Maidanek--claiming at the time that the "parallel between this story and the 'corpse factory' atrocity tale was too striking to be overlooked"--had to (hesitantly) admit in 1945 that it had been wrong, and that the parallel did not hold. "We have found it hard to believe that the reports from the Nazi concentration camps could be true. Almost desperately we have tried to think that they must be widely exaggerated. Perhaps they were products of the fevered brains of prisoners who were out for revenge. Or perhaps they were just more atrocity-mongering like the cadaver factory story of the last war. But such puny barricades cannot stand up against the terrible facts. The evidence is too conclusive. It will be a long, long time before our eyes will cease to see those pictures of naked corpses piled like firewood or of those mounds of carrion flesh and bones. It will be a long time before we can forget what scores of honorable, competent observers tell us they have seen with their own eyes. The thing is well-nigh incredible. But it happened." When even *The Christian Century* admitted that it had been wrong, it seemed that the world was finally ready for the truth.

For a week or so group after group arrived at the gates of Buchenwald, and by the beginning of May even Eisenhower felt that enough was enough. He wrote to Marshall that "if America is not now convinced, in view of the disinterested witnesses we have already brought over, it

would be almost hopeless to convince them through bringing anyone else.” A week later, on May 9, General Bradley curtailed all visits to the camps with a cable to headquarters. “Buchenwald concentration has been cleaned up, the sick segregated and burials completed to such an extent that very little evidence of atrocities remains. This negatives any educational value of having various groups visit the camp to secure first hand information of German atrocities. In fact, many feel quite skeptical that previous conditions actually existed. Suggest that further visits [to] camp be discontinued.” The allies faced the paradox that their very efforts to improve the situation in the liberated camps created, once more, the possibility for some to argue that everything had been just atrocity propaganda.

Indeed, for all the full page photos of the camps that had become available, the camps never were admitted to reality. Theodor Adorno brought this problem in philosophical focus at the time that Bradley closed Buchenwald for guided tours. Visits or not: it would not make much of a difference. Something had come to pass which had changed the whole perception of what is a lie, and what is truth. “When the National Socialists began to torture, they not only terrorized the peoples inside and outside Germany, but were the more secure from exposure the more wildly the horror increased. The implausibility of their actions made it easy to disbelieve what nobody, for the sake of precious peace, wanted to believe, while at the same time capitulating to it. Trembling voices persuade themselves that, after all, there is much exaggeration: even after the outbreak of the war, details about the concentration camps were unwanted in the English press. Every horror becomes, in the enlightened world, a horrific fairy-tale.” And Adorno observed that, with the war’s end, the situation that had existed before the Nazis had begun to confound truth and lies had not been restored. As lying had come to sound like truth, and truth sounded like lying, it

had become “a labour of Sisyphus to hold on to the simplest piece of knowledge.” And Adorno concluded, with melancholy: “So Hitler, of whom no-one can say whether he died or escaped, survives.”

In 1948 the American Judge Michael A. Musmanno, who had served on Nuremberg Military Tribunal II to hear the case against Oswald Pohl and other members of the SS Wirtschafts-und Verwaltungshauptamt (SS Economic and Administrative Main Department), concluded that, after having sat through 194 sessions of the tribunal, reviewed 1,348 different pieces of written evidence and 511 affidavits, listened to 48 witnesses and testimonies by the defendants, the world of the death camps was still beyond comprehension. In his concurring opinion, Musmanno observed that, when writing of the extermination of the Jews, “the ink runs heavy, the words falter, and a sadness akin to a hopeless resignation enters the soul.” “How can one write about a planned and calculated killing of a human race? It is a concept so completely fantastic and so devoid of sense that one simply does not want to hear about it and is inclined to turn a deaf ear to such arrant nonsense. Barbarous tribes in the wilds of South Pacific jungles have fallen upon other tribes and destroyed their every member; in America, Indian massacres have wiped out caravans and destroyed whole settlements and communities; but that an enlightened people in the 20th century should set out to exterminate, one by one, another enlightened people, not in battle, not by frenzied mobbing, but by calculated gassing, burning, shooting, poisoning is simply blood-curdling fiction, fit companion for H.G. Well’s chimera on the invasion from Mars. Adolf Eichmann, chief of the Jewish section of the Gestapo, estimated that the Hitler-Himmler extermination policy of the Jews resulted in the liquidation of 6,000,000 Jews, of which 4,000,000 were killed in extermination institutions. The murder of 6,000,000 human beings is entirely beyond the capacity of man’s imagination and one instinctively refuses to believe. But the curtain of incredulity has lifted and the armor of incomprehensibility no longer protects. The evidence is in and

what was utter fantasy and a mere macabre playing with numbers, is proved fact. The figure 6,000,000 is written in digits of blood, and no matter which way one turns their crimson horror is upon one.” Fifty years later when Auschwitz has become an accepted part of our intellectual landscape, it is good to remember that, perhaps, the world of the camps ought to have remained within a somewhat forbidden realm. Although the plethora of movies, memoirs, novels, and media revelations about the Holocaust have brought words such as “Auschwitz,” “The Six Million” and so on into daily currency and household usage, the mere fact of their familiarity does not connote their fathomability.

The foregoing consideration demonstrates that there is no historical justification to judge and dismiss the accounts of German atrocities during the Second World War within the context of the atrocity propaganda of the First World War. The attitude of the public of 1939-45 was radically different from that 25 years earlier, and it is clear that any attempt to generate the kind of propaganda symbolized by the notorious *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* would have merely generated mockery. To understand the difference in the way people experienced these two wars, it is important to remember that the sudden, all-devouring fire of the First World War caught people, who had experienced more than a century of peace and progress, by surprise. No-one could really explain why the war had come, and why it ought to be fought. There was so little relation between the trifle of Sarajevo and the cataclysm of Verdun. Tens of millions of men, coerced into the mass armies, faced incredible suffering amidst a general unintelligibility of events caused by a senseless, overwhelming force. Facing death without knowing why, the demoralized and dejected men who fought in the trenches lost their self-respect. In such circumstances, values collapsed: as the individual act had become irrelevant and individual judgement impossible, the distinction between truth and lie, fiction and reality had become obsolete. Manufacturing useful lies such as the stories of the

Kadaververwerkungsanstalt was no better nor worse than the generals' practice to mask the defeat of their strategies by sacrificing some extra armies in order to steal a very small local success that can be trumpeted as a major victory.

The Second World War was different. Instead of confusion there was resolve. From the very beginning, the allies knew that the war would be grim. "No one can predict, no one can even imagine, how this terrible war against German and Nazi aggression will run its course or how far it will spread or how long it will last," Churchill told the House of Commons on October 8, 1940--in the midst of the Blitz against London. "Long, dark months of trials and tribulations lie before us. Not only great dangers, but also many misfortunes, many shortcomings, many mistakes, many disappointments will surely be our lot. Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey; hardship our garment; constancy and valor our only shield. We must be united, we must be undaunted, we must be inflexible. Our qualities and deeds must burn and glow through the gloom of Europe until they become the veritable beacon of its salvation." Fighting Hitler under the inspired leadership of men like Churchill and Roosevelt, the allies had no need for atrocity propaganda. In the case of England, Churchill expressed his superb and passionate historical imagination with the consciousness that his words, and those spoken by all Englishmen, would remain the object of scrutiny and judgement to many generations--"Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This Was their finest hour.'" Evoking a dramatic image of what England was, and giving surprisingly little attention to what Germany had become, Churchill was able to mobilize a nation without the need to engage in the very kind of all-too-easily dismissable atrocity propaganda that the weak leaders in the First World War found necessary to employ to bolster morale. "The Prime Minister was able to impose his imagination and his will upon his countrymen,

and enjoy his Periclean reign, precisely because he appeared to them larger and nobler than life and lifted them to an abnormal height in a moment of crisis,” Isaiah Berlin wrote in a review of Churchill’s war memoirs. Churchill’s dramatic language “did turn a large number of inhabitants of the British Isles out of their normal selves and, by dramatising their lives and making them seem to themselves and to each other clad in the fabulous garments appropriate to a great historic moment, transformed cowards into brave men, and so fulfilled the purpose of shining armour.” And Berlin continued with the following important observation: “This is the kind of means by which dictators and demagogues transform peaceful populations into marching armies; it was Churchill’s unique and unforgettable achievement that he created this necessary illusion within the framework of a free system without destroying or even twisting it; that he called forth spirits which did not stay to oppress and enslave the population after the hour of need had passed.”

Indeed, if the caricature of the *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* was the legacy of allied propaganda of the First World War--a legacy that continues to embarrass--, the bold and dramatic language of Churchill became the legacy of the Second World War--a language that, almost sixty years later, still never fails to inspire.

Let us return now to the war-time revelations about Auschwitz. In November 1941, that is before Auschwitz had been assigned a central role in the Holocaust, the first substantial information about a concentration camp in Oswiecim became available to the public. The 32nd issue of the *Polish Fortnightly Review* an English-language newspaper published by the Polish government-in-exile, carried a 2,000-word long article entitled “Oswiecim Concentration Camp.” It described the camp as the largest concentration camp in Poland, and provided much detail about its extraordinarily violent regime. According to the article, the mortality rate had reached in the winter of 1940/41 an average of 1 per

cent per day, and a peak of 2 per cent per day. During this time, the article continued, “three crematorium furnaces were insufficient to cope with the bodies to be cremated.”

One account described the violence of life and death in the camp in a particularly graphic manner. “It happened one day that a prisoner ate two portions of dinner. When it was discovered he was led out before the entrance gate, near the crematorium. By the gate two rows of guards with knouts were lined up. One of them told the prisoner that as he had shown so much ingenuity and cleverness in eating an additional portion, he was to be released. The gate was open, and he could run into freedom. But as stealing was a punishable offence, he must first run the gauntlet of the two rows of guards. He started to run between the lines, being beaten mercilessly on the head and legs with the knouts. Near the end of the line he began to stagger, but he summoned all his strength and ran out through the gate. Then a machine-gun opened fire, and he was wounded in the belly. The guards called to a man with a wheelbarrow working close by, threw the wounded man on the barrow and ordered him to be taken to the crematorium. The prisoner was sufficiently conscious to see where he was being taken, and in a frenzy of despair tried to say something to the crowd of guards watching the sight. But they only laughed and made their way to the crematorium. There he was thrown in the furnace, where there were already two half-burnt bodies. The sight of his struggles aroused only jeers and laughter among the onlookers. The two guards in charge of the crematorium were ordered to divide the ashes into three, as the last victim had moved and so had disturbed the ashes of the other bodies.”

The *Polish Fortnightly Review* continued to provide updates about the situation in Auschwitz as information became available. In its issue of July 1, 1942 it described the camp in an article entitled “Documents from Poland: German Attempts to Murder a Nation.” Again, Auschwitz was characterized as a particularly violent camp. It mentioned a

second camp. "In addition to the main camp, built near Oswiecim, there is an additional camp near by, in which the brutalities are so terrible that people die there quicker than they would have done in the main camp. The prisoners call this supplementary camp "Paradisal" (presumably because from it there is only one road, leading to Paradise). The crematorium here is five times as large as the one in the main camp. The prisoners of both camps are finished off in three main ways: by excessive labour, by torture, and by medical means." This "paradisal" camp was, in all probability, Birkenau, which had been established in the Fall of 1941, and which in the spring of 1942 had received its first inmates. Contrary to the report, Birkenau did not at that time have a crematorium. A large crematorium, many times the size of the one in the main camp, had been designed and approved, but construction had not yet really started. It is unclear if the reference to the crematorium arose from knowledge of the blueprints.

The report listed various popular forms of torture, and mentioned that German doctors used inmates as guinea pigs for medical experiments in the camp. Of particular interest, in view of later developments, was a short discussion of a German experiment to gas inmates. "Among the other experiments being tried on the prisoners is the use of poison gas. It is generally known that during the night of September 5th to 6th last year about a thousand people were driven down to the underground shelter in Oswiecim, among them seven hundred Bolshevik prisoners of war and three hundred Poles. As the shelter was too small to hold this large number, the living bodies were simply forced in, regardless of broken bones. When the shelter was full gas was injected into it, and all the prisoners died during the night. All night the rest of the camp was kept awake by the groans and howls coming from the shelter. Next day other prisoners had to carry out the bodies, a task which took all day. One hand-cart on which the bodies were being re-

moved broke down under the weight.” It is important to note that, after the war, various witnesses confirmed that in early September the Germans had used Block 11 as an experimental gas chamber.

Two weeks later the *Polish Fortnightly Review* paid attention to Auschwitz once more. It noted the excessive mortality due to the rigors of the camp, and contained in a report on a press conference given by the Polish Minister of Home Affairs Mr. S. Mikolajczyk a reference to the ever increasing size of the inmate population. It also reported on statements given during the same press conference by two members of the Polish National Council on the extermination of Polish Jewry, and a final remark by the Polish Minister of Information that at least 700,000 Polish Jews had died since the beginning of the war. Yet at this time the concentration camp system and the emerging Holocaust were not yet brought into connection.

Only later that year did the *Polish Fortnightly Review* begin to mention camps as a execution sites of Jews. Many reports had reached the Polish government-in-exile about deportations from the Warsaw ghetto. In the fall of 1942 a eye-witness of the fate of the deportees had made his way to England. The Polish underground fighter Jan Koziński (better known by his underground name Jan Karski), had visited an extermination camp at Belzec disguised as a Latvian policeman, and witnessed the destruction of a transport. In England, Karski informed the Polish government-in- exile, and as a result the *Polish Fortnightly Review* published on December 1, 1942 as its main item an article entitled “Extermination of Polish Jewry.” It reported that the Warsaw ghetto had been subject to daily deportations of 7,000 people per day since July 24. Those who were too ill to travel were killed on the spot, or at the Jewish cemetery. The others were loaded in trains. “The deportees were carried off to three execution camps, at Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor. Here the trains were unloaded, the condemned were stripped naked and then killed, probably by poison gas or electrocution. For the purpose of burying the bodies a great bulldozer has been taken to

Treblinka, and this machine works without stopping. The stench of the decomposing bodies has nauseated all the peasants for three miles around and forced them to flight. In addition to Treblinka, there are also camps at Belzec and Sobibor. It has not been possible to ascertain whether any of those who have been carried off have been left alive. We have information only of extermination.”

Remarkably enough, the *Polish Fortnightly Review* did not publish part of Karski’s observations at Belzec, but chose to print as an annex to the report an earlier description of the “Jew- extermination Camp at Belzec.” It was dated July 10, 1942, and was obviously based on hearsay. “When a trainload of Jews arrives at the station in Belzec, it is shunted by a side track up to the wire surrounding the place of execution at which point there is a change in the engine crew and train guards. From the wire onward the train is serviced by German drivers who take it to the unloading point where the track ends. After unloading, the men go to a barracks on the right, the women to a barracks situated on the left, where they strip, ostensibly in readiness for a bath. After they have undressed both groups go to a third barracks where there is an electrified plate, where the executions are carried out. Then the bodies are taken by train to a trench situated outside the wire, and some thirty metres deep. This trench was dug by Jews, who were all executed afterwards.” In the summer of 1942, when the report was written, no-one who was not part of the execution team had left Belzec alive, and thus the description of the method of killing was largely based on rumour.

After drawing attention to the fate of the Jews in the *Polish Fortnightly Review* the Polish government-in-exile issued on December 10, 1942 a note to the other allies concerning the mass extermination of Jews in Poland, repeating in substance the information from the article. In all this publicity, the names of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka appeared again and again, but there was silence about Auschwitz. This can be explained because, up to the late fall of 1942, Auschwitz did not play a

significant role in the liquidation of Polish Jewry. In the summer and fall of 1942 the majority of transports had come from France, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Belgium, and Yugoslavia, and it can be understood why these escaped the attention of the Polish government-in-exile.

It is more difficult to understand why the Polish government-in-exile decided not to act on a report broadcast in March 1943 by a secret radio station operated by the Polish resistance and received in London. "The statistics for Oswiecim from the establishment of the camp until December 15 [1942] show that more than 640,000 people perished there, with 30,000 still alive. 65,000 Poles have been executed, hanged, tortured, gassed, or have died from starvation and disease with 17,000 still alive. More than 26,000 Soviet POW's have been liquidated; 100 still alive. More than 520,000 Jews have been gassed, including 20,000 from Poland, and the rest from France, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, etc. 6,800 women are alive, mainly Poles, 19,000 have died. Only a portion are registered in the camp records. Thousands are dying without being identified--e.g. Almost all Jews."

The Polish government-in-exile was one of only two organizations that had both the wish and the means to systematically monitor the camps in Poland. The second organization that received information about the camps on a systematic basis was British intelligence. Beginning in 1941, the Government Code and Cypher School, which trained intelligence officers, had begun to monitor, decipher and process the German police cyphers. Its main reason was that the hand cyphers of the German police and SS formed good raw material for the training of new decoders, and also provided insight in the strategically more important cyphers used by the German army. Furthermore the information obtained provided important data about anti-partisan activities. From the spring of 1942 until February 1943, the Government Code and Cypher School also intercepted crypted radio messages sent by the administration of the concentration camps to Berlin. These included reports from Auschwitz, but not from Belzec, Sobibor, and

Treblinka. In a post-war history of this operation, the British historian F.H. Hinsley mentioned that “[t]he daily return consisted of a series of unheaded, unexplained columns of figures,” which were interpreted by the students of the Government Code and Cypher School as information about “(a) number of inmates at the start of the previous day, (b) new arrivals, (c) departures by any means, and (d) number at the end of the previous day.” Departures by any means was interpreted as a euphemism for deaths. “The returns from Auschwitz, the largest of the camps with 20,000 prisoners, mentioned illness as the main cause of death but included references to shootings and hangings. There were no references in the decrypts to gassings.”

A summary of intercepted messages for the month of August, 1942, includes the following item:

“Reports on deaths in German prison camps during August reveal the following figures:

- NIEDERHAGEN:24;
- AUSCHWITZ:6829 men,1525 women;
- FLOSSENBURG:88;
- BUCHENWALD:74.(1/9) A message of 4/9, in reply to a request for 1000 prisoners for building the DANUBE railway, states that AUSCHWITZ cannot provide them until the “ban” (Lagersperre) on the AUSCHWITZ camp has been lifted. It appears that although typhus is still rife at AUSCHWITZ, new arrivals continue to come in. As from 1/9/42, “natural deaths” among prisoners in Concentration Camps are to be reported apparently only in writing (durch Formblatt).”

The decrypt revealed that the mortality in Auschwitz was about a hundred times that of the large concentration camp at Buchenwald, but also suggested that the main cause of death was typhus. Indeed: the great majority of the 6,829 men and 1,525 women who died in Auschwitz in August 1942 were struck down by disease. It must be remembered, however, that the mortality figures which the concentration camps sent to Berlin only applied to the deaths of registered prisoners, and not to

the gassing of deportees who were selected after arrival for immediate extermination. This was made clear after the war during the trial of the head of the central administration of the SS, Oswald Pohl. He was examined in detail about the information he received from the camps about the death rate of the inmates. These, he told the court, were assembled in charts. “[Judge Musmanno]: “Then you did know how many people were dying in the concentration camps?” [Pohl]: “Yes. I did.” Q.: “And when you saw the number increasing, did you do anything about it?” A.: “Of course I did. That development was always dependent on the development of the diseases. I inquired what diseases actually prevailed there, what measures had been taken in order to eliminate a steady increase of these diseases. The diseases, epidemic diseases, were usually the reason for the deaths, and they depended on the time or on the epidemic that prevailed at the time. In these curves we could not see all the deaths which occurred through the measures of the Reich Security Main Office or the Reich Government. I only dealt with the inmates who were in the camps according to plan, and who could be used for labor allocation.” A couple of minutes later, Pohl’s lawyer Seidl came back to the charts. “[Dr.Seidl]: “We know today that in certain camps extermination measures against certain groups were introduced, and I am thinking especially of the extermination of the Jews. Were these groups of people represented in Dr. Lolling’s statistics, or did he confine himself to covering only those cases which, on the strength of reports from medical offices of the individual camps, came to his knowledge?” [Pohl]: “The figures about exterminations were not reported to the Inspectorate at all, and consequently Dr. Lolling could not evaluate them for his statistics.” For the administration of the camps, information about the mass-killing of people who were not admitted to the camp, and who therefore did not make any claim on the resources of the SS, was irrelevant.

In 1943, when the four crematoria came into operation in Birkenau, the name “Birkenau” occasionally surfaced in relation to the Holocaust, but no-one made a connection with Auschwitz. There remained a kind of interpretative “gap” between the few accounts of the camp at Auschwitz as a particularly violent concentration camp meant mainly for Polish resistors, Birkenau as a destination for Jews of unknown geographical location, the Holocaust in general, and the town of Auschwitz as a site of massive industrial activity. Martin Gilbert observed that in fact the industrial activity in the Auschwitz region, with its use of slave-labour, “proved one of the most effective means of hiding the main purpose of Birkenau.” A good example of this can be found in a report that reached the World Jewish Congress in the summer of 1942. “We receive alarming reports from camps in Upper Silesia. A French deportee worker reports large concentrations of Frenchmen, English prisoners-of-war, ordinary convicts and Jews in labour camps. Large factories with accommodation for workers are being constructed directly above coal mines for the purpose of producing synthetic rubber. 36,600 men work on one building site; 24,000 on another one. Among them are several thousand Jewish deportees between the ages of 16 and 24 who are treated worst....The rate of mortality is so high that in some camps the Jewish personnel has been entirely replaced many times over. Non-Jewish workers are forbidden any contact with Jews.” In June 1944, when as the result of the escape of Rudi Vrba and Alfred Wetzlar finally the truth about the use of Birkenau as a site of systematic extermination became known, the Senior Representative of the Jewish Agency in Geneva, Richard Lichtheim, wrote in a letter to the Jewish Agency executive in Jerusalem that up to then he had always assumed that any reference to deportations of Jews to Auschwitz concerned the German purpose “to exploit more Jewish labour in the industrial centres of Upper Silesia.”

And of course it did not help that no maps showed the name “Birkenau.” Even in AustroHungarian times, when the town of Oswiecim was also known as Auschwitz, the village the Germans called Birkenau was identified on the official maps with its Polish name: “Brzezinka.” A final issue was that, during the war, Birkenau was officially incorporated in the German Reich. Those who knew about transports of Jews to extermination centers knew that these were located in Poland. The term “Poland” carried the assumption of “German-occupied Poland,” which was the Government General. The resulting confusion aided the Germans to maintain secrecy about Auschwitz as a place of mass extermination.

And then there was the fact that the many atrocities the Germans enacted elsewhere also proved an effective screen. In April 1943, for example, a report was drafted on Auschwitz by a Pole who, on instructions of the Polish underground, had gone to the town of Oswiecim to find out what was going on in the camp. His findings were based on accounts of freed (gentile)prisoners. According to the report, Auschwitz had become a major extermination camp for Jews.

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- a. Gas Chambers, the victims were undressed and put into those chambers where they suffocated.
- b. Electric Chambers, these chambers had metal walls, the victims were brought in and then high tension electric current was introduced.
- c. The so-called Hammerluft system. This is a hammer of air. Those were special chambers where the hammer fell from the ceiling and by means of a special installation victims found death under air pressure.
- d. Shootings. This was used as a collective form of punishment, in cases of lack of subordination, thus killing every tenth.”

Yet the report was never made public: added as an appendix to a long description of the Warsaw ghetto, it was overlooked when the whole text was dropped because, by the spring of 1943, the

situation in Warsaw had changed so dramatically as the result of the uprising that the account in the report was considered obsolete.

Finally there was the general problem to make information available. In March 1944, for example, the Polish Consul-General in Istanbul issued a cyclostyled report that claimed that between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1943 some 850,000 Jews had been gassed in Auschwitz. Published in a marginal format in a marginal location, it did not attract any attention outside the Polish refugee community in Turkey.

If the Germans aimed to keep killings in Birkenau secret, the Polish Labour Group in New York City and the American Office of War Information in Washington D.C. inadvertently aided them in their mission. In 1942, before the mass killings of Jews had started, the Polish underground had published a book on Auschwitz. Entitled *Oboz Smierci* (Camp of Death), it chronicled the first two years of the camp's existence--the period in which it only fulfilled a marginal role in the Final Solution. Nevertheless, the account was grim enough and, smuggled out of Poland, the text was translated into English and published March 1944 by the Polish Labour Group in New York City as *Oswiecim Camp of Death (Underground Report)*. The American publication was endorsed by Elmer Davis, the head of the Office of War Information. In a letter dated February 16, 1944 and printed opposite the title page, Davis wrote that he was glad to see the publication of the text. "The record written in blood at Oswiecim and institutions like it in the Nazi dominated countries should be preserved to document the diabolical methods of Nazi suppression and warn the free men of the future against the tyranny which we allowed to rise and blight our time." The opening lines were grim enough. "Oswiecim concentration camp, Auschwitz in German, has for two years symbolized the sinister reality of Polish life under German occupation. The shadow of Oswiecim falls over the whole of Poland, for the most remote corners of the country

have yielded their sons and daughters to its torture chambers. According to verified information up to July 1942, 125,000 persons passed through the camp, while, during all of the camp's existence, barely 7,000 people have been released. This figure includes twelve persons who escaped or who were transferred to other camps. At that time 24,000 men and women remained alive. Consequently, 94,000 people have perished in Oswiecim. In addition to Oswiecim there are a series of other camps, organized somewhat later: Tremblinka, Belzec, and others in the past year in almost every administrative district. Life in any of these camps is an inferno equal to that of Oswiecim. However, in Oswiecim, the methods of cruelty have been lowered to their vilest depth, and applied in every form."

The text described how information over the camp had only leaked out slowly, and that the editors had checked every detail scrupulously. "Coloring and strong expressions have been eliminated to let the facts speak for themselves." One area of specific interest was the account of gassings in the basement of Block 11, the penal barrack. Regularly, the report claimed, groups of prisoners disappeared into those cellars. Mostly these were sick inmates, but at times also included healthy Russian prisoners of war. After some time cries could be heard. "Then there is silence, an ominous silence that spreads around the double barrack. In the ensuing daylight, the silent barrack seems like a huge slab over an immense grave." The report described how for three days nothing moved. Then, on the fourth night, carts came to collect naked bodies to bring them to the crematorium. When one of the carts overturned, one of the prisoners was able to observe in the moonlight that the dead had a strange, greenish pallor. "Years ago he had seen another like it, in an abandoned trench, with the same spectral appearance. It is the mark of poison gas." "No one emerges alive from the darkness of the underground cells to tell a word, and yet, in the first bit of dawn, the secret of 800 dead men filters through. A trip to Oswiecim, a flight

of steps into the “underground,” and death by gas.” As we know today, the account was correct: Both Pery Broad and Rudolf Höss were to corroborate it.

In early 1944 *Oswiecim Camp of Death (Underground Report)* was seen as an important account of German atrocities in Auschwitz. No one pointed out that, as an essentially two-year- old account, it did not bring up-to-date information. Easily interpreted as an account of the contemporary situation in Auschwitz, its publication effectively denied whatever rumours had been floating around about Auschwitz as a place where transports of Jews from all over Europe arrived to be gassed.

In the middle of 1944 substantial information about the use of Auschwitz as a site of systematic genocide became available in the form of three reports. The first and most important account was written by two young Slovak Jews, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzlar, who had been imprisoned for two years in Auschwitz before their successful escape on April 10, 1944. They returned to Slovakia in the hope to warn the Hungarian Jews, and there they were debriefed by the Jewish underground. A second statement, that corroborated the other, was added. It was older than the Vrba-Wetzlar Report, having been written by a the Polish gentile Jerzy Tabeau shortly after his escape from Auschwitz on 19 November 1943. In the version issued by the War Refugee Board, Tabeau is identified as “a non-Jewish Polish Major.”

In June 1944 the Vrba-Wetzlar and the Tabeau reports reached Switzerland, and by the middle of the month various copies were circulating. On June 19, Richard Lichtheim, the senior Jewish Agency representative in Geneva, wrote to the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem that it had now become possible to ascertain “what has happened and where it has happened.” The systematic killing of Jews not only occurred in the by then well-known camps like Treblinka, but also in “similar establishments situated near or in the labour camp of

Birkenau in Upper Silesia.” Knowing well the confusion that existed as to the what and where of Birkenau, Lichtheim felt compelled to stress that “[t]here *is* a labour camp in Birkenau just as in many other places in Upper Silesia, and there are still many thousands of Jews working there and in neighbouring places (Jawischowiz etc.).” Yet the use of Birkenau as labour camp did not preclude an even more grim purpose: “But apart from the labour-camps proper there is a forest of birch trees near Birkenau (Bezinky) where the first large-scale killings took place in a rather “primitive” manner, while later on they were carried out in the labour camp of B itself with all the scientific apparatus needed for this purpose, i.e. In specially constructed buildings with gas-chambers and crematoriums.” Lichtheim also explained that Birkenau was formally subordinated “to the camp of Auschwitz (Oswiecim) which is 4 km from Birkenau.” This camp, he observed, was generally known because of its violent regime as a “Death Camp.” Yet for all its horror it was now revealed to be a pale foreshadowing of Birkenau. The gentiles imprisoned in Auschwitz “have not been slaughtered wholesale on arrival like 90 per cent of the Jews arriving in Birkenau.”

The revelations about the purpose and function of Birkenau occurred at a time that the Germans were in the process of dispatching daily trains full of Hungarian Jews to that location. The Jewish Agency in Jerusalem was likely to do little, but the British Government in London perhaps more, and so Lichtheim contacted the British legation in Geneva with the request (if they would be willing) to cable a text Lichtheim had written to Foreign Office in London. The British diplomats agreed, and on June 27 the Lichtheim telegram was sent to London under signature of the British Minister in Berne. It began as follows: “Received fresh reports from Hungary stating that nearly one half total of 800,000 Jews in Hungary have already been deported at a rate of 10,000 to 12,000 per diem. Most of these transports are sent to the death camp at Birkenau near Oswiecim in Upper Silesia where in the

course of the last year over 1,500,000 Jews from all over Europe have been killed. We have detailed reports about the numbers and methods employed. The four crematoriums in Birkenau have a capacity for gassing and burning 60,000 per diem.” A week later the Foreign Office received an eight-page summary of the Vrba-Wetzlar report from the acting Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Ripka, who had obtained it from the Czechoslovak representative in Geneva.

By the time the facts about Auschwitz had reached London, it also had become known in Washington D.C.. On June 24 Dr. Gerhart Riegner, who represented the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, had given the representative of the War Refuge Board in Berne, Roswell D. McClelland, a summary of the report, and that same day the latter had cabled the most important elements to Washington D.C. “There is little doubt that many of these Hungarian Jews are being sent to the extermination camps of Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birke Nau (Rajska) in eastern Upper Silesia where according to recent reports, since early summer 1942 at least 1,500,000 Jews have been killed. There is evidence that already in January 1944 preparations were being made to receive and exterminate Hungarian Jews in these camps. Soon a detailed report on these camps will be cabled.” In fact, it was two weeks before he was able to telegraph an eight page summary to Washington on July 6, promising that “when mailing facilities permit, microfilm copies of the two reports ‘in extenso’ will be sent.” The time-lag can be explained as McClelland desired to obtain certainty about the reliability of the report. A member of the Bratislava Papal Nunciature, who had personally interviewed Vrba and Wetzlar, told McClelland that their story had been thoroughly convincing, and also explained that they had been closely cross-examined by senior members of the Bratislava Jewish community. The latter had taken care that the material finally incorporated into the report included only that about which there was no uncertainty or equivocation.

Having received the assurances he had sought, the American diplomat decided to put his career on the line, and he cabled a summary of the report to Washington D.C. It described the location, the huge size and the atrocious living conditions of Auschwitz, identified as camp "A," and Birkenau, identified as camp "B." After a short account of various medical experiments, and methods of executions through shooting or phenol injections, the summary addressed the core issue: the role of Auschwitz in the Holocaust. "Jews who were brought to A toward end of 1941 were for most part Polish political prisoners and killed by various methods as such. Not until spring of 1942 were transports of Jews en masse sent to B (constructed principally for them) to be exterminated on purely racial grounds." The telegram mentioned that, up to the escape of the authors of the report, a total of 145,500 people had been admitted to the camp and registered as inmates. Most deportees were, however, not admitted. "As first large transports of Jews began to arrive in spring of 1942 process was to admit about 10% of more able-bodied men and 5% of women into B. This selection was made by Gestapo political commission at unloading of trains. Balance including elderly people, women with small children, those ill or otherwise unsuited for work and abandoned children were taken directly to Birkenwald in trucks and gassed." The summary mentioned that, initially, the bodies of the murdered people were buried. In the fall of 1942 the Germans had abandoned this practice, and turned to open-air incineration on pyres. "At the end of February 1943 four newly constructed crematoria and gassing units were put into operation in B two larger and two smaller the larger type consisted of vast central hall flanked on one side by furnace room and on other by long narrow gas chamber. About 2000 persons at once were crowded into central hall which was camouflaged to resemble a bathing establishment made to undress given a piece of soap and towel and then herded down a short stairway into adjoining lower gas chamber this is hermetically closed and SS men wearing gasmasks mount to rood and shake down into room from three openings in ceiling a powdered cyanide preparation labelled cyk-

lon manufactured in Hamburg. Within a few minutes everyone in gas chamber is dead, latter is aired and Sonderkommando proceeds with gruesome work of transporting bodies on small flat cars running along track passing under central hall to furnace room here there are nine ovens each with four openings with high smokestack rising in middle each opening can incinerate three normal bodies within one-half hours. Daily capacity of larger crematoria is 2000 of two smaller about 1000 each, total of all four units is some 6000 daily.” After providing details of various transports that had been subjected to selection and extermination, the telegram concluded with a frightful statistic. “Authors set number of Jews gassed and burned in B between April 1942 and April 1944 at from 1.5 to 1.75 million about half of them Poles the others (in thousands followed by country of origin) 150 France, 100 Holland, 60 Germany, 50 Lithuania, 50 Belgium, 50 Yugoslavia, Italy and Norway, together 30, Slovakia, 30; Bohemia, Moravia and Austria together 300 from various camps for foreign Jews in Poland.”

By the time McClelland’s summary arrived in Washington D.C., *The New York Times* had already run three stories on Auschwitz. The first, published on June 20, was only 22 lines long. Entitled “Czechs Report Massacre,” it reported the death of 7,000 Czech Jews. “The report said that the victims were dragged to gas chambers in the notorious German concentration camps at Birkenau and Oswiecim.” Two weeks later the coverage had increased four-fold in an article entitled “Inquiry Confirms Nazi Death Camps,” subtitled “1,715,000 Jews Said to Have Been Put to Death by the Germans Up to April 15.” The author, the *The New York Times* correspondent in Geneva Daniel Brigham, still hedged his language, but three days later, in an even longer article entitled “Two Death Camps Places of Horror” he had lost all doubt: the report had received “incontrovertible confirmation of the facts.”

By the middle of July 1944 many had become convinced that the Germans were engaged in the systematic annihilation of Jews in extermination camps, and that Birkenau was one of the most important of

these. But few people could really imagine what such places were like. The world of the camps remained intangible. This changed on July 23, 1944. Five days earlier the Soviet army had broken through German lines at Kowel, and on July 23 the Eight Guards Army took the town of Lublin. In Lublin's suburb of Maidanek, General Chuikov's soldiers found a large concentration camp, which the Germans had largely evacuated in the preceding months, but which for unknown reasons they had failed to destroy. The crematorium and various of the gas chambers were captured largely intact. For the first time it became possible to fully imagine what the word "Birkenau" meant. On August 29 the Soviet Embassy in Washington published the first instalment of a long, two-piece article by Konstantin Simonov entitled "Lublin Annihilation Camp." The article began with a statement that was to be repeated almost literally by dozens of journalists as they reported, in the nine months that followed, of the things they witnessed in the German concentration camps upon their liberation: "What I am now about to relate is too enormous and too gruesome to be fully conceived." Simonov admitted that it would take a painstaking inquiry to establish all the facts about the camp. Yet, having seen the place, and talked to around 100 witnesses, he could not wait. "[A] man who has seen what I have cannot hold his peace and cannot wait to speak." "But we open a door and find ourselves in another disinfecting chamber which is built on an entirely different principle. It is a square room, a little over two meters high and roughly six meters long and as many wide. The walls, ceiling and floor are all built of solid gray concrete. There are no shelves for clothes here such as we saw in the other chamber. The room is absolutely bare. A single steel door hermetically closes the entrance to the chamber. It can be fastened from the outside by an impressive steel bar. In the walls of this concrete vault are three apertures. In two of them pipes are fitted which lead out into the open. The third aperture is a little spy hole, a small square window barred on the inside by a stout steel grid fitted into the concrete. A thick panel of glass covers the outer side of the aperture so that it cannot be reached

through the grid. What is on the other side of this spy hole? To answer this question we leave the chamber and find that next to it is another and smaller room, also built of concrete. It is into this room that the spy hole leads. Here there is an electric switch. And here too, on the floor, stand several hermetically sealed cylindrical tins on which is inscribed the word “cyclone “ and in smaller letters “for special use in Eastern regions.” It was the contents of these tins which was poured through the pipes into the chamber next door after it had been filled with people. The people were stripped naked before they were pushed into the room and they were packed so tight they occupied little space. In these 40 square meters or so 250 persons were jammed at one time. The steel door was closed upon them and its edges sealed with clay. Then specially trained operators wearing gas masks poured the “cyclone” out of the cylindrical tins into the chamber. The small bluish innocent-looking crystals, on contact with the oxygen of the air, immediately began to generate poisonous gases which simultaneously affect all centers of the human organism. An SS man of the commanding squad turned on a switch in the next room illuminating the poison chamber and through the spy hole watched all stages of the asphyxiation, which according to various witnesses lasted from two to 10 minutes. He could safely watch the action of the gases and the faces of the dying. The spy hole was set into the wall at roughly the height of a human face. He had no need to look down, for the people were packed so close they did not fall as they died, but continued in an upright position. Incidentally, “cyclone” really is a disinfecting substance. It was actually used for the disinfection of clothes in neighbouring sheds. Everything seemed fair and aboveboard. It all depended on the dose which was poured into the chambers.” In a second part of his report, published a few days later, Simonov reported on the crematoria. “It is a large rectangular building, built of highly resistant firebrick. It contains five brick furnaces arranged one alongside the other, with round, hermetically-closing iron doors which now stand open. The deep furnaces are half-filled with incinerated vertebrae and ashes. In a space

in front of each furnace lie skeletons which were made ready by the Germans for cremation. Those in front of three of the furnaces are skeletons of men and women; those in front of the other two are the skeletons of children of 10 and 12, to judge by their size. There are five or six skeletons in front of each furnace. This indicates their capacity. Each furnace was built to accommodate six bodies. If the six bodies would not fit into the crematorium the operators hacked off the protruding parts of the body, an arm, a leg or a head, and then hermetically closed the door. There are five furnaces in all. They could handle a large number of bodies daily. Originally they incinerated a corpse in 45 minutes, but gradually by raising the temperatures in the furnaces the Germans doubled the handling capacity of the crematorium and incinerating process; instead of 45 minutes they took 25 and even less. Experts have already determined the fireproof brick from which the furnaces are built and conclude from the deformations and changes to which it has been subjected that the temperature in the furnaces exceeded 1,500 degrees Centigrade. Additional evidence is furnished by the cast-iron dampers, which have also been deformed and have slightly melted. If we reckon on an average that each batch of bodies took half an hour to cremate, and if we bear in mind, as is generally testified, that since the autumns of 1943 smoke poured from the crematorium chimney-stack incessantly, day and night, we may conclude that the total capacity of the crematorium was 1,400 bodies per day." The sight that shocked Simonov most was a large shed filled with shoes. "There may be a million, there may be more. They spill over out of the hut through the windows and the doors. In one spot the weight of them pushed out part of the wall, which fell outwards together with piles of shoes. Every kind of footwear can be found here: torn Russian military top-boots, boots of Polish soldiers, men's shoes, women's slippers, rubber overshoes, and what is the grimmest of all, thousands upon thousands of pairs of children's footwear--boots, shoes and sandals of children ten years old, eight years old and even of babies. It is hard to imagine anything more gruesome than this sight, a silent wit-

ness of the destruction of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children....Like everything else in the death camp, this storehouse was built for utilitarian purposes; nothing belonging to the slaughtered victims was to be wasted, neither clothes, shoes, bones nor ashes.”

One day after the Soviet Embassy in Washington published the first instalment of Simonov’s account of Maidanek, the American public found confirmation in *The New York Times*. On August 30 it carried on the front page an article entitled “Nazi Mass Killing Laid Bare in Camp,” written by the same Bill Lawrence who, nine months earlier, had shown such scepticism about the alleged mass killing of Jews in Babi Yar. This time Lawrence did not hedge his statements anymore. “I have just seen the most terrible place on the face of the earth--the German concentration camp at Maidanek, which was a veritable River Rouge for the production of death, in which it is estimated by Soviet and Polish authorities that as many as 1,500,000 persons from nearly every country in Europe were killed in the last three years. I have been all-through the camp inspecting its hermetically sealed gas chambers, in which victims were asphyxiated, and five furnaces in which the bodies were cremated, and I have talked with German officers attached to the camp, who admitted quite frankly that it was a highly systemized place for annihilation, although they, of course, denied any personal participation in the murders.... This is a place that must be seen to be believed. I have been present at numerous atrocity investigations in the Soviet Union, but never have I been confronted with such complete evidence, clearly establishing every allegation made by those investigating German crimes. After inspection of Maidanek, I am now prepared to believe any story of German atrocities, no matter how savage, cruel and depraved.”

While seeing Maidanek may have convinced Lawrence that his earlier scepticism had been inappropriate, the editors of *The Christian Century* felt no need to let go of the scepticism they had shown all along about the atrocity stories coming from Europe. On September 13, 1944 they

provided under the heading “Biggest Atrocity Story Breaks in Poland” a short summary of Lawrence’s account, and noted that “chief evidence for the charge that 1,500,000 persons had been killed in this manner was a warehouse ‘about 150 feet long’ containing clothing of people of all ages who were said to have been done to death in the camp.” It did not convince the editors back home in America. “Many newspapers gave the Lublin charges the big headline of the day, but the parallel between this story and the “corpse factory “ atrocity tale of the First World War is too striking to be overlooked. That story started in 1917 and was not finally discredited until 1925. There may or may not be a relation between the fact that the Lublin account came out immediately after it was charged by London Poles that the Russians had stopped their advance within artillery range of Warsaw and waited until the Germans had killed 250,000 Poles within the city who had risen to fight for their freedom in response to the call of the Polish government-in-exile.” And thus the editors of one of the leading Christian magazines in the United States concluded their coverage of the discovery of Maidanek.

The editors of *Time* showed less hesitance to accept facts for what they were. On August 21 they had provided a first account of the “gigantic murder plant,” largely taken from notes by the Russian war correspondent Roman Karmen. Three weeks later they printed an almost full-page article entitled “Murder, Inc.” written by their Moscow correspondent Richard Lauterbach, who had visited the camp sometime earlier. He was puzzled by the banality of the camp. “I took notes calmly, feeling little emotion. It was all so cold and bare.” After having inspected the gas chambers, his guide, the secretary of the Soviet Atrocities Commission Dmitri Kudriavtsev, showed him some cabbage patches. “The big, leafy cabbages were covered with a sooty, grey dust and next to them were high mounds of grey brown stuff. “This,” said Kudriavtsev, “is fertilizer. A layer of human bones, a layer of human ashes, a layer of manure. This is German food production. Kill people;

fertilize cabbages.” Lauterbach noted the Soviet expert’s explanation of the ultimate result of capitalist logic without comment. And neither did he dispute the expert’s interpretation of German efficiency. “The crematorium might have been a big bakeshop or a very small blast furnace. Here the Nazis carted the bodies, straight from the gas chambers. They cut them up scientifically. They put the chunks on iron stretchers, slid them on rollers into the five greedy mouths of the coke-fed ovens. They could disintegrate 1,900 people a day. “There was great economy,” said Kudriavtsev. “These furnaces also heated the water for the camp.” Lauterbach ended with an extensive description of the warehouses with shoes.

A week later *Life* ran another of Lauterbach’s articles on Maidanek. It was entitled “Sunday in Poland.” “It was not the gas chambers where victims were snuffed out standing up, or the crematorium where they were chopped up and then burned in construction ovens. This part of the “death factory” didn’t get to me somehow. Too machine-like. It wasn’t even the open graves with skeletons or skulls or stacks of fertilizer made from human bodies and manure. The full emotional shock came at a giant warehouse chock-full of people’s shoes, more than 800,000 of all sizes, shapes, colors, and styles. In some places the shoes had burst out of the building like corn from a crib. It was monstrous. There is something about an old shoe as personal as a snapshot or a letter. I looked at them and saw their owners: skinny kids in soft, white, worn slippers; thin ladies in black highlaced shoes; sturdy soldiers in brown military shoes.”

By this time a joint Soviet-Polish commission, that comprised of three Russian and eight Polish members (amongst whom a priest, the President of the Lublin Red Cross, two academics and two lawyers), and which was assisted by a six-member Board of Medico-Legal Experts and a four-member board of Technico-Legal and Chemical Experts, had begun a systematic forensic investigation, following procedures that had been well established in nineteen earlier enquiries into Ger-

man atrocities. They were lucky in that they had been able to obtain not only testimonies from former inmates, but also from a number of SS men who had not been able to escape in time. Furthermore some parts of the camp administration had been captured and, as we have seen, the gas chambers and crematoria had remained intact and were available for forensic investigation. In October the commission issued its report, the English-language version of which was made available by the Soviet embassy in Washington D.C. on October 17.

After a short introduction, the report came immediately to the point. “The Hitlerite hangmen set up a huge death factory at Maidanek in Lublin. They named it “Vernichtungslager” ((Extermination Camp). Germans who had served in this camp and were taken prisoner testified before the Commission. SS Rottenfuehrer Theodor Scholen stated: “This camp was called the ‘Extermination Camp’--‘Vernichtungslager’--just because a tremendous number of people were exterminated there.” Heinz Stalbe, a member of the Kampfpolizei, stated: “The main purpose of this camp was to exterminate the greatest number of people, and for this reason it was named the ‘Vernichtungslager,’ i.e.’Extermination Camp.’” Of course, the designation “*Vernichtungslager*” was only an informal one used by the SS guards in their conversations with the Soviets, and perhaps amongst themselves. The official designation of Maidanek was, like that of Birkenau, as a “Prisoner-of-War Camp of the Waffen SS Lublin” (*Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen SS Lublin*)--a designation that preserved Himmler’s original but quickly thwarted intention to use the camp as a forced labour pool of Soviet prisoners of war.

The bulk of the report was devoted to an extensive description of life in the camp, the constant starvation and exhaustion, the diseases, the humiliations, beatings, tortures, and hangings. One chapter chronicled the mass shootings, which had culminated on November 3, 1943 in the execution of 18,400 people on one day. Another chapter described extermination by gas. “One of the methods most widely used for the mass

extermination of people in Maidanek Camp was asphyxiation with gas. A board of technico-legal and chemical experts--presided over by the architect engineer of the town of Lublin, KELLES-KRAUSE, and consisting of Major Engineer, Assistant Professor TELANER, Master of Technical Science GRIGORYEV, and Master of Technical Science PEL-KIS, established that cells built on the territory of the camp had been used chiefly for the mass extermination of human beings. There were six such cells. Some had been used for killing people with "S.O." gas, others for killing with the poisonous chemical substance called "cyclone." On the camp territory there were discovered 535 drums of "Cyclone-B2" preparation and several steel cylinders containing carbon monoxide.... On the basis of precise calculation used in the technical examination of the gas cells, chemical analysis of the carbon monoxide and "cyclone," the experts have ascertained: "Technical and sanitary-chemical analysis of the gas cells in Maidanek Concentration Camp fully confirms that all these cells, especially cells Nos. 1,2,3 and 4, were destined and used for the large-scale extermination of people by poison gasses such as hydrocyanic acid (the 'cyclone' preparation) and carbon monoxide."

The conclusions by the technical experts were corroborated by eyewitness testimony of the captured SS men. "At a session of the Commission German SS men who had served in the camp related the following about the large-scale gassings of people: SS Rottenfuehrer Haensche stated that on September 15, 1942, 350 people, including women and children, were killed in a gas cell. SS Oberscharfuehrer Ternes told the Commission about the asphyxiation of 500 people, including many women and children, in gas cells on October 16, 1943. The selection of people for asphyxiation was done systematically by the German camp doctors Blanke and Rindfleisch. The same Ternes stated: "On the evening of October 21, 1943, Camp Doctor SS Untersturmfuehrer Rindfleisch told me that on that very day 300 children of three to 10 years of age had been asphyxiated with the "cyclone" pre-

paration in a gas cell.” Bodies were regularly removed from the gas cells to be burned in the crematorium or on bonfires. The bodies were transported on trucks or on special platforms hauled by tractors. Many eyewitnesses gave evidence on this point. The German prisoner of war SS Rottenfuehrer Theodor Scholen, who had worked in the camp, stated: “I often saw the truck, with a trailer attached, running from the gas cell to the crematorium and back. It took dead bodies from the gas cell, and then returned empty.”

The next chapter dealt with the technology of incineration. The crematorium had been completed in 1943 and counted five furnaces designed to burn continuously. “The technical experts who thoroughly examined the structure of the furnaces came to the following conclusion: “The furnaces were intended for burning bodies and designed to function uninterruptedly. Four bodies with hacked off extremities could be placed in one furnace at a time. It took 15 minutes to burn four bodies, and so with all furnaces working round the clock it was possible to burn 1,920 bodies in 24 hours. Taking into account the great quantity of bones discovered all over the camp (in pits, in vegetable gardens and manure heaps), the Committee of experts believes that bones were taken out of the furnaces before they could be completely consumed, and that therefore, in fact, many more than 1,920 bodies were burned in 24 hours.” There was also ample evidence that the Germans had incinerated corpses on large pyres, and the commission had found at least 18 large mass graves within the camp area, and 1,350 cubic meters of compost that consisted, among other things, of human ashes and small human bones. On the basis of the capacity of the old incinerators and the new crematorium, the assumed capacity of the pyres both inside and outside the camp, the commission estimated that some 1.5 million people had been killed in the camp. This latter figure was found suspect from the beginning, and led in 1948 to a new, official estimate of 360,000 victims based on analysis of transports, lists of the dead, and the occupancy of the barracks.

By the time the report appeared, the shock of the initial discovery had passed. The forensic investigation had confirmed the initial accounts, and so it was not really news. Few newspapers paid attention. Yet the work of the commission made an impact on the German leadership. Maidanek was “a public relations” disaster. David Irving tells in his *Hitler’s War* that at a war conference of October 27 Press Chef Otto Dietrich handed Hitler an English newspaper that carried a summary of the Soviet report. “A hush fell on the war conference. Hitler angrily laid the newspaper aside: “That’s that ‘hacked-off hands again--pure enemy propaganda!” But the consternation among his circle persisted. A perplexed Ribbentrop showed the newspaper to his son Rudolf, visiting him on injury leave from his Waffen SS unit. Rudolf too exclaimed, “Father, can’t you recognize atrocity-propaganda when you see it--it’s the ‘hacked-off hands’ again!!” Ribbentrop uneasily pressed Hitler in private. “It’s Himmler’s affair,” replied the Führer dismissively, “and his alone.” Indeed: Himmler became determined that it would not happen again. Within days after the incident in the Führer headquarters, he decided that, for all practical purposes, the Jewish Question had been solved as much as it was in his power to do, and he ordered the cessation of gassing in Auschwitz, and the dismantling of the extermination installations in the crematoria.

Just at the time that crews of prisoners completed the demolition of the gas chambers in Auschwitz the War Refugee Board published the Vrba-Wetzlar and Tabeau reports, which had been made available in summary in early July, and a third text drafted by Arnost Rosin and Czeslaw Mordowicz, who had escaped Auschwitz in late May, and who provided important information about the early phase of the Hungarian Action. The collated text was entitled *German Extermination Camps--Auschwitz and Birkenau*. In its press release, the Board stated that, with exceptions for the figures concerning the number of people admitted

to the camps--"declared by the authors to be no more than reliable approximations"--it accepted the accounts as providing "a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps."

The first time gassing is mentioned concerns the killing of prisoners in the summer of 1942. At this time Vrba had been the administrator of the sick barrack, and hence knew of the selections. "At the same time the so-called "selections" were introduced. Twice weekly, Mondays and Thursdays, the camp doctor indicated the number of prisoners who were to be gassed and then burned. These "selectees" were loaded into trucks and brought to the Birch Forest. Those still alive upon arrival were gassed in a big barrack erected near a trench used for burning the bodies." In the report Vrba and Wetzlar also correctly identify the completion of Crematorium 2. "At the end of February, 1943 a new crematorium and gassing plant was inaugurated at BIRKENAU. The gassing and burning of the bodies in the Birch Forest was discontinued, the whole job being taken over by the four specially built crematoria. The large ditch was filled in, the ground levelled, and the ashes used as before for fertilizer at the farm labour camp of HERMENSE, so that today it is almost impossible to find traces of the dreadful mass murder which took place there. At present there are four crematoria in operation at BIRKENAU, two large ones, I and II, and two smaller ones, III and IV." There followed a long description of crematoria 2 and 3 (in their numbering I and II) accompanied by a sketch. It is clear that the account of the lay-out of the interior is based on second-hand information, probably derived from members of the *Sonderkommando*. Indeed: in sworn deposition Vrba made in 1961, and in his later book *I Cannot Forgive* (1963), Vrba stated that he received all the specific information on the crematoria from *Sonderkommando* Philip Müller and his colleagues.

On the basis of direct observation, people who had been on transports, the people who handled the property of the deportees, the reports of the registry office of the Quarantine Camp in Auschwitz, and the in-

formation provided by those who worked the crematoria, Vrba and Wetzlar estimated that about 1,765,000 Jews had died in Auschwitz up to April 1944.

Jerzy Tabeau's report, which had a independent origin, provided much detailed information on life in the camp. More importantly, it corroborated the Vrba-Wetzlar account of the use of Birkenau as a site of mass extermination. Tabeau mentions that the first large transports of Jews began to arrive in the spring of 1942. "Certain large scale preparations had to be made to receive these mass transports and a special concentration camp was opened at BIRKENAU (The Polish name of the village is RAJSKO)." It describes the selections in detail, and the killing in the summer and fall of 1942 of the Jews in the gas chamber in the birch forest. Tabeau mentions the problems with getting rid of the corpses. "The crematoria had not yet been constructed, although there was a small one at AUSCHWITZ which, however, was not employed for burning these bodies. Mass graves were dug at that time into which the corpses were simply thrown. This continued into the autumn of 1942. By this time extermination by gas was being intensified and there was no more time as such for summary burial. Row upon row of bodies of murdered Jews, covered only by a thin layer of earth, were widely dispersed in the surrounding fields, causing the soil to become almost marshy through the putrefaction of the bodies. The smell emanating from these fields became intolerable. In the autumn of 1942 all that remained of the bodies had to be exhumed and the bones collected and burned in the crematoria (by that time four had been completed). An alternative was to gather the remains of the unfortunate victims into heaps, pour gasoline over them, and leave it to the flames to finish the tragedy." With exception of the clause "and the bones collected and burned in the crematoria (by that time four had been completed)" all that Tabeau mentioned was corroborated after the war.

As a result, much was known about Auschwitz by the end of 1944. The report of the War Refugee Board provided the structure, and the knowledge of Maidanek the texture of that knowledge.

IV Attestations, 1945–46

But it is time I should conclude this head, under which I have touched some of the reasons that show the folly of endeavouring to establish universal Pyrrhonism in matters of history, because there are few histories without some lies, and none without some mistakes; and that prove the body of history which we possess, since ancient memorials have been so critically examined, and modern memorials have been so multiplied, to contain in it such a probable series of events, easily distinguishable from the improbable, as force the assent of every man who is in his senses, and are, therefore, sufficient to answer all the purposes of the study of history. Lord Bolingbroke, *Lessons on the Study and Use of History*

On January 27, 1945 units of the 28th and 106th Corps of the First Ukrainian Front liberated the Auschwitz camps. They found in Auschwitz-Monowitz, the slave labour camp attached to the IG Farben Buna works, 600 sick inmates. The Italian Primo Levi was one of them. “They were four young soldiers on horseback, who advanced along the road that marked the limits of the camp, cautiously holding their stenguns. When they reached the barbed wire, they stopped to look, exchanging a few timid words, and throwing strangely embarrassed glances at the sprawling bodies, at the battered huts and at us few still alive. To us they seemed wonderfully concrete and real, perched on their enormous horses, between the grey of the snow and the grey of the sky, immobile beneath the gusts of damp wind that threatened a thaw. It seemed to us, and so it was, that the nothing full of death in which we had wandered like spent stars for ten days had found its own solid centre, a nucleus of condensation; four men, armed, but not against us: four messengers of peace, with rough and boyish faces be-

neath their heavy fur hats. They did not greet us, nor did they smile; they seemed oppressed not only by compassion but by a confused restraint, which sealed their lips and bound their eyes to the funereal scene. It was that shame we knew so well, the shame that drowned us after the selections, and every time we had to watch, or submit to, some outrage: the shame the Germans did not know, that the just man experiences at the other's crime; the feeling of guilt that such a crime should exist, that it should have been introduced irrevocably in the world of things that exist, and that his will for good should have proved too weak or null, and should not have availed in defence. ”

The Red Army liberated 1,200 sick prisoners in the Auschwitz *Stammlager* and 5,800 inmates in Birkenau. The rest, some 60,000 inmates, had been forced a week earlier in a death march to the west. In Birkenau the Soviets also found the blown-up remains of four crematoria--the SS had learnt from Maidanek--and a large compound with 32 burned storage houses. Again, the SS had tried to avoid the embarrassment caused by the 820,000 shoes in Maidanek. And they largely succeeded this time: all that was left in the four storage barracks that were not completely destroyed at Birkenau were a mere 5,525 pairs of women's shoes and 38,000 pairs of men's shoes--and 348,820 men's suits, 836,255 women's garments, 13,964 carpets, 69,848 dishes, huge quantities of toothbrushes, shaving brushes, glasses, crutches, false teeth, and seven tons of hair.

Immediately after the liberation the well-known Russian writer and *Pravda* correspondent Boris Polevoi wrote a first impression of the camp entitled “The Factory of Death at Auschwitz.” Wired from Auschwitz, it appeared in Pravda on February 2. “It will take weeks of long and careful investigations by special commissions before a full picture of the truly unparalleled German outrages at Auschwitz is established,” the article began. “What is noted here are only the outlines coming from a first glance acquaintanceship with the site of the monstrous outrages of the Hitlerite hangmen.” And this was indeed what the art-

icle provided, “a first glance acquaintenship.” Today, more than fifty years later, in an epoch that expects descriptions of the camps to evoke the stark and terrible gentleness of Jean Cayrol’s script for Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog*, or the naturalism of Primo Levi’s *If This Is A Man?*, or the restrained agony of Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, the histrionic language of the Pravda piece seems in bad taste. But it must be remembered that Cayrol wrote his lines ten years after the event, when the landscape of Auschwitz had become peaceful, while Polevoi wrote amidst the atrocity itself.

If Simonov’s report on Maidanek had been characterized by utter surprise and shock, Polevoi admitted that he had been prepared for what was to be revealed. “The name of the town “Auschwitz” has long been a synonym for bloody German atrocities in the lexicon of the peoples of the world. Few of its prisoners escaped the fires of its notorious “ovens.” From behind the wire of its numerous camps only a phantom echo had filtered of the wails from the lips of its thousands of prisoners. Only now, when the troops of the First Ukrainian Front had liberated Auschwitz, was it possible to see with one’s own eyes the entirety of this terrible camp, in which many of its tens of square kilometers of fields were soaked in human blood, and literally fertilized with human ash.”

To the Soviet journalist there was no doubt: Auschwitz was the direct result of Monopoly-Capitalism--a *Leitmotif* that had been well established almost half a year earlier at the occasion of the liberation of Maidanek, and that went straight back to Karl Marx’s analysis of the reduction of human labour into a commodity. But, as Polevoi observed, Auschwitz was in class of its own. “The first thing that strikes one about Auschwitz, and which distinguishes it from other known camps, is its enormous expanse. The territory of the camp occupied tens of square kilometers and in recent years had grown to absorb the towns of Makowice, Babice, and others. It was an enormous industrial plant, having its own branch facilities, each of which received its own special

charge. In one, the processing of the arrivals took place: prisoners were made of those who, before death, could be put to work, while the elderly, the children, and the infirm were sentenced to immediate extermination. In another, a division for those who were so exhausted and worn out as to be barely fit for physical labour, they were assigned the task of sorting the clothes of the exterminated, and of sorting their shoes, taking apart uppers, soles, linings. It is fair to say that all prisoners entering the branches of the industrial plant were to be killed and burned, either by being killed outright or through the many ordeals of confinement." Auschwitz, in other words, was a vast corporate enterprise which was unique in so far that it considered its workers to be totally expendable, and that once the labour had ceased to be a commodity, the body became one." Around this industrial plant enormous fields and enclosures were established in the Sola and Vistula river valleys. The remains of the prisoners, burned in the "ovens", had their ash and bones crushed in rolling mills and converted to meal, and this meal went to the fields and enclosures." "Auschwitz! Impartial commissions will establish the precise number of the people killed or tortured to death here. But already we can assert, based on discussions with Poles, that in 1941-1942 and at the beginning of 1943 five to eight trains of people arrived every day, indeed on some days so many came that the station could not handle them. The people came from the surrounding territories occupied by the Germans, from the USSR, from Poland, from France, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The wagons were tightly packed with people and were always locked. At the station, the Polish railway workers were replaced by a crew from the camp, which included several special railway detachments. The wagons would disappear behind the gates and return empty. In the first four years of the camp's existence the railway workers did not see a single wagon coming back from the camp carrying people." While the information of the Polish railway workers on the number of trains in the early years seem exaggerated--an item of misinformation that can be explained as the result of the fact that Auschwitz was a railway center of more than re-

gional importance--their information about the fact that in the first four years the trains that left Auschwitz were empty seems correct if only because of its implication that in the last year trains left the camp with prisoners. As we know, in the last year of its existence a large number of prisoners who had survived selection left Auschwitz after some days on transports to other camps.

Then the article turned to the machinery of death. "Last year, when the Red Army revealed to the world the terrible and abominable secrets of Majdanek, the Germans in Auschwitz began to wipe out the traces of their crimes. They levelled the mounds of the so-called "old" graves in the Eastern part of the camp, tore up and destroyed the traces of the electric conveyor belt, on which hundreds of people were simultaneously electrocuted, their bodies falling onto the slow moving conveyor belt which carried them to the top of the blast furnace where they fell in, were completely burned, their bones converted to meal in the rolling mills, and then sent to the surrounding fields. In retreat were taken the special transportable apparatuses for killing children. The stationary gas chambers in the eastern part of the camp were restructured, even little turrets and other architectural embellishments were added so that they would look like innocent garages. But even so one can see the traces of the murder of millions of people! From the stories of prisoners, liberated by the Red Army, it is not difficult to make out all that the Germans tried so carefully to conceal. This gigantic industrial plant of death was equipped with the last word in fascist technology and was furnished with all of the instruments of torture which the German monsters could devise. In the first years of the camp, the Germans maintained only a cottage industry of death: they simply led prisoners to a large open pit, forced them to lie down and shot them in the back of the head. When one layer was full, the next would be forced to lie down head-to-foot on the layer below. And so was filled the second layer, and the third, and the fourth... When the grave was full, to make sure that all of the people were dead, it was raked with subma-

chine gun fire several times, while those for whom there was no room in the grave covered it up. Thus were filled hundreds of enormous pits in the eastern part of the camp, which bore the name of the “old” graves. The German hangmen, noting the primitiveness of this method of killing, decided to increase the productivity of the industrial plant of death by mechanizing it, leading to the gas chambers, the electric conveyor belt, the construction of the blast furnace for burning bodies and the so-called “ovens.” In the weeks that followed, forensic investigation was to confirm the existence and use of the gas chambers and the ovens, and relegate the electric conveyor belt and the blast furnace to the realm of myth.

The article followed with a catalogue of the “ordinary” instruments of torture, and in one line described the condition of the surviving inmates--“people, so worn out that they swayed like shadows in the wind, people, whose age it was impossible to determine.” And it concluded: “The Red Army saved them, and pulled them from hell. They honor the Red Army as the avengers for Auschwitz or Majdanek, and for all the pain and suffering which the fascist hangmen have brought to the people of Europe.”

The same day that Polevoi’s article appeared in *Pravda*, the British weekly *The Jewish Chronicle* devoted one sentence to the event. “The Red Army has captured Auschwitz(Oswiecim), one of the most notorious of all death camps.” A week later the same magazine carried a front-page article entitled “Oswiecim Revelations: Worst Death Camp Captured.” The article provided a summary of Polevoi’s account, and ended with the grim statistic that “it is estimated that over 1,500,000 victims were done to death in Oswiecim, and hundreds of thousands of them were Jews.”

It was from the outset clear that Auschwitz had been the site of a tremendous crime, and that the best way to use it as an indictment of National Socialism was to follow the example taken in Maidanek and es-

tablish the truth according to commonly accepted historical and judicial criteria of evidence. Therefore the Prosecutor's Office of the First Ukrainian Front immediately began a preliminary investigation. Like the investigation of Maidanek, it operated under the aegis of the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of Fascist and Nazi Crimes. The investigators inspected the grounds of the camp, the pits containing human remains, and the ruins of the crematoria. They were assisted in the examination of the latter structures by Professor Roman Dawidowski, a specialist in heating and combustion technology from Cracow. Furthermore they studied the extermination process, and the remaining loot. Physicians medically examined 2,819 former inmates, and conducted autopsies on the corpses of 536 prisoners, and members of the Prosecutor's Office interviewed 200 of the remaining prisoners. They were fortunate in that they were able to interview three surviving members of the Sonderkommando. Until the end the Germans had kept some 100 Sonderkommando around: 30 to run Crematorium V, and 70 to clean out the incineration pits used in the summer of 1944. These 100 Sonderkommando were marched out of the camp on January 18, but Alain Feinsilber (alias Stanislaw Jankowski), Szlama Dragon and Henryk Tauber were able to escape, and the last two returned in time to Oswiecim to give evidence to the Soviets. Dragon also remembered the location where his fellow Sonderkommando Salmen Gradowski had buried a journal, written in Yiddish, in an aluminium canteen. The canteen was dug up in the presence of the members of the Prosecutors office. It contained a 81-leave notebook and a letter, dated September 6, 1944. Significant parts of the journal, which he had begun before his transport to Auschwitz, had become unintelligible. However the letter was preserved perfectly. For the record, here it is quoted in full. "I was writing this at the time when I was in the "Sonderkommando." I had been brought from the camp at Kielbasin near Grodno. I wanted to leave this as also other numerous notes as memento for the future world of peace, so that it may learn what had happened here. I have buried this under the ashes deeming it

the safest place, where people will certainly dig to find the traces of millions of men who were exterminated. But lately they have begun obliterating the traces and everywhere, where there was much ash, they ordered to have it ground fine and to cart it away to the Vistula and to let it flow with the current. We have dug up many graves and now two such open graves are in the terrain of the second and third crematorium. Several graves are still full of ashes. Perhaps they had forgotten about them or they themselves had maybe concealed it from the higher authorities, why, the order was: to obliterate all traces as quickly as possible; so, by not carrying out that order, they desisted from it. Thanks to that there are still two large graves left with ashes on the terrain of the second and third crematorium. Masses of ashes [from burnt corpses] of hundreds of thousands of Jews, Russians, Poles, were strewn and ploughed in on the sites of the crematoria. In the area of the fourth and fifth crematorium there are also small quantities of ash. There it was at once ground and taken to the Vistula, because all that area was destined for "burning the bridge"!!! The notebook and other notes have lain in the graves, getting saturated with the blood of not always entirely burnt bones and pieces of flesh. One can recognize the odour at once. Dear finder, search everywhere, in every inch of soil. Tens of documents are buried under it, mine and those of other persons, which will throw light on everything that was happening here. Great quantities of teeth are also buried here. It was we, the Kommando workers, who expressly have strewn them all over the terrain, as many as we could, so that the world should find material traces of the millions of murdered people. We ourselves have lost hope of being able to live to see the moment of liberation. In spite of good news that reaches us, we see that the world gives the barbarians the opportunity of destruction on an immense scale and of tearing out with roots the last remainder of the Jewish nation. Under our eyes tens of thousands of Jews from the Czech and Slovakian regions are now perishing. Those Jews could have certainly lived to see freedom. But everywhere where danger approaches the barbarians, from every place

which they have to leave, they take the remnants of Jews still alive and bring them to Birkenau-Auschwitz or to Stutthof near Gdansk. This is known thanks to the reports of persons who had come from there to us, too. We, the "Sonderkommando," had long since wanted to put a stop to our horrible work which we were forced to do under threat of death. We wanted to do great things. But people from the camp, a section of the Jews, Russians and Poles, have restrained us with all might and have forced us to put off the date of the mutiny. That day is approaching. It may happen today or tomorrow. I am writing these words in a moment of the greatest danger and excitement. May the future judge us on the base of my notes and may the world see in them, if only one drop, the minimum, of this tragic world amidst which we had lived. September 6, 1944. Salmen Gradowski." The uprising, which had been originally planned to happen in June, occurred one month later, on October 7, 1944. Gradowski was one of the leaders of the revolt. The uprising failed. The Germans captured and tortured Gradowski, and crushed his skull.

The notebook that accompanied the letter contained a detailed description of Gradowski's deportation to Auschwitz. He described how tension mounted in the train when it passed Bialystok on its way to Warsaw. "The train accelerated its motion. Everyone plunged again into an atmosphere of absolute despondency. The sadness grew with every kilometre and with every kilometre the emptiness became greater. What happened? Here we are approaching the ill-famed station of Treblinka," so tragic for the Jews, where, according to information which had filtered through to us, the majority of Poles and Jews from abroad were swallowed up and wiped out. Everyone is looking through the small windows and is searching for something in silence. They will, maybe, notice something, find some sign which would tell them the truth. Somebody, perhaps, would stand in the road and would tell them whither they are being led and what is awaiting them. Oh, how horrible!" The train passes two women who make a gesture across their

throat. Then the train begins to slow down. "The train has stopped, two thousand five hundred persons held their breaths. Teeth were chattering with fright and hearts were beating like mad. This great human mass, bathed in deadly sweat, is awaiting the coming minutes. Each second is an eternity, each second--a step nearer to death. All have grown numb in the expectation of satan's hand, reaching out, which will soon snatch them with its claws and will hurl them into this abyss. The whistle awakened them from their torpor. The train wrenched itself free of death and continued on; its route. Mothers are kissing their children, husbands are kissing their wives. Tears of joy are shed, all have wakened to live and have heaved sighs of relief. A fresh surge of hopeful thoughts has mastered everyone. The belief that all these versions are untrue has begun to be strengthened. The fear is slowly fading away, the fright is vanishing. There is no foundation for all the bad news and anticipations. They are the result and the echo of some single horrible happening but not of mass phenomena. You can therefore notice now how everybody has plucked up his courage, deeming they were taken to live, perhaps to live a hard life, but still a life." In the end, their optimism proved without foundation. After a gruelling journey, the train stopped in Auschwitz, and the passengers were subjected to selection. "Men have to stand separately, women separately. This order came like a thunderclap upon all. Now, when one is standing at the last stage, when one has come to the journey's end, one is ordered to separate, to cleave that which is indissoluble, which has been united and has grown into one inseparable whole. Nobody stirs from the spot, not being able to believe that which is unbelievable. It is not possible for something unreal to become real, a fact. But a rain of blows which the foremost ranks of people standing there had felt acted so that even in the farther ranks families had begun to separate.[...] It was thought that the formal procedure had begun of establishing the exact number of newcomers, both sexes separately. It was felt that the most important was approaching, when necessity arose to solace one another and to raise one another's spirits. The strength of indissoluble family ties

was still felt. Here are two persons standing, the husband on one side, the wife and the child on the other. Older people are standing, an old father and opposite the mother, weak already. Brothers are standing there, looking in the direction of their dear sisters. Nobody knows what is going to happen next.” Gradowski described how men who tried to cross over to the women’s line were beaten up, and driven back, and how in the separation all the hope that had sustained them throughout their ordeal in the ghetto and the transit camp at Kielbasin was destroyed. “The thought of staying together with the family, this opiate, which had kept up their spirits on the journey, has all at once stopped to act.” Lorries came up to transport the old people, the women and children. Gradowski was admitted into the camp. “We are here in a camp of death. It is a lifeless island. Man does not come here to live but to die, sooner or later. There is no room for life here. It is the residence of death. Our brain has grown dull, the thoughts are numbed, it is not possible to grasp this new language. Everyone is meditating on where his family is. Where were they driven and how will they manage in the new conditions? Who knows how the mortally frightened children will behave seeing how their mothers are being maltreated?[...] All are standing helpless, worried, full of despair, lonesome, unhappy, broken. Bunks are being assigned. They are beds of boards, each for five, six numbers jointly. We are told to climb into them, to push in so far that only the head should be seen. Get inside as far as possible, you accursed man! You won’t be able to see each other. The old camp inmates come to the bunks and ask how many were left in the lager and what was the strength of the transport. We are unable to grasp the meaning of such questions. Of what significance is [the list] of these numbers? Where are those who left us driving away in lorries? They regard us with cynical smiles and heavy sighs escape their lips. This is the sign of human compassion with us. Among the camp inmates of long standing there was one from our [transit] camp who had come with the former transport we knew nothing about till now and lost all trace of it. We thought he would inform us about the fate of those men, would

show us some trace from “the country of Yekes” [Germany]. But what does this man tell us! What does he have to say!? The heart trembles. It makes our hair stand on end. Listen to what he is saying, “My dears, we have passed the same road as you did [...] Those, who drove away in lorries, were led to death at once and those who went on foot also went to meet death--for some after a longer time of torture, for others after a shorter time.”

The journal recovered in March did not contain descriptions of Gradowski’s work as a Sonderkommando. In the Summer of 1945 a Pole found a second manuscript by Gradowski. He gave it to an Oswiecim native Chaim Walnerman, who took it with him to Israel, to publish it in the 1970s under the title *In the Heart of Hell* (I have been unable to trace a copy of this text within Canada). According to Nathan Cohen, the second manuscripts provides detailed descriptions of the murder of the inmates of the so-called family camp, and the incineration of their remains.

Remarkable as the discovery of Gradowski’s journal was, and the other gruesome discoveries the Soviet commission made, the Soviets chose not to use the camp as a major destination for foreign journalists. In August 1944, nothing much was happening on the front--in fact the Soviet armies had halted their advance in order to allow the Germans to crush the Warsaw uprising--and not only were many correspondents available to visit Maidanek, the concentration camp even provided a convenient decoy to detract western attention from the Soviet betrayal of the Polish underground army. Auschwitz was liberated just before the Yalta Conference. Exactly at the time that news of the liberation of Auschwitz reached Moscow, the allied leaders were gathered in the Crimea, and most western correspondents were there to cover the world-historical gathering. The moment the conference was over, they returned to the front to report on the enormous offensive which was to end with the conquest of Berlin. There was too much to cover, and the liberation of “another Maidanek” a couple of weeks

earlier was not merely “old news,” but also of considerable less interest than, for example, the conquest of the industrial area of Upper Silesia, the siege of Breslau, the surrender of Danzig, or the crossing of the Oder river.

Only in April, in the very last weeks of the war, did the concentration camps return to the frontpages of the press. With the liberation of Bergen-Belsen by British troops, and the liberation of Ohrdruf, Buchenwald and Dachau by the American army, for the first time large groups of western observers confronted the horrors of the camps, and within days pictures of mountains of emaciated corpses and starved inmates filled the newspapers and airwaves. The BBC program “War Report” aired on April 19 Richard Dimbleby’s report from Bergen-Belsen. “I picked my way over corpse after corpse in the gloom, until I heard one voice raised above the gentle undulating moaning. I found a girl, she was a living skeleton, impossible to gauge her age for she had practically no hair left, and her face was only a yellow parchment sheet with two holes in it for eyes. She was stretching out her stick of an arm and gasping something, it was “English, English, medicine, medicine,” and she was trying to cry but she hadn’t enough strength. And beyond her down the passage and in the hut there were the convulsive movements of dying people too weak to raise themselves from the floor. In the shade of some trees lay a great collection of bodies. I walked about them trying to count, there were perhaps 150 of them flung down on each other, all naked, all so thin that their yellow skin glistened like stretched rubber on their bones. Some of the poor starved creatures whose bodies were there looked so utterly unreal and inhuman that I could have imagined that they never lived at all. They were like polished skeletons, the skeletons that medical students like to play practical jokes with.”

“The British and Americans hailed the liberation of the camps as a proper and fitting capstone to their war effort,” Jon Bridgman wrote in his recent *The End of the Holocaust*. “From the very beginning they had

proclaimed that they were fighting against the evil of Naziism which if triumphed would usher in “a new Dark Age made more sinister by perverted science” [Churchill]. Liberation provided overwhelming evidence that the “New Dark Age” was no mere figure of speech. The deaths in battle of American and British soldiers were then invested with a kind of sanctity: after the opening of the camps who could say that they had died in vain?”

With the liberation of the western camps, the name Auschwitz became once more of interest. Many of the surviving inmates in Belsen and Buchenwald had arrived there relatively recently, having been evacuated in January from Auschwitz. As journalists began to interview the survivors, they heard again and again that Belsen and Buchenwald had not been the worst. “The worst camps were those at Auschwitz, in Silesia, and Lublin, Poland where many of Buchenwald residents had been at one time or another,” the American journalist Helen Kirkpatrick noted. A correspondent of the Polish Telegraph Agency, who had witnessed the liberation of Buchenwald, also cabled to his head office in London that, for all its apparent horrors, “Buchenwald is not among the worst of the concentration camps. It was a camp of slow death, of death by exhaustion, sickness and hunger.” And he quoted one of the liberated prisoners, who had also been an inmate in Auschwitz, that “by comparison with Oswiecim, Buchenwald was a paradise.” The American intelligence officer Saul K. Padover, who visited the camp shortly after liberation, recorded how he met among the prisoners a Polish high-school teacher from Kattowitz, located at some 30 miles from Auschwitz. “He had been through many camps, including the murder factory of Auschwitz(Oswiecim) where three million people, the majority of them Jewish men and women and children were gassed and then burned to death. The Pole, a Catholic, told it in a breaking voice, and as he talked he became hysterical and I had to put my hand on his shoulders to restrain him. “I saw them murder the

Jews. God Almighty, do you know what it means to see human beings burned to death? They were God's children, like us. God's children, like everybody, except the Germans."

On April 20, Radio Luxembourg's German-language "Story of the Day," prepared by a small group of German exiles serving the American army, carried an interview with an Auschwitz survivor who had been evacuated earlier that year first to Buchenwald and finally to in Ohrdruf. "Q.: "You were in the concentration camp Auschwitz?" A.: "Yes, I was in Auschwitz since June 30, 1944. Since then I was also for a shorter time in the concentration camps Buchenwald and Ohrdruf. I escaped with three comrades from Ohrdruf and was able to reach the American lines. Q.: "Can you tell us something more about Auschwitz?" A.: "Auschwitz was an extermination camp built by the Nazis. There between 12,000 and 20,000 people were killed on a daily basis." Q.: "Between 12,000 and 20,000?" A.: "Yes. One can say with certainty that the Nazis killed more people in Auschwitz and the other concentration camps than have fallen during this whole war at the frontlines." Q.: "Can you tell us how this terrible mass-extermiation took place?" A.: "Every day some transports arrived in Auschwitz, each of between 2,000 and 3,000 people. At their arrival they were divided into two groups: men and women. Each of these two groups was again subdivided into two. In the one group were those above 50 years old, and those who the SS doctors deemed to be unfit for work. In the other group were the younger and stronger people. Those who belonged to the group of over 50-year olds--and to this group also belonged the small children and mothers who did not want to be separated from their children --were immediately killed." Q.: "In what manner?" A.: "In Auschwitz were four enormous crematoria. Those condemned to death were led into these crematoria, had to undress themselves, and were gassed in a hall that was hermetically sealed. Then the corpses were incinerated in the same crematorium. The crematoria worked

day and night. During the day heavy clouds of smoke hang over the camp, and by night the flames of the crematoria gave the camp a sinister glare. One could not escape the smell of burnt flesh.”

The name “Auschwitz” turned up again and again. Members of the British Parliament, who had visited Buchenwald on invitation of General Eisenhower, were quoted in *The Times* of April, 28 that “[o]ne of the statements made to us most frequently by prisoners was that conditions in other camps, particularly those in Eastern Europe, were far worse than at Buchenwald.” “The worst camp of all was said by many to be at Auschwitz; these men all insisted on showing us their Auschwitz camp numbers, tattooed in blue on their left forearms.”

As the British Members of Parliament drafted their report, a special intelligence team of the Psychological Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces, headed by Lieutenant Albert G. Rosenberg, was busy interviewing former inmates in an effort to document the atrocities. They were assisted by a group of prisoners, headed by the Austrian journalist and economist Dr. Eugen Kogon. The team interviewed some 150 people, and gathered in the process a number of important testimonies about Auschwitz and other extermination camps in the East. It is important to note that, at the time that Rosenberg, Kogon and their colleagues took these testimonies, the Soviet commission had not yet published its results. One of witnesses was a fifteen-year old girl Janda Weiss, who had been deported to Birkenau a year earlier with a transport of 1,500 Jews from Theresienstadt. “Out of 1,500 people the camp doctor, SS Captain [Josef] Mengele, selected ninety-eight. I was among the “strong.” We immediately went into the camp; the rest of the family camp were gassed. In camp I became a helper in the kitchen. I visited the barracks of the Jewish work detail, which worked in the crematorium. These comrades told me about the horrors of the crematorium, where I would later work. After May 19 [1944] the Hungarian transports began arriving, with around 7,000 people daily. I will now describe the crematori-

ums and the transports. At the station 2,000 people got off the trains. They had to throw away all their luggage. Afterward the men and women were divided into two groups, at which the larger boys were assigned to the group with the men. Then the great devourer of Jews, Mengele, drove by in a car, seeking out the strongest from each transport. They numbered around thirty out of 2,000. The remainder were led away by SS Technical Sergeant Moll, the officer of the crematorium. The elderly were loaded onto dump trucks and then dumped into burning trenches while still alive. The remainder were led into the gas chambers. Meanwhile new transports were arriving. In front of the gas chamber was a dressing room. On its walls was written in all languages: "Put shoes into the cubbyholes and tie them together so you will not lose them. After the showers you will receive hot coffee." Here the poor victims undressed themselves and went into the chamber. There were three columns for the ventilators, through which the gas poured in. A special work detail with truncheons drove the people into the chamber. When the room was full, small children were thrown in through a window. Moll grabbed infants by their little legs and smashed their skulls against the wall. Then the gas was let into the chamber. The lungs of the victims slowly burst, and after three minutes a loud clamoring could be heard. Then the chamber was opened, and those who still showed signs of life were beaten to death. The prisoners of the special work details (*Sonderkommandos*) then pulled the corpses out, took their rings off, and cut their hair, which was gathered up, put in sacks, and shipped to factories. Then they arranged the corpses in piles of ten each. After Moll had counted them, they were taken to the ovens, or if the crematoriums were insufficient, thrown into fire trenches.... Once an Italian woman, a dancer, was brought to the crematorium. That drunken pig, the roll call officer Schillinger, ordered her to dance naked. She took advantage of a favorable moment, came near him, grabbed his pistol away from him, and shot him down. In the exchange of gunfire that followed, the SS won of course. Once Moll took a family of six. First he shot the youngest in the

presence of the rest, then he shot the older ones and finally the father and the mother. Thousands of women with shaved heads asked about their children and husbands. I lied to thousands of women, telling them that their loved ones were still alive, even though I knew very well that they were dead.”

The German Jew Walter Blass testified that Jews were not only subjected to selection on arrival. This procedure was also a regular occurrence for those imprisoned in the camp. “Selection--that was a terrifying word for every Jew in Auschwitz. It hung like the sword of Damocles over each Jew. All Jews who were injured at work or in bomb attacks, who had wounds (and how many flesh wounds there were!) or skin rashes, who had fever or malaria, who were afflicted by typhus, as well as the great number of undernourished, called “Muslims” [*Muselmänner*]-all, all of them, were murdered. Selections occurred at irregular intervals, sometimes after two or three months, then after four to five months, then again, as in January 1944, twice within two weeks. These last selections alone took from the men’s camps B II d in Birkenau 1,200 victims each, out of about 4,000 Jews, so around two-thirds of the Jewish prisoners were liquidated. At this time there were in Auschwitz and the immediate vicinity around thirty camps for men and two camps for women with varied number of prisoners. A total of 40 percent of the men and 60 to 70 percent of the women were murdered in January [1944]. If the SS doctor came with his staff, the cards had to be quickly altered (“non-Aryans” became “Aryans”). Jews had to undress completely and were quickly observed front to rear. Then, according to whim, they were sent to the right to record the prisoner number tattooed on the arm; that meant the death sentence. Or they were sent to the left, that is, back to the barracks; that meant a prolongation of life. When the “action” had been completed in the entire camp, those selected for death by gassing were transferred to the gassing barracks. There they were placed under especially strict guard, since they were “condemned to death.” Often they remained

there for two to three days, usually without food, since they were already considered to be “disposed of” [*abgesetzt*]. They remained in the throes of death, a death only these totally depraved Nazi beasts could think of.”

The interest in the camps generated by Belsen and Buchenwald and the various references appearing in the western press to Auschwitz offered the Polish government-in-exile a good opportunity to present the atrocities of Auschwitz to the western public. The first substantial report to appear after the liberation of Auschwitz was entitled “Polish Women in German Concentration Camps,” and it was published in the May 1, 1945 issue of the *Polish Fortnightly Review*. The article consisted of two eye-witness testimonies, some statistics, and a note on medical experiments in the women’s camp. The first testimony was entitled “An Eye-Witnesses’s Account of the Women’s Camp at Oswiecim-Brzezinka (Birkenau)--Autumn, 1943, to Spring, 1944,” and like all the other articles published in *The Polish Fortnightly Review*, it was anonymous. It is, however, clear that it was written shortly after the beginning of the Hungarian Action. “At the outset I want to say that the details given below are strictly true and authentic. They are not dictated by any desire for propaganda, by hatred, or by love of exaggeration. On the contrary, instead of making the picture more glaring, I shall try to tone it down, to make it more credible. For the reality I have to write about is so horrible that it is difficult to believe it. Yet it is reality, and believe my words as you would believe someone returned from the dead.” The report began with some figures. At the time the author escaped, the serial numbers of new inmates had gone up in the 80,000s, of whom some 65,000 had died. Most of the dead were Jewish women. Then the account discussed the conditions of work, the food, distinguishing marks, the camp administration, and a description of the physical lay-out of the camp itself. “Health and strength, honour and life--it is not sufficient to deprive the prisoners of these in order to consummate the work of dehumanizing them: the prisoners must be

robbed of their heart. Perhaps the greatest torment of a stay in the camp was the sight of the terrible tragedy of the Jews, which was open to all the camp to see. In Brzezinka there were six “chimneys,” or crematoria. They were never idle. Not an evening passes without the prisoners seeing flames leaping out of the broad chimneys, sometimes to a height of thirty feet. Not a day passes without heavy billows of smoke pouring from them. The cremating of the bodies of those who die in the camp is only a small part of the crematoria’s functions. They are intended for the living rather than the dead. And every day trains draw into the camp along the sideline bringing Jews from Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Poland, and until recently, from Russia. The trains bring men, women and children, and old people. Ten per cent of the women in each train are sent to the camp are given a number tattooed on them, a star on their clothing, and the numbers of those in the camp are thus increased. The others are sent straight to the gas chamber. The scenes which take place there defy all powers of description. But as ten per cent of the transports are brought to the camp amount to over thirty thousand Jewish women, what is the total figure of the victims whom the crematoria have consumed? It is terrible to think, terrible to watch when lorries pass through the Lagerstrasse, carrying four thousand children under ten years of age (children from the ghetto in Terezin in Bohemia) to their death. Some of them are weeping and calling “mummy,” others were laughing at the passers by and waving their hands. Fifteen minutes later not one of them was left alive, and the gas-stupefied little bodies were burning in the horrible furnaces. But who will believe that this is true? Yet I swear that it was so, calling on the living and the dead as my witnesses.” The second account only dealt with the living conditions in Birkenau, and this was followed by a table showing the monthly gassing rate of registered inmates in the women’s camp for 1943. The average number was a little over 1,600 persons per month.

On May 6 units of the American army liberated a concentration camp in Ebensee, Austria. One of the inmates was the 43-year-old painter David Olère. Born in Warsaw, Olère had moved to Paris in 1923 where he found work making posters and designing film sets. Arrested in February 1943, he had been deported to Auschwitz on March 2 of that year. He was assigned to the Sonderkommando of crematorium 3. A fellow Sonderkommando Don Paisikovic recalled after the war that among the few Sonderkommando who were not gassed was “a Parisian Jew named ‘Oler.’” “He was an artist and during the whole time that I knew the commando, his only task was to do paintings for the SS. He was excused from all other work of the Sonderkommando. We knew that apart from the exceptions mentioned, all the detainees of the ex-Sonderkommando were gassed.” Olère lived in the attic of crematorium 3, and observed both the building and its operation.

After his liberation Olère returned home to Paris. There he began to draw his memories: over 50 sketches done in 1945 and 1946. These sketches remained unknown until they were first exhibited in 1976. They provide a very important visual record of the design and operation of the gas chamber and the incinerators of crematorium 3, made before information about that building was published. The first two architectural sketches that are of great importance are pen drawings dated 1945 and 1946, and are “cleaned up” versions of pencil sketches made in 1945. One of them, done in 1945, provides a plan of crematorium 3, the second, done in 1946, a section. The plan is a composite of the basement level with the underground undressing room and the gas chamber which jotted out beyond the footprint of the building (left), and the ground floor with the incineration room with the 15 cremation ovens, the chimney, incinerator for identity papers, the coke store, and the SS guard rooms. Arrows indicate the functional relationship between the various rooms from the undressing room (1) people went through the vestibule (2) to the gas chamber (3) to be killed. SS men overseeing the operation could enter the basement by a separate

stairway connecting to the yard(13). After the gassing Sonderkommando moved the bodies to the elevator (4)which ascended to open into the incineration room (5), where other Sonderkommando filled the 15 incineration muffles of the ovens (0). The coke was brought with a truck running on a rails from the coke store(11) to the back of the ovens (0).Through five underground flues the smoke left the ovens to;the massive chimney (7) Olère's plan is fully corroborated by the plans that were found by the Russians in the building of the Central Construction Office, and which will be discussed below. One detail of particular importance which cannot be found on the blueprints recovered from the Auschwitz building archive is the staggered arrangement of the four hollow wire-mesh columns (marked 10) in the gas chamber (marked 3) through which the Zyklon-B was inserted into the room. As we will see below, there are various eye-witness accounts of these hollow columns, but they do not appear in the original blueprints as they were only added to the building shortly before completion. Olère's staggered arrangement is confirmed by air photos of Birkenau taken by the Americans on August 25,1944, and can be explained by assuming that these wire-mesh columns were attached on the west side of the first and fifth structural column that supported the roof of the gas chamber, and on the east side of the third and seventh structural column.

The corresponding section, drawn in 1946,is a complex drawing that shows much information in an economical manner. At the underground level Olère depicted the undressing room to the west or left (marked A), with on the extreme left the staircase that provided the principal access to this space. As the undressing room was not equipped with a ventilation system built-in the walls, it was equipped with metal ventilation ducts that were suspended from the ceiling. Olère also depicts the benches and the clothing hooks. To the east or right of undressing room is the vestibule with the corpse elevator to the ground floor (C), and the gas chamber (D). In order to represent the

gas chamber, which projected outwards to the north of the building at the back, and would have been hidden by the vestibule, Olère defied convention and turned it 90° from a south-north to a west-east axis, so that it is depicted under the incineration room (which had no basement). The most important information contained in this part of the drawing are the four hollow wire-mesh columns(E). For the section of the incineration hall Olère turned the five triple-muffle ovens 180° so that the muffles are visible. Important details are also to forced-air blowers to the side of each furnace, and; the coal truck which supplied the back of the furnaces with coal, while the corpses were loaded on the front.

In a number of other sketches, Olère provided additional information about crematorium 3. One drawing from 1945 shows crematorium 3 from the outside, with people filing into the compound from the road along the tracks, moving towards the end of the undressing room. A second sketch, dated 1946, shows the interior of the undressing room, with the benches, hooks, and the ventilation system. A third drawing shows the interior of the gas chamber with Sonderkommando collecting gold teeth and the hair of the women. In the back is depicted one of the hollow wire-mesh columns. Finally a fourth drawing shows the incineration hall with at the back, the corpse elevator that connects the basement level to the ground floor. The information in all of these drawings were to be corroborated in the testimony of the Sonderkommando Henryk Tauber(see below)and the blueprints found in the Central Construction Office (see below). None of these drawings could have been made on the basis of published material, as it was simply not available at the time.

Two other drawings are of interest. One, dated 1945 shows bunker 2--a peasant cottage transformed into a gas chamber in 1942, taken out of commission in 1943, and brought back into operation during the Hungarian Action. It shows not only bunker 2, but also the undressing barrack in its correct position vis-a-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 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.

The second drawing depicts the execution of women and children at the edge of an incineration pit behind crematorium 5. It shows, to the left, crematorium 5 depicted again archaeologically correct, with to the far end the higher shed with the incineration rooms with the two chimneys, and closer to the main scene the lower wing with the gas chambers. Olère depicted again one of the small windows with the heavy wooden shutters. Drawn from memory, the elevation of the gas chamber is not perfect: the short side contained in reality a door and two of these Zyklon-B insertion points. But in its essentials Olère's representation is correct: the crematorium was a higher shed with two chimneys to which was attached a lower wing with small highly placed windows closed with heavy shutters.

On the same day that the Americans liberated Olère, May 6, 1945, the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of Fascist and Nazi Crimes issued its findings, which were made available to the press a day later by the Soviet News Agency Tass. The Soviet Embassy in Washington D.C. published the English version of the whole report on May 29, 1945 under the lengthy title "Statement of the Extraordinary State Committee For the Ascertaining and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders and Their Associates On Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders in the Oswiecim Death Camp." The report began with the statement that, on the basis of the interviews with the former inmates, study of German documents found, and inspection of the remains of the crematoria, the commis-

sion had come to the conclusion that “One: By execution, starvation, poisoning, and monstrous tortures, the Germans annihilated in Oswiecim camp more than four million citizens of the Soviet Union, Poland, France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary and other countries. Two: German professors and doctors conducted in the camp so-called medical experiments on living men, women and children. Three: In the degree of premeditation, technical organization, and mass scale and cruelty of murder, the Oswiecim camp leaves far behind all German camps known hitherto. The Oswiecim camp had gas chambers, a crematorium, and crematoria, surgical departments and laboratories--all designed for the monstrous annihilation of people. The Germans called the gas chambers “special purpose baths.” On the entrance to the “bath” was written “For Disinfection,” and at the exit “Entrance to the baths.” People earmarked for annihilation thus unsuspectingly entered the premises for disinfection, undressed and from there were herded into the special purpose bath--that is, into the gas chambers where they were wiped out by cyclone poison. Special hospitals, surgical wings, histological laboratories and other installations were established in the camp not to heal people, but to kill them. German professors and doctors carried out wholesale experiments on perfectly healthy men, women and children in these institutions. They conducted experiments in sterilizing women and castrating men and boys, in infecting large numbers of people with cancer, typhus and malaria, conducting observations upon them; they tested the action of poisons on them.”

Following these introductory paragraphs, the report presented the issues raised in greater detail. First of all it provided a short account of the development of the camp, in which it gave prominence to the role of the firm Topf & Sons, suppliers of incineration equipment. The report mentioned that the Soviets had recovered a large correspondence between Topf and the camp administration, and it printed two letters as evidence--letters which, in the translation from German to Russian,

and back to German, lost some of their original meaning. “ I.A. Topf & Sons Erfurt February 12, 1943. Central Construction SS and Police, Auschwitz (Oswiecim) Re: Crematoriums Two and Three of camp for war prisoners. We confirm receipt of your telegram of February 10 of the following content: We again confirm receipt of your order for five triple muffle furnaces, including two electric lifts for hoisting corpses and one temporary lift for corpses. Also ordered are a practical device for feeding coal, and a device for transporting ashes. You have to deliver complete installation for crematorium No.3. We expect you to take all steps for immediate shipment of all machines and parts. Installation must absolutely begin functioning on April 10,1943. I.A. Topf and Sons. No. 12, 115/42/er/na 2 With regard to the installation of two triple muffle ovens; one each for the “special purpose baths,” engineer Pruefer has proposed taking them from furnaces prepared for shipment to Mogilev. The head of the Service Section of the SS Economic Administration of the Central Department in Berlin was immediately notified of this and requested to issue further instruction. SS-Untersturmführer (S) Oswiecim, August 21, 1942.”

A page-long description followed of the gas chambers and incinerators. The report estimated that the Germans were able to kill and burn between 10,000 and 12,000 people per day--that is between 8,000 and 10,000 arriving deportees and between 2,000 and 3,000 inmates. It quoted surviving Sonderkommando Dragon and Tauber, and repeated the assertion that the crematoria could incinerate between 10,000 and 12,000 corpses per day.

The next parts of the report considered various issues: 1. the medical experiments; 2. the constant arrivals of transports from all over Europe --between three to five trains a day, each carrying between 1,500 and 3,000 deportees. The Germans selected from each train between 300 and 500 for work, and killed the remainder; 3. the exploitation of labour at IG Farben in such a way that people were completely expendable in a terrible “moving belt of death “; 4. the murder

of hundreds of thousands of children; 5. the liquidation of intellectuals and scientists from all over Europe. 6. the mass plunder of possessions of the deportees: the report included an accurate accounting of the remaining loot found in the camp--348,820 men's suits, 836,255 women's coats and dresses, 5,525 women's shoes, 38,000 men's shoes, 13,964 carpets and so on--apart from seven railway wagons filled with another 514,843 garments ready for shipment to Germany, and 293 bags with women's hair weighing 7,000 kilos, and having probably belonged to 140,000 women.

The penultimate section of the report dealt with the German attempt to obliterate the traces of their crimes by destroying all documents concerning the number of people put to death in the Auschwitz camp. Yet the commission determined, on the basis of the remains of the crematoria, the testimonies of prisoners and other witnesses, and various documents that millions of people were annihilated, poisoned and burned in Auschwitz. Most important in their determination of the number of victims was their assessment of the capacity of the crematoria. Crematorium 1, so it was estimated, had had a monthly incineration capacity of 9,000 corpses. Having been in operation for 24 months, it was assumed that it had had a burning capacity of 216,000 bodies. Crematoria 2 and 3 were estimated to each have had a monthly capacity of 90,000 corpses. As they had been in operation for 19 and 18 months, they would have been able to incinerate together a total of 3,330,000 corpses. Crematoria 4 and 5 were estimated at 45,000 bodies per month, and as they had been in function for 17 and 18 months, they had together over that time a cremation capacity of 1,575,000 bodies. In total the five crematoria would have been able to burn, at least in theory, 5,121,000 bodies. Added to that was an extra capacity provided by the pyres. "Making allowances for possible undercapacity operation of the crematoriums and stoppages, however, the Commission of technical experts established that during the existence of the Oswiecim camp the German executioners killed in it no less than four

million citizens of the USSR., Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Holland, Belgium, and other countries.” The report ended with putting the blame squarely on the shoulders of the German government.

The Soviet investigation done by the Prosecution Office of the First Ukrainian Front had been short, and hurried, as the Army Group to which it belonged was at the time involved in heavy fighting: the conquest of Silesia, the siege of Breslau, and the final “Battle for Berlin” had a substantially higher priority than a forensic investigation in what quickly became the army rear. Yet, compared to the Polevoi account, the new report heralded an important step forward, and Polevoi’s description of an extermination machine, that consisted of an “electric conveyor belt, on which hundreds of people were simultaneously electrocuted, their bodies falling onto the slow moving conveyor belt which carried them to the top of the blast furnace where they fell in,” was relegated to the dustbin of history. In general, the description of the operation of the camp and the life of the inmates was to be confirmed by the more careful investigations of the ensuing years.

Yet the report contained one very monumental error: the assertion that at least four million people had been murdered at Auschwitz. This figure was based on what was an admittedly quick and crude calculation of the supposed incineration capacity of the crematoria. Yet there were also other factors that influenced this assessment. Most importantly of all, the forensic investigation in Auschwitz was done in the wake of the publication of the Maidanek report, and according to the latter the Germans had killed about 1.5 million people in Maidanek. As we have seen it would take two years before this figure was revised downward to 360,000 victims. In 1945 Maidanek provided the measurestick to estimate the number of victims of Auschwitz, and in every aspect the latter camp was considerably larger. The six completed compounds of Maidanek held 144 barracks; the main compounds of Birkenau held more than twice that number, to which could be added

the camp at Auschwitz I, the camp at Monowitz, and the many satellite camps. In Maidanek the crematorium had five ovens; the four crematoria in Birkenau had nine times as many. Given these statistics, the commission, without any substantial data about the number of transports that had arrived at the camp, was inclined to see the number of victims as a multiple of that of Maidanek.

The response to the revelation was limited. There were many other things on people's minds. In the West, the main news concerned the collapse and official surrender of the German Reich, the chaos everywhere, and the political re-arrangement of Europe. As far as the concentration camps were concerned, attention remained focussed on the camps liberated by the English and the Americans--most specifically Bergen Belsen and Dachau. While striking visual material from these camps and the deeply emotional observations of journalists and soldiers continued to remain directly available to the media, the English-language version of the Soviet report contained only one small picture showing a close-up of the bodies of Auschwitz victims.

While the media turned their backs to the camps to report on the issues of the day, serious forensic investigations at Auschwitz acquired momentum. The camp became one of the chief objects of study by the Polish Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. The commission, fashioned after the model of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission, was given responsibility for producing a full account of all the Nazi crimes in Poland. Judging its work by today's standards, one must admit that it tried to establish historical truth with remarkable scholarly professionalism and following due legal form. In the foreword to the publication of the first reports, the commission took justifiable pride in the fact that they had worked "according to the principles which are valid in all judicial proceedings--i.e. impartiality, proper caution in collecting evidence, and careful veri-

fication of witnesses 'statements.' As to the reports themselves, the commission stated that "only data of unquestioned evidential value were considered fit for publication."

The commission applied a great transparency of method, and a general willingness to state the limitations of knowledge. In the case of Treblinka the commission admitted that "an accurate calculation of the number of victims is at present impossible." "It will be remembered that Treblinka ceased its activities in the autumn of 1943, so that the German authorities had enough time to wipe the traces of their crimes. The most reliable method of counting the number of victims is by counting the number of trainloads. The figures based on the dimensions of the gas chambers give no guarantee whatever of accuracy, as we do not know, firstly, how often the gas chambers were used, and, secondly, the number of people who, on average, were gassed at any one time. In establishing the number of train-loads, the commission based its findings on the evidence given by witnesses, laying special stress on the statements of railway workers and on the railway records from Treblinka station, which are in the possession of the commission of enquiry." The commission established that between the middle of August 1942 and the middle of December 1942 at least one train arrived every day at the camp, and that the average number of wagons in those trains was 50. From the middle of December to the middle of May, 1943, the average was one train per week. As a result, "the total number of wagon-loads of victims from August 1, 1942 to May 15, 1943 may be taken, with some certainty, to have been 7,550." In the late summer of 1943 another 266 wagons arrived. Taking an average load of 100 persons per wagon, the Polish commission came to a "probable" figure of 731,600 victims. And they added that, taking into consideration the great caution with which the investigators assessed the number of train-loads and the average number of persons per wagon, this must be accepted as probable, that in actual fact the number of victims was even larger." They were right. Careful and methodic re-

search on the German liquidation of the Jewish communities in Poland, done in the years that followed, showed that in total 856,190 Jews were sent to Treblinka. Very few survived.

In Auschwitz the highly competent and scrupulous Judge Dr. Jan Sehn of the Cracow court led on behalf of the commission a very thorough, year-long forensic and historical investigation in Auschwitz. In this process he and his colleagues questioned and re-questioned many witnesses, amongst which the surviving Sonderkommandos Dragon and Tauber, who had already testified for the Soviet-Polish commission, and Alter Feinsilber (alias Stanislaw Jankowski), who had only been able to return to Poland after the Soviet-Polish commission had completed its work.

Jankowski was the first Sonderkommando to testify before Sehn's commission. On April 16 he was questioned in Cracow by Sehn's deputy, Edward Pechalski. Jankowski explained that he fought in Spain on the Republican side, and that after the fall of Barcelona he had crossed into France, where he had been interned. After the German invasion he escaped, ended up in Paris, where he was arrested as a Jew, interned in Drancy, to be deported to Auschwitz in March 1942. After an initial stay in Birkenau he was transferred to Auschwitz, where he worked in a carpentry shop. In November 1942 Jankowski was detailed to work in crematorium 1. At that time, the gas chamber of crematorium 1 was only sporadically used for killing people, having reverted back to its original function as a morgue. "The only gassing I knew about had taken place in November or December 1942. Over three hundred and ninety persons were then gassed, all of them Jews of various nationalities, employed in the Sonderkommando at Birkenau. The gassing took place in the Leichenhalle. I heard from people working in the crematorium that before that gassing several other actions of that kind had taken place in the same Leichenhalle and in several rooms in the crematorium. Thanks to my own observations I know the following details of the gassing of that Sonderkom-

mando. I was already employed in the crematorium at that time. We got the order to clear the Leichenhalle which was to be used for a larger transport. As there were many corpses collected in the mortuary at that time, we worked two days and two nights and cremated all corpses. I remember that after the mortuary had been cleared on Wednesday at about 11 a.m. Those three hundred and ninety odd from Birkenau were brought into the yard under a strong escort of SS men (two SS men for every five prisoners). We, Jews, were told to leave the mortuary and to go to the coke store. When we were permitted to return to the yard after some time, we found there only the clothes of those prisoners. Then we were ordered to pass to the Leichenhalle where we found the corpses. After writing down the camp numbers of the gassed prisoners we had to carry the corpses to the cremators.”

In July 1943 Jankowski was transferred to Birkenau, to join the squad of 120 prisoners that operated crematorium 5. According to Jankowski, crematoria 2 and 3 each had an incineration capacity of 2,500 corpses, while crematoria 4 and 5 could burn 1,500 each. “At first prisoners were brought to Birkenau from the Auschwitz station by cars. They were told at the station that those who were weak or unwell could get into cars and would be brought thus to the camp. Many people believed this and in many cases they were young and healthy. All those who had come by cars went to be gassed. Moreover, old people, pregnant women and children were selected in each transport and they were also gassed. Circa 50% of each transport went to be gassed. At that time transports of Greek Jews were arriving (about 50,000), transports of French Jews (every two weeks circa 1,000 persons from the famous camp in France), Belgians, Dutchmen (circa 15,000), Germans, Italians (circa 20,000), large transports of Slovakian and Polish Jews. I remember that one week only 35,000 Jews from Katowice, Bedzin and Sosnowiec arrived to be gassed. Also Jews from Cracow went to be gassed. The Jews from Theresienstadt did not go straight to gas chambers. They were, at first, put in the families’ camp

and were gassed precisely 6 months after their arrival. The first transport from Theresienstadt consisted of about 3,500 persons; all of them were gassed and cremated in the crematorium. Moreover, several less numerous groups of Poles, who were arrested charged with affiliation to political organizations, were gassed and cremated at Birkenau. I remember the cremating of a group of 250 persons, belonging to the Union of Armed Fighting, the leader of which was a woman, Ela, I did not learn her surname. I state that all these people were cremated without having been entered in the records. And so, too, all those who went straight to be gassed at Birkenau were not registered, both old people and women, children, above all, also all those who professed to be ill. The number of those who were not registered in the camp and who were cremated in the cremators at any rate surpassed many times the number of prisoners with camp numbers. Only those who were selected from the camp went to the cremators. The number of unregistered persons who were cremated amounts to several millions.”

Later in his deposition Jankowski came back to this issue. “I have to stress here that only persons destined to do various kinds of work were included in the registers of prisoners’ strength and were given camp numbers. No camp numbers were given and no registering was effected both in the cases of all those who went straight to the gas from transports and of those who for some considerations were not liquidated at once but, being beforehand destined for cremation, awaited their turn to come in special places of isolation.”

Jankowski also testified that he had witnessed the incident in which a female deportee killed *SS Oberscharführer* Schillenger--an event which, a few days later, Janda Weiss would describe in some detail in her deposition given in Buchenwald. According to Jankowski, the zenith of killing occurred during the Hungarian Action. “It was in July 1944, I should think, that the first transport of Hungarians had arrived. This was the first transport to be conveyed in vans as far as the crematoria, using the railway siding built expressly for that purpose. The unload-

ing ramp was situated opposite crematoria 2 and 3, more or less-halfway between camps C and D. At that time about 18,000 Hungarians were daily murdered at Birkenau. Circa 30% of the then arriving transports, which kept coming one after another all day long, were selected to be put in the camp. They were registered in series A and B. The rest were gassed and cremated in the crematoria ovens. If the number of persons to be gassed was not sufficiently large, they would be shot and burned in pits. It was a rule to use the gas chamber for groups of more than 200 persons, as it was not worth while to put the gas chamber in action for a smaller number of persons. It happened that some prisoners offered resistance when about to be shot at the pit or that children would cry and then Oberscharführer Moll would throw them alive into the flames of the pits. I was eye-witness of the following incidents: Moll told a naked woman to sit down on the corpses near the pit and while he himself shot prisoners and threw their bodies into the flaming pit he ordered her to jump about and sing. She did so, in the hope, of course, of thus saving her life, perhaps. When he had shot them all he also shot this woman and her corpse was cremated.” Kankowski’s statements provided a solid basis for Sehn’s investigation. They were to be corroborated in the testimonies and confessions taken in the two years that followed.

On May 10 Sehn took the testimony of Dragon concerning the operation of Bunker 2, the gas chamber in the grove of birch forests that had been the site of most of the mass killings in the second half of 1942 and the first months of 1943. As we have seen earlier, Dragon became a Sonderkommando in December 1942, and he was put to work at Bunker 2 to haul the bodies of those killed from the gas chambers into the yard. “We were all given masks, and were led through the door into the cottage. Moll opened the door, and only then could we see that the cottage was full of naked corpses of both sexes and all ages. Moll ordered us to remove these corpses from the cottage through the door to the yard. We started work with four men carrying one body. This an-

noyed Moll. He rolled up his sleeves, and threw a body through the door into the yard. When, despite this example, we said we were incapable of doing that, he detailed two of us to carry each body. Once the corpses were in the yard, a dental technician, assisted by an SS man, pulled out the teeth A barber, also watched by an SS man, shaved off the hair....After having removed all the bodies from the cottage, we had to clean it thoroughly, wash the floor with water, spread it with sawdust, and whitewash the walls. The interior of the cottage was divided into four rooms by partition walls. One, in which one could house 1200 naked people, the second with a capacity of 700, the third of 400, and the fourth with a capacity of between 200 and 250." Dragon told how he was later transferred to Crematorium 5, where he worked in the garden, and was employed cutting lumber in the adjacent forest. During the Hungarian action he was once more employed to remove bodies from the gas chambers of Crematorium 5. These rooms, which were attached in an annex to the main building itself, resembled in many ways the arrangement of Bunker 2. Also the procedure was similar, with an SS throwing Zyklon B crystals through a little window located in the outer wall of the gas chambers. Only in this case the window had been created at such height that one needed a small ladder to reach it. After the gassing Moll opened the doors of the gas chambers. "We put on our gas masks and pulled the bodies out of the various rooms through a short corridor into the undressing room and from there, once more through a short corridor, to the ovens. In the first vestibule, the one with the entrance doors, the barbers shaved the heads, in the second the dentists removed the teeth. In front of the ovens we put the bodies on an iron stretcher, which then were inserted into the ovens by means of iron rolls fixed to the ovens. We put the bodies on the stretchers in such a way that the first was head first, and both other corpses were with their heads to the back. In each oven we put three bodies at a time. By the time the third was put in, the first already started to burn. I saw how the hands of the corpses lifted, and later also the feet. In general we had to hurry, however, and could not observe the

whole process of incineration. We had to hurry because, when the end of the burning corpses began to rise, we often got problems in inserting the third corpse. We handled the stretcher in such a way that two inmates lifted the side that was farthest away from the oven and one at the end that was inserted first into the oven. After we moved the stretcher in one of the inmates held the corpse back with a long iron pole. We called it a rake with its end turned. The two others then pulled the stretcher out from under the dead.” Cremation lasted for 15 to 20 minutes, and after that time they just opened the door and inserted new bodies. In a three month period during the summer of 1944 the ovens were worked in two shifts, one from 6.30 am to 6.30 pm, and one from 6.30 pm to 6.30 am.

Remains at the site corroborated Dragon’s account, and on orders of Jan Sehn the local engineer M.Nosal, himself an ex-inmate of the camp, drew up detailed drawings that showed the lay-out of Bunker 2, the site plan with the undressing barracks, Bunker 2, the tracks, and the four incineration pits.

Dragon was precise and reliable when he talked about what he had witnessed in person. But he proved less reliable as an accountant. When on 17 May he was asked about the total number of Jews killed in Auschwitz, he answered that he was unable to give a precise number. “I think the total number gassed in the two bunkers and the four crematoria exceeded 4 million.”

One week after examining Dragon, Sehn interrogated the 28-year old former Sonderkommando Henry Tauber. If Dragon had been able to provide evidence about Bunker 2 and crematoria 4 and 5, Tauber had worked in crematorium 2. Tauber was very hesitant to estimate how many people had been gassed. “At present, I am incapable of giving the exact number of all the people gassed and incinerated in the Krematorien and the pits. Some of the men working in the Krematorium noted individually and in secret the figures and the most dramatic events

concerning the gassed persons. These notes were buried in different places close to the Krematorien. Some were dug up during the stay of the Soviet Commission and the Soviets took them away.” Yet in the end he was prepared to state that, during the period that he worked the crematoria(February 1943 to October 1944), two million people had been gassed. And he added that “during my time in Auschwitz, I was able to talk to various prisoners who had worked in the Krematorien and the bunkers before my arrival. They told me that I was not among the first to do this work, and that before I came another 2 million people had already been gassed in Bunkers 1 and 2 and Krematorium 1.” And he concluded that,”adding up, the total number of people gassed in Auschwitz amounted to about 4 million.”

Distinguishing clearly between what he accepted on the basis of his own observations, and what he accepted on hearsay, Tauber showed himself a reliable witness. Indeed, his testimony proved very important: his very long, and very detailed account of the operation of crematorium 1, where he worked from early February 1943 until March 4, crematorium 2, and crematorium 4 is almost wholly corroborated by the German blueprints of the buildings. Because of its importance, I will print significant parts of Tauber’s deposition.

Tauber told that he arrived in Auschwitz on 19 January 1943, and initially he was billeted in sector B1b. At the beginning of February Tauber and 19 other inmates were transferred to the main camp to work in crematorium 1. After a pep talk by an SS man who told them that they better get accustomed to some unpleasant work, the group was brought to the “bunker” or the morgue/gas chamber filled with hundreds of corpses. They dragged these corpses to the furnace room. There they were instructed to load a truck that ran on rails with the corpses. “Its strong frame was in the form of a box, and to make it heavier we weighted it with stones and scrap metal. The upper part was extended by a metal slide over two meters long. We put five corpses on this: first we put two with the legs towards the furnace and

the belly upwards, then two more the other way round but still with the belly upwards, and finally we put the fifth one with the legs towards the furnace and the back upwards. The arms of this last one hung down and seemed to embrace the other bodies below. The weight of such a load sometimes exceeded that of the ballast, and in order to prevent the trolley from tipping up and spilling the corpses we had to support the slide by slipping a plank underneath it. Once the slide was loaded, we pushed it into the muffle. Once the corpses were introduced into the furnace, we held them there by means of a metal box that slid on top of the charging slide, while other prisoners pulled the trolley back, leaving the corpses behind. There was a handle at the end of the slide for gripping and pulling back the sliding box. Then we closed the door. In crematorium 1, there were three, two-muffle furnaces, as I have already mentioned. Each muffle could incinerate five human bodies. Thirty corpses could be incinerated at the same time in this crematorium. At the time when I was working there, the incineration of such a charge took up to an hour and a half, because they were the bodies of very thin people, real skeletons, which burned very slowly. I know from the experience gained by observing cremation in Krematorien 2 and 3 that the bodies of fat people burn very much faster. The process of incineration is accelerated by the combustion of human fat which thus produces additional heat.”

Tauber went on to describe the lay-out of crematorium 1 in early 1943. At the back of the incineration room were a coke storage room and a store for urns. On inspection of the building in 1945, Tauber noted that the arrangement had changed: the door that connected in 1945 the “bunker” (morgue/gas chamber) and the furnace room had obviously been a new addition. “When I was working in crematorium 1, that door did not exist.” The only entrance to the furnace room had been through the vestibule. That same vestibule gave access to a store room, which at times was used as an undressing room. “The men from small transports, brought by truck, used to undress there. When I was working at

crematorium 1, they were shot in the bunker of the crematorium (the part of the building where they gassed people known as the “bunker”). Such transports arrived once or twice a week and comprised 30 to 40 people. They were of different nationalities. During the executions, we, the members of the *Sonderkommando* were shut up in the coke store. Then we would find the bodies of the shot people in the bunker. All the corpses had a firearm wound in the neck. The executions were always carried out by the same SS man from the Political Section, accompanied by another SS from the same Section who made out the death certificates for those shot.” Tauber told how access to the “bunker” was through a second room that opened to the vestibule. As the longer-serving members of the *Sonderkommando* told him, this “bunker” had been previously been used for gassing people, but when Tauber worked in crematorium 1 he only witnessed shootings in that space.

One of the odd things Tauber noted that while he was at work in crematorium 1, his group was actually designated “*Kommando Krematorium II*.” On March 4 everything became clear, when the whole group was sent to Birkenau to operate crematorium 2. “We had been sent there for one month’s practical training in crematorium 1 in order to prepare us for working in crematorium 2.” “Crematorium 2 had a basement where there was an undressing room and a bunker, or in other words a gas chamber (Leichenkeller/corpse cellar). To go from one cellar to the other, there was a corridor in which there came from the exterior a (double) stairway and a slide for throwing the bodies that were brought to the camp to be incinerated in the crematorium. People went through the door of the undressing room into the corridor, then from there through a door on the right into the gas chamber. A second stairway running from the grounds of the crematorium gave access to the corridor. To the left of this stairway, in the corner, there was a little room where hair, spectacles and other effects were stored. On the right there was another small room used as a store for cans of Zyklon-B. In the right corner of the corridor, on the wall facing the door from the

undressing room, there was a lift to transport the corpses. People went from the crematorium yard to the undressing room via a stairway, surrounded by iron rails. Over the door there was a sign with the inscription “*Zum Baden und Desinfektion*” (to bath and disinfection), written in several languages. In the undressing room, there were wooden benches and numbered clothes hooks along the walls. There were no windows and the lights were on all the time. The undressing room also had water taps and drains for the waste water. From the undressing room people went into the corridor through a door above which was hung a sign marked “*Zum Bade*”, repeated in several languages. I remember the [Russian] word “*banya*” was there too. From the corridor they went through the door on the right into the gas chamber. It was a wooden door, made of two layers of short pieces of wood arranged like parquet. Between these layers there was a single sheet of material sealing the edges of the door and the rabbets of the frame were also fitted with sealing strips of felt. At about head height for an average man this door had a round glass peephole. On the other side of the door, i.e. on the gas chamber side, this opening was protected by a hemispherical grid. This grid was fitted because the people in the gas chamber, feeling they were going to die, used to break the glass of the peep-hole. But the grid still did not provide sufficient protection and similar incidents recurred. The opening was blocked with a piece of metal or wood. The people going to be gassed and those in the gas chamber damaged the electrical installations, tearing the cables out and damaging the ventilation equipment. The door was closed hermetically from the corridor side by means of iron bars which were screwed tight. The roof of the gas chamber was supported by concrete pillars running down the middle of its length. On either side of these pillars there were four others, two on each side. The sides of these pillars, which went up through the roof, were of heavy wire mesh. Inside this grid, there was another finer mesh and inside that a third of very fine mesh. Inside this last mesh cage there was a removable can that was pulled out with a wire to recover the pellets from which the gas had evaporated. Be-

sides that, in the gas chamber there were electric wires running along the two sides of the main beam supported by the central concrete pillars. The ventilation was installed in the walls of the gas chamber. Communication between the room and the ventilation installation proper was through small holes along the top and bottom of the side walls. The lower openings were protected by a kind of muzzle, the upper ones by whitewashed perforated metal plates. The ventilation system of the gas chamber was coupled to the ventilation ducts installed in the undressing room. This ventilation system, which also served the dissection room, was driven by electric motors in the roof space of the crematorium. The water tap was in the corridor and a rubber hose was run from it to wash the floor of the gas chamber. At the end of 1943, the gas chamber was divided in two by a brick wall to make it possible to gas smaller transports. In the dividing wall there was a door identical to that between the corridor and the original gas chamber. Small transports were gassed in the chamber furthest from the entrance from the corridor. The undressing room and the gas chamber were covered first with a concrete slab then with a layer of soil sown with grass. There were four small chimneys, the openings through which the gas was thrown in, that rose above the gas chamber. These openings were closed by concrete covers with two handles. Over the undressing room, the ground was higher than the level of the yard and perfectly flat. The ventilation ducts led to the pipes and the chimneys located in the part of the building above the corridor and undressing room. I would point out that at first the undressing room had neither benches nor clothes hooks and there were no showers in the gas chamber. These fittings were not installed until autumn 1943 in order to camouflage the undressing room and gas chamber as a bathing and disinfestation facility. The showers were fitted to small blocks of wood sealed into the concrete roof of the gas chamber. There were no pipes connected to these showers, from which no water ever flowed. As I have already said, there was a lift in the corridor or rather a goods hoist. A temporary hoist was installed pending delivery of the electric lift to carry the

corpses to the ground floor.” It is important to note that Tauber’s description of the basement level of crematorium 2 is fully corroborated by the surviving blueprints of the crematorium. These will be discussed in greater detail in Part Three of this report.

Tauber also gave a detailed description of the ground floor--an account that is likewise confirmed by the architectural drawings. The lift, he told Sehn, had two exits at this level. One led to the autopsy rooms, the other into the large furnace hall with its five triple-muffle ovens. “It was possible to put five human corpses in each muffle, which was closed by an iron door bearing the inscription ‘Topf.’ Beneath each muffle, there was a space for a bin to collect the ashes, also closed by an iron door made by the same firm.” Behind the furnaces were the pits with the fire boxes and the coke storage. To the back of the incineration hall were rooms reserved for the SS, the chief capo, and the doctor. “A stairway led up to the roof space, where there was a dormitory for the men working in the *Sonderkommando* and, at the end, the electric motors for the lift and the ventilation system.” “Facing the entrance gate to the crematorium grounds, in the centre of the building, was a wing in which rubbish was burnt in an incinerator. It was called “*Müllverbrennung*.” It was separate, reached by going down a stairway. It was surrounded by an iron platform and was coal fired. The entrance to the waste incinerator wing faced the crematorium access gate. This wing had, in addition to its entrance door with a transom window over it, two windows, one on the right and one on the left of the entrance. In the left corner of the entrance, there was an opening through which, from a walled-off area on the outside, the objects to be burned were passed inside. The incineration hearth for these things was to the left of the entrance and the firebox on the right. I would point out that it was in this particular furnace that the documents of the Political Section of the camp were always burned. From time to time, the SS would bring whole truckloads of papers, documents and files that had to be burned under their control. During the incineration of these papers, I

noticed great stacks of records of dead people and death notices. We were not able to take any of these documents because we were operating under the close and direct surveillance of the SS. Behind the waste incinerator, at the end of the wing, was a chimney for all the cremation furnaces and the incinerator. At first, there were around this chimney three electric motors used for the draught. Because of the heat given off and the proximity of the incinerator, these motors often broke down. There was even a fire on one occasion. Because of these problems, they were later removed and the smoke flues of the cremation furnaces were connected directly to the chimney. A door allowed passage between the waste incinerator wing and the part where the chimney was. This part being slightly higher, it was reached by a few steps. After the motors were removed, some wash basins for the Sonderkommando were installed next to the chimney....In the roof space above the waste incinerator wing, the hair cut from the victims was dried, tossed and put in sacks which were subsequently taken away by truck.”

Tauber continued with a very detailed account of the incineration procedure “As I have already said, there were five furnaces in crematorium 2, each with three muffles for cremating the corpses and heated by two coke-fired hearths. The fire flues of these hearths came out above the ash boxes of the two side muffles. Thus the flames went first round the two side muffles then heated the centre one, from where the combustion gases were led out below the furnace, between the two firing hearths. Thanks to this arrangement, the incineration process for the corpses in the side muffles differed from that of the centre muffle. The corpses of “*Müselmanns*” or of wasted people with no fat burned rapidly in the side muffles and slowly in the centre one. Conversely, the corpses of people gassed directly on arrival, not being wasted, burned better in the centre muffle. During the incineration of such corpses, we used the coke only to light the fire of the furnace initially, for fatty corpses burned of their own accord thanks to the combustion of the body fat. On occasion, when coke was in short supply, we would put some straw and wood in the ash bins under the muffles, and once the

fat of the corpse began to burn the other corpses would catch light themselves. There were no iron components inside the muffle. The bars were of chamotte, for iron would have melted in the furnace, which reached 1,000 to 1,200° Celsius. These chamotte bars were arranged crosswise. The dimensions of the door and the opening of the muffles were smaller than the inside of the muffle itself, which was 2 meters long, 80 centimeters wide and about 1 meter high. Generally speaking, we burned 4 or 5 corpses at a time in one muffle, but sometimes we charged a greater number of corpses. It was possible to charge up to 8 “*Müselmanns*.” Such big charges were incinerated without the knowledge of the head of the crematorium during air raid warnings in order to attract the attention of airmen by having a bigger fire emerging from the chimney. We imagined that in that way it might be possible to change our fate. The iron components, in particular fire bars, still to be found in the camp, were from the fireboxes. Crematorium 2 had fire bars of heavy angle iron. Crematoria 4 and 5 were fitted with fire bars in the form of a lance, or rather were like swords with handles.” After the description of the installation, Tauber recalled how on the first day, 4 March, they operated the ovens in the presence of observers from the Political Section, representatives of the Berlin headquarters, and engineers of Topf. For this occasion, the Political department had taken care to provide 45 bodies of well-fed victims recently killed in Bunker 2. “Via the lift and the door leading to the furnace room, we took out the bodies and placed them two or three at a time on trolleys of the type I described for crematorium 1 and charged them into the different muffles. As soon as all the muffles of the five furnaces had been charged, the members of the commission began to observe the operation, watch in hand. They opened the muffle doors, looked at their watches, expressed surprise at the slowness of the cremation process. In view of the fact that the furnaces were not yet hot enough, even though we had been firing them since the morning, and because they were brand new, the incineration of this charge took about 40 minutes.” Tauber went on to explain that later on incineration

became more efficient, and they could incinerate two loads per hour. In fact, the Sonderkommando tried to overload the muffles, because this would allow them some free time. "According to the regulations, we were supposed to charge the muffles every half hour. Ober Capo August explained to us that, according to the calculations and plans for this crematorium, 5 to 7 minutes was allowed to burn one corpse in a muffle. In principle, he did not let us put more than three corpses in one muffle. Because with that quantity we were obliged to work without interruption, for as soon as the last muffle was charged, the contents of the first had been consumed. In order to be able to take a pause during the work, we would charge 4 or 5 corpses in each muffle. The incineration of such a charge took longer, and after charging the last muffle, we had few minutes' break until the first one was again available. We took advantage of this free time to wash the floor of the furnace room, as a result of which the air became a little cooler." After this first incineration, the Sonderkommando kept the fires burning, but there were no corpses to burn. "About mid-March 1943, one evening after work, *Hauptscharführer* Hirsch, in charge of the Krematorien at that time, came and ordered us to stay in the crematorium because there was some work for us. At nightfall, trucks arrived carrying people of both sexes and all ages. Among them there were old men, women, and many children. The trucks ran back and forth for an hour between the station and the camp, bringing more and more people. As soon as the trucks began to arrive, we, the *Sonderkommando*, were shut up in a room located at the back where, as I said in my description of the crematorium, the doctors who carried out the autopsies were to be housed. From this room, we could hear the people emerging from the trucks weeping and shouting. They were herded towards a hut erected perpendicular to the crematorium building, towards the entrance gate of crematorium II. The people entered through the door facing the gate and went down by the stairway to the right of the waste incinerator wing. At that time, this hut served as an undressing room. It was used for this purpose only for a week or so, then it was dismantled. After

this hut was removed, the people were herded towards the basement area of the crematorium via a stairway leading to the underground undressing room, already described. After we had waited for two hours, we were let out and ordered to go to the gas chamber. We found heaps of naked bodies, doubled up. They were pinkish, and in places red. Some were covered with greenish marks and saliva ran from their mouths. Others were bleeding from the nose. There was excrement on many of them. I remember that a great number had their eyes open and were hanging on to one another. The bodies were most crushed together round the door. By contrast, there were less around the wire mesh columns. The location of the bodies indicated that the people had tried to get away from the columns and get to the door. It was very hot in the gas chamber and so suffocating as to be unbearable. Later on, we became convinced that many people died of suffocation, due to lack of air, just before the gassing. They fell to the floor and were trampled on by the others. They were not sitting, like the majority, but stretched out on the floor, under the others. It was obvious that they had succumbed first and that they had been trampled on. Once the people were in the gas chamber, the door was closed and the air was pumped out. The gas chamber ventilation could work in this way, thanks to a system that could both extract and blow.” Tauber recorded that the *Sonderkommandos* wore gas masks when removing the bodies to the corridor, where a barber cut off the women’s hair before the corpses were loaded on the lift for transport to the ground floor. There two dentists pulled out the gold fillings and false teeth. “They also removed the rings and earrings. The teeth were thrown into a box marked “*Zahnarztstation*.” As for the jewels, they were put into another box with no label other than a number. The dentists, recruited from among the prisoners, looked into all the mouths except those of the children. When the jaws were too tightly clamped, they pulled them apart with the pincers used to extract the teeth. The SS carefully checked the work of the dentists, always being present. From time to time they would stop a load of corpses ready for charging into the fur-

nace and already operated on by the dentists, in order to check the mouths. They occasionally found a forgotten gold tooth. Such carelessness was considered to be sabotage, and the culprit was burned alive in the furnace. I witnessed such a thing myself. A dentist, a French Jew, was burned in this way in crematorium 5. He fought and cried, but there were several SS and they threw themselves on him, overpowered him and put him in the furnace alive." Tauber also witnessed other forms of punishments. One particularly horrifying incident occurred in August 1944 in crematorium 5. "When the shifts were changing over, they had found a gold watch and wedding ring on one of the labourers, a man Wolbrom called Lejb. This Jew, aged about twenty, was dark and had a number of one hundred thousand and something. All the Sonderkommando working in the crematorium were assembled, and before their eyes he was hung, with his hands tied behind his back, from an iron bar above the firing hearths. He remained in this position for about one hour, then after untying his hands and feet, they threw him in a cold crematorium furnace. Gasoline was poured into the lower ash bin [that of the firebox at the back of the furnace] and lit. The flames reached the muffle where this Lejb was imprisoned. A few minutes later, they opened the door and the condemned man emerged and ran off, covered in burns. He was ordered to run round the yard shouting that he was a thief. Finally, he had to climb the barbed wire, which was not electrified during the day, and when he was at the top, the head of the crematoriums Moll, first name Otto, killed him with a shot. Another time, the SS chased a prisoner who was not working fast enough into a pit near the crematorium that was full of boiling human fat. At that time, the corpses were incinerated in open air pits, from which the fat flowed in to a separate reservoir, dug in the ground. This fat was poured over the corpses to accelerate their combustion. This poor devil was pulled out of the fat still alive and then shot." Tauber worked in crematorium 2 until mid-April, incinerating the remains of

Greek, French and Dutch convoys. "I cannot say how many people were gassed during this period. We worked in two shifts, a day shift and a night shift. On average, we incinerated 2500 corpses a day."

Tauber was a careful witness, clearly distinguishing between what he had seen himself, and what not. At this time he did not witness how the people were herded into the undressing room and from there into the gas chamber because, when they arrived at the crematorium, all but two of the Sonderkommando were locked up in the coke storage room--the remaining two were in the furnace room keeping the fires going. Finally he was detailed to that job, and this allowed him to witness the outside of the gassing procedure. "Through the window of the incineration room, I observed how the Zyklon was poured into the gas chamber. Each transport was followed by a vehicle with Red Cross markings which entered the yard of the crematorium, carrying the camp doctor, Mengele, accompanied by *Rottenführer* Scheimetz. They took the cans of Zyklon from the car and put them beside the small chimneys used to introduce the Zyklon into the gas chamber. There, Scheimetz opened them with a special cold chisel and a hammer, then poured the contents into the gas chamber. Then he closed the orifice with a concrete cover. As there were four similar chimneys. Scheimetz poured into each the contents of one of the smallest cans of Zyklon, which had yellow labels pasted right round them. Before opening the cans, Scheimetz put on a gasmask which he wore while opening the cans and pouring in the product. There were also other SS who performed this operation, but I have forgotten their names. They were specially designated for it and belonged to the "*Gesundheitswesen*." A camp doctor was present at each gassing. If I have mentioned Mengele, that is because I met him very often during my work. In addition to him, there were other doctors present during the gassings, like König, Thilo and a young, tall, slight doctor whose name I do not recall." Unlike the practice of crematorium 1, the Sonderkommandos operating crematorium 2 soon abandoned using the trolleys for transporting and

inserting the corpses into the muffles. They were replaced by metal stretchers. They were loaded according to procedure. "The procedure was to put the first corpse with the feet towards the muffle, back down and face up. Then, a second corpse was placed on top, again face up, but head towards the muffle. This method was used so that the legs of the upper corpse blocked that below and did not get in the way when the corpses were introduced into the furnace. Two prisoners loaded the stretchers. One end of the stretcher was put in front of the muffle, below the bar, alongside which stood two prisoners. While the corpses were being loaded on the stretcher, one of these opened the door of the muffle and the other positioned the rollers. Then, they lifted the stretcher and put it on the rollers, while a fifth prisoner, positioned at the handles at the other end of the stretcher, lifted it at the same time as them and pushed it into the muffle. As soon as the corpses were inside, a sixth prisoner held them there with a fire iron while the fifth withdrew the stretcher. The sixth man also had to cool the stretcher as it came out of the furnace by pouring over it water in which soap had been dissolved so that the next load of corpses would slide easily on the metal of the stretcher without sticking to it. The same procedure was used for the following charge destined to be incinerated in the same muffle. We had to work fast, for the corpses put in first soon started to burn, and their arms and legs rose up. If we were slow, it was difficult to charge the second pair of corpses. During the introduction of these other two corpses, I was able to observe the cremation process. It appeared that the trunk of the body rose and the arms stretched towards the sky before contracting. The same thing happened with the legs. The bodies became covered in blisters. Gassed bodies that had remained in the store room for two days were swollen, and in the fire their diaphragm burst and their intestines poured out. I was also able to observe how cremation proceeded while I was moving the corpses in the furnace with a fire iron, to accelerate the combustion. After each charging, the SS head of the Kommando checked to make sure that the furnaces were properly filled. We had to open each muffle for him and

at that moment we could see what was happening inside. We burned the bodies of children with those of adults. First we put in two adults, then as many children as the muffle could contain. It was sometimes as many as five or six. We used this procedure so that the bodies of children would not be placed directly on the grid bars, which were relatively far apart. In this way we prevented the children from falling through into the ash bin. Women's bodies burned much better and more quickly than those of men. For this reason, when a charge was burning badly, we would introduce a woman's body to accelerate the combustion."

Tauber remembered that the ovens needed little coles when in use for some time. "The furnaces burned thanks to the embers produced by the combustion of the corpses." "So, during the incineration of fat bodies, the fires were generally extinguished. When this type of body was charged into a hot furnace, fat immediately began to flow into the ash bin, where it caught fire and started the combustion of the body. When "*Müselmann*" were being cremated, it was necessary to constantly re-fuel the fireboxes. The shift boss wrote in a notebook the number of corpses incinerated per charge and the head of the *Kommando*, an SS man, checked these entries. After an entire transport had been cremated, he took away the notebook." Tauber continued his testimony with detailed reports on the various personalities that operated the crematoria.

In April 1943, he was transferred to the newly completed crematorium 4. It was of a different design. Instead of having five triple-muffle ovens, this crematorium had one double-four-muffle furnace. Like in the case of crematorium 2, Tauber's description of crematorium 4 is fully corroborated by a surviving blueprint. "The muffles were in pairs on each side. One firebox heated two muffles, which together made up half of a furnace. Each furnace had its own chimney. the undressing room and the gas chambers were installed on the ground floor, and the part of the building where they were located was not so high as the fur-

nace room so that it had the appearance of an annex to the crematorium. The boiler room was separated from the undressing room by a narrow corridor with four internal doors, allowing passage between the two rooms. The undressing room was illuminated by four small barred windows giving on the exterior. Another door led to a corridor whose entrance door opened onto the yard of the Krematorium. This entrance was flanked by two windows. Opposite the entrance door in the corridor, there was a door that opened on a room with a window which was the kitchen for the SS working in the crematorium, a kitchen where the dishes were prepared by members of the Sonderkommando. This room was next to that of the Sonderkommando prisoners....The third door in the corridor led to a corridor with a barred window and a door leading to the crematorium yard. From this corridor, the door on the right gave access to the first of the gaschambers and that opposite to the smallest of the chambers, communicating by another door with the biggest. This corridor, and the three following rooms were used as chambers for gassing people. All had gas-tight doors, and also windows that had bars on the inside and were closed by gas-tight shutters on the outside. These small windows, which could be reached by the hand of a man standing outside, were used for throwing the contents of cans of Zyklon-B into the gas chambers full of people. The gas chambers were about two meters high and had an electric lighting installation on the walls but they had no ventilation system, which obliged the Sonderkommando who were removing the bodies to wear gasmasks. The corpses were dragged along the floor into the access corridor, where the barbers cut off the hair and then into the undressing room, which also served, in this kind of crematorium, as a store room for the corpses. It was a big hall where the bodies were put while the gas chambers were being cleaned up. Then they were taken through the narrow corridor between the undressing room and the furnace room, where at each end a dentist tore out the gold teeth. In the furnace room, there was the room of the head of the Kommando and beside it another one for the rest of the SS. This was followed by a

narrow corridor, which originally led to the east yard of crematorium 4, the SS washroom and WC and the coke store. The building was entirely brick-built, with a wooden roof, covered with asbestos sheets and roofing felt. The yards of all the crematoriums were separated from the outside world by a thick enclosure of wicker and a hedge to which straw hurdles were attached. In the yard, there were watchtowers, where SS armed with machine guns kept guard. Furthermore, the whole area was surrounded by electrified barbed wire and the yards were lit by powerful lamps. In May 1944, the SS ordered us to dig five pits in the yard of crematorium 5, between the building itself and the drainage ditch, five pits which were used later for incinerating the corpses of gassed people from the Hungarian transports. Although a track for the trolleys was laid between the building and the pits, we never used it because the SS considered it to be inconvenient, so we had to drag the corpses straight from the gas chambers to the pits. At the same time, the old Bunker 2, with its incineration pits, was also made ready for re-use. I never worked there. It was realized that the pits burned the corpses better, so the crematoria closed down one after the other after the pits came into operation. The first to be stopped was crematorium 4, apparently in June 1944, then, in October 1944, I think, Krematorien 2 and 3. Crematorium 5 kept going until the Germans fled. Towards the end, it was used to incinerate the bodies of prisoners who died naturally or were executed. Gassing ceased in October 1944.” Tauber recalled how after the gassing ceased the Germans began to dismantle the equipment. “The parts were taken to the goods platform and loaded onto trains.”

Tauber’s testimony is, without doubt, the most important record of the extermination procedure taken immediately after the war. It is largely corroborated by the contemporary testimonies of Jankowski and Dragon, and by the later memoirs of Filip Müller. It is in almost all its details corroborated by the surviving blueprints of crematoria 1, 2 and 4. The only piece for which there is no corroboration in the archives

are the metal columns in the gas chamber of crematorium 2. Attached to the four structural concrete columns, which carried the roof, these columns allowed for the introduction of the Zyklon. They were retroactively fitted into the space, but do not appear on the blueprints which, with one exception, were all drawn before the decision was made to use *Leichenkeller 1* as a gas chamber. Yet their existence is independently confirmed in eye-witness accounts of the gas chamber, the drawings made by David Olère (see below), and the following testimony of Michael Kula, who manufactured these columns.

On 11 June Sehn interviewed the 32-year old former inmate Michael Kula. The Roman Catholic Kula, a mechanic by training and before his incarceration in Auschwitz a resident of the neighbouring town of Trzebinia, had been brought to the camp on 15 August 1940. In his testimony he gave an account how, exactly at the even of the first anniversary of his arrival, the Germans had initiated experiments to gas 250 inmates with Zyklon B in the basement of Block 11. He had been able to witness some of it, because he had the afternoon off on the 15th of August, in honour of the Feast of Assumption. The killing had taken two days, and only on the night of the 16th did the nurses of the lazaret retrieve the corpses to take them out of the camp. Kula had been able to witness this from a window of the dental station in Block 21. Right in front of Kula's observation point a cart loaded with corpses broke down, and many fell on the ground. "I saw then that they were greenish. The nurses told me that the corpses were cracked, and the skin came off. In many cases they had bitten fingers and necks."

Kula worked in the metal workshop of the camp, and had forged many of the metal pieces for the crematoria. For crematorium I, for example, he and his colleagues had made the trucks for inserting the corpses into the ovens, the tracks, and the iron framework that braced the brickwork of the ovens. Furthermore they had made "the supporting framework for the fire boxes and the ventilation pipes from the gas chamber. In addition to that we did small repairs in that room." Kula

gave a detailed account of the work done for the crematoria in Birkenau. This included the iron braces for all the ovens, all scaffolds, the tools for retrieving the corpses, the metalwork of the doors, as well as the hooks, shovels and all that was necessary to run the ovens and the pit incinerations. His most important testimony concerned the construction of the four wire-mesh columns in the large gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3. As we have seen, Tauber had described them as three structures of ever finer mesh. Within the innermost column there was a removable can to pull after the gassing the Zyklon "crystals," that is the porous silica pellets that had absorbed the hydrocyanide. Kula, who had made these columns, provided some technical specifications. "Among other things the metal workshop made the false showers intended for the gas chambers, as well as the wire-mesh columns for the introduction of the contents of the tins with Zyklon into the gas chambers. These columns were around 3 meters high, and they were 70 centimetres square in plan. Such a column consisted of 6 wire screens which were built the one within the other. The inner screen was made from 3 millimeter thick wire, fastened to iron corner posts of 50 by 10 millimeters. Such iron corner posts were on each corner of the column and connected on the top in the same manner. The openings of the wire mesh were 45 millimeters square. The second screen was made in the same manner, and constructed within the column at 150 millimeters distance from the first. The openings of the second were around 25 millimeters square. In the corners these screens were connected to each other by iron posts. The third part of this column could be moved. It was an empty column with a square footprint of around 150 millimeters made of sheet zinc. At the top it was closed by a metal sheet, and at the bottom with a square base. At a distance of 25 millimetres from the sides of this columns were soldered tin corners supported by tin brackets. On these corners were mounted a thin mesh with openings of about one millimeter square. This mesh ended at the bottom of the column and from here ran in the [Verlaenderung] of the screen a tin frame until the top of the column.

The contents of a Zyklon tin were thrown from the top on the distributor, which allowed for an equal distribution of the Zyklon to all four sides of the column. After the evaporation of the gas the whole middle column was taken out. The ventilation system of the gas chamber was installed in the side walls of the gas chambers. The ventilation openings were hidden by zinc covers, provided with round openings.”

The wire mesh columns had been totally dismantled after the cessation of gassings and before the demolition of the crematoria, and no remains were found. Yet the dismantling crews had not been able to remove the ventilation system as they were a structural part of the walls, and consequently had overlooked to remove the zinc covers mentioned by Kula. They were dislocated when the demolition squads dynamited the gas chambers, but six of them were retrieved in the rubble of crematorium II and sent for analysis in the forensic laboratory in Cracow. The laboratory report noted that these were covered with a thin, white-coloured and strongly smelling deposit. The laboratory retrieved 7.2 grams of the deposit and dissolved it in water. Sulphuric acid was added to this solution, and the resulting gas was absorbed in an absorbent material. This was divided in two and subjected to two different tests, each of which revealed the presence of hydrocyanide.

Sehn and Dawidowski did not only study the remains of the bunkers and the crematoria, interview witnesses and send material for chemical analysis. They also studied the plans for the crematoria. These plans were part of the archive of the *Zentralbauleitung der Waffen SS und Polizei, Auschwitz O/S* (Central Building Authority of the Waffen-SS and the Police, Auschwitz in Upper Silesia), located in a compound of barracks at some distance from the main camp. When the Germans burned the archives of the camp Kommandantur prior to their evacuation from Auschwitz in January 1945, they overlooked the archive of the building office that had been closed some months earlier, and as a result they

were found more or less intact. The Soviet commission had paid scant attention to the massive amount of paperwork. It was up to the Poles to fully exploit the evidentiary value of this source.

Building at the concentration camp had been subject to normal civilian procedures as well as to the wartime superstructure of special permissions, and as a result multiple copies of many documents survive with the comments and signatures of the individual bureaucrats or businessmen to whom they were sent. The result was that Sehn and Dawidowski found a wide paper trail that included tens of thousands of different items such as plans, budgets, letters, telegrams, contractors' bids, financial negotiations, work site labour reports, requests for material allocations, and the minutes of meetings held in the Building Office among the architects themselves, with camp officials, and with high-ranking dignitaries from Berlin.

Comparing the results of the site visits with the blueprints and the other documentation that had been recovered, Roman Dawidowski wrote a (roughly) 10,000 word-long expert report on the technology of mass extermination in Auschwitz. Dawidowski's text was never published as a whole, but Sehn was to summarize its most important conclusions in the official account of the operation of the camp published by the Central Commission in 1946. The relative obscurity of the Dawidowski report is troublesome, as it erroneously suggests that the Poles did not do their homework in the post-war years. To be sure: today we know more about the construction of Auschwitz and the crematoria than Dawidowski. Yet, given the short time available to him and the general chaos in post-war Poland, it is still quite remarkable that most of his observations and conclusions have been confirmed over time.

Study of the archives quickly revealed that the creation of the crematoria and the gas chambers had been less straightforward than the language used by the Soviet experts and the journalists suggested: the development of Auschwitz as a "factory of death" had followed a twisted

course. Correspondence suggested, for example, that the Germans had an important change of mind in early 1942. Originally, they had planned to construct a large crematorium with five triple ovens in Auschwitz, and two small crematoria with two triple-muffle ovens in Birkenau. At the end of February the chief of construction in the SS, Hans Kammler, decided in consultation with the Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung to erect the large crematorium with the five triple incinerators in Birkenau. Dawidowski did not know the exact circumstances for this change in plan, but correctly inferred that it had to do with the adaptation of Birkenau into an extermination camp.

In studying the blueprints and the correspondence, Dawidowski discovered that the role of the crematoria in the Final Solution was veiled in innocuous-sounding code words. Whenever they were designated as extermination installations, the crematoria were referred to as *Spezialeinrichtungen* (special installations) for the *Sonderbehandlung* (special treatment) of inmates. The latter term referred to killing. Dawidowski also found that the architects only once made a direct reference to the underground gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3 as *Vergasungskeller* (gassing cellar) and only once to the adjacent space as *Auskleideraum* (undressing room). In general they designated the gas chamber of crematoria 2 and 3 as *Leichenhalle* (morgue), *Halle* (hall), *Leichenkeller 1*, *L-Keller 1*, *Keller 1* while the undressing room was *Leichenkeller 2* or simply *Keller 2*. Given all the other evidence he had found, Dawidowski was not particularly fascinated by the document with the reference to the *Vergasungskeller*, and he did not find it necessary to quote it. Yet more recently negationists have argued that this document is the “only” evidence for the genocidal use of the crematoria, and have spent considerable effort to challenge the common sense interpretation that the word *Vergasungskeller* refers to a homicidal gas chamber. Therefore it is good to print the letter in full. “ 29 January 1943 To the Chief Amtsgruppe C, SS-Brigadeführer and General-Major of the Waffen-SS, Dr. Ing. Kammler. Subject: Crematorium II, condition

of the building. crematorium has been completed--save for minor constructional work--by the use of all the forces available, in spite of unspeakable difficulties, the severe cold, and in 24 hour shifts. The fires were started in the ovens in the presence of Senior Engineer Prüfer, representative of the contractors of the firm of Topf and Sons, Erfurt, and they are working most satisfactorily. The planks from the concrete ceiling of the cellar used as a mortuary could not yet be removed on account of the frost. This is, however, not very important, as the gassing cellar (*Vergasungskeller*) can be used for that purpose. The firm of Topf and Sons was not able to start deliveries of the installation in time for aeration and ventilation as had been requested by the Central Building Management because of restrictions on use of railroad cars. As soon as the installation for aeration and ventilation arrive, the installing will start so that the complete installation may be expected to be ready for use 20 February 1943. We enclose a report of the testing engineer of the firm Topf and Sons, Erfurt. The Chief of the Central Construction Management, Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz, SS-Hauptsturmführer [Bischoff] Distribution: 1 – SS Ustuf Janisch and Kirschneck 1 – Filing office (file crematorium) Certified true copy: [signature] SS--Ustuf (F)” Cross-referencing this letter with blueprints of the basement of crematorium 2, Dawidowski concluded that the designation “*Vergasungskeller*” applied to morgue 1. He noted that the blueprints showed that the section of this morgue differed from that of morgue 2 in that the former was equipped with two built-in ventilation ducts on each side. Correspondence explained that these ventilation ducts were connected to a ventilator driven by 3.5 horsepower electric motor, and that the space was also equipped with a separate system for introducing warm air into it--an arrangement that made no sense if the space was used as a morgue (because corpses must be stored cold) but which made a lot of sense if the space was used as a Zyklon B gas chamber (because hydrogen cyanide, with a boiling point of around 27° Celsius, works much faster when used in a pre-heated space--an

issue Dawidowski was to discuss at length later in his report). Both eyewitness testimonies, blueprints and correspondence corroborated each other.

Not all of Dawidowski's observations were equally valid. For example, he stressed the fact that the location of the crematoria was determined by the desire to achieve maximum camouflage, both to the outside world, and to the victims, who had to be fooled until the very end. In fact, the issue of camouflage only seems to have become of concern after the crematoria were completed, and does not seem to have determined their original location. Dawidowski also showed an unusual interest in an issue that seems rather arcane in hindsight: the fact that both the design and the operation procedures of the crematoria in Birkenau violated the German Law on Cremation promulgated on May 15, 1934. Contrary to the stipulations of the law, which decreed that crematoria should be dignified in appearance, the Auschwitz crematoria had a factory-like appearance. More seriously than the question of aesthetics, the design of the Auschwitz incinerators violated the very important principle that only one corpse ought to be incinerated at a time, and that the ashes of the deceased ought to be identifiable and collected in an urn. The ovens designed by Topf did not heed the law: they had three (crematoria 2 and 3) or eight muffles (crematoria 4 and 5), and as up to five corpses could be incinerated in every muffle at the same time, it was unavoidable that the ashes were to be mixed. Finally, Dawidowski complained that the SS did not obey the law in its demand that the wishes of the persons or their immediate family as to burial or cremation were to be honoured." It is clear that the prisoners who had been given registration numbers, or the millions who were brought straight from the station to the gas chambers, were not asked before their murder if they wished that their corpses would be incinerated, or buried. And neither their family was asked, as this is stipu-

lated by the German law (§2).” Dawidowski’s outrage about this issue seems oddly misplaced, yet it does remind us of the fact that, even in 1945, the reality of the camps were still largely unimaginable.

On the basis of the documents Dawidowski reconstructed the development of the crematoria in its relation to the growth of the camp. The construction of crematorium 1 dated from 1940, and was equipped with two double muffle ovens. Dawidowski noted that the oven was initially heated by gasses created through the burning of coke. Once they had reached the ideal incineration temperature, the corpses were inserted. From that moment onwards the remains provided the most important fuel. He calculated that the original daily capacity of the crematorium was 200 corpses. After the addition of an third double-muffle oven in 1941 and the modification of the flues, the capacity rose to 350. This capacity was needed, as the mortality in the camp had risen at days up to 390 people per day. Causes of death were the general violence, starvation, exhaustion, and murder by means of phenol injections, and executions by rifle. According to Dawidowski, Zyklon B was first used as a killing agent in August 1941. Initially rooms in the basement of Block 11 were used as gas chambers. Later the SS adapted the morgue of the crematorium to that purpose.

When transports with Jews began to arrive in 1942, the gas chamber of the crematorium in Auschwitz proved inappropriate, and the SS transformed two buildings in Birkenau, the cottages of farmers Wiechuja and Harmata, into gas chambers. In his description of these extermination installations--bunkers 1 and 2--Dawidowski relied on Dragon’s testimony and the remains of the buildings, as he had not found any documents or blueprints describing the two buildings. In fact, none were ever found. It seems that the two cottages were transformed without much fuss.

From a description of the bunkers Dawidowski went to a lengthy description of the chemical properties of Zyklon B, and the unusual form the agent had been shipped to Auschwitz. Violating three decrees, the Zyklon B used in Auschwitz had not been provided with a warning agent. As the hydrogen cyanide contained in the Zyklon grains evaporated more easily as the environment was warmer, Dawidowski noted that the gas chambers were either pre-heated with portable stoves or, in the case of crematoria 2 and 3, by warm air generated by the ovens. And he presented the results of the laboratory analysis on the presence of hydrogen cyanide in the six zinc covers found in crematorium 2 and the bags of hair.

Initially the SS buried the corpses of those killed in the bunkers in large mass graves. On the basis of the testimony of Kula, Dawidowski came to the conclusion that in 1942 these corpses had begun to smell terribly. In response the SS ordered the opening of the mass graves and the destruction of the remains with the help of flame throwers. (As we have seen before, the War Refugee Report described this episode in great detail). This, so he argued, had triggered the decision to equip the camp with virtual “death factories”: crematoria equipped with gas chambers and powerful incinerators. “In this case negotiations were undertaken with the largest crematorium construction firm in Germany, J.A. Topf and Sons in Erfurt. This firm proposed projects and the SS headquarters in Berlin accepted them (letter of 3 .8.1942 No. 11450/Bi/Ha). The latter demanded the completion of the crematoria at the beginning of 1943 (letter of the Firm Topf of 22.12.1942 No. 20420/42, as well as letter from Berlin of 18.12.1942 No.Geh./42/Er/Z). In the course of 1942 the Firm Topf began with the construction of two very large crematoria, designated in Birkenau with numbers 2 and 3. At the same time that firm transported to Auschwitz, to ensure a faster progress of construction, parts of crematoria ovens intended by the SS for Mogilev, and built in Birkenau two more, somewhat smaller crematoria, designated with the numbers 4 and 5. All this haste explains

that the crematoria, built by the same firm, represented two different types, and well the type of the similar crematoria 2 and 3, and the second type of crematoria 4 and 5.” Later research, comparing the design and construction schedules of the various crematoria, was to show that the difference between the two types of crematoria derived from the fact that the type used in crematoria 2 and 3 was developed before the transformation of Auschwitz into an extermination camp, while crematoria 4 and 5 were designed from the very beginning to serve the Final Solution.

Dawidowski provided a detailed description of the technical equipment and interior arrangement of the crematoria, giving special attention to the killing installations, providing at every point cross references to the blueprints and the correspondence. Dawidowski noted that the plans for the basement of crematorium 2 provided for a room indicated as *Goldarb.[eitors]*(Goldworkers)--the space where the dental gold removed from the dead was melted. With the two adjacent spaces, the undressing room designated as morgue 2 and the gas chamber designated as morgue 1, “these spaces formed a unit that was carefully planned with the sole aim for the mass extermination of people using poison gas.” The gas chambers of crematoria 4 and 5 had been above ground, and of various sizes.

The report continued with a lengthy description of the killing procedures in the various crematoria, based on the testimonies of Dragon and Tauber. This was followed by Dawidowski’s calculations of the incineration capacity of the ovens. He assumed that each muffle could incinerate up to five corpses simultaneously, and that the average cremation duration was between 25 and 30 minutes. On the basis of these figures, he came to an hourly incineration rate of 175 corpses for crematoria 2 and 3, and a daily capacity of 2,500 persons for each crematorium--a reduction of 16 per cent from the figure estimated by the Soviet-Polish commission shortly after the liberation of the camp, but a figure that was a little over 60 per cent higher than the official ca-

capacity calculated by Topf of 1,440 corpses per day. Crematoria 4 and 5 had according to Dawidowski an incineration capacity of 1,500 corpses per day--a figure that was equal to the assumed capacity of the gas chambers, equal to the earlier Soviet estimate, and around double the official German figure of 768 corpses per day. During the Hungarian Action, however, actual incineration capacity exceeded, however, the total capacity of the crematoria of 8,000 corpses per day. Two incineration pits created in the spring of 1944 had a capacity of 5,000 corpses each, which brought the total incineration capacity at Birkenau to 18,000--a figure far below the (theoretically) maximum killing rate of 60,000 people in all the gas chambers.

In his conclusion, Dawidowski summarized the results: crematoria 2,3,4 and 5 were purposefully designed and built as extermination installations following an industrialized system of mass production. "One finds a planned sequence of living and dead material from the entrance to the undressing room to the ovens," and the factory also allowed for the production of "secondary products, such as dental gold." A final development in German perversity was the attempt to use the heat generated in the ovens to warm water. Throughout the history of the camp, the SS was engaged with an "intensive, yes even feverish attempts to improve the gassing action, as also to make it more efficient and more economically. In this effort local initiatives were in competition with the headquarters in Berlin."

Dawidowski's report was not without flaws, but it did mean an enormous step forwards compared to the Soviet report. Studying the remains of the crematoria in relation to the testimonies of Dragon, Tauber and Kula, and cross referencing these to the documents in the archive of the Central Building Office, the report put the history of the extermination installations at Auschwitz on a solid historical basis. If we may today quarrel with some of Dawidowski's conclusions as to the capacity of the crematoria or the motivations for the design changes between various crematoria types, we must also acknowledge that sub-

sequent discoveries or the confessions of Kommandant Höss, made after Dawidowski had done his work, largely corroborated the Dawidowski report.

The Central Commission accepted Dawidowski's conclusions, and integrated them in the first report on the history of the camp, written by Jan Sehn and published in 1946. For better and for worse, Sehn's history became the foundation of all subsequent histories of Auschwitz. "For better," because in what it describes, the text is both responsible and accurate. "For worse," because Sehn emplotted the history in such a manner that he subtly suppressed the contingency of the camp's history in order to stress an assumed universality of its impact. In other words, he gave an impetus to the formation of a myth.

I use the word *myth* in the sense that Barthes gave to it in his essay "Myth Today." Mythification, he argued, occurs when language empties a narrative of its historical contingency to fill it with an unchanging nature. "In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them simplicity of essences." The result is a "blissful clarity" in which there are no contradictions because statements of fact are interpreted as explanations; "things appear to mean something by themselves."

The beginning of Sehn's narrative stresses the fact of Auschwitz's isolation from the rest of the world. "The small, provincial Polish town of Oswiecim is situated far from the main railway centres and the more important lines of communication," Sehn claimed. It set the tone for a theme that was to continue all through the text: the Germans chose Oswiecim as a location for an extermination camp because the site offered isolation and camouflage. Yet, even more important, the site was unhealthy. "It is sufficient to look at a topographical map (Fig.2) to see that the place where Oswiecim is situated and the centre of the camp is like the bottom of a flat basin with no regular slope for draining away water. It is encircled by a series of fishponds, which permeate

the whole land with damp, mist, and mud. The earth at the bottom of the basin is impervious to water owing to its geological structure,(Fig. 3) consisting of a 60 to 80 metres thick layer of marl, at the bottom of the basin. The surface consisting of sand and pebbles is always muddy, due to its underlying substances. Besides, the quality of this stagnant water is very bad due to the rotting of organic substances which poison the air. It could be improved only by installing very expensive purifying works. For all these reasons Oswiecim and its surrounding [s] are not only damp but also abound with malaria and other diseases, which endanger man's life." The geological conditions of the site where the Germans chose to erect a concentration camp resembled that of the "unlimited, quaggy and damp moorland, dim with fog," at Dachau. This proved, Sehn argued," that the choice of Oswiecim for a place of punishment was not accidental." "Dachau became the topographical model for the Nazi places of execution. Such places as Dachau and Oswiecim, in the opinion of Prof. Romer, were avoided by life for thousands of years, as death kept watch there. The German authorities used the climate and geographical character of Oswiecim with premeditation in their criminal design."

Thus the town of Oswiecim was somehow cursed to host a German death camp, and the SS consciously acted to realize that destiny. Sehn saw therefore a direct causal link between geography, geology, and the creation of Birkenau, which he described in the following chapter entitled "'Sonderbehandlung' and 'sonderaktion.'" "To understand the proper character of the camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau, attention must be drawn to the following facts: In the autumn of 1941 on the moor of Brzezinka (Birkenau) 3 km. Away from the base camp, the construction of a special camp was proposed, ostensibly for prisoners of war (kriegsgefangenenlager--Official abbreviation K.G.L.) According to that the original plan of the Berlin Centre it was calculated to contain 200,000 prisoners (order of construction of Nov.1.And Dec. 16.1941--Assignment of credits and allotment of funds Jan 9th 1942)."

Sehn had no doubt that the original designation of Birkenau as a prisoner of war camp was mere camouflage to hide a more sinister purpose. One of the clues which led him to this conclusion was the fact that the building office created to design and oversee the construction of the camp was called *Sonderbauleitung* which was rather ominous as correspondence clearly stated that the camp was meant for the *Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung* ("to carry out special treatment.")--a purpose that was realized when the trains that started arriving were designated as Sondertransporte ("Special Transports") and when their passengers were led to a *Badeanstalt für Sonderaktion* (Bathing Establishment for Special Action). Sehn emphasized that all these terms that began with the adjective *sonder*(special) "were concealing the mass murder of millions of people, and that the special camp constructed for the carrying on of this Sonderbehandlung was already by assumption a huge extermination camp (Vernichtungslager)." "According to this assumption it grew in practice into the largest extermination camp, not only in Poland, but also in the whole of Europe, in which only those were left alive among the prisoners who were indispensable to the munition factories and other industrial establishments working for the Army and for the war at Auschwitz and in the whole of Silesia. The highest authorities of the IIIrd Reich as well as those who carried out orders on the spot at Auschwitz were conscious of the purpose of the camp, and did everything to enable this camp to fulfil completely its mission of extermination of the conquered nations of Europe with the Slav nations and the Jews in first order of importance. The only buildings calculated for long-lasting and constant use were the four big crematoria with gas-chambers, and the barracks for the SS-men who staffed the camp. The rest of the settlements, and particularly the huts for the prisoners, were destined from the beginning for the short and transitory existence in them of a constantly changing tide of prisoners."

Let there be no confusion: Birkenau became the largest extermination center in Europe. But does this mean that it was meant to become that center? Sehn felt the need to introduce from the very beginning of his narrative a sense of foreboding: Oswiecim had been a place avoided by life for thousands of years, and the fact that the building office that constructed Birkenau was called a *Sonderbauleitung* seemed to point to the camp's future use as a center of *Sonderbehandlung*. It is here, however, that Sehn's inexperience as a writer and a professional historian caught up with him. He fell in a trap that Sartre described in his philosophical novel *La Nausée* (1938): in narrative, unlike in life, the beginning always announces the end. "Nothing happens while you live. The scenery changes, people come in and go out, that's all. There are no beginnings. Days are tacked on days without rhyme or reason, an interminable, monotonous addition.... That's living. But everything changes when you tell about life; it's a change no one notices: the proof is that people talk about true stories. As if there could possibly be true stories; things happen one way and we tell about them in the opposite sense. You seem to start at the beginning: "It was a fine autumn evening in 1922. I was a notary's clerk in Marommès." And in reality you have started at the end. It was there, invisible and present, it is the one which gives to words the pomp and value of a beginning. "I was out walking, I had left the town without realizing it, I was thinking about my money troubles." This sentence, taken simply for what it is, means that the man was absorbed, morose, a hundred leagues from an adventure, exactly in the mood to let things happen without noticing them. But the end is there, transforming everything. For us, the man is already the hero of the story. His moroseness, his money troubles are much more precious than ours, they are all gilded by the light of future passions. And the story goes on in the reverse: instants have stopped piling themselves in a lighthearted way one on top of the other, they are snapped up by the end of the story which draws them and each one of them in turn, draws out the preceding instant: "It was night, the street was deserted." The phrase is cast out negligently, it seems su-

perfluous; but we do not let ourselves be caught and we put it aside: this is a piece of information whose value we shall subsequently appreciate. And we feel that the hero has lived all the details of this night like annunciations, promises, or even that he lived only those that were promises, blind and deaf to all that did not herald adventure. We forget that the future was not yet there; the man was walking in a night without forethought, a night which offered him a choice of dull rich prizes, and he did not make his choice. ”

A competent judge and experienced forensic researcher, Sehn was, at least in 1945-46, an amateur writer, and did not sufficiently realize that the ultimate transformation of Birkenau into an extermination camp was not a foregone conclusion when the camp was established as a prisoner of war camp. He did not negotiate the paradox that underlies every historical narrative and which Sartre and before him Robert Musil so brilliantly analyzed: that while in everyday life--even in Auschwitz--each moment unfolds with no certainty of outcome, “history” is based on a known conclusion that charges an otherwise tedious chronicle with portent and pregnancy. Yet, in criticizing Sehn, one must also remember that he wrote his account without the aid of the confessions of memoirs of Rudolf Höss, which only became available later in 1946 and 1947. Without any sources that provided a possibility to reconstruct the changing motivations of the SS in Auschwitz, the blueprints and correspondence of the Central Building Office *could* be plausibly interpreted as pointing to a unified development following an unchanging purpose --that is as long as one forgot the beginning of Dawidowski’s report that suggested a change of mind in the beginning of 1942, when Kammler decided to cancel two small incinerators in Birkenau, and build there a large crematorium originally planned for the main camp.

Whatever its flaws in describing the origin and development of the camp, Sehn's history of Auschwitz provided much useful information on the arrangement and administration of the camp, the housing conditions, the life and death of the prisoners, the medical experiments, the selections within the camp, and selections of Jews on arrival.

The report ended with a discussion, largely based on Dawidowski's forensic report, of the gas chambers, the crematoria, and the attempts to wipe out the traces of the crime. Sehn mentioned that after a first experimental gassings in Block 11, a gas chamber was created near crematorium 1, and after that, in the Fall of 1941, two peasants cottages in the Birkenau forest. "In the summer of 1942 it was decided to extend enormously gassing operations and to improve them technically, entrusting the construction of huge crematoria to the firm of J.A. Topf and Sons at Erfurt (ms. of Aug.3,1942, No.11450/42/Bi/H). This was done just after SS. Reichsfürer Himmler's visit of inspection. The construction began immediately, and in the early months of 1943 four huge modern crematoria were ready for the use of the camp authorities; their fundamental and essential part consisted of a set of gaschambers of a type unknown before. These crematoria were distinguished by the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5. Crematoria 2 and 3 had underground areas, called on the construction drawing Nos. 932 and 933 of Jan. 28, *Leichenkeller* 1, and 2, both of which were intended for the gassing of human beings. Cellar 2 had an area of 400 sq. metres (480 sq. yards) and was 2.3 metres high. Cellar 1 had an area of 210 sq. metres and was 2.4 metres (7 ft.9 in.) high. In crematoria 4 and 5 chambers were built on the surface, each having an extent of 580 sq. metres (694 sq. yards), which were officially called *Badeanstalt für Sonderaktion* ("Baths for Special Action") (*Aktenvermerk* of Aug 21,1942, No. 12115/42). From the specifications of the central building board of Feb.19, May 6,1943 and Apr.6,1943 it appears that both cellar No.1 in crematoria 2 and 3 and the *Badenanstalten* in crematoria 4 and 5 had gas-tight doors with grated observation windows of un-

breakable 8 mm glass. The true purpose of all these rooms variously described is revealed by Bischoff's letter of Jan. 29, 1943, to the Chief of the Official Group C. Kammler, 22250/43, in which he called them gas-chambers (*Vergasungskeller*). "Sehn followed with a description of the gassing procedure. "After undressing they were driven through a corridor to the actual gas chamber(Leichenkeller 1), which had previously been heated with the aid of portable coke braziers. This heating was necessary for the better evaporation of the hydrogen cyanide. By beating them with rods and setting dogs on them about 2000 victims were packed into a space of 210 sq. metres (250 sq. yds.) From the ceiling of this chamber, the better to deceive the victims, hung imitation shower-bays, from which water never poured. After the gas-tight doors had been [c]losed the air was pumped out and through four special openings in the ceiling the contents of cans of cyclon, producing cyanide hydrogen gas, were poured in. The contents of the cans fell down a cylindrical shaft constructed of four corner pieces covered with wire mesh-work of varying density. In the case of the surface gas-chambers in crematoria 4 and 5, the contents of the cans of cyclon were poured in through openings in the side-walls."

Both the cruel regime and the gas chambers produced many corpses. Initially they were buried in mass graves, but as the War Refugee Board report had already described, the mass graves created an ecological problem. Following Dawidowski's assessment, Sehn argued that the ecological problems caused by the mass burials necessitated the construction of the four new crematoria. "The first pair (2 and 3) had 5 furnaces of three retorts each, heated by two halfgenerator fires. Crematoria 4 and 5 were constructed at a distance of about 750 metres (820 yards) from the two previously mentioned, and had twin furnaces of 8 retorts each, heated by two fires on either side. Together, therefore, the four new crematoria had 46 retorts, each with a capacity of 3-5 corpses. The burning of one retort load lasted about half an hour, and as the cleaning of the fireplaces took about an hour per day, so all the

four crematoria could burn about 12,000 corpses in 24 hours, which would give 4,380,000 a year.” It is unclear why Sehn chose to change Dawidowski’s assessment that the capacity of the four crematoria in Birkenau was 8,000 per day. Sehn’s calculations do not make sense: even if we assume a load of 5 corpses per muffle, and an incineration time of 30 minutes, and an operation period of 23 hours per day, we come to a capacity of “only” ($46 \times 5 \times 2 \times 23 =$) 10,580 corpses per day.

The report continued with how in the summer of 1944, during the Hungarian Action, even the crematoria could not cope, and how the practice of open-pit burning was reintroduced. It then went on to address the total number of victims. “On the basis of calculations made by experts of the Investigation Technical Commission under the guidance of Prof. Dawidowski it was stated during the inquiry that the installations for disposing of corpses in pits and crematoria could have burnt more than 5 million bodies during the period in which they were active. As is well known, the Soviet Legal and Medicinal Commission, which arrived at Auschwitz immediately after the flight of the Germans, has stated that the number of prisoners murdered exceeded 4,000,000.”

Finally Sehn dealt with the obliteration of the traces. The Germans did not only remove documents and killed prisoners who knew too much, but also destroyed the crematoria. “As early as May, 1944, the old crematorium at Auschwitz was transformed into an air-raid shelter. Crematorium 4 was burnt on Oct.7, 1944, during a fire which broke out when the members of the *Sonderkommando* tried to avoid being gassed. The technical installations at crematoria 2 and 3 were dismantled in November, 1944, and part of them sent up to the camp at Gross Rosen, and the buildings were blown up. Crematorium 5 was burnt and its walls blown up in the night of Jan.20, 1945.” In conclusion, Sehn reiterated once more that Auschwitz was an extermination camp which “already at its foundation was designed by the Nazi authorities as a place of execution for millions of people.” n=”337”>

Using the findings of the Central Commission and cross-referencing these with their own experiences, the Czech former inmates Ota Kraus and Erick Schön/Kulka published in 1946 their *Tovarna Na Smrt (Factory of Death)*. Both Kraus and Schön had been employed in Auschwitz as locksmiths, and as such they had been able to move throughout the camp. Their book was an in general careful and well-organized account of the operation of the camp, and the chapter entitled “Masinerie smrto” (“Machinery of Death”) calmly presented the terrible facts without recourse to histrionics.

Kraus and Kulka located the beginning of mass destruction by gas in the spring of 1942 with the killing of 700 Slovak Jews in crematorium 1. According to them, crematorium 1 was only an experimental killing station. Once the Germans had devised a workable method there, “work was started at Birkenau on the construction of four large crematoria complete with gas chambers.” On their completion, crematorium 1 was closed down. The program of extermination overtook, however, the schedule of the architects, and therefore the SS was forced to adopt a stop-gap solution and adapt two cottages into gas chambers. After a description of bunkers 1 and 2, Kraus and Kulka described the gassing operation, and the disposal of the corpses in mass graves. “After a few months, although the corpses were covered with chlorine, lime and earth, and intolerable stench began to hang around the entire neighbourhood. Deadly bacteria were found in springs and wells, and there was a severe danger of epidemics. To meet this problem, the Sonderkommando was increased in size. Day and night, working in two shifts, the prisoners in the squad dug up decaying corpses, took them away on narrow-gauge trucks and burnt them in heaps in the immediate vicinity. The work of exhuming and burning 50,000 corpses lasted almost till December 1942. After this experience the Nazis stopped burying their victims and cremated them instead. Such were the emergency methods used for destroying people at Birkenau in the

early days. They continued in use until February, 1943, when the crematoria were completed and brought into use--first Crematorium I, and then the others."

Kraus and Kulka stressed that these new crematoria were ultra-modern "factories of corpses." Their book reproduced the blueprints of the crematoria which, as they claimed, the inmate architect Vera Foltynova had removed from the architectural office in August 1944. Foltynova had given the plans to Kraus and Kulka, who in turn had been able to smuggle the plans out of the camp and send on their way to Czechoslovakia "because at that time we assumed that both the crematoria and ourselves would be liquidated as witnesses to German crimes." "At first sight the crematoria--one-storey buildings in the German style, with steep roofs, barred windows and dormer windows--presented the appearance of large bakeries. The space around them was enclosed by high tension barbed wire and was always well kept. The roads were sprayed with sand, and well-tended flowers bloomed in the beds on the lawn. The underground gas chambers, projecting some 50 cm. Above ground level, formed a grassy terrace. A person coming to the crematoria for the first time could have no idea what these industrial buildings were actually for. Crematoria I and II were close to the camp itself and were visible from all sides. Crematoria III and IV, on the other hand, were hidden in a little wood; tall pine trees and birches concealed the tragedies that befell millions. This place was called Brzezinka, from which the name Birkenau is derived."

Kraus and Kulka followed with a description of the interior arrangement of the basement of crematoria 2 and 3 (I and II in their numbering system). "At Crematoria I and II there were two underground rooms. The larger of these was an undressing room and was occasionally used as a mortuary; the other was a gas chamber. The white-washed undressing-room had square concrete pillars, about 4 meter apart. Along the walls and round the pillars there were benches, with coat-hooks surmounted by numbers. A pipe with a number of water

taps ran the entire length of one of the walls. There were notices in several languages: KEEP CALM! KEEP THIS PLACE CLEAN AND TIDY! And arrows pointing to the doors bearing the words: DISINFECTION BATH-ROOM The gas chamber was somewhat shorter than the undressing-room and looked like a communal bathroom. The showers in the roof, of course, never held water. Water taps were placed along the walls. Between the concrete pillars were two iron pillars, 30 cm x 30 cm, covered in thickly plaited wire. These pillars passed through the concrete ceiling to the grassy terrace mentioned above; here they terminated in airtight trap-doors into which the SS men fed the cyclon gas. The purpose of the plaited wire was to prevent any interference with the cyclon crystals. These pillars were a later addition to the gas chamber and hence do not appear in the plan. Each of the gas chambers at Crematoria I and II was capable of accommodating up to 2,000 people at a time. At the entrance to the gas chamber was a lift, behind double doors, for transporting the corpses to the furnace rooms on the ground-floor, with their 15 three-stage furnaces. At the bottom stage air was in by electric fans, at the middle the fuel was burnt, and at the top of corpses were placed, two or three at a time, on the stout fire-clay grate. The furnaces had cast-iron doors which were opened by means of a pulley. There was also a dissecting-room on the ground-floor where the prisoner-doctors in the Sonderkommando carried out various experiments and post mortems under the supervision of SS doctors."

One of the great services of Kraus and Kulka's book was that it was the first to provide reliable plans of Auschwitz and Birkenau. For example, their description of the crematoria was accompanied by a fold-out sheet with a set of three annotated plans, showing the basement of crematorium 3, the first floor of the same building, and the plan of crematorium 4. They also provided two photographs of a model of

crematorium 3, which showed the underground gas chamber, the incineration hall with the five triplemuffle ovens, and the living quarters of the Sonderkommando in the attic.

Kraus and Kulka provided lengthy descriptions of the arrival procedures both before and after the completion of the spur line that connected Birkenau to the main railway lines. Before the spring of 1944, transports arrived at a special ramp outside the camp, adjacent to the railway corridor, and were greeted by the SS and inmates of the so-called Canada Squad who had orders to take care of all the deportees' belongings. "As the men got out of the trucks, they were separated from women and children. Then an SS doctor and SS officer, after a superficial examination of each man, would show by a jerk of the thumb whether they were to go to the right or left--life or death. Children were assigned to death, and women who did not want to be separated from their children went with them. Of the remaining women only those from sixteen to thirty who were young and healthy were selected for the camp; the rest were sent to the gas chambers. Of the men some 15 to 20% were classified fit for work. People destined for the gas chambers were loaded on to waiting lorries. Those classified as fit for work had to walk to the camps on foot, but before they left they were given the option of going on the lorries, if they thought they could not walk--which meant death in the gas chambers. We shall never forget the sight of those long convoys of fast-moving lorries, packed full of people. We were unable to give them the last word or sign to show them where they were heading--but they were really better off if they did not know. One of the most cynical touches in the whole affair was the use of an ambulance, marked with the Red Cross. The vehicle waited at the ramp, to give the impression that it was performing the normal function of an ambulance, and then moved off at the tail of the convoy. But instead of medicines and patients it carried tins of deadly cyclon B crystals for the gas chambers." Well-written and filled with

observations based on personal experience, Kraus and Kulka's *Factory of Death* was to become a classic, going through many and increasingly expanded editions in both Czech and other languages.

In the years that followed, enormous amounts of eye-witness evidence became available, some of which Sehn was to include in the subsequent editions of his initial forensic report. There is little use to review the various testimonies of survivors, as they do not substantially challenge or alter the knowledge that had been based on the evidence given in 1945 and 1946. It is, however, useful to include at this point a short discussion about the attempts of Holocaust deniers to challenge the testimonies of eye-witnesses such as Dragon, Tauber, and others. In general, Holocaust deniers have not spent too much energy on attempts to refute these statements. Their major effort has been directed to cast doubt on German documents such as Bischoff's letter containing the reference to the gassing cellar (*Vergasungskeller*), or the confessions of SS men who worked in Auschwitz, such as Pery Broad and Dr. Johann Paul Kremer, or camp Kommandant Rudolf Höss. The attacks on pieces of contemporary documentary evidence, or the self-incriminating statements made by SS personnel, are often of an intensively technical nature, and will be discussed in detail in Part Four of this report.

Attempts by deniers to discredit Jewish eye-witnesses such as Dragon, Tauber, and others have, in general, not taken the form of detailed hermeneutical analysis. Instead, Holocaust deniers have limited themselves to cast general suspicion on the evidentiary validity of such historical sources. The basic negationist position vis-a-vis survivor testimony was developed by, the "father of Holocaust denial," the Frenchman Paul Rassinier. During the war Rassinier, belonged to the French resistance, and after his arrest on November 29, 1943, Rassinier spent fourteen months as an inmate in the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dora. According to his own account, he met there an inmate named Jirsczah, who had been in Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Dachau and

Oranienburg before being transported to Buchenwald, and who became his mentor. Jirczah told Rassinier not to trust the atrocity stories told by the other inmates. "He told me the story of Buchenwald and the other camps. "There is a lot that is true in all that is said about the horrors for which they are the setting, but there is a lot of exaggeration, too. You have to reckon with the complex of Ulysses' lie, which is everyone's, and so it is with all of the internees. Human beings need to exaggerate the bad as well as the good and the ugly as well as the beautiful. Everyone hopes and wants to come out of this business with the halo of a saint, a hero, or a martyr, and each one embroiders his own Odyssey without realizing that the reality is quite enough in itself."

Liberated in April 1945, Rassinier returned to France physically a broken man, but mentally he had hardened in the ideological stance prepared for by his pre-war revolutionary ideology and shaped by Jirczah's lectures. He had no patience for or empathy with his fellow deportees. "The deportees came back with hatred and resentment on their tongues and in their pens. They were not tired of war, rather they had an axe to grind and they demanded vengeance. Moreover, since they suffered from an inferiority complex--there were only some 30,000 of them out of a population of 40 million inhabitants--they wantonly created a story of horror for a public that always clamored for something more sensational in order the more surely to inspire pity and recognition. The inflammatory fabrications of one deportee soon inspired similar stories by others, and the progressively were caught on a treadmill of lies. Although some deportees were duped by others in this process, most of them managed quite consciously to blacken the picture even more in their zeal to hold the limelight. So it was with Ulysses who, during the course of his voyage, each day added a new adventure to his Odyssey, as much to please the public taste of the times as to justify his long absence in the eyes of his family."

Rassinier became a crusader against the horror stories told by the deportees. It was not difficult to show inconsistencies and errors in detail. These were important to him. "I would like to make the observation ...that the whole is composed of details," Rassinier observed, "and an error of detail, whether made in good or bad faith, regardless of whether it is of a kind that is intended to mislead the observer, must logically make the observer doubt the reliability of the whole." And he added the rhetorical question: "and if there are many errors in detail...? And if they are almost all shown to be made in bad faith?"

Following Rassinier, Holocaust deniers routinely dismiss survivor testimonies concerning the Holocaust as "Lies of Ulysses," and their mental disposition as the "Odysseus Complex." They will try to find one "error of detail," and on the basis of this dismiss the whole statement. For example, during the First Zündel Trial held in Toronto in 1985, the Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson argued that the War Refugee Board report had no value because the plan of the crematorium drawn by Vrba contained errors. "[Defense Counsel]: "Now, in respect to this W.R.B. Report, you say because of the drawings respecting the gas chambers that are in the W.R.B. Report, and that in relation to the plans you found; is that right?" [Faurisson]: "Yeah." Q.: "Any other reason why you say we should not believe the W.R.B. Report of Dr. Vrba and others?" A.: "The plan of Auschwitz, the plan of the crematorium." Q.: "What about them?" A.: "They do not--they are nothing." Q.: "What do you mean, they're nothing?" A.: "When you see the reality of the place ..." Q.: "Yes." A.: "...It does not stand, that's all. When you see on the same level a gas chamber, then a track to put the people, the bodies in the furnaces, and when you see that in fact this place which was a mortuary was underground, that you had a little lift, and on the--at the other level you had the furnaces..." Q.: "Yes." A.: "...And the furnaces are not at all like they have been drawn by Dr.Vrba, and he said..." Q.: "What do you conclude from that, doctor?" A.: "I conclude that it is not exact." Q.: "What do you conclude about the author of that, if he says it

is exact? A.: "I say, 'You say something which is not exact.'" Q.: "All right. So is there any other reason why we should not believe the W.R.B. Report?" A.: "Yes, because, for example, you have the report of the Polish major." Q.: "Yes, which is part of the W.R.B. Report?" A.: "Yes, I remember that, that there are many things; this Polish major says that the people were gassed by a hydrocyanic bomb." After a diversion on the statement of another witness, Christie asked Faurisson if he had any other reasons to say that the War Refugee Board report should not be considered credible. He answered: "I think it's sufficient for me."

The Spanish negationist Enrique Aynat Eknes tried to demolish the credibility of the War Refugee Board report by quoting its description of crematorium 2. His treatment of the Vrba-Wetzlar account followed that of the testimonies of a) Rudolf Höss, b) Pery Broad, 3) Dr. P. Bendel--testimonies that will be discussed in the following chapter. In each case, Eknes quoted a selected passage describing the killing installations, and provided his "critique."

"d) Alfred Wetzler (Auschwitz internee): *At present there are four crematoriums in operation in Birkenau, two large ones, I and II, and two small, III and IV. Those of type I and II consist of three parts: a) the furnace room; b) the great hall; c) the gas chamber. An enormous chimney rises above the furnace room, around which are grouped nine furnaces, each with four openings, each opening can receive three normal cadavres at one time, and at the end of an hour and a half the corpses are completely consumed. That represents a daily capacity of around 2,000 bodies. Near this room there is a large reception hall arranged so as to give the impression of being the lobby of a public bath. It holds 2,000 people and apparently there is a similar waiting room on the floor below. From there, a door and several stairsteps take you to the gas chamber which is very long and narrow. The walls of this room appear to contain shower entrances, for the purposes of deceiving the victims. In the ceiling are fixed three little doors that can be sealed hermetically from the outside. A track leads from the gas chamber towards the crematory room. The administering of the gas is done as follows: the unfortunate victims are taken to the hall (b) where they are ordered to disrobe . . . Next*

the victims are brought together into the gas chamber (c). In order to squeeze this crowd into the cramped space, shots are frequently fired for the purposes of inducing them those who have already got to the far end to move still closer together. When everyone is inside, the heavy doors are closed. Then comes a short pause, probably to let the temperature of the room rise to a certain level, after which the SS men, wearing gas masks, climb to the roof, open the little doors, and drop a preparation in powder form taken from metal canisters labelled "Cyclon," "For use against parasites." ... At the end of three minutes everyone in the room has died. No one ever survived this treatment, whereas it is was not uncommon to discover signs of life in those who had been executed in the birch forest, because of the primitive methods employed there. Next the room is opened, ventilated, and the Sonderkommando piles up the bodies on flatbed trucks and transports them to the crematory rooms where the incineration takes place. Critique: --We already know that each crematorium was provided with five crematories of three muffle furnaces each. The reference to the nine furnaces and four openings is pure invention. --The "Great hall" is also a product of Wetzler's imagination, just like the "waiting room" on the ground floor. The "gas chamber" and the "crematory room" were not connected by a "track" but, as we know, by an elevator. --Accordingly, if the only means of access to the crematories from the supposed gas chamber was the freight elevator, the "flatbed truck" mentioned in the text would serve no purpose. --It would not be necessary for the SS men wearing gas masks to "climb" to the gas chamber, since the latter was underground, and its ceiling was practically at ground level. --But the best way of convincing ourselves that we are faced with apocryphal evidence is to compare the plan contained in Wetzler's supposed original document(see figure 12) with Figure 5, put out by the Auschwitz museum. The conclusion is obvious: Wetzler has never seen the place he describes."

Indeed, neither Wetzlar nor Vrba were ever inside the crematoria, and they did not claim that they were. In his 1963 memoir *I Cannot Forgive*, Vrba was very explicit about the fact that he had never been inside a

crematorium, and that he got his information from Sonderkommando Philip Müller. In 1985, during the Zündel Trial, Vrba came back to the issue as a witness for the prosecution. In cross-examination by Zündel's defense counsel Christie, Vrba had given the following explanation when challenged on the reliability of the description and the accompanying drawing included in the War Refugee Board report. "Mr.Christie: "How do you explain the fact that you've drawn on the diagram that I showed you every crematorium the same shape in 1944, when you drew the diagram upon your escape?" A.: "Because I had only two days to write the whole report, and to try to depict the crematoria. There was a great urgency with that plan, because the objective of the plan was to get it to Hungary and to use this whole report towards the Hungarian Jews of imminent deportation. Under that conditions I didn't lose much time with details like what is the difference between Krematorium I and II and Krematorium II and III, but I limited myself to depict the position of the gas chambers and crematoria [on] one side, and the geographic position of the whole murderous complex on the other side." Q: "Sure. I now produce and show to you a diagram which came from, I suggest, your War Refugee Report of 1944 in which you depicted a crematoria. Correct?" A.: "That's right." Q.: "Is it accurate?" A.: "This I cannot say. It was said that as we were not in the large crematoria, we reconstructed it from messages which we got from members of the Sonderkommando working in the crematorium, and therefore, that approximately how it transpired in our mind, and in our ability to depict what we have heard." In other words, the question is not if the reconstruction Vrba and Wetzlar made after their escape is an exact description of the crematoria, but if it is probable that they had indeed been in some regular contact with a Sonderkommando who knew the crematoria, and who gave them information about these installations and the extermination procedures therein. Reading the passage with this in mind, it is important first of all to observe that Eknes did not provide a full quote, but omitted to passages that provide specific detail. "The administering of the gas is done as

follows: the unfortunate victims are taken to the hall (b) where they are ordered to disrobe. *To complete the fiction that they are going to bathe, each person receives a towel and a small piece of soap issued by two men clad in white coats.* Next the victims are brought together into the gas chamber (c). [...] and drop a preparation in powder form taken from metal canisters labelled “Cyclon,” “For use against parasites,” *which is manufactured by a Hamburg concern. It is presumed that this is a “Cyanide” mixture of some sort which turns into gas at a certain temperature.* At the end of three minutes everyone in the room has died.” Both details were later confirmed by independent sources, and Eknes’ decision to drop them in his “quotation” from the War Refugee Report seems a brazen attempt to remove evidence contrary to this thesis.

If we consider the text as a whole, and identify the various elements of the description, then it becomes clear that most of them can be accounted for in the design of either crematoria 2 and 3, or crematoria 4 and 5, and that the compilation of these elements into a composite “crematorium” reconstructed by two escapees without any architectural training is as good as one could expect, given the circumstances. First of all, as Vrba and Wetzlar mentioned, there were four crematoriums in operation in Birkenau, consisting of two large crematoria--I (2) and II (3)--and two small crematoria--III (4) and IV (5). The information about the number of incinerators is obviously wrong, but the statement that each opening can receive three normal cadavers at one time was confirmed by Tauber and Höss. The “large reception hall arranged so as to give the impression of being the lobby of a public bath” must refer to the undressing rooms of crematoria 4 and 5, which were indeed located next to the incineration rooms. The description of the gas chambers, with the “little doors” in the ceiling can refer to either crematoria 2 and 3, or to crematoria 4 and 5. The description of the extermination procedure is more or less correct, as is the use of metal tins containing the Zyklon delousing agent and the way the solid substance “turns into gas at a certain temperature.” Finally “flatbed trucks” were

at times used in crematorium 2 to transport corpses from the elevator to the ovens. The tracks are still to be seen in the ruins of this crematorium.

The description of the crematoria in the War Refugee Board report contains errors, but given the conditions under which information was obtained, the lack of architectural training of Vrba and Wetzlar, and the situation in which the report was compiled, one would become suspicious if it did not contain errors. Vrba and Wetzlar did not claim to provide an exact description of the crematoria. Their report was not a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for a graduate degree in archeology. Their reconstruction of the killing installations was a good-faith attempt, based on whatever information they had been able to obtain, to convince the world that an unimaginable event was taking place in the heart of Europe--an event that still staggers and numbs the mind.

Confronted with the lengthy and very detailed testimony of Tauber, Eknies applied a technique of evasion. He implicitly dismisses the importance of Tauber's statement with one sentence: "In general, this testimony is in agreement with the official thesis." Like so many other Holocaust deniers, Eknies prefers to deal with inconvenient evidence by ignoring it. Yet he does not want to let one opportunity slip to use Tauber against "the official thesis." "In general, this testimony is in agreement with the official thesis. However, it contains a contradiction where he states that he was assigned to the Sonderkommando of crematorium II on 4 March 1943, inasmuch as this crematorium was not turned over to the camp administration until the 31st day of that month. H. Tauber further declared: "Between these two rooms [the disrobing room and the gas chamber] there was a corridor to which there was access from the outside by way of few stairs, and a chute down which they flung the cadavers coming from the camp, to convey them to the crematories." This chute for cadavers establishes at least that the Germans had designed the crematoriums *also* for the incineration

of prisoners who died from natural causes or epidemics, since, as we shall see, the “circuit” followed by those destined for extermination in the gas chambers was different. The tacit acknowledgement of the mixed use of the crematoriums that is derived from Tauber’s statement is per se disturbing for the credibility of the official doctrine. It is difficult to accept that the Germans had established a “circuit” for the cremation of the deceased from non-criminal causes which interfered with that followed by the victims of the gas chambers. It would have been much simpler to take the ones who died from natural causes directly to the crematory furnaces, avoiding their passage through the crowded basement of the crematorium.”

Eknes probably felt that he could ignore the bulk of Tauber’s testimony because he had identified the one contradiction that, according to Rassinier, was to make the whole account irrelevant: while Tauber claimed that he had been assigned to the Sonderkommando of crematorium 2 on March 4, 1943, documents showed that crematorium 2 was only turned over to the camp administration on March 31. But is there really a contradiction? It is clear that the official transfer of the crematorium occurred when the building had been fully completed but tests of the incinerators, undertaken in the presence of visitors from Berlin, had taken place as early as March 5, and the first experimental gassings had taken place on March 13. Both operations required a team of Sonderkommando. Only when the crematorium was deemed fully operational was it signed over to the camp authorities. As a result, there is no contradiction between the fact that Tauber was assigned to the Sonderkommando of crematorium 2 on March 4, and the official transfer of the building more than three weeks later.

As to the second part of Tauber’s testimony that raised Eknes’ interest the following: Eknes claims that Tauber stated that “there was a corridor to which there was access from the outside by way of few stairs, and a chute down which they flung the cadavers coming from the camp, to convey them to the crematories.” The translation made by

Dorota Ryszka and Adam Rutkowski, used by Pressac and consequently by myself, states that “there was a corridor, in which there came from the exterior a stairway and a slide for throwing the bodies that were brought to the camp to be incinerated in the crematorium.” Thus while Eknes makes a claim about a practice (of “flunging” “cadavers” into the basement of crematorium 2), Tauber refers to the intention of the slide--an intention that preceded the transformation of morgue 1 into a gas chamber. It is unclear to what extent that intention was actually realized during the operation of crematorium 2. What is clear is that even if the slide was used, there is no necessary contradiction with the use of the basement as an extermination installation. Eknes claims that “[i]t is difficult to accept that the Germans had established a ‘circuit’ for the cremation of the deceased from non-criminal causes which interfered with that followed by the victims of the gas chambers. It would have been much simpler to take the ones who died from natural causes directly to the crematory furnaces, avoiding their passage through the crowded basement of the crematorium.” He assumes, therefore, that there are two continuous processes, represented by two “circuits” that ought not interfere with each other. Yet the basement of crematorium 2 was not constantly crowded. Especially before the Hungarian Action, there were many days that no gassings took place, and there was ample time and space for corpses of inmates who had died in the camp to be brought to the basement of the crematorium, where their numbers would be registered in the death books and, if any, their golden teeth would be removed.

The Holocaust deniers have preferred to bury Tauber’s testimony in silence.

As to the countless testimonies of those survivors who were not employed as Sonderkommando, but who arrived in the camp, were subjected to selection, lost their family at that moment, and who were admitted to the camp never to see their beloved ones back, admitted to eke out a miserable existence marked by monthly selections, which led

to the disappearance of one's comrades, one's bunkmates--as to these survivor testimonies the Holocaust deniers claim that the source of all their stories is, in the words of the German negationist Wilhelm Stäglich, "mass suggestion." "The investigation of this phenomenon, in regard to the alleged extermination of Jews in the "gas chambers" of so-called extermination camps, would certainly be a worthwhile task for psychologists and sociologists. For even if the extermination of Jews had taken place, it would be unrealistic to assume that the laws of mass suggestion could not have had any influence on the description of the extent and nature of killings of Jews that actually took place. Probably this influence was far greater than one would imagine." According to Stäglich, the camps were closed off from the world, and were therefore ruled by rumour and provided therefore the perfect context for the emergence of mass suggestion. Invoking the work of the French psychologist Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) on self-delusions of "psychological crowds," Stäglich claimed that "the many accounts of the alleged mass gassings in Birkenau have their origin in mass hallucinations or mass suggestion inspired by propaganda." In short, inmates would have heard Allied radio broadcasts claiming gassings in the camps, and as a result have started to fantasize about such gassings in their own situation. "It is easy to find examples substantiating the view that many accounts of the alleged mass gassings in Birkenau have their origin in mass hallucinations or mass suggestion inspired by propaganda, for the observations upon which such reports are based can usually be explained in a completely natural way," Stäglich argued. That those deemed "unfit for work" left the place of selection in the direction of the crematoria can be explained because in that vicinity was also a hospital for inmates, and a bath house. "An equally natural explanation can be given for the observation, variously reported, that corpses were removed from the cellar of one of the crematoria, or a room next to the crematorium, to the incineration area of the crematorium. It is well-known that the death-rate in the Auschwitz camps was high at times-- especially during the frequent typhus epi-

demics. It is understandable that all these dead people could not be cremated at once. They must have been stored in a special area until they could be cremated. This was the “corpse cellar” of the crematorium, mentioned in various documents, or an annex serving the same purpose. The removal of corpses from such an area was a completely normal procedure. But many an inmate who observed such a procedure may, under the mass suggestive influence of rumors that were in circulation, have come in all good faith to the conclusion that he was witness to a “gassing.” But then, what about the testimonies about living people descending into those “corpse cellars.”

Stäglich was not concerned about the fact that so many people unanimously attest that gassings occurred. “In the nature of things,” he observed, “the unanimity of many groups of witnesses is itself the result of mass suggestion.” Stäglich then formulated his rules for accepting eye-witness evidence. “As evidence for the alleged gassing of the Jews, reports that do not contain specific details about it, but are limited to quite vague allegations of this type--as is usually the case--must be rejected at once. Such general statements are just as worthless as hearsay testimony, since they cannot be proved. Further, only statements free of contradictions, which do not stand in contradiction to other circumstances and facts, may lay claim to credibility. Finally, to have probative value, a statement must contain nothing improbable, something that may seem obvious to most people, but--as we shall see--is not always the case with reports about the Birkenau crematoria.” Stäglich had no trouble finding some obscure accounts published immediately after the war that did, indeed, have little probative value. Especially Eugène Aroneau’s 1946 collage of unrelated quotes taken from 125 different eyewitness accounts of various quality, proved an easy victim. Aroneau had submerged all the individual differences between the camps in order to evoke something that could be called “the essence of the concentration camp.” He reserved a particular scorn for Aroneau because it was the “original source of the later and

often-modified story of a woman who allegedly snatched a pistol from an SS officer, in front of the gas chamber at Birkenau, and shot him to death. “In this case, it was an “Israelite of extraordinary beauty” from Belgium, whose child had been “smashed against a concrete wall” by that SS officer. Kogon, on the other hand, tells this story as that of an Italian dancer who, on orders of the SS, had “to dance naked in front of the crematorium” before her gassing. Kogon even knows the name of the SS officer who was shot to death because he was so careless about his pistol: It was “Rapportführer Schillinger.” Karl Barthel also repeats this tale, in his book *Die Welt ohne Erbarmen* [The World Without Pity]. According to him, however, the heroine was a “French actress,” for whose “courage” Barthel has words of praise. Barthel himself was only in Buchenwald, but he probably found it necessary to make his own account a little bit more interesting with this and other such gossip. Other authors vary the tale of this “martyr” even further. She is an unusually instructive example of the imaginings of former concentration camp inmates.”

Aroneau was an easy target, but Stäglich studiously avoided the accounts published in this chapter--the posthumous testimony of Salmen Gradowski, statements made by Walter Blass, Shlomo Dragon, Henry Tauber, and Michael Kula. And he ignored the corroborating statements of the Polish inmate Stanislaw Klodzinski, “The Polish Major,” Stanislaw Jankowski, Janda Weiss, and an SS-man named Pery Broad who, independently from each other, corroborated the event. Klodzinski did so in a letter written to Teresa Lasocka-Estreicher, smuggled out of the camp shortly after the event. “The Polish Major” did so in early 1944, when he wrote about the incident in his report. Stanislaw Jankowski testified about the incident immediately after the war in Auschwitz, and Janda Weiss talked about it in Buchenwald--more or less at the same time that SS-man Pery Broad provided information about the event whilst imprisoned in a British prisoner-of-war camp. All these witnesses told of that extraordinary woman who on October

23, 1943 could not tolerate her fate and that of her companions any longer, snatched Schillenger's pistol, and killed him. As the story that Stäglich judged "an unusually instructive example of the imaginings of former concentration camp inmates" has indeed proven to be based on fact, what about all those other stories, all those testimonies full of instructive details, all those statements free of major contradictions?

V Confessions, 1945–47

But good sense, founded in experience, will answer, that they who record matters, concerning which they are strongly biased by their affections, their passions and their prejudices, and wherein they have directly, or indirectly, an immediate and great private interest to serve by inventing falsehoods, or by disguising truths, are never to be received as good witnesses, unless their testimony be confirmed by collateral and disinterested evidence....When are less liable to be deceived by the concurrence of authors, more independent and more indifferent than these, though they may not be all of equal credit: because when their motives and designs are not the same, when they had no common principle, and when they cannot be suspected to have had any concert together, nothing out of the notoriety of facts can make their relations coincide. Lord Bolingbroke, *"The Substance of Some Letters."*

By the end of the 1945 the major elements of the story had been established on the basis of on-site inspections, testimonies of witnesses, and study of the crematoria files in the archive of the *Zentralbauleitung*. Yet the Poles had not been able to interview any of the men who had constructed and run the camp, and who could give some insight into the aims that had shaped the development of the camp. Two documents that became available to the Poles in late 1945 were, while extremely important as corroborating evidence, not very informative as to the actual operation of the camp. The first was the war-time diary of Dr. Johann Paul Kremmer, *Dozent* of Anatomy at the University of Münster. Kremer had volunteered as a member of the General SS in 1935,

and he had been detailed to Auschwitz in August 1942 to replace a physician who had fallen ill. There he served until November 20. An avid diarist since he was sixteen, Kremer recorded his impressions at the time. Kremer was not part of the overall command structure, and on temporary duty in Auschwitz he showed remarkably little curiosity as to the historic events he witnessed and, in a subordinate role, helped to shape. Yet this very lack of engagement also marks the great historic interest of the diary. One of the remarkable aspects of the Holocaust was that it was conceived, initiated, executed, and completed by ordinary men who had learned to kill as part of their ordinary activities.

Kremer's diary was found when he was arrested, and was immediately recognized as an important piece of evidence of the atrocities committed in Auschwitz. We give here, in the common English translation, a few excerpts. "August 30, 1942. Departure from Prague 8.15 a.m. through Böhmisches Trübau, Olmütz, Prerau, Oderberg. Arrival at Concentration Camp Auschwitz at 5.36 p.m. Quarantine in camp on account of numerous contagious diseases (typhus, malaria, dysentery). Received to secret order through garrison physician *Hauptsturmführer* [Kurt] Uhlenbrock and accommodation in a room (no. 26) in the Waffen-SS club-house [Home]. August 31, 1942. Tropical climate with 28° Centigrade in the shade, dust and innumerable flies! Excellent food in the Home. This evening, for instance, we had sour duck livers for 0.40 RM, with stuffed tomatoes, tomato salad, etc. Water is infected, so we drink seltzer-water which is served free (mattoni). First inoculation against typhus. Had photo taken for the camp identity card. September 1, 1942. Have ordered SS officer's cap, sword-belt and brace from Berlin by letter. In the afternoon was present at the gassing of a block with Cyclon B against lice. September 2, 1942. Was present for the first time at a special action at 3 a.m. By comparison Dante's inferno seems almost a comedy. Auschwitz is justly called an extermination camp!" After his arrest, Kremer was extradited to Poland, and he became one

of the defendants in the Auschwitz Trial held before the Supreme National Tribunal in Cracow in November and December 1947. During his pre-trial interrogation Kremer was asked to elucidate the various entries of his diary. On August 18, 1947, he stated that “by September 2, 1942, at 3 a.m. I had already been assigned to take part in the action of gassing people.” “These mass murders took place in small cottages situated outside the Birkenau camp in a wood. The cottages were called “bunkers” in the SS-men’s slang. All SS physicians on duty in the camp took turns to participate in the gassings, which were called *Sonderaktion* [special action]. My part as a physician at the gassing consisted in remaining in readiness near the bunker. I was brought there by car. I sat in front with the driver and an SS hospital orderly sat in the back of the car with oxygen apparatus to revive SS-men, employed in the gassing, in case any of them should succumb to the poisonous fumes. When the transport with people who were destined to be gassed arrived at the railway ramp, the SS officers selected from among the new arrivals persons fit to work, while the rest--old people, all children, women with children in their arms and other persons not deemed fit to work--were loaded onto lorries and driven to the gas chambers. I used to follow behind the transport till we reached the bunker. There people were driven into the barrack huts where the victims undressed and then went naked to the gas chambers. Very often no incidents occurred, as the SS-men kept the people quiet, maintaining that they were to bathe and be deloused. After driving all of them into the gas chamber the door was closed and an SS-man in a gas mask threw the contents of a Cyclon tin through an opening in the side wall. The shouting and screaming of the victim could be heard through that opening and it was clear that they were fighting for their lives. These shouts were heard for a very short while. I should say for some minutes, but I am unable to give the exact length of time.”

Three days later Kremer witnessed another gassing, and dutifully recorded it in his diary. "September 5, 1942. At noon was present at a special action in the women's camp(Moslems)--the most horrible of all horrors. *Hschf* Thilo, military surgeon, was right when he said to me today that we are located here in the *anus mundi*. In the evening at about 8 p.m. another special action with a draft from Holland. men compete to take part in such actions as they get additional rations--1/5 litre vodka, 5 cigarettes, 100 grammes of sausage and bread. Today and tomorrow (Sunday)on duty." In Poland, Kremer gave again a full explanation of this entry. On July 17,1947 he testified that "the action of gassing emaciated women from the women's camp was particularly unpleasant." "Such individuals were generally called *Muselmänner* [Moslems]. I remember taking part in the gassing of such women in daylight. I am unable to state how numerous that group was. When I came to the bunker they sat clothed on the ground. As the clothes were in fact worn out camp clothes, they were not let into the undressing barracks but undressed in the open. I could deduce from the behaviour of these women that they realized what was awaiting them. They begged the SS-men to be allowed to live, they wept, but all of them were driven into the gas chamber and gassed. Being an anatomist I had seen many horrors, had dealt with corpses, but what I then saw was not to be compared with anything ever seen before. It was under the influence of these impressions that I noted in my diary, under the date of September 5, 1942 "The most horrible of all horrors. *Hauptsturmführer* Thilo was right when he said to me today that we are located here in the *anus mundi*." I used this expression because I could not imagine anything more sickening and more horrible." Yet by the next day Kremer was sufficiently recovered to enjoy an "excellent" Sunday dinner consisting of "tomato soup, one half chicken with potatoes and red cabbage (20 grammes of fat), dessert and magnificent vanilla ice-cream."

Three more entries are of interest. The first one is of October 3. "October 3, 1942. Today I preserved fresh material from the human liver, spleen and pancreas, also lice from persons infected with typhus, in pure alcohol. Whole streets at Auschwitz are down with typhus. I therefore took the first inoculation against abdominal typhus. *Obersturmbannführer* Schwarz ill with typhus!" During his trial Kremer commented at length on the first sentence of this entry. "In my diary I mentioned in several entries the taking, for research purposes, of fresh human material. It was like this: I had been for an extensive period interested in investigating the changes developing in the human organism as a result of starvation. At Auschwitz I mentioned this to Wirths who said that I would be able to get completely fresh material for my research from those prisoners who were killed by phenol injections. To choose suitable specimens I used to visit the last block on the right [Block 28], where prisoners who acted as doctors presented the patients to the SS physician and described the illness of the patient. The SS physician decided then--taking into consideration the prisoner's chances of recovery--whether he should be treated in the hospital, perhaps as an outpatient, or be liquidated. Those placed by the SS physician in the latter group were led away by the SS orderlies. The SS physician primarily designated for liquidation those prisoners whose diagnosis was *Allgemeine Körperschwäche* [general bodily exhaustion]. I used to observe such prisoners and if one of them aroused my interest, owing to his advanced state of emaciation, I asked the orderly to reserve the given patient for me and let me know when he would be killed with an injection. At the time fixed by the orderly the patients selected by me were again brought to the last block, and were put into a room on the other side of the corridor opposite the room where the examinations, during which the patient had been selected, had taken place. The patient was put upon the dissecting table while he was still alive. I then approached the table and put several questions to the man as to such details which pertained to my research. For instance, I asked what his weight had been before the arrest, how much weight he had lost since

then, whether he took any medicines, etc. When I had collected my information the orderly approached the patient and killed him with an injection in the vicinity of the heart. As far as I knew only phenol injections were used. Death was instantaneous after the injection. I myself never made any lethal injections.”

The second entry is of October 12. “October 12, 1942.(Hössler!) The second inoculation against typhus; strong reaction in the evening (fever). In spite of this was present at night at another special action with a draft from Holland (1,600 persons). Horrible scene in front of the last bunker! This was the 10th special action.” On July 18, 1947, Kremer elucidated this entry as follows: “In connection with the gassing described by me in the diary under the date of October 12, 1942, I have to explain that around 1,600 Dutchmen were then gassed. This is an approximate figure which I noted down after hearing it mentioned by others. This action was conducted by the SS officer Hössler. I remember how he tried to drive the whole group into one bunker. He was successful except for one man, whom it was not possible by any means to squeeze inside the bunker. This man was killed by Hösler with a pistol shot. I therefore wrote in my diary about horrible scenes in front of the last bunker, and I mentioned Hössler’s name in connection with this incident.”

Finally there is the entry for October 18. “October 18, 1942. In wet and cold weather was on this Sunday morning present at the 11th special action (from Holland). Terrible scenes when 3 women begged merely to have their lives spared.” Again, Kremer explained this entry during his trial. “During the special action, described by me in my diary under the date of October 18, 1942, three women from Holland refused to enter the gas chamber and begged for their lives. They were young and healthy women, but their begging was to no avail. The SS-men, taking part in the action, shot them on the spot.”

If Kremer's diary provides those who seek to deny the gassings in Auschwitz with some direct German evidence that support the "gassing claim," and if it provides the historian with important clues as to the mental state of one class of perpetrators, it lets us down in that it provides little factual knowledge of the gassing operations. A second document, the testimony of *SS-Unterscharführer* Pery Broad, proved rather more informative. Broad, who served in the Political Department (the "camp Gestapo") at Auschwitz, wrote it shortly after the German capitulation while in British captivity. By all accounts he wrote the report voluntarily while working in the camp as a translator for the British counter-intelligence unit. In 1964, during the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, Broad's British superior Cornelis van het Kaar testified that in the beginning of June, 1945, Broad approached him, and told him the history of Auschwitz. "Van het Kaar: "It seemed so important to me, that I immediately took him out of the camp, and gave him an English uniform. I told him: 'Write everything down, especially write about the daily life there.' Broad lived in the same house as we, and wrote everything down in two or three days. Later Broad went to the Munsterlager camp and began to help us with weeding our war criminals from the camps. Representative of Adjunct-Prosecutor [Henry] Ormond: "Did other people cooperate with the writing of the report? Did that possibility even exist?" Van het Kaar: "No. Broad has written the report by himself. He came voluntarily to us. We did not search him. He came to us around 15 June. It was a kind of confession. He wanted to unload his heart." Broad created six copies of his report. One of them was given to van het Kaar's superior Hermann Rothmann, who provided it to the Frankfurt court for Broad's trial. Examined during the trial under oath, Rothmann declared that Broad had written it by himself, and that the report roughly covered what Broad had told him in person.

Broad admitted, after some hesitation, that the report was his. “Presiding Judge: “Accused Broad, what do you say about the document that has just been read.” Broad: “Without hesitation I recognize some parts as my own notes, but not the whole document.” Presiding Judge: “You had in Auschwitz much knowledge about what happened there.” Broad: “Yes, I had much knowledge.” Presiding Judge: “You expressed at the time, that it concerned a crime.” Broad: “That is also my conviction today. Every act in Auschwitz aided and abetted that. I believe there are more versions of this report. It seems to me there is much unfamiliar knowledge in this report.” Presiding Judge: “The report is written in one style and it is homogeneous in character. Does it not seem that it was written by one man, that means by you?” Broad: “Yes, that is right. I only do not know the source of the numbers mentioned. That I could not know.”

The Broad report, which was of independent origin, corroborated important elements of the picture that had begun to emerge in Sehn’s investigation, and added important new descriptions. Perhaps most important was Broad’s recollection of the first gassings in crematorium 1, which was located adjacent to his own office in the barrack that housed the camp’s Political Department. “From the first company of the *SS-Totenkopfsturmbannes*, stationed in the Auschwitz concentration camp, *SS-Hauptscharführer* Vaupel selected six particularly trustworthy men. Among them were those who had been members of the black General SS for years. They had to report to *SS-Hauptscharführer* Hössler. After their arrival Hössler cautioned them to preserve the utmost secrecy as to what they would see in the next few minutes. Otherwise death would be their lot. The task of the six men was to keep all roads and streets completely closed around the area near the Auschwitz crematorium. Nobody should be allowed to pass there, regardless of rank. The offices in the building from which the crematorium was visible were evacuated. No inmate of the SS garrison hospital was allowed to come near the windows of the first floor which looked onto the roof of the nearby

crematorium and the yard of that gloomy place. Everything was made ready and Hössler himself made sure that no uncalled-for persons would enter the closed area. Then a sad procession walked along the streets of the camp. It had started at the railway siding, located between the garrison storehouse and the German Armaments Factory (the siding branched off from the main railway line, which led to the camp). There, at the ramp, cattle vans were being unloaded, and people who had arrived in them were slowly marching towards their unknown destination. All of them had large, yellow Jewish stars on their miserable clothes. Their worn faces showed that they had suffered many a hardship. The majority were elderly people. From their conversation one could gather that up to their unexpected transportation they had been employed in factories, that they were willing to go on working and to be as useful as they could. A few guards without guns, but with pistols well hidden in their pockets, escorted the procession to the crematorium. The SS-men promised the people, who were beginning to feel more hopeful, that they would be employed at suitable work, according to their preoccupations. Explicit instructions how to behave were given the SS-men by Hössler. Previously the guards had always treated new arrivals very roughly, trying with blows to make them stand in ranks "at arm's length," but there were no uncivil words just now! The more fiendish the whole plan! Both sides of the big entrance gate to the crematorium were wide open. Suspecting nothing the column marched in, in lines of five persons, and stood in the yard. There were three or four hundred of them. Somewhat nervously the SS guard at the entrance waited for the last man to enter the yard. Quickly he shut the gate and bolted it. Grabner and Hössler were standing on the roof of the crematorium. Grabner spoke to the Jews, who unsuspectingly awaited their fate, "You will now bathe and be disinfected, we don't want any epidemics in the camp. Then you will be brought to your barracks, where you'll get some hot soup. You will be employed in accordance with your professional qualifications. Now undress and put your clothes in front of you on the ground." They will-

ingly followed these instructions, given them in a friendly, warm-hearted voice. Some looked forward to the soup, others were glad that the nerve-racking uncertainty as to their immediate future was over and that their worst expectations were not realized. All felt relieved after their days full of anxiety. Grabner and Hössler continued from the roof to give friendly advice, which had a calming effect upon the people. "Put your shoes close to your clothes bundle, so that you can find them after the bath." "Is the water warm? Of course, warm showers." "What is your trade? A shoemaker? We need them urgently. Report to me immediately after!" Such words dispelled any last doubts or lingering suspicions. The first lines entered the mortuary through the hall. Everything was extremely tidy. But the special smell made some of them uneasy. They looked in vain for showers or water pipes fixed to the ceiling. The hall meanwhile was getting packed. Several SS-men had entered with them, full of jokes and small talk. They unobtrusively kept their eyes on the entrance. As soon as the last person had entered they disappeared without much ado. Suddenly the door was closed. It had been made tight with rubber and secured with iron fittings. Those inside heard the heavy bolts being secured. They were screwed to with screws, making the door air-tight. A deadly paralyzing terror spread among the victims. They started to beat upon the door, in helpless rage and despair they hammered on it with their fists. Derisive laughter was their only reply. Somebody shouted through the door, "Don't get burned, while you make your bath!" Several victims noticed that covers had been removed from the six holes in the ceiling. They uttered a loud cry of terror when they saw a head in a gas mask at one opening. The "disinfectors" were at work. One of them was *SS-Unterscharführer* Teuer, decorated with the Cross of War Merit. With a chisel and a hammer they opened a few innocuous-looking tins which bore the inscription "Cyclon, to be used against vermin. Attention, poison! To be opened by trained personnel only!" The tins were filled to the brim with blue granules the size of peas. Immediately after opening the tins, their contents was thrown into the holes which were quickly

covered. Meanwhile Grabner gave a sign to the driver of a lorry, which had stopped close to the crematorium. The driver started the engine and its deafening noise was louder than the death cries of the hundreds of people inside, being gassed to death. Grabner looked with the interest of a scientist at the second hand of his wrist watch. Cyclon acted swiftly. It consists of hydrocyanic acid in solid form. As soon as the tin was emptied, the prussic acid escaped from the granules. One of the men, who participated in the bestial gassing, could not refrain from lifting, for a fraction of a second, the cover of one of the vents and from spitting into the hall. Some two minutes later the screams became less loud and only an indistinct groaning was heard. The majority of the victims had already lost consciousness. Two minutes more and Grabner stopped looking at his watch. It was over. There was complete silence. The lorry had driven away. The guards were called off, and the cleaning squad started to sort out the clothes, sotidily put down in the yard of the crematorium. Busy SS-men and civilians working in the camp were again passing the mound, on whose artificial slopes young trees swayed peacefully in the wind. Very few knew what terrible event had taken place there only a few minutes before and what sight the mortuary below the greenery would present. Some time later, when the ventilators had extracted the gas, the prisoners working in the crematorium opened the door to the mortuary. The corpses, their mouths wide open, were leaning on one another. They were especially closely packed near to the door, where in their deadly fright they had crowded to force it. The prisoners of the crematorium squad worked like robots, apathetically and without a trace of emotion. It was difficult to tug the corpses from the mortuary, as their twisted limbs had grown stiff with the gas. Thick smoke clouds poured from the chimney.--This is how it began in 1942!" Broad's testimony was important, but as any observer will notice, not without its problems. He showed some literary ambition in his account, and his flowery and sentimental descriptions clashed with the evidentiary import of his recollections.

According to Broad, the main motivation to build the four new crematoria in Birkenau was the difficulties the Germans had in keeping the killings at bunkers 1 and 2 secret. The inhabitants of Wola, located at the opposite shore of the Vistula, had been able to observe the proceedings. "Thanks to the bright flames from the pits, where corpses were continually burnt, they could see the processions of naked people from the barracks, where they had undressed, to the gas chambers. They heard the cries of the people, brutally beaten because they did not want to enter the chambers of death; they also heard the shots which finished off those who could not be squeezed into the gas chambers, which were not roomy enough." The burning pyres produced a terrible stench and coloured the sky red at night. "[I]t was by reason of the unmistakable sweet smell and the nightly flames that the neighbourhood of Auschwitz learnt about the goings-on in the camp of death. Railwaymen used to tell the civilian population how thousands were being brought to Auschwitz every day, and yet the camp was not growing larger at a corresponding rate. The same information was supplied by police escorts of the transports. The result was that a party speaker, when making his speech in the town of Auschwitz, had to retreat as most of the audience was hostile."

The completion of four new crematoria, which ended the need to incinerate the corpses on large pyres, allowed the Germans to restore secrecy. "Two of them had underground gas chambers, in each of which 4,000 people could be killed at the same time. The other two smaller crematoria had two gas chambers partitioned into three sections, built on the ground floors. In each of these death factories there was an immense hall where "evacuees" had to undress. The halls of crematoria I [2] and II [3] were also underground. Stone stairs, about two metres wide, led down to them. Crematoria I [2] and II [3] had fifteen ovens each, and each oven was equipped to hold four or five corpses." But even the large crematoria could not keep the murders secret. Remarkably enough, Broad credited the architects with one

very peculiar leak. "The building section of the Auschwitz concentration camp was so proud of their achievements that they placed a series of pictures of the crematoria in the hall of their main building for everybody to see. They had overlooked the fact that the civilians, coming and going there, would be less impressed with the technological achievements of the building section; on seeing the enlarged photos of fifteen ovens, neatly arranged side by side, they would, instead, be rather apt to ponder on the somewhat strange invention of the Third Reich. Grabner soon took care to quash the bizarre publicity. But he could not prevent the numerous civilian workers, employed by the building section to construct the crematoria, from talking to outsiders about the construction plans, with which they were naturally thoroughly acquainted." Working in an administrative capacity in the Political Department of the camp (the in-house Gestapo office), Broad gave some valuable information regarding record keeping. "When information was requested by the Reich Main Security Office concerning a past transport, as a rule nothing could be ascertained. Former transport lists were destroyed. Nobody could learn anything in Auschwitz about the fate of a given person. The person asked for "is not and never has been detained in camp," or "he is not in the files"--these were the usual formulas given in reply. At present, after the evacuation of Auschwitz and the burning of all papers and records, the fate of millions of people is completely obscure. No transport or arrival lists are in existence any more."

Broad was called as one of the witnesses in the trial of Bruno Tesch, Joachim Drosihn and Karl Weinbacher. Tesch had been the owner of the firm of Tesch and Stabenow, which had supplied Zyklon B--the commercially sold fumigation product that had hydrogen cyanide as its active agent--to Auschwitz and other camps; Weinbacher had been a manager in the firm and Drosihn the chief technician. According to the indictment, the defendants had known since 1942 that Zyklon B was used not only for its normal fumigation purposes, but also to kill

human beings. Nevertheless Tesch and his subordinates had continued to supply the product. According to the prosecution, “knowingly to supply a commodity to a branch of state which is using that commodity for the mass murder of Allied civilian nationals is a war crime, and the people who did it were war criminals for putting the means to commit the actual crime into the hands of those who actually carried it out.”

During the trial, Broad testified on behalf of the prosecution. He testified that he had witnessed a gassing at crematorium 1 at some 40 to 45 meters distance. “Q.: “Will you tell us what you saw in connection with exterminations at the old crematorium? A.: “The installation at the crematorium was the following. The roof was plain, and there were six holes of the diameter of ten centimetres. Through these holes, after the tins had been opened, the gas was poured in.” Q.: “How many people were they putting in at a time in the old crematorium?” A.: “At the time when I observed it, there were about 300 or 400 or there might have been even 500.” Q.: “How long did the gassing take to finish the 500 off?” A.: “One could hear the screaming of the people who were killed in the crematorium for about two or three minutes.” Q.: “Did you later get to know more about the gassing operations?” A.: “Yes; later on I got to know the name of that particular gas; it was Zyklon.” Q.: “Did you ever see any gassings at the new crematoriums at Birkenau?” A.: “I have seen those gassing actions from a rather bigger distance.” Q.: “At Birkenau?” A.: “Yes.” Q.: “How many gas crematoriums were there at Birkenau?” A.: “There were four crematoriums at Birkenau.” Q.: “How many people a day were they gassing at Birkenau?” A.: “In the months of March and April 1944 about 10,000.” Q.: “Per day?” A.: “Yes, per day.” Broad was asked to identify the labels of the Zyklon B cans, and then to explain who were the victims. He estimated the total number of victims between 2.5 and 3 million. Then he described the gassing and incineration procedures at the crematoria, and the renewed use of pyres in 1944 when the killing exceeded the incineration capacity of

the ovens. "Q.: Who were the men who actually did the gassing? What type of man was that in the camp?" A.: "They were called disinfectors." Q.: "Will you tell us about these disinfectors shortly?" A.: "They were under the orders of the doctor and their duties comprised, apart from killing human beings, also the disinfection and the delousing of the internees' clothes." Q.: "How was that delousing and disinfection carried out?" A.: "In airtight rooms. The clothing was dealt with in the same way as the human beings." Q.: "Will you look at this extract from this report and tell me if you know anything about it? Who wrote that report, which is set out there in inverted commas?" A.: "I myself." Q.: "The disinfectors are at work ...With an iron rod and hammer they open a couple of harmless looking tin boxes, the directions read 'Cyclon [sic], vermin destroyer, Warning, Poisonous. 'The boxes are filled with small pellets which look like blue peas. As soon as the box is opened the contents are shaken out through an aperture in the roof. Then another box is emptied in the next aperture, and so on. And in each case the cover is carefully replaced on the aperture....Cyclon works quickly, it consists of a cyanic compound in a modified form. When the pellets are shaken out of the box they give off prussic acid gas (Blausaugas).... After about two minutes the shrieks die down and change to a low moaning. Most of the men have already lost consciousness. After a further two minutes ...It is all over. Deadly quiet reigns.... The corpses are piled together, their mouths stretched open....It is difficult to heave the interlaced corpses out of the chamber as the gas is stiffening all their limbs. Is that based on your experience?" A.: "Yes."

The Kremer Diary and the Broad Report were available to researchers of Auschwitz since their discovery or compilation in 1945. A third, and important document, created in the summer of 1945, was to remain hidden in the Public Record Office until it was released for study in 1992. Ironically, the first to see them was David Irving. Irving, however, initially chose not to go public with his discovery of the five accounts

about Auschwitz created shortly after the war by Höss's one-time deputy Hans Aumeier. Seeking to make the best from a very bad situation, he buried a reference to Aumeier's statement in a footnote in his 1996 book on the Nuremberg Trials.

SS-Hauptsturmführer (Captain) Hans Aumeier became in early 1942 *Lagerführer* (Camp Leader) of Auschwitz, and as such he was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the *Schutzhaftlager* (literally "Protective Custody Camp"), the inmate compound of the concentration camp. He remained in function until the end of that year, and therefore oversaw the transformation of Auschwitz from a "normal" concentration camp into a camp that, amongst other functions, also served as an extermination camp for Jews. Aumeier was not very effective, and in early 1943 he was transferred to run a concentration camp in Estonia. Finally he ended up running a concentration camp in Norway. Arrested after the German capitulation in May 1945, he was initially interrogated in Norway. In a first account written by Aumeier, dated June 29, 1945, he stated that during his tenure as *Lagerführer* 3,000 to 3,500 prisoners died in Auschwitz. He denied knowledge about gas chambers.

A month later, Aumeier admitted that gas chambers had been in operation in Auschwitz, and that they were used for the killing of Jews. "As far as I can remember, the first gassings of some 50 to 80 Jewish prisoners took place in the month of November or December 1942. This happened in the morgue of the crematorium in camp I [crematorium 1], under supervision of the camp doctor, of *Untersturmführer* Grabner, the camp commandant, and various medical orderlies. I was not present at that time, and also did not know beforehand that this gassing was going to take place. The camp commandant always remained distrustful towards me, and did not tell me much. Only the next day did the camp doctor, Grabner, *Obersturmführer* H[öss]ler, *Hauptsturmführer* Schwarz and I have to go to the camp commandant, and he told us that he had received via the Reich Security Main Office the order of the *Reichsführer* SS that, in order to prevent further epidemics, all Jewish

prisoners incapable of work, and all ill inmates, who in the opinion of the doctor could not be brought back to work, ought to be gassed. He further told us that in the preceding night the first inmates had been gassed, but that the crematorium was too small and could not handle the incineration of the corpses, and that therefore in the new crematorium in Birkenau also gas chambers were to be built. We were all very shocked and upset, but he added that the whole affair was a secret Reich matter, and that because of our oath of allegiance we would be condemned to death by the *Reichsführer SS* if we were to talk about it to others. We had to sign a declaration to this effect, which was given for safekeeping by the camp commandant. All the men who later had something to do with the commando were instructed by *Untersturmführer* Grabner, and also had to sign such a declaration in his presence. In the time that followed some three to four gassings were undertaken in the old crematorium. These always occurred in the evening hours. In the morgue were two to three air vents and medical orderlies, wearing gas masks, shook blue [cyanide] gas into these. We were not allowed to come close, and only the next day the bunker [gas chamber] was opened. The doctor told that the people died within half a minute to a minute. In the meantime in Birkenau, close to the burial sites, two empty houses were equipped by the construction office with gas chambers. One house had two chambers, the other four. These houses were designated as bunkers 1 and 2. Each chamber accommodated about 50 to 150 people. At the end of January or February, the first gassings were undertaken. The Kommando was called SK [*Sonderkommando*], and the camp commandant had put it under direct authority of *Untersturmführer* Grabner and was again led and brought into action by [...] H[öss]ler. The area was surrounded by notices and marked as a security zone, and moreover encircled by eight guard posts from the Kommando. From that moment onwards the camp doctors sorted from the arriving transports immediately the inmates, and those who were destined to be gassed. They had instructions to select for gassing those crippled by illness, those over 55 years of age who could not work, and

children up to 11 or 12 years. [...] Near bunkers 1 and 2 two barracks were built, and in this one inmates had to undress, and there they were told that they were to be deloused and bathed. Then they were brought to the chambers. Air vents were set in the side walls of these chambers. In the same manner as described above, gassings took place under control of the doctor. The bunker was always opened the next day. On the next day gold teeth would be broken out of the corpses under supervision of a dentist or a medical orderly, and after that the corpses were burned in trenches in a manner described above. At the same time doctors also selected seriously ill Jewish prisoners in the sick wards of the camp, and from time to time led to the gassing. It must have been around the middle of April 1943 that crematorium I [2] in Birkenau was completed and brought into operation. In the basement of the crematorium (I believe it had eight ovens) had been built a concrete bunker that had place for between 600 to 800 people. In front of the crematorium was also built a hut for undressing. Gassing occurred likewise through air vents from above. The Bunker had a system to introduce fresh air, so that after gassings the bunker could be opened after five to eight hours. The corpses were then brought with an elevator directly to the ovens for incineration. Additionally it is worth to mention that valuables were taken from the Jews and were sent by the administration to the SS-Wirtschafts-verwaltungshauptamt. After delousing, the clothes were partly issued in the [Auschwitz] camps, and partly sent to other camps. At the beginning of May 1943 crematorium II (5 ovens) was completed and alternately gassings also took place there. Its gas chamber was smaller and held perhaps 400 to 500 people. It did not have a system to bring in fresh air, and gassings happened by means of air vents in the side walls. At the time of my transfer crematorium III was still under construction and not ready. It was roughly planned on the same model as crematorium II (5 ovens). My estimate is that during my tenure between 15,000 and 18,000 Jewish prisoners were gassed.”

Aumeier's statement is important. While there are many errors, especially as it concerns dates or the number of Jews gassed, he is basically correct in his description of bunkers 1 and 2, and the gas chambers in crematorium 2 and 4. Less detailed, Aumeier's confession provide important independent corroboration of Broad's account, the statements made in Poland by surviving *Sonderkommandos*, and the forensic investigations done by Roman Dawidowski. Aumeier was to further elaborate on his statement in the months that followed, providing more details about the gassing operation. In these statements he stressed again, at various occasions, that "there was a Reichsführer-SS order to this effect which banned all written reports, counts, statistics, or the like in this context," or "no lists were kept of those gassed and those were also not recorded by name from the transports. As already mentioned, it was forbidden to make notes or lists about it."

Both Kremer's diary, Broad's report, and Aumeier's explanations provided in the months immediately after the end of the war in Europe important additional evidence about the history of Auschwitz as an extermination camp. Yet the immediate impact of these documents was small. This was different with the so-called Belsen Trial, held by a British Military Tribunal in the fall of 1945 in the German city of Lüneburg to try the captured SS personnel of Bergen Belsen. It did not merely generate valuable evidence, but also focussed attention on Auschwitz, as most of the defendants had, at one time or another, worked in Auschwitz before being transferred to Bergen-Belsen. Kommandant Josef Kramer, for example, had also served as *Lagerführer* of Birkenau during the Hungarian Action. Hence there were two distinct charges upon which the accused were arraigned. The first concerned the criminal and inexcusable neglect that characterized the SS' rule in Belsen, and the second focussed on the carefully designed and executed policy of extermination in Auschwitz.

the opening speech for the prosecution, Colonel T. M. Backhouse stated that he was to provide evidence to show that the conditions in Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz were caused not only by criminal neglect, but also “that they were caused by deliberate starvation and ill-treatment, with the malicious knowledge that they must cause death.” “In respect of Auschwitz I will go further and say that not only will the Prosecution ask you to say that it was done with deliberate knowledge that the conditions would cause death, but that there was deliberate killing of thousands and probably millions of people, quite deliberate cold-blooded extermination of millions of people in that camp, and that each of the accused who was serving at Auschwitz and is charged in the second charge had his or her share in this joint endeavour in this group of persons who were carrying out this policy of deliberate extermination.”

The first witness for the prosecution to testify on the conditions in Auschwitz was the Polish-Jewish physician Dr. Ada Bimko. She arrived in Auschwitz in August 1943 with 5,000 other Jews from Sosnowitz. Of this transport, 4,500 were sent directly to the crematorium. “My father, mother, brother, husband and small son of six years of age were included in that number.” “[Colonel Backhouse]: “After that date did you attend any other selections of this kind?” A.: “Yes. I was working as a doctor in the hospital and was present at several selections. The first of these happened on the day of the greatest feast of the Jews, the Day of Atonement. There were three methods of selection. The first one immediately on the arrival of the prisoners; the second in the camp among the healthy prisoners; and the third in the hospital amongst the sick. The camp doctor was always present and other S.S. men and S.S. women.” Dr. Bimko testified that she seen one of the gas chambers. In her original deposition, she discussed the circumstances that made the visit possible. “In the Birkenau section of Auschwitz Camp there were five brick buildings. These five buildings were similar in appearance and different from all the other buildings in the camp. They were

commonly known by all the prisoners in the camp as crematoria. When selections were held I saw the condemned persons driven to these buildings in lorries. I did not see the persons actually enter the buildings as it was not possible to get sufficiently close to do so. Both men and women were in the parties taken to these buildings. Usually the condemned women were ordered to undress and leave their clothes behind in Block 25, and sometimes they undressed at the gas chamber. Occasionally they were allowed to take blankets with them to the gas chamber, but this was all according to the S.S. Man in charge. Hospital blankets were used for this purpose. The crematorium and gas chambers were in an area of the camp known as Brzezinki.”

Attached to the hospital in the women’s camp, Dr. Bimko was responsible for recovering the blankets which the naked prisoners used after having undressed in Block 25, the holding pen in the women’s camp for those selected for the gas chambers. During the trial, she explained how this brought her into the crematoria. “Q.: “Have you ever been into one of the gas chambers?” A.: “Yes. In August, 1944. I was working in a portion of the camp as a doctor. A new crowd of those selected for the gas chamber had arrived, and as they were sick they came covered with a blanket. After two days we were told to fetch all those blankets from the gas chamber. I took the opportunity, as I always wanted to see with my own eyes this ill-famed gas chamber, and I went in. It was a brick building and there were trees around in a way as if it were camouflaged. In the first room I met a man who came from the same town as I do. There was also an S.S. man with a rank of Unterscharführer, and he belonged to the Red Cross. I was told that in this first big room the people left their clothes, and from this room were led onto a second, and I gained the impression that hundreds and hundreds might go into this room, it was so large. It resembled the shower-baths or ablution rooms we had in the camp. There were many sprays all over the ceiling in rows which were parallel. All these people who went into this room were issued with a towel and a cake of soap so that they

should have the impression that they were going to have a bath, but for anybody who looked at the floor it was quite clear that it was not so, because there were no drains. In this room there was a small door which opened to a room which was pitch dark and looked like a corridor. I saw a few lines of rails with a small wagon which they called a lorry, and I was told that prisoners who were already gassed were put on these wagons and sent directly to the crematorium. I believe the crematorium was in the same building, but I myself did not see the stove.”

One of the other witnesses for the prosecution was Dr. Charles Sigismund Bendel, a Rumanian Jewish physician living in Paris. Arrested in November 1943, he had been taken first to the transit camp at Drancy, and from there to Auschwitz. At the end of February, 1944, Bendel was detailed as a doctor to the Gipsy camp in Birkenau, where he witnessed Dr. Mengele’s medical experiments on twins. “[Colonel T. M. Backhouse]: “In June, 1944, was your employment changed?” [Bendel]: “Indeed, it was changed. Dr. Mengele gave me the honour to attach me to the crematorium. The men who worked there were called Sonderkommando, a Special Kommando numbering 900. They were all deported people. Just as there existed a Sonderkommando amongst the prisoners so there was a Sonderkommando also amongst the S. S. They enjoyed special privileges, for instance, in alcohol, and were completely separated from the other S.S. There were about fifteen S.S. in this Sonderkommando, three for each crematorium. The prisoners amongst the Sonderkommando lived in the camp in two blocks which were always locked, and were not allowed to leave them. Some of S.S. of the Sonderkommando were on night duties and others did their duty in rotas. They were always relieved by the others. At first I lived in the camp with the other prisoners, but later on in the crematorium itself. The first time I started work there was in August, 1944. No one was gassed on that occasion, but 150 political prisoners, Russians and Poles, were led one by one to the graves and there they were shot. Two days later, when I was attached to the day group, I saw a gas chamber

in action. On that occasion it was the ghetto at Lodz--80,000 people were gassed. Q.: "Would you describe just what happened that day?" A.: "I came at seven o'clock in the morning with the others and saw white smoke still rising from the trenches, which indicated that a whole transport had been liquidated or finished off during the night. In Crematorium No.4 the result which was achieved by burning was apparently not sufficient. The work was not going on quickly enough, so behind the crematorium they dug three large trenches 12 metres long and 6 metres wide. After a bit it was found that the results achieved even in these three big trenches were not quick enough, so in the middle of these big trenches they built two canals through which the human fat or grease should seep so that work could be continued in a quicker way. The capacity of these trenches was almost fantastic. Crematorium No.4 was able to burn 1000 people during the day, but this system of trenches was able to deal with the same number in one hour." Q.: "Will you describe the day's work?" A.: "At eleven o'clock in the morning the chief of the Political Department arrived on his motor cycle to tell us, as always, that a new transport had arrived. The trenches which I described before had to be prepared. They had to be cleaned out. Wood had to be put in and petrol sprayed over so that it would burn quicker. About twelve o'clock the new transport arrived, consisting of some 800 to 1000 people. These people had to undress themselves in the court of the crematorium and were promised a bath and hot coffee afterwards. They were given orders to put their things on one side and all the valuables on the other. Then they entered a big hall and were told to wait until the gas arrived. Five or ten minutes later the gas arrived, and the strongest insult to a doctor and to the idea of the Red Cross was that it came in a Red Cross ambulance. Then the door was opened and the people were crowded into the gas chambers which gave the impression that the roof was falling on their heads, as it was so low. With blows from different kinds of sticks they were forced to go in and stay there, because when they realized that they were going to their death they tried to come out again. Finally,

they succeeded in locking the doors. One heard cries and shouts and they started to fight against each other, knocking on the walls. This went on for two minutes and then there was complete silence. Five minutes later the doors were opened, but it was quite impossible to go in for another twenty minutes. Then the Special Kommandos started work. When the doors were opened a crowd of bodies fell out because they were compressed so much. They were quite contracted, and it was almost impossible to separate one from the other. One got the impression that they fought terribly against death. Anybody who has ever seen a gas chamber filled to the height of one and a half metres with corpses will never forget it. At this moment the proper work of the Sonderkommandos starts. They have to drag out the bodies which are still warm and covered with blood, but before they are thrown into the ditches they have still to pass through the hands of the barber and the dentist, because the barber cuts the hair off and the dentist has to take out all the teeth. Now it is proper hell which is starting. The Sonderkommando tries to work as fast as possible. They drag the corpses by their wrists in furious haste. People who had human faces before, I cannot recognize again. They are like devils. A barrister from Salonica, an electrical engineer from Budapest--they are no longer human beings because, even during the work, blows from sticks and rubber truncheons are being showered over them. During the time this is going on they continue to shoot people in front of these ditches, people who could not be got into the gas chambers because they were overcrowded. After an hour and a half the whole work has been done and a new transport has been dealt with in Crematorium No.4." Cross-examined by Captain L. S. W. Cranfield, one of lawyers for the defence, Bendel gave more details about the arrival procedures of the selected deportees at the crematoria. "[Cranfield]: "When a party arrived for the gas chamber, was it brought down by one of the doctors?" A.: "No. There was one S.S. In front and one at the back. That is all." Q.: "Did these parties usually arrive in trucks?" A.: "It varied--some prisoners arrived marching; on the other hand, sick people arrived in trucks.

These trucks were so constructed that they could be tipped over, and the drivers found amusement in doing so, and throwing the people out.”

Perhaps the most important witness was the Kommandant of Bergen-Belsen, Josef Kramer. Initially, during the pre-trial interrogations, the former *Lagerführer* of Birkenau had maintained that there had been no gas chambers in Auschwitz. “I have heard of the allegations of former prisoners in Auschwitz referring to a gas chamber there, the mass executions and whippings, the cruelty of the guards employed, and that all this took place either in my presence or with my knowledge. All I can say to all this that it is untrue from beginning to end.” Yet he changed his story when the prosecution was able to present him with proof that he had constructed and operated during his tenure as Kommandant of the camp at Natzweiler-Struthof a gas chamber. Confronted with this material, Kramer decided that it was better to confess to the existence of gas chambers in both Natzweiler-Struthof and Auschwitz, but to deny any direct responsibility. In the case of Auschwitz, where he served as *Lagerführer* of Birkenau, his denial of direct authority over the crematoria was, probably, justified. The crematoria were located outside the prisoner compound, and were under the direct responsibility of the Political Department and the Kommandant. “The first time I saw a gas chamber proper was at Auschwitz. It was attached to the crematorium. The complete building containing the crematorium and gas chamber was situated in camp No.2 (Birkenau), of which I was in command. I visited the building on my first inspection of the camp after being there for three days, but for the first eight days I was there it was not working. After eight days the first transport, from which gas chamber victims were selected, arrived, and at that time I received a written order from Hoess, who commanded the whole of Auschwitz camp, that although the gas chamber and crematorium were situated in my part of the camp, I had no jurisdiction over it whatever. Orders in regard to the gas chamber were, in fact, always given by Hoess, and I

am firmly convinced that he received such orders from Berlin. I believe that had I been in Hoess's position and received such orders, I would have carried them out, because even if I had protested it would only have resulted in my being taken prisoner myself. My feelings about orders in regard to the gas chamber were to be slightly surprised, and wonder to myself whether such action was really right."

Kramer testified on Monday, October 8. Major T.C.M. Winwood, his counsel, first examined the discrepancy between Kramer's two depositions. "Q.: "Will you explain to the Court how it is that, in the first statement you made, you said the allegations referring to gas chambers, mass executions, whipping and cruelty were untrue, whereas in your second statement you said they were true?" A.: "There are two reasons for that. The first is that in the first statement I was told that the prisoners alleged that these gas chambers were under my command, and the second and main reason was that Pohl, who spoke to me, took my word of honour that I should be silent and should not tell anybody at all about the existence of the gas chambers. When I made my first statement I felt still bound by this word of honour which I had given. When I made the second statement in prison, in Celle, these persons to whom I felt bound in honour--Adolf Hitler and Reichsführer Himmler--were no longer alive and I thought then that I was no longer bound." During cross-examination, Colonel Backhouse once more confronted Kramer with the issue of the conflicting statements. "Q.: "Do you believe in God?" A.: "Yes." Q.: "You remember the oath which you took when you first went into the witness box. Do you realize that to lie after you have taken that oath is deliberate perjury?" A.: "Yes." Q.: "In the first statement you made at Diest did you make precisely the same oath before you signed your statement?" A.: "I am not sure whether it was before or after." Q.: "I put it to you that you took precisely the same oath that you took in this court before you made your statement and that you lied and knew you were lying when you made that statement

in which you said that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz at all?" A.: "I have already said that, at that time, I felt still bound to my word of honour on that subject."

Examined by his counsel, Kramer gave a description of whom was responsible for what, carefully distancing himself from the whole issue. "Q.: "Did Kommandant Hoess say anything to you about the gas chambers?" A.: "I received a written order from him that I had nothing to do with either the gas chambers or the incoming transports. The Political Department which was in every camp had a card index system of prisoners and was responsible for personal documents and for any sort of prisoners and was responsible for personal documents and for any sort of transports or incoming prisoners. At Auschwitz the Political Department was also responsible for all the selections from incoming transports for the gas chamber. In the crematorium the S.S. And prisoners -Sonderkommando -were under the command of the Kommandant of Auschwitz, Hoess. As the place where transports generally arrived was in the middle of my own camp I was sometimes present at their arrival. The people who took part in supervising and who were responsible for the security were partly from Auschwitz No.1, and partly from my own camp at Birkenau, but the selection of these people who had to supervise was done by the Kommandant of Auschwitz No.1. The actual selection of the internees were made only by the doctors. Those who were selected for the gas chambers went to the different crematoria, those who were found to be fit for work came into two different parts of my camp, because the idea was that in a few days they were to be re-transferred to different parts of Germany for work." Q.: "Did you yourself ever take part in the selections?" A.: "No, I never took part, nor did the other S.S. members of my staff. I do not know exactly who the doctors got their orders from, but I think it was probably from Dr. Wirths, the senior doctor of the camp. The doctors lived together in Auschwitz No.1 where the headquarters were." Q.: "What did you personally think about the whole gas chamber business?" A.: "I

asked myself, 'Is it really right about these persons who go to the gas chambers, and whether that person who signed for the first time these orders will be able to answer for it?' I did not know what the purpose of the gas chamber was."

Mrs. Rosina Kramer testified on behalf of the defence of her husband. During crossexamination, Colonel Backhouse raised the issue of the gassings. "Q.: "You said that Hoess had been sent to Auschwitz for the incoming transports. What transports were these?" A.: "I believe these were the transports which were destined for the gas chambers." Q.: "You know about the gas chambers, then?" A.: "Everybody in Auschwitz knew about them."

One of the main defendants was Dr. Fritz Klein, an ethnic German from Rumania who had been drafted into the SS. As a physician, he participated in many selections. In his initial deposition he gave a very concise description of his responsibility, or lack thereof. "When transports arrived at Auschwitz it was the doctor's job to pick out those who were unfit or unable to work. These included children, old people and the sick. I have seen the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz, and I knew that those I selected were to go to the gas chamber. But I only acted on orders given me by Dr. Wirths. I cannot say from whom Dr. Wirths received his orders and I have never seen any orders in writing relating to the gassing of prisoners. All orders given to me were given verbally." Examined by his counsel Major Winwood, Dr. Klein discussed the selection in greater detail. "Q.: "Will you tell us what happened on selections?" A.: "Dr. Wirths, when the first transport arrived, gave me orders to divide it into two parts, those who were fit to work and those who were not fit, that is those who, because of their age, could not work, who were too weak, whose health was not very good, and also children up to the age of fifteen. The selecting was done exclusively by doctors. One looked at the person and, if she looked ill, asked a few questions, but if the person was healthy then it was decided immediately." Q.: "What happened to those people who were se-

lected as capable of work?” A.: “The doctor had only to make the decision. What happened to them afterwards was nothing to do with him.” Q.: “What happened to those people whom the doctors selected as unfit for work?” A.: “The doctor had to make a selection but had no influence on what was going to happen. I have heard, and I know, that part of them were sent to the gas chambers and the crematoria.” Later on Klein admitted that he had visited a gas chamber when not in operation. Asked his opinion about “this gas chamber business,” he answered that he did not approve, and added “I did no protest because that was no use at all.”

The third important defendant was Franz Hoessler, who in 1944 had served as *Lagerführer* at Auschwitz I. In his deposition he admitted to the existence and use of the gas chambers. “Everyone in the camp knew about the gas chamber at Auschwitz, but at no time did I take part in the selection of prisoners who were to go to the gas chamber and then be cremated. Whilst I was there selection of prisoners for the gas chamber was done by Dr. Klein, Dr. Mengele and other young doctors whose names I do not know. I have attended these parades, but my job was merely to keep order. Often women were paraded naked in front of the doctors and persons selected by the doctors were sent to the gas chamber. I learnt this through conversation with the doctors. I think those selected were mostly those who were not in good health and could not work. When transports of prisoners arrived the prisoners were taken from the train and marched to the camp. On arrival they were paraded in front of the doctors I have mentioned, and persons were selected for the gas chamber, the remainder being sent to the concentration camp. I have also attended these parades, but only when I have been Orderly Lagerführer, as this was part of his duties. Train-loads of 2000 and 3000 arrived at the camp and often as many as 800 went to the gas chamber. The doctors were always responsible for these selections. Whilst I was at Auschwitz the Kommandant, until June, 1944, was Hoess and he was succeeded by Baer. I made many

complaints to Hoess about the way people were being sent to the gas chamber, but I was told it was not my business. The camp was inspected once a year by Himmler and also Obergruppenführer Glücks and Obergruppenführer Pohl from Berlin. Himmler knew people at Auschwitz were gassed because it was he who gave the orders that this would be done. These orders could only have come from the top. Hitler must also have known that this was going on as he was the head of the country.”

Examined by his counsel Major A.S.Munro, Hoessler went into greater detail. “Q.: “Did you have to attend selections for the gas chambers?” A.: “Yes, I attended these selections because I had to guard the prisoners. I did not make selections myself, and there were no selections without doctors.” Q.: “What did you think when you were told to attend a selection parade for the first time?” A.: “When they told me for the first time, in summer 1943, I did not know even what it meant. I only thought I had to see that the people got out of their wagons and came into the camp.” Q.: “Did you later learn the real purpose of these parades?” A.: “Yes, I heard about it and did not think that that was right. Once when Hoess arrived in his car I asked him if it was all right what was going on, and he just told me to do my duty. I received the order to go on selection parade personally and verbally from Hoess.” Q.: “Will you explain exactly what happened when transports arrived in the camp?” A.: “The transport train arrived at the platform in the camp. It was my duty to guard the unloading of the train and to put the S.S. sentries like a chain around the transport. The next job was to divide the prisoners into two groups, the women to the left, the men to the right. Then the doctors arrived, and they selected the people. The people who had been inspected by the doctors and found to be fit for work were put on one side, the men and the women. The people who were found to be unfit for work had to go into the trucks, and they were driven off in the direction of the crematorium.”

Within the difficult circumstances of the time, the Belsen Trial was conducted with due regard to proper procedure. Some of the court-appointed defenders put up a spirited fight. For example, Major T.C.M. Winwood, counsel for Kramer, argued that really Heinrich Himmler was responsible, and that if anyone deserved the epithet “Beast of Belsen” it was the Reichsführer-SS, and not Kramer who had the misfortune to have become the “Scapegoat of Belsen.” And the fact that the latter had volunteered to work in a concentration camp should not be held against him, certainly not by an English court. “The concentration camp is not a German copyright. The first concentration camp in modern times was set up by the British authorities during the South African war to keep undesirable elements away until the fighting was over. The most modern concentration camp was set up in Egypt by the British in order to keep undesirable elements from Greece out of the reach of the ordinary people. The object of the German concentration camp was to segregate the undesirable elements, and the most undesirable element, from the German point of view, was the Jew.” After having explained why one should not judge the Germans too harshly in confining Jews to camps, Winwood proceeded effortlessly to put the blame for the conditions within the camps on the inmates. “As regards these German concentration camps, there were large numbers of people housed in them, and it is a fact that they were very overcrowded. The guards were few, and the administration staff was even fewer in proportion. The result was that it was left to the internees to do the ordinary “interior economy” of the camp, and that is the principle applied to prisoner of war and internee camps. The type of internee who came to these concentration camps was low, and had very little idea of doing what they were told, so that the control of these internees was a great problem.”

Then there was Major L.S.W. Cranfield, who did his best to assault the credibility of witnesses, and to create reasonable doubt as to the operation of Auschwitz as an extermination camp. The summary of his

closing speech reads in many ways as the founding document of negationism. “The court had first of all to decide what were the facts about the selections for the gas chamber at Auschwitz and what actually had happened,” Cranfield argued. How did people know that those who had been selected ended up in the gas chambers? “From the evidence it appeared that the usual grounds for inferring people had been gassed was that they disappeared, but the same thing would have happened if they had been sent away to a factory or to another camp. With regard to Block 25, it might well have been that that block was used as a staging block for any party that was to leave the camp after a selection. When parties had been chosen they would obviously have to be segregated until they got away. Witnesses had spoken about people staying in Block 25 for days. If the authorities had decided to have a gas chamber selection they would not have done that unless they knew that the gas chamber was ready to take the people selected. Would they have selected 1000 people for the gas chamber and put them in Block 25 and kept them there for three days?” And thus Cranfield began the search for alternative explanations that, as we will see below, became a hallmark of negationist reasoning.

Cranfield also tried another route. In his opening speech for the defendants Irma Grese and three others, Cranfield argued that the concentration camps were, under German law, prisons and that their inmates were legally imprisoned. He admitted that even if the camps had been legally established, the defendants should have refused to obey their superiors as they should have known that they were participating in a crime against humanity. “I answer that by saying that the accused can only judge what is a crime against humanity by their own environment,” Cranfield retorted. “What is alleged to have been done in these concentration camps was to the accused nothing else than common form in Europe.”

Obviously, Cranfield's reasoning was less than satisfactory, and therefore Colonel Smith, sometime Professor of International Law at London University, was added to the defense team to help them deal with the legality of the indictment from the perspective of international law. Smith first of all argued that what happened in the concentration camps was no war crime because it did not involve an offence against the legitimate conduct of the operations of war. "This policy of concentration camps was started by Hitler within a few weeks of his ascension to power in early 1933. It was continued with ever increasing intensity throughout the whole time of peace, and it would have continued after the war if the Germans had won the war. It was part of a national German policy, a policy which we are all agreed is detestable, primarily the degradation and ultimate extermination of the Jewish race. More than that, in addition to the unfortunate Jewish race the Germans regarded as their inferiors the Slavonic races, who were treated with scarcely less severity. So I would like to submit to the Court, and as strongly as I can, that we are dealing here with incidents which occur, it is true, in time of war, but which have no logical connection with the war whatever --a policy which was begun in peace as a peace-time policy and was intended to be carried on as a permanent and long-term policy." As a result, it was inappropriate to indict the defendants with a war crime and try them before a Military Court.

Colonel Smith even maintained that the orders that had been given to build and operate the gas chambers had been legal within the admittedly unusual legal structure of the Third Reich, and that Kramer could therefore not be tried, as he merely had obeyed the law. Smith observed that, by the mid 1930s, Hitler had become the law, and that he had chosen to delegate some of his powers to Himmler, and that the latter had placed his instruments of power--the Gestapo, the concentration camps--outside the control of the courts. "Apply that to the most important thing in the charges, the gas chamber at Auschwitz," Smith asked. "If you ask me to produce a law legalizing the gas cham-

bers at Auschwitz and Belsen, of course I could not do it," Smith admitted. But this did no matter. All that mattered was Himmler saying "Have a gas chamber." "If Himmler said a gas chamber was to be erected, he did not need a special law for it. His order was sufficient, and everyone concerned had to obey it. That is my proposition and believe it to be a perfectly sound one. What it leads to is this. In the case of the average German it was impossible to have the kind of conflict which might arise in England, where a man might question the order of his superior officer and say: "You cannot give me that order under the Army Act," and so on. An order as an order is perfectly legal, and where there is a conflict between internal law and the international law the individual must always obey the law." Because Kramer and his colleagues had not built the gas chambers on their own initiative, and because they had sent people there on orders of others which, ultimately, came from Hitler, he could not be held accountable under International Law.

Observers who followed the trial were in fact quite troubled by the amount of leeway given to the defence. "Impatience over the Belsen trials seems to be growing, and ought to be," the British weekly *The Spectator* reported as early as October 5. "It is perfectly right, and in true accord with the best traditions of British justice, that the accused should be adequately defended and anything that can be said for them said. But there are limits. It would almost appear as if the relevant authorities were determined to go Kramer and his Kramerish colleagues acquitted at any price." More than a month later public opinion had not changed much. "The Belsen trial is at last reaching its end, and justice will at last be done," the representative of Jewish relief organizations at the trial Norman Bentwich observed. "The general verdict that is passed on its protracted hearing is that, while it was an example of British administration of justice, conducted with dignity and with every regard for the accused, it involved an efflorescence of legal procedure. The twelve defending officers put all the forty-five accused per-

sons into the box to tell a long story; and people began to believe the wisecrack, that was passed around Luneburg in the first week of the trial, that they would save their clients from the gallows by boring them to death.”

The prosecution rested its case on November 13, 1945. Colonel Backhouse made it clear that he had no doubts as to the historical record. “There is only one general picture of Auschwitz. Here was a camp in Poland, in a place where even the S.S. objected to being posted, and you have seen the type of place it was from the film supplied by the Russian government and heard what went on there from a variety of people. Can the Court have the slightest doubt, first of all, about the gas chamber or the selections which were made? It is freely admitted that there were in the camp Birkenau five gas chambers attached to the crematoria, and that when they were really busy the latter could not keep up, so that they had in addition to dig pits where bodies were thrown and burned by oil or petrol being poured upon them. People were gassed night and day. We have been told that these gas chambers could carry 1000 people at each gassing and that during some periods people were saved up until there were 1000 in order to save wasting gas. In the busy period the Sonderkommando was working so that there was a gassing every hour and they were working in double shifts day and night. You have heard that utterly foul picture painted by Dr. Bendel. Can you have any doubt about it? The persons who were being put into these gas chambers were not people who had committed any crime or offence, they were not people who had been submitted to any trial; they were pure and simply persons who were no longer fit to work for the Reich, and although Kramer would not admit it to me in cross-examination, when it was put to him in re-examination he said: “It was a doctrine of my party to destroy the Jewish race. “Whatever other places may also have been used in the course of this destruction, in Auschwitz alone literally millions of people were gassed for no other reasons than that they were Jews. The people who were gassed were

the old, the weak, the pregnant women, and children under 14. Those were the people who were being selected and put into these gas chambers and quite blatantly murdered. No one could for a moment believe that that was anything but murder and an obvious crime against humanity.” Given all the hesitation the Russian report--the only one available at the time of the Belsen Trial--had shown in even mentioning the word “Jew,” Backhouse’s closing speech was a remarkably straightforward and honest assessment of whom had been the principal victims of the gas chambers. And these were not, as Kramer had suggested, “the dregs of the ghettos “ without whom the world was better off. “This is manifestly untrue from the evidence,” Backhouse asserted. “The people who were going through this gas chamber were going through without regard to class or ability; without regard to anything at all except for the fact of their religion, their race, or that they could work no longer as slaves. This is why they went through the gas chamber.”

Conforming the customs of military justice, the Judge Advocate--the professional lawyer C. L. Stirling--provided a summary of the arguments, laying out the legal issues, and the questions the court should consider. “Now I want to remind you that in every trial in a British court there are two main issues which have to be established, and you will forgive me if I perhaps repeat things which are known to you because of your experience and standing in the Army. I feel it is my duty in a case of this gravity to emphasize these points although it may well be they have already occurred to you. The two broad issues that have to be established to your satisfaction beyond all reasonable doubt are, first, has the crime set out in the charge-sheet been established? Secondly, if it has been established, have the accused or any of them before you in the charge-sheet been proved to your satisfaction to have committed it?” As far as the first issue was concerned, Stirling had the following to say: “Rightly or wrongly (it is, of course, for you to decide whether or not you accept it) in my view there is a tremendous general

body of evidence going to establish that at Auschwitz the staff responsible for the well-being of internees were taking part in these gassings....I am not for a moment suggesting that the prisoners in the dock necessarily committed what I call that general crime. I will consider that later in detail under the second heading. There is that evidence before you and I must leave it to you to decide whether you accept it or not. As, however, the evidence is before you I am satisfied to say that there is evidence upon which you could find that the war crime set out in the first charge had been committed.” At the end of his summation, Stirling reminded the court of their duty. “You are about, in the next few minutes, to go to the peace and quiet of your own room to decide the fate of these men and women in the light of evidence. When you go I would ask you to take with you the words of Lord Sankey in the famous case of *Woolmington v. The Director of Public Prosecutions*, 1935 A.C. 462, a case that is known throughout the length and breadth of every English court. “Throughout the web of the English Criminal Law one golden thread is always to be seen, that is the duty of the prosecution to prove the prisoner’s guilt. If at the end of and on the whole of the case there is a reasonable doubt created by the evidence given by either the prosecution or the prisoner, the prosecution has not made out the case and the prisoner is entitled to an acquittal no matter what the charge or where the trial.” The principle that the Prosecution must prove the guilt of the prisoner is part of the common law of England, and no attempt to whittle it down can be entertained, and no attempt has been made in this case by the Prosecution to whittle it down. If you have a reasonable doubt in regard to any one of these accused, it is your duty to record a finding of not guilty. On the other hand, if the Prosecution have established their case to your satisfaction, and have excluded reasonable doubt by producing that judicial certainty which excludes such a doubt, then, gentlemen, it would be your duty to convict and to mete out that stern justice which a conviction on charges of this kind not only requires but demands.”

The court withdrew, and returned with 30 guilty verdicts and 14 acquittals. Of the 30 guilty verdicts, ten included a guilty for having committed a war crime in Auschwitz. Kramer, Klein and Hoessler were amongst those convicted. They were sentenced to death.

The proceedings of the Belsen Trial were published in 1949, and in the introduction the editor, Raymond Phillips, observed that in some future the trial would perhaps be remembered “for the achievement of the British Legal System in refusing to be stampeded into the wild justice of revenge.” Confronted with charges that had aroused “the resentment and horror of humanity,” the court had brought “a cool, calm, dispassionate and unhurried determination.” I agree with Phillips. On reading and re-reading the proceedings, one is not left with the sense that there were many, if any, loose ends. The prosecution did establish that the crime happened, that gas chambers operated in Auschwitz, and that the many of the accused shared a responsibility for it.

For the first time in the West, people entrusted with judicial authority had to pass formal judgement on the evidence according to traditional and proven methods. At the conclusion of the trial, the editors of *The Spectator* who had shown so much criticism for the proceedings before, finally admitted that all the attention to judicial form had served an important purpose. “There has been much criticism of the proceedings, chiefly directed to their length and the pains taken to ensure that justice shall be done and shall be seen to be done. Now the trial is over, such criticism seems very near praise. The trial has served a valuable purpose in exposing in detail some of the horrible crimes which were common form in the Germany of the concentration camps and in ensuring that they met with the strictest justice. One of the most interesting features was that the accused, who were capable of such inhuman cruelty, presented no appearance of abnormality and regarded their crimes as honourable services to their fatherland.”

With the Belsen Trial, the gas chambers at Auschwitz formally entered the historical record as what Colonel Backhouse rightly identified as “a war crime which has never been equalled.”

On August 8, 1945 the four Great Powers had signed an accord to establish an International Military Tribunal that was to prosecute and punish leading war criminals. The tribunal was initially given jurisdiction over three types of crimes: 1. Crimes against peace; 2. War crimes; and 3. Crimes against humanity. The last included the extermination, enslavement, and deportation of civilians and persecution on political, racial or religious grounds. The tribunal charged 22 political and military leaders of the Third Reich, including Ernst Kaltenbrunner, who had been since January 30, 1943 chief of the Reich Security Main Office--the central agency charged with the coordination of the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Problem. Of all the defendants, Kaltenbrunner was the only SS official, and had had as such most business with Auschwitz. But even so, Kaltenbrunner had had only a relative little significance in the history of the camp: the main architect of the camp's history, and its transformation from a regular concentration camp into an extermination camp, *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Heinrich Himmler, was dead, as was his aide Reinhard Heydrich. As a result, the war-time history of Auschwitz had little *direct* bearing on the proceedings against the defendants. Only in the case against Kaltenbrunner was there an explicit connection between the camp and a defendant's direct responsibility. And, as we will see, it was in the case against Kaltenbrunner that the most important testimony was to occur.

The first time that the role of Auschwitz was highlighted was on January 3, 1946 in the testimony of Dieter Wisliceny, who had been an aide to Eichmann. Wisliceny, told the court about his involvement, in 1942, with the deportation of Slovak Jews as forced labour to Auschwitz, and of his involvement in early 1943 with the preparations for the deportation of more than 50,000 Saloniki Jews in between 20 and 25 transports of between 2,000 and 2,500 people each to Auschwitz. “Lt.Col.

Brookhart: "And what was the ultimate disposition of the Jews sent to Auschwitz from Greece?" Wisliceny: "They were without exception destined for the so-called final solution." Wisliceny also testified that he had participated in the deportation of some 450,000 Jews from Hungary. "Q.: "What became of the Jews to whom you have already referred-approximately 450,000?" A.: "They were, without exception, taken to Auschwitz and brought to the final solution." Q.: "Do you mean they were killed?" A.: "Yes, with the exception of perhaps 25 to 30 percent who were used for labor purposes. I here refer to a previously mentioned conversation on this matter between Hoess and Eichmann in Budapest."

Later that January Auschwitz took, for a short time, center stage in the presentation of the French case against the defendants. It was appropriate that the French would raise the issue, as they had suffered under Nazi rule, and 69,000 French citizens had been deported to Auschwitz. Interestingly, the French described the world of the camps as the center of a conspiracy against *civilisation* itself--that very civilisation of which France had been such a staunch defender. The Chief Prosecutor, Francois de Menthon defined "the organized and vast criminality" of National Socialism as a denial of "all spiritual, rational, and moral values by which the nations have tried, for thousands of years, to improve human conditions." Its aim, he said, was to "plunge humanity back into barbarism, no longer the natural and spontaneous barbarism of primitive nations, but into a diabolical barbarism, conscious of itself and utilizing for its ends all material means put at the disposal of mankind by contemporary science." Indeed, to de Menthon, the defendants did not stand accused because of war crimes committed "in the excitement of combat," or "under the influence of a mad passion," or out of "a warlike anger," or out of "an avenging resentment," but "as a result of cold calculation, of perfectly conscious methods, of a pre-existing doctrine."

Given this approach, the concentration camps were important evidence of the German assault against civilisation. Three witnesses described life and death in Mauthausen, and two testified about conditions in Buchenwald. On January 28, 1946, Marie Claude Vaillant-Couturier, deputy of the Constituent Assembly and Knight in the Legion of Honor, provided a long, precise and important testimony on the situation in Auschwitz. Vaillant-Couturier--a gentile--had been a member of the resistance, and she was arrested in 1942 and deported to Auschwitz in 1943. Examined by Deputy Prosecutor Charles Dubost, she provided a detailed account of the atrocious conditions in the women's camp at Birkenau, the sterilization of women, the killing of babies born of women who had arrived pregnant, and so on. "Dubost: "What do you know about the convoy of Jews which arrived from Romainville about the same time as yourself?" Vaillant-Couturier: "When we left Romainville the Jewesses who were there at the same time as ourselves were left behind. They were sent to Drancy and subsequently arrived at Auschwitz, where we found them again 3 weeks later, 3 weeks after our arrival. Of the original 3,000 only 125 actually came to the camp; the others were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Of these 125 not one was left alive at the end of 1 month." The transports operated as follows: When we first arrived, whenever a convoy of Jews came, a selection was made; first the old men and women, then the mothers and the children were put into the trucks together with the sick or those whose constitution appeared to be delicate. They took in only the young women and girls as well as the young men who were sent to the men's camp. Generally speaking, of a convoy of about 1,000 to 1,500, seldom more than 250--and this figure really was the maximum--actually reached the camp. The rest were immediately sent to the gas chamber. At this selection also, they picked out women in good health between the ages of 20 and 30, who were sent to the experimental block; and young girls and slightly older women, or those who had not been selected for that purpose, were sent to the camp where, like ourselves, they were tattooed and shaved. There was also, in the spring of 1944, a spe-

cial block for twins. It was during the time when large convoys of Hungarian Jews--about 700,000--arrived. Dr.Mengele, who was carrying out the experiments, kept back from each convoy twin children and twins in general, regardless of their age, so long as both were present. So we had both babies and adults on the floor at that block. Apart from blood tests and measuring I do not know what was done to them.” Q.: “Were you an eye witness of the selections on the arrival of the convoys?” A.: “Yes, because when we worked at the sewing block in 1944, the block where we lived directly faced the stopping place of the trains. The system had been improved. Instead of making the selection at the place where they arrived, a side line now took the train practically right up to the gas chamber; and the stopping place, about 100 meters from the gas chamber, was right opposite our block though, of course, separated from us by two rows of barbed wire. Consequently, we saw the unsealing of the cars and the soldiers letting men, women, and children out of them. We then witnessed heart-rending scenes; old couples forced to part from each other, mothers made to abandon their young daughters, since the latter were sent to the camp, whereas mothers and children were sent to the gas chambers. All these people were unaware of the fate awaiting them. They were merely upset at being separated, but they did not know that they were going to their death. To render their welcome more pleasant at this time--June-July 1944--an orchestra composed of internees, all young and pretty girls dressed in little white blouses and navy blue skirts, played during the selection, at the arrival of the trains, gay tunes such as “The Merry Widow,” the “Barcarolle” from “The Tales of Hoffman,” and so forth. They were then informed that this was a labor camp and since they were not brought into the camp they saw only the small platform surrounded by flowering plants. Naturally, they could not realize what was in store for them. Those selected for the gas chamber, that is, the old people, mothers, and children, were escorted to a red-brick building.” Q.: “These were not given an identification number?” A.: “No.” Q.: “They were not tattooed?” A.: “No. They were not even counted.” Q.:

“You were tattooed?” A.: “Yes, look.[*The witness showed her arm*]. They were taken to a red brick building, which bore the letters ‘Baden,’ that is to say ‘Baths.’ There, to begin with, they were made to undress and given a towel before they went into the so-called shower room. Later on, at the time of the large convoys from Hungary, they had no more time left to play-act or pretend; they were brutally undressed, and I know these details as I knew a little Jewess from France who lived with her family at the ‘Republique’ district.” Q.: “In Paris?” A.: “In Paris. She was called ‘little Marie’ and was the only one, the sole survivor of a family of nine. Her mother and her seven brothers and sisters had been gassed on arrival. When I met her she was employed to undress the babies before they were taken into the gas chamber. Once the people were undressed they took them into a room which was somewhat like a shower room, and gas capsules were thrown through an opening in the ceiling. An SS man would watch the effect produced through a porthole. At the end of 5 or 7 minutes, when the gas had completed its work, he gave the signal to open the doors; and men with gas masks--they were too interneers--went into the room and removed the corpses. They told us that the interneers must have suffered before dying, because they were closely clinging to one another and it was very difficult to separate them. After that a special squad would come to pull out gold teeth and dentures; and again, when the bodies had been reduced to ashes, they would sift them in an attempt to recover the gold....” By the time Dubost finished his presentation of the evidence of the concentration camps, there were few doubts left that the French prosecution had achieved its aim. Judge Sir Norman Birkett noted in his diary that “the evidence is building up a most terrible and convincing case of complete horror and inhumanity in the concentration camps.” And he added that one did not need much more. “The case has been proved over and over again.”

Yet the Russian prosecutors did not see any reason not to confront the court once more with Auschwitz. On February 27, 1946 they presented Severina Shmaglevskaya, a Polish inmate in Auschwitz, with the single aim to receive testimony about the attitude of the SS. "Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: "Tell me, Witness, did you yourself see the children being taken to gas chambers?" Shmaglevskaya: "I worked very close to the railway which led to the crematory. Sometimes in the morning I passed near the building the Germans used as a latrine, and from there I could secretly watch the transport. I saw many children among the Jews brought to the concentration camp. Sometimes a family had several children. The Tribunal is probably aware of the fact that in front of the crematory they were all sorted out." Q.: "Selection was made by the doctors?" A.: "Not always by doctors: sometimes by SS men." Q.: "And doctors with them?" A.: "Yes, sometimes, by doctors too. During such a sorting, the youngest and healthiest Jewish women in very small numbers entered the camp. Women carrying children in their arms or in carriages, or those who had larger children, were sent into the crematory with their children. The children were separated from their parents in front of the crematory and were led separately into gas chambers. At that time, when the greatest number of Jews were exterminated in the gas chambers, an order was issued that the children were to be thrown into the crematory ovens or the crematory ditches without previous asphyxiation with gas." Q.: "How should we understand that? Were they thrown into the ovens alive or were they killed by other means before they were burned?" A.: "The children were thrown in alive. Their cries could be heard all over the camp. It is hard to say how many there were." Q.: "Nevertheless, there was some reason why this was done. Was it because the gas chambers were over-worked?" A.: "It is very difficult to answer this question. We don't know whether they wanted to economize on the gas or whether there was no room in the gas chambers. I should also add that it is impossible to determine the number of these children--like that of the Jews--because they were driven directly to the crematory, were not registered, were

not tattooed, and very often were not even counted. We, the internees, often tried to ascertain the number of people who perished in gas chambers; but our estimates of the number of children executed could only be based on the number of children's prams which were brought to the storerooms. Sometimes there were hundreds of these carriages, but sometimes they sent thousands." Q.: "In one day?" A.: "Not always the same. There were days when the gas chambers worked from early morning until late at night." That same day the prison psychologist at the Nuremberg Trial, Gustave M. Gilbert, noted in his diary that Karl Doenitz's lawyer, Otto Kranzbuehler, had asked him "Didn't *anybody* know *anything* about *any* of these things?" Doenitz had just shaken his head, shrugging sadly. Gilbert had gone over to Alfred Jodl to ask him if it was possible that nobody knew anything about the camps. "Of course, somebody knew about it," Jodl said quietly. "There was a whole chain-of-command from the Chief of the RSHA down to the people who executed those commands. I then walked over to Kaltenbrunner. "I suppose you didn't know anything about these things either." "Of course not," he whispered. "The people who did are all dead.--Hitler, Himmler, Bormann, Heydrich, Eichmann--" "Did those few people have the sole knowledge and responsibility for the murder of millions of people and the burning of children alive?" "Well, no--the people who actually participated in it did--. But I had nothing to do with it." "Even as Chief of the RSHA?" "Concentration camps were not my responsibility. I never found out anything about any of this."

By the end of February, no-one felt that there was a need for more testimony about Auschwitz in the trial. The French and Russian prosecutors rightly assumed they had made their point, and the lawyers for the defendants felt no inclination to call attention to the camp. Then, on March 11, 1946, everything changed: British soldiers found Auschwitz Kommandant Rudolf Höss, who had been in hiding since the end of the war.

By his own account, initially the British treated Höss roughly. At the end of March his treatment improved, and he was flown to Nuremberg to serve as a defence witness for Kaltenbrunner. As we have seen, Kaltenbrunner maintained that he had nothing to do with Auschwitz--"Concentration camps were not my responsibility. I never found out anything about any of this "--and Kaltenbrunner's lawyer Kurt Kauffman believed that Höss could confirm Kaltenbrunner's claims in the matter of Auschwitz. In Nuremberg Höss was interrogated. At the certain moment he was asked if he could confirm that Jews started to arrive in great numbers in 1942. Höss did, and then gave a detailed list of the numbers: 250,000 from Poland, 65,000 from Greece, 100,000 from Germany, 90,000 from Holland, 110,000 from France, 90,000 from Slovakia, 20,000 from Belgium and 400,000 from Hungary. The conversation continued as follows: "Q.: "Now you just told us that you had facilities for 130,000. If you add all those figures they amount to a much greater number than 130,000. How could you accommodate all those people?" A.: "They were not supposed to be employed in work there, but they were supposed to be exterminated."

On 5 April Höss was given an affidavit which he corrected and ultimately signed. In that he admitted that he had overseen the extermination, "by gassing and burning," of at least two and half million human beings--mostly Jews. "6. The "final solution" of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941. At that time there were already in the general government three other extermination camps; BELZEK, TREBLINKA and WOLZEK. These camps were under the Einsatzkommando of the Security Police and SD. I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their exterminations. The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was principally concerned with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. He used monoxide gas and I did not think his method were very efficient. So when I set up the

extermination building at Auschwitz I, I used Cyclon B, which was crystallized Prussic Acid we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one-half hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses.

7. Another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each. The way we selected our victims was as follows: we had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transport of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the Camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavoured to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under the clothes but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.” On Monday, 15 April Höss was called to the witness stand. Examined by Kaltenbrunner’s lawyer Kauffmann, Höss tried to serve Kaltenbrunner’s case as well as he could. “Dr. Kaufmann: “I ask you whether Himmler inspected the

camp and convinced himself, too, of the process of annihilation? Höss: “Yes. Himmler visited the camp in 1942 and he watched in detail one processing from beginning to end.” Q.: “Does the same apply to Eichmann?” A.: “Eichmann came repeatedly to Auschwitz and was intimately acquainted with the proceedings.” Q.: “Did the Defendant Kaltenbrunner ever inspect the camp?” A.: “No.” Q.: “Did you ever talk with Kaltenbrunner with reference to your task?” A.: “No, never....”

Kauffmann’s examination did not help Kaltenbrunner’s case. American prosecutor Colonel John Harlan Amen’s cross-examination proved damaging for all the defendants. Initially Amen asked Höss a few simple questions concerning the practice of high German functionaries of visiting the camps, and more specifically about Kaltenbrunner’s connection to Auschwitz. Then he turned to the affidavit, and asked if Höss had signed it voluntarily. Höss answered in the affirmative.

Höss’ testimony created great gloom amongst the accused. Dr. Gilbert noted in his diary that the former Governor General of Poland, Hans Frank, told him that “That was the low point of the entire Trial--to hear a man say out of his own mouth that he exterminated 2 1 /2 million people in cold blood--. That is something that people will talk about for a thousand years.” Gilbert, however, was not surprised by Höss willingness to testify. He had got to know him during two visits. On April 9 Gilbert visited Höss in his cell. “He readily confirmed that approximately 2 1 /2 million Jews had been exterminated under his direction. The exterminations began in the summer of 1941. In compliance with Goering’s scepticism, I asked Hoes how it was technically possible to exterminate 2 1 /2 million people. “Technically?” he asked. “That wasn’t so hard--it would not have been hard to exterminate even greater numbers.” In answer to my rather naive questions as to how many people could be done away with in an hour, etc., he explained that one must figure it on a daily 24-hour basis, and it was possible to exterminate up to 10,000 in one 24-hour period. He explained that there were actually 6 extermination chambers. The 2 big ones could accommod-

ate as many as 2,000 in each and the 4 smaller ones up to 1500, making a total capacity of 10,000 a day. I tried to figure out how this was done, but he corrected me. "No, you don't figure it right. The killing itself took the least time. You could dispose of 2,000 in a half hour, but it was the burning that took all the time. The killing was easy; you didn't even need guards to drive them into the chambers; they just went in expecting to take showers and, instead of water, we turned on poison gas. The whole thing went very quickly." He related all of this in a quiet, apathetic, matter-of-fact tone of voice."

Asked by Gilbert to provide more detail, Höss wrote later that month a short memorandum which Gilbert did not publish at the time, but was to present during the Eichmann Trial to the District Court of Jerusalem. It gave a detailed description of the arrival, selection and killing of the deportees. "The freight trains with the Jews destined for extermination moved along a special railroad installation which had been laid down especially for this purpose right up to the extermination installations. Notification of these trains was given in advance by Obersturmbannführer Eichmann of the RSHA, and they were allocated consecutive numbers, together with letters of the alphabet, in order to prevent a mix-up with transports of other prisoners. Each cable relating to these transports bore the reference: "In accordance with the specified directives, and are to be subjected to special treatment." These trains consisted of closed freight cars and contained, on the average, about 2,000 persons. When the trains arrived at the aforementioned ramp, the accompanying railway personnel and the accompanying guard--members of the Security or Order Police--had to leave the area. Only the transport commander who had delivered it remained until it had been completely handed over, and the numbers checked, to the duty officer of the camp. After the trains were off-loaded and the numbers determined (lists by names were not drawn up), all the people had to file past two SS duty doctors, and in the course of this, those who were fit for work were separated from those who were unfit. On the average

about twenty-five per cent were found to be fit for work. These were marched off immediately into the camp, in order to change their clothes and be received there. All the luggage remained on the ramp and, after those unfit for work had also been sent off, it was brought to the store of personal effects, to be sorted out. Those unfit for work were classified according to sex--men, women, and children--and marched off to the nearest available extermination installation. Those unable to walk and women with small children were transported there on trucks. When they arrived, all of them had to strip naked in rooms which gave the impression of being delousing installations. The permanent labour unit of prisoners who worked in these installations--and who were also housed there and did not come into contact with other inmates of the camp--helped with the undressing and coaxed the hesitant to hurry up, so that the others would not have to wait so long. They were also told to take note where they put away their clothes, so that they would be able to find them again immediately after taking their bath. All this was done on purpose, in order to dispel any fears which might arise. After they had taken off their clothes, they were taken into a nearby room--the gas chamber itself. It had been prepared to look like a wash-room--that is to say, showers and pipes were installed throughout, water drainage channels, etc. The moment the entire transport had entered the chamber, the door was closed, and simultaneously the gas was forced in from above through a special aperture. It was Zyklon "B" gas, cyanide acid in the form of crystals, which vaporized immediately, that is to say, it took effect immediately upon coming into contact with oxygen. The people were dazed already on taking their first breath, and the process of killing took from thirteen to fifteen minutes., depending upon the weather conditions and the number of people locked up within. Thereafter, nothing moved any more. Thirty minutes after the gas had been released and had entered the chambers, they would be opened, and the transfer of the bodies to the crematoria would commence. Throughout all these years, I never came across a single case of a person coming out of the gas chambers while still alive. While the

bodies were taken out, the women's hair was still cut, and gold teeth and rings removed by prisoner dentists who were employed in this unit. In Birkenau there were five installations -two large crematoria, each of which had a capacity for receiving 2,000 persons in the course of 24 hours. That is to say, it was possible in one gas chamber to put to death up to 2,500 persons; in five double ovens heated with coke, it was possible to burn at most 2,000 bodies within 24 hours; two smaller installations could eliminate about 1,500 people, with four bigger double ovens to each of them. Furthermore, there was also an open-air installation--that is, an old farmhouse was sealed and turned into a gas chamber, which could also contain 1,500 persons at one and the same time. The incineration was carried out there in an open pit on wood, and this was practically limitless. In my estimation, it was possible to burn there, in 24 hours, up to 8,000 persons in this way. Hence it was possible to exterminate and eliminate up to 10,000 people within 24 hours in the installations described above. As far as I am aware, this number was attained only once in 1944, when delays occurred in the arrival of trains, and consequently five transports arrived together on one day. The ashes of the burnt bodies were ground into dust, which was poured into the Vistula in remote places and swept away with the current. On the basis of the figure of 2.5 million, which is the number of people who--according to Eichmann--were brought to Auschwitz for extermination, it may be said that on average, two transports arrived daily, with a combined total of 4,000 persons, of whom twenty-five per cent were fit for work, the balance of 3,000 were to be exterminated. The intervals in the various operations can be computed together at nine months. Thus there remain 27 months, with 90,000 people each month--a total of 2,430,000 people. This is a calculation of the technical potential. I have to keep to the figure mentioned by Eichmann, for he was the only SS officer who was allowed to keep records concerning these liquidation operations, according to the orders of the Reichsführer-SS. All other units which took part in any way had to destroy all records immediately. Eichmann mentioned this number in my presence

when he was called upon, in April 1945, to present a report to the Reichsführer-SS. I had no records whatsoever. But, to the best of my knowledge, this number appears to me much too high. If I calculate the total of the mass operations which I still remember, and still make allowance for a certain percentage of error, I arrive, in my calculation, at a total of 1.5 million at the most for the period from the beginning of 1941 to the end of 1944. But these are my computations which I cannot verify. Nuremberg, 24 April 1946 (Signed) Rudolf Höss (At the bottom of the document): Hungary – 400,000; Slovakia – 90,000; Greece – 65,000; Holland – 90,000; France – 110,000; Belgium – 20,000; the region of the Generalgouvernement and Upper Silesia – 250,000; Germany and terezin -100,000. Total – 1,125,000.”

Gilbert noted that Höss had little remorse. “One gets the general impression of a man who is intellectually normal but with schizoid apathy, insensitivity and lack of empathy that could hardly be more extreme in a frank psychotic.”

Höss’s Nuremberg testimony marked an important development in the historiography of Auschwitz. Until Höss took the stand, information had been based on the testimony of witnesses, of members of the camp’s lower personnel and middle-management, on a document collection that was only comprehensive where it concerned the construction of the camp, and on the inspection of the site itself. It had become clear by 1946 that the history of the camp had been complex, but there had been little insight why and how the camp had evolved. In Poland, Jan Sehn was not only ready to prosecute Höss for war crimes, but also very anxious to interview him as an eye-witness to history, as only the former commandant would be able to answer most of the various outstanding questions concerning the evolving purpose of Auschwitz. Sehn got his chance when, on request of the Polish government, Höss was extradited to Poland.

After Höss's arrival in Poland on May 25, 1946, Sehn and the psychologist Professor Stanislaw Batawia, who had been assigned the task to create a psychological profile of Höss, set out to establish a working relationship with him. Knowing quite well that he had no chance of acquittal, Höss decided to cooperate, and on their suggestion he wrote 34 shorter (the shortest is one paragraph long) and longer (the longest is 114 densely written pages long) documents. The first essay Höss drafted was a roughly 9,000 word-long statement on the role of Auschwitz in the Holocaust entitled "The Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Concentration Camp Auschwitz." In this essay, and in accordance with earlier statements made in Nuremberg, Höss claimed that Himmler had made the decision to transform Auschwitz into an extermination camp for Jews in the summer of 1941. There is no independent corroboration of Höss's account of his conversation with Himmler, and so one can only come to tentative conclusions as to the value of Höss's account of the decision to make Auschwitz into a final destination for European Jewry. What is, however, fully corroborated by many other witnesses --both Germans such as Broad and Aumeier as well as others--is the bulk of Höss's testimony. First experimentation with the use of Zyklon B as a killing agent occurred in the Fall of 1941. Initially rooms in the basement of Block 11 were used as primitive gas chambers. As it was difficult to ventilate these spaces, the morgue of crematorium 1 was adapted for the purpose. "The doors were made airtight, and we knocked some holes in the ceiling through which we could throw in the gas crystals." Finally Höss ordered the transformation of some peasant cottages into gas chambers. "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 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] 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. 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."

As Höss mentioned, initially the corpses of those murdered were buried. Then In the summer of 1942 a decision was taken to change the manner of corpse disposal. The occasion was the well-documented two-day visit by Himmler. "During his visit in the summer of 1942, Himmler very carefully observed the entire process of annihilation. He began with the unloading at the ramps and completed the inspection as Bunker 2 was being cleared of bodies. At that time there were no open-pit burnings. He did not complain about anything, but he didn't say anything about it either. Accompanying him were District Leader Bracht and SS General Schmauser. Shortly after Himmler's visit, SS Colonel Blobel from Eichmann's office arrived and brought Himmler's order, which stated that all the mass graves were to be opened and all the bodies cremated. It further stated that all the ashes were to be disposed of in such a way that later on there would be no way to determ-

ine the number of those cremated. Blobel had already conducted various experiments in Kulmhof [Chelmno], which tried to burn the bodies in various ways. He was ordered by Eichmann to show me the installations. I drove with Hössler to Chelmno for an inspection.” As Höss was to explain elsewhere, the most important reason for the change in corpse disposal was the fact that the enormous mass graves putrified the water supply at the camp and the surrounding area. “As late as the summer of 1942 the corpses were still buried in mass graves. Not until the end of the summer did we start burning them. At first we put two thousand bodies on a large pile of wood. Then we opened up the mass graves and burned the new bodies on top of the old ones from the earlier burials. At first we poured waste oil over the bodies. Later on we used methanol. The burning went on continuously--all day and all night. By the end of November all the mass graves were cleared. The number of buried bodies in the mass graves was 107,000. This number contains not only the first Jewish transports which were gassed when we started the burnings, but also the bodies of the prisoners who died in the main Auschwitz camp during the winter of 1941-42 because the crematory was out of order. The prisoners who died at Birkenau are included in that number.”

The open-air cremations attracted attention to the killings, and therefore Höss did everything to get the four new crematoria completed. “The two large crematories were built in the winter of 1942-43 and brought into service in the spring of 1943. Each had five ovens with three doors per oven and could cremate about two thousand bodies in less than twenty-four hours. Technical difficulties made it impossible to increase the capacity. Attempts to do this caused severe damage to the installations and on several occasions they were unable to function. Crematories [2 and 3] both had underground undressing rooms and underground gas chambers in which the air could be completely ventilated. The bodies were taken to the ovens on the floor above by an elevator. The [two] gas chambers could hold three thousand people, but

this number was never achieved, since the individual transports were never that large. The two smaller crematories [4 and 5] were capable of burning about 1,500 bodies in twenty-four hours, according to the calculations made by the construction company called Topf of Erfurt. Because of the wartime shortage of materials, the builders were forced to economize during the construction of crematories [4 and 5]. They were built above ground and the ovens were not as solidly constructed.”

Höss gave a detailed description of the killing procedure in which he expanded considerably on the information that he had given in his Nuremberg affidavit. “The extermination process in Auschwitz took place as follows: Jews selected for gassing were taken as quietly as possible to the crematories. The men were already separated from the women. In the undressing chamber, prisoners of the Sonderkommandos, who were specially chosen for this purpose, would tell them in their own language that they were going to be bathed and deloused, and that they must leave their clothing neatly together, and, above all, remember where they put them, so that they would be able to find them quickly after the delousing. The Sonderkommando had the greatest interest in seeing that the operation proceeded smoothly and quickly. After undressing, the Jews went into the gas chamber, which was furnished with showers and water pipes and gave a realistic impression of a bath house. The women went in first with their children, followed by the men, who were always fewer in number. This part of the operation nearly always went smoothly since the Sonderkommando would always calm those who showed any anxiety or perhaps who had even some clue as to their fate. As an additional precaution, the Sonderkommando and an SS soldier always stayed in the chamber until the very last moment. The door would be screwed shut and the waiting disinfection squads would immediately pour the gas [crystals] into the vents in the ceiling of the gas chamber down an air shaft which went to the floor. This ensured the rapid distribution of the gas. The process could be observed through the peep hole in the door. Those who were stand-

ing next to the air shaft were killed immediately. I can state that about one-third died immediately. The remainder staggered about and began to scream and struggle for air. The screaming, however, soon changed to gasping and in a few moments everyone lay still. After twenty minutes at most no movement could be detected. The time required for the gas to take effect varied according to weather conditions and depended on whether it was damp or dry, cold or warm. It also depended on the quality of the gas, which was never exactly the same, and on the composition of the transports, which might contain a higher proportion of healthy Jews, or the old and the sick, or children. The victims became unconscious after a few minutes, according to the distance from the air shaft. Those who screamed and those who were old, sick or weak, or the small children died quicker than those who were healthy and young. The door was opened half an hour after the gas was thrown in and the ventilation system was turned on. Work was immediately started to remove the corpses. There was no noticeable change in the bodies and no sign of convulsions or discoloration. Only after the bodies had been left lying for some time--several hours--did the usual death stains appear where they were laid. Seldom did it occur that they were soiled with faeces. There were no signs of wounds of any kind. The faces were not contorted. The Sonderkommando now set about removing the gold teeth and cutting the hair from the women. After this, the bodies were taken up by an elevator and laid in front of the ovens, which had meanwhile been fired up. Depending on the size of the bodies, up to three corpses could be put in through one oven door at the same time. The time required for cremation also depended on the number of bodies in each retort, but on average it took twenty minutes. As previously stated, Crematories 2 and 3 could cremate two thousand bodies in twenty-four hours, but a higher number was not possible without causing damage to the installations. Crematories 4 and 5 should have been able to cremate 1,500 bodies in twenty-four hours, but as far as I know this figure was never reached."

As the crematoria ovens failed at times, Höss ordered that the possibility of open-air cremations should remain available. During the Hungarian Action, when the daily number of gassed Jews far exceeded the official incineration capacity of the crematoria, open-air pyres took care of the excess. “The highest total figure of people gassed and cremated in twenty-four hours was slightly more than nine thousand. This figure was reached in the summer of 1944, during the action in Hungary, using all installations except Crematory [4]. On that day five trains arrived because of delays on the rail lines, instead of three, as was expected, and in addition the railroad cars were more crowded than usual.”

The killing frenzy that characterized the Hungarian Action marked the nadir in the history of Auschwitz. At other times there were few killings. As a result, one could not calculate the total number of victims using the Soviet method of using the total incineration capacity of Auschwitz over its history as a point of departure--a method that had led the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of Fascist and Nazi Crimes to speculate the more than 4 million people had been murdered in Auschwitz. Höss explicitly rejected the Soviet number, and also the figure of 2.5 million victims which he had initially mentioned during his Nuremberg interrogations. Questioned by Sehn, he confirmed that the number of victims had been most likely less than 1.2 million persons--a conclusion he had first reached in the consideration on the technology of the Final Solution, drawn up in April on request of Gilbert. “During my earlier interrogations I gave the number of 2.5 million Jews who arrived at Auschwitz to be exterminated. This figure was given to me by Eichmann, who had given this figure to my superior, SS General Glücks, when Eichmann was ordered to make a report to Himmler shortly before Berlin was surrounded. Eichmann and his deputy, Günther, were the only ones who had the necessary information to calculate the total number of Jews annihilated....I myself never knew the total number, and I have nothing to help me ar-

rive at an estimate. I can only remember the figures involved in the larger actions, which were repeated to me by Eichmann or his deputies. From Upper Silesia and the General Government 250,000 Germany and Theresienstadt 100,000 Holland 95,000 Belgium 20,000 France 110,000 Greece 65,000 Hungary 400,000 Slovakia 90,000 I can no longer remember the figures for the smaller actions, but they were insignificant by comparison with the numbers given above. I regard the number of 2.5 million as far too high. Even Auschwitz had limits to its destructive capabilities.”

Höss completed his essay on the use of Auschwitz as a killing installation for Jews in November 1946. In the month that followed, he wrote on invitation of Sehn 32 shorter essays on various aspects of the SS and its men. In some of the biographical essays he touched on various aspects of the killing operations at Auschwitz. For example, in his portrait of Dr. Gröning, the Surgeon-General of the SS, Höss discussed the role of the SS Hygiene Institute and its leader Dr. Mugrowski in obtaining the cyanide used in the gas chambers. “If I remember correctly, the Cyclon B gas was manufactured by the Tesch and Stabenow firm until 1942 in Hamburg. This was the gas used for disinfection and also for the extermination of the Jews. It was procured by the administration from Tesch and Stabenow. From 1942, all poison gas was purchased for the SS by a central authority. Mugrowski was in charge of the Hygienic Department and he alone was responsible for the shipments of the gas. So he was the one who continually had to get the gas for the extermination of the Jews. Tesch and Stabenow was able to deliver the needed amounts of gas by railroad on time until 1943. But after 1943 the increasing Allied air raids made this impossible. Consequently, Auschwitz was forced a few times to use trucks to get the gas from the manufacturing plant in Dessau.” A number of the permission slips to dispatch a truck from Auschwitz to Dessau, signed by Höss’s adjutant Mulka, survived the war, and were submitted as evidence in the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial (1963-64). During Mulka’s cross-examination, the

presiding judge asked him about these slips. “[Chairman]: ‘Accused Mulka, have you signed permissions for trips to Dessau?’ [Mulka]: ‘I only remember one occasion. A permission was signed by Glücks and at the left bottom counter-signed by me. It concerned a disinfection means.’ Q.: ‘Here it reads ‘For the Resettlement of the Jews’ and ‘In confirmation of the copy Mulka.’ You knew what the resettlement of the Jews meant?’ A.: ‘Yes, that was known to me.’ Q.: ‘And what were those materials for the resettlement of the Jews?’ A.(silently): ‘Yes, raw materials.’ Q.: ‘All right then. That was thus Zyklon-B.’ A.(even more silently): ‘Yes, Zyklon-B.’”

Let us return to Höss’s essay on the SS Hygienic Institute. In this same account, Höss remarked on the use of the ambulances to transport the gas to the gas chambers. “The ambulances were for use by the garrison doctor, and he was authorized to issue orders for their use. Because there was a constant shortage of trucks in Auschwitz, the garrison doctor had no choice but to use the ambulances for shipments to other camps. It gradually became the custom that all necessary trips for the garrison doctor were carried out with the ambulances. So, not only the sick were driven from camp to camp, but the dead also. Medicines, bandages, and surgical equipment were all transported in the same ambulances. The doctors and the medics drove them to their duties on the ramp and to the gas chambers. The Jews who could not walk were driven from the ramp to the gas chambers in ambulances. If no trucks were available, the standby ambulances were used. Because the medics were the ones who threw the gas into the gas chambers, they would be driven with their cans of gas to the gas chambers using the ambulances when no other trucks were available. They just hitchhiked a ride with the doctors who were going there anyway. As time went by the ambulances were used for all kinds of purposes because no other trucks were available. No one ever gave a thought that they were profaning the symbol of the Red Cross when the ambulances drove to the gas chambers loaded with those who were to be gassed and the gas it-

self. No doctor ever objected to this. Even the ever-sensitive Dr. Wirths never brought the subject up with me, and I myself never gave it a thought either.”

In a separate report on the institutional structure of Auschwitz, Höss once again discussed the role of Dr. Wirths and his colleagues in the Holocaust. “Aside from the customary medical duties, the SS doctors of Auschwitz pursued the following activities: 1. According to Himmler’s guidelines, they had to select males and females from the incoming transports of Jews who were able to work. 2. The doctors had to be present during the extermination process in the gas chambers to supervise the prescribed application of the poison gas Cyclon B by using the disinfection fixtures. Furthermore they had to make certain after the gas chambers were opened that the extermination process had been completely carried out. 3. The dentists continuously had to conduct spot checks to make certain that the prisoner dentists of the Sonderkommando pulled all the gold teeth from the gassed and dropped them into a special security container. Furthermore they had to supervise the melting of the gold teeth and their safekeeping until delivery to the proper SS branch was made.”

In a long essay on Heinrich Himmler and his role in the development of Auschwitz, Höss provided much detail about Himmler’s crucial two-day visit to Auschwitz of July 17 and 18. Höss recorded that the *Reichsführer-SS* was briefed on the progress of the design of the settlement and the I.G. Farben complex, that he visited the *Stammlager*, Birkenau, and the various agricultural and industrial operations in the camp’s Zone of Interests. As a special treat he witnessed the first day the complete extermination process of a transport of Dutch Jews which had just arrived. “He also looked on for a while during a selection of those who would work and those who would die without any complaint on his part. Himmler made no comment about the extermination process. He just looked in total silence.” Höss noted that he desperately tried to focus Himmler’s attention on all the various unresolved issues, which

included the problem of the waste water treatment which continued to be an irritant between the camp and the province, but Himmler shrewdly managed the situation in such a way that Höss had no opportunity to complain. He decided not to stay the night in Höss's house, where he would have been subject to his subaltern's petitions, but in the official Kattowitz residence of the *Gauleiter* Bracht of Upper Silesia. Politesse demanded that he invited Höss for dinner, but to ensure that neither the *Kommandant* nor the *Gauleiter* would have any opportunity to raise difficult issues, Himmler insisted that the respective spouses would join them. According to Höss it was a pleasant gathering. "He was in a very good mood that evening; charming and very talkative, especially with the two ladies, the wife of the Gauleiter and my wife. He discussed every topic that came up in the conversation: the raising of children, new houses, paintings and books. He told about his experiences with the Waffen SS divisions at the front lines and about his front line inspection tours with Hitler. He carefully avoided mentioning, even with a single word, anything that he had seen during the day or any matters concerning official business. Any attempt by the Gauleiter to bring business into the conversation was ignored by Himmler. We broke up quite late. Himmler, who usually drank very little alcohol, that evening had a few glasses of red wine and smoked, which was another thing he didn't usually do. Everyone was captivated by his lively stories and cheerfulness." The next morning Himmler had a private discussion with Bracht about some questions concerning the resettlement program in Upper Silesia, and after that was picked up by Höss for the second part of his visit to Auschwitz. A man with a great sense of chivalry, Himmler had a special interest in the treatment of women prisoners. Thus he watched the beating of a woman prisoner ("a professional criminal and prostitute") and pardoned some Polish women who had been imprisoned for minor offenses. Just before he stepped in the car Himmler instructed Höss to increase the capacity of Auschwitz-Birkenau from 100,000 to 200,000 inmates. Acknowledging Höss's difficulties he said that "I cannot change a thing about it. You

will have to see how you can cope with it. We are in the middle of a war and accordingly have to learn to think in terms of that war.” And he added to this another instruction. “Eichmann’s program will continue and will be accelerated every month from now on. See to it that you move ahead with the completion of Birkenau. The Gypsies are to be exterminated. With the same relentlessness you will exterminate those Jews who are unable to work. In the near future the work camps near the industrial factories will take the first of the large numbers of able-bodied Jews; then you will have room to breathe again here. Also, in Auschwitz you will complete the war production facilities. Prepare yourself for this. Kammler will do his very best to fully support you concerning the construction program. The agricultural experiments will be pushed ahead intensively, as I have the greatest need for the results. I saw your work and your accomplishments. I am satisfied with them and I thank you. I hereby promote you to lieutenant-colonel.” Despite his promotion, Höss was less than happy with the visit.

As he was completing his essays, Höss faced justice. On January 11, 1947, Höss testified in Cracow before Judge Jan Sehn and Edward Pechalski, Vice Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal in Cracow, about the structure and operation of concentration camps in general, and Auschwitz in particular. “The only German camps possessing the full rights of a concentration camp [*Konzentrationslager* or *KL*] were those with a political department [*Politische Abteilung*] headed by an officer of the Reich Security Main Office [RSHA]. Such camps were admission camps [*Einweisungslager*], that is camps that could admit prisoners directed by RSHA and its regional posts, release prisoners in accordance with RSHA decisions and transfer prisoners to other camps. Most of these proper camps had many branches satellite camps in the area. For these branches, usually called labour camps [*Arbeitslager* or *A.L.*], the concentration camp functioned as the main camp [*Stammlager*]. Administratively the prisoners of these labour camps were counted as part of the main camp. Each main camp served its surrounding region

as an admission camp. As such, the concentration camp in Auschwitz served the General Government and Silesia, until the camp in Gross-Rosen became independent. From that time Auschwitz only served Upper Silesia and the Sudeten.” After a lengthy description about the way the camps operated as an instrument of political terror within Germany, Höss stated that after the war began the role of the camps expanded to include political opponents from the conquered countries. “All of them were treated as enemies of the German State. Accordingly, the camps were organised so that most of these enemies were to die in them. Neither Himmler nor any of his helpers ever said it clearly. Yet they used to create such living conditions for prisoners in the camps that this order, unspoken officially, was practically fully executed in the camps. The proof that it was his and the Reich leadership intention is a fact that in the cases where some prisoner groups, whose life he cared for, were an issue, he was doing everything so that they were not destroyed in concentration camps. This applies, for example, to the Aryan prisoners from North-European countries, that is Norway and Denmark.”

Höss testified that, above and beyond the normal task to imprison political opponents, Auschwitz had been given an extra function: “it became the place of mass destruction of Jews of all nationalities and from all countries conquered by the Third Reich.” “This second role of the Auschwitz camp I have described in details in my essay where I call the camp a place of destruction [*Vernichtungsanstalt*] in connection with its function within the action to exterminate the Jews [*Judenvernichtungsaktion*]. During the war waged by the Third Reich this extermination action expanded according to the following stages. In the first period of the war *Einsatzkommandos* consisting of RSHA officers and police members followed German armies. These *Einsatzkommandos* were commanded by SS-Brigadeführer Ohlendorf and were to clean occupied area from hostile elements. Therefore their first victims were Jews, who were gathered into groups and exterminated on the spot.

The next stage were actions carried out by in Poznan by the Higher SS and Police Leader von Alvensleben and in Lublin and, after the war with Russia began, in the adjacent eastern districts by the SS and Police Commander Globocnik. Both Alvensleben and Globocnik set up extermination places for Jews that were subordinated to them: Alvensleben in Chelmno (Kulmhof) and in Grudziadz, and Globocnik in Sobibor, Belzec, Treblinka, and Lublin.” According to Höss, an important advantage of these extermination camps over the shootings by the Einsatzgruppen was the possibility to recover and exploit the personal property of the victims. “He used to deliver valuables looted in the progress of the action to Himmler.” Yet the camps operated by von Alvensleben and Globocnik had no excess capacity to deal with the Jews from countries other than Poland, “Himmler summoned me in the summer of 1941 and ordered me to prepare in Oswiecim instruments of destruction that could be used in this action.” “I took up this task, details of my activities in this field I have described in my essay I have submitted and in the essay about Eichmann’s activity. I request to enclose this essay to the current report. The second function, conducting the action of extermination of Jews in the Auschwitz camp, I fulfilled in this camp on the basis of Himmler’s verbal order, at the same time fulfilling officially functions of the SS Garrison Commander and the Commandant of the camp in Auschwitz. I held these positions since May 1940 till the end of November 1943. On the 1st of December 1943 I was transferred from Auschwitz to the post of the chief of the DI office at the Main Economic-Administrative Office of the SS [SS-WVHA] in Berlin-Oranienburg. It was the political department of the SS-WVHA. As the chief of the department I took care of all matters concerning the concentration camps of interest to the RSHA. After I left the commandant’s post in Auschwitz, the extermination of the Jews continued to be carried out in that camp. It was directed by my successor on the post of the garrison chief and camp commandant, *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Arthur Liebehenschel, who held this position until the beginning of June 1944. Under his management the liquidation

of Jews coming in transports proceeded inefficiently. Therefore, in the beginning of June 1944, Pohl sent me to Auschwitz to improve the action and adjust it to the plan set by RSHA. In 1944 I directed this action in June, July and August. In this period of time, because of seniority I was officially the garrison chief in Auschwitz. Baer was already the commandant of Auschwitz I, Kramer of Auschwitz II, and Schwartz of Auschwitz III. I finally left Auschwitz at the end of August 1944.

Kramer, as the commandant of the camp Auschwitz II where instruments of destruction were concentrated, co-operated with me in the June to August period in the action of exterminating the Jews. After my final departure Kramer continued the action until November 1944, when Himmler forbade further extermination of Jews. He issued this ban as a result of negotiations with the Jewish representatives, among them were envoys of the Zionists leader Weissmann. Becher in Budapest, in Switzerland and Turkey carried out the negotiations. They were based on the idea the Jews were to deliver various goods in exchange for Jews Germans kept. Because foreign Jews representatives demanded immediate stop to the destruction actions, German side prolonged the negotiations as much as possible to win some time and annihilate as many Jews as possible. Only in November 1944, Himmler finally acceded to the condition given by the Jewish representatives, that is to immediate stop the action, only in November 1944.”

In his testimony, Höss addressed the question concerning the number of victims. “One man- Eichmann, had all notes concerning the number of Jews destroyed in the action I have described. I cannot give figures for Auschwitz because I did not use to record them. I was acting in accordance with Himmler’s order. Just before the breakdown of the Reich in April 1945, I was present when Eichmann gave a report to Glücks on the number of Jews destroyed and killed. I remember precisely that Eichmann gave a figure of 2 1 /2 million for Auschwitz. In the same report he said to Glücks that in the course of anti-Jewish action in Auschwitz, some 25 -- 30% of all newcomers were selected as fit for work,

and were not annihilated immediately. I stress that all arriving Jews selected as fit for work, and kept in the camp, were registered and included in camp evidential number series. However I cannot explain if they were numbered only in A and B series or in the general male and female series as well. As I recall, Jewish numbering series A and B were introduced only in 1943. I suppose Jews who came previously were numbered in the general series. Hungarian Jews, Polish Jews from Upper Silesia and the General Government, French Jews, German Jews and Jews from Theresienstadt, Dutch, Slovakian, and Greek Jews, and smaller groups of Jews of various other nationalities such as Yugoslavia and Russia were annihilated in mass actions in Auschwitz. I mentioned the nationalities in order of number of victims. The largest quota of registered prisoners who were imprisoned in the camp, and not brought to the camp for extermination, were Aryan Poles. Reich Germans and Czechs were the next largest categories. There were smaller numbers of Yugoslavs, French, Belgians, Germans, Italians, Latvians, Russians, Lithuanians and Spanish in the Auschwitz camp. Moreover there was a number of Jews with fake passports issued to them by representatives of various South American and other countries from all over the world. I can give neither the general number of prisoners numbered in all series nor the highest figures in each series. I cannot give the figure of victims from among numbered prisoners.” Höss testified that he has done all he had confessed out of a sense of duty towards his superiors. Yet he confessed that he often had felt doubts. “Many times in the course of action of mass destruction of Jews I wondered if some Providence exists and if yes, how it is possible such things may happen. Nevertheless I was present everywhere, both at the coming transports reception and at gassing in gas chambers and corpses cremation, trying to set an example to my subordinates and avoid accusation of requiring something I run away from myself.”

At the end of his testimony, Höss summarized his activities in life and his activities in point form. "I admit the following facts: 1. Since November 1922 until Germany's downfall in 1945, I was a member of the National Socialist German Workers Party. 2. Since June 1933 until the downfall of the Third Reich in 1945, I was a member of the SS, reaching at the end the rank of *SS-Obersturmbannführer*. 3. From May 1940 until the end of November 1943, I fulfilled the functions of commandant of the concentration camp in Auschwitz, and SS-garrison commander. 4. From December, 1, 1943 until the downfall of the Reich, I fulfilled functions of chief of DI office in the Main Economic-Administrative Office of the SS. 5. Since the summer of 1941 I prepared, and since January 1942 I directed the action of mass killing of Jews in extermination installations of the concentration camp in Auschwitz. 6. During my activity in Auschwitz millions of people died there, and I am unable to establish their exact number. 7. In Auschwitz, these victims were robbed of their possessions, the value of which I am even now not able to estimate approximately. 8. According to the rules in force, as the commandant of the camp I was solely and fully responsible for everything that took place in the camp. All issues not mentioned in the deposition and discussed in essays I drew up, I consider essential supplement to the content of this deposition and I ask to enclose these essays to the depositions of this interrogation." Höss had testified in German, which had been translated in Polish. The Polish text was retranslated into German, and approved by Höss. "The whole content of the protocol before me has been translated into German. The record presents my deposition both literally as well as to its meaning. In endorsement, I personally sign the protocol."

Cross-examined during his trial, Höss went into greater detail about many of the issues he had discussed in his deposition on the Final Solution. "Höss: "On the basis of those reports, *Reichsführer-SS* Himmler ordered that I was to personally carry out this action in Auschwitz. In his program Eichmann had envisioned a schedule of four

trains every day. This was, however, not feasible despite the development of all existing installations. For that reason, I personally travelled to Eichmann in Budapest to annul this order. We solved the matter as follows: one day two trains, and the next day three trains were to leave for Auschwitz. I remember precisely that the schedule, negotiated with the railway authorities in Budapest, anticipated a total of 111 of such trains. Nevertheless, when the first transports arrived in Auschwitz, Eichmann came also in order to find out if it wouldn't be possible to send more trains: *the Reichsführer-SS* demanded that the Hungarian action was to be accelerated." Prosecutor Siewierski: "Let the defendant explain it more clearly: after your return to Auschwitz, did you give any orders of technical nature to speed up the gassing and incineration of Jews?" A.: "I remember that we accelerated the expansion of the railway station inside the camp with its siding consisting of three tracks. Furthermore we reactivated the open-air cremation site known as installation 5. We also reinforced the squads who were to sort the luggage of the deportees. It took between four and five hours to unload a train--people and all their luggage--and there was no way to do it faster. People could be dealt with within this time, but the luggage was accumulating in such quantities that this forced us to abandon the idea to increase the number of transports. Even as we added another 1,000 additional inmates to the squads sorting the luggage, there was no way to speed up the action. We had not enough space to store all these things, and this is why we failed in our effort to faster send out of the camp all the clothing and belongings these people had brought to Auschwitz. No improvements could be made to the crematoria. After eight to ten hours of operation the crematoria were unfit for further use. It was impossible to operate them continuously. As Eichmann had mentioned that we should expect by the end of the year 1944 and in 1945 more transports, we planned a larger crematorium. It was to be a huge, circular brick furnace, to be built underground. Due to lack of time, it was never designed." Q.: "When the defendant came to supervise the action, did you consider Moll--the chief of the crematoria--to

be the right man in the right place, or did the defendant have to give further orders?" A.: "When I came to Auschwitz, Moll worked in some satellite camp. I withdrew him from that camp, and assigned him to the cremating kommando--the one burning prisoners in the open air. The previous chief could not handle it." Q.: "And Moll could?" A.: "Yes. He proved capable."

Given Höss's full confession, it was no surprise that the court convicted him for mass murder. Remarkably, however, the court did not accept the number of four million victims mentioned in the Soviet Report, and assumed in the indictment. In its judgement, the court stated that Höss had participated in the murder of "an indeterminate number [of victims], but certainly no less than 2,500,000, mostly Jews, brought in transports from various European countries for the purpose of immediate extermination, and therefore not officially registered."

Waiting for his execution, Höss wrote a 224-page long and detailed autobiography that expanded on his earlier statements made. Höss described how systematic mass killing in the camp began in the summer of 1941, with the arrival in Auschwitz for execution of Soviet prisoners-of-war identified as political commissars. The first experiments with hydrogen cyanide as a killing agent were done on these people. Höss recalled that he instructed *Lagerführer* Karl Fritsch, who was responsible for the liquidation of the Soviets and was also in charge of the fumigation of the camp and the disinfection process in the extant gas chambers in Blocks 3 and 26, to carry out a pilot experiment. Fritsch obliged with a transport of Soviet prisoners-of-war whom he took to Block 11 and locked into a basement cell. Fritsch threw Zyklon-B crystals into the room and all the men died.

Encouraged by his success, Fritsch conducted the first mass execution with Zyklon-B on 3 September. "I viewed the killings wearing a gas mask for protection. Death occurred in the crammed full cells immediately after the gas was thrown in. Only a brief choking outcry and it

was all over. This first gassing of people [which Höss witnessed] did not really sink into my mind. Perhaps I was much too impressed by the whole procedure.” Höss recorded that, shortly thereafter, they transformed the morgue of crematorium 1 into a gas chamber. Fritsch’s men punched three square portholes through the morgue roof and covered them with tightly-fitting wooden lids. The murder of 900 Soviets inaugurated the new gas chamber. “The entire transport fit exactly in the room,” Höss recalled. “The doors were closed and the gas poured in through the opening in the roof. How long the process lasted, I don’t know, but for quite some time sounds could be heard. As the gas was thrown in some of them yelled ‘Gas!’ and a tremendous screaming and shoving started toward both doors, but the doors were able to withstand all the force.” A few hours later the fans were turned on and the doors opened. “I really didn’t waste any thoughts about the killing of the Russian prisoners of war,” Höss confessed. “It was ordered; I had to carry it out. But I must admit openly that the gassings had a calming effect on me, since in the near future the mass annihilation of the Jews was to begin.”

I could go on quoting from Höss’s autobiography, but as it substantially confirms everything he had said in his essay on the Final Solution, I will stop here.

This brings to an end Part Two of my report. It will be clear that, by early 1947, there was a massive amount of evidence of the use of the camp as a site for mass extermination. This evidence had become slowly available during the war as the result of reports by escaped inmates, had become more substantial through the eye-witness accounts by former Auschwitz inmates immediately after their liberation in Auschwitz and other concentration camps, and was confirmed in the Polish forensic investigations undertaken in 1945 and 1946. Finally, this evidence was corroborated by confessions of leading German personnel employed at Auschwitz during its years of operation.

It is, in other words, highly implausible that knowledge about Auschwitz was a war-time fabrication by British propagandists. Instead, the material brought together in Part Two shows that knowledge about Auschwitz emerged cumulatively from a convergence of independent accounts, acquiring an epistemological status located somewhere in the realm framed on the one hand by a judgement that knows a fact “beyond reasonable doubt,” and on the other hand by the always receding horizon that promises unqualified certainty. In short, it has become possible, on the basis of the material presented and discussed so far, to assert as “moral certainty” the statement that Auschwitz was an extermination camp where the Germans killed around one million people with the help of gas chambers.

PART THREE *CONCERNING DOCUMENTS*

VI Blueprints of Genocide

“Things of several kinds may admit and require several sorts of proofs, all which may be good in their kind. The Philosopher has long ago told us [Aristotle, *Eth. Lib. 1, cap. 3; Metaph. lib. 1, cap ult.*], that according to the divers nature of things, so must the Evidences for them be; and that ‘tis an argument of an undisciplined wit not to acknowledg this. He that is rational and judicious will expect no other kind of Arguments in any case than the subject-matter will bear....All things are not capable of the same kind of Evidence....And as for matters of fact, concerning Times, Places, Persons, Actions, which depend upon story and the relation of others, these things are not capable of being proved by such scientificall Principles as the others are....From whence I infer this, That it is not, ought not to be, any prejudice to the Truth or Certainty of any thing, that its is not to be made out of such kind of proof, of which the nature of that thing is not capable, provided it be capable of satisfactory proofs of another kind.”

When in late 1944 the Germans closed and dismantled the Auschwitz gas chambers and, shortly thereafter, dynamited the crematoria and burned the camp archives, they did so in order to destroy all immediate material evidence of what the camp had been between 1942 and

1944. And at the same time allied bombers completed the destruction of primary evidence in successfully bombing SS offices in Berlin. As a result, any historian who seeks to reconstruct the development and operation of Auschwitz as an extermination camp had to rely in perhaps a greater measure than he or she would feel comfortable with on what Marc Bloch identified as “intentional evidence”--narrative sources such as testimonies, confessions, memoirs and so on. Following Bloch’s definition, all these accounts are “consciously intended to inform their readers.” While very important as a historical source, the problem with intentional evidence is that the historian always should assume the possibility that it might have been created to mislead us. As we have seen in Part Two, there is sufficient corroboration between the testimonies of survivors taken during and immediately after the war, the confessions of SS men in 1945-46, and Höss’s memoirs of 1946-47 to get a rather good idea of what happened in Auschwitz when. But the general absence of “non-intentional evidence,” the “evidence of witnesses despite themselves,” is troubling. One would like to have possession of the documents produced by the Kommandantur or the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin that are contemporary to the use of Auschwitz as a killing center and that were produced as part of that operation. Of course, it was a limited problem, because trained historians generally do not fall in the fallacy of negative proof, in which they sustain a factual proposition (for example “Auschwitz was not purposefully operated as an extermination camp ...”) merely by negative evidence (“... because there are no official German wartime documents that prove that Auschwitz was purposefully conceived and operated as an extermination camp.”). But still, even if every historian knows that most evidence does not survive, and that any reconstruction of any historical event is based on accidentally preserved relics, it would have helped if the archive of the Auschwitz Political Department, which coordinated the arrival of the deportation trains with the Kommandantur, had survived. “It would have helped,” but it is not crucial. As Bloch observed, “the variety of historical evidence is infinite.”

Not only testimony, but everything that people produce can be used as evidence, if it can be made to correspond to allied evidences. Therefore Bloch rightly observed that one should not expect that a particular historical question--for example if Hitler ordered the Holocaust or that there were homicidal gas chambers in Auschwitz--can only be proved by turning up an actual Führer Decree to that effect signed by Hitler or a blueprint showing a building or room designated as "gas chamber." "It would be sheer fantasy to imagine that for each historical problem there is a unique type of document with a specific sort of use. On the contrary, the deeper the research, the more the light of the evidence must converge from sources of many different kinds." Indeed: the single-most important Auschwitz archive that did survive the war--that of the Central Construction Office--offers important if not always straightforward evidence that has at least the virtue of freeing us from a complete reliance on the words of witnesses, evidence that can be forced to speak.

The survival of a significant part of the documents the Auschwitz Central Construction Office produced during the war is accidental. When the Germans burned the archives of the camp Kommandantur prior to their evacuation from Auschwitz in January 1945, the archive of the construction office, some three hundred yards away from the Kommandantur, was overlooked and remained intact. The reason that the SS forgot it was simple: the construction office had been closed for some time, and no-one was left in the building, and so no-one warned the men charged with the destruction of the evidence that there was a lot of architectural material that could be incriminating. And so the building archive survived. There is no similarly complete archive from any other concentration camp, and none of the administratively less complex Operation Reinhard death camps under the control of Odilo Globocnik (Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka) generated such documents.

Building at Auschwitz both in the concentration camp and in the town was subject to normal civilian procedures as well as to the wartime superstructure of special permissions. Multiple copies of many documents survive with the comments and signatures of the individual bureaucrats or businessmen to whom they were sent. The Building Office generated a wide paper trail: plans, budgets, letters, telegrams, contractors' bids, financial negotiations, work site labour reports, requests for material allocations, and the minutes of meetings held in the Building Office among the architects themselves, with camp officials, and with high-ranking dignitaries from Berlin. These papers tell us a great deal. They elucidate the thinking in the Auschwitz Kommandantur and, to some extent, at SS headquarters. Every decision Himmler took with regard to Auschwitz, or Kommandant Höss took about the camp over which he reigned, had implications for the physical site. If prisoners were to be shipped in, barracks were needed; if the deportees' goods were to be claimed for the Reich, storehouses were required. If masses of people were expected to die, incinerators to burn their bodies were essential.

As a source of historical material, the archives of the Central Construction Office are very important. But it is also important to remember that during the war the architects who produced the documents that are part of that of that archive were told to apply self-censorship when writing things down that related to the genocide in the camp. On January 21, 1972, the architect Fritz Ertl, who had been employed at the Auschwitz Construction Office until early 1943, testified in court in Vienna about the genocidal use of the crematoria. The first time that he was informed about the use of Auschwitz in the Final Solution was in the summer of 1942. "Then I talked with an employee of the Political Department who was in private life a judge. He then told me something. Normally one would not have dared to talk while on duty, because one had to fear to be punished for that. I remember that Mrs. Bischoff complained about an officer who had jokingly called Goebbels

as “Jupp.” This judge has enlightened me. That must have been in the summer of 1942. He came from Hamburg and later fell on the front. Auschwitz, so he told me, is an extermination camp. Many people were to be executed, that means condemned by court martials. Then he indicated through reference to the Jewish Problem that larger exterminations were to come. He counselled me to find ways to quickly get out. He himself left somewhat later, and fell in Russia. This statement was for me a warning, I was shocked and enraged. This conversation took place at the time that construction began of the crematoria. This I used as an occasion to ask for a transfer. Bischoff yelled at me and told me that he was not prepared to consider this.” A little later Ertl commented that the new crematoria were necessary “because of the special actions.” When asked if he knew what the word “special measures” meant, Ertl told the court that he knew the significance. Then Ertl commented on the notorious letter that contained the word “*Vergasungskeller*.” “At this time I was not anymore in Auschwitz. In my personnel dossier it is recorded that I left Auschwitz on January 25, 1943. I did not get a copy of this letter. The only names it is copied to are “Janisch” and “Kirschneck.” In this letter one talked quite openly, which is clear from the use “gassing basement.” The reference sign is “Bischoff.” I can imagine that he has written this himself. I had received the order of Bischoff that I could never write the word “gassing.” I always had to circumscribe it. *Concerning the question of the chairman of the court if Bischoff had directly told Ertl that he could not write that, or if this order had come from higher up, the accused Ertl gave the following statement:* I believe that Bischoff pointed out to me, that the word “gassing” should not appear. It is also possible that once such an order has come from higher up. I can’t remember that now. However, because this word “gassing” was always circumscribed, with “special action” or “special measure,” I am convinced that this was ordered. I am surprised that Bischoff used this word “gassing basement” himself. Because higher up always used the word “special action,” I also used it so. I adopted that term.” An important document in the archive confirms Ertl’s statement. On

August 19, 1942 Ertl chaired a meeting in which members of the Central Construction Office discussed with Engineer Kurt Prüfer of Topf and Sons the creation of four crematoria in Birkenau. Item 2 mentioned the construction of two triple-oven incinerators near the “Bath-houses for Special Actions”--“*Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen*.” These were the gas chambers also known as bunkers 1 and 2. On January 21, 1972 Ertl testified in court that, when he wrote down the words “bath-houses for special actions”--“*Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen*,” he knew exactly what this euphemism meant. “I knew at the time, that this concerned gassing spaces.”

So what can we learn from the archive. First of all, the archive contains some copies of paper-work that was in general circulation among the various departments in the camp, and which more than hint at the possibility that Auschwitz was not a normal concentration camp. One such document is a copy of a pep-talk given by Oswald Pohl, the business administrator of the SS, to senior SS personnel during his visit to Auschwitz on September 23, 1942. “During today’s observations I have silently noticed that you have an ideal inner relation to the issue at stake and an ideal attitude towards the tasks at hand. This conclusion is especially necessary in relation with the issues and the special tasks, about which we do not have to speak words--issues that belong however to your responsibilities. I observe that you do your duty from an inner obligation and this is the precondition for results. There remains a very large field of action ahead, on which we may create furthermore great values. In this respect you have ahead of you a wide and vast terrain. In the last months I have made many of these inspections, and I am pleased to state here that Auschwitz significantly transcends everything else. I have noted a very good relationship between men, NCO’s and officers, and I call upon you to remain conscious of your responsibility in this matter. I would like to remind you about the importance about the tasks set by the Reichsführer-SS, tasks that will be very important for the time when we will have achieved the final victory.

Even when you are not with the fighting troops, your tasks do not demand less from you, tasks the importance of which will only be recognized in the time after the victory. It are those tasks that on the other hand put great pressure on each individual, pressures that are equal to those faced by the fighting troops on the front.” In what way was Auschwitz vastly different from other concentration camps? In what way could the job of a concentration guard be compared to that of a soldier in the field? It is obvious that Pohl referred to the so-called “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” that, shortly before, had become an official part of the operation of Auschwitz.

The archive contains very few documents like the report of Pohl’s speech. Most of the documents concern construction. One approach to them would be to look for what one could call “linguistic slips” like Bischoff’s use of the noun “*Vergasungskeller*” in the letter of January 29, 1943. The basic assumption that guides such an investigation is that the men of the Central Construction Office had been instructed, as Ertl declared in court, not to make any specific references to gas chambers as gas chambers, and so on. One researcher, Jean-Claude Pressac, spent considerable effort in the 1980s trying to find such “slips” or “criminal traces,” and he came up with 39 of them --one of each step. For a full discussion of these “slips” I refer to Pressac’s work. Here I will review only those few of which I have good illustrative material.

Before I present some of these “slips,” it is good to note that the documents in which they occur are bound together and numbered consecutively in the original German files. It is obvious from the condition of these files that the archive was not tampered with.

The first “slip” is the occurrence of the word “*Vergasungskeller*” in Bischoff’s letter of January 29, 1943. “The planks from the concrete ceiling of the cellar used as a mortuary could not yet be removed on account of the frost. This is, however, not very important, as the gassing cellar [*Vergasungskeller*] can be used for that purpose.” From the context

it is clear that the word “*Vergasungskeller*” refers to a space that is indicated in the blueprints as morgue 1--*Leichenkeller 1*. It is important to note that in the copy of the letter preserved in the Auschwitz archive the word “*Vergasungskeller*” is heavily underlined with red pencil. That same pencil was used to write, in the upper margin of the letter, the following: “*SS-Ustuf (F) Kirschneck!*” It is clear from the shape of the handwriting and from the very precise designation “*SS-Ustuf (F)*” that this note was written by a member of the Central Building Office, and from this we may conclude that same person underlined the word “*Vergasungskeller*,” marking it for special attention. Obviously, there is an issue that concerns Kirschneck, as behind his name appears an exclamation mark. The issue at stake is, of course, the appearance of the “slip.” Kirschneck was what we call today the project architect of the crematoria, and hence he was responsible for all documentation. The mistake had been noticed, and marked to be brought to his attention.

The “slip” in Bischoff’s letter is the only one that was picked up at the time, and one can guess why: first of all, as Ertl observed in 1972, it was created by an important man (the chief of the Central Construction Office), writing to an even more important man (the chief of all SS building operations), and was very blunt in mentioning the forbidden reference to gassing. Most other slips were less obvious. They occurred in notes made by civilian builders in timesheets. For example, in the daily timesheets kept by the contractor Riedel and Son from Bielitz (Bielsko-Biala), we find a few slips. On 28 February the foreman fitted gastight windows--“*gasdichter Fenster*”--in an unspecified space of crematorium 4. Two days later he noted that he had “covered the ground with hard fill, tamped [it] down, and concreted the floor in the gas chamber”--“*Fußboden Aufschüttungsauffüllen, stampfen und Fußboden betonieren im Gaskammer*.” Then, at various occasions, the fitter Messing of the crematoria-oven manufacturer Topf and Sons mentioned in the timesheets for his work on crematoria 2 and 3 that he had been working in the ventilation system of the “undressing basement”--“*Aus-*

kleidekeller--, a space obviously located next to the basement used according to Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943 as a gassing basement--"*Vergasungskeller*."

All of these "slips" were errors. Certain "slips" could, however, not be avoided. Sometimes the Central Construction Office had to be specific in order to get exactly what they wanted. For example, on February 26, 1943, at 6.20 pm, SS-Untersturmführer Pollok sent a cable, cosigned by SS-Untersturmführer Kirschneck and Jährling, to Topf with the following message: "Send immediately 10 gas detectors as discussed. Send your invoice later"--"*Absendet sofort 10 Gasprüfer wie besprochen. Kostenangebot später nachreichen*." And then there is a letter sent by Bischoff on March 31, 1943 to the German Armament Works. "In the letter mentioned above informs you that you must make **three gas-tight doors** according to the order of January 1, 1943 for BW 30b and 30c, following exactly the size and construction of those already delivered. At this occasion we remind you of another order of March 6, 1943 for the delivery of a gasdoor 100/192 for morgue 1 of crematorium 3, Bw 30a, which must be equipped exactly in the form and size of the basement door of crematorium 2, located opposite, to be made with a spyhole of double 8 mm glass with a rubber seal and metal fitting. This order must be considered as very urgent." It is obvious that the contents of this letter square with those of Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943. Morgue 1 of both crematorium 2 and 3 are both equipped with a gasdoor with spyhole. This morgue is labelled "gassing basement" in the letter from January 29.

Most of these "slips" were already picked up by Dawidowski in 1946, and were referred to in the 1972 Dejaco/Ertl trial in Vienna. Pressac brought them all together. When I began work on the history of Auschwitz, using among other sources the archive of the Central Construction Office, I did not set out to discover more "slips." As far as I was concerned, the point had been made. Yet working my way through the material, I did encounter one that had not been noticed before. Before

presenting this “slip,” it is perhaps useful to present the reaction it generated in negationist circles. In 1997 the negationist *Journal of Historical Review* published an article entitled “How a Major Holocaust Historian Manipulates Facts: Gerald Fleming’s Distortions.” It described the British historian Gerald Fleming as an “internationally prominent Holocaust historian” who, in his *Hitler and the Final Solution* (1984) “attempted to refute British historian David Irving’s provocative contention that no documentary evidence exists to show that Hitler ordered the extermination of Europe’s Jews, or even that he knew about any such policy or program.” After having observed that “the German-born English-Jewish historian failed conclusively to refute Irving’s thesis,” the article went on to describe Fleming’s involvement with a 1994 BBC movie. “In 1994 Fleming collaborated with architect Robert Jan van Pelt on a documentary film, “Blueprints of Genocide,” which was broadcast in Britain on the BBC “Horizon” program, May 9, 1994, and in the United States on the NPR “Nova” program, February 7, 1995. During a dramatic high point of the broadcast, van Pelt is shown holding a document while stating: “It says very clearly, ‘You will be able to kill and you will be able to burn simultaneously in this building [Crematory 2].’” This document, which is not shown to viewers, is actually a simple memorandum of January 29, 1943, not even marked “Secret,” about ... electricity supply. It mentions “burning [cremation] with simultaneous special treatment” (“Verbrennung mit gleichzeitiger Sonderbehandlung”). Fleming deceitfully reversed the word order, and rendered “Sonderbehandlung” as “kill.” Commenting on this misrepresentation, Robert Faurisson has written that “the word ‘Sonderbehandlung’ could mean, by its place in the phrase, anything except to kill because this ‘special treatment’ was simultaneous with burning.” Moreover, as Faurisson further noted, it is obvious that if Fleming, or anyone, had actually discovered a wartime German document that clearly says what Holocaust historians have been seeking for decades, it would be publicized everywhere as a discovery of the

greatest historical importance.(See: R. Faurisson, “A KGB Novelist: Gerald Fleming,” Adelaide Institute on-line newsletter [Australia], Dec. 1996, pp.23-25.)”

As the article mentioned, I indeed discussed a letter which I had found after working through many reels of microfilmed documents from the Moscow archives. To understand the historical context of the letter, I will quote here the way Debrah Dwork and I used it in Chapter Ten of our book *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present*. The extract covers the months January to April 1943, a time that the Germans did everything in their power to complete the crematoria. The section referring to the document will be printed in italics. “As construction in the Reich came to a halt, Kammler, Bischoff, Dejaco, and Prüfer did everything in their power to complete the crematoria. Throughout the month of January regular transports arrived from the Bialystock District, the Netherlands, Berlin, and Theresienstadt; the bunkers were hardly able to keep up, and in February Eichmann was forced to divert trains destined for Auschwitz to Sobibor and Treblinka. Eichmann then designated the proud, 2,000-year-old Sephardic community of 55,000 Jews in Salonika for immediate liquidation. Salonika and the rest of northern Greece was occupied by German forces, but southern Greece was in Italian hands, and by the end of 1942 the Saloniki Jews had discovered that the Italians were not interested in applying the anti-Semitic policies of their Nordic allies. Increasingly large numbers of Saloniki Jews sought refuge in the south, and the Italians refused to extradite them to the Germans. Eichmann realized he had to act quickly. He knew that the killing station in Auschwitz was working at top capacity, but he also saw that the Operation Reinhard camps, which were neither equipped with crematoria nor with a holding pen for those deportees who could not be killed immediately upon arrival, could not handle the long-distance 3,000-person transports he envisioned. Eichmann telephoned Kammler to ask him when the crematoria would be ready. Informed only by Bischoff, who was loathe to admit that con-

struction had fallen two months behind schedule, Kammler reported the current official prognosis: crematorium 2 would be operational on 31 January, crematorium 4 on 28 February, and crematorium 3 on 31 March. *Unexpected problems in the electricity supply to the buildings caused additional delays. When Bischoff and Dejaco had modified the basement plan of crematoria 2 and 3 to include a gas chamber, they had increased the anticipated electricity consumption of the building. The ventilation system was now simultaneously to extract the Zyklon-B from the gas chamber and fan the flames of the incinerators. They had contacted AEG, the contractor for the electrical systems, but due to rationing AEG had been unable to get the heavy-duty wiring and circuit breakers the system required. As a result, crematorium II was to be supplied with a temporary electrical system; nothing at all was available for use in crematorium 3. Furthermore, the AEG representative in Katowitz, Engineer Tomitschek, warned the Auschwitz Building Office, the capacity of the temporary system would not allow for simultaneous 'special treatment' and incineration.* The five triple-muffle furnaces in crematorium 2 were test-run on 4 March with the incineration of fifty corpses of men killed in bunker II. At 45 minutes, the incineration took longer than planned: Prüfer thought the furnaces were not dry enough. They were to be heated for a week without being used. In the meantime, his colleagues completed the gas chamber ventilation system. On Saturday 13 March the machinery was ready for a trial run, and 1,492 women, children, and old people, selected from a transport of 2,000 Jews from the Cracow ghetto, were killed in the new gas chamber and burned in the new incinerators. The murder itself took five minutes, but burning the bodies took two days--the managers operated the incinerators at 50 percent capacity to forestall technical failures. Erroneously believing all the crematoria to be fully operational, Eichmann dispatched the first transport of 3,000 Saloniki Jews in mid-March. Traversing southeastern Europe via Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb, Graz, Vienna, and Teschen, the train arrived in Auschwitz on the 20th of that month. Crematoria 3, 4, and 5 were still being built, and crematorium 2 was in the trial stage; it had not yet been handed over by the architects and engin-

eers to the camp authorities. The physicians who conducted the selection that day admitted 417 men and 192 women to the camp, the other 2,191 deportees were designated for immediate liquidation. They would 'pass through' crematorium 2, the camp officials decided. It quickly became clear that the building could not handle such numbers at once. *Killing was easy, but as the Germans began to work the ovens at full capacity (officially 1,440 bodies per day, that is 96 per muffle or an average of 4 bodies per muffle per hour), they ignored the advice of the AEG Engineer, Tomitschek, and the electrical system caught fire.* Both the forced draft system that fanned the incinerator flames and the ventilation system to extract the Zyklon-B from the gas chamber were damaged. The Germans carried on. They would not close down the installation for repair. Trains with 2,000 to 3,000 deportees were leaving Salonika according to schedule, and could not be stopped. In anticipation of these transports, the architects signed off on crematorium 4 on 22 March, without having tested the incinerators. They also tried to repair crematorium 2 and, partly successful, they transferred the crippled system to the camp on 31 March. After two weeks of intensive use in the Salonika Action the double four-muffle furnace of crematorium 4 cracked and, after various attempts at repair, the incinerator was de-commissioned in May. Prüfer realized that the overly-centralized structure of the furnace was to blame for the breakdown, and he modified the incinerator of crematorium 5, which was still under construction. It was officially completed on 4 April. Crematorium 2 initially functioned reasonably well, but after a month the internal lining of the smokestack and the connecting flues to the incinerator began to collapse. It was taken out of commission on 22 May for a month of repair work. One would have hoped that, with all these technical failures, the system would have proved less fatal, but such was not the case. Despite the breakdowns, in just two months the camp personnel liquidated over 30,000 members of the Salonika community, and some 7,000 Yugoslavian, German, and Polish Jews."

I quoted the context of the AEG document at some length because the document has a specific historical context. When I found the document, I realized as all historians do that as a piece of evidence it is, taken by itself without any context, mute. I had to make it “speak,” determine what it could mean because only then could it be considered to be evidence for something. Like any other piece of evidence it had to be placed where it belongs, and this required knowledge of what was going on at the time, at the building site in Birkenau, in the architect’s office and, in this case, in Greece. Considering the context, it was obvious that the AEG document came into existence when it became clear there would be a delay in the completion of the crematoria, partly caused by the slow arrival of rationed electrical equipment, and when it also became clear that this delay would be in conflict with Eichmann’s schedule of deportations. Our understanding of this context is based on other evidence--in the case of the problems the Germans had in completing the crematoria this evidence consists of the correspondence between the Auschwitz Central Construction Office and Berlin--an exchange of letters that generated among other things the notorious letter dated January 29, 1943 in which Bischoff reported to the Chief Amtsgruppe C, SS-Brigadeführer and General-Major of the Waffen-SS, Dr. Ing. Kammler, on the progress of construction of crematorium 2. In an earlier letter, Bischoff had promised that the crematorium would be completed on January 31. Now he had to break the news gently to his boss that he had not been able to do so. “The crematorium has been completed--save for minor constructional work --by the use of all the forces available, in spite of unspeakable difficulties, the severe cold, and in 24 hour shifts. The fires were started in the ovens in the presence of Senior Engineer Prüfer, representative of the contractors of the firm of Topf and Sons, Erfurt, and they are working most satisfactorily. The planks from the concrete ceiling of the cellar used as a mortuary could not yet be removed on account of the frost. This is, however, not very important, as the gassing cellar (*Vergasungskeller*) can be used for that purpose. The firm of Topf and Sons was not able to start deliveries

of the installation in time for aeration and ventilation as had been requested by the Central Building Management because of restrictions in the use of railroad cars. As soon as the installation for aeration and ventilation arrive, the installing will start so that the complete installation may be expected to be ready for use 20 February 1943.” As Bischoff bought himself three more weeks, his aides desperately tried to resolve all the outstanding difficulties. The same day that Bischoff wrote his letter, SS-Unterscharführer Swoboda met with Engineer Tomitschek, and both drafted and signed the following minute of their meeting, which was countersigned by Bischoff.

“ Auschwitz, 29.1.1943 Memorandum re: Electricity Supply and Installation of the KL [*Konzentrationslager*, or Auschwitz] and KGL [*Kriegsgefangenenlager*, or Birkenau] Conference held on 29.1.43 between the Central Construction Office Auschwitz and AEG-Kattowitz, present:

- Engineer Tomitschek--AEG and
- SS-Unterscharführer Swoboda--Central Construction Office AEG informs that it has not yet received valid iron and metal certificates in response to its iron and metal request, which were partly already filed in November 1942. Therefore it was not possible for this firm to begin construction on the ordered parts of the installation. There is a great likelihood that, due to the continued delay in the allotment of these requests, delivery will take much longer. As a result of this, it is not possible to complete the installation and electricity supply of crematorium 2 in the Prisoner of War Camp [Birkenau] by January 31, 1943. It is only possible to complete the crematorium for operation earliest by February 15, 1943 using materials that are in stock for other building projects. This operation can only involve a limited use of the available machines (whereby is made possible burning with simultaneous Special Treatment), because the main electricity supply to the crematorium is not capable to carry its power consumption. Yet similarly the iron and metal certificates for the overhead line necessary for this have not been issued yet. Because of this, it is absolutely impossible to supply crematorium 3 with electricity. Tomitschek. Swoboda Representative of AEGSS-Unterscharführer Taken note of Bischoff.”

Considered within the historical context in which it was created, the meaning of the memorandum is unequivocal. Let us now consider the negationist attempt to destroy its evidential value. First of all, I am accused of “deceitfully” reversing the word order of the document when, during the filming of the BBC documentary, I stated that “it says very clearly, ‘You will be able to kill and you will be able to burn simultaneously in this building [Crematory 2].’” I do admit that in paraphrasing the text in front of the camera, I did reverse the word order, yet reject the allegation that I did so “deceitfully” as the change in word order does not make any difference in the interpretation. The adjective “simultaneous” makes clear that the “burning” takes place at the same time as the “Special Treatment,” and that the “Special Treatment” takes place at the same time as the “burning.”

More important, however, is the observation that the document is “not even marked ‘Secret,’” a common negationist argument to attack the validity of most pieces of evidence. Their argument is that because the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Problem occurred “in secret,” all documents that relate to it should be marked as “Secret.” It suffers from the fallacy of division, which arises when one argues from the properties of a whole (the general secrecy of the “Final Solution”) to the properties of the constituent parts of that whole (a discussion about the electricity supply to a crematorium equipped with gas chambers). There is of course no reason to assume that what is true of the whole is true of all the parts, and that evidence for the existence of a largely secret operation may not be derived from parts of that operation that were not secret. In fact, experience shows that the best ways not to attract attention to a secret operation is to not to attract attention to the secrecy, and consequently assign the qualification of “secret” to as few documents as possible--also in the bureaucracy one hides best in a crowd.

The negationist attack on the document continued with the observation that Robert Faurisson has written that “the word ‘Sonderbehandlung’ could mean, by its place in the phrase, anything except to kill because this ‘special treatment’ was simultaneous with burning.” In other words, Faurisson argues with his usual literal-mindedness that because the adjective “simultaneous” means “at the same time,” it is impossible that the noun “*Sonderbehandlung*” refers to killing as one first kills and then burns the body. The problem with Faurisson’s observation is that it ignores the context of the clause “whereby is made possible burning with simultaneous Special Treatment.” If it were an instruction for the Sonderkommando how to kill and incinerate the victims, Faurisson would have a point, but it is not. The context is a discussion about the electricity supply to the crematorium. The problem which Tomitschek and Swoboda discussed was rooted in the circumstance that one needed electricity to operate the ventilation system of the gas chambers. Yet, at the same time that this ventilation system was to extract the hydrogen cyanide from the gas chamber, the crematorium needed electricity to operate the forced-air system to heat the incinerators as they are readied to cremate the remains of the people killed in the gas chambers. In other words, there is an overlap in the electricity consumption of the gas chamber and the ovens, the former still using electricity *after the killing has occurred*, the latter using electricity *before the incineration can commence*.

Then there is Faurisson’s implicit argument: that the context of the letter does not count. I will review the reasons for Faurisson’s refusal to consider context below. Here it is important to note that a basic rule in the interpretation of historical evidence is that any piece of evidence depends upon the context from which it is taken. David Hackett Fisher observed in his *Historians’ Fallacies*, that “no historical statement-in-evidence floats freely outside of time and space. None applies ab-

stractly and universally.” Faurisson did not choose to consider the context, and hence did not apply historical criticism to the text of the memorandum.

Finally there is Faurisson’s last argument: that if “Fleming, or anyone, had actually discovered a wartime German document that clearly says what Holocaust historians have been seeking for decades, it would be publicized everywhere as a discovery of the greatest historical importance.” In other words, the fact that I did not choose to publicize my discovery “everywhere,” trumpeting it as “a discovery of the greatest historical importance,” suggests that this document probably does not exist, because if it did, it would have been “what Holocaust historians have been seeking for decades.” When, in 1993 I came upon the Tomitschek/Swoboda memorandum, I was pleased to find another small piece of a large puzzle, but in no way thought it to be “of the greatest historical importance.” The reasons for this is that I did not find any reason in the past, nor today, to set my research agenda according to Faurisson’s wishes. In 1979 he proposed in a letter to *Le Monde* that he wished for a public debate on “the problem of the gas chambers.” Faurisson rejected that there was a “superabundance of proofs that attest to the existence of ‘gas chambers’” and therefore proposed that someone would supply him “with a proof, one single precise proof of the actual existence of one ‘gas chamber,’ one single ‘gas chamber.’” And he concluded his challenge with the exhortation: “Let us examine this proof together, in public.”

As a historian I am prepared to state that no single piece of evidence can “prove” the existence of any historical event. Faurisson’s challenge is, from a historian’s point of view, absurd. No piece of evidence is conclusive by itself. Historians reconstruct the past by cross-referencing different pieces of evidence, each of different evidential value. This, however, seems to be unassimilable to negationists like Faurisson and Irving, who continue to throw challenges to academic historians to produce “one single proof.” To understand where they come from, it is

necessary to consider, for a moment, the context of Faurisson's turn to Holocaust denial: his training as a linguist and his adherence as a linguist to the school of literary interpretation known as "New Criticism," a school that resists a common practice in literary analysis that regard a poem in terms of its author's biography, and proposes instead that critics ought to read the poems as verbal icons, as autonomous verbal structures, and foreclose any appeal to history, biography, or cultural context. Only by concentrating on "the words on the page," which meant erecting a *cordon sanitaire* around the text, could the criticism acquire precision. Faurisson adopted this ontologically grounded aesthetic isolationism, but abandoned its pragmatic aims to encase it in a particularly dogmatic set of rules. The historical, autobiographical and cultural contexts became totally irrelevant for one's understanding of the text. As Faurisson explained to a Canadian court in the mid 1980s, he refused to establish authorship, or the time it came into being, but instead began with one word, and then proceed to its immediate contexts: the words before and after it, and so on. Faurisson justified this approach because "all of us, we have little brains. We cannot embrace a vast context." Of course, his modesty was only a ruse, because the true implication of his refusal to consider any external evidence was that the only access to truth was now to be Faurisson's own technique of textual exegesis. This he called the "Ajax Method" because "it scours as it cleans as it shines," and it centered on the for the analysis of literary texts absurd proposition that while words may have more than one meaning if taken in isolation, they only acquire one specific meaning within a text: "Texts have only one meaning, or no meaning at all."

Faurisson's work would have remained a footnote in the history of postmodern literary theory if not for his desire to apply the "Ajax Method" to the study of history. Having no professional training in the field, he could only look with contempt at historians who, as he stated in his expert-testimony during the first Zündel trial, habitually fail to "attack" the documents they are using, and instead try to fit those texts

into its various contexts. In other words, historians sinned against the ground rule of Faurisson's theory of criticism that nothing should distract from the exegesis of the sacrosanct "word on the page."

Faurisson's attempt to apply his rule of textual exegesis to history is obviously absurd. While the "Ajax Method" may apply to poems--which may be defined as texts in which all that is said or implied is relevant, and everything that is irrelevant has been excluded--it obviously fails when it is applied to practical messages, which are successful *if and only if* we correctly infer the intention. Hastily written, the Tomitschek/Svoboda memorandum is completely unintelligible as a historical source if one does not know the historical context, which includes the hurry in which the SS tried to complete the crematoria, the difficulty they had in obtaining allocations for building materials, the meaning of the word *Sonderbehandlung*, the need to fire-up the ovens before they are used, and so on. Faurisson had, however, no qualms to launch his theory of literary criticism into a colonizing drive beyond the boundary of the poetic, and treat historical texts as merely rhetorical, purely discursive operations that have no link to external evidence.

Probably it is difficult for Faurisson, or for negationists in general, to imagine that there are other and more valid ways of interpreting historical evidence. It is difficult for Faurisson to imagine that not all scholars studying the Holocaust are day and night searching for the "one single proof" that testifies to the existence of the gas chambers without any corroborating evidence. But none is, because history does not need a "single proof" to establish a fact as fact.

Enough about "single proofs" that in the case of Auschwitz seem destined to appear in "slips." The real historical importance of the archives of the Central Construction office is *not* that they prove independent of other evidence that Auschwitz was an extermination camp. In so far as the issue of "proof" is relevant, the archives are important because they provide additional evidence of a "non-intentional" nature

that allows us to interpret and cross-examine the “intentional” evidence given by important and informative witnesses such as Tauber and Höss. While the negationists have tried to abuse these architectural documents to narrow down the amount of admissible evidence--nothing is relevant except the wartime document--, we consider them as a means to increase the amount of evidence. For example, when we consider the blueprints of crematorium 2 and use them to reconstruct this building, it becomes possible to follow Tauber’s narrative sentence by sentence. Or when one considers the blueprints of crematorium 4, one can not only study the logical arrangement of the building--with the sequence of three gas chambers (with stoves to pre-heat the rooms during the winter), vestibule and fuel supply for the stoves in the gas chambers, the large morgue, and the cremation part with the sluice, the incineration room with the eight-muffle oven, the coke room and a small office--but also square this with the remaining fragments of the building and eye-witness statements. For example, in the former coke store room of crematorium 1 the Auschwitz museum preserves some of the gas-tight shutters from crematorium 4. The shutters measure 30 cm by 40 cm. In the plan they are indicated as having a size of 30 cm by 40 cm. In an order dated February 13, 1943 they are mentioned “as pieces gas-tight doors of 30/40 cm”--*12 St. Gasdichte Türen cca 30/40 cm.* Obviously, the plan, the bill and the relics coincide. As we have seen, David Olère did depict these gas-tight shutters in his drawings of crematorium 5 and bunker 2. And then there are eye-witness statements of the way these gas-tight doors functioned. Let us quote, once more, part of Tauber’s recollections of crematorium 4. We begin in a room labelled in the plan as “*Vorraum*”--vestibule. “Opposite the entrance door in the corridor, there was a door that opened on a room with a window which was the kitchen for the SS working in the crematorium, a kitchen where the dishes were prepared by members of the Sonderkommando. This room was next to that of the Sonderkommando prisoners....The third door in the corridor led to a corridor with a barred window and a door leading to the crematorium yard. From

this corridor, the door on the right gave access to the first of the gas chambers and that opposite to the smallest of the chambers, communicating by another door with the biggest. This corridor, and the three following rooms were used as chambers for gassing people. All had gas-tight doors, and also windows that had bars on the inside and were closed by gas-tight shutters on the outside. These small windows, which could be reached by the hand of a man standing outside, were used for throwing the contents of cans of Zyklon-B into the gas chambers full of people. The gas chambers were about two meters high and had an electric lighting installation on the walls but they had no ventilation system, which obliged the Sonderkommando who were removing the bodies to wear gasmasks. The corpses were dragged along the floor into the access corridor, where the barbers cut off the hair and then into the undressing room, which also served, in this kind of crematorium, as a store room for the corpses. It was a big hall where the bodies were put while the gas chambers were being cleaned up. Then they were taken through the narrow corridor between the undressing room and the furnace room, where at each end a dentist tore out the gold teeth. In the furnace room, there was the room of the head of the *Kommando* and beside it another one for the rest of the SS.” Thus the blueprints help to corroborate eye-witness evidence. They do not, and should not, take the place of it.

The same applies to, for example, photos of the crematoria. During the construction of the camp, the Central Construction office documented the progress of construction photographically. All these photos were assembled in the so-called Bauleitung Album, which survived the war. One of the photos shows the back of crematorium 2 shortly before its completion. Projecting outwards from the long side of the building one can see the basement space known in the plans as morgue 1. It is not yet covered with earth, and as a result one can easily see (just right of the smokestack of the locomotive in the foreground, the more or less cubical tops of three of the four wire-mesh Zyklon-B insertion columns

made by Kula, drawn by Olère, and described by Tauber. Again, by itself the photograph would not be conclusive evidence, but in combination with eye-witness evidence it proves the existence of these columns beyond reasonable doubt.

Yet sometimes study of the plans and photos help us to reconstruct important elements in the development of Auschwitz as an extermination camp for which there is no eye-witness evidence. For example: all the evidence points to the fact that the Germans changed the purpose of crematorium 2 between its first inception in the fall of 1941 and its final completion in the spring of 1943. At the time of the original design this crematorium was meant to incinerate the corpses of inmates who had died as the result of the “ordinary” violence of concentration camp existence, and the “ordinary” mortality that results from seasonal infectious diseases such as Typhus and Typhoid Fever. By the time it was completed, crematorium 2, and its double crematorium 3, and two other crematoria (4 and 5) were meant to serve the original function and also incinerate the corpses of deportees who had arrived in Auschwitz shortly before to be immediately selected for the gas chambers, and killed. On the basis of ample evidence, we know that by the time of their completion crematoria 2–5 were equipped with homicidal gas chambers, and that these were used to kill the vast majority of deportees. Yet how and when did the intended purpose of the buildings change?

The blueprints and the correspondence that goes with them offer evidence that allows us to understand some aspect of the changing purpose of the crematoria. I will concentrate on two variables: the information the blueprints give us about the evolution of the projected incineration and morgue capacity in Auschwitz between the Fall of 1941 and the Spring of 1943. Independently of other evidence, both numbers are important to assess the intended use of Auschwitz. If Auschwitz, as the Holocaust deniers maintain, was a “normal” concentration camp comparable to Dachau and Sachsenhausen--that is a camp

not dedicated to systematic extermination of large transports--then one should expect an incineration and morgue capacity comparable to those “normal” concentration camps. If Auschwitz was more lethal than other concentration camps because of the greater prevalence of infectious diseases, then one should expect perhaps a higher incineration capacity, but certainly a very much higher morgue capacity to provide a buffer between the seasonally fluctuating discrepancy between incineration capacity and mortality. And if it was an extermination camp in which most people were murdered “on command,” then one could expect an arrangement that had a high incineration capacity and a low morgue capacity, as the administrators of the killing process ought to have been able to send only as many people to the gas chambers as the crematoria could handle--assuming that the corpses of those killed would be incinerated within the next 24 hours.

In the second week of October 1941, shortly after he had begun work on the design and construction of Birkenau, the chief architect of Auschwitz, Karl Bischoff, realized that the existing crematorium of the concentration camp (later to be known as crematorium 1), would not be able to service the prisoner-of-war camp. It had been designed a year earlier to service an inmate population of 10,000. Bischoff summoned Kurt Prüfer, chief crematorium engineer at the firm Topf and Sons in Erfurt, which had supplied the incinerators of the crematorium in the main camp. Prüfer arrived in Auschwitz on October 21 and joined Bischoff in a two-day design charette. The engineer suggested to combine three incinerating crucibles in a single furnace. As to the location of the crematorium the men determined that it made sense to build it in the main camp across from the administration building and next to the existing crematorium. As a labour pool for the construction of the city, Birkenau promised to be only a temporary camp, and it would be a waste of money to build a relatively expensive structure such as a crematorium (the whole building Bischoff budgeted for RM [*Reichsmark*] 650,000) on a site that was going to revert

to farming a few years later. It is likely that Bischoff sketched during this meeting the basic arrangement of the plan. The centre was to be a large incineration hall in which five triplecrucible ovens were to be placed side by side. On one end was to be the supply of cokes, and on the other end the storage of corpses. As the incineration hall was to be hot, and the morgue needed to be cold, Bischoff located two vast morgues underground, outside the so-called “footprint” of the building. An elevator was to connect these underground morgues to the furnace hall and the autopsy rooms which were to occupy the space gained by the transfer of the corpse cellars from above-to below ground.

Bischoff's new Chief Designer, Walther Dejaco, elaborated the sketches into a preliminary design. Back in Berlin also an architect under contract with the SS, Georg Werkmann, had a go at it, and he showed a greater skill in uniting practical requirements with certain architectural ambition. Kammler obviously preferred Werkmann's design over Dejaco's, approved it in late November, and had it sent to Auschwitz. When it arrived Bischoff, who had arrived on October 1 to head the building of Birkenau, had also become responsible for the construction in the main camp; the *Neubauleitung* and the *Sonderbauleitung KGL* had merged into a new organization, officially designated as the *Zentralbauleitung der Waffen SS und Polizei, Auschwitz O/S* (Central Building Authority of the Waffen-SS and the Police, Auschwitz in Upper Silesia). This office produced from mid-January to the beginning of February 1942 a complete set of blueprints for the new crematorium based on Werkmann's design of November.

As the architects were developing the design Prüfer was busy calculating the implications of his suggestion to unite three large crucibles in one incinerator. It proved to be a difficult problem from a thermodynamic perspective. Not only did Prüfer have no experience with triplemuffle furnaces, but he had changed two variables by also increasing the size of each crucible. Relatively straightforward, however,

were the implications for the forced-draft system, which was determined at a total extractive power of 40,000 cubic meters per hour. Bischoff had also charged Prüfer to design a ventilation system for the incineration room and the two morgues. The furnace room, the dissection rooms and the larger of the two corpse cellars were to receive a system that only extracted the hot, foul air, while the smaller of the mortuaries was also to receive a system to bring in fresh air from the outside.

It is important to note here that there is no indication that either Bischoff or Prüfer envisioned a homicidal use for the smaller morgue in the new crematorium. But the presence of the powerful ventilation system charged the design from its inception with a genocidal potentiality which would only require small modifications in the design to be actualized. Indeed: it was the presence of such a ventilation system in the crematorium of the main camp which, seven weeks earlier, had inspired *Lagerführer* Fritsch to use the mortuary of the crematorium as an experimental gas chamber.

Numbers seem to confirm that the new crematorium was not designed to serve the genocidal practices that were to become commonplace in Birkenau a year later. If the purpose of the crematorium had been to serve both as a place for incineration of the inmates and as a execution site and cremation facility for large transports of people brought from outside, then one would expect a cremation capacity that far exceeded the normal oven/inmate ratio prevalent in the other concentration camps which did not serve the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. In 1937 the leaders of the concentration camp at Dachau thought that a single-muffle furnace would do for a camp of 6,240 inmates. At a price of RM 9,250, it required an initial investment of RM 1.48 per person. Within a year the envisioned investment per inmate dropped by 50 percent. In the spring of 1939 the total inmate population in Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen had risen from 24,000 to 60,000 as a result of the arrests that followed the Austrian Anschluss in

the spring of 1938, the so-called *Reichskristallnacht* of November 9, 1938, and the December annexation of the Czech Sudetenland. Dr. Grawitz, the chief SS doctor, feared that the overcrowding in the camps would lead to an epidemic and, as a result, increased mortality. Also, the regime in the camps had become harsher. Both the overcrowding and the increased violence within the camps focused attention on the problem of corpse disposal. Topf now offered to supply Dachau with a stripped-down mobile furnace with two oil-fired forced-draft muffles with a capacity of two corpses per hour and a price tag of RM 8,750. As by now the assumed capacity of the camp had been doubled (by assigning twice as many inmates to the relatively spacious barracks), the capacity remained one muffle per 6,240 inmates. Yet the investment had dropped from RM 1.48 to RM 0.70 per inmate. For Buchenwald Topf calculated a need of one muffle per 5,000 prisoner and an investment of RM 0.90 per inmate. The same figures applied to the double-muffle incinerator that Topf built in Auschwitz in the summer of 1940. But in fact Auschwitz had a larger capacity as its furnace was 50 per cent more powerful than the Dachau model of 1939. Taking this into account, we can say that it counts as a three- muffle oven of the old model. Hence I will designate its capacity as that of three “units,” that is one unit per 3,333 inmates. When later that year a second double-muffle (three-unit) furnace was added alongside the first the total was now four crucibles (six units) for a camp of 10,000, that is one unit per 1,666 inmates. Total investment for incinerators was now RM 1.67 per inmate. The remarkably high ratio must be understood in relation to the fact that the crematorium not only served the camp, but also the Gestapo Summary Court from Kattowitz.

If we compare these numbers with the figures for the Birkenau crematorium it becomes apparent that, assuming that the camp was indeed going to be completed and filled to capacity, one crematorium equipped with five three-muffle furnaces was *not* an excessive proposition. Topf offered the five furnaces for RM 31,890. That is an invest-

ment of RM 0.25 per inmate. Also of interest is that Prüfer assumed that one muffle per 8,300 inmates--or 1 unit per 5,555 inmates--would suffice. In other words, neither Bischoff nor Prüfer anticipated in October 1941 the very high mortality rate of the prisoners of war that actually occurred. With a capacity of 15 muffles or 22.5 units for 125,000 inmates, we come to 1 unit per 5,555 inmates, that is less than a third of the capacity of Auschwitz I, and very much in line with Dachau and Buchenwald. At an investment of RM 0.25 per inmate it cost one-sixth of that of the main camp. These figures suggest that the mortality rate for the Soviet prisoners of war was expected to be the same as that for concentration camp inmates in the Reich, and less than that for the Polish inmates in the concentration camp on the other side of the tracks. The conclusion must be that the expected mortality rate of the Soviet *Untermenschen* was not going to be higher than that of the 'typical' concentration camp inmates. And there was certainly no extra capacity that could be used for genocidal use.

A last point that seems to support this conclusion is that as the mortality rate of the prisoners of war began to rise, the plans of the camp were changed. In December 1941 Bischoff ordered the creation of a new master plan, which was completed in the first week of January 1942. Two of the most striking elements of this plan relate directly to the catastrophic conditions. First, it changed the barracks in Building Section II and Building Section III from the original brick to the prefabricated wooden huts that had been designed as horse stables for the Army. As these could be erected with a minimum of labour it implied a significant reduction in the mortality that had occurred with the construction of the brick barracks. Furthermore, at the western edge of Building Section II and Building Section III a new zone was designated which was to include two auxiliary crematoria and ten corpse cellars. The plan was approved on January 6, 1942, and a few weeks later Prüfer returned to Auschwitz to discuss the incinerators to be used. The engineer proposed to equip each with a simplified version of his

triple-muffle furnace. Without a compressed air blower, and using only a small amount of iron, they were to cost RM 7,326 each. As these were to be built in addition to the large crematorium to be constructed in the main camp, the investment in incinerating capacity had risen to a total of RM 46,542 or RM 0.37 per inmate. With a capacity of 31.5 units the unit-per-inmate ratio had risen from 1: 5,555 to 1: 4,000, or 28 %.

These numbers seem more evolutionary than revolutionary, yet there is another difference from the original plans that gives the whole picture, at least at first inspection, a more sinister aspect: the 10 enormous corpse cellars. In the crematorium already under design, the total volume of the two major morgues (a small third one, included in the January version of the design, was used only “for administrative purposes”) was a little over 50,000 cu. ft. Its capacity was 420 corpses, or roughly 1 corpse per 300 inmates. In comparison Sachsenhausen had a morgue capacity of 1 corpse per 50 inmates. The plan of January 6 added another 250,000 cu. ft., to arrive at Sachsenhausen’s capacity of 1 corpse per 50 inmates. In short, this sixfold amplification was meant only to bring the morgue capacity of the camp in line with that found in other concentration camps.

If we now fast forward to February 1943--a time that Birkenau was fully committed to play its central role in the Holocaust--we see that the numbers have changed considerably. In February 1943 the projected inmate population of Auschwitz was 30,000, and of Birkenau 140,000, but the total incineration capacity which was by that time supposed to be available was 75 units. This brings the unit-per-inmate ratio to 1: 2267. This means that, in comparison with Dachau or Buchenwald, Auschwitz has double the incineration capacity. The official incineration capacity of Auschwitz after the completion of all the crematoria was 4,756 corpses per day. Assuming the camps to be completed and fully occupied, this would mean that, on average, Auschwitz

had an excess incineration capacity of more than 2,350 corpses per day--or, in other words, the ovens could accommodate two daily transports of 1,000 people easily.

At the same time morgue capacity had dropped significantly. The ten morgues with a total capacity of 250,000 cu. ft., included in the plan of January 6, 1942, had disappeared from the plan of February 17, 1943, and instead the theoretical morgue capacity in crematoria 1–5 was 136,000 cu ft., or 1,150 corpses--that is 1 corpse per 147 inmates, or Auschwitz was to have one third of the normal morgue capacity of a “normal” concentration camp. In fact, the situation was much worse, because in February 1943 all the morgues in crematoria 2 and 3 had been redesigned and were being equipped to function as undressing rooms and gas chambers, while the morgues in crematoria 4 and 5 were to be destined as undressing rooms. *By the time the crematoria were finished, Auschwitz had virtually no permanently dedicated morgue capacity.* This is very important: putting it very crudely, a design for a camp with a low incineration capacity and low morgue capacity indicates the expectation of low mortality; a design for a camp with low incineration capacity and high morgue capacity indicates the expectation of high mortality, most likely due to contingent circumstances (epidemics); a design for a camp with high incineration capacity with low morgue capacity indicates the expectation of high mortality, most likely due to humanly controlled circumstances (murder).

Let me be clear: in the foregoing paragraphs I have not attempted to provide “proof,” on the basis of the changing incineration and morgue capacity alone, of the change from “normal” to genocidal purpose of the Auschwitz crematoria--even if these particular statistics support what we know about the evolution of Auschwitz from a “normal” concentration camp into an extermination camp over the period 1941 to 1943. I hope, however, to have shown that the evidence in the archive of the Central Construction Office can be used to answer many historical questions that transcend the forensic question if the camp was, or

was not, an extermination camp. These questions of history are important however. One of the reasons that Holocaust deniers were able to get as far as they did was because, for a long time, no comprehensive history of Auschwitz existed that placed the genocidal function of the camp within the context of all its other purposes. In our *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* Debórah Dwork and I wrote a history, using the archives of the Central Construction Office, which shows that an understanding of the complex historical development of the camp resolves apparent contradictions thrown up by the fact that a seemingly “top-secret” extermination facility existed side-by-side a major industrial project. In short, good history and not “slips” answer the deniers.

One genre “non-intentional” evidence that has been the object of some discussion in the last twenty years are the aerial photos taken by British Mosquito reconnaissance airplanes and American bombers of Auschwitz on five dates in 1944. These planes flew over the camps on a bombing run to the IG Farben site east of the town of Auschwitz, and shortly before reaching the target area the cameras which were to provide intelligence and record the damage inflicted were turned on. Because of the relative short distance between Birkenau and the IG Farben site, these cameras unintentionally captured the death camp. One photo, taken on June 26, 1944, shows Birkenau (1), Auschwitz 1 located along the Sola river (2), the Vistula river (3), and the IG Farben building site (6) with at its south-eastern corner the concentration camp Auschwitz-Monowitz (no number indicated--but the site is easily identifiable as it is surrounded on most of its southern and all of its eastern side by a very light coloured patch of land).

Magnified, these photos allow for easy identification of the various parts of the camp, inclusive the crematoria. Yet what kind of evidence do they provide of the use of Birkenau as an extermination camp? In 1979, in response to the new interest generated by the TV series *Holocaust* the Central Intelligence Agency released a 19-page report entitled *The Holocaust Revisited: A Retrospective Analysis of the Auschwitz-*

Birkenau Extermination Complex. Written by Dino A. Brugioni and Robert G. Poirier, the report claimed that these aerial photos provide evidence of extermination activities. On the photo taken on August 25, 1944, one could for example see trains in the station of Birkenau with prisoners being marched to crematorium 2 and, in the roof of the gas chamber of that building, “four vents used to insert Zyklon B crystals into the subsurface gas chamber.” Yet the group of people alleged to be walking towards the crematorium were still at a large distance from the crematorium, and would not have necessarily ended up there. The photos do not produce conclusive evidence of exterminations nor do they provide evidence against this--despite some inflated claims by Holocaust deniers.

The original CIA analysis was based on study of analog enlargements. With new digital technologies it has become possible, however, to revisit the issue of the evidentiary value of the photos. In April 1996 I visited Los Angeles to meet with Michael Shermer, the editor of *Skeptical* magazine, and Alex Grobman, the director of the Martyrs Memorial and Holocaust Museum. Together we went to NASA's Jet propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena to meet with Dr. Nevin Bryant, Supervisor of Cartographic Applications and Image Processing Applications. One of the world leaders in the analysis of aerial and satellite images, Dr. Bryant agreed to analyze with his computers the photos, enhancing the data using software programs used by NASA. The most important results were that the four shaded markings on the roofs of morgue 1 of both crematorium 2 and 3 did belong to the original negative, and were not added later on. Furthermore, Dr. Bryant discovered through comparison of various consecutive exposures taken on May 31, 1944 a long line of people moving into the compound of crematorium 5. Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* records that, on May 31, 1944, two transports arrived from Hungary, and that from the first one 100 Jews were selected for work. “The remaining people are killed in the gas chambers.” And of the second transport 2,000 Jews are admitted to the camp. “The re-

maintaining people are killed in the gas chambers.” Why would the Germans have moved a large group of people into the compound of crematorium 5, which was off-limits to inmates, if not to kill them? Yet even here one must remember that, like all the other “non-intentional” evidence, the information derived from the aerial photos should not be considered in isolation. A last point must be made, before we leave this short review of what Bloch called the “non-intentional” evidence preserved in the archive of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office. Part of this archive is in Moscow, part is in Oswiecim, in Block 24, right next to the entrance that proclaims “Work Makes Free” -- “*Arbeit Macht Frei*.” About a hundred yards away is another collection of “non-intentional” evidence, relics from the camp that the Germans did not manage to destroy when they evacuated the camp. In Birkenau the Central Construction Office oversaw the erection of 30 storage barracks, right between crematoria 2 and 3 on the south and crematoria 4 and 5 to the north, and visible on all the aerial photos. This part of the camp, called by the inmates “Canada” because of its wealth in goods, stored the belongings of the deportees brought from all over Europe--personal possessions left at the tracks or in the undressing rooms of the crematoria. There a special squad of inmates sorted the goods, and prepared them for shipment for deserving families in the Reich. Late in 1944, when the railroad infrastructure collapsed, these shipments ceased, and the barracks of Canada filled up. Just before their departure from Auschwitz, SS men wishing to destroy evidence, set fire to the barracks. Twenty-nine barracks went up in flames. One only partly burned. Some of the things the Russians found upon the liberation of the camp are now stored in Block 5--as I said about a hundred yards from the building archive.

Alain Resnais presented these items of “non-intentional” evidence in his justly celebrated *Night and Fog*. Here, for the record, some lines from the script. “(Black and White): A mountain of spectacles, combs, dishes and pans, clothing and shoes, scissors, and shaving brushes.

“Everything was saved. Here are the stockpiles of the Nazis at war. Here are their warehouses.” An enormous mountain of gleaming hair rising toward the sky. “Nothing but women’s hair...” Reams of cloth, its hair surface glistening in the light. “At fifteen pfennig the kilo, they made cloth from it.” ”

PART FOUR *CONCERNING DENIAL*

VII Auschwitz and Holocaust Denial

Frankfurter: “Dr. Münch, what would you say to those who say today that all of this did not happen, that Auschwitz is a lie, that Auschwitz is a hoax?”

Münch: “When someone tells that Auschwitz is a lie, that it is a hoax, I feel hesitation to say much to him. I say, the facts are so firmly determined, that one cannot have any doubt at all, and I stop talking to that person because it has no use. One knows that anyone who clings to such things, which are published somewhere, is a malevolent person who has some personal interest to want to bury in silence things that cannot be buried in silence.”

Dr.Hans-Wilhelm Münch, former SS doctor in Auschwitz.

Given the way the memory and image of Auschwitz has become central in the discourse of the Holocaust, it is not surprising that holocaust deniers focus much of their attention on the camp. To understand the centrality of Auschwitz for the negationist cause, it is important to know that one of the very few full confessions given by any German official involved in a key role in the Holocaust concerns the statements Auschwitz Kommandant Rudolf Höss made in Nuremberg, during his own trial in Warsaw, and the autobiography, accompanied by an essay entitled “The Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Concentration

Camp Auschwitz.” Other key figures in the Holocaust either died before the end of the war (Heydrich), or committed suicide immediately after the German defeat (Himmler), or made less than full confessions (Eichmann). The first instalment of Höss’ confession was available within a year of the end of the war, and his writings were published in the 1950s. As he acknowledged the central role of Auschwitz in the Holocaust, and as he described the organization, development, procedures, and problems of the extermination program in great detail, any attempt to refute the Holocaust must engage and refute Höss.

A second reason that Auschwitz is the focus of Holocaust denial arises from the historical certainty of the central role of Auschwitz as an extermination centre that arises from the convergence between eyewitness’ accounts, Höss’s writings, the physical remains, the extensive building archive of the Auschwitz Central Building Office (which survived the war) and various other archival sources. The evidence for the role of Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor--sufficient as it may be to come to a moral certainty as to the war-time history of those places--is much less abundant. There are very few eyewitnesses, no confession that can compare to that given by Höss, no significant remains, and few archival sources.

Given this situation, Holocaust deniers seem to have concluded that it makes strategic sense to concentrate their energies on debunking the Höss account and showing that Auschwitz could not have accommodated an extermination program. Their strategy is explained by the wellknown Holocaust denier Arthur R. Butz who, in 1982, claimed that impartial scientific, forensic and scholarly analysis of the evidence showed that Auschwitz had not been a centre of extermination. “It follows,” Butz argued, “that the basic tactic of the defenders of the [extermination] legend, in controversies to come, will be to attempt to make claims that cannot be tested by the normal method of placing them as hypotheses in appropriate historical context and seeing if they cohere.” According to Butz, those who want to maintain that the Holo-

caust existed despite the evidence to the contrary would prefer to discuss extermination camps like Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka--places of which little remain in terms of physical or archival relics, and knowledge of which is largely based on witness testimony of survivors like Jankiel Wiernik and post-war confessions of Treblinka commandant Stangl and others. "The consequence," Butz concluded, "is that it is much easier to disprove the legend as it applies to Auschwitz than as it applies to the others." For Auschwitz there were the remains of the crematoria, and there were ample archival sources, and these all pointed, as Butz confidently believed he had proved, to a non-genocidal intent and use. Therefore Butz declared that, confronted with Auschwitz, "the defenders of the [extermination] legend are in an impossible position." "They cannot concede Auschwitz without conceding the whole issue, for the reason that there is no sort of evidence they offer for the others that is not also offered for Auschwitz. If the "confession" of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss is fanciful, then who will believe the "confession" of Treblinka commandant Franz Stangl? If the Auschwitz accounts of Rudolf Vrba and Miklos Nyiszli are not credible, and their books sick jokes, then who will believe the equally sick Treblinka accounts of Jankiel Wiernik and other obscure people? If the Nuremberg and postwar German trials have not established the truth about Auschwitz, then who will believe that they have established the truth about Treblinka? If the large numbers of Jews admittedly sent to Auschwitz were not killed there, then who will believe that the large number of Jews sent to Treblinka were killed at that camp? My advice, then, to those who would engage in controversy is not to permit the defenders of the legend to get away with ignoring Auschwitz. The fact is that it is very easy to bring down the legend as it applies to Auschwitz and Auschwitz in turn, on account of the nature of the evidence involved, brings down the rest of the legend with it."

Butz confidently claims that Auschwitz, seemingly the strongest proof of the Holocaust, is in fact the easiest to attack. Subsequent history has shown that he has a point. In the last fifteen years holocaust deniers have fired a barrage of arguments to show that Auschwitz could not have been an extermination camp, that the gas chambers could not have worked, or that the crematoria ovens could not have incinerated the great number of bodies claimed. Every time they adduce specific technical arguments, which for technological laymen--which is the great majority of us, and includes virtually all students of the Holocaust--are difficult if not impossible to refute. Their arguments are based on the premise that the Holocaust is a hoax created and maintained by sinister forces such as the British Secret Service or some Zionist outfit, or which arose as the result of some mass hysteria of eastern Jews. And they argue that Auschwitz, which was during the war an ordinary concentration and labour camp of extraordinary size, was selected by those same forces or identified by those same hysterics as a death camp equipped with installations for mass extermination. And they see their own task to rip the veil of falsehood and deception. They see themselves as successors of Sherlock Holmes, looking for clues that give access to the hidden truth. Their confidence that they can do so is based on their assumption that the "Hoax" that is the Holocaust centers on the premise that Auschwitz was an extermination camp, and the assumption that Auschwitz was an extermination camp centers on the premise that it was equipped with homicidal gas chambers, and that our knowledge of the gas chambers is based on only a very few and very unreliable sources: mainly hearsay and a few scraps of paper. Therefore, they assume that the whole "legend" will dissolve when one can show one error, one mistake, one inconsistency, or one contradiction.

The assumption that the discovery of one little crack will bring the whole building down is the fundamental fallacy of Holocaust Denial. It would be a legitimate argument if indeed our knowledge of the Holo-

caust depended on our knowledge of the extermination installations of Auschwitz, and if the existence and operation of the gas chambers was proved by very few bits of information. This is obviously nonsensical. First of all there is the fact that if we assume the Holocaust to have happened more or less as told, all the evidence becomes intelligible, while if we assume it was a hoax, most of the evidence does not make any sense. When this was the case, the father of “debunkment,” Lord Bolingbroke, counselled to desist and accept a fact as true. “Force your imagination as much as you please, you will find insurmountable difficulties in your way, if you suppose the fact to be invented: but all these difficulties vanish when you suppose it true.” Furthermore, our knowledge of the Holocaust depends on tens of thousands of individual pieces of information, many of which have nothing to do with Auschwitz, and if we do consider Auschwitz, then we may safely state that our knowledge of the gas chambers depend on thousands of individual pieces of evidence of different kinds and classes. All those data converge to a conclusion. Even if one can point at erroneous information, inconsistencies and contradictions--normal occurrences in everyday historical practice--this does not mean that these disprove the existence of the gas chambers, or the Holocaust.

Holocaust deniers have, however, found ways to address this question by trying to deny that there is a convergence of evidence. Michael Shermer described the way they respond to the evidence. “We have an eyewitness account by a survivor who says he heard about gassing Jews while he was at Auschwitz. The revisionist says that survivors exaggerate and that their memories are unsound. Another survivor tells another story different in details but with the core similarity that Jews were gassed at Auschwitz. The revisionist claims that rumors were floating throughout the camps and many survivors incorporated them into their memories. An SS guard confesses after the war that he actually *saw* people being gassed and cremated. The revisionist claims that these confessions were forced out of the Nazis by the Allies. But now a

Sonderkommando--a Jew who helped Nazis load dead bodies out of the gas chambers and into the crematoria--says he not only heard about it, and not only saw it happening, he actually *participated* in the process. The revisionist explains this away by saying that the Sonderkommando accounts make no sense--their figures of bodies are exaggerated and their dates are incorrect. What about the camp commandant, who confessed after the war that he not only heard, saw, and participated in the process, but that he *orchestrated* it!? He was tortured, says the revisionist. But what about his autobiography written after his trial, conviction and sentencing to death, when he had nothing to gain by lying? No one knows why people confess to ridiculous crimes, explains the revisionist, but they do. No single testimony says "Holocaust" on it. But taking many together the story begins to unfold. And now the revisionist's defense is beginning to unravel. Instead of the historian having to present "just one proof," the revisionist must now disprove five pieces of historical data, with five different methods of disproof. But there is more. We have the blueprints for both the gas chambers and the crematoria--huge structures built for processing large numbers of bodies. Those were used strictly for delousing, claims the revisionist, and thanks to the Allies' war against Germany, the Germans were never given the opportunity to deport the Jews to their own homeland, and instead had to put them into overcrowded camps where disease and lice were rampant. What about the huge orders of Zyklon-B gas? It was strictly used for delousing all those diseased inmates. What about those speeches by Hitler, Himmler, Frank, and Goebbels talking about the "extermination" of the Jews? Oh, they really meant "rooting out," as in deporting them out of the Reich. What about Eichmann's confession at his trial? He was coerced. Hasn't the German government confessed that the Nazis attempted to exterminate European Jewry? Yes, but they lied so they could rejoin the family of nations. Now the revisionist must rationalize no less than 14 different bits of evidence that "jump together" to a specific conclusion. But our convergence continues. If six million Jews did not die, where did

they go? They are in Russia, and America, and Israel, and scattered throughout the world. But why can't they find each other? They do-- haven't you heard the occasional stories of long lost siblings making contact with each other after many decades? What about those photos and newsreels of the liberation of the camps with all those dead bodies and starving/dying inmates? Those people were well taken care of until the end of the war when the Allies were mercilessly bombing German cities, factories, and supply lines that were feeding those camps-- the Nazis tried valiantly to save their prisoners but the combined strength of the Allies was too much. But what about all those accounts by prisoners of the brutality of the Nazis--the random shootings and beatings, the deplorable conditions, the freezing temperatures, the overwork, etc.? This is war. The Americans put Japanese in camps. The Japanese imprisoned Chinese. The Russians tortured Poles and Germans. War is hell. The Nazis are no different from anyone else. **Post Hoc Rationalization.** We are now up to 18 proofs all converging toward one conclusion. The revisionist is desperately swinging away at them all, steadfastly determined not to give up his belief system. He is relying on what might be called *post hoc rationalization*--an after-the-fact reasoning to justify contrary evidence. In addition, the revisionist then shifts the burden of disproving all this evidence to the historian by mistakenly demanding that each one of these pieces of evidence independently prove the Holocaust."

Indeed, in the case of Auschwitz, it is important when dealing with the arguments of deniers that, despite the claims to the contrary, the onus is on them to make their case. This means, above all else, that they must transcend their nihilist agenda. Despite their claim to be "revisionists," holocaust deniers have not yet begun to undertake the task of "revising history." True revisionist history not only destroys an inherited view of the past, but also provides an alternative. For example, Michel Foucault argued in his famous *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) that the Enlightenment ascent from the world of ex-

plicit judicial violence enacted on the body had been, in fact, a descent into a closed universe of total surveillance and unrelenting discipline, a world ruled by some cunning, shadowy and ultimately sinister power. Foucault's argument was shown to be a blatant misconstruction, and as a result we read *Discipline and Punish* today more for its historical value as a representative of the intellectual climate of the 1970s than for its value as history of the Enlightenment. Yet the fact remains that in its time it offered a revisionist interpretation of the history of punishment that was plausible and therefore was taken seriously. And it could be taken seriously because Foucault had taken the trouble to write a history, that is to offer what seemed at least at first reading to be a narrative in which he put forward his thesis. He created something one could engage with. And he created something one wanted to engage with.

Up to today holocaust deniers have been unable to produce, in forty years of effort, a counter-narrative to the inherited history of Auschwitz. The deniers claim to be revisionist historians, but they have yet to produce a history that offers a plausible, "revised" explanation of the events in question. Until now, they have had a nihilist agenda. They have attacked the inherited account on the unproven assumption of some general conspiracy, but they have not been able, or willing, to produce serious revisionist historiography that gives us the origin and development of this conspiracy, the reason why and how it seized on, of all places, those very "ordinary" Auschwitz concentration camps as the fulcrum of its effort to hoodwink both gentiles and Jews, to leverage the international community in general, and defraud the Germans and the Arabs in particular. At the moment the best the negationist have done in this respect is either Arthur Butz's rambling and highly implausible suggestion that the origin of the conspiracy was somehow tied to the American need to accelerate in 1942 its synthetic rubber program, or a certain "Samuel Crowell's" more recent attempt to describe, in good post-modern fashion, Auschwitz as the result of "inter-

textuality.” And if the actual war-time history of Auschwitz and Birkenau was indeed one of relative normality, comparable to the histories of Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, with only typhus epidemics as an extra permanent fixture to explain the increased mortality, then one should expect holocaust deniers to produce, accepting the criteria and constraints of accepted historical scholarship, a transparent and coherent account to that effect. At the moment nothing exists even resembling this. Certainly, the negationists have shown great creativity in inventing many alternative explanations for each aspect of the camp’s history that seems to point to a deliberate program of genocide, but none of them are reconciled in one plausible narrative-- a history that would force the negationists to choose between the many options they have imagined, to seriously engage with issues of relevancy and causation, and to apply judgement.

In the following pages I will show that the work of these so-called revisionist historians constitutes a travesty of historical scholarship. I will consider the most important statements made by these negationist scholars, beginning with the Frenchman Paul Rassinier. At this point I will not consider why and how he became to be convinced that the Holocaust was a Hoax, but simply review his most important statements on the subject, giving particular attention to the way he interprets the evidence from Auschwitz. I will demonstrate that, as a scholar, Rassinier is grossly inaccurate at best, intellectually dishonest as a rule, and mad at worst.

According to Rassinier, the genealogy of the gas chamber hoax began in 1943. In the case of the German camps, the *agent provocateur* was not Victor Kravchenko, but Rapheal Lemkin. “After some fifteen years of historical research, I have come to the following conclusion: it was in 1943 that National Socialist Germany was accused for the first time of the systematic extermination of the Jews in the gas chambers. The author of this first, horrible and infamous accusation was a Polish Jew, a refugee in England and a jurist by profession, by the name of Rafael

Lemkin. And, he made that accusation in a book published in London, and in English, in that year, entitled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*....And, the view maintained in the book was supported by the *Kasztner* Report on the tragedy of the Hungarian Jews, a report which was also talked about in the corridors during the [Nuremberg] trial..But, we must be precise and say that it was only after January 30, 1946, the date when French Prosecutor DuBost made public his discovery of the Gerstein document, that these two pieces of writing took on importance. In fact, it was on that day that, in the world press, the gas chambers mythology began its dance to every tune and diabolical rhythm; that unrestrained saraband full of missteps has not stopped since. Let us try to reconstruct the facts. Until January 30, 1946, aside from the *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* and the *Kasztner* Report which were only secondhand testimonies, the prosecution and judges at Nuremberg had only direct testimonies which, juridically, were not much authentic, given the way in which they were adduced by their authors. All of these witnesses had been interned at Auschwitz, and, as for gas chambers, either they knew nothing about them, or they knew about them through their prison comrades who were “trustworthy” and who they generally did not name, or who were already dead, if they did name them. Second hand testimony again. An example of this kind of testimony is provided by Dr. Benedikt Kautski, who did not appear in court, but, as we have seen, who wrote a book and had his short hour of fame. Another is that of Madame Vaillant-Couturier who arrived at the Auschwitz camp in January 1943, who was a communist, who, for that reason, was hidden away in the hospital where she was an important personage in the *Häftlingsführung* and who, in answer to the question as to whether the hospital had been open to Jews when they were sick, coldly replied to French Prosecutor DuBost, “No, when we got there the Jews did not have the right to go there; they were taken directly to the gas chamber if they were sick.” (T. VI, p. 219) Now, never was a false witness brought before the bar of a Tribunal with such calm assurance, since in January 1943 there existed--if indeed there ever existed--no gas chamber

at Auschwitz, the official word being that they were not installed until the end of February 1943. There is no end to the number of false witnesses of this kind that could be cited. But, for the first time, with the Gerstein document, the prosecution had a first-hand witness. But wasn't Gerstein dead? Yes, but he had written, or, at least, he had signed, a statement--at least that is what was claimed. Was not this statement about Auschwitz? No, not in so far as it concerned what he had seen; but invoices for Zyklon B that was delivered to that camp were appended. His description of extermination by gas in other camps portrayed the operation in such a degree of horror that the journalists assigned to the trial decided that their emphasis of that theme would be sure to sell newspapers at home. The judges themselves accorded much less importance to the Gerstein allegations, but they allowed the journalists a free hand; even though they did not actually encourage them, they never gave them their true impressions of the Gerstein document, which was presented to public opinion as though it had been admitted into evidence when actually it had been rejected (as was discussed in the preceding chapter). Dr. Benedikt Kautksi's book did not come out until the end of 1946. Therefore, it did not play a part in the trial of the Major War Criminals. As a secondhand testimony on gas chambers it would not have been any great help. To have a description of the gas exterminations at Auschwitz as precise as that of the Gerstein document on Belzec, the prosecution had to wait until 1951 and *Médecin à Auschwitz* by Miklos Nyiszli, about whom we learned what to think in the preceding chapters. Since then, nothing. No other *de visu* witnesses. The literature of the concentration camps--the historians like Hans Rothfels, Golo Mann, or Raul Hilberg, the *War Crimes Commission* of Warsaw, and the *Centres of Contemporary Jewish Documentation*, their propagandists like Leon Poliakov or Hannah Arendt, the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* at Munich, or showmen and film directors like Piscator (producer of *Der Stellvertreter* by Hochhuth)--has never

been able to bring forth, as far as I know, any more than those two testimonies, both of which I believe I have proved were obviously apocryphal. I shall not belabor the point.”

Before we consider the historiographical importance of these paragraphs, let us just look at their accuracy. It will be clear that accuracy is the first virtue of any historian, and there is a general consensus that a constant lack of accuracy in the description of small things generates a quite legitimate concern about one’s honesty in one’s judgement of the big issues. Rassinier disappoints. First of all Raphael Lemkin’s *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* did not accuse the Germans of conducting a “systematic mass extermination of Jews in the gas chambers.” What did Lemkin write? In a chapter entitled “Genocide” Lemkin introduced the neologism “genocide” with the justification that “new conceptions require new terms.” “By “genocide” we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc. Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accompanied by mass killing of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” Given this definition, Lemkin saw that genocide involved first of all the destruction of the national pattern of a given group, and second of all the forced imposition of a new pattern. It was therefore mainly a political, cultural, and economic process. This, so he believed, occurred with varying intensity all over German-ruled Europe, but especially in German annexed Alsace, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Bohemia, and western Poland. Lemkin did discuss German policies of biological genocide in the annexed parts of Poland, where the German authorities tried to decrease the birthrates of Poles,

and physical genocide through racial discrimination in feeding, the endangering of health, and mass killings. In all three categories he included most of the non-German nations that had come under Nazi rule. The section dealing with mass killings reads as follows: “*Mass Killings*. The technique of mass killings is employed mainly against Poles, Russians, and Jews, as well as against leading personalities from among the non-collaborationist groups in all the occupied countries. In Poland, Bohemia-Moravia, and Slovenia, the intellectuals are being “liquidated” because they have always been considered as the main bearers of national ideals and at the time of occupation they were especially suspected of being the organizers of resistance. The Jews for the most part are liquidated within the ghettos, or in special trains in which they are transported to a so-called “unknown” destination. The number of Jews who have been killed by organized murder in all the occupied countries, according to the Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress in New York, amounts to 1,702,500.” The next paragraph deals with the religious persecution of Luxembourgish and Polish Catholics. There is no mention of gas chambers either in Lemkin’s text, nor in the reference he quotes from the December 17, 1942 “Joint Declaration by members of the United Nations,” in which the Germans are accused of working the able-bodied to death in labour camps and in which they leave the infirm to die of exposure or starvation, or massacre them in mass executions. Lemkin does not mention anywhere the systematic mass extermination of Jews in gas chambers.

Similarly the records do not support Rassinier’s account of the events on January 30, 1946--the day that the “gas chambers mythology began its dance to every tune and diabolical rhythm.” First of all, Deputy Chief Prosecutor Charles Dubost did not announce his discovery of the famous Gerstein Report--the very detailed eyewitness account of the extermination process in Belzec written by *SS-Obersturmführer* Kurt Gerstein. What did happen is that Dubost mentioned that he had possession of ten invoices addressed to Gerstein for the delivery of Zyklon

B to the Oranienburg and Auschwitz concentration camps, and that he wanted to submit them as evidence under Exhibit Number RF-350. There is no evidence anywhere in the official transcript of that day's proceedings that justifies Rassinier's claim that on that day the "unrestrained saraband" of the gas--chamber legend began. There is no evidence anywhere that justifies Rassinier's observation that, "for the first time, with the Gerstein document, the prosecution had a first-hand witness," and that "the judges themselves accorded much less importance to the Gerstein allegations." No allegations were read, no "description of extermination by gas" provided. The only thing that happened was that DuBost mentioned the ten invoices, and that he encountered some difficulties in having it and many other documents accepted as evidence that day because of the inability of DuBost's small staff in completing all the required administrative procedures in arranging and numbering them.

Rassinier elsewhere suggested that the refusal of the judges to initially admit Exhibit Number RF-350 as evidence was due to its mistrust of the authenticity of the document. "For reasons which the reader will not fail to understand, the Tribunal, in fact, did not want to hear anything about either Kurt Gerstein or his testament," Rassinier observed. "[O]ut of the bundle of documents that were produced by Mr. DuBost, it accepted only two invoices of April 30, 1944, each for 555 kilos of Zyklon B, one for Auschwitz and the other for Oranienburg." Elsewhere Rassinier gives a slightly different version of the same event. "It was this fantastically gruesome account that Mr. DuBost--not just anyone, but a prosecutor, and, doubtless, a well known one too, since he was chosen from among his peers to represent France at Nuremberg--wanted to have accepted by the International Tribunal on January 30, 1946. The Tribunal did not go along. But, one must say that for the Tribunal not to go along it had to be really a little thick, because in other circumstances it swallowed, apparently without a flick of an eyelash, lots of other tricky things of this kind." Again, the record of the pro-

ceedings do not support Rassinier's suggestion. The Gerstein Report was never at issue, and the (temporary) problem, resolved that same afternoon, was of a procedural nature.

Georges Wellers, former inmate of Auschwitz and editor of "Le Monde Juife," could not resist showing his rage at Rassinier's suggestion, which later transformed into a conclusion, that the refusal of the Tribunal to initially accept Exhibit Number RF-350 into evidence proved "that the Gerstein document was an historical forgery." "This "argument" is a model of hypocrisy and outrageous deceit typical of all the procedures currently employed by Rassinier. It is a model of hypocrisy, for God knows how much spleen Rassinier vented on the Tribunal of Nuremberg and its decisions, how many documents admitted by the Tribunal were declared by him to be "forged," "apocryphal," "falsified," "worthless," "not conclusive," etc. to not take seriously his sudden and virtuous indignation that the Gerstein document is still considered authentic and essential. Outrageous deceit, for in reality the Tribunal, during its morning session on January 30 did in fact "refuse to hear the reading" of the Gerstein report, but not at all because it considered it "inconclusive," but rather for a purely technical reason: a certificate establishing its origin, obligatory required by the Tribunal for every paper produced, was lacking." And after describing how, later in the afternoon the Tribunal apologized to Mr. DuBost for causing some difficulties earlier that day, Wellers asked "[i]s that sufficiently clear? The incident is closed for anyone...Except for Rassinier, naturally."

Let us return to the passage under discussion. Finally, of course, is Rassinier's blunt dismissal of Claude Vaillant-Couturier's testimony. Labelling her a "communist" and conveniently ignoring that she was a member of the Constituent Assembly and a *Chevalier* in the *Legion d'Honneur*, Rassinier passed in silence over her amazingly detailed and responsible account of life and death in Auschwitz, dismissing her whole testimony because he wrongly assumed that in January 1943,

when she arrived in Auschwitz, there were no gas chambers. Whenever Madame Vaillant-Couturier mentioned something she had not witnessed herself, she mentioned this specifically in her declaration, and provided the name of her informant.

Thus Rassinier's genealogy of the gas chamber story is inaccurate, to say the least. Equally non-sensical is his account of how the legend of the concentration camps and the hoax of the Holocaust were the result of the cold-war. "[I]t is no secret that there are certain features of the foreign policy of the United States which are expressly designed to prevent any serious breakdown of relations with the Soviet Union; the contrived danger of a re-birth of Naziism and Fascism in Europe is one of them. Both Stalin and Truman fully exploited this myth [of the camps], the former to keep Europe from achieving economic and political unity and from integrating Germany into such a European community, and the latter to justify in part the huge cost of maintaining an army of occupation in Germany." When in the early 1950s the prospect of a united Europe appeared, the Soviets and the Israelis had new reasons to whip up the myth of the gas chambers, the former to prevent the isolation of Russia, the latter to prevent an end to the German reparation payments to Israel. The main centers of propaganda were two organizations that were a figment of Rassinier's imagination: the *Warsaw Committee for the investigation of crimes and war criminals* and the *World Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation*. "The target was Germany. The theme was that the horrors and atrocities that had been committed during the Second World War by the Nazis were a natural vocation of Germany. Therefore, in order to prevent a re-emergence of this horrible propensity, the Germans had to be kept under severe control and very carefully segregated." Thus appeared, on orders of propaganda organizations centred in Warsaw and Tel Aviv, Miklos Nyszli's memoir *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account* and Leon Poliakov's *Harvest of Hate* and finally Rudolf Höss's memoirs.

In his historiography of our knowledge of the gas chambers, Rassinier introduced a technique which other negationists were to copy: he summarily dismissed all eye-witness testimonies that affirmed the existence of, for example, gas chambers as lies of Ulysses, and ignored (or perhaps proved ignorant of) the vast array of other evidence. Of course, he did profess at occasions his good will: "For fifteen years, everytime that I heard of a witness anywhere, no matter where in the portion of Europe that was not occupied by the Soviets, who claimed to have himself been present at gas exterminations, I immediately went to him to get his testimony. And, each time the experience ended in the same way. With documentation in hand, I would ask him so many precise and detailed questions that soon it became apparent that he could not answer except by lying. Often his lies became so transparent, even to himself, that he ended his testimony by declaring that he had not seen it himself, but that one of his good friends, who had died in the camps and whose good faith he could not doubt, had told him about it. I covered thousands and thousands of kilometres throughout Europe in this way." It is a pity, for posterity's sake, that Rassinier did not keep a log of his travels, or his interviews, as it would have helped later generations of historians in their work!

It will be clear that the publication of Höss's autobiography and his essay on the Final Solution of the Jewish Problem troubled Rassinier. Unlike the memoirs of the deportees, he could not simply dismiss the book as another "Lie of Ulysses." Therefore he had to engage the text closely, and discredit Höss as a witness by revealing alleged contradictions, miscalculations and other reasons for doubt as to the accuracy of his memory or the veracity of his statements. "In reply to the question put by Dr. Kaufmann, Kaltenbrunner's legal counsel at Nuremberg, "Did Eichmann tell you in fact that more than 2,000,000 Jews were destroyed at Auschwitz camp?" Hoess answered, "Yes, that is right." (T. XI, p. 409.) Behind the scenes he is supposed to have told the American psychologist, Gustave Gilbert, that "Every day two trains

brought in 3,000 persons, for 27 months” (therefore, for the whole length of the period of deportation, from March 1942 to July 1944). “So that makes a total of about 2,500,000 people.” (Statement of Professor Gilbert before the Jerusalem Tribunal in judgement on Eichmann, May 30, 1961). But, when it came to giving details about these 2,500,000 people he wrote in the *Le Commandant d’Auschwitz parle* (p. 239, French ed.): As for me, I never knew the total number, and had no way of determining it. I can only remember the number in the most important cases, often pointed out to me by Eichmann or one of his deputies. From Upper Silesia, or Poland in general:250,000 From Germany, or Theresienstadt:100,000 Holland:95,000 Belgium:20,000 France: 110,000 Greece:65,000 Hungary:400,000 Slovakia:90,000 TOTAL: 1,130,000 The figures concerning cases of less importance are not graven in my memory, but they were insignificant compared with the above. I think the figure of 2,500,000 much too high “”

Rassinier’s text is full of mistakes, misinterpretation, and falsification. “Behind the scenes [Höss] is supposed to have told...” is refuted by reading either Gilbert’s book *The Psychology of Dictatorship* (1950) or the transcripts of the Eichmann trial. In the book Gilbert wrote and during the trial he stated under oath that Höss wrote these things down in a short autobiography created on Gilbert’s behest. On May 29, 1961, the day of Gilbert’s testimony, the original document was produced in court as evidence, and marked as T/1170. In his autobiography Höss provided a detailed description of the arrival, selection and killing of the deportees. I will provide a rather lengthy quotation, to provide the full context for the two sentences Rassinier chose to quote. “In Birkenau there were five installations--two large crematoria, each of which had a capacity for receiving 2,000 persons in the course of 24 hours. That is to say, it was possible in one gas chamber to put to death up to 2,500 persons; in five double ovens heated with coke, it was possible to burn at most 2,000 bodies within 24 hours; two smaller installations could eliminate about 1,500 people, with four bigger double

ovens to each of them. Furthermore, there was also an open-air installation--that is, an old farmhouse was sealed and turned into a gas chamber, which could also contain 1,500 persons at one and the same time. The incineration was carried out there in an open pit on wood, and this was practically limitless. In my estimation, it was possible to burn there, in 24 hours, up to 8,000 persons in this way. Hence it was possible to exterminate and eliminate up to 10,000 people within 24 hours in the installations described above. As far as I am aware, this number was attained only once in 1944, when delays occurred in the arrival of trains, and consequently five transports arrived together on one day. The ashes of the burnt bodies were ground into dust, which was poured into the Vistula in remote places and swept away with the current. On the basis of the figure of 2.5 million, which is the number of people who--according to Eichmann--were brought to Auschwitz for extermination, it may be said that on average, two transports arrived daily, with a combined total of 4,000 persons, of whom twenty-five per cent were fit for work, the balance of 3,000 were to be exterminated. The intervals in the various operations can be computed together at nine months. Thus there remain 27 months, with 90,000 people each month--a total of 2,430,000 people. *This is a calculation of the technical potential.* I have to keep to the figure mentioned by Eichmann, for he was the only SS officer who was allowed to keep records concerning these liquidation operations, according to the orders of the Reichsführer-SS. All other units which took part in any way had to destroy all records immediately. Eichmann mentioned this number in my presence when he was called upon, in April 1945, to present a report to the Reichsführer-SS. I had no records whatsoever. *But, to the best of my knowledge, this number appears to me much too high. If I calculate the total of the mass operations which I still remember, and still make allowance for a certain percentage of error, I arrive, in my calculation, at a total of 1.5 million at the most, for the period from the beginning of 1941 to the end of 1944.* But these are my computations which I cannot verify.[Emphasis added]

Nuremberg, 24 April 1946 (Signed) Rudolf Höss (At the bottom of the

document): Hungary – 400,000; Slovakia – 90,000; Greece – 65,000; Holland – 90,000; France – 110,000; Belgium – 20,000; the region of the Generalgouvernement and Upper Silesia – 250,000; Germany and Terezin – 100,000. Total – 1,125,000.”

Considering Höss’s statement given to Gilbert and read in court during the Eichmann trial, it is clear that first of all the contradiction that Rassinier noted between the figures of 2.5 million and 1.1 million does not exist. Höss clearly states that he took Eichmann’s figure of 2.5 million deportees as a point of departure, and that, at least in theory, this number of victims could have been achieved with an average of 90,000 victims arriving over 27 of the 36 months that mass killing took place in Auschwitz. However, Höss warned that the number of $(27 \times 90,000 =) 2,430,000$ should only be seen as “a calculation of the technical potential.” Having no records of his own, he felt obliged “to keep to the figure mentioned by Eichmann, for he was the only SS officer who was allowed to keep records concerning these liquidation operations, according to the orders of the Reichsführer-SS.” But, having said so, Höss immediately proceeded to make his own calculation, which was “1.5 million at the most, for the period from the beginning of 1941 to the end of 1944. But these are my computations which I cannot verify.” As to the second quotation Rassinier provided, which came from the French version of Höss’s autobiography, again we can see that he failed to provide the context. The paragraph that preceded the one with the calculation of 1,130,000 million deportees that Rassinier quoted reads as follows: “During my earlier interrogations I gave the number of 2.5 million Jews who arrived at Auschwitz to be exterminated. This figure was given to me by Eichmann, who had given this figure to my superior, SS General Glücks, when Eichmann was ordered to make a report to Himmler shortly before Berlin was surrounded....I myself never knew the total number, and I have nothing to help me arrive at an estimate. I can only remember the figures involved in the larger actions....” Again,

the context is the same. Höss mentions Eichmann's calculation of 2.5 million deportees in order to reject it in favour for a lower figure of his own.

Quoting partially and out of context, Rassinier gave the false impression that Höss came to one conclusion in one place, and another elsewhere--in short that Höss was an unreliable witness. It seems, after some closer scrutiny of the evidence, that Höss showed, after all, a remarkable consistency in his computations--especially so if one remembers that he did the two calculations Rassinier quoted at different periods and without the opportunity to compare them. *The contradiction does not exist, except in Rassinier's mind.*

Having established the less than stellar practice of Rassinier as a scholar and having reestablished the credibility of Höss as a witness, we return to Rassinier's text.

"[W]e are concerned here with the witness Hoess, not the general statistics. And about those two trains that for 27 months brought 3,000 people to Auschwitz everyday, witness Hoess does not seem very certain. On this subject I invite the reader to think about these three propositions:

1. "As far as I can remember the convoys arriving at Auschwitz never carried more than 1,000 prisoners." (p.220).
2. "Following some delays in communication, five convoys a day, instead of the expected three, arrived." (p.236).
3. "In the extermination of Hungarian Jews, convoys were arriving at the rate of 15,000 persons a day." (p.239). From which it appears that under certain circumstances five trains per day of 1,000 persons each delivered a total of 15,000 persons."

So let us follow Rassinier's proposal, and consider these three propositions. First of all, let us establish their context. The first quote appears in a discussion about the early transports of Upper Silesian Jews to Auschwitz. "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 (Emphasis added)."

Comparison between the German original and the English translation shows that the latter has some problems, but on a crucial point it is correct: when Höss discusses the size of the transports, he only refers to those early transports. "These transports never numbered more than a thousand persons." He does not refer to other transports. In fact, the use of the demonstrative adjective "these" and the double adverb "never...more" suggest that other, that is later, transports were larger. By changing "these transports" for "the transports," Rassinier distorted Höss's text.

A misrepresentation of a different kind occurs when he quotes that "following some delays in communication, five convoys a day, instead of the expected three, arrived." The context of this sentence, in the translation of Andrew Pollinger, is as follows: "The highest total figure of people gassed and cremated in twenty-four hours was slightly more than nine thousand. This figure was reached in the summer of 1944, during the action in Hungary, using all installations except Crematory [IV]. On that day five trains arrived because of delays on the rail lines, instead of three, as was expected, and in addition the railroad cars were more crowded than usual."

Rassinier is quite brazen with his third quotation: "In the extermination of Hungarian Jews, convoys were arriving at the rate of 15,000 persons a day." It does not appear in the original. He seems to have made it up. In conclusion, Rassinier suggests a discrepancy between three figures that does not exist. The two that could be traced back applied both to specific, and what proved to be atypical situations--one at the (hesitant) beginning of the history of Auschwitz as a site of the Shoah, and one extraordinary situation during its peak.

In the next paragraph Rassinier, who has shown poor exegetic skills, provides an example of his mathematical skills. “To the Tribunal on April 15, 1946, Hoess had stated that these trains carried 2,000 persons each (T. XI, p. 412). To Professor Gustave Gilbert he said that they contained 1,500 each, and in his book, he comes down to 1,000. What is certain that for the period given none of these estimates on the capacity of the trains corresponds to a total of 1,130,000. The last one is the closest to the truth with an exaggeration of only 300,000. Since Mr. Raul Hilberg takes under consideration six “killing centres,” an exaggeration of 300,000 for each one would yield a total exaggeration of nearly 2,000,000 persons and, out of six million a total exaggeration of that magnitude is quite important.” I will not comment on the easy way Rassinier was able to bring back to life, at the end of this paragraph, almost 2 million Jews with a stroke of the pen. Of greater interest is his statement about the capacity of the trains, and his conclusions. First of all the contradiction between the numbers. As we have seen, Höss mentioned the figure of 1,000 in relation to the transports of early 1942 from surrounding region of Upper Silesia. The figure of 2,000 that he mentioned on April 15, 1946, referred to “the whole period up until 1944.” “Dr. Kaufmann: “And then the railway transports arrived. During what period did these transports arrive and about how many people, roughly, were in such a transport?” Hoess: “During the whole period up until 1944 certain operations were carried out at irregular intervals in the different countries, so that one cannot speak of a continuous flow of incoming transports. It was always a matter of 4 to 6 weeks. During those 4 to 6 weeks two to three trains, containing about 2,000 persons each, arrived daily.” Again, where Höss is specific and where he makes historically important distinctions, Rassinier chooses to lump things together. He also seems incompetent as an accountant when he states that there is no way one could reach, on the basis of trains with between 1,000 and 2,000 Jews, a total number of 1,130,000 arriving deportees. Yet a simple calculation that does not exceed the abilities of a ten-year old shows otherwise. Let us take as our basis the

figure of that the deportations occurred over a period of 27 months (a figure which Rassinier endorsed a little earlier). This is a little over 800 days. This means that, *on average*, Auschwitz would have received 1,412 deportees per day. This is the average of the three figures Rassinier quoted--that is the total number of 1,130,000 deportees could have been easily reached if over a period of 27 months one train of 1,500 people per day arrived at the camp. But, as Höss wrote, during many actions the average rate was between two and three trains per day, and during the Hungarian action the normal rate was three trains per day. And I wonder how Rassinier could state with such conviction that, "for the period given none of these estimates on the capacity of the trains corresponds to a total of 1,130,000."

In the next paragraph Rassinier showed his general ignorance of the meaning of the documents of the *Zentralbauleitung* found in Auschwitz at the time of the liberation. "The same observation holds for the soundness of [Hoess's] testimony. "In the middle of spring, 1942, hundreds of human beings perished in the gas chambers." (p. 178.) But, as we have seen, Document No. 4401 establishes beyond any doubt that the so-called "gas chambers" were not ordered for Auschwitz until August 8, 1942 and Document No. 4463 establishes that they were not actually installed until February 20, 1943. At Nuremberg, Hoess had already stated in his deposition that "in 1942, Himmler came to visit the camp and was present at an execution from beginning to end," (T. XI, p. 413); no one called his attention to the fact that even if it were possible that Himmler had gone to Auschwitz in 1942, it was not possible for him to have been present at an execution, since the gas chambers had not been constructed yet. And, furthermore, we know that it would have been unlikely for Himmler to have been present at an execution because as we learned after the war from his physician, Dr. Kersten, he could not bear the sight of an execution."

Two documents that relate to the construction of the four new crematoria equipped with gas chambers in no way preclude the existence of other gas chambers in Auschwitz. In fact, Bunker 1 had been in operation since March of that year, and Bunker 2 since July. These were converted farmhouses and, in fact, Höss mentions them as the place of execution in the paragraph preceding the sentence Rassinier chose to quote as well, more obliquely, in the sentence itself, which Rassinier chose to quote only partly, suppressing amongst other things not only the location, but also Höss's sickeningly sentimental attempt at poetry. "In the spring of 1942 hundreds of people in the full bloom of life walked beneath the budding fruit trees of the farm into the gas chamber to their death, most often without a hint of what was going to happen to them." (*Im Frühjahr 1942 gingen Hunderte von blühenden Menschen unter den blühenden Obstbäumen des Bauerngehöftes, meist nichtsahnend, in die Gaskammern, in den Tod.*) It is in this context significant that Rassinier uses the definite article "the" when he mentions the gas chambers: "it was not possible for him to have been present at an execution, since *the* gas chambers had not been constructed yet. [Emphasis added]" The definite article "the" suggests there were only one set of gas chambers at the site that came into operation in 1943. In fact, there were many different gas chambers, some which were used for longer periods, and some for a shorter time, some were spaces converted from other uses, others were designed as gas chambers.

Finally there is Rassinier's treatment of Himmler's visit. Höss provided a few short accounts of this visit in his autobiography, and in his essay on the Final Solution. In the latter text the account reads as follows. "During his visit in the summer of 1942, Himmler very carefully observed the entire process of annihilation. He began with the unloading at the ramps and completed the inspection as Bunker 2 was being cleared of bodies. At that time there were no open-pit burnings. He did not complain about anything, but he didn't say anything about it either. Accompanying him were District Leader Bracht and SS General

Schmauser. Shortly after Himmler's visit, SS Colonel Blobel from Eichmann's office arrived and brought Himmler's order, which stated that all the mass graves were to be opened and all the bodies cremated. It further stated that all the ashes were to be disposed of in such a way that later on there would be no way to determine the number of those cremated." It is obvious that Himmler did not like the sight, but was more of a "man" than both Kersten and Rassinier assumed.

Finally Höss provided a very long (four pages) and very detailed account of this visit in his biographical essay on Himmler, which was attached to and published with his autobiography. In this essay Höss described once more Himmler's response to the killings. "After inspecting Birkenau, Himmler witnessed the complete extermination process of a transport of Jews which had just arrived. He also looked on for a while during a selection of those who would work and those who would die without any complaint on his part. Himmler made no comment about the extermination process. He just looked in total silence. I noticed that he very quietly watched the officers, the NCOs and me several times during the process." The next paragraph of Rassinier's text is even more problematic. "Hoess' comments concerning the capacity of the gas chambers and the crematories also are grossly contradictory. For example, he says on one page that: *The maximum figure for the number of people gassed or incinerated every 24 hours was a little more than 9,000 for all the installations* (p.236, emphasis added.) But, then, he says a few pages later: *As I have already said, Crematories I and II could incinerate about 2,000 bodies in 24 hours; it was not possible to exceed this if one wanted to avoid damage. Installations III and IV were supposed to incinerate 1,500 corpses in 24 hours. But, as far as I know, these figures were never reached.* (p. 245, emphasis added.) How can one fail to deduce from these flagrant contradictions that here is a document which was fabricated hastily after the event by illiterates?"

So let's look again at what Höss really says. For the record: with *Anlage II* (Installation II) Hoess points at Bunker 2., As we have already seen, Bunker 2 was a peasant cottage west of Birkenau that had been transformed into a gas chamber in the summer of 1942. It had been taken out of commission after the completion of the crematoria in 1943, but brought back into operation during the Hungarian Action in 1944 and renamed as Bunker 5. Outside Bunker 2/5 were large burning pits, where bodies were cremated in the open. The remains of these pits, together with the ashes, are still visible today. "Installation II, later designated as Open Air Installation or Bunker V, was in operation until the very end, especially as a standby in case of breakdowns in crematoria I to IV. In the case of actions with train transports arriving shortly after each other daytime gassings were conducted at V, and nightly arriving transports at I to IV. *The cremation possibility at V was practically unlimited as long it was still possible to burn both by day and night.* Because of enemy air activity it was not possible anymore from 1944 onwards to burn at night. The highest total figure of gassings and cremations within 24 hours was a little over 9,000 at all locations except at III in the summer of 1944 during the Hungarian Action, as due to train delays five instead of the expected three trains arrived within 24 hours, and these were also more heavily loaded (Emphasis added)." In other words, there is no contradiction. The open air cremation pits at V allow for the much higher figure. By partially quoting the paragraph, Rassinier either incompetently or malevolently tried to change the record.

Elsewhere Rassinier is just sloppy. "Finally, a careful analysis of the following language reveals a pearl: *Toward the end of 1942, all the mass graves were cleaned [crematory ovens had not been built yet, and incineration was done in mass graves]. The number of cadavers buried there exceeded 107,000. This figure [as Rudolph Hoess explains farther on] includes not only convoys of Jews gassed from the beginning, until the moment when they went on to incineration, but also the cadavers of all the prisoners who died in Auschwitz-Birkenau camp (p. 231).* From this statement one infers that in

nearly three years 107,000 persons died. I say “in nearly three years” because the two phrases “toward the end of 1942” and “until the moment when they went on to incineration,” are paradoxical, since the cremations could not have begun, according to the official thesis, before February 20, 1943. Therefore, for the two to be concomitant, which is called for here, it is absolutely necessary that both should have occurred on this last date. Since the camp was opened on June 14, 1940, one has to speak of almost three years. Hence the cremation of 107,000 cadavers before February 1943 must mean that all of the rest were cremated at a later date. Taking into account that between February 1943 and October 1944 (the official end of the exterminations) there are 17 months and that, as the Kasztner Report tells us, for 8 or 9 months (the autumn of 1943 to May 1944) the gas chambers at Auschwitz were out of order and not working, it remains to be established how many persons more than 107,000 could have been “incinerated,” from February 1943 to October 1944, when the camp was equipped with four crematoria ovens of 15 burners each. I would be very astonished if a cremation expert, given these facts, should reply that it was possible to cremate the million bodies that are claimed by Mr. Raul Hilberg, or even the 900,000 of the Institute of Jewish Affairs.”

Rassinier begins his argument with a quote from Höss’s report. Let us carefully examine this quote in its proper context. In the preceding paragraphs Höss records the beginning of the extermination of Jews in Bunker I, describing the procedure in some detail. “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 west of crematoria 4 and 5, which were built later, was chosen and prepared. Five barracks were built, two near Bunker 1, and three near Bunker 2. Bunker 2 was the larger one. It held about 1,200 people. As late as the summer of 1942 the corpses were still buried in mass graves. Not until the end of the summer did we start burning them. At first we put two thousand bodies on a large pile of wood. Then we opened up the mass graves and

burned the new bodies on top of the old ones from the earlier burials. At first we poured waste oil over the bodies. Later on we used methanol. The burning went on continuously--all day and all night. By the end of November all the mass graves were cleared. The number of buried bodies in the mass graves was 107,000. This number contains not only the first Jewish transports which were gassed when we started the burnings, but also the bodies of the prisoners who died in the main Auschwitz camp during the winter of 1941- 42 because the crematory was out of order. The prisoners who died at Birkenau [Auschwitz 2] are included in that number.”

Examination of the text shows how non-sensical Rassinier’s comments are. Let’s look at them sentence by sentence. “From this statement one infers that in nearly three years 107,000 persons died.” In fact, this inference is wrong. All the statement says is that 107,700 people were buried in mass graves until the beginning of the incinerations on the pyres, that is until the end of the summer of 1942. *It does not even include those people who arrived after the end of the summer to be killed and cremated immediately upon death without having been buried first in a mass grave.* It only includes those who were killed and initially buried without the intention of later cremation.

The largest group of these people were Jews who had arrived mostly after the spring of 1942--the transports in the spring were still classified as “small police actions.” So these were people who were killed in the camp between let’s say June and September, that is three months and not three years. Added to that were two smaller groups--inmates who had died in Auschwitz I in the winter of 1941/42 when the crematorium there was in repair, and the prisoners who had died in Birkenau since its opening in the beginning of March 1942. Ignorant of the context, Rassinier’s following sentence is non-sensical. “I say ‘in nearly three years’ because the two phrases ‘toward the end of 1942’ and ‘until the moment when they went on to incineration,’ are paradoxical, since the cremations could not have begun, according to the official

thesis, before February 20, 1943. “The paradox does not exist, because it is absolutely clear that Höss refers in his *”bis zu Beginn der Verbrennungen* [until the beginning of the incineration]” to the open--air incinerations discussed earlier in the same paragraph, and not to the in-house incinerations in the crematoria mentioned 10 paragraphs later. As these open-air incinerations began at the end of the summer, they could very well have ended by the end of November 1942.

As a result Rassinier’s conclusion that between June 1940 and February 1943 only (!) 107,700 people were cremated is nonsense: it only applies to three distinct groups of murdered people which represent according to current data about half of the total mortality of Auschwitz in 1942. Furthermore these cremations took place in very primitive circumstances, and hence any attempt to extrapolate from the number of 107,000 the number of total cremations in Auschwitz is inappropriate given the fact that in early 1943 four new crematoria with 46 ovens became available. Official figures of the *Zentralbauleitung* mentioned a total cremation capacity of 4,756 corpses per day. Yet Rassinier has no qualms about trying to make some suggestion that there should be some balance between the (false) figure of 107,000 corpses cremated before February 1943, and the total amount of cremations between February 1943 and October 1944. “Since the camp was opened on June 14, 1940, one has to speak of almost three years. Hence the cremation of 107,000 cadavers before February 1943 must mean that *all of the rest* were cremated at a later date. Taking into account that between February 1943 and October 1944 (the official end of the exterminations) there are 17 months and that, as the Kasztner Report tells us, for 8 or 9 months (the autumn of 1943 to May 1944) the gas chambers at Auschwitz were out of order and not working, it remains to be established how many persons more than 107,000 could have been “incinerated,” from February 1943 to October 1944, when the camp was equipped with four crematoria ovens of 15 burners each. I would be very astonished if a cremation expert, given these facts,

should reply that it was possible to cremate the million bodies that are claimed by Mr. Raul Hilberg, or even the 900,000 of the Institute of Jewish Affairs (Emphasis added).” With “all of the rest” I assume that Rassinier means the other 900,000 (Hilberg) or 800,000 corpses (Institute of Jewish Affairs).

This is what Rassinier had to say about Auschwitz. It will have become clear that it cannot pass even the most superficial examination. Rassinier did not have either the accuracy, nor the logic, nor the honesty required of a researcher.

One could go on, but I assume that the foregoing discussions will have amply demonstrated the worthless nature of Rassinier’s scholarship. I will leave his other arguments, such as for example his demographic argument that the total number of Jewish victims was either 1,589,492 or 987,592 (!), and that the “lie” involves the “murder” of 4,419,908 Jews who never existed, for others to tackle. On the basis of our analysis of what he has to say about Auschwitz, it is clear that one need not expect much of his contribution to the demographics of the Final Solution. Negationism was born in France, and it there it became the focus of public debate. Yet, in the wake of Rassinier’s pioneering work, considerable negationist activity arose outside of France. As I have already mentioned in the section on “Auschwitz and Holocaust Denial,” the most important American practitioner of negationist historiography is Arthur R. Butz. A full refutation of Butz’s *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* requires a dissertation. Therefore I will concentrate my analysis of Butz’s scholarship on his central argument: his assertion that no extermination of people took place in Auschwitz.

Butz assumed that a hoax, in order to be successful, will *not* be based on a story that is false in all or most of its details. “[N]inety nine per cent valid fact can be present in a story whose major claim has no truth whatever to it,” Butz argued, “and recognition of this leads the author of the hoax to the maximally safe approach to his deed: distort

the meaning of valid facts.” And he continued: “This is the basic structure of the Auschwitz extermination legend. It is shown here that every real fact contained in the story had (not could have had, but had) a relatively routine significance, having nothing to do with the exterminations of a people. Thus those who claim extermination must advance a thesis involving a dual interpretation of the facts, but by then the impartial reader, in consideration of what has just been noted, should be on my side; the need for a dual interpretation of fact, the trademark of the hoax, has emerged.”

Butz assumed, in other words, that procedures or structures have only one meaning or purpose, and that if we find that they have more than one--that is one “routine” meaning or purpose and one “extra-ordinary” meaning or purpose, the latter will be a fictional significance grafted on the factual one. For example: Butz rightly noted that people had to undress when subjected to delousing, that Zyklon was used for delousing purposes, that morgues were used to store corpses, that crematoria incinerated the corpses of people who had died as the result of starvation, exhaustion, mistreatment, or because of natural causes, and that chemical factories create stench. He therefore jumped to the conclusion that the author of the hoax intelligently created a fiction in which people had to undress when subjected to gassing, that Zyklon was used for killing purposes, that morgues were used as gas chambers, that crematoria incinerated the corpses of people who had been murdered in the gas chambers, and that the cremations create stench. In other words, the hoax criminalized “routine” activities. What Butz did not consider was that people had to undress both when subjected to delousing *and* when subjected to gassing, that Zyklon was used for delousing purposes *and* for killing purposes, that some morgues were used to store corpses *and* others as gas chambers, that crematoria incinerated the corpses of people who had died as the result of starvation, exhaustion, mistreatment, or because of natural causes, *and* that they incinerated the corpses of people who had been murdered in the

gas chambers, and that both chemical factories *and* crematoria create stench. And what Butz did not consider either is the rather simple explanation, proven to be true, that the various procedures or structures had historically two meanings or purposes because the second one evolved from, or was grafted onto, the first. For example, Zyklon was used in the camp for delousing purposes, but when searching for a simple, effective and cheap killing agent for humans, the SS discovered that hydrogen cyanide did not only kill lice, but people *also*, and at much lower doses. And when the Auschwitz crematoria were under construction, they were assigned to function as killing stations *also*, and the well-ventilated morgues proved easily adaptable into gas chambers. In other words contingency marked the development of the camp, and as in all cases where contingency rules, things designed to do one thing ended up doing something else *also*.

So let's look in some detail at the substance of Butz's argument. He began with an analysis of the Höss affidavit of April 5, 1946. "I commanded Auschwitz until 1 December, 1943, and estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total dead of about 3,000,000. This figure represents about 70% or 80% of all persons sent to Auschwitz as prisoners, the remainder having been selected and used for slave labor in the concentration camp industries."

Butz commented rather tamely that "[i]t would have been helpful in putting things into slightly better focus and perspective if Hoess had briefly indicated what the nature of the 'concentration camp industries' at Auschwitz was, and the enormous importance this industry had for the Germans." He did not go into detail why this would have been helpful, but assumed that the reader would remember an earlier discussion in which he claimed that because Auschwitz was the site of many industries using the slave labour of the camp, it could not have been a center of extermination *also*. As to the number of two and half

million people Höss claimed to have gassed in Auschwitz, Butz noted that a year later Höss mentioned a figure of 1,135,000 people murdered. And he continued as follows: “The lowest figure to be claimed by those who claim that gassings took place is 750,000. The Russians claimed 4,000,000, including some killed by “injections, ill treatment, etc”, but the highest figure claimed seems to be 7,000,000.” The reader is left to draw his own conclusions, but the suggestion is clear: when the lowest and highest estimate differ a whole order of magnitude, there is no reason to trust any of them. “Mass executions by gassing commenced during the summer 1941 and continued until fall 1944. I personally supervised executions at Auschwitz until the first of December 1943 and know by reason of my continued duties in the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps WVHA that these mass executions continued as stated above.”

Butz suggested that there was a contradiction with another statement Höss made in which he said that when, in 1941, Himmler ordered him to transform Auschwitz into an extermination camp, the Inspector of the Concentration Camps Glücks was not to know about this. Thus how could Höss have known about the exterminations after he had left the camp to take up a post at Glücks’s Inspectorate? Butz did not consider the probability that Himmler’s order of secrecy visa-vis Glücks in 1941 made sense in a context of the initial preparation of the Final Solution, and had become obsolete by 1943, when the genocide of the Jews had been underway for more than a year. “The “final solution” of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941. At that time there were already in the general government three other extermination camps; BELZEK, TREBLINKA and WOLZEK. These camps were under the Einsatzkommando of the Security Police and SD. I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their exterminations. The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was princip-

ally concerned with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. He used monoxide gas and I did not think his methods were very efficient. So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz I, I used Cyclon B, which was crystallized Prussic Acid we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one-half hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses.”

Butz commented on this paragraph with a lengthy discussion that took more than three densely-printed pages. The first issue was the contradiction that existed between Höss’s account of the date of the Himmler order, June 1941, and his assertion that, at that time, Treblinka was already in operation. As Treblinka came only in operation in the summer of 1942, Butz dismissed the first part of the paragraph as “the sorts of contradictions that one should expect to emerge from a pack of lies.” Then he continued with a discussion on Zyklon as a delousing agent. “The constant menace of typhus as carried by lice has been noted, and the calamitous results of a complete breakdown of disinfection measures at Belsen has been seen. In view of the particular hospitability of the Auschwitz-Kattowitz operations to the typhus-bearing louse, in view of the fact of epidemics at Auschwitz which actually forced work-stoppages, and in view of the tremendous importance of the Auschwitz industry to the German war effort, it is not surprising that the Zyklon was used in liberal quantities at Auschwitz, and in the surrounding region, for its intended purpose.... It is not correct to say that the insecticide role of the Zyklon has been concealed; the WRB report mentions the anti-parasite role of the Zyklon and a dual role for the Zyklon at Auschwitz is explicitly claimed in the IMT transcript. We must be careful at this point to note the significance of the legend’s

Zyklon B allegation. Here we have, on a major point, the main attribute of a hoax as we begin to examine the details of the Auschwitz extermination claims: the fact requiring a dual interpretation.” Having noted the “dual interpretation,” Butz did not find it necessary anymore to engage and refute Höss’s graphic description of the gassing procedure itself. By implication, this was now a phantasm because Zyklon was also used to kill lice. And as Butz felt confident enough to pass over the rest of the paragraph in silence, it will be no surprise that he never mentioned or engaged any of the other testimonies that corroborate Höss’s account. “Another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each. The way we selected our victims was as follows: we had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transport of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the Camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavoured to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under the clothes but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.”

Butz's comment on this paragraph from Höss's affidavit is all over the place. First of all he complained that it was highly irregular that Himmler would have chosen to bypass the normal chain of command and personally give instructions to Höss. Then he was puzzled at the way the German Government "left the means of killing, and the materials required, a matter for the judgement and ingenuity of the local camp commandant." In the case of Auschwitz this meant that Höss decided on his own that two cottages would do as gas chambers, and that Zyklon, which he found "kicking around the camp," would work as a killing agent. "All of this is idiotic," Butz concluded.

Then he turned to Höss's account of the selections. According to him, those unfit for work were immediately killed. Butz challenged Höss's statement by referring to the fact that in 1943 a large group of Jews from Theresienstadt were initially not subjected to selection, but were lodged as families in Birkenau. "Since these people were put into 'quarantine' it is certain that their quarters had been disinfected with the Zyklon just prior to their moving in," Butz speculated. And then he 235 noted with indignation: "Now we are asked to believe that the Germans planned to kill them with the same chemical product later on!" And one wonders, why not? But for Butz it did not make any sense at all. "The part of the Auschwitz legend touching on the Theresienstadt Jews is obvious nonsense even without contrary evidence, however. It is not believable that the Germans would quarter for six months at Birkenau each of three distinct groups of people of a category for which there exists an extermination program at Birkenau. The dual role of the Zyklon in this story merely effects passage from the nonsensical to the incomparably absurd." Then Butz turned to the selections. "With the 'selections' we are offered another fact for dual interpretation. There is no doubt that the extensive industrial and other activities required 'selections' of people for various conventional purposes. We are then asked to add an 'extermination' purpose to these activities." Having no doubts as to the real meaning of the word selec-

tion, Butz failed to provide evidence for the selections “for various conventional purposes,” and neither did he feel obliged to engage Höss’s testimony on this issue, or the many other testimonies that corroborate it. The only thing that mattered was that the word selection can be interpreted in two different ways, which “proves” that the idea of selection as a part of the process of extermination is a fabrication.

The last sentence of the paragraph under consideration forced Butz to employ his wits as never before. “We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.” Butz admitted that this subject “is a big one,” and then proceeded to argue that the crematoria in Auschwitz only served the “routine” purpose of incinerating corpses, and did not serve as extermination installations. His first argument was that the crematoria were already planned before Himmler ordered any extermination program in the summer of 1942. “It is claimed that the new crematoria were intended for extermination of Jews but we have suggested a more routine purpose in the preceding chapter. Let us review their history. The construction was well into the preliminary stages of planning and ordering early in 1942 and this fact, in itself, makes it difficult, to say the least, to believe that they were related to any extermination program ordered by Himmler in the summer of 1942. The construction plans for four structures containing crematory furnaces are dated 28 January 1942.” It is a nice try, but this reasoning is first of all wrong, in that only the designs of two of the crematoria were dated January 1942, while the others dated from the summer of 1942. Second of all Butz did not take into account the possibility, proven in the late 1980s to be historical fact, that the designs of the two earlier crematoria were modified later in order to accommodate gas chambers. Again, he was not prepared to admit the possibility of the SS changing its mind.

Then Butz developed the argument that the capacity of the crematoria came nowhere close to that required to support the claim that between 800,000 (Reitlinger) and 2.5 million (Höss) people had been killed in Auschwitz. I will consider the evidence for the incineration capacity of Auschwitz in some detail in our discussion of the Leuchter report. Here I will limit myself to noting discrepancies between Butz's argument and the evidence that will be presented in the discussion of Leuchter's numbers. Butz wrongly assumed that "[e]ach oven was designed to take one body at a time, as are all standard cremation ovens." He provided no evidence for that, and ignores statements by Höss and the testimony by surviving Sonderkommandos that the average load per oven was three corpses at a time. Then he continued with his rough-and-ready calculation. "The limit on the rate at which people could have been exterminated in a program of the type alleged is not determined by the rate at which people could have been gassed and the gas chambers ventilated, but by the rate at which bodies could have been cremated. In estimating the capacity of the crematoria, it is possible for arithmetic to produce some impressive figures. At that time an hour was a very optimistic time to allow for the reduction of one body, and the body's being wasted would not have made much difference. If we allow for one hour of cleaning and miscellaneous operations per day, one oven could reduce perhaps 23 bodies per day so 30 ovens could reduce 690 and 46 ovens could reduce 1058 per day. This could accommodate exterminations at the respectable rate of about 240,000 to 360,000 per year, but of course one must bear in mind that, since the exterminations are supposed to have been halted in the autumn of 1944, Auschwitz could not have had 46 ovens for more than about one year of exterminations. However the logic leading to such figures as the preceding is rubbish; things do not work that way. People, especially concentration camp inmates, who manned the crematoria, do not work with such efficiency, such equipment cannot be used in such a continuous manner, and equipment needs do not occur with such mathematical regularity in any case. If we allow opera-

tions to relax toward something more realistic, take into account downtime for regular and irregular maintenance and allow for usual engineering margins of excess capacity we have figures that are generally in line with anticipated epidemic conditions. It is also possible that, as the WRB report asserts, there was a backlog of buried bodies to dispose of.” In his calculation Butz ignored however war-time German documentation, Höss’s testimony and that of the Sonderkommando which mentioned that the ovens had a capacity of at least 4,500 corpses per day. Butz’s *coup-de-grâce* was, however, the fact of “dual interpretation.” “It is obvious that, given a policy of cremating dead inmates, a vast operation such as Auschwitz would naturally provide relatively elaborate crematoria facilities for this purpose. Thus again we have a fact for dual interpretation if we are to believe the extermination legend; to the commonplace interpretation of these ovens, unquestionably valid, it is proposed that we also accept as valid a second interpretation of exterminations.” This, of course, cannot be.

Butz generally, but not always, ignored inconvenient evidence. He does try to tackle one particularly important piece of evidence for the existence of gas chambers in the Auschwitz crematoria: the letter written on January 29, 1943 by the Chief Architect of the camp, Karl Bischoff, to his superior, the Chief of the SS Building Department in Berlin, Hans Kammler. As we have seen in the discussion of Dawidowski’s forensic investigation, and in the discussion of the documents, the letter has been well-known since its discovery in 1945, and was admitted, with the number NO-4473, as evidence in the Nuremberg Trials. Hence Butz could not easily ignore it. It reads as follows: “29 January 1943 To the Chief Amtsgruppe C, SS-Brigadeführer and General-Major of the Waffen-SS, Dr. Ing. Kammler. Subject: Crematorium II, condition of the building. The crematorium has been completed--save for minor constructional work--by the use of all the forces available, in spite of unspeakable difficulties, the severe cold, and in 24 hour shifts. The fires were started in the ovens in the presence of Senior Engineer Prüfer,

representative of the contractors of the firm of Topf and Sons, Erfurt, and they are working most satisfactorily. The planks from the concrete ceiling of the cellar used as a mortuary could not yet be removed on account of the frost. This is, however, not very important, as the gas chamber [literally *Vergasungskeller* or “gassing Basement”] can be used for that purpose. The firm of Topf and Sons was not able to start deliveries of the installation in time for aeration and ventilation as had been requested by the Central Building Management because of restrictions in the use of railroad cars. As soon as the installation for aeration and ventilation arrive, the installing will start so that the complete installation may be expected to be ready for use 20 February 1943. We enclose a report of the testing engineer of the firm Topf and Sons, Erfurt. The Chief of the Central Construction Management, Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz, SS-Hauptsturmführer [Bischoff] Distribution: 1 – SS Ustuf Janisch and Kirschneck 1- Filing office (file crematorium) Certified true copy:[signature] SS--Ustuf (F) ”

The meaning of the letter is quite clear, especially if one compares the text with a plan of the basement of crematorium 2. The basement plan shows two large spaces indicated as “*Leichenkeller*,” or morgues. Originally designed as spaces to store corpses, the smaller of the two morgues, *Leichenkeller 1*, was transformed during its construction into a gas chamber. The second morgue, *Leichenkeller 2*, initially was meant to function both as a morgue and an undressing room, but quickly was fully committed to the latter purpose. The letter, thus, mentions that there are problems with completing *Leichenkeller 2*, and that therefore the gas chamber--formerly *Leichenkeller 1*--will have to serve (temporarily)its original purpose, and store corpses.

The letter is important because there was a general policy in the architectural office in the camp, as was attested by the SS architects Fritz Ertl and Walther Dejaco during their trial in 1970, never to use the terms “gas chamber” in documents or blueprints. Drawn up hastily in response to an urgent request from Berlin for information on the pro-

gress of construction, Bischoff did not notice the “slip.” When the letter was archived in the crematorium dossier of the Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung*, however, someone did, and marked the forbidden word “*Vergasungskeller*” with a red pencil, writing on the top of the letter the words “SS-Ustuf (F)Kirschneck!” It was clear that Kirschneck was responsible for the slip, and should be told of it.

Butz argued that the noun *Vergasungskeller* should not be translated as gas chamber or, more precisely, gassing cellar. I will give his reasoning in full. “The final subject in paragraph 7 [of Höss’s affidavit] is the gas chambers which, except for Hoess’ early sealed--up huts, are supposed to have been integrated into the crematoria buildings. Reitlinger and Hilberg take different approaches to making this claim. Reitlinger interprets NO-4473, whose translation as it appears in the NMT volume is presented above (p.116), as evidence for a gas chamber in crematorium II. This is a result of a mistranslation. The crematoria at Auschwitz are frequently referred to as “gas ovens” but this is hardly informative since, with the exception of electric cremators which enjoyed a brief existence during the Thirties, all modern crematoria consist of “gas ovens”; a fuel-air mixture, which may be considered a “gas”, is introduced into the oven to start, control, and finish the burning. The fuel used may be “gas”; town gas or some sort of liquefied gas is popular. Such a cremator is termed “gas-fired” on account of the use of gas as a fuel. Other types are “oil- fired” and “coke (or coal)-fired”, but all are ‘gas ovens’ since in all three cases it is a fuel--air mixture which is injected, under pressure, into the oven. The customary German word for the concept in question here is “*Gaskammer*”, but the word in NO-4473 which was translated “gas chamber” is “*Vergasungskeller*”, which Reitlinger also mistranslates as “gassing cellar”. Now the word *Vergasung* has two meanings. The primary meaning (and the only one in a technical context) is gasification, carburation or vaporization, i.e. turning something into a gas, not applying gas to something. A *Vergaser* is a carburetor and, while *Vergasung* always means gasifica-

tion in a technical context, it usually means, specifically, carburation in such a context.... The translation “gassing cellar” is thus not absolutely incorrect; it is just over-hasty and presumptuous. A “gas oven” requires some sort of gasification or carburation. In the case of the gas fired-ovens of Utting and Rogers in 1932: “*Burners set in the crown and sole of the furnace are fed by a mixture of air and gas under pressure; the mixture is regulated by fans, housed in a separate building. Separate control of both air and gas provides better regulation of the furnace temperature.*” That building is just a big carburetor. Oil-fired crematoria are so similar in design that most gas-fired ovens can be easily adapted for use with oil. The ovens at Birkenau seem to have been coke or coal-fired, and with this type there is an extra stage of fuel processing due to the initially solid state of the fuel. The two most common methods of producing fuel gasses from coal to coke are, first, by passing air through a bed of burning coke to produce “coke oven gas” and second, by passing steam through the coke to produce “water gas”. The first coke cremators employed what amounted to coke oven gas. Processes for generating such gases are termed “*Vergasung*” in German, as well as processes of mixing them with air.... In any case it is obvious that the crematoria at Auschwitz required equipment for doing *Vergasung* in order to inject a fuel-air mixture into the ovens and the translation of NO-4473 should be revised, possibly to “gas generation cellar”. I have confirmed this interpretation of the “*Vergasungskeller*” with technically competent sources in Germany. The reasons for installing such equipment in special separate rooms or even buildings are most probably the considerable noise that must be made by the fans and, in coal-fired ovens, the heat of burning coal. The primary meaning of the word *Vergasung* is of necessity applicable to document NO-4473. It is written in a technical context; it is a letter from the chief of the Auschwitz construction management to the head of the SS engineering group. It makes reference to a process, *Vergasung* which is standard with all crematoria, and the wording of the letter is such that it is implied that it would normally be peculiar to find bodies in the *Vergasungskeller* since bodies are normally

stored in what is correctly translated as the “cellar used as a mortuary”. Document NO-4473 tends, in fact, like so many prosecution documents, to rejection of the prosecution’s claim when it is properly understood. We see that in crematorium II there were at least two cellars, a *Leichenkeller* and a *Vergasungskeller* and that neither was a “gas chamber”.”

Nowhere in the whole correspondence between the makers of the ovens Topf and the SS, and nowhere in the technical specifications of the ovens is there any mention of a carburation room. Nothing in the blueprints support Butz’s contention--that none of the two large underground spaces is in any way connected to the ovens in such a way that they could function as carburation rooms? It is sufficient to note that Butz himself, in 1992, was forced to publically distance himself from the truly insane interpretation of the *Vergasungskeller*. The occasion was the publication of Pressac’s tome *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* (1989)--a book that made available in published form a massive amount of archival material concerning the construction of the gas chambers and the crematoria which had been used in the 1945/6 forensic investigation at Auschwitz, and which had been presented again during the trial of the Auschwitz architects Walther Dejaco and Fritz Ertl, but which had since been forgotten. In Part Four, Chapter One, “Auschwitz explained by the revisionists,” Pressac refuted Butz’s argument that the *Vergasungskeller* had been a carburation room. Remarkably enough, Butz did reconsider the issue in light of Pressac’s refutation, and acknowledged that he had been wrong. “I interpreted the *Vergasungskeller* mentioned in the 1943 document as a place where coke or coal was converted into a combustible gas, mixed with air, and then introduced under pressure into the cremation ovens. While this interpretation is not “technically worthless,” Pressac shows that it is not correct in this instance. His proof consists of (1) many engineering drawings of Crematorium 2, in various stages of design, which show no such facility, and (2) engineering drawings of, and other

data on, typical Topf company crematory ovens, which show that they were not of the design I assumed, and which used as fuel coke supplied directly behind the ovens.” Having admitted that his original interpretation did not hold, Butz had to come up with another challenge to the common sense interpretation of Bischoff’s letter that the two underground rooms were a mortuary and a gas chamber, and that due to the delay in completion of the mortuary, the gas chamber was going to be temporarily used as a mortuary. “As noted by others, Pressac is in the strange position of claiming that a room consistently designated *Leichenkeller* 1 on all engineering drawings was to be used only temporarily as a *Leichenkeller*, either instead of normally as a gas chamber, or simultaneously as a gas chamber and a morgue. In the latter case the unsuspecting victims must presumably stand on the corpses. In the former case (the only interpretation worth considering), the implied delay in the use of the building for extermination was “unimportant,” a major contradiction if one claims, as Pressac does, that the primary role of the building was for mass gassing.” The adverb “unimportant” now acquired great importance. In the letter it clearly referred to the delay in the removal of the formwork for the reinforced concrete ceiling of morgue 2, which prevented the room to be used at short notice as a storage place for corpses. In other words, it applied to a temporary situation. We must remember that the ovens were not yet to be operational for another month and half! During that time, no gassing should start, and so for that month-and-a-half the gas chamber could easily be used as a morgue.

But Butz was undeterred. “Because the document confirms that in January 1943 the Germans were working, under great pressure, to make this installation operational as an ordinary crematorium, I regard it as further evidence against the claim that it had been decided in the summer of 1942 that the primary purpose of these crematoria was extermination by lethal gassing. The use of the *Vergasungskeller* as a morgue not only did not interfere with bringing Crematorium II into

operational status, it advanced it. Here I am arguing, in passing, for a focus on what the document says rather than on the term *Vergasungskeller* mentioned in it.”

Of course, the primary purpose of the crematoria always was incineration and not gassing because, as Höss observed in his conversation with Dr. Gilbert, and experience in Auschwitz and the other camps taught, incineration capacity and not gassing capacity was the bottleneck. Gassing could be done in simple sealed rooms, as the experience with the Bunkers amply demonstrated. In fact, Butz admitted this already in 1976, when he wrote that “[t]he limit on the rate at which people could have been exterminated in a program of the type alleged is not determined by the rate at which people could have been gassed and the gas chambers ventilated, but by the rate at which bodies could have been cremated.” Yet in 1992 he chose to forget his earlier assessment.

Butz continued as follows:

“In any case, Pressac’s logic in interpreting the *Vergasungskeller* as a gas chamber depends entirely on the assumption that there was a gas chamber in Crematorium 2. Without that assumption we have the following situation:

- (1) One (and apparently only one) document concerned exclusively with the operational status of Crematorium II makes reference to a *Vergasungskeller* to be temporarily used, in support of the Crematorium, as a morgue and not for its intended or normal function,
- (2) In the many engineering drawings of the crematoria that Pressac has examined, there is no mention of a *Vergasungskeller*, Gaskammer, or anything similar, and
- (3) Nothing in those engineering drawings implies or calls for something describable as a *Vergasungskeller*. For example the cremation ovens have been shown to be of a design not calling for such a facility. The appropriate conclusion, I believe, is that the *Vergasungskeller* was not in Crematorium 2 at all. I assume that it was somewhere in the vicinity, but in the light of the current knowledge the only basis for inferring that it was in the Crematorium building is an assumption that there was a gas chamber there. In the absence of the massive documentation presented by Pressac, it seemed logical to assume that the *Vergasungskeller* was located in Crematorium II. I made just that assumption in writing my book, and the assumption seemed confirmed for me by the observation that crematorium technology could call for such a facility. However Pressac has shown, without realizing it, that the *Vergasungskeller* was not in Crematorium II because it did not appear on the many engineering plans, and is not implied or called for by anything that appears on those plans. Only an unfounded or arbitrary prior assumption can place it there. If the *Vergasungskeller* was not in Crematorium II, then the questions of what and where it was are only of limited importance. It suffices, I believe, to show that the term could have applied to operations that transpired, or may have transpired, elsewhere in the camp.”

Butz’s argument began with the observation that “Pressac’s logic in interpreting the *Vergasungskeller* as a gas chamber depends entirely on the assumption that there was a gas chamber in Crematorium 2.” Is this an unwarranted assumption? According to Butz it was, but given the fact that there are many eye-witness testimonies that place a gas chamber in the basement of crematorium 2, it is a valid point of departure. If one posits as a hypothesis, based on the eye-witness testimonies, that morgue 1 was a gas chamber, then all kind of different pieces

of evidence fall into place, such as the fact that this morgue was designed to be heated, and that construction documents refer to a “gas-door” with a “spy-hole of double 8 mm glass with a rubber seal and metal fitting” for that space, or that the other large underground space (morgue 2) is referred to as an undressing basement. The hypothesis that “*Vergasungskeller*” referred to morgue 1 of crematorium 2, and that this space was used as a gas chamber, can therefore be tested, and confirmed. This is what Pressac did, and this is what Dawidowski had done forty years earlier. Consequently, the burden of proof was on Butz to show that the assumption was wrong. And indeed: in his original argument he did accept this principle, and tried to show how the general assumption was invalid, and that the “alleged” gas chamber in crematorium 2 had been, in all probability, a carburation chamber.

The three points of Butz’s argument do not support the conclusion that “the *Vergasungskeller* was not in Crematorium 2”. It is obvious why he desired to relocate it elsewhere: as long as it remained likely that the *Vergasungskeller* was in crematorium 2, and more specifically the basement of this building, the only possible conclusion remains that Bischoff designated morgue 1 as such, and the question remained if it was not a homicidal gas chamber, what was it then? The logic of Bischoff’s letter suggests that if the *Vergasungskeller* was not in the crematorium, it must have been very close, or at least at a reasonable distance. However there is no trace of any basement space close to the crematorium, or for that matter anywhere in Birkenau!

Butz went to search for the *Vergasungskeller* in the wider environment of Auschwitz. It is worthwhile to quote his journey, in which he allowed to let his imagination run wild, in full. “If the *Vergasungskeller* was not in Crematorium 2, then the questions of what and where it was are only of limited importance. It suffices, I believe, to show that the term could have applied to operations that transpired, or may have transpired, elsewhere in the camp. To give my favored interpretation first, it is unlikely that the town of Auschwitz had preexisting means for production

and/or distribution of fuel or town gas sufficient for the needs of the huge complex of camps we call “Auschwitz.” Such needs could have been for cooking, heating, or incineration of waste, and so forth. On account of the paucity of natural gas, but abundance of coal in Europe, the Germans had extensively developed the gasification of coal. In the Auschwitz region coal was particularly abundant, so processes of coal or coke gasification were suited for the conditions there. In offering my earlier interpretation of the Vergasungskeller as a fuel gas generator for the crematorium ovens I wrote: “The two most common methods of producing fuel gases from coal or coke are, first, by passing air through a bed of burning coke to produce ‘coke oven gas’ and second, by passing steam through the coke to produce ‘water gas’.” I now offer almost the same interpretation, but modified so that the specific location of the *Vergasungskeller* is no longer known, and the gas generated is for general application and not specifically for cremation. This seems entirely justified by the engineering plans that indicate no Vergasungskeller in the crematoria, by the great likelihood that the camp required fuel gas, and in view of the easy availability of coal there.” Butz proved unable to point at any structure in or adjacent to the camp designed as a plant for coal or coke gasification. In fact, there was none. In order for his assumption to warrant any discussion, he should have at least suggested where this building could have been! There is, however, more. Butz assumed “the likelihood” of the camp having been supplied by gas. It would not have been too difficult to establish a certain level of certainty in this matter. Both inspection of the site, the buildings, and the engineering plans would have shown him that the infrastructure to pipe gas to the camp and its buildings was neither designed nor constructed.

Yet Butz did not limit himself to the chimera of his “favored” or “preferred” suggestion. He also dreamed up some others. “It has already been remarked that fuel gas generated in the camp could have been used, among other things, in waste incineration. That is, the fuel has

could have served as the auxiliary fuel. There is also a second sense in which “Vergasung” can apply to waste incineration, because the technology views the waste as a combustible fuel being turned into gases. Incineration (or *Verbrennung*) is actually a special case of gasification (or *Vergasung*) in which all combustibles are oxidized to the highest degree possible, for example, producing carbon dioxide (CO₂) instead of carbon monoxide (CO, a combustible gas, in which case it would be said that *Vergasung* had taken place). Since perfect incineration does not exist in this sense, the line between *Verbrennung* and *Vergasung* can be blurred. What is termed waste gasification, or *Müllvergasung* in ordinary technical German, was developed as a practical process only after the war. It appears that during the war *Vergasung* could have been used in the waste incineration context only in the sense of one of many specific processes taking place inside a plant viewed as performing *Müllverbrennung*. Thus this second sense of application of “*Vergasung*” to waste incineration does not seem to apply, and it is very unlikely that at Auschwitz any waste incinerator would have been spoken of as performing *Vergasung*. This possibility is nevertheless worth mentioning. There was a waste incinerator in what I would call the chimney housing behind the cremation ovens in Crematorium II. The effluent gases from the incinerator combined with the effluent of the ovens in sharing the chimney and the suction type forced draft system. I do not believe that the “*Vergasungskeller*” was this chimney housing because, apart from the reasons already given, it was not referred to as such on the drawings, and seems to have had insufficient free space to serve as a plausible temporary substitute for the huge *Leichenkeller* 2. All the same, it is at least worth noting that “*Vergasung*” could apply as an inclusive description of the two processes (cremation and waste incineration) involved there. However I do not consider a waste incineration interpretation of the *Vergasungskeller* a likely possibility.”

It is unnecessary to comment on these two paragraphs of a book that is claimed on its jacket to be “unsurpassed as the standard scholarly refutation of the Holocaust extermination story,” and which in a German negationist review of the literature is still celebrated as the “revisionist standard work.” Perhaps all we need to do to comment on Butz’s vaporous yes/no/yes/no argument is to add the observation that the word “*Vergasungskeller*” indicates a basement space, and the incineration room in the chimney housing was above ground.

Butz finally arrived at a third possibility, as preposterous as the preceding: “In the vicinity of the crematoria at Birkenau there were three sewage treatment plants (*Kläranlagen*) in various stages of completion. Sewage treatment amounts basically to the acceleration of the natural processes in which bacteria metabolize solid waste into gases and inoffensive solids (sludge), and to the disposal or use of these products. There are several senses in which *Vergasung* could arise.” Butz proceeded to discuss the possible use of the term “*Vergasung*” in the processes of aeration and chlorination of sewage, in spontaneous methane production from sewage, sewer gasification, and sludge incineration. Yet all his speculations were to no avail, as he had to admit himself. “I have not located the *Vergasungskeller* in the sewage plants. Rather, I have listed five senses in which generation of, or treatment with, a gas comes up in sewage technology. I have not found the term “*Vergasungskeller*” or “*Vergasungskammer*” in the German literature on wastewater treatment, but that is not necessary. The document in question [i.e. Bischoff’s letter of 29 January 1943] was not written by a sewage engineer; it was written by a construction engineer for the information of another construction engineer, and the author never imagined that half a century later people would be poring over his hurried note. Nevertheless, I still favour the first interpretation offered, namely that the *Vergasungskeller* was a generator of fuel or town gas intended for general use. Only the study of complete engineering plans for the camp could settle this question.”

Mr. Butz may rest assured that in none of the plans for the sewage treatment plant, which have all been preserved, there are any spaces, and to be more specific basement spaces, for the aeration or chlorination of sewage, the removal of methane, sewer gas, or the incineration of sludge. Neither do the engineering plans of the camp indicate any space, certainly not below ground, that could have served any such function.

Butz obviously did not really believe the arguments he had proposed in 1992, because in 1997 he came back to the issue. He promised to offer an interpretation “more plausible than any earlier offered by me or anybody else.” The *Vergasungskeller* had been a gas shelter! “[W]e should view all three cellars in Crematorium 2 as emergency air raid shelters, with only one being provided with the additional measures to make it effective as a gas shelter.” As Butz derived this last interpretation from one proposed eighteen years earlier by a certain Wilhelm Stäglich, I will leave my refutation of this proposal for my discussion of Stäglich’s suggestion.

As more documents produced by the Central Building Office became available in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Butz faced the need to address other issues than the problem of the *Vergasungskeller*. One of these documents was the order, dated February 26, 1943, for 10 gas detectors. The French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson, whom I will discuss at length in the following chapter, had responded to the discovery of the order for the gas detectors with the argument that this order should not surprise. According to him the gas detectors had been meant to detect carbonmonoxide and carbondioxide. “[T]he firm Topf & Sons, manufacturers for crematory ovens, routinely supplied detectors for CO and CO₂.” And Faurisson added, “why try to convince us that this type of company, on receipt of an order for “gas detectors,” would have understood by way of telepathy than in this case it was to supply detectors for HCN (and not CO and CO₂) and...that it would be in a position to furnish an item that it didn’t manufacture?” This con-

vinced the negationists for some time. Then Jean-Claude Pressac found Topf's response, dated March 2, 1943, to the order of the gas detectors. "Re: Crematorium, Gas detectors. We acknowledge receipt of your telegram specifying "Immediately send ten gas detectors as agreed, price quote to follow." We hereby inform you that two weeks ago we inquired, of five different companies, concerning the residual prussic acid detection devices sought by you. We have received negative responses from three companies and two have not yet answered. When we receive information on this matter, we shall immediately contact you, in order to put you in touch with a company that makes these devices."

Faurisson's initial "attack" had failed. Then he regrouped, and explained that it was to be expected that the Central Construction Office would have ordered HCN gas detectors because morgue 1, the gassing cellar, was used as a delousing room. Yet this explanation did not satisfy Butz. He rightly noticed that if the gas detectors had been indeed used for normal delousing operations, the SS Central Construction Office would not have ordered them from the furnace maker Topf, but from the Degesch company, the firm with normally supplied delousing equipment.

So how to explain the gas detectors without assuming the use of morgue 1 as a gas chamber. Butz, as may be expected, came up with a very ingenious solution. He noticed in the plans for crematoria 2 and 3 a waste incinerator, located close to the chimney. "[...] HCN release was possible in the waste incinerator, which shared the chimney with the crematory ovens. Many materials may release HCN when burned. Among these are many fabrics, a highly relevant observation because the waste incinerator was most likely used to incinerate used camp fabrics (such as inmate uniforms, bed linen, and mattresses). For example, Nylon and wool can release HCN when burned, a fact that has been known since the Thirties." Thus began Butz's speculation that because ersatz cloth that had become popular in wartime Germany had a

high rayon content, the camp uniforms were also made from rayon. He had to admit that rayon itself did not produce hydrocyanide when burned as it had no nitrogen in its chemical composition. Yet he was not going to be stopped by this. “The burning of rayon can generate HCN gas if the rayon is impregnated with, but not chemically bound to, compounds of ammonia, which supply the necessary nitrogen.[...] [A]mmonium compounds are added to many fabrics to make them flame retardant (this is sometimes called “fireproofing,” but that cannot be done literally with ordinary fabrics). [...] While I do not have a document that says so, I consider it very plausible that many concentration camp fabrics were treated with flame retardants for security reasons, that is, to limit the effects of fires started by inmates. This would have been particularly the case with bed linens and mattress fillings. Thus I am proposing the possibility that fabrics used in the camps, destined to be disposed of by incineration, were known to present a danger of evolution of HCN in such incineration.” It is obvious that Butz had not the ability to stretch anyone’s imagination to the point of absurdity. Not only is there no evidence that the Germans fireproofed the inmate uniforms and their (non existent) bed linens and (non existent) mattresses, it is even more highly implausible that they would have cared to do so.

At the end of his highly original and also highly implausible interpretation of the purpose of the gas detectors Butz offered some general observations on the problems revisionists have in dealing with the kind of evidence Faurisson and he had tried to interpret. “[T]he revisionists may not be able to immediately offer correct replies to the defenders of the [extermination] legend. This appears to me to have been the case with the Topf letter. I don’t believe Faurisson’s immediate replies (which I would also have made) were correct. In fact nobody could be relied on to be correct under the circumstances and on the time schedule involved. A comparison: there is much building activity at Northwestern University now. Does anybody believe that, 50 years from now,

perhaps after some cataclysm, anybody could reliably interpret individual documents that were records of this construction? Of course not. Nobody could do that, and nobody could infallibly interpret every Auschwitz document from the period 1941-1945. Indeed, the hypothesis I have advanced here may be wrong, even though I have had a few years to consider the solitary document in question. Some years ago I warned of these dangers. It is not out of the question that, some day, an authentic Auschwitz document might utterly confound the revisionists--that is, raise some apparently relevant question of detail that they will be unable to answer. In the event of such a development, I can only urge that the context--that is, the massive documentation and historical context supporting the revisionist position--be kept firmly in mind." It is obvious that Butz, for all his bravado, is not comfortable with the position he is in.

And he has reason to be. Rassinier did not only inspire negationist activity in the United States. He also urged two German eyewitnesses of Auschwitz "to come out" in order to present their exculpatory testimonies to the world. The first person was a certain Thies Christophersen, who served in one of the satellite camps of Auschwitz in 1944, and who published in 1973 a booklet entitled *Die Auschwitz Lüge* (*The Auschwitz Lie*). Richard Harwood, author of *Did Six Million Really Die?*, considered Christophersen's account as "one of the most important documents for a re-appraisal of Auschwitz." "[It] adds to a mounting collection of evidence demonstrating that the giant industrial complex of Auschwitz (comprising thirty different installations and divided by the main Cracow-Vienna railway line) was nothing but a vast war production centre, which, while admittedly employing the compulsory labor of detainees, was certainly not a place of "mass extermination." So what does one read in a document so celebrated by the negationists? "I was in Auschwitz from January to December 1944. After the war I heard about the alleged mass murders of Jews and I was quite taken aback. Despite all the testimony submitted and all the reports in

the media, I know such atrocities were never committed.” How could he be so certain? Christophersen was willing to give a full account. “In May my wife, for the first time, came to visit me. She was a teacher in agricultural home economics and was curious about my work at the concentration camp. This fact alone, that we were able to have our relatives visit us at any time, should prove that the camp administration had nothing to hide. Had Auschwitz been the death factory it is reputed to have been, such visits would certainly not have been permitted.” Christophersen did not take into account that the killings took place in a separate zone some miles away from where he was stationed, and that this zone was a “*Sperrgebiet*” absolutely “*verboten*” for not only the wives of SS men, but even for any SS man who had no direct business there. This zone was at the eastern edge of Birkenau. Most parts of the camp at Birkenau were, however, open to SS men like Christophersen, and he indeed recalled visiting the camp once. “The death camp was not in Auschwitz, it was at Birkenau.” This is what I heard and read after the war. Well, I was also in Birkenau. This camp I did not like. It was overcrowded and the people there did not make a good impression on me. Everything looked neglected and grubby. I also saw families with children. It hurt to see them, but I was told that the authorities felt it kinder not to separate children from their parent when the latter were interned. Some children played ball merrily enough.... I had been commissioned to pick 100 workers for hoeing the Kok-Sagis plants. At roll call the inmates were asked if they were interested in this work and if they had done it before. Then followed the “selection” of the workers. This “selection” was later completely misinterpreted. The purpose was to give the inmates something to do and they themselves wanted to be occupied. Selecting them meant no more than to inquire about their inclinations, their capabilities, and their physical state of health with regard to the work they were to do.” Christophersen obviously suffered from Butz’s logic, or for that matter Faurisson’s hermeneutical principle, that a word can have only one meaning, or that it has no meaning at all.

In the same way that Rassinier claimed to have travelled the whole of Europe in search for authentic eyewitnesses of the gassings, Christophersen began an Odyssee in search of the crematoria, following the directions of his maid Olga. "One evening my mother asked about the crematorium where corpses were supposed to be burned. I knew nothing about this, so I asked Olga. She could not tell me anything either. She did intimate, however, that around Bielitz there always was what seemed to be a reflection against the sky, as if from a fire. So I went in the direction of Bielitz and there found a mining camp in which some inmates also worked. I travelled around the entire camp and examined all fire grates and all smoke stacks, but found nothing. I asked my colleagues; the answer...a shrug of the shoulder and "don't pay any attention to those rumors." Actually there was a crematorium in Auschwitz, I was told for there were 20,000 [in the German edition 200,000!] people there and any city of that size has a crematorium. Of course people died here as they did elsewhere, but not only inmates at the camp. The wife of one of our supervisors [in the German edition Obersturmbannführer A.] had also died there. As far as I was concerned, that was enough of an answer."

After the publication of *Die Auschwitz Lüge* Simon Wiesenthal urged in a letter to the President of the German Bar Association that Mr. Roeder, who had written a preface and published the book, warranted an investigation by the ethics committee. Wiesenthal's letter was handed to Roeder, who replied in a letter of 30 May 1973 that the gassing and burning of Jews had been technically impossible. "There would not have been enough fuel to be found during the war in the entire sphere of German influence to burn just a fraction of so many human bodies. And the huge installations necessary for such an undertaking have disappeared from the face of the earth without a trace. Nothing, absolutely nothing could be found after the war. It might interest you that I know enough eyewitnesses now who were in Auschwitz after the war who confirm all the observations made by Mr. Christophersen: there

have never been such extermination installations! But these witnesses fear reprisals by the Poles and certain Jewish organizations, should they come out in the open with the truth.”

One other witness, however, was prepared “to come out in the open with the truth.” In response to Christophersen’s account, a Hamburg Judge, Dr. Wilhelm Stäglich, testified in an article published in the ultra-right *Nation Europa* that in the summer of 1944 he had served with an anti-aircraft battery unit near Auschwitz. In order to obtain food, Stäglich had gone a few times to the camp, which had its own slaughterhouse and bakery. “If memory serves, I was inside the camp three or four times altogether. On none of these visits did I see gassing installations, crematoria, instruments of torture, or similar horrors. The camp gave on the impression of being well-kept and very well-organized.”

Flattered by the attention he had received, Stäglich went to work on his *magnum opus* his massive *Der Auschwitz Mythos (The Auschwitz Myth)*, which was published in 1979. Stäglich’s aim, as set out in the introduction, was “to survey, examine, and assess as objectively as possible the evidence that has thus far been presented for the claim that Auschwitz was a ‘death factory.’” Stäglich acknowledged that other camps were connected to the Holocaust. But he did not feel obliged to consider them. Like Butz had already declared in his book, he was convinced “that the extermination thesis stands or falls with the allegation that Auschwitz was a ‘death factory.’”

Stäglich began systematically. He divided the material into three groups: documentary evidence which was produced at the time of the camp’s operation, post-war personal accounts, and post-war legal proceedings. In his chapter on documentary evidence Stäglich first dealt with the basic documents, such as the Göring decree of July 31, 1941

that charged Heydrich to create a comprehensive proposal for the intended Final Solution of the Jewish Question, and the Protocol of the Wannsee Conference.

Then Stäglich turned to the documents regarding Auschwitz. First of all he found it suspicious that the Soviet prosecutors in the Nuremberg Trial, after announcing that they had recovered a voluminous correspondence concerning the construction of the crematoria, had chosen not to bring that material in evidence, with exception of a few documents. One of these documents was Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943, which mentioned the noun *Vergasungskeller* Stäglich referred to Butz's interpretation, and then added a second "plausible" explanation: "this room was intended for the fumigation of clothing and other personal effects, a common practice in all concentration camps. The proprietary hydrocyanic fumigant Zyklon B used for this purpose is supposed to have been used for the 'extermination of Jews' as well." This was the first of many alternative suggestions Stäglich was to offer, and which like all of them is characterized by a total ignorance of the circumstances. The rooms designed for fumigation of clothing and other objects were always constructed in such a way that they had two doors: one entrance and one exit. The entrance door opened to the *un-reine* (unclean) side, the exit door opened to the *reine* (clean) side. This arrangement conformed not only to common sense, but also to specific SS regulations issued by the SS construction bureau in 1941, and determined the design of the special delousing facilities constructed in Auschwitz and Birkenau. Furthermore the SS built a very large delousing installation, the so-called Central Sauna, right between crematoria 3 and 4. It was constructed following the guidelines issued by the SS construction bureau. One wonders why the SS would have erected the Central Sauna if the crematoria already provided such ample delousing capacity. Even in Auschwitz there was a limit to the need for delousing installations. Yet not held down by any specific knowledge, Stäglich rushed to his conclusion: "Since Bischoff's letter of January 29,

1943 is the only known document from the Auschwitz camp files in which the word “Vergasung” is used in connection with the crematoria, one should now realize that there is no documentary evidence for the allegation that chambers for killing people by means of lethal gas were part of the crematoria.”

After doubting the evidence when the crematoria were completed, Stäglich went on to dispute even whether there had been four crematoria in Birkenau. Invoking the post-war sketch book of Alfred Kantor, Stäglich observed that none of his drawings showed more than one crematorium or more than one crematorium chimney. This argument is simply wrong because on p. 34 of his sketchbook Kantor shows in a general overview of the camp at the horizon three columns of black smoke, which through comparison with other depictions of those same columns of smoke (pages 53, 54, 60, 68, 72, 73) clearly refer to three crematoria bellowing smoke. Furthermore Stäglich argued that “a person who toured the grounds of the former Birkenau camp without a guide and who is unquestionably reliable, so far as I am concerned, told me he saw the ostensible remains of crematoria 2 and 3, but could find no trace of crematoria 4 and 5.” This statement only proves that it pays to hire a guide when visiting Birkenau: the remains are there to be seen, and indeed are seen by most visitors as they are adjacent to the pond where, for a short time in 1944, the Germans dumped the ashes produced by crematorium 4--the pond which made television history when, in the 1973 BBC television series *The Ascent of Man*, Jakob Bronowski was filmed walking into that pond whilst giving a peroration on the darker side of technological progress.

Stäglich also reviewed the incineration capacity of the crematoria, and he claimed there were no reliable data. “In the literature on the camp, yet another report by SS-Sturmbannführer Bischoff, dated June 28, 1943, is frequently cited. It states that the individual crematoria were capable of incinerating the following number of corpses *daily*. 1.old crematorium (parent camp)340 corpses 2.new crematorium

(Birkenau)1,440 corpses 3.new crematorium (Birkenau)1,440 corpses
 4.new crematorium (Birkenau)768 corpses 5.new crematorium
 (Birkenau)768 corpses Total 4,756 corpses Where this report was discovered is not mentioned. On the subject of the incineration capacity of the crematoria one usually cites as the authority a “Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau (“Chronology of Events in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp”), compiled by Danuta Czech, Custodian of the Polish States Museum at Auschwitz. I have been unable to determine whether this lady was ever interned at the camp or what her source of information may be. The estimates listed above strike one as absurd. The sheer punctiliousness of the accounting--right down to the very last corpse--is suspicious, for cremation is a complicated technical process, involving so many variables that the incineration capacity of a crematorium is not always the same.”

Some research would have helped. Stäglich would have found that the document was found in the archive of the *Zentralbauleitung* and that it was held in the Auschwitz museum. What is truly astonishing, however, is that he did not compare Bischoff’s numbers to what Stäglich refers to as the “alleged” number of ovens in Birkenau. On the following page he mentions that the Polish State Auschwitz Museum claims that the four crematoria in Birkenau had 46 “cremation units,” or muffles, and that even Butz had accepted that number. Later he mentions that the Report of the Soviet War Crimes Commission made the “careless” statement that “the four crematoria in Birkenau had, altogether, 12 ‘ovens’ with 46 ‘retorts.’”--a number which, at that point, Stäglich considers “not many.” Be that as it may, what is interesting is that if we take the total capacity of crematoria 2 to 5 (1,440 +1,440 +768 +768 =4,416) and divide this number by 46, we come to the exact number of 96 corpses per “cremation unit” or “retort” or “muffle” per day. This should have given Stäglich some reason to reconsider the validity of the information provided by the museum and the Soviets.

Even a cursory comparison between the document and information available to him would have shown that crematorium 1 had in 1943 six muffles, crematoria 2 and 3 fifteen muffles each, and crematoria 4 and 5 eight muffles each, and that as a result Bischoff assumed for accounting purposes for crematoria II to V a cremation capacity of 96 corpses per muffle per day, or an average of 4 corpses per muffle per hour ($24 \times 4 = 96$; $15 \times 96 = 1,440$; $8 \times 96 = 768$). The old crematorium had a lower capacity per muffle per day, because the ovens were of an older design and construction. Of course: these numbers are averages, and include down time for cleaning and so on. It is important to note here that Bischoff's numbers are conservative. In his notes on the Final Solution in Auschwitz, Höss noted that *"[j]e nach Körperbeschaffenheit wurden bis zu drei Leichen in eine Ofenkammer gebracht. Auch die Dauer der Verbrennung war durch die Körperbeschaffenheit bedingt. Es dauerte im Durchschnitt 20 Minuten.* [Depending on the size of the bodies, up to three corpses could be brought into one muffle. Also the duration for the incineration was determined by the size of the body. On average it took 20 minutes.]” This means that one muffle could burn a maximum of nine bodies per hour. Bischoff's number is less than half.

Undeterred, Stäglich soldiered on. Taking as his point of departure a double-muffle oven delivered to Mauthausen with a capacity of ten to 35 corpses per ten hours, he assumed that the Auschwitz ovens would be the same. “Starting with the premise that there really were four crematoria in Birkenau, and that each crematorium contained one oven capable of cremating at most 35 corpses *per diem* then the highest capacity of all four crematoria would be a total of 140 corpses daily. That does not seem excessive for a complex the size of Auschwitz, each component camp of which was planned for over 100,000 inmates--all the more so, since contagious diseases were rampant there.... While these are no more than purely hypothetical estimates, they are probably closer to reality than the absurd figures given in the letter attributed to SSSturmbannführer Bischoff--even if one assumes that all four

crematoria had 46 units.... The claim that the Birkenau crematoria were built only for use in a “mass extermination program” thus proves to be totally false.” It will be clear by now that Stäglich refuses to consider the evidence at hand. He complains in the next page that he has copies of the plans of the crematoria, but he did not find it necessary to consult them when “hypothetically” establishing the number of crematoria ovens. They are only useful to him when it concerns his argument that they did not reveal a provision for a gas chamber.

We can continue analysis of Stäglich’s arguments at nauseam only to reveal that his total inability or unwillingness to responsibly and rationally weigh the evidence at hand. He mentions, for example, a letter that talks about a gas door for corpse cellar I in crematorium, equipped with a peep-hole made of 8-mm glass. “Could this be the famous peep-hole through which the SS physicians who allegedly supervised the “gassing” of inmates are said to have observed the death--throes of the victims? Probably not. Like the other documents of its kind, it really proves nothing. At that time, gas-tight doors were not uncommon, since every cellar had to double as an air raid shelter. The peep-holes in these doors were a source of light and a means of observing the outside....Air raid shelters had to be secure not only against explosives, but against gas as well. Considering that Birkenau had no other fortified places, it would only have been common sense to make the cellars of the crematoria into air raid shelters.” Stäglich’s speculation is non-sensical. First of all if, as he assumed, corpse cellar 1 was used as a mortuary, then the problem arises about the protocol during an air raid. Would the living join the putrefying dead for the duration of the alarm? Furthermore the design of the structure does not indicate an air-raid shelter. The concrete columns are enough to support the roof, but not to withstand a bomb. In fact, when the gas chamber of crematorium I was adapted into a air raid shelter in 1944, the room was subdivided that very reason in many small rooms, divided by heavy walls designed to support the reinforced roof. Finally the loca-

tion; unlike crematorium I, crematorium II and III were very far from any location where SS were present in sufficient numbers to warrant such a facility. In Auschwitz I, crematorium I was adjacent to the SS hospital and the SS Kommandantur, and thereby was the obvious structure to be made into an air raid shelter; in Birkenau the alleged air raid shelters of crematoria II and III were more than a mile distant from the SS quarters.

In conclusion Stäglich determined that those who believed that the documents he presented supported the extermination hypothesis revealed their critical ineptitude, gullibility, and prejudice. “No historian who holds to the traditional scholarly methods of researching and evaluating sources would accept a mode of argumentation based on the premise that documents can be made to serve a desired end by the use of unwarranted assumptions and arbitrary interpretations.” After a critical examination of his methods, it is clear that his judgement certainly applied to his own mode of argumentation.

Stäglich’s book was enthusiastically received by the negationists, and continues up to today to be one of the staples in their mail-order catalogues. He was invited to join the editorial advisory committee of the *Journal of Historical Review*, and gave a paper on his book and experiences at the fifth International Revisionist Conference in 1983.

And then there was, of course, Richard Harwood’s *Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth At Last*. Like all the other negationist works, it claimed direct descent from Rassinier’s work. “Since the war, Rassinier has, in fact, toured Europe in search of somebody who was an actual eye-witness of gas chamber exterminations in German concentration camps during World War Two, but he has never found even one such person....Certainly, the most important fact to emerge from Rassinier’s studies, and of which there is now no doubt at all, is the utter imposture of “gas chambers.” For Harwood, the whole Holocaust was a piece of atrocity propaganda created by Jews to swindle the Germans.

With exception of the writings of Robert Faurisson, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the work of Rassinier, Butz, Christophersen, Stiglich and Harwood constituted the main body of revisionist scholarship on Auschwitz in the year that Irving joined that cause. After slogging through a significant and representative cross-section of their arguments, it will be clear that none of the writings considered are worthy of the designation “scholarship.”

VIII Auschwitz and the Faurisson Affair

“Demnant: “There are people who claim that in Auschwitz Jews were never gassed.”

“Klehr: “Jews never gassed? No? Yes, I have already been asked about that...Three elderly ladies come to visit us here. That is such an official society. They always want to support us a little bit, to give us a present on our birthdays, and so on, and one of them asked me once if people were gassed in Auschwitz? I said--I will tell you openly and honestly, but if it were someone else, I would have answered that I did not know. But because it is you, I will tell you precisely, that people were gassed. And anyone who maintains that there are no gassing...Yes, I don't understand him, he must be crazy or on the wrong...When you are three, four years in Auschwitz and experiences everything, then I cannot get myself to lie about it and say that no gassings were conducted.”

When, in September 1996, David Irving took out a Writ of Summons against Penguin Books Ltd, Deborah Lipstadt, and four book sellers, a new act began in a public drama that had begun eighteen years earlier as the so-called Faurisson Affair. The central issue at stake in this drama was the allegation that Auschwitz had not been an extermination camp, that the gas chambers belonged to the world of legend, and that, consequently, the Holocaust was a Hoax. The central protagonist in this drama was the onetime lecturer in French literature at the University of Lyons-2, Dr. Robert Faurisson. It was Faurisson who brought Holocaust denial to public attention, it was Faurisson who orchestrated the defence of the two Zündel Trials in Toronto, it was Faurisson who created in early 1988 the brief for Leuchter's investigation in Auschwitz--the very investigation that produced the Leuchter report which pulled David Irving into the middle of the second Zündel Trial,

which in turn led to Deborah Lipstadt's description of David Irving's role in the trial which has become the content of Irving's complaint against Penguin, Lipstadt, and the four others. Therefore, in order to understand the background of the events of 1988, it is necessary to consider the so-called "Faurisson Affair" in some detail.

As a student of French literature, Faurisson developed early a special interest in debunkment, using a radical method of textual criticism he called the "Ajax method" because "it scours as it cleans as it shines." All of this was of little public interest, until Faurisson turned his attention to the Holocaust, and more specifically Auschwitz. Surveying the literature, the great debunker found many contradictions in, among other things, statements about the total number of victims who had died in Auschwitz. Shortly after the liberation the Russians had given the number of four million victims. Commandant Rudolf Höss had mentioned at one time three million victims, of whom two and half million had been gassed--the rest having died from "natural causes," and at another time had mentioned a number of some 1,130,000 victims. And as historians like Gerald Reitlinger had estimated that there "only" 700,000 Jews had died in Auschwitz. Then Faurisson discovered other contradictions in the literature: for example, the plan of the crematoria published in the war-time War Refugee Board report, based on the testimony of two escaped prisoners and released in November 1944, showed little relation to the plans of the crematoria published after the war. And of course, many witness testimonies contradicted each other, while some plagiarized other texts. Faurisson concluded that all these contradictions pointed only at one possible conclusion: the story that Auschwitz had been an extermination camp was a hoax.

One cannot deny that he worked hard to make himself at home in the subject. For example, in 1975 he visited Auschwitz for one day, and in 1976 he stayed there for ten days. Ten years after his first visit, he was sufficiently at home in the subject to be qualified as an expert witness

for the defence on the subject in the first Zündel Trial in Toronto. In the examination in which the defence counsel Douglas Christie presented Faurisson's credentials, the issue of his first visit to Auschwitz came up. "[Christie]: 'Right. In your inquiry what did you do then?'" [Faurisson]: "So I went to visit first what is called Crematorium 1." Q.: "Where is that?" A.: "In Auschwitz I." Q.: "Yes." A.: "you have in the same building a path, on the left, called 'Krematorium,' and on the right a place called 'Gas Chamber.'" Q.: "Yes." A.: "I got first into the place called 'Krematorium'. There were there two furnaces with two openings." Q.: "What did you do?" A.: "I noticed some things which were not normal." Q.: "What did you notice? Tells us what you noticed." A.: "I noticed, for example, that there was no soot at all." Q.: "How did you find that out?" A.: "Putting my finger like that, I saw that there was no soot." Q.: "Inside the furnaces?" A.: "yes." Q.: "All right." A.: "So I decided to find the highest possible responsible..." Q.: "person." A.: "...person, of the Auschwitz Museum." Q.: "And then what did you do." A.: "I found that man called [J]an Machalek. I asked him to come to the spot. I asked him if those ovens were genuine or not." Q.: "Yeah. Don't tell us what he said. What did you ask him for?" A.: "I can say that I showed all the same that there was no soot?" Q.: "Yes." A.: "Okay. The conclusion was that it was a reconstruction, a rebuilding and not something genuine."

A specialist in scouring words, Faurisson had discovered like a latter-day Holmes the implications of the immaculate muffles of the Auschwitz incinerators. And he remembered that, thirty years earlier, a certain toxologist René Faivre had investigated a room in the concentration camp Struthof in the Alsace by taking samples from the walls around the ventilation system and having them analyzed forensically. The results had been lost. And, ignoring Polish investigations that had established the presence of the hydrogen cyanide in six zinc ventilation covers of the gas chamber of crematorium 2, and dismissing similar tests that had found such traces in the many bags of human hair

found near the crematoria--the French scholar maintained that it would have been a usual practice to “disinfect” human hair with Zyklon B--Faurisson wondered if it was not time to repeat Faivre’s experiment in Auschwitz.

Yet unlike Holmes, Faurisson proved a lousy student of evidence. In the following pages, I will consider Faurisson’s published writings, concentrating on the manner in which he deals with Auschwitz. I will ignore for the sake of brevity the more biographical aspects of Faurisson’s turn to Holocaust denial.

As I have discussed in Chapter Five, one of the important contemporary pieces of evidence concerning the use of Auschwitz as an extermination camp is the war-time diary of Dr. Johann Paul Kremer, *Dozent* of Anatomy at the University of Münster. Kremer had served in Auschwitz in the late Summer and Fall of 1942. Faurisson “attacked” the text of Kremer’s diary in a 50-page essay entitled “Professor of Medicine Johann Paul Kremer Faces the Horrors Caused by Typhus in Auschwitz during September and October 1942.” It began with a two-page introduction about the prevalence of exanthematous typhus during the Second World War, and the German inability to suppress it. The horror of Bergen-Belsen was caused by exanthematous typhus, and both the Germans before the liberation of the camp and the English afterwards could do little about it. “Neither the Germans nor the English killed in Bergen-Belsen; typhus killed: first and foremost typhus, but also other related epidemics caused by malnutrition. There was in Belsen not a “war crime” (“*crime de guerre*”) perpetrated by one particular nation but, if one desires to hold on to the term “crime” (which is always off when one talks about war), one should say, in my judgement, that those horrors are “a crime of war” (“*un crime de la guerre*”), a “crime” caused by human folly. As the famous engraving of Dürer shows, peste accompanies war.”

We will forego the task of analyzing Faurisson's exculpating language, with the suggested equivalence between the inability of the German jailors to stop the epidemic in a concentration camp of their making and the inability of the English liberators to immediately stop the ravaging effects of the disease after they took over the camp. Instead we will concentrate on Faurisson's textual analysis of Kremer's diary. The first observation one can make is that Faurisson's approach was wrought with contradiction. Following his own principles of textual exegesis, Faurisson completely discarded any testimony given in Cra-cow--that is any external evidence given by the author of the diary that helped to elucidate his own text. Yet, at the same time, Faurisson was happy to provide an exegesis of various diary entries to establish that Dr. Kremer was first of all a decent scientist. For example, on January 13, 1943, Kremer wrote that "There is no Aryan, Negroid, Mongoloid or Jewish science, only true or false science." "I had never dreamt there existed anything like "a gagged science." By such manoeuvres science has received a mortal blow and has been banished from the country! The situation in Germany today is no better than in the times when Galileo was forced to recant and when science was threatened by tortures and the stake. Where, for Heaven's sake, is this situation going to lead us in the twentieth century!!! I could almost feel ashamed to be a German. And so I shall have to end my days as a victim of science and a fanatic of truth." Faurisson happily quoted these lines as a character reference, but remarkably failed to provide the context of Kremer's observation on the state of science in Germany. "Mrs. Glaser left for Krefeld today. I heard from Gülker at the Sanitary Office for National Health that Fenner had put in a good word for me at the District Office--concerning the chair of heredity biology--but that they had told him I would not be taken into consideration on account of my Driburg work--A Noteworthy Contribution to the Problem of the Hereditary Nature of Deformations--They had nothing else against my person. There we have the much praised freedom of scholarship. It is difficult to imagine a greater gagging of it! Science with a blindfold over its eyes

is and remains only a farce. And so I have really become a victim of my sincere belief in scientific ideals and in the unlimited freedom of research, as I had never even dreamt there existed anything like “a gagged science.” By such manoeuvres science has received a mortal blow...” In other words, Kremer’s outburst was triggered by problems he faced in his career: as a *Dozent* he was, at the age of fifty-nine, stuck at the bottom end of the academic hierarchy, and his attempt to spend the last ten years of his academic career in the well-paid and highly-honored comfort of a chair had obviously failed. Given this context, it is clear that, without any further corroboration, his rant cannot be taken as convincing evidence for his integrity as a scientist.

Faurisson also desired to portray Kremer as a true humanitarian. For this he quoted the diary entry of July 26, 1945, when German refugees from the East were streaming into Münster. “The weather is still very hot and dry. The corn ripens before its time, gnats are pestering us more than ever, and Russians, Poles and Italians still harass the starving, needy and homeless inhabitants. People are crowded in goods trains like cattle and carried hither and thither, while at night they try to find shelter in the stench of dirty, verminous bunkers. Quite indescribable is the fate of these poor refugees, driven into uncertainty by death, hunger and despair.”

Having constructed Kremer’s moral universe, Faurisson ventured to reconstruct the circumstances of his time in Auschwitz. For that purpose he provided one page with the various entries in the so-called “Auschwitz Calendarium” that mention an exanthematous typhus epidemic during the summer of 1942. Thus Kremer had arrived in Auschwitz in the midst of a typhus epidemic. And Faurisson proceeded to quote the various references in Kremer’s diary to exanthematous typhus.

After having argued the presence of a typhus epidemic, which no-one contests, Faurisson had to “neutralize” Kremer’s entries that mentioned outright murder. The most problematic one was, of course, the entry of September 2. “September 2, 1942. Was present for the first time at a special action at 3 a.m. By comparison Dante’s inferno seems almost a comedy. Auschwitz is justly called an extermination camp!” Not without justification, Faurisson showed that the translation of this text was imprecise. The original German is slightly different. “*Zum 1. Male draussen um 3 Uhr früh bei einer Sonderaktion zugegen. Im Vergleich hierzu erscheint mir das Dante’sche Inferno fas wie eine Komödie. Umsonst wird Auschwitz nicht das Lager der Vernichtung genannt.*” Faurisson noted that the adverb “*draussen*” (“outside”) had not been included in the translation, and neither had been the personal pronoun “*mir*” (“to me”). Furthermore in German Auschwitz was called “*das lager der Vernichtung*” (“the camp of extermination”) and not “an extermination camp.” Hence the correct translation should read as follows: “September 2, 1942. Was present for the first time **outside** at a special action at 3 a.m. By comparison Dante’s inferno seems **to me** almost a comedy. Auschwitz is justly called **the camp of extermination!**” All of this made a tremendous difference, according to Faurisson. “Special Actions,” so he claimed, were usually interpreted as gassings. Yet Kremer said that he participated in a special action that took place outside. Hence it could not refer to a gassing, since the Germans gassed people inside. Then there was the issue of the term “*Vernichtung*” and the fact that Kremer called Auschwitz “the camp of extermination.” This, Faurisson claimed, did not refer to what legend knows as “an extermination camp,” but to “a camp in which extermination occurs.”

To understand the entry of September 2, Faurisson claimed, it was necessary to put it in the context of the entries of September 1 and September 3. “September 1, 1942. Have ordered SS officer’s cap, sword-belt and brace from Berlin by letter. In the afternoon was present at the gassing of a block with Cyclon B against lice. September

2, 1942. Was present for the first time at a special action at 3 a.m. By comparison Dante's inferno seems almost a comedy. Auschwitz is justly called an extermination camp! September 3, 1942. Was for the first time taken ill with the diarrhoea which attacks everybody in the camp here. Vomiting and colic-like paroxysmal pains. Water did not cause it as I had not drunk any. Neither was it the bread. People who take white bread only (diet) also fall ill. Most probably it is the unhealthy tropical climate, very dry and tropically hot, with clouds of dust and insects (flies)." This context made it clear, Faurisson argued, that the entry of September 2 should be considered within the context of the epidemic, referred to obliquely in the entry of September 1 as the delousing of a barrack with Zyklon B serves to kill the primary hosts of the typhus virus: lice. There is a description of the effects of illness in the entry of September 3. Thus the entry of September 2 ought be read as referring to an event related to the epidemic. Noting that Kremer had not provided the potentially incriminating term *Sonderaktion* within quotations marks, Faurisson observed that this was absolutely appropriate because the term *Sonderaktion* routinely occurred in German military vocabulary. "The real work of professor of medicine Johann Paul Kremer at Auschwitz is his laboratory research on all kinds of diseases, especially typhus. But at times he is also asked to participate in special actions: assist in taking charge of a transport, in solving some difficulty, at the sorting of the ill in the hospital wards, and so on. I believe to know that, in the French army, all extra efforts, which are not really covered within one's normal duties, carry the pompous name "*mission exceptionnelle*" (special mission), the word "mission" denoting a "task" without necessarily implying an idea of movement. At three o'clock in the morning, Dr. Kremer is asked for a special action that takes place "outside" (*draussen*), which means that there are also special actions that take place "inside" (*drinnen*). It is a pity that we cannot precisely establish what this action was, but we know it was horrible, at least in his eyes....One always claims that this special action concerned the arrival of a convoy from Drancy. That is not impossible.

In fact, a convoy from Drancy arrived in Auschwitz on September 2, 1942. One should verify the hour of arrival. It is not difficult to imagine the arrival of those people who were not affected by the epidemic in a camp that has fallen prey to typhus. The task of the doctor was not only to separate those fit to work from those who are unfit....It is also necessary to find billets for the arrivals in the barracks in the camp. Or always, or almost always, there are at the place of arrival ill people and people who are on the verge of death. One should imagine the crowding. To assist with that for many hours, sometimes in the middle of the night, sometimes at dawn, sometimes during the day, that must have been Dantesque. One may imagine the terrible anxiety of those who arrive in that hell....After the war, in a similar fashion, the German populations deported from the East, who were discreetly referred to as “displaced persons,” were also crammed in overpopulated camps ravaged by epidemics.” Thus ends Faurisson’s “debunkment” of Kremer’s diary entry of September 2. The only other trumpcard he has not shown yet, but which he will produce close to the end of his essay, is the final “proof” that with the words “Dante’s Inferno” he referred to a hell caused by typhus. After all, in a letter he wrote back home on October 21, he announced that he did not know for certain, but that he expected “to be back in Münster before December 1, so that I will have definitively turned my back to this hell Auschwitz, where now not only typhus and so on reigns, but also typhoid fever.” And Faurisson triumphantly exclaimed: “Here then that “inferno of Dante” of his entry of 2 September 1942! Professor of medicine Johann Paul Kremer has seen the horrors of a massive epidemic *destroying* in Auschwitz both prisoners and guards: he has never seen the monstrous gassing operations meant to exterminate human beings.” So much for the application of the “Ajax Method” to history.

I will not deal with his attempt to negate the plain meaning of some of the other entries, and move straight to the entry of October 12. “October 12, 1942. (The second inoculation against typhus; strong reaction

in the evening (fever). In spite of this was present at night at another special action with a draft from Holland (1,600 persons). Horrible scene in front of the last bunker! Hössler!) This was the 10th special action. 2. *Schutzimpfung gegen Typhus; danach abends starke Allgemeinreaktion (Fieber). Trotzdem in der Nacht noch bei einer Sonderaktion aus Holland (1600 personen) zugegen. Schauerliche Szene vor dem letzten Bunker (Hössler)! Das war die 10. Sonderaktion.*” Faurisson attached great significance to the fact that the German text did say “*Sonderaktion aus Holland (1600 Personen).*” It is, admittedly, rather awkward in German: “Special Action from Holland (1600 persons).” To make it grammatically correct one needs to add between “Special Action” and “from” something like “of a draft” or “of a group of people.” Yet this common sense interpretation of Kremer’s shorthand notation did not satisfy Faurisson’s sense of the possible. He brazenly proposed that the preposition “*aus*” referred to the German nouns of “*Auswahl*” or “*Auslese*,” synonyms of “*Selektion*,” selection. The verb “to chose from” was in German “*auswählen*” or “*auslesen*.” On the basis of this tenuous link he proposed now that the text referred to “a simple medical selection (to separate those fit for work and those unfit for work; or also, in that situation, the sick and the healthy; or the contagious and the not-contagious) enacted on a group of 1,600 people.”

After much thought, the logic of Faurisson’s interpretation still eludes me, even if it was not without precedent: in 1949 the historian Jean Bruhat had employed in the Kravchenko trial the kind of philological reasoning to whitewash the Soviet regime. “The Purges of the Bolshevik Party,” he testified, present absolutely no mystery.” “Every Soviet citizen who joins the Bolshevik Party knows that by entering it, he undertakes a certain number of responsibilities. And no one compels him to be a member of the Bolshevik Party. Among other obligations, he must accept this one, which is to account publicly at any moment for his activity. That is what is called a Purge.”

Faurisson had no difficulty neutralizing the obvious reading of the sentence “Horrible scene in front of the last bunker!” as referring to the situation at either Bunker 1 or Bunker 2 in Birkenau, the converted cottages that served as gas chambers until the completion of the four new crematoria in the Spring of 1943. Completely ignoring the fact that both the SS and the inmates referred in common parlance to those extermination installations as “bunkers,” Faurisson stated that the true meaning of the sentence must be obvious to “anyone who knows the topography of the Auschwitz camp.” And with that he leads us to a place more than two miles distance from bunkers 1 and 2. “The “last bunker” cannot be but the bunker at the end of the camp, the famous bunker no. 11 that houses the prison of the camp, very far from the place where the deportees disembarked (the railway platforms that also served as the place of selection). It is in front of that bunker (exactly between bunker 10 and 11) that the place of executions was located.” The problem, of course, is that while Faurisson may know the topography of the camp, he shows himself wholly ignorant of the nomenclature. The buildings he refers to, the camp prison and the adjacent barrack with the execution place in between, are, were, and always have been known as “*Block 11*” and “*Block 10*,” not “*Bunker 11*” and “*Bunker 10*.” The noun “bunker” referred in camp jargon either to the two cottages (1 and 2, or perhaps “the first” and “the last”) that served as gas chambers or, after the completion of crematoria 2, 3, 4 and 5, to their gas chambers probably. The latter because these gas chambers took over the function of the “bunkers.”

Of course, Faurisson would not look at external evidence to guide his interpretation. Yet if he had chosen to do so, he could, for example, have found in his research in the Auschwitz archive a description of the situation at the “last bunker.” On May 10, 1945 Judge Jan Sehn, member of the Polish Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, took the testimony of a surviving Sonderkommando of the crematoria, Shlomo Dragon. Dragon had worked at

Bunker II, the gas chamber in the grove of birch forests that had been the site of most of the mass killings in the second half of 1942 and the first months of 1943. Dragon told how he was first brought to the Bunker in December 1942. "We were taken into a forest where there was a brick cottage covered with thatch; its windows were bricked in. On the doors to the interior of the cottage was a metal plate with the inscription "Hochspannung--Lebensgefahr" ("High Voltage--Danger"). Two wooden barracks were at 30 or 40 meters distance. On the other side of the cottage were four pits 30 meters long, 7 meters wide and 3 meters deep. The edges of these pits were burned and blackened. We were lined up in front of the house; then [SS-Unterscharführer] Moll arrived and told us we would work here at the burning old and lice-infected people, that we would be given something to eat and in the evening we would be taken back to the camp, and that we had to work. And if we did not, we would be beaten and for that purpose there were always clubs and dogs at hand. The SS who escorted us had indeed dogs. Then we were split in a number of groups. I was detailed with 11 others in a group which, as we learned later, was to remove the bodies from this cottage. We were all given masks, and were led through the door into the cottage. Moll opened the door, and only then could we see that the cottage was full of naked corpses of both sexes and all ages. Moll ordered us to remove these corpses from the cottage through the door to the yard. We started work with four men carrying one body. This annoyed Moll. He rolled up his sleeves, and threw a body through the door into the yard. When, despite this example, we said we were incapable of doing that, he detailed two of us to carry each body. Once the corpses were in the yard, a dental technician, assisted by an SS man, pulled out the teeth. A barber, also watched by an SS man, shaved off the hair; After that another group loaded the bodies onto a cart. This cart ran on a narrow-gauge track to the edge of the pits. Still another group prepared the pit for burning the corpses. First of all, big logs were put in the bottom, then smaller and smaller wood, in criss-cross fashion, and finally dry twigs. Another group took the bodies that had

been brought by the cart and threw them into the pit. Once all the bodies had been brought from the cottage to the pit, Moll poured kerosene over them in the four corners of the pit and set fire to it by throwing a burning rubber comb over the kerosene-soaked areas. That is how the fire started and the corpses burned. While Moll started the fire, we were in front of the cottage and could see what he was doing. After having removed all the bodies from the cottage, we had to clean it thoroughly, wash the floor with water, spread it with sawdust, and white-wash the walls. The interior of the cottage was divided into four rooms by partition walls. One, in which one could house 1200 naked people, the second with a capacity of 700, the third of 400, and the fourth with a capacity of between 200 and 250. In the first room, the biggest, there were in the wall two little windows. The three smaller rooms each had one small window. These windows were closed by the wooden doors. Each room had a separate access. On the entrance door there was a metal sign with the inscription "Hochspannung--Lebensgefahr," as I mentioned earlier. When the door was opened, this sign was invisible but one could see another "Zum Baden" ("To the Baths"). The people who were in these rooms saw on the exit door another sign with the inscription ("Zur Desinfektion")("To Disinfection"). Behind this door there was obviously no disinfection, because through these doors we removed the bodies into the yard. Each room had its own entrance door."

Dragon continued to explain how this cottage was known as Bunker II, and that there was also another cottage, Bunker I, which contained only two chambers and which could hold less than 2,000 people. He explained that he and his fellow workers were mainly involved with the removal and burning of the corpses, and that only occasionally was he present at the actual, mostly nightly gassings, which was mainly run by the SS men themselves. His role at those occasions was to help undress ill people. At those times he witnessed how, after all had been driven into the cottage, the doors were closed, and how *SS-Rottenführer*

Steinmetz collected a tin of Zyklon B from a red cross van, donned a gas mask, opened it, threw it through one of the windows, closed the window, and carried the tin back to the van.

Dragon also gave a graphic account of the situation inside Bunker II the next morning. "In general we found, when we opened the rooms, the bodies of the gassed in lying positions. When there were many, they were on top of one another, often in standing positions, with their upper bodies bent down. In many cases I saw on the lips of the gassed a white foam. In the rooms it was after they were opened very hot and one could sense the gas. It caused an itching feeling at the throat. On one's lips one senses a sweetish, pleasant taste." Dragon recorded that Bunker I was demolished in 1943, and that in the same year the barracks situated next to Bunker II were also dismantled, and that at that time the cremation pits were filled with earth. Bunker II remained, however, standing to be used once more during the Hungarian Action of 1944.

If Faurisson missed Dragon's account, he certainly should have been able to consult that of Pery Broad, as it had been published by the time he began his investigation. A non-commissioned officer in the Auschwitz Political Department, the 34-year old *SS-Unterscharführer* Pery Broad was captured by the British near Ravensbrück on 6 May, 1945. In the prisoner-of-war camp he worked as a translator, and wrote voluntarily a report on his activities in Auschwitz. The Broad report corroborated Dragon's account of the Birkenau extermination installations, those "innocuous looking farmhouses, the 'bunkers' as those gas chambers were generally called." "At some distance from the Birkenau camp, which was growing at an incredible rate, there stood, amidst pleasant scenery, two pretty and tidy-looking farmhouses, separated from one another by a grove. They were dazzlingly whitewashed, cosily thatched and surrounded with fruit trees of the kind that usually grew there. Such was the first hasty impression! Nobody would have thought it credible that in those insignificant little houses as many people had

perished as would have filled a city. The attentive spectator might have noticed signs in many languages on the houses. The signs read: "To disinfection." then he might observe that the houses were windowless, but had a disproportionate number of remarkably strong doors, made air-tight with rubber and secured with screwed-down bolts, while small wooden flaps were fixed near the bolts. Near the small houses there were several incongruously large stables, such as were used in Birkenau to accommodate prisoners. The roads leading to them bore the tracks of many heavily loaded vans. If the visitor discovered, in addition, that from the back doors there led a railway track to some pits hidden by brushwood fences, then he would certainly guess that the houses served some special purpose." There followed a detailed account of the killing procedure, from the arrival of the victims at the bunker, to the arrival of the tins of Zyklon B in an ambulance commanded by the medical orderly SS-Oberscharführer Josef Klehr. And Broad described the last phase of the killing process: the incineration of their bodies on the huge pyres. It corroborated Dragon's account given a month earlier--a testimony given in Poland and which was not and could not have been available to either Broad or his interrogators. Yet Broad could add the unique perspective of an outside observer. For example, Broad knew that the SS leadership was concerned about the fact that the killings at Bunkers I and II could not be kept secret. "The great pyres were spreading such a stench that the whole countryside for miles around had been infected. At night, the red sky above Auschwitz was visible from far away. But it would have been impossible to do away with the immense quantities of corpses, both of those who died in the camp and of those who had perished in the gas chambers, without the huge pyres. The chimney of the Auschwitz crematorium [crematorium 1] showed dangerous clefts due to overheating. Sentries were punished for gossiping: they were supposed to be guilty of betraying the secrets, but it was by reason of the unmistakable sweet smell and the nightly flames that the neighbourhood of Auschwitz learnt about the goings-on in the camp of death. Railwaymen used to

tell the civilian population how thousands were being brought to Auschwitz every day, and yet the camp was not growing larger at a corresponding rate. The same information was supplied by the police escorts of the transports. The result was that a party speaker, when making his speech in the town of Auschwitz, had to retreat as most of the audience was hostile.” The creation of four new crematoria, which ended the need to incinerate the corpses on large pyres, allowed the Germans to restore the very secrecy that allowed, thirty years later, a man like Faurisson to negate the existence of these bunkers.

Fearful of external evidence, Faurisson stayed away from Dragon, Broad, Klehr, and the many other testimonies that describe the operation of the bunkers in excruciating detail. Ignorantly of context, he soldiered on, with as his only compass the linguistic insights offered by his “Ajax Method.” Persistence paid. After many years of work he finally was able in late 1978 to propagate his ideas in the prestigious daily *Le Monde*. I will consider below the circumstances that led Faurisson’s “breakthrough.” Here I will limit myself to the conclusion about the Kremer diary that he was able to present to the French nation at large. “The physician Johann Paul Kremer’s diary should be quoted correctly. It will thus be observed that when he speaks about the horrors of Auschwitz, it is an allusion to the typhus epidemic of September-October 1942. On October 3, he wrote: “At Auschwitz, whole streets have been annihilated by typhus.” He himself would contract what he calls “the Auschwitz disease.” Germans would die of it. The sorting out of the ill from the healthy was the “selection” or one of the forms of the “special action” performed by the physician. The sorting out took place either within buildings or outdoors. Never did he write that Auschwitz was a *Vernichtungslager*, that is, according to a terminology developed by the Allies after the war, an “extermination camp” (by which we are to understand a camp endowed with a gas chamber). In reality, what he wrote was: “It is not for nothing that Auschwitz is called the camp of annihilation (*das Lager der Vernichtung*).” In the etymological sense of the

word, typhus annihilates those whom it strikes. Another seriously mistaken quotation: for the date of September 2, 1942, Kremer's manuscript reads: "This morning, I was present, outdoors, for the first time, at a special action." Historians and magistrates customarily suppress the word "outdoors (*draussen*)" in order to have Kremer say that the action took place in a "gas chamber." Finally, the atrocious scenes in front of the "last bunker" (this was the courtyard of Bunker 11) were executions of prisoners sentenced to death, executions the physician was obliged to attend. Among those sentenced were three women who had arrived in a convoy from Holland." This passage received the reply it deserved in Pierre Vidal-Naquet's brilliant essay "Un Eichmann de papier" ("A Paper Eichmann"). Vidal-Naquet characterized Faurisson's method as "the Art of Not Reading Texts," and in his comment on Faurisson's interpretation of Kremer's diary Vidal-Naquet amply demonstrated that, unlike Faurisson, he understood the art of reading texts. For example, as to Faurisson's discussion on the all-important distinction between *Vernichtungslager* and *das Lager der Vernichtung*, Vidal-Naquet wrote that "the fact that Auschwitz was the *Lager der Vernichtung* has no relation to typhus epidemics." "Indeed, Faurisson, who is so concerned with precision when it comes to translation, did not perceive that Kremer, in speaking of typhus, did not use the verb *vernichten*. He wrote on October 3, "In Auschwitz whole streets have been stricken down by typhus (*In Auschwitz liegen ganze Strassenzüge an Typhus darnieder*)." The difference in verbs (*darniederliegen* instead of *vernichten*) is significant, and Faurisson allowed himself to be fooled by the translation of the Polish publisher. Finally, a detail which I mention to show how Faurisson reads texts: it is false that Kremer had typhus and that what he called the Auschwitz illness is typhus. The indications in the diary for September 3, 4 and 14, show clearly that the Auschwitz illness is diarrhea with a moderate fever (37.8 degrees C. On September 14), Kremer was, in fact, vaccinated against (exanthematic) typhus and against typhoid fever. Faurisson's interpretation is thus not admissible, and the explanation--so dear to those revisionists, like Butz,

prepared to admit that there was a lot of dying in Auschwitz--of the death rates at Auschwitz by typhus stands condemned along with it. One must return to what is to be learned from the camp archives and from Kremer's confessions: that the "special actions" correspond to the arrival of convoys of deportees (who were, as a rule, duly registered in the camp archives); that deportees not enrolled in the camp were gassed in the bunkers of Birkenau (small houses located in the forest); that those suffering from illnesses in the camp (and specifically from typhus) as well as male and female "Muslims" were also gassed; and that at the last moment, there were occasionally painful scenes, such as that of October 18, 1942, with three "young and healthy" Dutch women who "did not want to enter the gas chamber and cried to save their lives" and who were shot, scenes that disturbed the SS-imposed order. When Kremer spoke of *the* camp of annihilation, he was not, it is true, referring to a juridico-administrative concept, which did not figure, as is also true, on the official rolls of the Third Reich. He was simply speaking about what he saw. On the level he most cherishes, that of philological precision and accurate translation, Faurisson's interpretation is incoherent; on the level of intellectual ethics and scientific probity, it is bogus."

The same judgment applies to Faurisson's analysis of the confessions of Kommandant Höss. He found in Höss's autobiography, written in Poland awaiting his sentence, an account how he had been beaten up immediately after his arrest by the British in March 1946, and on the basis of this he concluded that his entire confession had been the result of torture. Furthermore there were discrepancies between his different confessions--the one he gave immediately after his arrest, the one he gave in early April in Nuremberg, the one he gave later that month to prison psychologist Dr. Gustave M. Gilbert, and the two major confessions he wrote in Poland. And to make matters worse, Höss was weak on the technical details of gassing. Hence he was useless as a witness. Yet, at the same time, Faurisson was prepared to subject Höss's

language to a most detailed exegesis whenever it suited him. For example, he juxtaposed the following two of Höss's statements. "The door was opened a half an hour after the gas was thrown in and the ventilation system was turned on. Work was immediately started to remove the corpses." Closely reading this passage, Faurisson noted the adverb "immediately." In other words, work began immediately when the ventilation began, that means when the room was still highly toxic. This was very dangerous. It was evident, Faurisson argued, that the Sonderkommando only could have entered the space equipped with gas masks. The second statement by Höss seemed, however, to preclude this. "They dragged the bodies from the gas chambers, removed the gold teeth, cut off the hair, then dragged the bodies to the pits or to the ovens. On top of that, they had to maintain the fires in the pits, pour off the accumulated fat, and poke holes into the burning mountain of bodies, so that more oxygen could enter. All these jobs they performed with an indifferent coolness, just as if this was an everyday affair. While dragging the bodies, they ate or smoked. Even the gruesome job of burning the bodies dug up after being in mass graves for a long time did not prevent them from eating." Faurisson observed that Höss saw the Sonderkommando dragging bodies while eating and smoking, they were obviously not wearing gas masks--probably because of their "indifferent coolness." In short, there was an inexplicable contradiction between the extreme toxicity of the gas chamber and the behaviour of the Sonderkommandos. Adding to the collection the official instruction manual of Zyklon B, which stipulated that spaces that had been fumigated with the agent should air out for at least 20 hours, Faurisson came to the conclusion that Höss obviously did not know what he was writing about, and that his testimony was worthless. Yet on examination, it is clear that his "Ajax Method" did not do the texts justice. The second quotation taken from Höss occurs in the middle of a paragraph that deals with the "strange" behaviour of the Sonderkommando. It did not discuss the extermination procedure in any logical order. When Höss mentions that the Sonderkommando ate or smoked

while dragging bodies, he did not say “while dragging bodies from the gas chambers.” In fact, there was a lot of body-dragging in Auschwitz: in crematoria 2 and 3 bodies were dragged within the incineration halls from the elevator doors to the ovens, in crematoria 4 and 5, bodies were dragged not only from the gas chambers to the morgue, but also from the morgue to the incineration room, and in the case of the open air burning of the buried corpses in the late summer and fall of 1942, bodies were dragged from the opened mass graves to the incineration pits. At no time did the Sonderkommando need a gas mask for this awful job. Likewise Faurisson misrepresented the Zyklon B instruction manual. The rule for spaces to be aired for 20 hours applies to rooms without any special ventilation system. After 20 hours of natural ventilation, and another hour with closed windows and doors, the room should be available for all activities except sleeping: this should wait another day. The situation in the gas chambers was different. With its powerful ventilation system, and with the fact that most of the hydrogen cyanide was absorbed by the victims’ bodies, the time could be reduced to 20 minutes.

While Faurisson examined the testimony of witnesses for every possible contradiction, he steadfastly refused to apply his “Ajax Method,” or even the most basic rules of criticism, to the utterances of his hero Rassinier. Faurisson accepted his writings without criticism. Given Rassinier’s glaring abuse of sources and their systematic violation of even the most elementary rules of legitimate scholarship, Faurisson’s endorsement of his works can only be explained as a testimony of his bad faith--of his need to cling to a belief in order to oppose another belief, a belief which, so I sense, Faurisson maintains in the absence of any true conviction.

Since the early 1970s Faurisson sought public attention for his work, but for many years he did not get a foot on the ground. The prestigious daily *Le Monde* refused to publish his letters, and also elsewhere the mainline press ignored him. Only the extreme-right *Défense de*

l'Occident (Defense of the West) was interested, and in June 1978 published an article entitled “Le ‘problème des chambres à gaz’” (“The ‘Problem of the Gas Chambers.’”). Because of its limited circulation, Faurisson sent an off-print to a number of important people, adding a convenient summary of his arguments. “Conclusions (after thirty years of research) of revisionist authors: (1) Hitler’s “gas chambers” never existed. (2) The “genocide” (or: the “attempted genocide”) of the Jews never took place; clearly, Hitler never ordered (nor permitted) that someone be killed for racial or religious reason. (3) The alleged “gas chambers” and the alleged “genocide” are one and the same lie. (4) This lie, which is essentially of Zionist origin, has allowed a gigantic politico-financial swindle of which the principal beneficiary is the State of Israel. (5) The principal victims of this lie and this swindle are the German and the Palestinian peoples. (6) The tremendous power of the official information channels has, until now, assured the success of the lie and censored the freedom of expression of those who denounce the lie. (7) The supporters of the lie know now that their lie is in its last years; they misrepresent the purpose and meaning of revisionist investigations; they label what is just a return to a concern for historical truth as “resurgence of Nazism” or “the falsification of history.”

Not many of the recipients gave the material a second thought. Yet the Nazi-hunters Beate and Serge Klarsfeld--the former a German by birth, the latter a Holocaust survivor--saw a gathering storm, and they invited Joseph Billig, who had assisted in the Nuremberg prosecution of A. Rosenberg, and Georges Wellers, editor of “Le Monde,” to contribute to a volume entitled *The Holocaust and the Neo-Nazi Mythomania* (1978). Wellers, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote two essays united under the heading “Reply to the Neo-Nazi Falsification of Historical Facts Concerning the Holocaust.” One of the two essays dealt with Paul Rassinier’s demographical “proof” that the Holocaust was a hoax, and a second essay is entitled “The Existence of the Gas Chambers.” In his introductory remarks, Wellers summarized the allegations of the nega-

tionists, and noted the paradox that a Frenchman and former resistor, Rassinier, had laid down the foundations of negationism. “The paths marked out by Rassinier are faithfully followed by his imitators, who constantly refer to the master, citing him as a ‘classic’ who has ‘definitively’ demonstrated this or that,” Wellers observed. Yet the pupils had started to go beyond the master, denying even the few concessions Rassinier had made to historical truth. Wellers mentioned them briefly, to end with the remark that, “[f]inally, for a certain R. Faurisson, everything is crystal clear: ‘The time is ripe,’ it is the ‘imposture of genocide.’”

If Klarsfeld’s aim was that the publication of *The Holocaust and the Neo-Nazi Mythomania* would finish the issue, he must have been disappointed. In the fall of 1978, shortly after the book appeared, the existence, technology and operation of the gas chambers became in France an object of public contention. The catalyst for this was the notorious *L’Express* interview with Louis Darquier de Pellepoix. Living since the end of the war in comfortable exile in Spain, the former Commissioner General for Jewish Affairs of the Vichy government alleged that the Holocaust had not occurred, that there had been no gas chambers in Auschwitz. He claimed: “Only lice were gassed in Auschwitz.”

The Darquier interview provided Faurisson with the opportunity he needed. Within days he was published in the socialist newspaper *Le Matin*. Faurisson commented that the Darquier affair ought to convince the French that the Holocaust was fiction and the gas chambers fabrications “In common with the Frenchman, Paul Rassinier (a former member of the resistance and a deportee), with the German, Wilhelm Stäglich, the Englishman, Richard E. Harwood, the American, Arthur R. Butz (author of the Hoax of the Twentieth Century, such a remarkable work that clearly no one has been able to reply to him) and twenty other authors who are either ignored or calumniated as I hereby proclaim...that the massacres in so-called “gas chambers” are a historical lie.”

A few weeks later *Le Monde* was forced, under the threat of legal action to publish a letter by Faurisson entitled “Le problème des chambres à gaz’ ou ‘le rumeur d “Auschwitz”” (“‘The Problem of the Gas Chambers’ or ‘the Rumor of Auschwitz.’”) The letter began with the declaration that “no-one contested the use of crematoria ovens in certain German camps.” The high mortality due to epidemics had made those incineration facilities necessary. “It is the existence of ‘gas chambers,’ true slaughterhouses for humans, which is contested.” Faurisson argued that any visitor to Auschwitz or Majdanek could observe that the gas chambers could not have worked because it would have resulted in a “catastrophe” for the perpetrators, who would be killed themselves. Furthermore it would be impossible to cram 2,000 people in a room of 210 square meters, and it would have been ridiculous to then sprinkle them with pellets of an insecticide. Faurisson argued that the plans that did exist showed that the alleged gas chambers were typical morgues, and that the gas would have taken too long to be extracted from the room. Finally he noted that in all the trials no-one had been able to produce German documentation for Bunkers I and II. Faurisson concluded with the statement that “Nazism is dead, quite dead, and also its Führer. Today only the truth remains. Let us dare to proclaim it: The non-existence of the ‘gas chambers’ is good news for poor humanity. Good news like this should no longer be suppressed.”

Publication of such language in the influential and prestigious *Le Monde* brought, for the first time anywhere, the negationist denial of the gas chambers into public prominence. Until then, such ideas had only circulated within the fringe. And it was to stay in the public arena. Worried by the effect of Faurisson’s letter, the editors of *Le Monde* had asked a response from Wellers who was well prepared to answer Faurisson. Wellers’ letter, “Abondance de preuves” (“An Abundance of Evidence”) appeared next to Faurisson’s. Wellers quoted the documents that had become well known by now. First of all he quoted Bischoff’s letter of 29 January 1943, which contained the information that

“the planks from the concrete ceiling of the cellar used as a mortuary could not yet be removed on account of the frost. This is, however, not very important, as the gassing basement (*Vergasungskeller*) can be used for that purpose.” Furthermore Wellers invoked the statement of Pery Broad, Höss’s autobiography, the Vrba-Wetzlar report, the manuscripts of the *Sonderkommandos*, and so on. Specifically to the charge that those who would have worked the gas chambers would have killed, Wellers mentioned the powerful ventilation system that had been built in the walls of corpse cellar 1, the gas chamber. Wellers ended his letter with the observation that he did not address himself to fanatics, because there is no hope to convince them, but to people of good will, ignorant of the facts, and who could be taken in by the fallacies of Nazi apologists. While Wellers competently refuted the latter’s arguments, the publication of his letter proved soon a mistake: the publication of the two letters on the same page created the appearance that Faurisson’s and Wellers’ arguments were in principle commensurate in intellectual respectability--that, in short, there were (as the negationists have tried to establish all along) a “revisionist” and an “exterminationist” thesis concerning the Holocaust the advocates of which ought to be given equal opportunity to plead their cases.

Faurisson’s coup had immediate reverberations outside France. Four days after the publication of his “good news,” the Italian Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi responded in an interview with the *Corriere della Sera*. Naively, in hindsight, Levi tried to find some rational core in Faurisson’s position by assuming an actual personal link between Faurisson’s ideas and the events of thirty-five years earlier. “The operation has succeeded: it is not enough to read the horrors of Darquier de Pellepoix in *L’Express* last November, not enough to allow the murderers of those days space and voice in respectable magazines, so that they may dictate their truth with impunity: the truth that the millions of dead in the camps never died, that Genocide is a fable, that in Auschwitz they only used gas to kill lice. All that is obviously not enough. Obviously the

time is ripe, and from his university chair Professor Faurisson comes to put the world at ease. Fascism and Nazism have been denigrated, slandered. We don't talk about Auschwitz any more: that was a sham. We talk about the lie of Auschwitz, the Jews are cheats, they always have been cheats, and liars, liars enough to concoct the gas chambers and the crematorium ovens all by themselves, *after the event*. I don't know who Professor Faurisson is. Perhaps he is only a fool, even if he does hold a university office. Another hypothesis is more likely. Perhaps he himself was one of those in charge at the time, as Darquier was, or perhaps he is the son, or friend, or mainstay, of people in charge, and is striving to exorcize an episode that, in spite of modern permissiveness, weighs on his conscience. We are familiar with certain psychological mechanisms. Guilt is corrosive. In times now long since gone in Italy and France, it was also dangerous. People start by denying in court, in public, then in private, then more and more to themselves. The trick succeeds. Black turns white. The dead are not dead, there is no murderer, there is no more guilt. There never was. It wasn't me who did something. That thing itself no longer exists. No, Professor, life is not like that. The dead are truly dead. Even the women, and even the children, tens of thousands in Italy and France, millions in Poland and the Soviet Union. That's not so easy to conceal. You don't have to wear yourself out to find the evidence. If you really want to be informed, ask the survivors--there are enough of them in France. Listen to them. They saw themselves dying day after day, one by one, after their comrades who walked the dark path to the crematoria. They returned (those who did return), and they found their families wiped out. The path to avoiding guilt is not that one, Professor. Even for chair-borne Professors, facts are stubborn. If you deny the slaughter organized by your friends of that time, you must explain why, from 17 million in 1939, Jews were reduced to 11 million in 1945. You must deny the hundreds of thousands of widows and orphans, and you must deny us, the survivors. Come and debate with us, Professor, and you'll find it harder to teach your pupils. Are all of them so badly informed that they

accept this stuff? Has none of them raised a hand to protest? Then what have the university authorities done in France, and the law? By letting you deny the dead, they have tolerated your killing them a second time.”

Neither common sense nor an awareness of what the living owe the dead was to put the matter to rest. According to a nineteenth-century French law, Wellers’ direct attack on Faurisson had given the latter a right of response. Faurisson did not hesitate to make use of it, and *Le Monde* printed his reply to Wellers on January 16th. He claimed that he had believed in the gas chambers until he had read the work of Rassinier, and that he had reflected on the issue for fourteen years, and re-searched it assiduously for another four. “I visited and revisited Auschwitz and Birkenau where one presents us with a reconstructed “gas chamber,” and the ruins that are said to be “crematoria with gas chambers.” At Struthof (Alsace) and Maidanek (Poland) I have examined sites that are presented as “gas chambers in their original state.” I have analyzed thousands of documents.....I have searched in vain for a single deportee capable of proving to me that he has seen, with his own eyes, a “gas chamber.” I certainly did not want an illusory abundance of proofs; I would have been satisfied with only one proof, only one proof. That proof I never found. What I found, instead was many false proofs worthy of a witch trial--proofs that dishonored the judges that accepted them.” As to Wellers’ invocation of Bischoff’s letter of 29 January 1943, Faurisson approvingly quoted the interpretation offered a few years earlier by the American Arthur R. Butz that the term “*Vergasungskeller*” referred to a carburation chamber. The manuscripts of the *Sonderkommandos* he simply tried to brush off with the remark that they had been “miraculously” rediscovered, in other words that they were most likely forgeries. And so on.

The editors noted wearily that they only printed the letter because they were legally obliged to do so, and they warned that any other response to Faurisson would give him a renewed right to publish his views. (In

fact, Wellers did write another long rebuttal published on February 21, in which he did not mention Faurisson by name, nor directly refer to his letter, but in which he presented his arguments in the form of a general reflection on the musings of Rassinier, who had died three years earlier. It provided the editors of *Le Monde* with the legal means to deny Faurisson the right of response.)

Many regarded the publication of Faurisson's letters with confusion and mortification, and responsible historians who feared an unending cycle of negationist assertions and professional rebuttals joined together to end the farce. The well-known Holocaust historian Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, historian of ancient Greece, wrote a declaration that was consequently endorsed by 35 other prominent French historians and published in *Le Monde* on February 21. Entitled "La politique hitlérienne d'extermination. Une déclaration d'historiens" (The Hitlerian Policy of extermination. A Declaration by Historians), the manifesto pronounced that "the question of how technically such a mass murder was possible should not be raised. It was technically possible because it occurred. This is the necessary starting point for all historical investigation of the subject. It has fallen to us to recall that point with due simplicity: there is not nor can there be a debate over the existence of the gas chambers."

Faurisson wrote a rebuttal of the statement, but it was refused for publication. In this letter, entitled "A proof...one single proof," which Faurisson published a year later in his book *Mémoire en défense*, he offered what seemed to be a constructive proposal. "For four years now I have wished for a public debate with anyone who desires to engage in it on "the problem of the gas chambers." One responds to me with criminal complaints....I know a manner to advance the debate. Instead of repeating ad nauseam that there is a superabundance of proofs that attest to the existence of "gas chambers" (let us recall the value of this assumed superabundance for the "gas chambers"--mythical--of the *Altreich* [the German Reich within its borders of 1937], I

propose that, to begin at the beginning, one supplies me with a proof, one single precise proof of the actual existence of one “gas chamber,” one single “gas chamber.” Let us examine this proof together, in public.”

If we compare the spirit of “A Declaration by Historians” and Faurisson’s “A proof...One single proof,” it is on a first view not easy to feel some sympathy for Faurisson’s attitude. After all, we are heirs to a rational, liberal and individualistic culture that accepts as one of its formative myths the conflict between the Church and Galileo. It is all too easy to see in the statement of the historians a dogmatic pronouncement by a new intellectual inquisition aiming to repress evidence and logic for the sake doctrine, and in Faurisson a champion of free enquiry. And, indeed, negationists have tried to exploit this seemingly obvious parallelism for all it is worth.

There are, however, some problems in applying the myth of the Church versus Galileo to the “Faurisson Affair”—apart from the fact that historians of science have come to realize that the commonplace reading of the “Galileo Affair” as the battle between reactionary obscurantism and the spirit of science does not hold. The most important problem is that the paradigm of scientific enquiry does not really apply to history. Like history, science has an empirical component, but unlike historians, scientists can conduct experiments and repeat them *ad nauseam* in order to find evidence and construct a proof. After all scientists operate in a universe ruled by natural laws, while virtually all historians (with the exception of some radical Hegelians or Marxists) study a world shaped by incessant and unrelenting contingency. A historical proof is a difficult thing. Unlike the scientist, who can design a laboratory experiment so that it offers the ideal situation to study a particular phenomenon, the historian must out of necessity work with often scraps of evidence that accidentally survived the times, often the testimony of witnesses who were absolutely not qualified to bear witness, and so on.

But there is something more important, which goes directly to the heart of the seemingly authoritarian “Declaration of Historians.” It is the issue that relatively quickly after an important historical event has passed--and with important I mean one that has acquired an important place in the historical consciousness--it becomes very difficult if not impossible to offer “a proof...A single proof.” Why is this so? Let’s look at the situation in 1979, thirty-four years after the liberation of Auschwitz. By that year scholars, judges, juries, and the public at large had acquired a consensus as to what had happened in Auschwitz. This knowledge had accrued over more than three decades by different means. There were, of course, inferences people had made on the basis of relevant evidence: confessions by SS men like *öss* and Broad, sworn depositions by eyewitnesses like Dragon and Tauber, original German documents like Bischoff’s letter to Kammler of 29 January 1943, substantial residues of cyanide in the ventilation covers of the gas chambers of crematorium 2, and the forensic investigations of Jan Sehn and Roman Dawidowski. When these pieces of evidence were first studied--mostly in the immediate post-war years--they were things that existed in the present, but allowed the student of Auschwitz to make, by means of a valid inference based on causal regularity, a licensed move to a statement about the development and situation of Auschwitz in the past. But, by the late 1970s, other genres of knowledge been grafted on the original evidence: memoirs of survivors, interpretation of writers, evocations by filmmakers, symbolic monuments designed by architects and sculptors, public rituals of commemoration, theological speculation, and so on. In other words, by the late 1970s, knowledge of “Auschwitz” became transmitted as a mixture of learning and second-hand memory, shaped by public political discourse and private anxiety.

By the 1970s “Auschwitz” had acquired an important place in the public imagination. As such, it was both part of the life of the new generation, but also out of their reach. With that, it entered a certain twilight

zone between memory and history. Eric Hobsbawn described this twilight zone as the no-man's land of time located at the intersection of the past as a generalized record that is open to relatively dispassionate inspection, and the past as a remembered part of, or background to, one's own life. "It is by far the hardest part of history for historians, or for anyone else, to grasp," Hobsbawn observed. "It forms something similar to those particoloured ancient maps filled with unreliable outlines and white spaces, framed by monsters and symbols. The monsters and symbols are magnified by the modern mass media, because the very fact that the twilight zone is important to us makes it central also to their preoccupations."

Having become a central obsession of public discourse, a symbol of evil as such, knowledge of Auschwitz had detached itself from the knowledge of present matters of fact--confessions, sworn depositions, documents, certain amounts of residual cyanide, forensic opinions--and acquired a life of its own. This, of course, does not only apply to Auschwitz, but to all facts of history that become part of public discourse, and knowledge of Auschwitz was now not only direct, but also mediated by art and so on. With that its epistemological status had changed, definitively, and irrevocably. David Hume's argument from Section IV of Part III of Book I of *A Treatise Concerning Human Nature* (1739-40) that all historical knowledge is based on valid inferential arguments based on direct and certain pieces of evidence available in the present--that is that historical knowledge ultimately stems from a direct apprehension of "the facts"--is proven wrong in a situation where knowledge is so obviously mediated by social factors. The knowledge about Auschwitz as it was available in the late 1970s, or as it is available today, follows more Alexis de Tocqueville's observation, made in Chapter II of the Second Part of his *Democracy in America*, that social factors mediate perceptions and understandings, and that only a small

part of any individual's knowledge is based on original, unmediated perception of evidence, while most of that person's knowledge is transmitted as one's patrimony through social networks.

In 1979 knowledge of Auschwitz had become part of the intellectual patrimony of the West. Recently the philosopher of history Leon Pompa explained the epistemological conundrum that follows from the circumstance that people most often engage a historical fact after they have come across it as an already accepted item of knowledge. By the late 1970s Auschwitz figured in history textbooks and in encyclopedias. It was alluded to in political speeches and demonstrations, and it had been the subject of plays such as Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*, films like Resnais's *Night and Fog*, television series like *Holocaust*, novels like William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*, and so on. By the time the Faurisson Affair emerged most people had *come to learn* about Auschwitz through such references, but it was not in virtue of inferences drawn from these references that Auschwitz had become an item of historical knowledge. To the contrary: those references to Auschwitz had been made upon the assumption that its existence and operation as an extermination camp was already known to be true. This was unavoidable because if it were otherwise, the references to Auschwitz in the political and cultural life of the West would fail to serve their purpose. In short, the discourse on Auschwitz existed because a consensus about its history existed.

Because Auschwitz had become part of our general cultural and historical inheritance, it had become more or less independent of the potential or actual availability of evidence. What mattered much more was the question if people accepted the beliefs that constitute one's knowledge of Auschwitz before interpreting the available evidence. Taking Pompa's ideas as our point of departure, one could say that, by the time Faurisson offered his challenge, the inherited knowledge of Auschwitz could be supported by evidence, but that more importantly one should accept the fact that the community as such did not accept the

inherited account of Auschwitz because there it was possible to cite documentary evidence, but was prepared to interpret the evidence in that way because it had inherited the belief for which it seems to be evidence.

Pompa demonstrated that this inheritance of shared historical beliefs is not just a contingent feature of our knowledge of history. At least in part, it constitutes our sense of our place in history and, therefore, of our knowledge of history. Inherited historical belief has priority over inferential historical belief because the former is the precondition for our judgement about the validity of our inferences. “[O]ur concept of historical reasoning is so dependent upon a set of accepted historical beliefs, which are partially constitutive of our sense of the structure of a determinate past, that, if we had to countenance their possible falsity, we should be left with no idea how to put any others in their place or, therefore, why we should accept the conclusions of historical reasoning as conclusions about the past.” Every empirical historian operates within a context of inherited beliefs, and this allows her to discover new facts, and assimilate them into the body of inherited knowledge. “[G]iven our incapacity to find an independent criterion of historical truth, we shall be able fully to warrant claims to truth only for those products of historical reasoning which can, in some or other way, be linked to the inherited set which provides the general structure of our concept of the determinate past. That is the reason why, when, by historical argument, we try to establish facts about parts of history which, for contingent reasons, do not connect in any way with what we have received, the area of disagreement among experts becomes so wide that we are often not justified in accepting any of the many accounts which can be offered as more than plausible hypotheses. But with regards to facts which can be connected to those, which are, so to speak, known by transmission, there is scope for the establishment of many new ones, so that the body which we hand on to our successors about our known past may be a much larger body than that which we

received. But it will, nevertheless, retain one part of its content in which it overlaps with what we received, and it is in virtue of this that historical belief can be thought of as being factual rather than fictional in character.” In other words, in order to raise questions about, for example the operation of the gas chambers in Auschwitz, much of what we may call our inherited knowledge about Auschwitz must be accepted. Without inherited knowledge of history, we would have no capacity to have *any* historical beliefs at all.

Pompa used the case of Caesar’s assassination, first employed by Hume in his discussion of the foundations of historical knowledge, to illustrate this point. “It may seem a conceptual possibility that Caesar never existed,” Pompa argued, “but it cannot be a historical possibility.” It cannot because facts are not independent, but both interrelated to each other and progressively entrenched in the account as it is transmitted from one generation to the next. “If we were to believe that Caesar was not assassinated, an enormous range of other implicated facts, both about Caesar and about the Roman history of his time in general, would have to be abandoned,” Pompa observed. This raises, of course, the issue of our general trust in the way information is communicated socially. “If we take the case of Caesar’s assassination, the first to know it would, no doubt, be those who participated in it or who witnessed it. From there, belief in it would be acquired by public communication, by word of mouth or by seeing or hearing of his funeral cremation and so on. By the time it came to the general constitutional muddle which ensued, or the measures which were eventually taken by Antony and Octavian against Brutus and Cassius, Caesar’s death would be so much a presupposition of what was going on in a large part of Roman constitutional life that it would already be beyond the rational possibility of doubt. But these are ways in which it would come to be an item of public knowledge for the Romans, rather than evidence for it. If anyone were to be asked why he believed that Caesar was dead, he might well refer to the way in which he had learnt of it, but

this would not, except in a few cases of those who saw his dead body, count as evidence for it. If the question were pressed further, most would simply fall back upon the answer that that was what everybody else believed. In part, of course, this amounts to saying that it becomes an item of knowledge as belief in it becomes more widely accepted and as its effects multiply. But it is not merely a matter of the wider dissemination of the belief. For it also becomes more deeply entrenched within that wider body of belief, and the practices which depend upon it, to a degree which, at a certain point, makes it impossible rationally to question it. After a certain time, belief in the event becomes so constitutive within a communal pattern of interlocking beliefs that there is no way in which doubts about it can rationally be entertained. Thus, if we were not prepared to accept that Caesar was assassinated, relying largely on the fact that, despite a lack of the availability of much evidence for most of the population, it has been transmitted to us as an item of public knowledge for the Romans, we would need, in turn, to disbelieve a very large part of Roman history as we have also received it.”

Or, if we apply Pompa’s discussion to Auschwitz, one could say that the non-existence of the gas chambers may seem a conceptual possibility, but cannot be a historical possibility because their historical existence is the *a priori* of most of our knowledge of the Second World War. Our knowledge of the gas chambers is not independent of, for example, our knowledge of the ideological radicalization of the Nazis after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa. In our understanding of the history of the Second World War, the operations of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the East, the deportations of German Jews from the West, the German treatment of Soviet prisoners-of-war, the expansion of the concentration camps, the first experimentations with Zyklon-B as a killing agent, and the adaptation of the morgues of crematoria 2 and 3 in Auschwitz into gas chambers are interrelated to each other. To challenge the existence of one of these facts would be to challenge all of them. This does not

mean that one may not reconsider one's interpretation of the meaning of those facts in their interrelationship to those other facts. While some like to emphasize the importance of one relation, others may attach greater weight to another relation. Yet the facts are there, supporting each other, and when a person desires to deny one fact, he must re-write the whole history of the Second World War.

From an epistemological perspective this may be less than ideal, but, as Pompa argued, centuries of experience teaches that by and large the social acceptance and transmission of historical fact has been reliable. "[W]hat has come down to us as fact is the product of a basically truth-preserving process." This does not mean that all beliefs we inherit were equally certain: some are seen as more, and some as less reliable. But, as Pompa noted, in those cases the tradition clearly earmarked such beliefs as less certain. In short, the wide range of certainty that historians ascribe to recorded facts are a proof of the general truth-preserving character of the process of transmission.

This excursion into the epistemological labyrinth that confronts every historian makes clear why the declaration by the 37 French historians that there can be no debate over the existence of the gas chambers showed a realistic assessment of the possibilities and limitations of historical investigation. It also shows why Faurisson's call for "a proof...a single proof" revealed the shallow amateurism of the dilettante. Yet the daily press was not the ideal place to provide a course in the complex epistemology of historical knowledge, and so what could and should have become a very important theoretical engagement concerning the historical (im)possibility that the gas chambers had not existed came to an early end

The one lasting result of the exchange of letters was that Faurisson had become well-known in France. Fame came, however, at a high personal price. Students at the university of Lyons-2 staged demonstrations against him, and in response the university administrators suspended

Faurisson's lectures. And the staff of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris, which had been Faurisson's main source of information, refused to serve him.

In the months that followed Faurisson also became known also abroad. In August 1979 the Italian magazine *Storia illustrata* printed a long interview with him, in which Faurisson's statements were left unchallenged. Hitler, so the French scholar declared, had not engaged any more in genocide than Roosevelt. Both had interned enemy aliens in internment camps: the latter the Japanese, and the former the Jews. Yet because he had not been able to intern all Jews, Hitler had forced those who were left in the cities and villages to wear a sign. "Those who wore the stars could not freely move everywhere at all times. They were like paroled prisoners. It seems that Hitler was concerned less with the Jewish Question than with ensuring the safety of the German soldier. The German soldier would otherwise have been unable to distinguish the Jews from the non-Jews. The sign marked them for them." Thus the segregation of Jews from the non-Jews occurred not for ideological, but for military reasons. To Faurisson, the fact that the Jews built 700 bunkers in the Warsaw ghetto proved their threat. Even the children challenged the military situation. "I know that sometimes that children between six and fifteen years of age could not constitute a danger and that they should not have been obliged to wear the star. But if one accepts this military logic, there exist today enough accounts and memoirs in which Jews tell us about the way they engaged, even as children, in all kinds of illicit activities or resistance against the Germans." Faurisson's logic was allowed to go unchallenged.

Shortly after giving his interview to the *Storia illustrata*, Faurisson crossed the ocean, to begin his missionary activity in the United States. In fact, his name had already become known in progressive circles. News had reached American academia that the French academic had been hindered in his pursuit of knowledge, and in response to that violation of academic freedom the following text was circulated,

and signed by several hundred academics. “Dr. Robert Faurisson has served as a respected professor of twentieth century French literature and document criticism for over four years at the University of Lyon-2 in France. Since 1974 he has been conducting extensive independent historical research into the “Holocaust” question. Since he began making his findings public, Professor Faurisson has been subject to a vicious campaign of harassment, intimidation, slander and physical violence in a crude attempt to silence him. Fearful officials have even tried to stop him from further research by denying him access to public libraries and archives. We strongly protest these efforts to deprive Professor Faurisson of his freedom of speech and expression, and we condemn the shameful campaign to silence him. We strongly support Professor Faurisson’s just right of academic freedom and we demand that university and government officials do everything possible to ensure his safety and the free exercise of his legal rights.”

The most prominent academic to put his name under the document was Noam Chomsky. Faurisson must have appeared to the famous linguist and public intellectual, who showed open disgust for the general subservience of the mainstream intelligentsia--“the herd of independent minds”--to the propaganda systems of their own governments, a fellow traveller worthy of support. The same year that he put his signature under the petition in support of Faurisson, Chomsky derided the proven willingness of many intellectuals to “disseminate propaganda concerning the evil practices, real or fabricated, of current enemies of the state. It is remarkable to see how susceptible intellectuals have been, over the years, to the machinations of the atrocity fabrication industry.” Faurisson did not belong to the herd, and therefore he deserved support.

Faurisson’s first stop was California, where he attended the first congress sponsored by the Institute for Historical Review. There he was to present a paper entitled “The mechanics of gassing,” but because he

felt that his English was rather bad, Faurisson asked a Canadian participant, Ernst Zündel, to read his paper on his behalf. It marked the beginning of an interesting relationship.

Faurisson's paper began with a discussion about the difficulty of gassing people as it imposed severe risks for the executioner. Therefore Höss's recollection that the crews began clearing the gas chambers *sofort* ("immediately") after the gassings did not make any sense, as too much hydrogen cyanide would have remained in the bodies and in the air pockets between them. "What kind of superpowerful fan is able to instantly disperse so much gas drifting through the air and hidden in air pockets?" the paper asked, and it continued with the observation that "it is abundantly clear from Höss's description that the fan in question must have been endowed with magical powers in order to be able to disperse all the gas with such flawless performance so that there was no cause for concern or need for verification of the absence of the gas!" Then the paper reviewed the Degesch instructions for handling Zyklon-B, which stipulated that rooms fumigated with the agent should be aired at least for 21 hours, and discussed at some length the danger for explosion. At the end the paper would once more consider the issue that, according to Höss, the Sonderkommando had entered the gas chambers "immediately" after the deaths of the victims. "I contend that this point alone constitutes the cornerstone of the false evidence, because this is a physical impossibility," Faurisson wrote and Zündel spoke. "If you encounter a person who believes in the existence of the 'gas chambers,' ask him how, in his opinion, the thousands of cadavers were removed to make room for the next batch?" As far as we know, no-one at the meeting rose to point out that, after gassing 2,000 people in the basement of crematorium 2 in one operation, even the Germans had to allow some time before "the next batch." After all, it would take the crematoria ovens of that same crematorium more than a day and half to incinerate the bodies.

Turning to the remains in Auschwitz, the paper mentioned that the gas chamber of crematorium 2 had been merely a morgue, and that it would have been too small to accommodate the between 2,000 and 3,000 victims mentioned by Höss. Then it mentioned the obliteration of traces. “Do not be deceived into believing that before their retreat the Germans blew up the “gas chambers” and crematory ovens to conceal any trace of their alleged crimes. If one wishes to obliterate all trace of an installation which would be intrinsically quite sophisticated, it must be scrupulously dismantled from top to bottom so that there remains not one shred of incriminating evidence.” The paper did not mention that eyewitnesses mentioned that, indeed, the gas chambers had been “scrupulously dismantled,” and that only after the perforated columns and ventilators had been removed the rooms were dynamited.

Then the paper turned to what was to become a focus of Faurisson’s studies in the next years, and which was to lead to the Leuchter Report nine years later: the design, technique and operation procedures of American gas chambers. “The real gas chambers, such as those created in 1924 and developed by the Americans around 1936-1938 offers some idea of the inherent complexity of such a method of execution,” the paper proclaimed. And there followed a lengthy description of the gassing procedure in American prisons, and the extensive safety precautions taken to prevent any accidents.

After discussing the American gas chambers, Faurisson returned to the German gas chambers. “If the Germans had decided to gas millions of people, a complete overhaul of some very formidable machinery would have been absolutely essential. A general order, instructions, studies, commands and plans would surely have been necessary also. Such items have never been found. Meetings of experts would have been necessary: of architects, chemists, doctors, and experts in a

wide range of technical fields. Disbursement and allocations of funds would have been necessary. Had this occurred in a state such as the Third Reich, a wealth of evidence would surely have survived.”

Faurisson’s paper generated a discussion, and Zündel especially liked its approach. Comparison between the structures in Auschwitz and American gas chambers was to be the key to the future of negationism, and was to provide the basis for Leuchter’s involvement in the Second Zündel Trial in 1988--an involvement that directly led to Irving’s adoption of the negationist position. On his return to France, Faurisson made a stop in Washington DC to give a lecture at the headquarters of the National Alliance, the American neo-Nazi party. Faurisson made use of his stop-over to visit and photograph the gas chamber in the State Prison in Baltimore, Maryland. He sent those photos to Zündel who, as Faurisson testified in the Second Zündel Trial, became obsessed by the American gas chambers, and urged Faurisson to continue his investigations in that direction. But, as Faurisson testified in Zündel’s 1988 trial, “I had some trouble after that that I could not really work on this question.”

Indeed, on his return home to France Faurisson became, once again, the center of public debate. In April 1980 the so-called Faurisson Affair was given new life with the publication of Serge Thion’s massive, 350-page long book *Vérité historique ou vérité politique? La dossier de l'affaire Faurisson. La question des chambres à gaz (Historical Truth or Political Truth? The File of the Faurisson Affair. The Question of the Gas Chambers)*. With the strong declaration of the 35 French historians, published in *Le Monde* on February 21, 1979, Faurisson had become the underdog opposed by the defenders of the status quo, and as such for the champions of the radical left, in search for a new cause to unmask the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie, Faurisson became their hero, and they began to fashion, in imitation of the “Dreyfus Affair,” a so-called “Faurisson Affair.” Thion, a left-wing radical, rallied to Faurisson’s case, and presented this as the logical consequence of his commitment to the

principles of freedom of thought. Yet it still remains baffling, however, to see with what ease Thion was willing to assimilate Faurisson's point of view, and categorically dismiss the great abundance of evidence that attests to the historical reality of the Holocaust. "What is thus most incredible for anyone preoccupied with this question is--given the enormity of the facts and the generality of their representation--the narrowness of the sources, once one is willing to eliminate the crowd of hearsay witness who in fact did not see. It is literally stupefying to observe that the centerpiece is the set of confessions before Allied tribunals by the heads of the German camps. Once one is prepared to imagine the situation of those defeated men, gambling with their own lives between the hands of their jailers, a paltry game in which truths and lies are the basic tokens in a tactic of survival, one will not be prepared to accept all their declarations as valid currency." A true defender of the underdog, be it the Algerian in his battle with the French Republic, the Vietnamese in their battle with the United States, Faurisson in his battle with the establishment, Thion even had no difficulty feeling sympathy for men like Höss or Frank when they were in the dock. To Thion, the Nuremberg war crimes tribunals had been not much different from the Stalinist show trials, and therefore they had no evidentiary value.

In a lengthy response to the book entitled "A Paper Eichmann," Pierre Vidal-Naquet refuted Thion's points. First of all he observed that there is much more evidence than Thion mentions. "I dare say as well that "hearsay witnesses who in fact did not see" also have something to teach us. When, for instance, a man is separated from the rest of his family and learns from former detainees that exit from the camp is by way of the smokestack, when there exists an immense amount of analogous testimony, when one knows that the interested parties never reappeared, such testimony is, all the same, deserving of some attention." Then Vidal-Naquet turned to the basic assumption that the trials would have been show trials. He observed that the Nuremberg trials, or

the Polish Auschwitz Trial, were of a radically different genre than the Stalinist show trials in which the accused, the police and the magistrates shared a common knowledge. “The first rule is that the accused adopt entirely the language of his accusers; but that rule, if characteristic of all trials of the Moscow sort, is valid for them alone. The second rule, which is fundamental, is that absolutely everything that the accused says, either during the official investigation or publicly at the trial, must be politically significant, in accordance with party policy.” In other words, show trials are carefully scripted, and somehow assume that they occur within a process of historical necessity that embraces all participants in equal measure. Consequently the accused know what part to play.

Within months after bringing Thion’s book on the market, La Veille Taupe published Faurisson’s *Mémoire en Defense--contre ceux qui m’accusent de falsifier l’histoire. La question des chambres à gaz* (*Testimony in Defense--Against those who Accuse me of Falsifying History: The Question of the Gas Chambers*). The true significance of the book, which made it the topic of conversation everywhere, was not to be found in the amalgamate of Faurisson’s scholarship, but in Noam Chomsky’s ill-advised preface. As we have seen, Chomsky had in 1979 signed a petition in support of Faurisson’s academic freedom to challenge the inherited account of the Holocaust, and one thing had led to another. Entitled “Some Elementary Commentaries on the Right to the Freedom of Speech,” Chomsky reviewed the reasons why he had signed the 1979 petition, and dismissed the outcry that had resulted from it. He stated that he had often signed petitions on behalf of people whose ideas he found detestable--Russian dissidents who supported American policies in Indochina--and observed that in those cases no-one had raised an objection. “If someone had, I would have regarded him with the same contempt that those who denounce the petition in favour of Faurisson’s right deserve, and for the same reasons.” Then Chomsky went on to contrast the freedom-loving practice in the United States

with the stifling intellectual climate in France. Back home, he proudly stated, Arthur Butz (“whom one may consider the American equivalent of Faurisson”) was not subjected to harassment, negationists had not been hindered in running an international conference, and the American Civil Liberties Union had defended the right of neo-Nazis to march through the largely Jewish town of Skokie. The French, in other words, had much to learn.

In his final paragraph he addressed the tricky question of Faurisson’s alleged antisemitism. “Let it be said that even if Faurisson were a rabid antisemite or a fanatic Nazi-supporter--and these are accusations that are levelled against him in letters that I have received and for which there is no space here to cite in detail--that has absolutely no bearing on his legitimacy of the defence of his civil rights. On the contrary, that would make the defence of these rights even more necessary since, once again, and for this there is evidence for many years, and even centuries, it is exactly the right to express the most dreadful ideas freely that must be defended most rigorously.” Yet, in the end, Chomsky said that Faurisson was really a kind of “relatively apolitical liberal.” Chomsky ended his preface with questioning the past attitude of Faurisson’s critics to the French war in Indochina, or to Stalinism. The implication was obvious: they were engaged in selective indignation.

The Chomsky preface initiated a second wave of publicity for Faurisson, which led, among other things, to a radio interview on December 17, 1980. Faurisson said, among many other things, that the alleged Holocaust was a historical lie that served a huge political and financial swindle that benefited the State of Israel at the expense of the German and Palestinian peoples. This statement led to Faurisson’s indictment under France’s Race Relations Law. At the same time Faurisson was also indicted under Article 382 of the Civil Code for willfully distorting history. Finally Faurisson faced a libel suit initiated by the French historian Léon Poliakov, whom Faurisson had accused of fabricating his sources with reference to the Gerstein report. The first two trials cer-

tainly put Faurisson in the position of the Dreyfusian underdog persecuted by the system, and brought him much publicity, and even sympathy. Absorbing all of Faurisson's energies to remain out of prison, the trials generated, however, not much new negationist "scholarship," and hence I will limit myself to the observation that Faurisson was convicted in each case.

By the mid 1980s Faurisson finally emerged from his legal troubles. By now he had become a very well-known figure. His theories had even led a book-length consideration of the issue by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, of which I quote here one of the more salient passages. "I have analyzed thousands of documents. I have tirelessly pursued specialists and historians with my questions. I have tried in vain to find a single former deportee capable of proving to me that he had really seen, with his own eyes, a gas chamber" (Faurisson in Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 1981:81) To have "really seen with his own eyes" a gas chamber would be the condition which gives one authority to say that it exists and to persuade the unbeliever. Yet it is still necessary to prove that the gas chamber was used to kill at the time it was seen. The only acceptable proof that it was used to kill is that one died from it. But if one is dead, one cannot testify that it is on account of the gas chamber.--The plaintiff [Faurisson] complains that he has been fooled about the existence of gas chambers, fooled that is, about the so-called Final Solution. His argument is: in order for a place to be identified as a gas chamber, the only eyewitnesses I will accept would be a victim of this gas chamber; now, according to my opponent, there is no victim that is not dead; otherwise, this gas chamber would not be what he or she claims it to be. There is, therefore, no gas chamber."

Published in newspapers, books by supporters, neutral observers and opponents, Faurisson's theory that Auschwitz had not been an extermination camp, and that the gas chambers were a legend fabricated to extort money from the Germans, had become part of public discourse.

It is therefore not surprising that when, in 1984, the Canadian- German publisher Ernst Zündel faced prosecution for Holocaust denial, he turned to Faurisson for help.

Zündel is the author of various neo-Nazi books with such tantalizing titles as *The Hitler We Loved and Why* and publisher of a range of negationist publications that included Thies Christophersen's *The Auschwitz Lie*, and Richard Verrall's (alias Richard Harwood) *Did Six Million Really Die?* This book began with the claim that it offered "irrefutable evidence that the allegation that 6 million Jews died during the Second World War, as a direct result of official German policy of extermination, is utterly unfounded." The Holocaust, in short, was a "most colossal piece of fiction and the most successful of deceptions."

In 1983 the Holocaust survivor Sabina Citron issued a private complaint against Zündel, who was charged under section 177 of the Criminal Code of Canada for wilfully publishing statements that he knew to be false and cause injury to a public interest. The charge concerned Zündel's activity as the author and publisher of *The West, War and Islam*, and his publishing of *Did Six Million Die?* The Crown assumed the carriage of the charge, and in 1984 indicted Zündel. In early 1985 Zündel was tried in the District Court of Ontario. District Court Judge Hugh Locke presided, attorney Peter Griffiths represented the Crown, and attorney Douglas Christie acted on behalf of Zündel. From the very beginning, two issues were central: the first was that of free speech, the second one Harwood's claim that the Holocaust was a hoax. The latter argument centred on Auschwitz, which is no surprise considering that Faurisson organized Zündel's 10-men research team. Throughout the trial the defence tried to make the case that no gassings had taken place in Auschwitz, and that therefore Harwood's book did not contain false statements.

Faurisson had cast himself in the role as an expert witness for the defense. In court, he claimed that the War Refugee Board report was one of “the three pillars of the story of the gas chamber.” Consequently, it was his job to demolish its credibility. Christie asked Faurisson why he attached no credence to the report. “[Defense Counsel]: “Now, in respect to this W.R.B. Report, you say because of the drawings respecting the gas chambers that are in the W.R.B. Report, and that in relation to the plans you found; is that right?” [Faurisson]: “Yeah.” Q.: “Any other reason why you say we should not believe the W.R.B. Report of Dr. Vrba and others?” A.: “The plan of Auschwitz, the plan of the crematorium.” Q.: “What about them?” A.: “They do not--they are nothing.” Q.: “What do you mean, they’re nothing?” A.: “When you see the reality of the place...” Q.: “Yes.” A.: “...It does not stand, that’s all. When you see on the same level a gas chamber, then a track to put the people, the bodies in the furnaces, and when you see that in fact this place which was a mortuary was underground, that you had a little lift, and on the--at the other level you had the furnaces...” Q.: “Yes.” A.: “...And the furnaces are not at all like they have been drawn by Dr. Vrba, and he said...” Q.: “What do you conclude from that, doctor?” A.: “I conclude that it is not exact.” Q.: “What do you conclude about the author of that, if he says it is exact? A.: “I say, ‘You say something which is not exact.’” Q.: “All right. So is there any other reason why we should not believe the W.R.B. Report?” A.: “Yes, because, for example, you have the report of the Polish major.” Q.: “Yes, which is part of the W.R.B. Report? A.: “Yes, I remember that, that there are many things; this Polish major says that the people were gassed by a hydrocyanic bomb.” After a diversion on the statement of another witness, Christie asked Faurisson if he had any other reasons to say that the War Refugee Board report should not be considered credible. He answered: “I think it’s sufficient for me.”

A couple of days earlier, one of the authors of the War Refugee Board report, Rudi Vrba, had testified for the prosecution. In cross-examination by Zündel’s defense counsel Christie, Vrba had given the following

explanation when challenged on the reliability of the drawings.

“Mr.Christie: “How do you explain the fact that you’ve drawn on the diagram that I showed you every crematorium the same shape in 1944, when you drew the diagram upon your escape?” A.: “Because I had only two days to write the whole report, and to try to depict the crematoria. There was a great urgency with that plan, because the objective of the plan was to get it to Hungary and to use this whole report towards the Hungarian Jews of imminent deportation. Under that conditions I didn’t lose much time with details like what is the difference between Krematorium I and II and Krematorium II and III, but I limited myself to depict the position of the gas chambers and crematoria [on] one side, and the geographic position of the whole murderous complex on the other side.” Q: “Sure. I now produce and show to you a diagram which came from, I suggest, your War Refugee Report of 1944 in which you depicted a crematoria. Correct?” A.: “That’s right.” Q.: “Is it accurate?” A.: “This I cannot say. It was said that as we were not in the large crematoria, we reconstructed it from messages which we got from members of the Sonderkommando working in the crematorium, and therefore, that approximately how it transpired in our mind, and in our ability to depict what we have heard.”

Prosecutor Peter Griffiths came back to Vrba’s statement when he cross-examined Faurisson. He asked the French professor if he had been in court during Vrba’s testimony. “[Faurisson]: “Yes. Yes.” Q.: “And did you hear Dr. Vrba say that when he drew those maps they weren’t meant to be architectural drawings but to give an idea of what was there?” A.: “Yes, yes.” Q.: “Does that change your opinion at all? A.: “It doesn’t change my opinion because it is like when he said that it was -- he used a Latin expression--licence as a poetarium.” Q.: “Poetic licence.” A.: “Poetic licence.” Q.: “For those of us who are not classical scholars.” A.: “So he used this expression, and I don’t think that it explains me anything of what he said in “I Cannot Forgive.” The same thing when he says, you see, it’s not the work of an architect. It doesn’t

change anything in substance, because when he says there were four-- nine ovens with four opening, they were around the chimney, all was on the same ground, there is a series of fantastic errors.” This was the sum-total of Faurisson’s ability to apply the “Ajax Method” to the War Refugee Board report.

On Faurisson’s suggestion, the defence had engaged Dr. William Lindsey, who had worked as a chemist for DuPont. Lindsey had been in Auschwitz where he had made a cursory examination of the gas chamber of crematorium 1, and he had studied the German documentation of Zyklon B. In negationist circles he was considered with respect since his publication of an article in the *Journal of Historical Review* entitled “Zyklon B, Auschwitz, and the Trial of Dr. Bruno Tesch.” In this article, Lindsey had argued that the allies had originally “invented” the Holocaust during the war as part and parcel of the usual atrocity propaganda, and that, after the war, they had decided to continue to push that story, against all evidence to the contrary, to cover up their own misdeeds and create a foundation for post-war allied solidarity. “With no “Holocaust” to take their place in the columns of the world’s newspapers, the many surreptitious, undercover activities, plans and responsibilities of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his proto-United Nations conspirators prior to, during and after the war--today still too-little publicized--would have come under immediate, murderous, and lasting scrutiny. This would have resulted in the United Nations wartime charges and the (still-vulnerable) “integrity” of this organization being ripped asunder in a manner which would have made the revelations about the Allied lies found in the World War I Bryce Committee Report on propaganda charges look by comparison like reports on a love feast. If the many plans already formulated diplomatically and formally or informally in war conferences were to be fully, irreversibly implemented as the planners wished, the “New” United Nations organization would have to meet the full support of those who might otherwise strongly oppose it. The wartime “atrocity propaganda” charges made

by the victors to inflame their soldiers and citizenry, and to justify and condone their own use of progressively more violent, ruthless measures against Germany and Japan, *simply had to be sustained after the war.*”

On paper, Lindsey showed the very kind of eloquence and argumentation which attracted Zündel, and he also seemed to know a decent amount about hydrogen cyanide in general, and Zyklon B in particular. But, as an expert witness, Lindsey’s performance was not very satisfactory. When Christie asked if he believed that either 2.5 million or even 1 million people had been gassed in the crematoria, Lindsey answered that “I find it, from my point of view, I find it is absolutely impossible to believe that. The method as described, the rate at which they can burn these bodies and carry out the gassing procedure, I find it’s impossible.” In the witness stand Lindsey showed very little eloquence, and contrary to the impression he had given in the many notes that accompanied his article, Lindsey proved unable to back up his opinions with demonstrable scientific facts, and therefore his testimony had failed to satisfy Faurisson’s demands. The case ended with Zündel’s conviction for publishing *Did Six Million Die?*, And he was sentenced to a prison term of fifteen months.

Despite Zündel’s conviction, Holocaust deniers celebrated the trial, soon to be known in their own circles as “The Great Holocaust Trial,” as a watershed. First of all, it had given them a very public platform, comparable to that which Faurisson had occupied in the late 1970s in France. Since then, Holocaust deniers had sought to engage Holocaust scholars in an open debate on the issues that divided them. Arguing that their “revisionist” or “heterodox” interpretation of the Holocaust is as legitimate as what they term the “exterminationist” or “orthodox” approach, they seek legitimacy by becoming a partner in discussion. Yet they did not get the opportunity because Holocaust scholars realized that there was no debating with people who are, in Lipstadt’s words, “contemptuous of the very tools that shape any honest debate:

truth and reason. Debating them would be like trying to nail a glob of jelly to the wall.” And so the examinations and cross-examinations of the expert witnesses of both sides took the place of the scholarly debate. For this very reason Faurisson, who had unsuccessfully called for a public debate, welcomed the trial “where the two sides found themselves face to face before a judge and a jury.” Therefore Zündel’s legal defeat could still be re-interpreted as a resounding victory for the negationist cause. “For the first time in modern history, the consensus reality most accurately described as Exterminationism, was tested and challenged in a court of law,” one of Zündel’s supporters claimed. Zionists, Holocaust historians, and the public at large, had been shown to have no answer to “the revisionist revelations within the Great Holocaust Trial.” Instead of addressing the “radical questions [the trial] has raised and the bedrock of previously censored facts it has unearthed,” those who pushed the Holocaust Hoax had only turned up “the volume on their hysterics.” “How pathetic they are, and how doomed to defeat. Slinking away from debate, hiding behind a judge’s robes and the scene-flats of tinsel town, the “Holocaust” hoaxers have an inevitable appointment with destiny. The seeds of their denouement were planted by Ernst Christof Friedrich Zündel, son of Swabian lumberjacks and peasants....On a snowy Sunday, on an eve of his judicial ordeal, Ernst announced to a small circle of friends, “When this trial is over, the ‘Holocaust’ hoax will be known as ‘Before Zündel and After Zündel.’” The proof of that prophecy lies not only in the head-spinner of Reagan at Bitburg, but in the renaissance of enthusiasm, solidarity and determination that has arisen among the rapidly-swelling ranks of revisionists world-wide, who are coming out of seclusion to form an unbeatable coalition of *activist* truth-seekers, eager to confront nothing less than the mind-polluters and enslavers of humanity.”

On appeal the ruling against Zündel was overturned on procedural grounds and a new trial was ordered, all who were to be involved in the second trial knew exactly what was to come. While there was a change

in the cast of characters who were to appear on the bench and represent the crown--District Court Judge Ron Thomas was to preside, and John Pearson and Catherine White were to conduct the prosecution--Christie was to represent Zündel again, and, as it became soon clear, Faurisson was once more to head the research team. Lindsey was not to be asked to testify in the second trial.

IX The Leuchter Report

“I see nobody on the road,” said Alice. “I only wish *I* had such eyes,” the King remarked in a fretful tone. “To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too.”

According to his own account, Fred Leuchter had never heard of Ernst Zündel, Robert Faurisson, or Holocaust denial until one morning in early 1988. “Like all American children born during and after World War II, I was taught about the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis on the Jews. By the time I had reached college, I had no reason to disbelieve any of my education, except that I had some problems swallowing the numbers of decedents, said to total better than six million persons. But there it stopped. I believed in the Nazi genocide. I had no reason to disbelieve. Some twenty-four years later, a very believing engineer sat at his desk working one snowy January afternoon in 1988, when the telephone rang. This very believing engineer was about to receive a very shocking history lesson which would cause him to question that fifty-year-old Holocaust lie and the application of that lie to generations of children. “Hello, this is Robert Faurisson”--and that very believing engineer would believe no more.”

The idea to engage an engineer to “prove” the Auschwitz gas chambers to be a hoax was not new. As we have seen, Arthur R. Butz had done his best more than ten years earlier by studying the material then available to him in Evanston, and Robert Faurisson had made a big issue of it in his writings from 1978 onwards, when he had become convinced that a comparison between the “alleged” gas chambers of Auschwitz

and gas chambers used for the execution of those condemned to death in various American states would yield great results. When he began to prepare for the Second Zündel Trial, Faurisson suggested that Zündel approach Bill Armontrout, Warden of the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri. Armontrout's prison included a gas chamber operated by cyanide gas. Constructed in 1939, it had been used 39 times. Zündel's legal aide Barbara Kulaszka wrote Armontrout, and the latter responded in a letter of January 13, 1988. "I received your letter regarding Queen vs. Zündel and the testimony of an expert witness dealing with execution by "gas chambers". I have considerable knowledge in that area, however, I suggest you contact Mr. Fred Leuchter, 108 Bunker Hill Street, Boston, MA 02192, home telephone number 617-322-0104. Mr. Leuchter is an engineer specializing in gas chambers and executions. He is well versed in all areas and is the only consultant in the United States that I know of."

Faurisson had found the man he had been looking for. After a few initial telephone conversations, and two trips of Faurisson to Boston, Leuchter left with Carolyn, his wife of two weeks, to Toronto to meet Zündel and his defence team. "Two days of lengthy meetings followed, during which I was shown photos of the alleged German gas chambers in Poland, German documents and Allied aerial photographs. My examination of this material led me to question whether these alleged gas chambers were, in fact, execution facilities. I was asked if I would go to Poland and undertake a physical inspection and forensic analysis resulting in a written evaluation of these alleged execution gas chambers, some at places I had never even heard of." Leuchter agreed, and left for Poland on February 25, accompanied by his wife, a draughtsman, a video-cameraman, an interpreter, and, "in spirit," Zündel and Faurisson, "who for obvious reasons could not accompany us in person, but who nevertheless were with us every step of the way." The party returned on March 3, having spent three days in Auschwitz and half a day in Majdenek. In those camps Leuchter studied the lay-out of

the crematoria--or better of what remained of them--and illegally took various samples of the brickwork and plaster, which he brought back to the United States to be analyzed by the Alpha Analytical Laboratories in Ashland, Massachusetts on residual cyanide content.

Back home, Leuchter wrote a report entitled *An Engineering Report on the Alleged Execution Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek Poland*, which Christie submitted to the court. The crown successfully challenged, however, Leuchter's credentials. Leuchter admitted that his formal education was in the humanities, that he had no engineering license, and that he had no expertise regarding chemistry, toxicology or incineration. As a result, Judge Thomas ruled that the Leuchter report could not be admitted as evidence. Leuchter, however, was allowed to testify on a very narrow range of issues: his observations of the camps, his taking of the samples, and the issue of the gas chambers. Yet while the jury never saw the report, Irving did, and as he testified, it led to his conversion to negationism. In fact, he was so enthusiastic that he became its English publisher. And so we will consider it in some detail.

Let us first of all allow Leuchter to present his methodology and conclusion. He used, as he wrote, a seven-step approach:

“

1. A general background study of the available material.
2. An on-site inspection and forensic examination of the facilities in question which included the taking of physical data (measurements and construction information) and a considered removal of physical sample material (brick and mortar) which was returned to the United States for chemical analysis.
3. A consideration of recorded and visual (on-site) logistic data.
4. A compilation of the acquired data.
5. An analysis of the acquired information and comparison of this information with known and proven design, procedural and logistic information and requirements for the design, fabrication and operation of actual gas chambers and crematories.
6. A consideration of the chemical analysis of the materials acquired on site.
7. Conclusions based on the acquired evidence. ”

In a section entitled “Synopsis and Findings,” Leuchter summarized the results of his seven--stepped approach as follows: “After a study of the available literature, examination and evaluation of the existing facilities at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek, with expert knowledge of the design criteria for gas chamber operation, an investigation of crematory technology and an inspection of modern crematories, the author finds no evidence that any of the facilities normally alleged to be execution gas chambers were ever used as such, and finds, further, that because of the design and fabrication of these facilities, they could not have been utilized for execution gas chambers. Additionally, an evaluation of the crematory facilities produced conclusive evidence that contradicts the alleged volume of corpses cremated in the generally alleged time frame. It is, therefore, the best engineering opinion of the author that none of the facilities examined were ever utilized for the execution of human beings and that the crematories could not have supported the alleged work load attributed to them.”

Before we go into a detailed discussion, it is good to note two things. The first is the very limited research he did before he left for Poland. During his testimony during the trial, he told the court that he reviewed some parts of Hilberg's *Destruction of the European Jews*, a De-gesch document on how to handle Zyklon-B which had been submitted as evidence in the Nuremberg Trials (NT-9912), a Dupont flyer on safety when handling its own brand of hydrocyanide, and some negationist literature, among which was the article by Lindsey on the Trial of Bruno Tesch, an article by a certain Friedrich Paul Berg on German Delousing Chambers, and Arthur Butz's *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*.

The second issue is that Leuchter did not attach too much significance to his samples. When Pearson asked him "what percentage of your conclusions is based on these conclusions you draw from the cyanide traces?" Leuchter answered: "Ten per cent." "[Pearson]: "What other-- what are the other foundations for your conclusion?" [Leuchter]: "The other foundations are that the facilities that I looked at were physically not designed and could not have been operations as gas chambers." Q.: "And what do you rely on for that conclusion?" A.: "I rely on my knowledge of gas chamber construction and design." Q.: "So you rely on your knowledge and experience as somebody constructing gas chambers in the United States for the purposes of executing one person as humanly as possible with as less danger to other people as possible." A.: "Partially." Q.: "Well, that's your only experience, isn't it?" A.: "It's my only experience at constructing gas chambers. I don't believe anyone has had any experience constructing larger gas chambers that took more than two people. But, the--" Q.: "Did you read the testimony of the commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss?" A.: "I did." Q.: "Okay. So, you've told us about your experience and you said that the hydrogen traces account for ten percent of your conclusion. What per cent of your conclusion is your experience in the construction of modern gas chambers?" A.: "Twenty, maybe thirty percent." Q.: "Okay. What else is

there then, please?" A.: "Good engineering design in terms of building structure, air moving equipment, plumbing equipment that would be utilized to handle the air and mechanical equipment that would be utilized to introduce gas and gas carriers into a structure." Q.: "And what percentage of your opinion is based on that?" A.: "Fifty or sixty percent." Q.: "And that is all based on the assumption that the physical plant presently at that location in Poland is what was there in 1942, '43, '44 and '45. Is that right?" A.: "That is correct." "

Given the fact that Leuchter himself based ninety percent of his conclusion on considerations of engineering, we do well to follow his cue, and concentrate on his observations as an engineer. I will provide first of all the full passage that contains his main observations on the gas chambers, and then analyze the various statements it contains separately. "Bunkers 1 and 2 are described in Auschwitz State Museum literature as converted farm houses with several chambers and windows sealed. These do not exist in their original condition and were not inspected. Kremas 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are described historically and on inspection were verified to have been converted mortuaries or morgues connected and housed in the same facility as crematories. The on-site inspection of these structures indicated extremely poor and dangerous design for these facilities if they were to have served as execution gas chambers. There is no provision for gasketed doors, windows or vents; the structures are not coated with tar or other sealant to prevent leakage or absorption of gas. The adjacent crematories are a potential danger of explosion. The exposed porous brick and mortar would accumulate the HCN and make these facilities dangerous to humans for several years. Krema I is adjacent to the S.S. Hospital at Auschwitz and has floor drains connected to the main sewer of the camp--which would allow gas into every building at the facility. There were no exhaust systems to vent the gas after usage and no heaters or dispersal mechanism for the Zyklon B gas to be introduced or evaporated. The Zyklon B was supposedly dropped through roof vents and put in

through windows--not allowing for the even distribution of gas or pellets. The facilities are always damp and not heated. As stated earlier, dampness and Zyklon B are not compatible. The chambers are too small to physically contain the occupants claimed and the doors all open inward, a situation which would inhibit removal of the bodies. With the gas chambers fully packed with occupants, there would be no circulation of the HCN within the room. Additionally, if the gas eventually did fill the chamber over a lengthy time period, those throwing Zyklon B in the roof vents and verifying the death of the occupants would die themselves from exposure to HCN. None of the alleged gas chambers were constructed in accordance with the design for delousing chambers which were effectively operating for years in a safe manner. None of these chambers were constructed in accordance with the known and proven designs of facilities operational in the United States at that time. It seems unusual that the presumed designers of these alleged gas chambers never consulted or considered the United States technology, the only country then executing prisoners with gas."

Let us consider this central statement sentence by sentence. "Kremas 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are described historically and on inspection were verified to have been converted mortuaries or morgues connected and housed in the same facility as crematories."

The sentence does not make any sense. I presume that Leuchter meant to write "[The alleged gas chambers of] Kremas 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are described historically and on inspection were verified to have been converted mortuaries or morgues connected and housed in the same facility as crematories." If this is what he meant, and I cannot imagine any other possible explanation for why he wrote what he wrote, we must ask how he had determined "on inspection" that all these alleged gas chambers had been morgues. While he could have done so safely in crematorium 1, where the space is still available for inspection, and while he could have inferred from the underground position of the alleged gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3 that these most likely would

have been designed as morgues, and while he would have found evidence in the blueprints provided by Faurisson that these places had indeed been designated as morgues (*Leichenkeller*), he could not have come to that conclusion studying the remains of crematoria 4 and 5. First of all virtually nothing is left of these structures except concrete slabs and some low walls reconstructed after the war, and the blueprints of these buildings do not show any designation of gas chambers as morgues. So it is unclear on the basis of what evidence he was able to come to a verification in the case of crematoria 4 and 5.

“The on-site inspection of these structures indicated extremely poor and dangerous design for these facilities if they were to have served as execution gas chambers,” Leuchter claimed. “There is no provision for gasketed doors, windows or vents; the structures are not coated with tar or other sealant to prevent leakage or absorption of gas.” It is a mystery how Leuchter, on the basis of the remains of the crematoria, could have come to this statement. With the exception of crematorium 1, the other four crematoria are merely rubble, a fact which Leuchter admitted in cross-examination, and which he also observed in the paper he presented at the Ninth International Revisionist Conference in 1989. Simply stated, there is simply not enough evidence remaining to establish if there were, or not, the gasketed doors, windows or vents. There is, however enough left to see that the walls had been plastered: in 1990 the forensic scientists of the Institute of Forensic Research in Cracow used plaster samples from the gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3 as the basis for their analysis of residual cyanide. Yet, undeterred by all of this, Leuchter had no hesitation to determine on the basis of the few remains of the gas chamber of crematorium 2 that the walls of that room had been rough, unsealed brick and mortar, and that those walls that had never been painted. This was important because, if the wall had been coated with tar or painted, the bricks that remained would have been protected from the hydrogen cyanide, and it would have been impossible for a chemical reaction to occur

between the hydrogen cyanide and the brick and mortar. But because he, or at least Faurisson, had aimed to establish that the absence of residual cyanide in the bricks pointed to the fact that no hydrogen cyanide had been used in those rooms, he had to postulate *a priori* that the walls had not been coated or painted. However, as we have seen, the remains of the rooms do not support such an assumption.

“The adjacent crematories are a potential danger of explosion,” Leuchter observed. His reasoning was based on the fact that hydrogen cyanide is combustible, and that because the gas chambers were located not too far from the incineration ovens, there ought to have been a danger for explosion. Yet during cross-examination Leuchter had to admit that hydrogen cyanide became combustible at 60,000 parts per million, and that it was lethal at 300 parts per million, that is at 0.5 percent of the combustion point. “ Q.: “And I want to ask you about your answer to me. I said it takes a higher concentration of hydrogen cyanide to exterminate insects than it does to kill human beings. You said no. We go to the Degesch manual and it says that it requires twenty times as much to kill beetles as to kill rats and it takes three times as much to kill rats [than] it does to kill humans.” A.: “Maybe it depends upon the insects. Most of the work that I’ve been looking at, they’ve been killing lice and ticks. And their recommendation for general fumigation purposes is three thousand per million.” Q.: “What is twenty times 833 parts per million?” A.: “What is twenty times 833 parts per million?” Q.: “Right.” A.: “16,600.” Q.: “16,600. So what Degesch are saying, the people who make the product, is that if you want to kill beetles, you should have a concentration of--of what, sir?” A.: “16,600, apparently.” Q.: “Right, And it takes three hundred parts per million to kill a human being in a matters of minutes?” A.: “Or more.” Q.: “In a matter of minutes.” A.: “Twenty minutes, fifteen minutes, yes.” Q.: “Right. And here they’re talking about a time of exposure from 2 to 72 hours, right?” A.: “Right.” Q.: “Now, you gave us as a conclusion about the danger of explosion, didn’t you?” A.: “Yes.” Q.: “This was a big

factor in your mind, this possibility of explosion. Did you look at the Degesch manual when it talked about inflammability?" A.: "I'm looking at it now, counsellor." Q.: "Page five?" A.: "Yes." Q.: "'Liquid HCN,' that is hydrocyanic acid, right?" A.: "Correct." Q.: "... *Burns like alcohol. Aaseous [H]CN forms an explosive mixture with air under certain conditions. The lower explosion limit, however, lies far above the concentration used in practical fumigation work.*" So, they tell us that if we're going to exterminate beetles, we have to have a concentration of 16,600 and they tell us if we have a concentration of 16,600, the lower explosion limit lies far above that concentration." A.: "The lower explosion limit is six per cent." Q.: "And what's six percent?" A.: "Six thousand." Q.: "Isn't it sixty thousand, sir?" A.: "Correct. Sixty thousand." Q.: "Sixty thousand parts per million of air. Right?" A.: "Correct, but you must understand that at the Zyklon-B material, when the gas is being given off, you have a percentage per volume of air of ninety to one hundred per cent. That means you have almost pure hydrogen cyanide at the carrier." Q.: "At the point where the Zyklon-B is vapourizing, I agree, you have a ninety-nine per cent concentration level. But how far did you tell us these ovens were from the chamber we are talking about?" A.: "150, 160 feet." Q.: "And doesn't gas diffuse, sir?" A.: "It may or it may not." Q.: "And what would its concentration be 150 or 160 feet away?" A.: "I have no idea and no one could answer that question for you." Q.: "Right, you don't know, do you?" A.: "Most people would tell you it's very dangerous." And thus Pearson effectively and publically demolished Leuchter's argument that there would have been a danger of explosion, as the concentration used in the gas chambers was around 300 parts per million., that is at 0.5 per cent. Irving, who was to testify the following day, was in the audience and watched it all. It obviously did not leave an impression.

"The exposed porous brick and mortar would accumulate the HCN," Leuchter wrote in his report, "and make these facilities dangerous to humans for several years." Yet in the trial he admitted that hydrogen cyanide had only a very short life--a few days at best, and that the only

way it would remain in the walls was if the cyanide would combine with iron present in brick or mortar to make the harmless pigment ferro-ferri cyanide, also known as Prussian blue.

“Krema I is adjacent to the S.S. Hospital at Auschwitz,” Leuchter observed, and he continued to assert that it “has floor drains connected to the main sewer of the camp--which would allow gas into every building at the facility.” He is right in observing a floor drain in the former gas chamber of crematorium 1. Yet there is no way in which he could positively determine if first of all this drain was “connected” to the main sewer of the camp, and second of all if the war-time camp possessed a “main sewer” at all: the main survey of the Polish military base that was to become the *Stammlager*, drawn up in December 1939, indicates that the water supply was by means of outside pumps while outside latrines had to serve the soldiers’ needs. Projecting expectations about the usual infrastructure of American military installations to Polish military barracks in the 1930s does not show much historic sense. But even if the drain was connected to a main sewer, it would have been very unlikely that the hydrogen cyanide would have been able to travel from the gas chamber to other buildings. Hydrogen cyanide is very soluble in water. The water would dilute the hydrogen cyanide to such a degree that it would become a harmless solution to be dumped in the Sola river. Once dissolved in the water, the hydrogen cyanide would not evaporate again to (possibly) penetrate into other buildings.

“There were no exhaust systems to vent the gas after usage,” Leuchter observed. Prompted by Christie, Leuchter repeated this, according to him, crucial piece of evidence at various points during his testimony. Discussing crematorium 2, he stated that he did not find any capability to ventilate the alleged gas chamber. “[Christie]: ‘In this on-site inspection, did you find any roof vent capabilities as indicated on the various drawings that were given?’ [Leuchter]: ‘there was no ventilation capability for this facility at all. The door to the facility, the one door, as you

can see, goes into the main area of the building, and it should be remembered that morgue 2 and morgue 1 and morgue 3 were all [under]ground. They were in actuality a basement for the building. They were floor level and they were ground level and with no structure above them. To the right of the building where it says 'Crematory', that was a structure that was ground up and was one and a half storeys with a stack for the furnaces. Now, these-- both facilities, as I said, were underground. This was Underground. There was only one door going to the morgue at that time and absolutely no way of getting air into the facility. There was a second door down at this end with a stairway, and in my opinion there will be no way of adequately ventilating this building and it would take a very long time since the only way you could allow the gas to come out would be through the stairway. Since there were no other apertures, it wouldn't even make sense to put an exhaust fan in because there would be no way of getting air into the building, because there was no air intake at any point in the facility." Without a proper ventilation system, the basement of crematorium II could not have been used as a homicidal gas chamber. "[Christie]: "And can you tell us why you hold that opinion?" [Leuchter]: "Yes, essentially for the same reasons that I felt that the mortuary at Krema I was not an execution gas chamber. The building was not sealed with tar or pitch in any manner. There was no ventilation system. There was no means at all for introducing the Zyklon B gas. There was a story in something I read in some of the available literature that there was a hollow column that the materials would drop through. All of the columns was solid reinforced concrete." When, during cross-examination, Pearson confronted Leuchter with a letter written by the leader of the Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung*, Karl Bischoff, which mentioned that Topf would proceed with "the installation in time for aeration [*Belüftung*] and ventilation [*Entlüftung*]" immediately when transport became available, Leuchter wrongly concluded that "this ventilation system was, in fact, the blower for the furnace. It had nothing to do with ventilating the alleged gas chamber area. Since Topf made it, we know they manufactured

furnace equipment, crematory equipment.” Yet the plans of the crematoria show that built in the walls of the gas chamber were ducts indicated in the drawings as “*Belüftung*” and “*Entlüftungskanal*.” The remains of this system can still be seen in the ruined east wall of the gas chamber of crematorium 3. Ignoring important evidence, and refusing to examine the blueprints in relation to the correspondence and the remains of the crematoria Leuchter had jumped to the wrong conclusion. There was a ventilation system.

If he had spent a little bit more time in Auschwitz, and consulted the archive of the camp, Leuchter would have been able to find independent confirmation in the testimony of Henryk Tauber, who had been a Sonderkommando in crematorium 2, and who had given testimony immediately after the war. “Besides that, in the gas chamber there were electric wires running along the two sides of the main beam supported by the central concrete pillars. The ventilation was installed in the walls of the gas chamber. Communication between the room and the ventilation installation proper was through small holes along the top and bottom of the side walls. The lower openings were protected by a kind of muzzle, the upper ones by whitewashed perforated metal plates. The ventilation system of the gas chamber was coupled to the ventilation ducts installed in the undressing room. This ventilation system, which also served the dissection room, was driven by electric motors in the roof space of the crematorium.” But Leuchter never even thought about cross-referencing his own observations, the German blueprints, and the testimonies of eye-witnesses. He could, for example, have found some use for the statements of the well-known Israeli artist Yehuda Bakon during the Eichmann trial. In 1943 the then fourteen-year-old Bakon had been imprisoned in the Czech family Camp in Birkenau, and there he had joined a squad of inmates who had to bring papers to be burned in the crematoria. As a result, he had been able to enter the buildings, and seen the gas chambers from within. In the summer of 1945, after his liberation, Bakon who was already

a talented draughtsman at the time drew various views of Auschwitz from memory. He showed them during his testimony. “ Attorney general: “What are you holding in your hand now?” Witness Bakon: “This is a view of the gas chambers and also Nos. 1 and 2 which were underground, and what one saw above. They looked like water sprinklers; I was curious and examined them closely. I saw there were no holes in them, this was just a sham; at first sight it seemed to be an actual shower-head. Above there were lights covered with wire, and in each gas chamber there were two pipes leading from the ceiling to the floor, and around them were four iron columns surrounded by strong wire. When the operation was over and the people were forced inside, the SS opened some device above, like a drainage pipe, and through it introduced Zyklon B.” Presiding Judge: “Did the gas remain in the middle of the chamber and spread from there?” Witness Bakon: “Yes.” Judge Raveh: “Is that what we see in the centre of the picture.” Witness Bakon: “Yes, there were two of these in each gas chamber in crematoria Nos. 1 and 2--that is to say, there were four; their dimensions were 40 x 40 centimetres; below were the ventilators and also holes for cleaning with water. Afterwards, when they dismantled the crematoria, we saw the ventilators separately.” Presiding Judge: “Were these air vents?” Witness Bakon: “Yes. There were several openings. One opening was for the purpose of ventilation and one for washing the floor.” Presiding Judge: “This drawing of the gas chamber will be marked T/1320.” Attorney general: “In order to make it quite clear, Mr. Bakon, what purpose did this ventilation serve?” Witness Bakon: “The ventilation made it possible for other people to enter at once.” Q.: “To ventilate the chamber after the killing?” A.: “Yes. The bodies were removed from the chamber, there was a lift there--actually it consisted only of boards 2 1/2 x 1 1/2 metres. I saw the lift on which they transferred the bodies to the top floor of that crematorium, from where there were rails of small trains with waggons, and they conveyed the bodies to the incinerators. I also saw the incinerators, and I remember that members of the Sonderkommando also showed me the crate in which they

collected the gold teeth, which were melted down into gold bars.” Q.: “What do you have before you now, in this picture?” [*Hands a picture to the witness.*] A.: “Crematoria 3 and 4--they were built in a different style--they were older.” Q.: “Are these the ones you mentioned in your earlier testimony?” A.: “Yes.” Q.: “At the end there is a small structure. What is that?” A.: “Here, there were two gas chambers, on the extreme right-hand side.” Attorney general: “I submit this to the Court.” Presiding Judge: “What does the arrow signify?” Witness Bakon: “The arrow points to the gas chambers, to the small structure containing the gas chambers.” ”

Leuchter did not consult the records of the Eichmann Trial, nor for that matter testimony given at other trials. During the cross-examination Pearson asked Leuchter why he did not consult any witnesses when he did his investigation. “ [Leuchter]: “I don’t know who I would speak to, sir, because I would submit that the person that I should speak to have would have to be someone who was operating the chamber. If I am to believe the literature, these people all died in the operation of the chamber.” Q.: “How about some of the people that cleared the bodies out of the chambers?” A.: “Well, from what I’ve been able to determine from most of the literature, these people are expendable and probably all deceased and were deceased shortly after the operation of the facility.”

The SS men who had been involved in the gassings had not been expendable, and Leuchter could have found some interesting testimony about the operation of the gas chambers from, for example, a well-known witness like Pery Broad, or a more obscure SS man like Hans Stark. Like Broad, Stark had been employed in the Auschwitz Political Department, better known as the “Camp Gestapo.” Stark provided during the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial useful evidence about the procedures in the Political Department, and the various ways of execution. One of these was gassing in crematorium 1. “As early as autumn 1941 gassings were carried out in a room in the small crematorium which

had been prepared for this purpose. The room held 200-250 people, had a higher-than-average ceiling, no windows and only a specially insulated door, with bolts like those of an airtight door. There were no pipes or the like which would lead the prisoners to believe that it was perhaps a shower room. In the ceiling there were openings of about 35 cm in diameter at some distance from each other. The room had a flat roof which allowed daylight in through the openings. It was through these openings that Zyklon B in granular form would be poured.” Stark participated in various of those gassings. Sometimes his business was to check the numbers. “About 200-250 Jewish men, women and children of all ages were standing at the crematorium. There may also have been babies there. There were a great many SS members present, though I could not say what their names were, plus the camp commandant, the Schutzhaftlagerführer, several Blockführer, Grabner and also other members of the Political Department. Nothing was said to the Jews. They were merely ordered to enter the gas-chamber, the door of which was open. While the Jews were going into the room, medical orderlies prepared for the gassing. Earth had been piled up against one of the external walls of the gassing room to ceiling height so that the medical orderlies could get on the roof of the room. After all the Jews were in the chamber the door was bolted and the medical orderlies poured Zyklon B through the openings.” One time Stark was ordered to pour Zyklon B into the room because only one medical orderly had shown up. It was essential, he claimed, that Zyklon B was poured simultaneously through both openings. “This gassing was also a transport of 200-250 Jews, once again men, women and children. As the Zyklon B--as already mentioned--was in granular form, it trickled down over the people as it was being poured in. They then started to cry out terribly for they now knew what was happening to them. I did not look through the opening because it had to be closed as soon as the Zyklon B had been poured in. After a few minutes there was silence.

After some time had passed, it may have been ten or fifteen minutes, the gas-chamber was opened. The dead lay higgledy-piggledy all over the place. It was a dreadful sight.”

Stark described the procedure at crematorium 1. In order to understand the slightly different arrangement at crematorium 2, Leuchter could have profited from Tauber’s testimony. “Crematorium 2 had a basement where there was an undressing room and a bunker, or in other words a gas chamber (Leichenkeller/corpse cellar)....The roof of the gas chamber was supported by concrete pillars running down the middle of its length. On either side of these pillars there were four others, two on each side. The sides of these pillars, which went up through the roof, were of heavy wire mesh. Inside this grid, there was another finer mesh and inside that a third of very fine mesh. Inside this last mesh cage there was a removable can that was pulled out with a wire to recover the pellets from which the gas had evaporated.”

These wire-mesh columns had been made in the camp metal workshop. One of the inmates employed there, the Pole Michael Kula, testified immediately after the war that he had made various metal parts for the Birkenau crematoria, including the four wire-mesh columns in the large gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3. As we have seen, Tauber had described the three structures of ever finer mesh. Within the innermost column there was a removable can to pull after the gassing the Zyklon “crystals,” that is the porous silica pellets that had absorbed the hydrocyanide. Kula, who had made these columns, provided some technical specifications. “Among other things the metal workshop made the false showers intended for the gas chambers, as well as the wire-mesh columns for the introduction of the contents of the tins with Zyklon into the gas chambers. These columns were around 3 metres high, and they were 70 centimetres square in plan. Such a column consisted of 6 wire screens which were built the one within the other. The inner screen was made from 3 millimetre thick wire, fastened to iron corner posts of 50 by 10 millimeters. Such iron corner posts were on

each corner of the column and connected on the top in the same manner. The openings of the wire mesh were 45 millimeters square. The second screen was made in the same manner, and constructed within the column at 150 millimeters distance from the first. The openings of the second were around 25 millimeters square. In the corners these screens were connected to each other by iron posts. The third part of this column could be moved. It was an empty column with a square footprint of around 150 millimeters made of sheet zinc. At the top it was closed by a metal sheet, and at the bottom with a square base. At a distance of 25 millimetres from the sides of this columns were soldered tin corners supported by tin brackets. On these corners were mounted a thin mesh with openings of about one millimeter square. This mesh ended at the bottom of the column and from here ran in the [Verlaenderung] of the screen a tin frame until the top of the column. The contents of a Zyklon tin were thrown from the top on the distributor, which allowed for a equal distribution of the Zyklon to all four sides of the column. After the evaporation of the gas the whole middle column was taken out. The ventilation system of the gas chamber was in installed in the side walls of the gas chambers. The ventilation openings were hidden by zinc covers, provided with round openings.”

These wire mesh columns do not appear in the blueprints of the crematoria. The reason for this is easily explained: first of all they only became part of the building’s equipment relatively late in the construction process. Originally crematorium 2 had not been designed to be a site of mass murder, and the space labelled as “*Leichenkeller I*” had indeed been designed to serve as a morgue and not as a gas chamber. The “mother” set of blueprints of the building were drawn up in that first phase, and they remained the basis of the documentation after the building’s purpose had been expanded to include gassing. Furthermore the wire-mesh columns had no structural function in the building. They were, in fact, more like pieces of equipment attached to four of the seven structural columns that supported the roof (most likely

columns 1, 3, 5, and 7), and therefore there was no need to draw up a new set of blueprints after the decision had been made to insert them into the morgue. As pieces of equipment it was relatively easy to dismantle these columns after the cessation of gassings and before the demolition of the crematoria, which explains why Leuchter did not find any remains.

These columns were connected to small holes that penetrated the concrete ceiling of the gas chamber, which opened to four small “chimneys” for lack of a better word. These are visible on one of the photos of crematorium 2 taken by the SS during construction, the aerial photos taken by the Americans in 1944, and have been described by, amongst others, Henryk Tauber. “The undressing room and the gas chamber were covered first with a concrete slab then with a layer of soil sown with grass. There were four small chimneys, the openings through which the gas was thrown in, that rose above the gas chamber. These openings were closed by concrete covers with two handles.” Tauber also witnessed the way the Germans inserted the Zyklon through these small chimneys. “Through the window of the incineration room, I observed how the Zyklon was poured into the gas chamber. Each transport was followed by a vehicle with Red Cross markings which entered the yard of the crematorium, carrying the camp doctor, Mengele, accompanied by *Rottenführer* Scheimetz. They took the cans of Zyklon from the car and put them beside the small chimneys used to introduce the Zyklon into the gas chamber. There, Scheimetz opened them with a special cold chisel and a hammer, then poured the contents into the gas chamber. Then he closed the orifice with a concrete cover. As there were four similar chimneys, Scheimetz poured into each the contents of one of the smallest cans of Zyklon, which had yellow labels pasted right round them. Before opening the cans, Scheimetz put on a gasmask which he wore while opening the cans and pouring in the product. There were also other SS who performed this operation, but I have forgotten their names. They were specially designated for it and

belonged to the “*Gesundheitswesen*.” A camp doctor was present at each gassing. If I have mentioned Mengele, that is because I met him very often during my work. In addition to him, there were other doctors present during the gasings, like König, Thilo and a young, tall, slight doctor whose name I do not recall.” Today, these four small holes that connected the wire-mesh columns and the chimneys cannot be observed in the ruined remains of the concrete slab. Yet does this mean they were never there? We know that after the cessation of the gasings in the Fall of 1944 all the gassing equipment was removed, which implies both the wire-mesh columns and the chimneys. What would have remained would have been the four narrow holes in the slab. While there is not certainty in this particular matter, it would have been logical to attach at the location where the columns had been some form-work at the bottom of the gas chamber ceiling, and pour some concrete in the holes, and thus restore the slab.

“The Zyklon B was supposedly dropped through roof vents and put in through windows,” Leuchter observed, “not allowing for the even distribution of gas or pellets.” Leuchter attached great importance to the even distribution of the gas, and this could not be obtained by inserting the Zyklon at some points. In cross-examination he was challenged on this assumption, which also had led Leuchter to conclude elsewhere in the report that, on the basis of his calculation of the ideal air-flow requirement, a gas chamber of 2,500 square feet could only hold 278 people. “ [Pearson]: “Some of the calculations that you made were based on the executed person occupying nine square feet?” [Leuchter]: “That’s correct.” Q.: “How do you calculate that measurement?” A.: “The space required is determined by what’s necessary for air circulation and those figures are normally used by all air moving engineers throughout the world.” Q.: “So once again, we’re talking about figures that you would use in the United States in 1988 to conduct the execution of a condemned person. Is that right?” A.: “Yeah, or in 1810. It doesn’t matter when it is, the requirements for moving air have stayed

the same.” Q.: “But would you agree with me that if you want the person to die quickly, if you put a premium on executing the person quickly, you want to have as much flow of air as possible. If you’re not really concerned about how long it takes, the amount of time it takes for the air to flow, it isn’t as important. Would you agree?” A.: “Within reason.” Unlike the State of Missouri, which stipulates in one of its statutes that an execution by gas should take occur as quickly as possible, the SS were not bound by any statute or protocol to ease the suffering of their victims.

“The facilities are always damp and not heated.” Essential for Leuchter’s argument was that the gas chambers had been operated on low temperature. “We know that the facilities in question were operated at low temperatures,” he testified in court. “We know that there would have been a considerable amount of condensation of liquid hydrogen cyanide on the walls, floor and ceiling of these facilities.”

Leuchter was even prepared to testify that “these facilities were operated at zero degrees fahrenheit or near zero temperatures and perhaps below that.” It is not clear on the basis of what evidence Leuchter came to this conclusion. There is, in fact, ample evidence that the gas chambers were heated. One piece of anecdotal evidence was given by Yehuda Bakon during the Eichmann trial. In 1943 he had joined a group of youngsters who had to pull a cart, the so-called *Rollwagenkommando*. “Q. “Who gave you orders where the cart should go?” A. “The Blockälteste (block elder) always went with us and he knew what we had to do. Our tasks were quite varied: Sometimes we had to collect papers, sometimes we had to transfer blankets, sometimes we had to go to the women’s camp to which other people did not have access. With the Rollwagenkommando we went through all the camps of Birkenau, A, B, C, D, E and F, as well as the crematorium.” Q. “You went into the crematorium?” A. “Yes.” Q. “Did you see the crematorium from the inside?” A. “Yes. We had to take wooden logs that were in the vicinity of the crematorium for the fire. Sometimes these had to be taken for regular heat-

ing in the camps. And when we finished our work and it was cold, the Kapo of the Sonderkommando took pity on us and said: "Well, children, outside it is cold, warm yourselves in the gas chambers! There is nobody there." Q. "And you went to warm yourselves inside the gas chambers?" A. "Yes. Sometimes we went to warm ourselves in the *Kleidungskammer*, sometimes in the gas chambers. It sometimes happened that when we came to the crematorium, we were told: "You cannot enter now--there are people inside." Sometimes, it was in crematorium 3, after they had been burned, we took the ashes, and in winter the ashes were to be used for the road." Q. "Did you use human ashes to spread on the roads?" A. "Yes." Q. "For what purpose?" A. "So that people could walk on the road and not slip." There are also German documents that attest to the fact that the gas chamber was heated (a fact which, as I have pointed out above, strongly suggests that that room was *not* anymore to be used as a morgue. The most important is a letter the chief architect of Auschwitz, Karl Bischoff, sent to Topf on March 6, 1943. In it, Bischoff discussed the heating of morgue 1 of crematorium 2. "In accordance with your proposal, the department agrees that morgue 1 will be preheated with the air coming from the rooms with the 3 installations to generate the forceddraught. The supply and installation of the necessary ductwork and ventilators must follow as soon as possible. As you indicate in your letter, the work should begin this week."

Both Bakon's testimony and Bischoff's letter demolish Leuchter's argument that the gas chamber of crematorium 2, and by implication of crematorium 3, was not heated.

"As stated earlier, dampness and Zyklon B are not compatible." For once, I have no complaint with Leuchter's assertion, yet it has become irrelevant.

“The chambers are too small to physically contain the occupants claimed and the doors all open inward, a situation which would inhibit removal of the bodies.” Surviving Sonderkommandos and Kommandant Höss claimed that the gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3, which were 210 m² each, held up to 2,000 people at a time. This meant some nine to ten people per square meter. Leuchter categorically refused to accept the possibility that 2,000 could be crammed in such a space, but during cross-examination he had to admit that he could not back up his judgement. “ [Pearson]: “Have you ever put 2,000 people into a room?” [Leuchter] “No. But I’m sure I couldn’t get them into that room.” Q.: “You’ve never done it, you have not conducted any experiments but you’re sure. Is that what you’re saying?” A.: “That’s what I’m saying. I don’t believe anyone else has either.” Perhaps more important is the fact that Leuchter was simply wrong when he stated that the doors all open inward. There is no evidence in the rubble of crematoria 2 to 5 to come to any judgement if the doors opened one way or another. The blueprints that have been preserved in the archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oswiecim, however, directly and convincingly refute Leuchter’s assertion. Drawing BW (B) 30/12, which shows Walther Dejaco’s drawing for the modification of the entrance to the basement of crematoria 2 and 3, shows that the doors to the gas chamber, indicated here as “*L.[eichen] Keller 1*”) swing to the outside; drawing BW (B) 30b, which shows Walther Dejaco’s design for crematorium 4, shows that the doors to the gas chambers, located on the left of the plan but depicted on the right of the elevation, open again to the outside.

“With the gas chambers fully packed with occupants, there would be no circulation of the HCN within the room.” It is undoubtedly true that packing the gas chamber with people did not aid the rapid circulation of the hydrogen cyanide. Yet the design of the hollow, perforated columns did help to allow the gas to reach the higher reaches of the gas

chamber, where the air was not displaced by the bodies, and where the heavy panting of panicking 2,000 people, or less, would--so one would assume--cause some circulation.

“Additionally, if the gas eventually did fill the chamber over a lengthy time period, those throwing Zyklon B in the roof vents and verifying the death of the occupants would die themselves from exposure to HCN.” This is an odd sentence, as the adverb “eventually” suggests that even Leuchter assumes that it would take some time before the gas would reach the roof vents. Nevertheless, during his testimony Leuchter repeated his assertion that the SS men dropping the Zyklon-B through the roof vents would face real danger. “The gas would come back up while they were doing this and probably kill all of the personnel operating the facility.” Pearson did not accept this reasoning, and forced Leuchter to address this issue once more during cross examination. “[Pearson]: “Now, hydrogen cyanide is slightly lighter than air?” [Leuchter]: “that’s correct.” Q.: “It means it rises slowly?” A.: “Very slowly.” Q.: “very slowly. So this stuff you told us about people on the roof who dropped the gas down and how they would be committing suicide, it would take a matter of minutes before the gas got to them, wouldn’t it?” A.: “Unquestionably.” Q.: “So, if they closed the vent and got off the roof, there would be nothing to concern them, would there?” A.: “If they got off the roof. But at some point they have to do an inspection to determine whether the parties are deceased.” Q.: “They send in the Sonderkommandos to do that, sir, and they don’t care what happens to them.” A.: “Right, all right.” ” In fact, for this purpose the doors of the gas chambers were equipped with spyholes. Again, Tauber’s testimony is rather specific on this point. “Crematorium 2 had a basement where there was an undressing room and a bunker, or in other words a gas chamber (Leichenkeller/corpse cellar)....From the undressing room people went into the corridor through a door above which was hung a sign marked “*Zum Bade*”, repeated in several languages. I remember the [Russian] word “*banya*” was there too. From the

corridor they went through the door on the right into the gas chamber. It was a wooden door, made of two layers of short pieces of wood arranged like parquet. Between these layers there was a single sheet of material sealing the edges of the door and the rabbets of the frame were also fitted with sealing strips of felt. At about head height for an average man this door had a round glass peephole. On the other side of the door, i.e. on the gas chamber side, this opening was protected by a hemispherical grid. This grid was fitted because the people in the gas chamber, feeling they were going to die, used to break the glass of the peep-hole. But the grid still did not provide sufficient protection and similar incidents recurred.” Also experience helped in guessing when it was time to turn on the ventilators. After a few gassings the men operating the gas chambers knew how long it took how many people to die as the result of how much hydrogen cyanide.

“None of the alleged gas chambers were constructed in accordance with the design for delousing chambers which were effectively operating for years in a safe manner.” One wonders why the Germans would have bothered to use the design of delousing chambers for their gas chambers. First of all, the delousing chambers were designed to operate with very high concentrations of hydrogen cyanide--between 40 and 70 times the concentration the Germans used to kill humans in Birkenau--and these concentrations were applied for a couple of hours. Secondly, the delousing chambers were, as Leuchter observed, designed in such a way that it guaranteed the highest possible safety for its users whilst allowing for the greatest possible efficiency in the quick loading and unloading of the chamber. The issue of safety was of lesser importance in the gas chambers, as the Sonderkommando who entered the room were expendable. Furthermore efficiency in the filling of the room with living people and retrieving their bodies afterwards was less important in the case of the gas chamber. While in the case of the delousing chambers the rate-determining factor was the technology of the room itself, in the case of the gas chambers it was in

the cremation process which, invariably went considerably slower than the gassing. In other words, the delousing rooms were designed to operate more or less continuously with high doses of hydrogen cyanide, with relatively short periods of down-time in between, while the gas chambers were designed to operate for very short times with low doses of hydrogen cyanide, while remaining idle for extended periods of time.

“None of these chambers were constructed in accordance with the known and proven designs of facilities operational in the United States at that time. It seems unusual that the presumed designers of these alleged gas chambers never consulted or considered the United States technology, the only country then executing prisoners with gas.” It is obvious that, in late 1941 or early 1942, a letter from Kommandant Höss to the Warden of, let’s say, the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri, which had been equipped with an state-of-the-art hydrogen cyanide gas chamber in 1939, would not have elicited a steady stream of collegial advice as to the design and operation of gas chambers. Furthermore, it is not clear why Höss would have bothered, as became clear in Leuchter’s cross examination. “[Pearson]: “Would you agree with me that the gassing process itself is not a very difficult or complex process? The difficulty arises in constructing chambers which meet the requirements of safety and humane execution.” [Leuchter]: “That’s probably true, yes.”

The fallacy of Leuchter’s reasoning, which went back to Faurisson, was the assumption that American gas chambers would be comparable with German gas chambers. First of all, in the case of the American types, all was designed to provide for a quick and, given the circumstances, “humane” execution that not only satisfies the sense of decency of the witnesses who, seated in an adjacent room equipped with air-sickness bags, can see all through a glass window, but also preempts a possible constitutional challenge on the grounds of “cruel and unusual” punishment. This means, in the case of gas chambers, that

everything is designed to introduce the gas immediately after the execution command is given, and to ensure that the concentration of gas in the room reaches quickly such a level that death follows immediately. Related to the necessary “constitutionality” of the American gas chambers and the irrelevance of this notion in the case of the Auschwitz killing installations is the fact that the former are, in a sense, only the last station in a long, ritualized path that takes the condemned a week to travel, and that provides both a sense of legality while dissolving at the same time any possibility of individual accountability. Michael Lesy wrote in his *The forbidden Zone* that, “[s]ince there’s no holy law to protect them, prison officials rely on a system of divided responsibilities.” “Procedures are so fragmented that no single person remains responsible. All actions are mediated by others or shared with other. Everything is done by administrative decree and court order, conveyed from person to person, down a chain of command and obedience: “I-did-what-I-did-because-he-did-what-he-did.” By the time a death sentence is carried out, it’s impossible to accuse any particular person of anything. In Georgia, murderers die, but no one man ever kills them.” The whole ritual develops on the understanding that it may be stopped, even a second before the final command, because of a last-minute stay of execution. The situation in Auschwitz could not have been more different.

We have now considered every word of the paragraph devoted to the Auschwitz gas chambers in the section entitled “Design and Procedures at the Alleged Execution Gas Chambers.” It is clear that almost all his engineering opinion concerning the crematoria at Auschwitz must be defined as uninformed rubbish. It is important here to remember that Leuchter attached great significance to his observations as an engineer: in fact, as he claimed in the Toronto court, 90% of his conclusion that no homicidal gassings could have taken place in the Auschwitz gas chambers were based on these observations.

Despite the fact that Leuchter adamantly asserted that the Auschwitz “facilities” could not have worked as gas chambers, he was in the end prepared to calculate how many people could have been killed in these spaces (I presume if they would have worked). “The alleged gas chamber in each of Kremas 2 and 3 had an area of 2500 sq. ft. This would accommodate 278 people based on the 9 square foot theory.” Leuchter assumed that it would take a week to ventilate the room as he had not found evidence of a ventilation system, and so, with a sleight of hand, the daily extermination capacity became a weekly one. Crematoria 2 and 3 had been in operation for a total of 84 and 72 weeks respectively, and thus Leuchter came to a maximum extermination capacity of 23,352 persons for crematorium 2 and 20,016 persons for crematorium 3. Using a similar approach, he concluded that the gas chambers of crematorium 4 could kill 209 people daily/weekly, and those of crematorium 5 could kill 570 on a daily thus weekly basis. As each of these had been in operation for 80 weeks, the maximum extermination capacity for crematorium 4 had been 16,720 people and crematorium 5 had been able to gas a total of 45,600 people. This gave a total of 105,688--a number that did not include the 6,768 people who could have been killed in crematorium I, or the people killed in Bunkers I and II--gassing installations for which Leuchter did not provide any data.

It is clear that Leuchter’s numbers are wrong. First of all if one refuses to assume that the gas chambers could be used only once a week, we come to a total of $7 \times 105,688 = 739,816$. If then one assumes instead of a density of one person per nine square feet a more realistic figure of one person per two square feet, then one comes to a killing capacity of above 3.3 million victims for the four crematoria of Birkenau as they operated between the Spring of 1943 to the fall of 1944. If one adds to this the killing capacity of crematorium I and Bunkers I and II, the figure becomes even higher, rising to at least 3.5 million people.

Leuchter did not only study the technology of the gas chambers. He also was prepared to act as an expert witness for the construction of incinerators. He wrote in his unique style that “a consideration of crematories, both old and new, must be made to determine the functionality of the German Kremas at accomplishing their attributed tasks.” It is important to note that, during cross-examination, Leuchter had to admit that he had no expert knowledge of crematories. “

[Pearson]: “Now, you devote in your report, one, two, three, four, five, six--seven paragraphs to gas chambers and you devote one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen--seventeen sections or paragraphs to crematoriums.” [Leuchter]: “I’m not sure that is entirely true, counsellor, because there’s information interspersed throughout this as necessary.

You’re simply going by the section headings and I would submit if you would read each section in each paragraph, you would see that the two are intertwined and there is information contained on gas chambers throughout.” Q.: “Well, unfortunately I haven’t been given an opportunity to read it so you’ll have to bear with me. I’m just going by the headings. What expertise do you have with designing crematoriums?” A.:

“Nothing in design, sir.” Q.: “All right. Do you operate a crematorium?”

A.: “No.” Q.: “What experience do you have with crematoriums?” A.: “I

made a determination before and after I began this project to apprise myself of crematorium design and operation. I consulted with a number of the crematorium manufacturers, I received data from these manufacturers on instruments that are used for cremation, and likewise, I visited two crematories and I watched the entire operation several times and the cremation of a number of corpses from the start of putting the corpses into the retort, until the bones were crushed and the ashes were put into the urn.” Q.: “You said both before and after you were retained. What made you look into this before you were retained?” A.: “There’s a misunderstanding there, counsellor. What I said before and after I went to Poland.” Q.: “All right. Sorry. So once again,

we’re talking about knowledge that you picked up since February when

you were retained, I will suggest on a part-time basis or while you were working on one of a number of projects that your company was engaged in. Is that right?" A.: "Most likely, yes." Q.: "And I suggest, sir, that that really doesn't give you the expertise required to give opinions and extrapolate with respect to crematoriums." A.: "Only to the extent, sir, that it is common and expected of an engineer that's dealing with any given problem to investigate the problem and then to investigate procedures relative to that problem." Q.: "Sir, you went to school in Massachusetts?" A.: "I did." Q.: "Do they give degrees of engineering in Massachusetts?" A.: "Some schools do." Q.: "For instance, does MIT give out degrees in engineering?" A.: "It does." Q.: "You don't have a degree in engineering, do you?" A.: "No, I do not." Consequently, the court rejected Leuchter's qualifications as an expert witness of the design and construction of crematories.

Leuchter's lack of expertise did not prevent either Zündel nor Irving including Leuchter's observations on the Auschwitz crematoria and his conclusions regarding the total incineration capacity of these installations for the period that they were in operation. After a short historical introduction, in which he observed that Orthodox Judaism forbade cremation, he reviewed modern practices. "Earlier retorts were simply a drying or baking kiln and simply dried the human remains. Modern retorts of brick-lined steel actually blow fire from a nozzle onto the remains setting them afire, causing combustion and rapid burning.... These modern retorts or crematories burn at a temperature of 2000+°F, with an afterburner temperature of 1600°F. This high temperature causes the body to combust and consume itself, allowing for the burner to be shut down....At 2000°F or more with a 2500 cfm blowered air supply from the outside, modern retorts will cremate one corpse in 1.25 hours. Theoretically, this is 19.2 in a 24 hour period. Factory recommendations for normal operation and sustained use allow for three (3) or less cremations per day. Older oil, coal and coke furnaces with forced air (but no direct flame application) normally

took 3.5 to 4 hours for each corpse. Theoretically, this could allow for 6.8 corpses in a 24 hour time period at a maximum. Normal operation permits a maximum of three (3) cremations in a 24 hour time period. These computations are based on 1 corpse per retort per cremation.” This led Leuchter to the conclusion that, with 3 furnaces with 2 muffles each, crematorium 1 would have had a theoretical incineration rate of $(6 \times 6.8 =)$ 40.8 corpses per day, and a “real-time” rate of $(6 \times 3 =)$ 18 corpses per day. Crematoria 2 and 3 could have incinerated then “theoretically” $(15 \times 6.8 =)$ 102 and practically $(15 \times 3 =)$ 45 corpses per day, and crematoria 4 and 5 respectively $(8 \times 6.8 =)$ 54.4 and $(8 \times 3 =)$ 24. This resulted in a combined daily incineration capacity in Auschwitz of 353.6 (theoretical) or 156 (practical). These numbers led Leuchter to infer that, over the history of the crematoria which operated over a minimum of 72 weeks (crematoria 1 and 3) and a maximum of 84 weeks (crematorium 2), the total number of cremations would have been 193,576 (theoretical) and 85,092 (practical).

As with his calculations for the gas chambers, Leuchter operated in a make-believe universe, in which he consulted neither German documents nor the testimony of witnesses. Leuchter claimed that, before his journey to Poland, he had studied Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Hilberg mentioned in note 110 in Chapter Nine, “Killing Center Operations,” a letter written by the Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung. Dated June 28, 1943, the letter reads as follows: “ 28 June, 1943. Concerns: the completion of crematorium 3. Reference: none To the SS-Administrative and Economic Head Office, department C, SS-Brigadeführer and General Major Dr. Ing. Kammler Berlin--Lichterfelde--West Unter den Eichen 120-135. Report the completion of crematorium 3 at 26 June 1943. Therewith all the crematoria ordered have been completed. Capacity of the now available crematoria per 24 hours: 1. old crematorim 1 3 x 2 muffle ovens 340 persons 2. new crematorium 2 in KGL 5 x 3 muffle ovens 1,440 persons 3. new crematorium 3 5 x 3 muffle ovens 1,440 persons 4. new crematorium 4 8

muffle oven 768 persons 5. new crematorium 5 8 muffle oven 768 persons Total per 24 hours 4,756 persons The leader of the Central Building Administration of the Waffen SS and Police Auschwitz, Signed: Jahrling SS-Sturmbannführer. Cc: dossier--Janisch dossier--Kirschnek file KGL BW 30. " In short, according to a war-time German document, the daily incineration capacity of the five Auschwitz crematoria was 4,756 corpses per day. In his cross-examination, Pearson confronted Leuchter with Hilberg's reference. " [Pearson]: "Now, that document suggests that there is a capacity on a twenty-four hour period of 4,756 persons in the crematoriums?" [Leuchter]: "Yes." Q.: "That's quite different from your report, isn't it?" A.: "It is." Q.: "Have you looked at that document before?" A.: "I have never seen that document before."

Each of the ovens of crematoria 2 to 5 were calculated to have a capacity of 96 corpses per day ($15 \times 96 = 1,440$; $8 \times 96 = 768$), or an average of four corpses per muffle per hour. Is this German statistic possible? If one followed normal civilian practice, *in which it is absolutely essential to preserve the identity of the remains from the beginning of incineration to the final gathering of the ashes*, the German figures are absurd. It would be impossible to insert a body in the muffle, cremate it, and remove the remaining bones and ashes within fifteen minutes. But the situation changes radically when the identity of the remains ceases to be important. First of all, if the size of the muffle permits, it becomes possible to insert more than one corpse at the same time, and furthermore it becomes feasible to create something of a continuous process, in which, after initial heating of the incinerators, the burner can be turned off, thus making full use of the phenomenon that at the right temperature the body will combust and consume itself without any further application of an external source of energy.

Henryk Tauber, who worked the incinerators of both crematorium 1 and 2, gave in his testimony an extensive description of the incineration procedures, and implicitly confirmed the validity of the German figures. "In crematorium 1, there were three, two-muffle furnaces, as I

have already mentioned. Each muffle could incinerate five human bodies. Thirty corpses could be incinerated at the same time in this crematorium. At the time when I was working there, the incineration of such a charge took up to an hour and a half, because they were the bodies of very thin people, real skeletons, which burned very slowly. I know from the experience gained by observing cremation in Krematorium 2 and 3 that the bodies of fat people burn very much faster. The process of incineration is accelerated by the combustion of human fat which thus produces additional heat.” If we take Tauber’s figures, it would take 17 hours to incinerate the 340 corpses mentioned in the letter of June 28, 1943.

Tauber provided a very detailed account of the incineration procedure in crematorium 2. “As I have already said, there were five furnaces in crematorium 2, each with three muffles for cremating the corpses and heated by two coke-fired hearths. The fire flues of these hearths came out above the ash boxes of the two side muffles. Thus the flames went first round the two side muffles then heated the centre one, from where the combustion gases were led out below the furnace, between the two firing hearths. Thanks to this arrangement, the incineration process for the corpses in the side muffles differed from that of the centre muffle. The corpses of “*Müselmanns*” or of wasted people with no fat burned rapidly in the side muffles and slowly in the centre one. Conversely, the corpses of people gassed directly on arrival, not being wasted, burned better in the centre muffle. During the incineration of such corpses, we used the coke only to light the fire of the furnace initially, for fatty corpses burned of their own accord thanks to the combustion of the body fat. On occasion, when coke was in short supply, we would put some straw and wood in the ash bins under the muffles, and once the fat of the corpse began to burn the other corpses would catch light themselves. There were no iron components inside the muffle. The bars were of chamotte, for iron would have melted in the furnace, which reached 1,000 to 1,200° Celsius. These chamotte bars were ar-

ranged crosswise. The dimensions of the door and the opening of the muffles were smaller than the inside of the muffle itself, which was 2 meters long, 80 centimeters wide and about 1 meter high. Generally speaking, we burned 4 or 5 corpses at a time in one muffle, but sometimes we charged a greater number of corpses. It was possible to charge up to 8 "*Müselmanns*." Such big charges were incinerated without the knowledge of the head of the crematorium during air raid warnings in order to attract the attention of airmen by having a bigger fire emerging from the chimney. We imagined that in that way it might be possible to change our fate. The iron components, in particular fire bars, still to be found in the camp, were from the fireboxes. Crematorium 2 had fire bars of heavy angle iron. Crematoria 4 and 5 were fitted with fire bars in the form of a lance, or rather were like swords with handles." After the description of the installation, Tauber recalled how on the first day, 4 March, they operated the ovens in the presence of observers from the Political Section, representatives of the Berlin headquarters, and engineers of Topf. For this occasion, the Political department had taken care to provide 45 bodies of well-fed victims recently killed in Bunker 2. "Via the lift and the door leading to the furnace room, we took out the bodies and placed them two or three at a time on trolleys of the type I described for crematorium 1 and charged them into the different muffles. As soon as all the muffles of the five furnaces had been charged, the members of the commission began to observe the operation, watch in hand. They opened the muffle doors, looked at their watches, expressed surprise at the slowness of the cremation process. In view of the fact that the furnaces were not yet hot enough, even though we had been firing them since the morning, and because they were brand new, the incineration of this charge took about 40 minutes." Tauber went on to explain that later on incineration became more efficient, and they could incinerate two loads per hour. In fact, the Sonderkommando tried to overload the muffles, because this would allow them some free time. "According to the regulations, we were supposed to charge the muffles every half hour. Ober Capo

August explained to us that, according to the calculations and plans for this crematorium, 5 to 7 minutes was allowed to burn one corpse in a muffle. In principle, he did not let us put more than three corpses in one muffle. Because with that quantity we were obliged to work without interruption, for as soon as the last muffle was charged, the contents of the first had been consumed. In order to be able to take a pause during the work, we would charge 4 or 5 corpses in each muffle. The incineration of such a charge took longer, and after charging the last muffle, we had a few minutes' break until the first one was again available. We took advantage of this free time to wash the floor of the furnace room, as a result of which the air became a little cooler." According to Tauber's testimony, the incinerators of crematorium 2 should burn, according to the regulations, $(15 \times 2 \times 3 =)$ 90 bodies per hour. This would mean that the official daily capacity of 1,440 would be reached in 16 hours of operation $(90 \times 16 = 1,440)$.

Kommandant Rudolf Höss confirmed Tauber's account. In 1946 he wrote in Polish captivity that "the two large crematories were built in the winter of 1942-43 and brought into service in the spring of 1943." "Each had five ovens with three doors [retorts] per oven and could cremate about two thousand bodies in less than twenty-four hours. Technical difficulties made it impossible to increase the capacity. Attempts to do this caused severe damage to the installations.... The two smaller crematories [4 and 5] were capable of burning about 1,500 bodies in twenty-four hours, according to the calculations made by the construction company called Topf of Erfurt." A few pages later, in a different context, Höss returned to the issue of concerning the incineration capacity of the crematoria. "Depending on the size of the bodies, up to three corpses could be put in through one oven door at the same time. The time required for cremation also depended on the number of bodies in each retort, but on average it took twenty minutes. As previously stated, Crematories 2 and 3 could cremate two thousand bodies in twenty-four hours, but a higher number was not possible without

causing damage to the installations. Crematories 4 and 5 should have been able to cremate 1,500 bodies in twenty-four hours, but as far as I know this figure was never reached.”

There are two more indications that the Topf ovens could, indeed, handle numbers far greater than what Leuchter claimed. The first is a recently discovered note written by Topf engineer Kurt Prüfer on September 8, 1942. Addressed to the SS, Prüfer calculated the daily incineration capacity of the three double muffle ovens of crematorium 1 as 250 corpses, the five triple muffle ovens of crematoria 2 and 3 as 800 corpses each, and the eight muffle ovens of crematoria, 4 and 5 as 400 corpses each. In short, according to Prüfer, the daily incineration capacity was to be 2,650 corpses. While Prüfer’s figures are only 55% of those given by Bischoff, they are still 16 times Leuchter’s practical incineration capacity, and 7 1/2 times Leuchter’s theoretical incineration rate. When considering Prüfer’s figures, it must be remembered that, with the contracts signed, it was in his interest to provide very conservative numbers, as the Topf firm was to be accountable for the functioning of the ovens.

A final indication that the testimony of Tauber and Höss may be trusted, and that the Topf ovens had a much larger capacity than Leuchter claimed, can be found in the patent application T 58240 Kl. 24 for a “Continuous Operation Corpse Incineration Furnace for Intensive Use,” filed by Topf on November 5, 1942. In the first paragraph the application referred to the situation in the camps in the East. “In the gathering camps in the occupied territories in the East with their high mortality rate, as they are affected by the war and its consequences, it has become impossible to bury the great number of deceased inmates. This is the result of both the lack of space and personnel and the immediate and longterm danger to that immediate and farther surroundings that is caused by the burial of the dead who often succumbed to infectious diseases. Therefore there is a need to quickly, safely and hygienically dispose of the constantly great number of corpses. In that

process it will, of course, be impossible, to operate according to the legal stipulations that are valid in the territory of the Reich. Thus it will be impossible to reduce to ashes only one corpse at a time, and the process cannot be done without extra heating. Instead it will be necessary to incinerate continuously and simultaneously many corpses, and during the duration of the incineration the flames and the gasses of the fire will have to engage the corpses to be incinerated directly. It will be impossible to separate the ashes of the simultaneously incinerated, and the ashes can only be handled together. Therefore one should not really talk in the depicted disposition of corpses of "incineration," but it really concerned here corpse burning. To realize such corpse burning--following the principles sketched above--a number of multi-muffle ovens were installed in some of those camps, which according to their design are loaded and operated periodically. Because of this these ovens do not fully satisfy, because the burning does not proceed quickly enough to dispose off in the shortest possible time the great number of corpses that are constantly presented." It is clear that the ovens referred to in the last paragraphs are the multi-muffle ovens supplied by Topf to Auschwitz.

The patent application describes the continuous cremation furnace as a structure in which the corpses are inserted at the top, and as they slowly slide down a system of inclined grids they are quickly reduced to ashes. It does not provide data as to the capacity of the furnace, but in 1985 the consulting engineers Klaus and Christel Kunz made, in consultation with Rolf Decker, manager of incinerator production at the Ruppmann company in Stuttgart, an engineering assessment of Topf's continuous cremation furnace. They assumed that the furnace could be initially loaded with 50 corpses, and in the upper part of the furnace the bodies would dry out through evaporation; having allowed to fall into the second part these corpses would be burned, while the first part would be reloaded. Having been allowed to fall into the third part of the furnace, the remains would be completely reduced to ashes.

“On the basis of the plan one may only theoretically calculate the capacity and duration, because exact data can only be determined through practical trials. Nevertheless it is quite conceivable to introduce, when the object is appropriately dimensioned, some 50 corpses on the shelf, assuming it has a length of 25 meters. The process of evaporation in position a should take some 15 minutes, so that at a continuous operation one could arrive at an incineration capacity of around 4,800 corpses per 24 hours. Pre-heating of such an oven should take at least two days. After this preheating the oven will not need any more fuel due to the heat produced by the corpses. It will be able to maintain its necessary high temperature through self-heating. But to allow it to maintain a constant temperature, it would have become necessary to introduce at the same time so-called well-fed and so-called emaciated corpses, because one can only guarantee continuous high temperatures through the emission of human fat. When only emaciated corpses are incinerated, it will be necessary to add heat continuously. The results of this would be that the installation could be damaged because of the thus created temperatures and one would expect shorter or longer breakdowns.” The report ended with the assertion that it should be possible to increase, after some initial experience, the initial load from 50 to 100 corpses. This would increase the loading rhythm from every 15 to every 20 minutes, and as a result the daily capacity would increase from $(50 \times 60/15 \times 24 =)$ 4,800 corpses to, at least theoretically, $(100 \times 60/20 \times 24 =)$ 7,200 corpses. It is unclear if the incinerator would have ever worked. What is important, however, is that both the text of the patent application and the design of the incinerator makes the incineration process described in Tauber’s testimony not merely plausible, but indeed probable.

With both a war-time German document stating that the daily incineration capacity of the crematoria came close to 4,500 corpses per day, two independent testimonies corroborating this range of cremation capacity, and a war-time patent application by the makers of the ovens

which corroborate the incineration procedure described in these testimonies, there is little reason to dwell much longer with Leuchter's assertion that the theoretical incineration rate was a whole order of magnitude smaller, and that the practical incineration rate was with 156 corpses per day a little over 3 per cent of the official German rate.

Finally I turn to the issue of the samples. As we have seen, Leuchter did not find them too important, but because their alleged evidentiary value impressed Irving, Faurisson, and so many others, it is necessary to consider them in some detail.

First of all it is necessary to point out some of the assumptions that led Leuchter to assume that there would be residual cyanide, in the form of ferro-ferri-cyanide, in the walls of the Auschwitz gas chambers. In the second Zündel trial, Leuchter admitted that one should not expect any residual cyanide in the walls of American gas chambers. " [Pearson]: "You'd agree with me that the purpose of a ventilation fan is to remove the gas from the--the place where the gas is at. [Leuchter]: "That is true." Q.: "And it will have a bearing on what traces are present at some later date. Isn't that right?" A.: "That's very true." Q.: "Very True." A.: "Yes." Q.: "Now, with respect to the delousing chamber, if there was no ventilation at all, we could expect high levels of cyanide traces, couldn't we?" A.: "It depends upon how--the system we used. That's partially true, yes. Q.: "Well, if there's not ventilation at all and there's no way for the gas to get out, then we would expect high levels of cyanide traces, wouldn't we?" A.: "Again, counsellor, it depends upon the ventilation system." Q.: "I'm saying no ventilation system." A.: "Probably." Q.: "All right. Now, if, on the other hand, the location is extremely well ventilated to get all the gas out, I suppose that's the optimum, if the ventilation system works perfectly, and would you agree with me that it's very difficult to reach perfection with respect to ventilation?" A.: "I do." Q.: "Although that's basically one of your engineering tasks with these modern gas chambers you produce, isn't it?" A.: "Yes, it is." Q.: "Do you expect that forty-five years from now, people will be able to find cyan-

ide traces in your gas chambers?” A.: “No, I do not.” ” He continued to explain, good ventilation, heating the room so that the hydrogen cyanide would not condensate on the walls, and walls coated with epoxy or some other sealant prevented the formation of residual cyanide such as ferro-ferri-cyanide in the walls of modern gas chambers.

Leuchter wrongly assumed that Auschwitz gas chambers were not ventilated. Furthermore, he wrongly hypothesized that the gas chambers operated at very low temperatures, and that therefore there would have been “a considerable amount of condensation of liquid hydrogen cyanide on the walls, floor and ceiling of these facilities.” Furthermore he wrongly inferred from the ruins of crematoria 2 to 5 that the walls of the gas chambers had not been coated, and that therefore the liquid hydrogen cyanide could have reacted with the iron in the bricks and mortar to form ferro-ferri-cyanide. Then he wrongly reasoned that, in accordance with American practice, the Germans had used a high concentration of 3,600 parts of hydrogen cyanide per million parts of air--the concentration used in United States gas chambers to ensure that the condemned will die a quick death--while in fact the Germans used a concentration of 300 parts per million to kill their victims. Neither did he consider the amount of hydrogen cyanide that would be absorbed by the bodies of the victims. Finally he did not take into account the effects of changes in the situation of the gas chambers in the last 45 years. For example, the gas chamber of crematorium 1 had been abandoned in 1943, and had been transformed into an air-raid shelter in 1944, undergoing substantial modifications in the process. Then, after the war, it was once more changed, to provide a museological reconstruction of the original gas chamber. Leuchter assumed that the layer of plaster from which he took his samples was the same that had coated in the walls in 1942. There is little to no evidence to support that premise. Then he took no account of the fact that the gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3 had been purposefully demolished in 1944 and that their remains had been exposed to the elements for 45 years,

and that the walls had been washed with acid rain--a fact of some importance because, contrary to Leuchter's belief, ferro-ferri-cyanide is not stable under all conditions, but tends to slowly dissolve in an acidic environment. Finally, he did not know that the low brick walls that mark the plan of crematoria 4 and 5 were rebuilt after the war using bricks from the original buildings, but not necessarily in the right position. In other words, the walls that now define the outlines of the gas chamber could have been rebuilt using bricks originally used for the construction of the incineration rooms, or the coke storage rooms.

On the basis of wrong assumptions, Leuchter expected that one would find relatively high residual cyanide in the walls of the gas chambers if they had been indeed used for genocidal purposes. When he did not, he immediately jumped to the conclusion that these spaces had not been used as gas chambers. He was strengthened in his conviction by a few "control samples" he had taken from rooms that had been used as hydrogen cyanide delousing chambers. These samples showed a very high degree of ferro-ferri-cyanide--something that did not surprise anyone as the walls of these delousing rooms showed large Prussian blue stains. Leuchter wrongly assumed that the delousing rooms had been exposed to much lower quantities of gas than the homicidal gas chambers--in fact the opposite is true, and while the delousing chambers operated more or less non-stop, the homicidal gas chamber operated only for very short times--and drew his "shattering" conclusion. "One would have expected higher cyanide detection in the samples taken from the alleged gas chambers (because of the greater amount of gas allegedly utilized there) than that found in the control sample. Since the contrary is true, one must conclude that these facilities were not execution gas chambers, when coupled with all the other evidence gained on inspection." As we have seen, also "all the other evidence gained on inspection" was less than it purported it to be.

Perhaps the most damning aspect of Leuchter's investigation is the way he took the samples. I have studied carefully the videotapes which were made of his trip to Poland, and which clearly show that Leuchter took what were for the analysis of cyanide content incorrect samples. When the Alpha laboratories analyzed the cyanide content of the samples, they provided the measurements of the total cyanide concentration in each of the samples. It did not provide the concentration of cyanide on the outer surface of the samples. As Dr. Jim Roth, who analyzed the samples in 1988, explained recently to the American filmmaker Errol Morris, "hindsight being 20/20, the test was not the correct one to have used for the analysis." Roth explained that cyanide will react on the surface of brick or plaster, penetrating the material not more than 10 microns, or 0.01 mm, or one tenth the thickness of a human hair (one micron equals 1/1,000,000 of a meter, or 0.000039 inch). In other words, if one wants to analyze the cyanide concentration in a brick sample, one should take a representative sample of the surface, 10 microns thick, and no more. Yet, as Roth remembered, "[Leuchter] presented us with rock samples anywhere from the size of your thumb up to half the size of your fist. We broke them up with a hammer so that we could get a sub-sample; we placed it in a flask, add concentrated sulfuric acid. It undergoes a reaction that produces a red-colored solution. It is the intensity of this red color that we can relate with cyanide concentration." Roth explained that his laboratory analysis could not make up for faulty sampling technique. If the sample was not representative, the results would be meaningless. Because the cyanide cannot penetrate into the brick for more than 10 microns, it is unavoidable that the cyanide concentration will be diluted 10 times when the sample is 100 microns or 0.1 mm or 0.0039 inch thick, it will be diluted 1,000 times when the sample is 10 mm or 0.39 inch thick. Leuchter did not carefully slice the surface of the materials he was sampling. In fact, as the video tapes clearly show, he hacked happily into the walls, and took samples that counted at least a thousand of layers of material that could not have reacted with the cyanide.

As Roth remarked, “I might have had the back side of the brick, not the front side of the brick, but I didn’t know which side was up and which was down. That’s the point: Which was the exposed surface? I didn’t even have any idea. That is like analyzing paint on a wall by analyzing the timber that’s behind it.” In conclusion Roth stated that “I don’t think the Leuchter results have any meaning.”

Indeed: the only conclusion one may legitimately draw from Leuchter’s sampling is that the very fact that the Alpha laboratories found any residual cyanide at all is extremely significant. In fact, Leuchter’s samples most likely proved the use of morgue 1 of crematorium 2 and 3 as a gas chamber.

As we have seen before, Leuchter’s track record as a forensic scientist was not very impressive, and it is not very useful to waste more energy on his samples. At this point it is more useful to consider the legitimate forensic studies which were undertaken at the Auschwitz crematoria by Polish scientists in the early 1990s. When the first news about the Zündel Trial and Leuchter’s testimony reached the Auschwitz Museum, its director Kazimierz Smolen wrote to the highly experienced and respected Polish forensic scientist Professor Jan Markiewicz, Director of the Institute of Forensic Research in Cracow with the request to take samples from the wall plaster of the gas chambers and analyze them for the presence of hydrogen cyanide. Smolen did not inform Markiewicz about the existence of the Leuchter Report. Markiewicz responded that he thought “the chances of detecting hydrogen cyanide in such samples as nearly none.” Nevertheless, he dispatched two of his employees to the camp, who took on 20 February 1990 22 samples: ten from rooms in Block 3 of the Auschwitz *Stammlager* that had served as delousing rooms, five from the ruins of the gas chamber of crematorium 2 and 3, and one sample each from crematorium 5 and crematorium 1. No samples were taken from crematorium 4--the latter building was left alone since all the walls had been reconstructed after the

war. The results showed traces of hydrocyanic compounds in seven samples taken from Block 3, and in one sample taken from a remaining pillar of the gas chamber of crematorium 2.

The letter that Markiewicz sent to the Museum was leaked to the revisionists, and in the newsletter of the Institute of Historical Review much was made of it. Mark Weber, Associate Editor of the Journal of Historical Review then wrote to Markiewicz, and asked him to comment on the relevance of his own findings for the Leuchter Report. Markiewicz responded in a letter dated 7 June, 1991, in which he observed that the initial research had been a little too hasty. “Now, in the light of letters and publications coming to us from different countries, I have arrived at the conclusion that our investigations aiming at the confirmation, if possible, of the use of cyanic preparations in the rooms that survived whole or only in the form of ruins, were rather preliminary in nature and incomplete. We are bent on widening and deepening these investigations and have already been preparing for them. It is only now when suitable materials from literature have become accessible to us that we see the purpose and sense of such studies. Naturally, we shall publish their results and make them accessible to you and your Institute.”

The Institute of Historical Review did not wait, however, for the new report. Immediately after receiving Markiewicz’s letter they published an article entitled “An Official Polish Report on the Auschwitz ‘Gas Chambers’: Krakow Forensic Institute Bolsters Leuchter’s Findings.” It claimed that Polish scientists had “replicated Leuchter’s findings and implicitly corroborated his conclusions.” Wrongly arguing that the whole of the gas chamber of crematorium 2 was protected from the elements by the collapsed concrete ceiling,” and is otherwise in its original condition,” the author of the article found it worth noting that the Cracow scientists had not responded to the “compelling reasons given by Leuchter for doubting the orthodox extermination story.” For example, they had not engaged him on his engineering considerations--a

fact which should not have surprised them because Markiewicz had written in his letter to Weber that they had not known about the Leuchter Report when they took their samples or wrote their report. The main text of the article ended with the following comment. "Auschwitz State Museum officials initiated this investigation rather obviously hoping that the Institute's report would discredit Leuchter's findings and corroborate the orthodox extermination account. And just as obviously, if the Institute's report had, in fact, discredited the American engineer's conclusions, the Auschwitz State Museum would certainly have wasted no time in giving it maximum publicity. Although neither the Auschwitz State Museum nor the Krakow Institute has (so far) made this September 1990 report public, Revisionists were nevertheless able to obtain a copy of the original document. Professor Robert Faurisson in France and Fred Leuchter in the United States were quick to cite the "Polish Leuchter Report" as corroboration of the Revisionist view of the Auschwitz extermination story."

Having rudely awakened to the realities of negationism, Markiewicz and his people decided to move with greater care. In the final report, which they published in 1994, they discussed Leuchter's investigations, their own early sampling and its results. "When the dispute on the Leuchter Report arose, we undertook a closer study of the problem, availing ourselves, among other publications, of J.C. Pressac's comprehensive work. In consequence, we decided to start considerably more extensive and conscientiously planned researches. To carry them out, the Management of the Auschwitz Museum appointed their competent workers, Dr. F. Piper (custodian) and Mr. W. Smrek (engineer) to join the commission, in which they co-worked with the authors of the present paper, representing the Institute of Forensic Research. Under this collaboration, the Museum workers were providing us on the spot with exhaustive information concerning the facilities to be examined and--as regards the ruins--a detailed topography of the gas chambers we were concerned with. And so they made it possible for us to take

proper samples for analysis. We tried to take samples--if at all possible--from the places best sheltered and least exposed to rainfall, including--also as far as possible--fragments from the upper parts of the chambers (hydrogen cyanide is lighter than air) and also of the concrete floors, with which the gas from the spilled Zyklon B came into contact at rather high concentrations. Samples, about 1-2 g in weight, were taken by chipping pieces from bricks and concrete or scraping off, particularly in the case of plaster and also mortar. The materials taken were secured in plastic containers marked with serial numbers. All these activities were recorded and documented with photographs. Work connected with them took the commission two days. The laboratory analysis of the material collected was conducted--to ensure full objectivity--by another group of institute workers. They started with preliminary work: samples were comminuted by grinding them by hand in an agate mortar, their pH was determined at 6 to 7 in nearly all samples. Next the samples were subjected to preliminary spectrophotometric analysis in the infrared region, using a Digilab FTS-15 spectrophotometer. It was found that the bands of cyanide groups occurred in the region of $2000-22000\text{ cm}^{-1}$ in the spectra of a dozen samples or so. However, the method did not prove to be sensitive enough and was given up in quantitative determinations. It was determined, using the spectrophotographical method, that the main elements which made up the samples were: calcium, silicon, magnesium, aluminium and iron. Moreover, titanium was found present in many samples. From among other metals in some samples there were also barium, zinc, sodium, manganese and from non-metals boron. The undertaking of chemical analysis had to be preceded by careful consideration. The revisionists focussed their attention almost exclusively on Prussian blue, which is of intense dark-blue colour characterized by exceptional fastness. This dye occurs, especially in the form of stains, on the outer bricks of the walls of the former bath-delousing house in the area of the Birkenau camp. It is hard to imagine the chemical reactions and physicochemical processes that could have led to the formation of Prussian blue in

that place. Brick, unlike other building materials, very feebly absorbs hydrogen cyanide, it sometimes does not even absorb it at all. Besides, iron occurring in it is at the third oxidation state, whereas bivalent iron ions are indispensable for the formation of the $[\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6]^{4-}$ ion, which is the precursor of Prussian blue. This ion is, besides, sensitive to the sunlight. [...] We decided therefore to determine the cyanide ions using a method that does not induce the breakdown of the composed ferrum cyanide complex (this is the blue under discussion) and which we had tested before on an appropriate standard sample. To isolate cyanide compounds from the materials examined in the form of hydrogen cyanide we used the techniques of microdiffusion in special Conway-type chambers. The sample under examination was placed in the internal part of the chamber and next acidified with 10% sulfuric acid solution and allowed to remain at open room temperature (about 20°C) for 24 hrs. The separated hydrogen cyanide underwent a quantitative absorption by the lye solution present in the outer part of the chamber. When the diffusion was brought to an end, a sample of lye solution was taken and the pyridine-pyrazolone reaction carried out by Epstein's method. The intensity of the polymethene dye obtained was measured spectrophotometrically at a wavelength equal to 630 nm. The calibration curve was constructed previously and standards with a known CN^- content were introduced into each series of determinations to check the curve and the course of determination. Each sample of materials examined was analysed three times. If the result obtained was positive, it was verified by repeating the analysis. Having applied this method for many years, we have opportunities to find its high sensitivity, specificity and precision. Under present circumstances we established the lower limit of determinability of cyanide ions at a level of 3-4 $\mu\text{g CN}^-$ in 1 kg of the sample. The results of analyses are presented in Tables I-IV. They unequivocally show that the cyanide compounds occur in all the facilities that, according to the source data, were in contact with them. On the other hand, they do not occur in dwelling accommodations, which was shown by means of the

control samples. The concentrations of cyanide compounds in the samples collected from one and the same room or building shows great differences. This indicates that the conditions that favour the formation of stable compounds as a result of the reaction of hydrogen cyanide with the components of the walls, occur locally. In this connection it takes quite a larger number of samples from a given facility to give us a chance to come upon this sort of local accumulation of cyanide compounds.”

Samples 1 to 8 were taken from fumigation chambers in Blocks 1 and 3 in the *Stammlager* and showed concentrations of CN^- that went in one instance (sample 6) as high as 900 $\mu\text{g/kg}$. Samples 9 to 12 were taken from dwelling spaces in Block 3 and 8, and all showed a total absence of CN^- . These rooms were known to have been fumigated with hydrogen cyanide only once. Samples 13 to 52 were taken from places which served as homicidal gas chambers. Samples 13 to 22 were taken in Auschwitz 1. It is a pity that the report does not mention the thickness of the samples, again the knowledge that cyanide only reacts on the surface of brick remains an important fact of consideration. Therefore I would not like to assign more than relative significance to the Polish measurements. Yet, even so, they are important in their own right, as they clearly show the presence of cyanide in the walls of the gas chambers, confirming the “alleged” use of these spaces as killing installations.

A--Sample No. B--Concentration of CN^- ($\mu\text{g/kg}$) Cellars of Block 11
 used as experimental Gas Chambers in 1941 A131415---- B28200----
 24160---- 24160---- Crematorium 1 A16171819202122
 B287600288080 288000292080 288000288080 Crematorium 2
 A25262728293031 B640280820168296 592280816156288
 620280816168292 Crematorium 3 A32333435363738
 B68121216121656 688121281652 68881681656 Crematorium 4

A3940414243-- B4036500trace16-- 4432496012-- 4436496012--
Crematorium 5 A46474849505152 B244369212116560
248289612120600 232329612116600

Finally samples 53 to 59 were taken from the same delousing building BW5a from which Leuchter had obtained his control samples. Samples 53 to 55 were taken from the dark- blue stains on the outer side of the building wall, sample 56 was mortar taken from the outer side of the building wall, samples 57 and 58 were plaster taken from dark blue stains on the inner side of the building wall, and sample 59 was plaster taken from white walls inside the building. Delousing Buildings BW5a A5353a545556575859 B2422436736484034828 2024828740079232428 2422832640084034828

The forensic team also conducted various other tests to study the absorptive behaviour of various materials. In the first test the scientists exposed fresh plaster, fresh mortar, new brick, and old brick, both in dry and wet forms, to a high concentration of hydrogen cyanide (2%) for 48 hours. The results of this test, which simulated the conditions that existed in a fumigation room, showed that the various materials absorbed the hydrogen cyanide with very different rates. material-
Fresh plasterFresh mortarNew brickOld brick conditiondrywetteddry-
wetteddrywetteddrywetted CN⁻ mg/kg244801762700452200

In a second test, the team added carbon dioxide to the hydrogen cyanide, introducing the two gasses in a rate of 5 parts of CO₂ to one part of HCN. This test simulated the conditions that existed in homicidal gas chambers. “[I]n their reasoning the revisionists did not take into consideration certain circumstances, namely, the simultaneous action of cyanides and carbon dioxide on the chamber walls. In the air exhaled by man carbon dioxide constitutes 3.5% by volume. Breathing for 1 minute, he takes in and next exhales 15-20 dm³ of air, comprising on the average 950 cm³ CO₂; consequently, 1000 people breathe out about 950 dm³ of carbon dioxide. And so it can be estimated that, if

Finally Markiewicz's team tested the way water elutes cyanide ions. Taking two plaster samples of 0.5 grams each that had been fumigated with hydrogen cyanide, they flushed them with one litre of clean deionized water. The first sample showed a loss in concentration of HCN in $\mu\text{g/kg}$ of 82.5% (160 vs. 28), the second of 90.7% (1200 vs. 112). This test is important as the remains of the gas chambers of crematoria 2 to 5 have been exposed to the elements since the end of the war, and "it can be estimated, on the basis of climatological records, that in these last 45 years or so they have been rinsed rather thoroughly by a column of water at least 35 m in height (!)."

The conclusion of what one should call the Markiewicz Report was straightforward and, as far as the Leuchter Report was concerned, shattering. "The present study shows that in spite of the passage of a considerable period of time (over 45 years) in the walls of the facilities which once were in contact with hydrogen cyanide the vestigial amounts of the combinations of this constituent of Zyklon B had been preserved. This is also true of the ruins of the former gas chambers. The cyanide compounds occur in the building materials only locally, in the places where the conditions arose for their formation and persistence for such a long time. In his reasoning Leuchter claims that the vestigial amounts of cyanide combinations detected by him in the materials from the chamber ruins are residues left after fumigations carried out in the Camp, "once, long ago" (Item 14.004 of the Report). This is refuted by the negative results of the examination of the control samples from living quarters, which are said to have been subjected to a single gassing, and the fact that in the period of fumigation of the Camp in connection with a typhoid epidemic in mid-1942 there were still no crematoria in the Birkenau camp. The first crematorium (Crematorium 2) was put to use as late as 15 March 1943 and the others several months later."

Of course, at the time of the second Zündel trial the Markiewicz report did not exist. Yet at that time it was clear to the court, at least, that Leuchter's methodology and data simply did not meet the judicial demands of admissible evidence. While this impressed the jury and the judge, it did not impress hard-core Holocaust deniers and their allies, who hailed (and continue to hail) the Leuchter Report as an important breakthrough. A large part of the credit of having rescued the Leuchter Report from deserved oblivion must go to David Irving who, convinced by Leuchter's findings, publically converted to hard-core Holocaust denial in April 1988, and became the publisher of the English edition of the Leuchter Report a year later.

PART FIVE *CONCERNING IRVING*

X Auschwitz and David Irving (1977–1988 -1992)

“He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat.”

Irving came to Holocaust denial late, and through the backdoor. In his *Hitler's War* (1977), he developed the startling theory that while the Holocaust had happened, it had been enacted by Himmler behind Hitler's back and not only without his permission, but even in violation of his express wish that the Jews would be spared. In the original edition of the book, Irving made a number of references to the role of Auschwitz as an extermination camp. Writing about the spring of 1942, Irving stated that the Germans began to round up Jews in France, Holland, Belgium and Slovakia. “From Hans Frank's Generalgouvernement of Poland too--beginning with the ghettos of Lublin--the Jews set out eastward under the direction of one of the cruellest SS leaders, Brigadier Odilo Globocnik, the Trieste-born former Gauleiter of Vienna. Upon arrival in Auschwitz and Treblinka, four in every ten were pro-

nounced fit for work; the rest were exterminated with a maximum of concealment.” A few paragraphs later Irving noted in the summer of 1942 Himmler threw the “murder machinery into top gear.” “On July 19, three days after seeing Hitler, Himmler ordered the “resettlement” of the entire Jewish population of the Generalgouvernement to be completed by the last day of 1942. Each day after July 22 a trainload of five thousand Jews left Warsaw for the extermination center at Treblinka; each week two trains left Przemyśl for the center at Belzec.” Writing about the Hungarian Action in 1944, when more than 400,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz, Irving noted that “[i]n Auschwitz, the defunct paraphernalia of death--idle since late 1943--began to clank again as the first trainloads from Hungary arrived.” Yet this time the policy of concealment was to fail. “Himmler’s ghastly secret was coming out, for two Slovak Jews had escaped from Auschwitz extermination camp, and their horrifying revelations were published in two reputable Swiss newspapers in early July.”

Hitler’s War attracted the attention of Holocaust deniers. In July 1978, John Tiffany, editorial assistant of the Noontide Press (the book-publishing arm of the Institute for Historical Review), wrote Irving that he considered Irving’s “tremendous” book a “tour de force,” and that therefore the press had ordered a quantity for resale. Tiffany recommended the press’s other offerings to Irving’s attention, offering him a free copies of *The Myth of the Six Million*, Butz’s *Hoax of the 20th Century*, and Rassinier’s *Debunking the Genocide Myth*. In early 1980 Irving received an invitation from the director of the Institute for Historical Review, Lewis Brandon, to speak at the 1980 Revisionist Conference, which was to be dedicated to the memory of Paul Rassinier. Enclosed with the invitation was the programme of the 1979 conference, which included lectures by Arthur Butz, Udo Walendy, and Robert Faurisson. Irving hesitated. In his reply, he stated that “I would have to condition my acceptance of your very kind invitation on knowing who else would participate.” “Of course, I have no desire to limit your own scope, but

for reasons you will probably perceive I cannot speak on the same platform as for example Walendy or Butz. This is pure Realpolitik on my part: I am already dangerously exposed, and I cannot take the change of being caught in Flak meant for others!"

Brandon replied enthusiastically: neither Butz nor Walendy were going to be invited, but Faurisson was mentioned as a back-up speaker. Irving had doubts. He scribbled behind Faurisson's name "on Auschwitz track à le Butz." In the end, Irving did not attend the conference.

One of those who did was a certain Mark Weber, who held a master's degree in central European history from Indiana University, and who worked as a freelance translator in the Washington DC area. In the years that followed, he became one of the central figures on the revisionist scene. Weber was at the time working on a book entitled *The Final Solution: Legend and Reality*. In a working outline, dated May 1981, Weber proposed a book that was to have as its central thesis: "There was no official German policy to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Six million Jews not killed." If completed, the ten chapter book was to provide the most coherent attempt to write a negationist counter-account of the Holocaust. Most importantly, the outline mentioned under the heading Forward {sic!}: "David Irving has conditionally consented to write this."

While Irving was not (yet) prepared to be too publically associated with well-known Holocaust deniers, he did establish an ongoing commercial relationship with the Institute for Historical Review. The institute became the American distributor of some of Irving's books, and from one thing came another: finally, in 1983, Irving caved in and agreed to attend the by now International Revisionist Conference--sharing the platform with, among others, Robert Faurisson and Wilhelm Stäglich.. In his lecture entitled "On Contemporary History and Historiography," Irving presented the thesis he had developed in his *Hitler's War*. Hitler was "so busy being a soldier that he didn't really pay

too much attention to what crimes may or may not have been going on in various far-flung parts of the Reich.” And he added the following remark: “I’m not going to go into the controversy here about the actual goings-on inside Auschwitz, or the other extermination camps or concentration camps. We do know in the meantime that Dachau is a legend, that everything that people found in Dachau was in fact installed there by the Americans after the war--rather like Disneyland--for their local people to go and be impressed by German *Schrecklichkeit*.” At this time Irving was not yet prepared to state that the gaschambers of Auschwitz were built by the Poles, after the war.

At the 1983 conference, Irving met Faurisson for the first time, before his lecture. After Irving’s lecture, Faurisson challenged Irving to prove the fact that a Holocaust had happened, but behind Hitler’s back. A journalist who was present wrote this about it. “Opponents of this heresy [of revisionism] will be heartened to learn how riven with schisms the young upstart already is. For instance, Robert Faurisson opened his talk with a critical response to David Irving. “Dahveed Earveeng sze, Eatlair deent know wot appen at Auschwitz. I esk Dahveed Earveeng, *whot appent* at Auschwitz???” he chided in a real “Com with’ me to zee Casbah” French accent. Irving had already departed....” Therefore Faurisson was forced to communicate to Irving through the *Journal for Historical Review*. In an article entitled “A Challenge to David Irving,” Faurisson observed that Irving had been willing to share his opinions on historical matters he admitted not to have studied. “Irving has the honesty to advise us that, in fact, he has not studied the particular aspect of the history of the Second World war that some call the “Holocaust.” With some insistence he repeated that about the “Holocaust “ specifically he only has some “feelings.” He said that in his mind there has been formed a certain impression of what “probably” took place. He does not for a moment attack the revisionist authors. He does not act like those persons who issue denunciations of the revisionists that are more and more categorical in proportion to

the extent that they have not studied the question. However, even a David Irving sometimes gives in to the temptation to maintain opinions that, from his own point of view, he ought not to maintain since he has not studied the question.” For once, it is not difficult to agree with Faurisson. The latter proceeded with attacking the various statements Irving had made in which he had admitted to various liquidations done at various locations by various criminal elements of various ethnic backgrounds without direct orders from above. As to Irving’s account of the extermination procedures, Faurisson observed that it contained “too much metaphysics, not enough materialism.” And thus Faurisson counselled that it was time for Irving to begin at the beginning. The latter has remarked that he suspected “there was some kind of major crime going on at the initiative of the local criminals on the spot.” This is what Faurisson had to say about it. “Here is my response to David Irving: “You are right to be suspicious. In historical investigation suspicion is the beginning of wisdom. But what you consider to be in some sense a finishing line, a line which must be maintained in order to continue the inquiry, I consider to be the starting line. Start with that suspicion if you wish, but do not stop there. Let that suspicion be a stimulus for an investigator like you. Do not hesitate to question it when you need to. You yourself frankly say that you ‘haven’t investigated that particular aspect of history.’ You even say you ‘haven’t got into that.’ Let someone like me, who has gotten into that subject for many long years and who has conducted some investigations which few others have conducted, investigations as materialist in character as possible, let me tell you that the moment has come for a historian of your importance to get into the subject and to study it for yourself in your own fashion.”

Faurisson’s intellectual argument proved not sufficient by itself. As with so many others, the Zündel case, which was to unite Faurisson’s agenda with Zündel’s showmanship, was to provide the catalyst in Irving’s conversion to Holocaust denial. Irving came in contact with

Zündel in 1984 when the latter began to prepare for his first trial. Zündel sent Irving material, and asked if he were prepared to testify. Irving responded that he was following the development of the case with interest, and that he could be persuaded to go. “In reply to your handwritten inquiry: I would be willing to attend the trial in Toronto as an expert witness, if so invited; you may be aware that my affidavit in the case against Dr Kausch in Hanover W. Germany resulted in his reinstatement in his school director’s job. I am also to be called as a witness in the Heidemann “Hitler Diaries” trial. My fee for attendance at Toronto, assuming a presence there not exceeding three days, would be \$1,000(US), plus return airfare via New York (cheaper than direct) and hotel accommodation. I am sure you are aware that in some respects my evidence may be disadvantageous, but on balance it would help.” In the end Zündel did not take up Irving on his offer.

In a pioneering study on Holocaust Denial written at this time, Irving was already included, as a “soft” variant of the phenomenon. Gill Seidel devoted a whole section to him in her 1986 study *The Holocaust Denial: Antisemitism, Racism & the New Right*, judging that “David Irving makes a very decisive contribution to the ‘soft revisionist’ literature on the second world war.” “His sober writing contains nothing of the vulgar racism which permeates the pamphlets of McLaughlin and Harwood. He does not deny the Holocaust. He does not suggest that the Jews were responsible for the war. Rather, from documentary scraps and by editing documents, Irving claims that Hitler knew nothing of the “Final Solution”, and that his aides carried out the killings behind his back.”

Yet as Seidel’s book appeared, Irving began to move closer to the position occupied by hard-core Holocaust deniers. In a lecture entitled “Censorship of History,” given in Runnymede, Australia, Irving went out of his way to challenge the evidential importance of the appalling situation in the concentration camps revealed in the Spring of 1945. According to Irving, “the starvation, the epidemics, the typhoid had

only broken out in the last two or three weeks of the war.” And it was not the Germans, but the allies who were to be partly blamed. “We have to admit probably that we the British and the Americans were partially responsible, at least partially responsible for their misfortune. Because we vowed deliberate bombing of the transportation networks, deliberate bombardation, bombarding the German communications, by deliberate destruction of the German pharmaceutical industry, medicine factories. We had deliberately created the conditions of chaos inside Germany. We had deliberately created the epidemics, and the outbreaks of typhus and other diseases, which led to those appalling scenes that were found at their most dramatic in the enclosed areas, the concentration camps, where of course epidemics can ravage and run wild. And so it is symbolic of the hypocrisy that existed at the end of the Second World War that we picked on those awful photographs, which were of course good television one would say nowadays, they were good newsprint, they were good photos, they were very photogenic those scenes, those piles of corpses. We picked on them as being evidence that the war was a just war and that our journey had not been in vain.”

However Irving was not prepared, yet, to deny the Holocaust as such, or in any case not the fact that many Jews had died. He did, however, reject the notion that the genocide of the Jews was a centrally managed, state-approved enterprise, and even began to become silent about the role of the men like Himmler who, in his earlier writings, he had still blamed for the Holocaust. Obviously Himmler was too close to Hitler, and it was not very probable that Himmler would have exterminated a good part of European Jewry without Hitler’s knowledge. Irving began to shift the responsibility to the actions of “nameless criminals” of various nationalities. In a radio interview, given during the same Australian trip, he stated that between hundreds of thousands, or even millions of Jews, had been liquidated, “by the Germans, or the Latvians, or the Ukrainians, or all the rest who carried out li-

quidations.” “They were the victims of a large number of nameless criminals into whose hands they fell on the eastern front. Mostly around Eastern Europe the liquidations occurred. And these men acted on their own impulse, their own initiative, within the general atmosphere of brutality created by the Second World War, in which of course the Allied bombings played a part.” When his interviewer Terry Lane asked him if his remark about the “hundreds of thousands or millions” of Jews implied that he rejected the figure of six million Jewish victims, Irving replied tergiversantly that “when you are a statistician as I am, and you’ve studied statistics, you know that figures don’t compact, they don’t come rounded up to six figures like that, with zeroes at the end. There is one school of thought that says 4 million. Another school of thought may say 6,500,000. Another school of thought, right out at the fringe, says it was only 100,000.” Irving was not yet willing to come down on one or the other side.

In 1986 Irving visited Toronto on a world-encompassing lecture tour. He had arranged for a driver to pick him up at the airport, but instead Zündel showed up to greet him. According to Zündel, “David Irving was visibly shocked.” “He wanted nothing to do with me, even then, because of the bad reputation that I had in conservative circles in England and Europe. He thought I was some “Revisionist-Neo-Nazi-Rambo-Kook!” In order not to give the wrong impression to his audience, Irving asked Zündel not to show up at his lecture. Zündel complied, and so did his supporters. As a result, attendance of Irving’s lecture was very poor. Worst of all, no journalists had shown up.

After Irving left, Zündel sent him a long letter in which he reviewed the disappointing results of the trip, and sought to draw some lessons from it. “You were frank with me in your fears about being linked with me and I made every effort, as you will recall, not to embarrass you with my presence. Unfortunately, this lack on my part did lead to the dismal showing of “no press” at your meeting, because few people seem able to handle the press well. I have usually had success in my

arrangements for press attendance and coverage, before, during, and after my trial. Please make sure that you have someone competent handle your next appearance. You deserve the best! I have been thinking long and hard how I could be of help to you, despite my “gag order” which does not permit me to say much on topics such as you tackle in your books. It struck me, after having enjoyed your televised presentation, that you would be able to reach more of the public, which is increasingly illiterate, and at a profit, by making some videotaped presentations which you could market through whomsoever you wished, perhaps even setting up your own distributing network. I have no idea if you have a list of bookbuyers--that is, of individuals, rather than publishers. If you do, you would have the “grassroots” support which could allow you to establish an independent business --one which you yourself would control and of course, make most of the editorial decisions and, in the end, retain most of the profit yourself.” The German-Canadian Mephistopheles had found his English Faust. And in the remainder of the letter Zündel persuasively laid out more schemes that would enrich Irving, whom he characterized as a “promoter’s dream.” “You are handsome and witty, but not superficial, and thus have a wonderful combination of presentability and credibility. You speak beautifully, with a well-modulated voice. You can be combative and abrasive when necessary and also humble and charming.” All of these talents were, of course, wasted if no-one was to market them properly. Zündel, who identified himself as “an advertising man,” made it clear that he saw all the possibilities. But, after having made the suggestion he wanted, he did not push it any further, for the moment.

In the year that followed, Zündel and Irving began an informal cooperation. Zündel was interested in pursuing legal action against an American soldier said to have killed German guards of Dachau after their surrender to the American army. This soldier had never been brought to trial for war crimes--a fact that clearly illustrated according to

Zündel that the post-war allied war crime trials of German military personnel had been merely instances of victor's justice. He asked Irving if he could help him obtaining relevant documentation. Irving obliged.

In late 1987, after having established a practice of collaboration, Zündel raised once more the issue of a possible appearance by Irving as a witness in his second trial. "Dear Mr.Irving: You have an outstanding memory of persons, places and events, so you will likely remember our conversation on the way to the Toronto International Airport in 1986 in regard to your appearance as a witness in The Second Great Holocaust Trial. You will no doubt recall that I won my appeals on the provincial and Supreme Court levels in regard to my conviction for "the dissemination of false news" following the First Great Holocaust Trial and that both appellate courts directed that there be a retrial under the same thoughtcrime charge, in view of the many irregularities committed by the Crown and the judge at the first trial....[....]I am therefore alerting you now in order to advise you that I would very much appreciate your appearance as an expert witness in regard to your findings on Churchill and the warmongers who brought about World War II. Undoubtedly, the prosecution will ask you about "mass-gassings" and "Hitler's orders for the extermination of Jews", and I assume that you will give him the same statements you have made in this regard during your various lectures and talks. I think the Defence can live with that! Certainly, no one need gloss over the occurrence of pogroms, just as I do not gloss over the existence of concentration camps and deportations." Zündel proved a master of persuasion. He suggested that Irving could use his stay in Toronto to give lectures and promote his books, offering to provide "frontmen" to organize the book-promotion campaign. "Should you wish to extend your visit in order to go to other parts of Canada, I would recommend that you do so, in order to take advantage of the publicity derived from your courtroom appearances. During the first trial, we received coast-to-

coast coverage virtually every day. The time to plan is now! I need to know from you the best time or time which is most convenient for you to come to Toronto during the trial. That way, we can prepare advance notice to the media and the public so as to avoid any repetition of the mean and outrageous treatment you received during your last Toronto appearance. I think it was shocking that you were received with such little appreciation and that so few knew that you were coming in the first place! The Zionists knew you were coming, so the general public should have known about it, too, and not just a few members of the geriatric kosher-conservative, “anti-communist” clique. In regard to advance publicity, I would recommend that you supply your Toronto “agents “ with ample promotional material for them to mail to the media, not once, but at least twice, so as to remind them to come out in force.”

Zündel repeated his presentation of the trial as a catalyst for a successful book-tour in another letter sent in early January, 1988. After having expressed his dismay for the fact that Irving had to personally deliver his books to London booksellers, and once more offering to organize help with such pedestrian chores so that Irving could concentrate on the important task of revising history, Zündel came to the point. “After several false starts, my thoughtcrime trial is to commence on 18 January 1988. Thus your testimony would occur somewhat later than we had foreseen, which means late March or early April. I reiterate my offer to be of assistance, directly or indirectly, in the promotion of your books, including the organisation of a lecture tour, coupled with your trial appearance, which could get such a promotional tour off with a proverbial “bang”. Your timely appearance at the “Hitler Diary “ debate was excellent in this regard, and the forthcoming trial here in Toronto promises to be a well-covered media event.”

Irving remained cautious. In his reply to Zündel Irving established clear conditions to make the whole thing worth it to him: the whole operation was to be essentially risk-free as far as the authorities were

concerned. “In the interests of serving historical truth I would be prepared to testify on the basis of my own research subject to assurances from the Canadian and American authorities that this would not jeopardise my hitherto unimpeded access to their respective countries. I have contacted their London representatives about this. Your defense attorney should also bear in mind that I wrote on the last occasion, that cross-examination will bring out that there are differences of opinion between your hypotheses and my own. In short, I accept that a great tragedy did happen but do not accept the present versions as to how. I should also require adequate compensation for my time and travel.”

In early March Zündel became suddenly nervous about Irving’s appearance when two of the expert witness he had called--Dr. Russell Barton and Dr. Kuang Fann--agreed during cross-examination with the Crown’s argument that the Nazis had murdered six million Jews, and that *Did Six Million Really Die?* was a repugnant book. He contacted Irving again, writing that he could not afford anymore to have one of his witnesses “in the final analysis agreeing with the Crown prosecutor that ‘It really did happen.’” “I do not know what your state of knowledge concerning the Holocaust is or what your tactical stance on the issue is at this time. But I need your assurance that if you do testify you will state either that you have done no primary research into this area and cannot give an expert opinion or that what research you have done indicated major problems with the Holocaust story. If you feel you cannot in all honesty give either of these answers, then I believe that your testimony would be too damaging for me. I have heard you say that something did happen in the East, but nobody really knows what. I could live with that! But to affirm that mass gassings took place, or that there was an official policy of “Judenausrottung” coming from your lips would be a disaster for me. Please let me know exactly how you feel.”

Then Zündel received Leuchter's report, and with that he acquired the opportunity to force the issue with Irving. The question became now very easy: would Irving be prepared to endorse, in court, Leuchter's findings. In an interview given in 1998, Zündel told the American filmmaker Errol Morris what happened next. "So I called Florida and I said, 'Mr Irving.' 'Oh, Ernst, what's up?' I said, 'Well, you know about the trial?' 'Yes.' 'Are you free?' 'Well, sort of. When would you need me?' I said, 'Well, hear me out. I have sent an American gas chamber expert to Auschwitz. He's come back with samples.' There was a long silence at the end of the line and he said, 'And?' I said, 'The results are in our favor.' He said, 'Ernst, I'm coming to Toronto. I am coming to Toronto.' I said, 'Not so fast. First, I'm going to send you down the booklet, *Did Six Million Really Die?* Then I'm going to give you a rough outline of what he found.' Because I know that David Irving, although he is willing to help me for a price, that he, next to Fred, would be a pretty expensive witness, you know. So, I mean, I'm a fairly frugal man, so I had to weigh how long and when do I want to have this august Englishman gracing the courtroom in Toronto together with an already very expensive Fred Leuchter and Professor Roth. But anyway, he said he was going to come, he said this was sensational. And then he said, 'Why did I not think of that myself?' Why didn't he think of doing that himself? Well, actually that's a very logical question. Right? But he hadn't thought of it himself. So we decided that he was going to come up, he was going to look at the report, he was going to meet Fred Leuchter, who was still in Toronto, and, based on that, he was then going to decide whether or not he was going to be a witness.[....] And so David Irving was in Toronto. He saw the Leuchter report. He met Fred Leuchter, he looked at all the stuff that he had brought, the video footage, and the drawings that Fred had brought with him. And he said, 'this is a shattering document. The Leuchter report is a shattering document. It is a stroke of genius by the defense. As a historian,' he said, 'anybody that will write history, the history of the Second World War that does not take into consideration what Fred Leuchter has found and unearthed, will

henceforth do so at their peril because they will write propaganda. Not history.” For Zündel the chase had ended. Irving was to testify on his behalf, unequivocally endorsing Leuchter’s findings.

Irving testified on Friday 22 April, and Monday and Tuesday, 25 and 26 April, 1988. As an expert witness for the defence, Irving endorsed in general terms the main object of legal contention, Harwood’s *Did Six Million Really Die?* “[Christie]: “If you were to classify the book *Did Six Million Really Die?* as to say its factual content, looking at its alleged facts, what percentage would you [state] to be true, in your opinion?” [Irving]: “I would estimate over ninety percent of the brochure *Did Six Million Really Die?* to be factually accurate on the basis of the facts which I arrived at by an entirely different approach, namely the documentary basis.”

Given Irving’s general endorsement of *Did Six Millions Really Die?*, it is good to repeat once more the book’s central claim that the whole Holocaust was a piece of atrocity propaganda not different from the stories that circulated in the First World War, and that credited the Germans with transfixing Belgian babies on bayonets and operating “corpse factories” where they extracted from the corpses of their own dead glycerine and other useful commodities. Yet the big difference between the First and Second World War was that, after the former, the truth had been re-established, while no such action had happened after the latter. To the contrary, according to Harwood the atrocity propaganda had become more intense. “Gruesome paperback books with lurid covers continue to roll from the presses, adding continuously to a growing mythology of the concentration camps and especially to the story that no less than Six Million Jews were exterminated in them.”

During his testimony, David Irving did not merely give credence to the theory that the stories about gassings were allied atrocity propaganda through his general endorsement of *Did Six Million Really Die?*. He also addressed the issue directly when crown-attorney Pearson confronted

him with a passage from his *Hitler's War*. In this book, Irving described the impact at Hitler's headquarters of the publication of a Soviet report on the camp, which had been liberated in the Summer of 1944. "On October 27th, 1944, news reports reached Hitler that the Russians claimed to have found a former concentration camp, Majdanek, near Lublin, at which 1,500,000 people had been liquidated; according to Heinz Lorenz, his press officer, Hitler angrily dismissed the reports as propaganda--just as German troops had been accused of "hacking off children's hands in Belgium" in 1914. When Ribbentrop pressed him for an answer, the Führer replied more revealingly, "That is Himmler's affair, and his alone." He betrayed no flicker of emotion." Cross-examined by Pearson, Irving now stated that the "gas chamber story" was allied propaganda. "[Pearson]: "You're satisfied that this October 27th, 1944 exchange between Ribbentrop and Hitler took place?" [Irving]: "I would have to check to see what my source was but certainly if I wrote that, I had a very good source for it." Q.: "And you say 'Hitler betrayed no flicker of emotion.' How do you know that?" A.: "Probably from the testimony given by Ribbentrop in the source that I used." Q.: "So, you're saying there that Hitler was not surprised that 1,500,000 people had been liquidated. Isn't that what you're saying?" A.: "If you read the paragraph closely you'll see this is the Allied propaganda saying that 1,500,000 people have been liquidated. This was among a number of very large similar claims put out by the British psychological warfare executive on the instructions of the British Secret Service, the gas chamber story originated in the British Secret Service. The psychological warfare executive and the files on that are now available in the British public records office."

Both his statement in the Toronto court, and Irving's more recent attempts to discredit the evidence about the extermination camps by placing them in the context of "more far-fetched atrocity legends" which accused the Germans of using bodies as the raw material for the production of soap, confronts us once more with the question if, in-

deed, there exists a historical link between the allied atrocity propaganda of the First World War (which wrongly did accuse the Germans of producing soap from corpses) and the revelations about the German extermination camps in the Second World War. As we have seen at the beginning of Chapter Three, there is a link---but not on in which the accounts of the mass-murder of people in gas chambers are simply recycled atrocity stories from the First World war. The historical link is that during the Second World War the general public showed a great reluctance to believe accounts of atrocities because they remembered how they had been fooled by wild stories and outright lies of a quarter-century earlier. Unlike the men and women who opposed the Kaiser, those who fought Hitler were sceptics. Irving's claim that the accounts of the German death camps, and Auschwitz in particular, were the result of allied atrocity propaganda has little claim to truth. The only historical link between the notorious *Kadaververwerkungsanstalt* and the killing machinery in Auschwitz is that, during the Second World War, many refused to believe accounts of the latter because of memories of the former. In 1988, when he endorsed *Did Six Million Really Die?* Irving had ceased to care about history. On the witness stand, testifying for a well-known Holocaust denier, Irving turned into a denier of history.

"[Christie]: "Does--does the conclusion of the booklet *Did Six Million Really Die?* Offend your sensitivities as a historian or not?" [Irving]:

"Will you remind me of what the conclusion is before I testify to that?"

Q.: "Just dealing with the question most pertinent to the extermination legend is, of course, how many of the three million European Jews under German control survived after 1945?" A.: "Right. Let me say at this point I think this conclusion here they are aiming at here is justified. I am delighted that so many Jews survived what they now describe as the Holocaust and I am puzzled at the apparent lack of logic. That the Nazis are supposed to have had a government policy for the deliberate, ruthless, systematic extermination of the Jews in Auschwitz and in other places of murder and yet tens if not hundreds of thousands of Jews passed through these camps and are I am glad to say alive and

well amongst us now to testify to their survival, so either the Nazis or they were an exceedingly sloppy race, which isn't image that we have of them today. It's another of the logical questions which is being asked in this history which the historians hitherto have not asked." As I have demonstrated in Chapter One, the fact that Jews survived for example Auschwitz does not mean that either Auschwitz was not an extermination camp, or the Germans were sloppy. Many Jews who could work were imprisoned in Auschwitz as slave labour, and in the Summer of 1944 tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews were temporarily admitted in Auschwitz as so-called *Durchgangsjuden*, to be transported on as slave labour to other camps. The survivors of Auschwitz belonged almost exclusively to these two categories of prisoners.

When Irving testified that the existence of survivors meant that Auschwitz could not have been an extermination camp (as the Germans were no sloppy executioners), he stated what had become by 1988 a well-known negationist argument. At other moments during his testimony he quoted and affirmed further well-established negationist doctrine. For example, when Pearson confronted him with Karl Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943, Irving repeated Butz's interpretation of the word *Vergasungskeller* "[Pearson]: 'Now Mr. Irving, before the break you had told us that you had not read Commandant Hoess' account of what was happening at Auschwitz. Is that right?' [Irving]: 'That is correct.' Q.: 'And I show you a document from the National Archives of the United States and ask you if before coming to Toronto, you had seen that document.' A.: 'Yes, sir, this is the document you just asked me a few minutes ago to read through and I am familiar with the document and I was familiar with the document before I came to Toronto.' Q.: 'All right. Now, do you have any reason to question the authenticity of that document?' A.: 'I have no reason to question the authenticity of this document although the providence with the document isn't clear from the staff evidence analysis sheet attached to it.' Q.: 'We have not referred in proceedings to the staff evidence analysis

sheet.” A.: “The staff evidence analysis sheet was a sheet attached to any exhibit at Nuremberg which would inform as to where the document had been found and it is rather imprecise but I have no reason to question its authenticity.” Q.: “All right. Now, there is attached to this a translation that was prepared presumably at the time of the Nuremberg trials. Have you had an opportunity, and I know it was a very brief opportunity, but you did have a brief opportunity to compare the translation with the German document and is it a satisfactory translation in your view?” A.: “It is a satisfactory translation apart from one sentence where--which is quite clearly the operative sentence, which says--I would translate it as ‘This is, however unimportant, as the *Vergasungskeller*’” Q.: “Let’s put it up on the overhead to see what we’re talking about. First of all, is this the original German?” A.: “It is the same document.” Q.: “Document January 29th, 1943?” A.: “It is the same document and I am referring to this sentence here, ‘Die ist jedoch unbedeutend, da der *Vergasungskeller* hierfür benutzt werden kann.’ I translate as ‘This is, however, unimportant as the *Vergasungskeller* can be used for this,’ and the German word *Vergasungskeller* is a known [?] coming from the German verb *Vergas[en]*, and the German verb *Vergas[en]*, like many German words, has different translations, some of them completely different in meaning from each other.” Q.: “All right.” A.: “It can mean gassing, it can mean “carboureshing” (ph), as in the sense of a carburetor on a car and this is the meaning which I don’t find, the alternative meaning in the translation of the document, the possibility that it refers not to gassing but to the “carboureshen” process in some kind of oil fire heater, so when we are looking at a *Vergasungskeller* I think it is tendentious to translate it as gas chamber. I mentioned on Friday that a German-- Q.: “What do you mean by tendentious?” A.: “Tendentious? I think it is trying to arrive at an impression. It is giving possibly a deliberately wrong translation of the word. It is a possible translation but it is an unlikely translation because if a German was going to write the word ‘gas chamber,’ he would not write ‘*Vergasungskeller*’ He would write ‘*Gasungskeller*’.”

Or would he? German documents show that the adjective *Vergasungs-* was commonly used to qualify means or procedures used in the gassing of people. For example, in the notorious letter of October 25, 1941 which Dr. Erhard Wetzel, Advisor for Jewish Affairs in the Ostministerium, drafted for Alfred Rosenberg, Wetzel mentions that “Oberdienstleiter Brack of the Führer’s Chancellery has agreed to assist in the construction of the necessary buildings and gassing apparatus (*Vergasungsapparate*)....In the present situation, there are no objections to getting rid of Jews who are unable to work with the Brack remedy.” The “gassing apparatus” was a gas van. In his memoirs, written after the war, Adolf Eichmann was to call these gas chambers on wheels “gassing cars” (*Vergasungswagen*). And when, also after the war, Erich Bauer testified about the extermination of Jews in Sobibor, he also used the word *Vergasung* as an adjective: “The doors were sealed airtight and immediately the gassing procedure (*Vergasungsvorgang*) commenced. After some 20–30 minutes there was complete silence in the gas chambers; the people were gassed (*vergast*) and dead.” And both Walther Dejaco and Fritz Ertl, testifying during their trial in 1972, used the term gassing spaces--“*Vergasungsräume*”--to denote gas chambers. For example, in his testimony given on January 19, 1972, Dejaco denied that he had transformed the morgue of crematorium 1 into a “gassing space.” “I have certainly not inserted a wall in crematorium 1. With this work I had, as I have already made clear, nothing to do. I did not know anything about the gassing space. I have not inserted any wall..[...] I did not know what went on behind my back. At this time one was of course very much concerned, that no one would know what was happening in Auschwitz. Therefore the Kommandantur will have done such work as the insertion of a wall in the crematorium or the purchase of the incineration ovens and the installation of gassing spaces on its own initiative. After all, no one should know what happened there.” Ertl commented on January 21, 1972 that when he wrote in his

report of August 19, 1942 about the so-called “bathhouses for special actions”--“*Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen*”--, “I knew at the time, that this concerned gassing spaces.”

Furthermore, I have never found an example of Germans using the adjective *Gasung* in the context of a discussion on the killing of people in gas chambers. Hence Irving’s argument is non-sensical. While indeed the word *Gaskammer* is more common when referring to a (homicidal) gas chamber, the common use of the adjective *Vergasungs-* in conjunction with a noun in the context of discussion on the gassing of people fully explains why Kirschneck, who had drafted the letter for Bischoff, would have formed the composite neologism *Vergasungskeller* when referring to a basement that was to function as a gas chamber.

Pearson did not press Irving on the issue of the *(Ver)Gasungskeller*. He did, however, try to pin Irving down on the precise meaning of words the latter had written more than ten years earlier, in the Introduction to the 1977 edition of his own *Hitler’s War*. “[Pearson]: “Don’t you go on to say what the Final Solution was, sir? Right in your introduction?” [Irving]: “If you can point out the passage concerned.” Q.: “All right. First of all, let’s go to the last sentence. ‘*For thirty years, our knowledge of Hitler’s part in the atrocity has rested on inter-historian incest.*’ What atrocity are you talking about?” A.: “There is no other way to describe what happened. Thousands of civilians being lined up on the side of pits and being machine-gunned to the pits after being robbed of their personal possessions. This kind of thing can only be described as an atrocity whether it happens in German, Yugoslavia or Vietnam.” Q.: “‘*Many people, particularly in Germany and Austria, had an interest in propagating the said version that the order of one madman originated the entire massacre. Precisely when the order was given and in what form has, admittedly, never been established.*’ For the--for what, sir?” A.: “The order for the atrocities. We are talking about the order that these people imagine exist so there was one central order.” Q.: “‘*In 1939?--but the secret extermination camps did not begin operating until December 1941.*’ Sir, aren’t you suggesting

there, stating to the reader that the secret extermination camps did not begin operating until December 1941?" A.: "I think I have to say here that this sentence falls into the category of sentences that I would not repeat in 1988. At the time I wrote that in the 1960's, 1974 thereabouts when I wrote--wrote that introduction, I believed. I believed everything I had heard about the extermination camps. I wasn't investigating the extermination camps. I was investigating Hitler." Q.: "But you told us that you did ten years of extensive research on the National Socialist regime?" A.: "Yes." Q.: "And you had no problem making that statement, did you?" A.: "Because I believed." Q.: "Right." A.: "I believed what I had read up at that point. I hadn't gone to the sites of Auschwitz and Treblinka and Maidanek and brought back samples and carried out analysis. I hadn't done any research into what is called the Holocaust. I researched Hitler and his staff." Q.: "You haven't done that, have you, since?" A.: "I haven't." Q.: "You haven't done those things?" A.: "I have carried out no investigation in-depth in equivalent depth of the Holocaust." Q.: "But your mind changed?" A.: "My mind has now changed." Q.: "You no longer believe it?" A.: "I have now begun to challenge that. I understand it is now a subject open to debate." Q.: "But your belief changed even though you didn't do any research; is that what you're saying?" A.: "My belief has now changed because I understand that the whole of the Holocaust mythology is, after all, open to doubt and certainly in the course of what I have read in the last few days, in fact, in this trial, I am now becoming more and more hardened in this view." Q.: "As a result of what you've read here in the last few days?" A.: "Indeed."

As he explained, the reading matter that had changed his mind was Leuchter's conclusion that "none of the facilities examined were ever utilized for the execution of human beings and that the crematories could never have supported the alleged work load attributed to them." In court, Irving publically embraced Leuchter's conclusions. "I'm very impressed, in fact, by the presentation, by the scientific manner of

presentation, by the expertise that's been shown by it and by the very novel conclusion that he's arrived at," and Irving admitted that "as a historian I 'm rather ashamed it never occurred to me to make this kind of investigation on the particular controversy." In conclusion, Irving endorsed the report wholeheartedly. "I think it is shattering in the significance of its discovery."

It is good to remember that, when Irving offered his wholehearted endorsement of the Leuchter Report, its author had already admitted in court that he had gone to Poland minimally prepared, having read three works by Holocaust deniers, two documents on the use of hydrocyanide, and some pages from Hilberg's *Destruction of the European Jews*. Then, too, Leuchter had admitted that he never tried to cross-reference his own observations by looking at the German blueprints, or by studying the testimonies of eye-witnesses. This attitude should have troubled a historian who took pride in his own research skills and his undisputed tenacity in uncovering new material. Indeed: Irving completely ignored Leuchter's sorry performance on the witness stand which he admitted he had witnessed. Let us, for the record, recall some of the main issues that had come up. Leuchter had stated that ninety percent of his conclusions were based on his engineering opinion, and only ten percent on the analysis of the samples that he had taken. Yet during cross-examination, he had to admit that this engineering opinion was very flawed. For example, Leuchter assumed that hydrogen cyanide was very combustible, and that because the gas chambers were located not too far from the incineration ovens, there ought to have been a danger for explosion. Yet during cross-examination he admitted that while hydrogen cyanide became combustible at 60,000 parts per million, it was lethal at 300 parts per million, that is at 0.5 percent of the combustion point. Irving was in the audience and watched it all. It obviously did not leave an impression. Furthermore Leuchter flatly stated that the build up of hydrogen cyanide in the brick and mortar would make the gas chambers very dangerous to use for the SS, yet un-

der cross-examination he had to admit that hydrogen cyanide had only a very short life, and that it quickly combined with iron present in brick or mortar to make the harmless pigment ferro-ferri cyanide, also known as Prussian blue. Then Leuchter stated that the alleged gas chambers could not have worked because there was no ventilation system to extract the gas from the gas chambers. Without a proper ventilation system, the basement of crematorium II could not have been used as a homicidal gas chamber. During cross-examination, Pearson produced a copy of a German document that stated that the gas chamber was to be equipped with an installation for aeration [*Belüftung*] and ventilation [*Entlüftung*], effectively demolishing Leuchter's argument. Then Leuchter had to admit that his calculations as to the very low capacity of the gas chambers were based on the assumption that the Germans would have followed American practices, which aim to kill the victim very fast in order to spare the victim "unusual and cruel punishment." As the Germans were not very interested in ensuring a quick and painless death of those to be murdered, Leuchter had to admit that his calculations were irrelevant. He also had to admit that his assumption that the only way to understand the gas chambers in Auschwitz was through comparison with American gas chambers, and that if the former did not conform to the principles of the latter, the German gas chambers could not have worked, was fallacious. Particularly embarrassing for Leuchter had been the interchange with Pearson about Leuchter's claim that those who inserted the hydrogen cyanide through the roof vents into the gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3 would die themselves from exposure to the poison. After some simple questions, Leuchter had to admit that, once again, he had been wrong. He also had to admit during cross-examination that he had no expert knowledge of crematoria.

When Irving publically announced in the Toronto courtroom that he changed his mind about the historicity of the Auschwitz gas chambers, he turned against a consensus held for more than four decades by

scholars, judges, and the general public that Auschwitz had been the site where Germans operated gas chambers for the execution of human beings, and that in these gas chambers very large numbers of people had been killed. At the time of Irving's "conversion," the informed estimate of the number of victims ranged between a little under a million people (Reitlinger) to 2.5 million, with a clear tendency in more recent scholarship to put the number of victims between one and 1.5 million people. Rejecting the various results of careful analyses done by many historians, Irving hastily embraced, on the basis of a document that purported to be a forensic analysis of the remains of the Auschwitz gas chambers, a piece of scientific garbage.

Irving's public conversion had made him the new hero of Holocaust Deniers everywhere. One negationist magazine, *Instauration* celebrated his testimony as "traumatic for world Jewry." Mark Weber wrote Irving that "[w]ith your support of holocaust revisionism, the outcome is no longer in doubt." "It's not everyone who has a chance to be instrumental in a historic turnaround. The practical consequences of destroying the holocaust myth are almost indescribably potent. "

It is clear that Irving did not need Weber's flattery to fully appreciate the impact of his testimony. In August 1988 he returned to Canada for a talk. In it, he stated that since he had been a small boy he had enjoyed to see important people, or people with reputation and prestige, with "egg on their face." With Holocaust denial, he had found a way to act out his boyhood dream. "[J]ust imagine the omelet on their faces if we manage to expose that other six million lie [as opposed the six million marks *Der Stern* paid for the Hitler diaries]. This is the prospect that is now opening up in front of me." Reviewing his own journey towards his endorsement of the Leuchter Report earlier that year, Irving described his thesis that Hitler knew nothing of the Holocaust as "aa kind of half-way house in m conversion." But his full conversion only came when he saw the scientific evidence. In fact, during the lecture he mentioned that the old-style Holocaust deniers had done the revi-

sionist cause harm, “because they have not used the necessary scientific methods in making their claim on Auschwitz.” “But Mr. Zündel has used the scientific method. And taking this as a starting point, I have now begun, over the last few months, going round the archives with a completely open mind, looking for the evidence myself. Because if Auschwitz, just to take that one cardinal tent pole of the case, if Auschwitz itself was not an extermination factory, then what is the evidence that it was? This is one thing we have to look at. How did all the evidence come into existence?” Irving argued that all the evidence had a very narrow basis--“one, or two, or three documents and eyewitness accounts.” Speculating on the origin of the Vrba--Wetzlar report, issued by the War Refugee Board, Irving stated in 1944 some thought it to be Nazi propaganda, because it revealed that “the Jews themselves were the people responsible for the ‘atrocities’ at Auschwitz, that “the people whose job it was to select, and deport, and ship into the gas chambers, and carry out the bodies and so on, were all Jews themselves....The real atrocities were committed by the Jews themselves in the camp at Auschwitz.” A more likely scenario, however, was that the British government “masterminded the gas chamber lie” in order to motivate Allied soldiers “so that they would fight even harder.” Interpreting the Cavendish-Bentinck minute of 27 August 1943, Irving argued that the authors of the lie thought that by 1943 it had served its purpose. And he added, “here we are 44 years later and that hare is still running, bigger and stronger than ever, because nobody dares now stand up and kill it.” “It is got out of control. The Auschwitz propaganda lie that was starting to run in 1944 is now out of control. And it is going to take He-men of the kind of stature of Ernst Zündel to kill that particular hare [applause]. So gradually the whole edifice of contrary evidence is coming together. We are demolishing [the argument] that says that it was, and we are finding the evidence that says that it was not. It is a very, very happy task for myself and it is exactly the kind of thing I like doing.”

Irving predicted that soon the whole exterminationist edifice was going to come down, and people would realize that while Jews may have suffered, “along with a lot of other minorities and ethnic groupings,” the Jews did not suffer proportionally more than other groups. “I don’t think that their suffering can be said to be worse than the sufferings suffered by the Germans after the war, in the great mass expulsions, the great population movements.” All of this was to become the subject of a new book--to be published in five years. “It has to be my final book probably, on Auschwitz. This is why I hope that people will recognize that I managed to pull off a coup even more spectacular than exposing the Hitler diaries as a fake. From one six million lie to another. That I will see then that some of the world’s most famous historians and politicians have the biggest omelet of all times all over their face.”

Irving did not (yet) keep his promise to enlighten the world with a study of Auschwitz. Instead he bought from Zündel the right to publish through his own publishing venture “Focal Point” the British edition of the Leuchter Report. In the spring of 1989 everything was ready for the book-launch. The spirit of the day suggested that revisionism was on the rise. In April a storm broke loose in the United States about the a book published half a year earlier by the respected Princeton historian Arno Mayer. Entitled *Why did the heavens not darken? The Final Solution in history*. Mayer argued that the Holocaust, which he termed “Judeocide,” was not the result of antisemitism, but of antibolshevism. It did not arise from the National Socialist phantasy concerning the so-called “Jewish Question,” but resulted from German frustration when the Wehrmacht failed to defeat the Soviet Union in the Summer and Fall of 1941. “The Jewish catastrophe was forged in the crucible of this irreversible but failing Glaubenskrieg. This secular crusade provided the mastery of space, the corridor of time, and the climate of violence the Nazis needed to perpetrate the Judeocide.”

While this thesis could perhaps be accepted for the operations of the *Einsatzgruppen* Mayer went farther: Operation Barbarossa also provided the cause and context for the death camps, including Auschwitz. “The very origins of the centers of mass killing reflect the existence of an iron nexus between absolute war and large-scale political murder in eastern Europe. Of the six such centers--Auschwitz, Majdanek, Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka--Auschwitz and Majdanek were started as stalags for prisoners of war and concentration camps for political prisoners. At the outset Auschwitz and Majdanek were also meant to serve as outposts for the implantation of the Thousand-Year Reich in occupied Poland and Russia. The nexus of absolute war and deliberate mass murder remained all-pervasive. At Auschwitz and Majdenek, which were at one and the same time concentration camps and annihilation centers, the hyper-exploitation of inmates for war production was anything but spurious. Of course, at both camps, in the face of irreversible military setbacks and shortages, the line between egregious exploitation and outright exterminism kept wearing thin. Indeed, ultimately the execrable living, sanitary, and working conditions in the concentration camps and ghettos took a greater toll of life than the willful executions and gassings in the extermination centers.”

Mayer included in his boo a specific chapter devoted to Auschwitz. While Mayer did not deny the presence and importance of the gas chambers, he gave a particular importance to typhus as a cause of death. To be sure, Mayer’s discussion on the selections started conventionally enough. “It is unclear what percentage of the incoming Jews was selected on arrival as “unfit for hard labor “; estimates range between 60 and 80 percent. It is also uncertain how many of these “unfit”--the sick and infirm as well as healthy women, infants, children, and old people--were sent to the gas chambers immediately upon arrival or shortly thereafter, how many were sent sometime later, and how many ultimately dies a natural death.” So far so good. Yet quickly

his account moved beyond legitimate caution about the exact statistics into an irresponsible description of the purpose of and conditions in Birkenau that had no relationship whatsoever to the historical record. “Unlike the main camp, which was and remained an all-male camp for about 15,000 slave workers, Birkenau was to become the major compound not only for forced laborers of both sexes but also for the non-working inmates of the entire complex. Accordingly, upon their arrival after a gruelling and dehumanizing journey in freight cars, all temporarily and permanently “unemployable” Jews were summarily assigned to Birkenau, where housing and sanitation were disastrous, as they were throughout the Auschwitz complex. Half-starved and practically without medical care, the frail and the sick were particularly imperiled, the more so since at the journey’s end the whole of Auschwitz was intermittently in the grip of a devastating typhus epidemic. The result was an unspeakable death rate, partly because the ailing and the dying were brought to Birkenau from both the main camp and from Monowitz. In addition to being the wretched and miasmic habitat for the least fit, Birkenau was the site of Auschwitz’s main medical facility and quarantine center, as well as of most of its crematoriums and gas chambers.” And, without discussing the purpose of those gas chambers, Mayer immediately proceeded to a well-meant but ill-considered reflection on the causes of death in Auschwitz--a reflection that ended with a sentence that, introduced with the oddly chosen adverb “besides,” ceased to make any sense whatsoever. “There is a distinction between dying from “natural” or “normal” causes and being killed by shooting, hanging, phenol injection, or gassing. But quite apart from the vital importance of not allowing this distinction to be used to extenuate and normalize the mass murder at Auschwitz, it should not be pressed too far. The Nazis leaders decided to transport frail and sick Jews, and Gypsies, to Auschwitz in full awareness of the perils they would face, and they continued to do so once there was no ignoring and denying the deadly conditions there, including the endemic

danger of epidemics. Besides, from 1942 to 1945, certainly at Auschwitz, but probably overall, more Jews were killed by so-called “natural” causes than by “unnatural” ones.”

Mayer’s book did not include any annotation that provided an insight into his sources. Neither did he refer to the work of other scholars in his text. The book did contain a bibliography. It included both Butz and Rassinier.

Of all books published on the Holocaust, essential passages of *Why did the heavens not darken?* approached some of the core arguments of the negationists. For example Mayer’s thesis that typhus had been one of the main causes of death in Birkenau could only bring happiness to negationists like Faurisson, who had always maintained that all the Zyklon-B shipped to Auschwitz could be easily explained because of the in his opinion endemic prevalence of typhusbearing lice in the camp. Indeed: many passages could provide Holocaust deniers with useful quotations. Yet none of those connected with the Institute of Historical Review noticed Mayer’s book. This changed when in April 1989 *The New Republic* published an angry and devastating six-page review entitled “False Witness,” written by Daniel Goldhagen. He summarized Mayer’s book as “an artful construction of half-truths” that was “riddled with extraordinary factual errors, which amount to a pattern of falsification and distortion.” Goldhagen observed that Mayer’s “outrageous” account of Auschwitz showed “the spirit of revisionist apologia.” “Mayer is saying, astoundingly, that the Nazi leaders sent Jews to Auschwitz despite their knowledge that life in the camp was perilous as if epidemics were the main danger for the Jews; not with the intention of killing them.” Goldhagen had no difficulty in demolishing Mayer’s account of Auschwitz.

Goldhagen’s review had unintended consequences: it alerted the negationists to the fact that a major historian had produced a work that, with admittedly considerable distortion, could be presented as an en-

dorsement of the revisionist position. Consequently the May issue of the newsletter published by the Institute of Historical Review carried a review entitled “The Holocaust: A Sinking Ship?” It described Mayer as “one of the leading lights of his profession,” and his book as a justification of “the approach and methodology of Revisionist scholars of the Holocaust like Paul Rassinier, Arthur Butz, Robert Faurisson, Wilhelm Stäglich, Walter Sanning, David Irving, Mark Weber, Fritz Berg, Carlo Mattagno, Henri Roques and a growing cohort of other researchers.” It defined Mayer’s text as a “minefield of hoax-boasting concessions “--a place “where Exterminationist angels fear to tread “but an “intrepid Harvard graduate student” had rushed in. And it ended with the question “What to make of it all?” “Is the crew of the good ship *Holocaust* preparing a rush for the lifeboats (and women and children be damned!), or are damage control teams working feverishly below decks in an effort to keep the stricken hull afloat? Will the (largely Gentile) suckers for what passed not so long ago, even among academics, as “the best documented event in history” stick to their berths in steerage, as the hoax capsizes and begins its last lonely hurdle to the watery graveyard of historical frauds? A prediction from this side: by the turn of the millennium Goldhagen and his friends will need bathyscaphes to travel to their beloved showers.”

In his review of *Why did the heavens not darken?*, published later that year in *The Journal of Historical Review*, Robert Faurisson did not hide his pleasure either. One sentence had given him particular joy: “Sources for the study of the gas chambers are at once rare and unreliable.” Faurisson observed how far revisionism had come. He reminded his readers that in 1979 leading French scholars had publically stated that there could be no debate about the gas chambers. “We had to wait until 1988 for an established historian like Arno Mayer to say, in his chapter on Auschwitz, that sources for the study of the gas chambers, far from being *abundant* and *reliable* as people asserted, are only *rare* and *unreliable*. This is just a single example of the significant progress

that Historical Revisionism has made in the scholarly community.” Of course, using his “Ajax Method,” Faurisson did not feel any need to inform his readers about the rest of the paragraph and the one that followed it--paragraphs in which Mayer clearly stated that, despite the lack of information, he did not doubt that there had been gas chambers.

With the apparently partial “conversion” of a prominent historian to a revisionist position vis-avis the Auschwitz gas chambers, the prospects of the Leuchter Report to attract establishment support looked good indeed. In a letter to the negationist Robert Countess, Irving judged Mayer’s book as “remarkable, though not quite as ‘revisionist’ as the reviews of it (Newsweek etc) suggest. Still, it is a breakthrough.” And he added “[i]f Mayer would address the IHR that would be a sensation!” At the same time, the prominent German historian Ernst Nolte had expressed to Irving his willingness to attend, under certain conditions, the next revisionist conference. With the “breakthrough” of *Why did the heavens not darken?*, Irving acquired the confidence to put his whole reputation on the line: the provocative press statement issued by Focal Point--that is Irving--was not only grandiose in its claims for the historic significance of the Leuchter Report, but also unequivocal as to where Irving stood. Ten years after Faurisson had brought his glad tidings to the world, Irving was to make the “epochal announcement” that the gas chambers of Auschwitz had not been. “Nearly forty years after Soviet troops overran the Nazi slave labour camp at Auschwitz in January 1945, the truth is coming out about it. Scientists, using the same ultra-modern equipment and methods that detected the centuries-old fraud of the Turin Shroud, have established that there is no significant trace of any poison residues in the “gas chambers” of Auschwitz and the other main “death camps” purported by the world’s historians. **British historian DAVID IRVING will present the findings at a press conference in London’s World Trade Centre on 23d June 1989...** Irving, controversial--but always right--is the author of nearly

thirty major books on the Hitler era and the Third Reich. His books are always based on the documents and the archives. He does not just quote other historians. His latest biography of Hitler's "Reichsmarschall" Hermann Göring is to be published by Macmillan Ltd in August, and has been hailed by Time Out as "Book of the Year." By writing the introduction to the U.K. Edition of **The Leuchter Report**, he has placed himself at the head of a growing band of historians, worldwide, who are now sceptical of the claim that at Auschwitz and the other camps there were "factories of death" in which millions of innocent people were systematically gassed to death. Irving has a record of exposing fakes and swindles: he once used City of London fraud laboratories to discredit cleverly-faked "diaries" of Hitler's Intelligence chief Wilhelm Canaris that had been offered to William Collins Ltd., and in April 1983 he was the first to unmask the Adolf Hitler "diaries" as fraudulent, creating a sensation at *Der Stern's* Hamburg press conference until the magazine had him evicted. **Now he is saying the same thing about the infamous "gas chambers" of Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek. They did not exist--ever--except, perhaps, as the brainchild of Britain's brilliant wartime Psychological Warfare Executive (PWE).** The tragic "eye-witnesses" must have been, to use no harsher word, mistaken. The survivors of Auschwitz are themselves testimony to the absence of an extermination programme. So what did happen? Come to our press conference on 23d June. Hear Irving deliver his epochal announcement; obtain your copy of the Focal Point publication *The Leuchter Report*--and ask for yourself: is this indeed the end of the line for Auschwitz? "

The press-release followed more or less Irving's introduction to the Leuchter Report. In it, Irving clearly established his contempt for the historical establishment, and his aim to use the Leuchter Report as a weapon in his battle with main-line historians. "Unlike the writing of history, chemistry is an exact science. Old fashioned historians have always conducted endless learned debates about meanings and inter-

pretations, and the more indolent among them have developed a subsidiary Black Art of “reading between the lines”, as a substitute for wading into the archives of World War II documents which are now available in embarrassing abundance.” Saying that “more daring” historians had begun to use modern technologies to dispel “some of the more tenaciously held myths of the twentieth century,” Irving presented his own record as a debunker of the faked Canaris and Hitler diaries through laboratory analysis of the ink used. Moving effortlessly from two diaries that suddenly appeared on the market without any provenance whatsoever to very complex and long-lasting historical events witnessed by thousands of different people, Irving could not hide his own surprise at having failed to subject “Auschwitz” to laboratory analysis. “And yet I have to admit that it would never have occurred to me to subject the actual fabric of the Auschwitz concentration camp and its “gas chambers”--the holiest shrines of this new Twentieth Century religion--to chemical tests to see if there was any trace of cyanide compounds in the walls. The truly astounding results are set out in this report: while significant quantities of cyanide compounds were found in the small de-lousing facilities of the camp where the proprietary (and lethal) Zyklon B compound was used, as all are agreed, to disinfect the plague-ridden clothing of all persons entering these brutal slave-labour camps, no significant trace whatsoever was found in the buildings which international opinion--for it is not more than that--has always labelled as the camp’s infamous gas chambers. Nor, as the report’s gruesomely expert author makes plain, could the design and construction of those buildings have made their use as mass gas-chambers feasible under any circumstances. For myself, shown this evidence for the first time when called as an expert witness at the Zündel trial in Toronto in April 1988, the laboratory reports were shattering. There could be no doubt as to their integrity. I myself would, admittedly, have preferred to see more rigorous methods used in identifying and certifying the samples taken for analysis, but I accept without reservation the difficulties that the examining team faced

on location in what is now Poland; chiselling out the samples from the hallowed site under the very noses of the new camp guards. The video tapes made simultaneously by the team--which I have studied--provide compelling visual evidence of the scrupulous methods that they have used. Until the end of this tragic century there will always be incorrigible historians, statesmen and publicists who are content to believe, or have no economically viable alternative but to believe, that the Nazis used "gas chambers" at Auschwitz to kill human beings. But it is now up to them to explain to me as an intelligent and critical student of modern history why there is no significant trace of any cyanide compound in the building which they have always identified as the former gas chambers. Forensic chemistry is, I repeat, an exact science. The ball is in their court."

Confident of his contribution to world-history, and seeking maximum publicity, Irving sent copies of the preface to Members of Parliament. It was met with an immediate response. On June 20--three days before the official launch of the Leuchter Report--Hugh Dykes M.P. introduced an "early day motion" with the title "David Irving and Holocaust Denial." "Description: That this House, on the occasion of the reunion of 1,000 refugees from the Holocaust, most of whose families were killed in gas chambers or otherwise by Nazi murderers is appalled by the allegation by the Nazi apologist David Irving that the infamous gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek did not exist ever, except perhaps, as the brainchild of Britain's brilliant wartime Psychological Warfare Executive: draws attention to a new fascist publication, the Leuchter Report, in which this evil calumny appears: and condemns without qualification such pernicious work of Hitler's heirs." Eighty-eight of the members present signed the motion. In a letter, copies of which were sent to the media, Irving reacted angrily. "Dear Dykes, Come clean. Who put you up to it! (I am referring to your privileged act of defamation against me in the House). Is this the best that the gallant but dwindling band of gullible believers in the "gas cham-

bers” can do? Unwilling to debate them seriously in public, they resort to the sledgehammer (literally), fire bomb, and “nazi” smear to protect their moral investment. If you persist in believing in “gas chambers” at Auschwitz you are on a loser. I challenge you to replicate the forensic tests that have been carried out on the internal fabric of the “gas chambers” there and come up with results that will prove that it is I, and not your friends, who lie. Further, I offer myself for this test: I will stand in the Auschwitz “gas chamber” and you or your friends can dump in the Zyklon B in the prescribed manner. I guarantee you will get little satisfaction from the outcome!” Luckily for Irving, Dykes did not take him up on his challenge.

On June 23, the day of the book launch, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that Irving had told them, in an interview given two days earlier, that “[t]he Jewish community have to examine their consciences. They have been propagating something that isn’t true.”

The press conference itself did not take place exactly as planned. The World Trade Centre cancelled Irving’s booking, and he was forced to move the event to his own house, at 81 Duke Street, Mayfair. Irving took care to have the whole press conference recorded on video-tape. Irving was very straightforward about his assertion that the Leuchter Report proved that the Auschwitz gas chambers were the product of allied propaganda which, after the war, no-one had ever wanted to correct. “I don’t think there’s any specific reason why a lie has been adopted. I think that, as I have said often before, that in wartime governments produce propaganda. The propaganda flywheel starts to spin, [and] nobody at the end of the war has a motive to stop the propaganda flywheel spinning. It should be the job of the historians, but the historians have become themselves part of the propaganda process. Now we find in the British archives a lot of evidence that we willingly propagated the gas chamber story because it was a useful propaganda line for us to take. However it was based on such tenuous evidence, as you can see from the document in the press pack, that the people who them-

selves spread the lie then urged that Her Majesty's Government should not even attach their name because for fear that eventually it should be shown up." Challenged to explain where the Jews who had been transported to Auschwitz had gone, Irving asserted that Jewish underground organizations had shipped most of them, "across Europe in trucks," to Palestine, where "they were given new names and a new existence and a new life.... The Jews that were in Israel didn't come from nowhere." For the disappearance of those who could not be accounted for Irving blamed the allies: the men who flew the bombers that destroyed Dresden, and not the SS, were responsible for the fact that so many who were shipped to Auschwitz never returned home. "Another part of them, when Auschwitz was liberated were set out on the roads to be shipped westward where they ended up in cities like Dresden. I don't have to tell you what happened in Dresden three weeks after Auschwitz was evacuated by the Germans. There were one million refugees in the streets of Dresden at the time that we burned Dresden to the ground, killing anything between 100,000 and 250,000 of them." Irving conducted the press conference in a fighting spirit. When asked if he was a fascist, he responded with saying that he was "on an *intifada* against the, against the established version of writing the Holocaust: a one-man *intifada*."

The *Jewish Chronicle* carried a week later a report of the press conference. "Mr. Irving asserted last week that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz and said he was waging "a one man *intifada*" against Holocaust history. He was speaking at a press conference at his Mayfair flat to launch "The Leuchter Report," a Holocaust denial pamphlet published by Mr Irving's far Right Focal Point Publications. [...] A PLO representative Ms Karma Nabulski angrily rejected Mr Irving's "attempt to hijack the *intifada*. His theories are obscene," she said. Mr. Irving expanded on his theories at a bizarre press conference last week, standing in front of an aerial photo of Auschwitz and a larger colour picture of himself. Part of his "evidence" played on a video at the far end of the

room. Three fuzzy, anoraked figures, including Mr Fred A. Leuchter, an engineer, who designs gas chambers for American prisons, wandered through Birkenau hacking lumps of masonry from the rubble of the crematoria. Were they trying to complete the work of the SS by destroying the evidence? No. They were “scientists” working “under the noses of the Communist guards” gathering “astounding” forensic evidence Mr Irving said. [...] Tests on Mr. Leuchter’s samples showed no traces of cyanide said Mr Irving. Therefore Zyklon B had not been used in the gas chambers, which were not gas chambers after all. He admitted that there was no independent evidence that Mr Leuchter’s samples were from the gas chambers. And he discounted all documentary evidence on the subject and the eyewitness testimony of thousands of Jewish and Nazi witnesses.”

In his provoking if not incitive 1989 preface to the Leuchter Report Irving felt no hesitation in raking some academic muck, suggesting that those historians who maintain that Auschwitz had been an extermination camp did so because they were either intellectually rigid or economically dependent on the high priests of the new “twentieth century religion” of the Holocaust. Yet, at least formally, he still claimed a willingness to entertain the possibility that Leuchter could be proven wrong. In fact, shortly after the publication of the report he received information from what he considered to be a reliable source that the Leuchter Report was very problematic. A certain David A. Crabtree, an engineer resident in Swaziland, had obtained a copy of the Leuchter Report through his daughter, who had attended a lecture Irving had given in Johannesburg. He wrote Irving that he found it interesting reading, “and its major conclusion to be well founded.” Yet he was troubled by the “elementary errors of fact and reasoning in the text.” “Obviously the report was researched and prepared in some haste, and the errors are peripheral to the main argument. Even so, it is clear that they will be used by the well organised opposition to “prove that the author is incompetent and uninformed” to such an ex-

tent that his whole work should be dismissed, and buried, if not actually publicly burned.” Crabtree had considered writing an article about the problems in the Leuchter Report, but in the end offered his notes to Irving, to be used in a revised edition of the work. He closed his cover letter with a general observation. “At Cambridge, forty years ago, I learned the philosophy that history is what historians write, rather than what actually happened. I thoroughly approve of your success in stripping the wallpaper off the cracks of the edifice of conventional wisdom.”

Attached was Crabtree’s five-page effort entitled “The Leuchter Report--proposals for amendments to be incorporated in the second edition, Together with reasoned substantiation thereof.” For all his sympathy for Leuchter’s point of departure, Crabtree was blunt about the man’s scientific expertise. Leuchter’s observations on carbonmonoxide Crabtree described as “total rubbish, good evidence to brand the author as a scientific ignoramus.” Page after page he corrected Leuchter’s figures, and challenged his reasonings. Crabtree had special trouble with Leuchter’s assumption that the gas chambers could only be packed at a density of one “executtee” per nine square feet. “Mention is made of chambers too small to contain the occupants claimed, or attributed. This statement appears to be based on the assumption that executees were evenly spaced at 3 foot intervals, as per the reference to 9 square feet in col I, this page. An assumption is an assumption, and is not necessarily wrong. However, this one is comparable with a popular cocktail party. Surely the popular conception of the holocaust is more like the Tokyo underground at rush hour, or even the Guinness Book of Record figures for how many people get to fill a telephone kiosk or a Volkswagen beetle. 1,5 square feet per person seems more likely, given the alleged conditions. The number of executees per day should be therefore 6 times those used by the author. He can do this without interfering with his argument. He just makes it more acceptable. Even if the executees were allowed 9 square feet each

to be executed in, they would not use the space, as they would crowd themselves as densely as possible away from any perceived poison source, and towards any possible escape route. Proposal--that the calculated output of corpses be increased accordingly. It is still not enough to support the holocaust figures. And the chemical evidence is in any case overwhelming, that it never happened.” Crabtree was neither convinced by Leuchter’s argument that the cyanide could have reached the ovens and exploded, destroying the crematorium: “the fatal percentage of gas is so far below the flammability or explosive limit that it could not have ignited or exploded.” At the end of his report, Crabtree suggested that if the report was limited to “confirmed evidence”--with which he clearly indicated the chemical analysis of the samples--he would be “more easily defended on the battlefield.”

Crabtree’s observations troubled Irving, as can be surmised from Irving’s fax to Ernst Zündel of July 31, 1989. “I think that the enclosed letter from a reliable South African engineer, Crabtree, needs all our urgent attention. In short, he has detected a number of elementary calculating errors in Fred’s report, and he has a number of general comments to make which I confess echo precisely the feelings I had upon reading the report: that having scored conclusively on the issue of the chemical tests, Fred thoroughly confuses the issue by examining what are the theoretical maximum numbers that these buildings could have exterminated. I appreciate the difficulties that an engineer has in writing plain English; they are the same as the difficulties that trades unionists have in speaking it! But the Report is now accepted worldwide as the breakthrough, and in its mass production version we must not let it shoot itself in the foot. I am therefore recommending to Tony that the text of future editions is modified to take these objections into account. Of course, it will then have to be made plain that this is no longer the affidavit as submitted in evidence.”

Zündel responded immediately. He noted that he agreed that the report can be vastly improved, yet that a court order forbade him to do so. Violation would result in him losing his right to appeal, the forfeiture of the bond that kept him out of prison pending his appeal, his immediate arrest and, on completion of his sentence, automatic deportation. As an alternative of tinkering with the Leuchter Report, Zündel suggested that a new expedition could be mounted to Auschwitz. "Philipp seems to have an eager young German publisher with some money and expert television crews and equipment interested in going back there to Auschwitz, Majdanek etc. You seem to get along well with him. Could you not expend that lead into a full fledged one with you being the narrator on scene both in German and English, on location." Zündel suggested that they would use a professional television crew, and take along a "mobile notary" to notarize the samples. Zündel suggested that this adventure would bring great benefits to Irving: "This would give you "instant expert" status let you talk more forcefully and convincingly with "eyewitness status", I was there etc. It would make the whole thing a serious archaeological history endeavour." Zündel also suggested that if the Poles were to make it impossible to take samples, they would amalgamate the new discoveries with the Leuchter samples. And even if the whole thing were to end in scientific failure, Zündel saw the commercial benefits: Irving would end up with "a very marketable product in the Irving image of media Razzle Dazzle."

Zündel also sent a letter to Crabtree, in which he explained, more guardedly, that the Leuchter Report was a court document, and any change would be exploited by the other side as a proof that he had submitted invalid evidence --a serious issue especially as Zündel was appealing the verdict. "My case will be before the courts till about 1990 and I have no intention of giving my enemies an easier time since you yourself state that the "errors are peripheral to the main arguments." I could already point out some of the reasons why Fred Leuchter's cal-

culations were based on industry standard air flow figures re maximum gas release, etc., but will ask you to be patient. We will come up with an “Addendum of Explanation”, which will not compromise me in the courts by raising nitpicking questions while my case winds itself through the court system. I am of the opinion that this report is to be seen, as has been stated by me and Leuchter in the past, as a seminal piece of work.”

Crabtree’s critique, written from a perspective sympathetic to Leuchter’s effort, was not the only indication that there were profound problems with the Leuchter Report. In early August Irving received from Mark Weber an anonymous 23-page German critique, entitled “A critical comment on the so-called Leuchter document” (“Kritische Stellungnahme zum sogen. Leuchter-Dokument”), accompanied by the following explanation of its provenance. “I received this on the 26th of July from a correspondent in West Germany who is sympathetic to Holocaust revisionism. In an accompanying letter he wrote: “Dieser Text erscheint im Herbst in einem Sammelwerk deutscher Historiker. Ich konnte ihn fuer Sie beschaffen, kann Ihnen aber den Verfasser nicht nennen. Was halten Sie davon?” [“This text will appear this Fall in a multi-author volume of German historians. I could get a copy of it for you, but am unable to name the author. What do you think about it?”] This essay is almost certainly the most detailed “exterminationist” response to date of the Leuchter report. It is gratifying to see that the report has provoked such a response, although I am concerned about the impact it might have when it is published later this year. I’ve sent this essay to Ernst Zuendel, and I plan to send it soon to Robert Faurisson. I have also told Leuchter about it, although I don’t have time to translate it into English.”

Weber’s correspondent was partly right: the manuscript was the rough draft of an essay written by the octogenarian German retired civil servant and amateur historian Werner Wegner, who had dedicated his retirement to the study of the Holocaust in general, and Auschwitz in

particular. It was to be published in 1990 as a chapter in the monumental *Die Schatten der Vergangenheit: Impulse zur Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus* [*The Shadows of the Past: Impulses Towards a Historicization of National Socialism*], published by Propyläen Verlag. Wegner amply demonstrated revealed that Leuchter's science did not pass critical muster. Most of the arguments contained in Wegner's draft parallel those which I introduced in my discussion of the Leuchter Report in Chapter Nine. Point by point Wegner demolished Leuchter's arguments. For example, reviewing Leuchter's argument that in the gas chambers each of the "executees" would have occupied nine square feet (or 0.84 m²), he noted that the German legislation determining the number of people that may occupy the aisle in street cars assumes that one person of 65 kilos occupies 0.125 m², or eight people per square meter. Thus following German standards, Wegner concluded that the gas chamber of crematorium 1 could have given space to 618 people at a time. (He did not calculate the capacity of the gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3, which were about 200 m² each, but using the same German data, one would arrive at a capacity of $8 \times 200 = 1,600$ people per gas chamber--that is a total number of people that exceeds by ten percent the official incineration rate of these crematoria of 1,440 people per day. The three gas chambers of crematoria 4 and 5 were also more than adequate for the job: the two larger ones were about 95 m² each--allowing for 760 victims each [which comes close to the official incineration capacity of 756 corpses per day--and the smaller of about 40 m² could still accommodate 320 people.) Wegner claimed that his own calculations confirmed the official German figures which assigned crematorium 1 a capacity of 340 corpses per day, crematoria 2 and 3 a capacity of 1,440 corpses per day, and crematoria 4 and 5 a capacity of 756 corpses per day, but sadly enough he did not provide them as evidence. In conclusion, Wegner stated that the Leuchter Report was a worthless investigation.

Mark Weber of the Institute for Historical Review tried to answer the criticism in his “A Preliminary Response to the 23-page Manuscript Essay ‘Kritische Stellungnahme zum sogen. Leuchter-Dokument.’” Weber began his attack with the observation that the criticism was based on a pirated German-language version of the Leuchter Report, and that “[t]he failure of the essay author to refer to the original English-language edition of the Report...Shows a lack of seriousness and scholarly care.” Then he addressed the criticism point by point, invoking however exclusively negationist literature to defuse the critique, quoting for example Arthur Butz’s contention that Auschwitz was established as a camp “for Jews who were not able to work, including the sick and elderly.” Weber ended his comment with the observation that it was in itself proof of the “growing influence of the revisionist view of the Holocaust story, and in particular of the important independent research of a courageous American engineer.”

Irving received a copy of the Wegner’s draft, and Mark Weber’s “Preliminary Response.” He replied as follows: “The critiques of the Leuchter Report are very cogent. They raise several points on the statistical side that had worried me. Leuchter, alas, is an engineer and he writes English with the flair of a trade-unionist. I too feel that having chemically established the truth, he only helps the opposition by looking at the theoretical capacities. And in doing so he needlessly broadens the target area that he presents the enemy. As you know, we had a similar critique from an engineer in Pretoria, Mr Crabtree. I do not know what the answer is, but your response was pretty good.”

Weber responded a month later, informing Irving that Leuchter and Faurisson had assured him that the criticisms were “basically without merit,” even if Weber still considered that they deserved “serious consideration.” One of the reasons was that, in response to the Leuchter Report, the Pole had released the original documents that described the toxicological analysis of the hair and the ventilation covers of the gas chamber of Crematorium 2. As we have seen in Chapter Four, the

forensic laboratory in Cracow had determined that the thin white-coloured and strongly smelling deposit that covered the lids contained hydrocyanide. In a letter to Weber dated October 15, Irving turned and twisted to cast suspicion on those pieces of forensic investigation, done 43 years before Leuchter arrived at Auschwitz. “You will have seen the Polish “December 1945” investigation of hair and zinc remnants from the Auschwitz Leichenkeller 1. My immediate negative feelings were: (a)unlike the Leuchter report, whose lab results are based on purely quantitative analysis, the Polish report is purely qualitative analysis, i.e. Confirming the presence of cyanide compounds, but not putting a figure on them. There is nothing to show that the zinc grids were not taken from the disinfestation chamber site; and nothing to show that the hair was not impregnated en route from the site to the laboratory. Quite apart from anything, the notion that 25.5 kilos (half a hundredweight!) of hair--a huge volume by any estimates--could be contained in a “paper bag “ is very suspect. A general criticism is: How very convenient that this December 1945 document should come to light now (I assume it did not come to light substantially earlier?), and seek to disprove precisely the points made by the April 1988 Leuchter Report! It is as though London Transport had had the foresight, in 1945, to make scrapings of their buses, in case some historian in 1989 should challenge whether their colour really was red!” Having raised the last suggestion, Irving should have realized the insanity of assaulting the well-established record of history. He should also have understood that he had, in the end, made extra-ordinary claims about the uniqueness of Leuchter’s forensic investigation and the importance of Leuchter’s claims without having done his home-work. Yet he chose to ignore the evidence that contradicted the validity of his stance, and instead tried to find support for his views in whatever was on offer. In the same letter he discussed a video of Auschwitz made by Sepp Geiger. “I had not realized before that there is such evidence of downright faking as the “gaschamber” sites--the hole cut through the concrete ceiling,

preparatory to including wooden framework and a lid as on the other chambers, but abandoned by the Poles when they ran into steel reinforcing bars.”

Weber responded in a long letter in which he stated that he did not know about the Polish forensic investigations. He showed once more concern about the Leuchter Report, and Leuchter and Faurisson’s refusal to take the emerging criticism seriously. “I have been pleading with Faurisson, Zuendel and Leuchter to respond to the most plausible and oft-repeated criticisms in a kind of appendix to a new edition, but neither Zuendel nor Leuchter seems to regard this as a priority task.”

The situation was to become worse. In the late fall or early winter Irving received through the good offices of a certain Colin M. Beer another utterly devastating critique of the Leuchter Report. The author noted that the basis of Leuchter’s assumption, the idea that it would be possible to judge the Germans’ use of hydrocyanic gas as a killing agent in Auschwitz with contemporary American practices, was invalid. In American gas chambers, inmates were killed with 3,200 ppm, the effect of which the critique describes as “one-gulp-and-you’re-dead.” A concentration of 300 ppm was to bring about “rapid and immediate death.” Given the fact that there were accounts that it took people up to 30 minutes to expire, concentrations could have been as low as 100 ppm. “A supplementary factor is that in a US judicial execution chamber the victim is strapped, fully dressed, into a chair. Gas ingestion is thus by inhalation. According to literature the victims of the alleged gas chambers were herded bare-arse naked into the facility having been made to run from the undressing rooms to the chambers. The victims were thus gasping for breath while immersed in a toxic atmosphere. Since HCN can access the body by skin absorption as well as by inhalation, this greatly increased the effectiveness of the low concentrations of gas and makes the use of 100 ppm fully credible. The result makes a dramatic difference to the whole report.” Operating with a low (but lethal) hydrocyanide concentration of 100 ppm, there

was no danger for explosion. More importantly, at such a low concentration the for Leuchter (and Faurisson) major issue of ventilation ceased to be a point. The author of the critique did not know that the underground gas chambers of crematoria 2 and 3 were equipped with a ventilation system which, as we have already seen, made Leuchter's opinion as to the impossibility to use these rooms as gas chambers mute. But the smaller above ground gas chambers of crematoria 4 and 5 did not have a separate ventilation system: only doors that opened directly to the outside. It is therefore interesting to note his comments on the issue of ventilation. "Leuchter claims that at least a week would be needed to ventilate the chambers prior to removing the bodies and cleansing. This is based on US industrial safety standards, a complete lack of ventilation and the 3200 ppm concentration. The use of 100 ppm dramatically reduces the time needed to reduce concentration. It is obvious that the German guards would not have applied 1989 US industrial safety standards to the slave labour reputedly used to clear the chambers. The volume of one chamber is quoted as 7657 ft³. A swept volume of 120 ft³/min would be needed to completely change this in one hour equating to a flow rate of 0.5 ft³/sec. A current of this speed is hardly distinguishable from still air. Assuming 1 hour is left for ventilation the result would be a residual gas concentration of 15-25 ppm within the chamber. The symptoms in crews used to clear/clean the chamber would, after prolonged exposure, be headaches, nausea, reddening of eyes, giddiness and weakness. These are exactly the symptoms experienced by survivors of the work teams reputedly used for this purpose and previously assumed to be a psychosomatic result of the horror of the experience. This is a further case of Leuchter's own work actually verifying Holocaust accounts." As a result, it would have been possible to use the gas chambers twice a day, instead of once a week. This immediately increased the possible death rate of the gas chambers from a little over 100,000 to close to 1.5 million people. Added to that was the fact that Leuchter's assumption that the gas chambers were loaded with victims at a density of one per nine square feet

was obviously wrong. The author of the critique assumed at least a density of one person per six square feet, which would have brought the possible death-toll to 2.2 million people.

Then the critique addressed the assumption that had informed Leuchter's sampling technique. "The 100 ppm operating concentration discredits his sample technique. Obviously if the gas concentration was 100 ppm, the residue concentration in the walls cannot be greater. The samples were exposed to a damp, cold environment for 40 years. Leaching and chemical breakdown would be such that even the stablest complexes would be degraded. To find 6 ppm under such circumstances is remarkable. The control sample was from a delouser used several times per day at 3200 ppm and A SMALL, SELF-CONTAINED UNIT COMPLETELY ENCLOSED AND SHELTERED. To consider this a control is exceptionally bad technique and discredits the entire sample programme. I repeat at 100 ppm initial I would expect NO DETECTABLE CONCENTRATION in an exposed sample." Irving scribbled in the margin of this section the word "important."

After dealing with some more issues Leuchter had thrown up, the author of the critique came to eight conclusions--the last of which turned the Leuchter Report into a boomerang returning into the face of the deniers:

- 1) The design of the alleged gas chambers is consistent with the use of HCN at a concentration of 100 ppm.
- 2) That the literature evidence on the Holocaust is consistent with the likely outcome of mass gassing attempts at 100 ppm.
- 3) That the capacity of the Birkenau facilities is consistent with the alleged execution totals as internationally accepted.
- 4) The sampling of the walls and the subsequent analysis for cyanide residues is scientifically invalid due to inadequate controls and the effects of the long period of time between use and study.

5) The facilities are not “highly efficient and well designed” as frequently stated but a hastily-conceived compromise between existing design and the requirements. This is consistent with much of the available records on construction and concept.

6) There does seem to be a problem in relating crematorium capacity to death toll.

7) The Leuchter Report on its own does not conclusively prove that the buildings in question were used as gas chambers. Equally its conclusions that they could not have been do not stand up to rigorous analysis. Contrary to Irving’s assertions forensic science is not exact except in detective fiction. At best it is a matter of balancing probabilities. In all such cases it must be considered in the light of all available evidence. In this context the omission of all other evidence from the Leuchter Report is damning. Leuchter is not, in spite of his undoubted (if gruesome) expertise, a forensic scientist. He is also not a historian. Had he been either his first reaction should have been that his investigation contradicted the mass of available evidence. Where this occurs there are the following probabilities.

a) The mass of evidence is wrong

b) His conclusions are wrong

c) The contradiction is due to a significant factor being wrong or omitted. Leuchter, having correctly analysed the problem in the light of his own experience then simply assumed that this conclusion invalidated all the other evidence available and reported accordingly. A forensic scientist or skilled historian then would have asked what factor would have eliminated the contradiction. The reports of a 30-45 minute death time would have pointed him at 100 ppm gas concentration and lead to a fundamental reassessment of his report. Once the 100 ppm assumption is made, all the Holocaust evidence falls into place and the accurate and detailed evidence of the Leuchter Report confirms them. Which leads to our final conclusion.

8) The evidence of the Leuchter Report, when taken in the context of the times and in full consideration of all other evidence is consistent with that other evidence and together strongly supports both the fact and the scale of the massacres in the gas chambers of Birkenau provided that assumption is made that the gas chambers operated at relatively low toxic concentrations. [Italics mine]

The report was devastating. Irving had to admit so much when he responded to it in a letter to Mr. Beer. As to the general thrust of its argument, he wrote that “I agree, in fact, with many of your friends’s criticisms,” but then preferred to blame Leuchter’s command of English as

one of the sources of confusion. Irving then proceeded to address some of the points raised in greater detail. Remarkably, he seemed to endorse what was one of the most damning paragraphs--the one that begins with the sentence "The 100 ppm operating concentration discredits his sample technique," and which ends with the conclusion that "at 100 ppm initial I would expect NO DETECTABLE CONCENTRATION in an exposed sample." Irving commented that "I accept p.4., para 2: ("The 100 ppm...") if only because that is a fair argument. Yet then he immediately tried to neutralize this admission of the weakness of Leuchter's argument by calling a remark made in 1943 by Victor Cavendish-Bentinck to his aid. "Against that has to be set the obvious argument raised by the British PWE in 1943? Why on earth go to all the trouble of using gas, when the old fashioned bullet was perfectly good enough elsewhere, as used by the Russians at Katyn (so PWE argued 1943!)." I still fail to see how this is of relevance to the question if one would expect to find residual cyanide in the ruins of places used 40 years earlier as gas chambers using a concentration of 100 ppm of cyanide. But as Irving has raised the issue of bullets versus gas, it is useful to remember that, when the Germans adopted a policy of exterminating Jews somewhere in 1941, they initially used rifles and machine-guns as their tools of destruction. Soon, however, it became clear that these public executions could not be kept secret. Even more problematic for the commanders of the troops entrusted with this task, the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*, was the pressure on their men. After the war, the judgement of the Stuttgart court that tried the "inventor" of the gas van, Dr. Albert Widmann, summarized the problems as follows: "After only a brief period, the commandos of the *Einsatzgruppen* got into considerable difficulties. The members of the *Einsatz*- and special commandos, some of whom were themselves fathers, were in the long run not up to the mental strain caused by the mass shootings, particularly when women and children were involved. There were disputes, refusals to obey orders, drunken orgies, but also serious psychological illnesses. Himmler, who was not unaware of the situation, was looking

for a way of reducing the nervous psychological strain on the men involved in the shooting. Thus, in discussion with Heydrich and other leading figures the plan emerged of utilising gas vans for this purpose, which were to be used for the liquidation of women and children in particular.” The gas cans led to the gas chambers which, as Pierre Vidal-Naquet observed, did indeed screen the killing process from the perpetrators. “All the operations from the directing of victims as they left the trains to the undressing and cleaning of bodies to their placement in the crematoria were basically under SS control, of course. But all this was done through the intermediary of members of the *Sonderkommandos* who, in the end, were the only ones placed in direct contact with death.” As a result the Auschwitz SS did not suffer the psychological strain experienced by their colleagues in the *Einsatzgruppen*, and at no point in the camp’s history became did the gassings cause disciplinary problems within the SS.

Irving endorsed conclusion number 4--”The sampling of the walls and the subsequent analysis for cyanide residues is scientifically invalid due to inadequate controls and the effects of the long period of time between use and study”--yet, ignoring the second reason why the sampling was invalid, drew from this the conclusion that “the tests should be repeated under controlled, scientifically acceptable conditions.” In response to conclusion number 7, in which the author of the critique had demolished whatever remained of the Leuchter Report by means of the argument that it had not been a forensic investigation, Irving tepidly responded that “forensic evidence is certainly more exact than eye-witness testimony!”--leaving of course open the question what constituted in this case “forensic evidence” and what it was exact about.

In conclusion: within six months after the publication of the Focal Point edition of the Leuchter Report, it had become clear to Irving that not only the engineering part of the report, which to its author represented the main basis for his conclusion that no gassings had taken

place in Auschwitz, was scientific garbage, but that even the fundamental assumptions that formed the basis of Leuchter's analysis of the samples--the idea that the gas chambers had operated with a high concentration of hydrocyanide--did not hold. Yet Irving did not care to share his knowledge with the rest of the world, and continued to praise the analysis of the samples as a major historical breakthrough that had demolished the myth of the Holocaust.

In the summer of 1989, Zündel's ambitions transcended defending Leuchter's science. Irving had sent him a copy of a German-language booklet he had written on the Nuremberg Trials, and Zündel immediately realized that it could be of great importance in the debate about Auschwitz. "Our revisionist demolitions of the myths and hoaxes of Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka et al. appear to have little effect upon the prosecutors and judges who always fall back upon the "authority" and the "precedent" of the Nuremberg proceedings. This means that as long as the Nuremberg Travesty stands, the Holocaust Hoax is supported by the full weight of Allied complicity. Revisionist scholars should therefore go after the truth about the Nuremberg Trials with as much tenacity and determination as they have gone after the Holocaust Legend." Zündel therefore proposed a full-scale cooperation to create, on the basis of Irving's *Der Nürnburger Prozess: Die Letzte Schlacht*, the very kind of text which would make it clear that the Nuremberg trials had been, in fact, nothing but "a Purimfest with some shabbes-goyim presiding as figureheads" designed to serve the basis of a "Zionist extortion racket." Zündel obviously expected that, after publication of such a book on Nuremberg, it would become impossible for judges to take judicial notice of the Holocaust.

Yet, despite the new cooperation, Zündel found it difficult to cope with Irving on a daily basis. The latter proved not as easy to control as Zündel had hoped. In December 1989 Zündel complained in a long letter about the Nuremberg project that Irving tried to maintain the appearance of having an independent position from the hard-core Holo-

caust deniers by taking swipes at some members of the Nazi leadership, and even suggested that there could have been indeed some isolated instances of German massacres of Jews. Such statements, Zündel wrote, did not help Irving in establishing his authority in Germany.

“The days of the “Knie-beugen Paragraph” are fast disappearing and Germans of the postwar generations are becoming quite disgusted by those who continue to shovel dung, in greater or lesser quantities, into the German nest. I am not demanding that you “change your tune” or “toe the party-line” with me or with anyone, but because I admire you and hope you will continue to succeed as a great revisionist activist, I offer you this friendly warning not to burn your bridges in advance.” Zündel was particularly offended by the fact that Irving tried, in public, to create the appearance of distance between himself and Zündel by characterizing the latter as a “loud-mouth” and a man who desires “to dance at every wedding.” “Once again, you are welcome to think whatever you wish about me, my work and my goals and you are welcome to say exactly what you think, but how can I, in good conscience, play the “fall guy” and provide a resurgent Germany with the creative leadership contribution my people require? After all, to be any kind of leader, one must be respected. It is music to my ears when our enemies berate us and call us names, but I find it painful when our supposed allies in this struggle for survival and freedom demean us in this fashion. Surely, any mention of my name is unnecessary, if you feel this way about me. Let us be kind to one another, for there are damned few of us on our side in this struggle!” It seems that Zündel got through to Irving: the latter ceased to talk about his Canadian ally.

Irving continued to peddle his version of history to whoever was ready to listen. In a lecture given in Germany in March 1990, Irving declared all gas chambers in Auschwitz to be phony. “I say the following thing: there were no gas chambers in Auschwitz. There have been only mock-

ups built by the Poles in the years after the war, similar to the mock-ups built by the Americans in Dachau and which they had to demolish....But the mock-ups still exist in Auschwitz.”

Irving speculated that, perhaps 30,000 people had been killed in Auschwitz. “Bad enough. No-one of us would like to approve of that. Thirty thousand people in Auschwitz from beginning to end--that is as many as we English killed in Hamburg in one night.” Every single survivor was a testimony to the fact that there had been no program to exterminate the Jews. And then, once more, he explained how the gas chambers had been invented by the Psychological Warfare Executive. He went on at great length about the problems Victor Cavendish-Bentinck had with the proposal to include a reference to the gassings in the declaration made by the allied leaders in Quebec. Irving creatively invented some new historic material when he claimed that the Cavendish-Bentinck minute of August 23 said that “the whole assertion of German extermination measures against Jews with gas chambers and so on have no foundation in fact and are merely a lie that we have spread against the Germans.” Cavendish-Bentinck never wrote such a sentence: Irving made it up.

In the spring of 1990 Irving once more mailed the foreword of the Leuchter Report to members of Parliament--this time to the Lords. The occasion was the War Crimes Bill designed to give British courts greater jurisdiction over certain war crimes committed in Germany and German held territory during the Second World War. During the debate Irving’s introduction had been mentioned, and he in turn mailed a copy of it, accompanied with a letter in which he stated that he did not enclose the whole report, which he described as “costly and scientific, but persuasive.” “It certainly convinced me (and your Lordship may recall that The Economist, reviewing one of my works, was kind enough to call me “the forensic pathologist of modern military history.”) Five years from now even the dourest academic will accept that the “gas chambers “ displayed at Auschwitz are as false as the one removed at

Bonn's insistence from the site at Dachau--a propaganda legend just like the "soap made from victims of the Nazis," which Israeli historians last month finally admitted was also a grotesque wartime untruth."

Most members of the House of Lords thanked politely, some not so. Lord Bonham-Carter responded that he had participated in the last days of the war in the liberation of a concentration camp. "The evidence of my own eyes is better than the delusions you peddle." Irving responded that, while he did not know which camp Bonham-Carter had seen, he did know for certain that "the appalling epidemics and starvation found at Bergen-Belsen, Neuengamme, and Buchenwald were as much a direct consequence of S.H.A.E.F.'s transport interdiction campaign and saturation bombing policies (the entire pharmaceutical industry had been destroyed by March 1945) as of mindless Nazi brutality." In the next paragraph, Irving moved from condescension to rudeness. "Several of their Lordships have, in reply to my letter, suggested that there is need for further inquiry into the "gas chamber" legend, for which we all fell over the last forty years (I may take it that you are not claiming to have seen one in the camp you liberated?) Others have asked for a copy of the full Leuchter Report. As your own inspirational needs appear more elementary, I am sending you a copy of my first book, *The Destruction of Dresden*; the photographs of thousands of victims of the British air raid being piled up for mass cremation in February 1945 may remind you -and I am aware of your reputation for fair mindedness--that there are two sides to every "war crimes story. Alas, there are no equivalent pictures from Auschwitz." Bonham-Carter's reply was swift, short, and to the point: "I find your argument a most curious exercise in logic. You appear to be saying that because the bombing of Dresden could be argued to be a war crime, therefore the evidence of the Holocaust is false. I don't see the connection."

In October 1990, Irving brought his gospel to the institutional center of Holocaust denial: the Institute of Holocaust Review. In his inflammatory, even rabble-rousing speech at the Tenth International Revisionist

Conference held in Washington DC, Irving once again unequivocally endorsed the negationist cause. Introducing Irving, Mark Weber reminded the audience how Irving's testimony had been "the startling climax" in "the second Holocaust trial in 1988 of Ernst Zündel." Irving had "stunned the completely packed courtroom by announcing that he had changed his mind about the Holocaust story." Weber continued his introduction with the conclusion of Irving's Dresden speech earlier that year in commemoration of the city's destruction 45 years earlier. "Ladies and gentleman, survivors and descendants of the holocaust of Dresden, the holocaust of Germans in Dresden really happened. That of the Jews in the gas chambers of Auschwitz is an invention. I am ashamed to be an Englishman."

Initially Irving's talk seemed ordinary. He recounted the various occasions when he had been right and others wrong. After having recalled how he debunked the fake Hitler diaries and the legend of Rommel's involvement with the resistance, Irving turned to the Holocaust. "This is how it was when I was in Toronto a couple of years ago. I was called as an expert witness as a historian to give evidence at the Ernst Zündel case, where Zündel's researchers showed me the *Leuchter Report* the laboratory tests on the crematoria and the gas chambers. As a person who, at the University of London, studied chemistry and physics and the exact sciences, I knew that this was an exact result. There was no way around it. And suddenly all that I'd read in the archives clicked into place. You have to accept that, if there is no evidence anywhere in the archives that there were any gassings going on; that if there's not a single German document that refers to the gassings of human beings--not one wartime German document; and if there is no reference anywhere in the German archives to anybody giving orders for the gassings of people, and if, on the other hand, the forensic tests of the laboratories, of the crematoria, and the gas chambers and Auschwitz and so on, show that there is no trace, no significant residue whatsoever of a cyanide compound, then this can all only mean one thing." Having de-

clared the Holocaust a hoax, Irving asked why he and everyone else had been fooled for so long in thinking that the Holocaust had happened. His answer was simple: “we have been subjected to the biggest propaganda offensive that the human race has ever known.” “It’s been conducted with such finesse, with such refinement, with such financial clout, that we have not been able to recognize it as a propaganda offensive--from start to finish. And yet there are these weapons cruising past us on the horizon--in all their ugliness--and the biggest weapon, of course, of all in this propaganda campaign against the truth since 1945 has been the great battleship Auschwitz! And we have now, at last, the historical profession-- above all, the Revisionist historical profession--have found as our own task, the major task: “Sink the Auschwitz!” Yet, for those who feared a fierce battle, Irving had some encouraging information: in fact, the crew of the battleship was already scuttling the vessel. Informed by recent newspaper articles that, based on detailed studies, the Auschwitz Museum was about to revise the official death toll of the camp to a little over a million, Irving enthusiastically announced that “the Auschwitz has been steering amongst the Icebergs, and finally it has begun to scuttle itself. They’ve begun to haul down the flag of the battleship Auschwitz. They’ve taken down the placard, they’ve taken down the memorial to the four million, and they’ve have replaced it with a rather smaller memorial to one million.” And Irving confidently predicted that this downward revision would continue, and continue.

Irving did not limit himself to simply gloat over the newly revised victim count that had been released by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. In fact, he could not resist to make then and there his own contribution to the problem. “The Russians have helped us: the Russians released in September last year, September 21, the Auschwitz death books. That was an ugly blow for the battleship Auschwitz and its crew. Because the Russians, by releasing the forty-six death books of Auschwitz, which cover the years 1942 completely, 1943 almost com-

pletely, and 1944 incompletely--the Russians have revealed that the set of Auschwitz death books, which they have released, now shows, a total of 74,000 deaths, 74,000 deaths by all causes.”

Irving was partly right: the Russians had made known earlier that they had in their possession copies of a Auschwitz death books. Contrary to Irving’s assertion, these death books do not cover 1942 completely: the book for the period 12 November to 4 December, and the book for the period 15 December to 28 December are missing, and of the book covering the period 14 to 26 June only one sheet is available. As Irving correctly stated, in 1943 there are also lacunae: some time in early February, the first half of April, mid June, the whole of September and the first half of October. But, contrary to Irving’s claim, there is not one book for 1944. These books record a total of 68,864 deaths.

These discrepancies between claim and fact are however of little importance compared to the issue that Irving did not care to mention in his speech: the 46 volumes only record the deaths of registered inmates. Most of the people who died in Auschwitz were murdered on arrival, without having been admitted to the camp. Irving could not claim ignorance on this point, as he wrote in the original edition of his *Hitler’s War* that “[a]rriving at Auschwitz and Treblinka, four in every ten were pronounced fit for work; the rest were exterminated with a maximum of concealment.” Yet thirteen years later he chose in his discussion of the *Sterbebücher* to pass over the fate of the (in his estimate) 60 per cent of arriving Jews not deemed fit for work. At least, one should think, he should have alluded to a potential problem--especially when later in that same lecture he mentioned the immediate killing of arriving transports once more. “But on the other hand, the great big battleship Auschwitz, this lie that’s been cruising around for the last 45 years, has told us that that’s what Auschwitz was about! That Auschwitz was purely as a kind of *Endstation* or terminus. That the trains arrived in Auschwitz, and disgorged their masses of helpless, pitiful humanity, all of whom were Jews, of course, in the present perception. And they

were then kind of channelled through the extermination procedure, where they were gassed.” Having mentioned “the lie,” he ought have dealt with it when he discussed the Death Books, because “the lie” challenged directly his conclusion. He did not.

In fact, as the lecture continued, misconstruction turned into pure chicanery. “Now the Jewish professor, Arno Mayer, whom I greatly respect,...tells us in his book *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* that of those who died in Auschwitz and other concentration camps, probably far more than half died of natural causes--whatever you can call natural causes in wartime. Of course the very phrase is suspect. But that means--whatever it does mean--that less than half was killed. Which means less than half of 74,000 people were killed in Auschwitz. Let’s be generous and say 40,000 may have been killed in Auschwitz over three years--that’s a bad figure! That’s a grave crime, it’s almost as many people as we British killed in one night.” Earlier in that same lecture he had bragged about his exemplary research skills in always relying exclusively on study of the original records. “If you keep your nose glued to the archives--if you keep your nose glued to the documents--then you are going to be that much closer to getting things right.” Yet in order to establish the all important number of murders in Auschwitz--which should be an absolutely central concern for anyone trying to “Sink the Auschwitz”--Irving relied first of all on a book that was notorious amongst scholarly studies of the Holocaust because it has no references to any sources, no footnotes or endnotes whatsoever. Furthermore Irving read Mayer very selectively. Discussing the evidence of the number of deportees to Auschwitz, Mayer had rightly observed that “[t]he camp officials did not keep very accurate records of the inbound deportees.” “Untold thousands were “processed” without being signed in. Because of this, and because so many records were destroyed, there are no close approximations of the numbers and identities of the Jews checked into Auschwitz except for those sent there from western Europe. Their fate can be reconstructed not from

the incomplete registers of inmates checked into the camps, but with the help of the shipping manifests of departing transports, which are reliable and have survived.” Mayer had called attention to those documents, but Irving, the self-proclaimed master-interpreter of the original records, did not choose to consult them. Apart from that, if Mayer’s book was indeed to be invoked as the new Gospel of Holocaust Research, then Irving should have at least considered the fact that one could not make solemn pronouncements on the number of deaths in Auschwitz based on the number of registered inmates only.

Irving did not care about the facts. When he made his statements, it was clear that much was happening in the historiographical field concerning Auschwitz: scholars everywhere eagerly anticipated the full publication of Dr. Franciszek Piper’s conclusions. Irving had already referred to the fact that the museum authorities in Auschwitz had “taken down the memorial to the four million,” to replace it “with a rather smaller memorial to one million.” Yet instead of exercising the scholarly patience appropriate to the historian’s vocation, he rushed in to offer his own quick calculation to arrive at a “generous” estimate of 40,000 people murdered in Auschwitz. In his lecture he characterized this activity as a “cutting down to size.” “When the Germans use that dreaded word, *relativieren* meaning you are trying to compare things, you are trying to belittle things, the answer is: “Yes, I’m trying to cut legends down to size because that is the job of the historian.”

This may be true, but it is also the job of the historian to beware of the universal pyrrhonism that doubts everything and all. In the eighteenth century, the great British historian Lord Bolingbrooke observed that “[c]ommon sense requires that every thing proposed to the understanding, should be accompanied with such proofs as the nature of it can furnish. He who requires more, is guilty of absurdity.” In the early 1940s, Marc Bloch said in his magnificent analysis of the historian’s craft that, contrary to popular opinion, people have generally distrusted historical evidence, and hunted down false relics. Throughout his-

tory, people have been less credulous than we think. And he added that “skepticism on principle is neither a more estimable nor a more productive intellectual attitude than the credulity with which it is frequently blended in the simpler minds.” The historian, in order to be a good historian, must negotiate his way between the extremes of being too ready to doubt and being too ready to believe. Francois Bédarida observed more recently in an essay on the responsibility of the historian that the pure skepticism which became popular in post-modern historiography, ultimately leads to a negation of knowledge. “It is from this point that we come back to the need for truthfulness that the historian, instead of minimizing, must proclaim very clearly to be his lode-star. It is a star that is distant, transient, occasionally veiled by clouds, but without it, what could the notion of responsibility be based on? It is true that at this level one enters the realm of values and that a connection between history and ethics is established.”

Of course, the skepticism Irving shows is only directed to a particular range of source material, and does not apply to the utterings of perpetrators. As such, Irving is, as a historian, a worthy successor of the many men and women who mined the past in order to find the raw material that can be turned into propaganda and mythology. The task of every historian, as Eric Hobsbawm once observed, is to be aware that “bad history is not harmless history. It is dangerous. The sentences typed on apparently innocuous keyboards may be sentences of death.” Which brings us back to Edith Wyschogrod’s understanding that the responsibility of the historian is not to the living, but to the dead. The historian must be the spokesman for those who have been silenced. I believe that no historian can responsibly touch the world of Auschwitz without some way or another becoming what Wyschogrod called a “heterological historian.” Given the way Irving has exercised his talents as a historian, and given the subject matter which has become the object of his attention in 1988, we may conclude that he has steadfastly refused to accept the ethical responsibility that comes with all history,

but especially with the history of Auschwitz. When Irving had the audacity to reduce without having done any relevant research the number of murdered victims of Auschwitz to 40,000 people, he betrayed more than a million dead people. At that moment he did not merely cease to be a responsible or heterological historian--he ceased to be a historian at all.

Yet this did not matter to Zündel, and his Canadian supporters. True to his promise that he would help Irving in organizing lectures, Zündel had arranged for the weeks after the Tenth International Revisionist Conference a Canadian lecture tour for Irving. In Victoria, British Columbia, Irving gave a presentation entitled "The Controversy on Auschwitz and the Dangers of Censorship." It contained many of the elements of the speech given at the conference. Yet now the battleship HM Auschwitz was escorting the cruiseship MS Holocaust. "There's no shortage of crewmembers or applicants for this particular ship. The only requirement to become a crewmember of the cruise ship "Holocaust" is that you should be an Auschwitz survivor. And of course there's an inexhaustible supply of Auschwitz survivors. There are millions of Auschwitz survivors now floating around the world, or people who purport to be Auschwitz survivors. Although I must admit that their number has become somewhat muted in recent years, over the last 18 months, since the government in Moscow on September 21, 1989, in a statement from TASS, announced that all this time they have had a card index of anybody who was ever in Auschwitz. And ever since then the number of new applicants who claim to have been in Auschwitz has somewhat dwindled. Eliah Wiesel no longer claims to have been in Auschwitz for example, the Nobel Prize winner. He now claims to have been in a completely different camp, in the hope that they won't find the card indexes on that one." Like so many of Irving's pronouncements, his allegation about Eli Wiesel's change of story had no relation whatsoever to the facts of the case. Wiesel was deported with his family during the Hungarian Action to Auschwitz, subjected to

selection in Birkenau, and brought afterwards with his father to Auschwitz 3 in Monowitz. From there he was evacuated in a so-called death march to Buchenwald, where he was liberated in April 1945. Wiesel claims that he can be seen in a picture taken within one of the Buchenwald barracks at the liberation of that camp (and, judging by appearances, the claim seems to be justified). Ignoring completely the manner in which the passage of time changes not only men, but also the place of men in space, Irving inferred from Wiesel's claim that, as he was liberated from Buchenwald, he was not liberated from Auschwitz, and that hence he could not have been in Auschwitz. Putting a particularly creative spin on his own inattention as an observer and ignorance as a historian, Irving had no difficulty in explaining the apparent contradiction as produced by Wiesel's apparent desire to create a smokescreen to cover his retreat.

Irving claimed that the death books were authoritative, and that there would have been no killings that were not recorded in them. "It is rather like expecting the Colombian drug barons, who have tens of millions of dollars going through their hands every day from illicit operations, to start nickeling and diming on their housekeeping petty expenses at the same time. "Therefore "if the *Totenbücher* from Auschwitz show that in those three years 76,000 people died, from whatever cause, that is it. That is the bottom line." Irving is able to produce two false analogies in one argument. First of all there is no reason to assume that a Colombian drug baron would use the same administrative procedures when dealing with his income from "illicit operations" and his household expenses. If in the case of his income, the criminal would like to use numbers to conceal facts, while in the case of the way his staff would spend his income, he would like to see financial transparency. Furthermore Irving sets up a false analogy when he suggests a comparison between the private administration (if any) of a Columbian drug baron and the institutional administration of a German institution. In order to allow for a general accountability towards the public,

all documents produced within an institutional context must observe a strict system of rules. In the case of a closed institution such as a hospital, a prison, or even a concentration camp, the books must be balanced in terms of the admission of inmates, the presence of inmates, and the discharge of inmates, either through release or death. The Auschwitz death books only concerned registered and therefore numbered inmates. As no records were kept of people who were selected on their arrival to be killed, there was neither need nor information to create records of their deaths.

In the same lecture Irving also addressed the documentary evidence, and he obviously enjoyed one particular document. “One of these documents was thrown on the wall in the courtroom at Toronto where I was giving evidence. And I have to admit I had not seen the document before, and I was a bit flabbergasted, but I looked at the document and the prosecuting counsel said, “Mr. Irving, how do you explain this?” It is a letter written by the architect’s office in Auschwitz to a firm of construction engineers saying they are having difficulty completing the concrete ceiling, which is going to be put in, the slab over the mortuary, before winter sets in and therefore they could perhaps use another room which they identified as the *Vergasungskeller* a gassing cellar, if you want to translate it that way. And the prosecuting counsel said to me, “Mr. Irving, how do you explain that?” And I said straight away, “Well let me point out to you as a German linguist, and I have known German fluently for the last thirty or forty years, the word ‘*vergasen*’ has various meanings like a lot of words in German have various meanings. ‘*Vergasen*’ can mean to gas somebody. It can also mean to gasify, as in a carburetor.” A carburetor in a motor car in Germany is *Vergaser*. And a crematorium would have a kind of carburating system. Quite definitely, because you need very high temperatures to cremate. And this is quite definitely a document connected with the cremation process. And when the prosecuting counsel appeared a bit fazed by this particular suggestion, I said to him suddenly, I said, “Excuse me, can

we have that document back on the screen again? Because I want to look at something, and point it out to the jury.” And he put it back onto the screen. And I said, “There you are. I will tell you what is most significant in that document is not what it says, but what it does not say. We are being told by you, by the prosecution, this is a document concerning the gassing of millions of Jews, which was the most secret operation in the Third Reich apparently. So secret that almost nothing exists about it. Certainly nothing in the archives. Top secret. And yet here is a document that bears no kind of security classification at all.” In short that was the proof that the document was totally innocuous. In fact it was of janitorial level I would say. Of janitorial level. Broom cupboard level.” Irving’s last remark shows that he is not only ignorant of the manner in which detectives mostly solve crimes by paying attention to what the janitors have say and what the broom cupboards preserve, but also to his own well-documented predilection to use, if convenient, the memories of janitors to refute publically documented facts.

Like so many other statements he has made, Irving’s account of his testimony about Bischoff’s letter of January 29, 1943 is a mixture of fact and fiction. Desiring to show off his assumedly unrivalled hermeneutical skills, Irving stated in the lecture that he had never seen the document before. “One of these documents was thrown on the wall in the courtroom at Toronto where I was giving evidence. And I have to admit I had not seen the document before, and I was a bit flabbergasted, but I looked at the document and the prosecuting council said, ‘Mr. Irving, how do you explain this?’ “Yet the transcript of the court proceedings reveals that Irving admitted to the court that he knew of the document well in advance: “[Pearson]: “And I show you a document from the National Archives of the United States and ask you if before coming to Toronto, you had seen that document.” [Irving]: “Yes, sir, this is the document you just asked me a few minutes ago to read through and I am familiar with the document and I was familiar with the document before I came to Toronto.” His subsequent interpreta-

tion of the word “*Vergasungskeller*” which came straight from Butz’s *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, also corroborates that Irving had seen the document before. Irving’s account of his discussion of the meaning of the term “*Vergasungskeller*” is tendentious insofar that he suggests that Pearson tried to make a point by invoking the presence of the word in the letter, and challenging Irving to explain it--suggesting of course he would not be able to do so. In fact, the transcript of the proceedings make clear that Person did not raise the issue of the *Vergasungskeller*, but that it was Irving himself. “[Pearson]: “All right. Now, there is attached to this a translation that was prepared presumably at the time of the Nuremberg trials. Have you had an opportunity, and I know it was a very brief opportunity, but you did have a brief opportunity to compare the translation with the German document and is it a satisfactory translation in your view?” [Irving]: “It is a satisfactory translation apart from one sentence where--which is quite clearly the operative sentence, which says--I would translate it as ‘This is, however unimportant, as the *Vergasungskeller*.’” Q.: “Let’s put it up on the overhead to see what we’re talking about. First of all, is this the original German?” A.: “It is the same document.” Q.: “Document January 29th, 1943?” A.: “It is the same document and I am referring to this sentence here, ‘Die ist jedoch unbedeutend, da der *Vergasungskeller* hierfür benutzt werden kann.’ I translate as ‘This is, however, unimportant as the *Vergasungskeller* can be used for this,’ and the German word *Vergasungskeller* is a known coming from the German verb *Vergas[en]*, and the German verb *Vergas[en]*, like many German words, has different translations, some of the completely different in meaning from each other.” Q.: “All right.” A.: “It can mean gassing, it can mean “[carburation]”, as in the sense of a carburetor on a car and this is the meaning which I don’t find, the alternative meaning in the translation of the document, the possibility that it refers not to gassing but to the “carboureshen” process in some kind of oil fire heater, so when we are looking at a *Vergasungskeller*, I think it is tendentious to translate it as gas chamber. I mentioned on Friday that a German-- Q.: “What do you

mean by tendentious?" A.: "Tendentious? I think it is trying to arrive at an impression. It is giving possibly a deliberately wrong translation of the word. It is a possible translation but it is an unlikely translation because if a German was going to write the word 'gas chamber,' he would not write '*Vergasungskeller*.' He would write '*Gasungskeller*.'" This misrepresentation of the exchange between himself and Pearson can be attributed to Irving's desire to dramatize the event in order to depict himself as the champion who defeated another attack by the enemy. The rest of his account is pure fabrication. While Irving indeed asked Pearson to put back the document on the projection screen, he did not perform another hermeneutical feat by pointing out that it did not contain the designation "(top)secret." "[Pearson]: "Right, all right. So you agree that that translation, subject to the proviso that you've entered, is an accurate translation." [Irving]: "Yes. I would draw attention to the translation of the first line. I'm sorry, you've removed the document. Could you possibly return it?" Q.: "In English?" A.: "The German document. I would draw attention to this line here, "*Betr.: Krematorium II. Bauzustand*." That means this document is "Re: Krematorium No.II, construction status." Q.: "Right." A.: "In other words this entire document refers to Krematorium No.2, not to any other building or any other installation. Purely to the crematorium. I think that needs possibly to be underlined. I think this justifies me in suggesting that if we're looking for which of the alternative translations to look for this key word underlined here, *Vergasungskeller*, it is some piece of equipment to do with a crematorium process and not to do with any other process." Q.: "What's the *Leichenkeller*?" A.: "I beg your pardon?" Q.: "What's--" A.: "A *Leichenkeller*, a morgue." Q.: "And that's in the crematorium complex, isn't it?" A.: "It would indeed be." Q.: "Right. And are you familiar with the plan of Crematorium 2 and 3 at Birkenau?" A.: "If I could project one on the screen and we could look at it, that would answer your questions no doubt." Q.: "Are you familiar?" A.: "I'm sure you would have projected one on the screen if it would help us." Q.: "You can't tell us what Crematorium 2 is, can you?" A.: "I know what a crem-

atorium is. And this document concerns a crematorium.” Q.: “And the only reason you say that is because it refers to Crematorium 2.” A.: “It says at the top quite specifically ‘re: Krematorium No.II, construction stage.’” Q.: “And if Crematorium 2 referred to a complex which had within it undressing rooms, a *Leichenkeller* or gas chamber and a crematorium and all those three were referred to as Crematorium 2, it wouldn’t be referring to just the crematorium part, would it?” A.: “I’m sure if you had a plan suggesting that you would show it to the jury and that would save us a lot of time examining alternative translations of words.” It is clear that Irving totally misrepresented the exchange in his lecture. Instead of addressing the issue that the document was not marked “(top) secret,” he raised an altogether different issue: the fact that it referred to the construction of a crematorium, and that hence nothing in this letter could apply to a gas chamber. Pearson, however, was not so easily caught. Cross-examining Irving, he was not only able to make clear that Irving had no idea about the actual lay-out of the crematorium, but was also able to make the simple point that in official correspondence a crematorium equipped with gas chambers would still be referred to as “crematorium.” Thus, while Irving pretended to have brought new light to the issue, he in fact was shown to be totally ignorant of its meaning and context.

Less than two weeks after he had begun his Canadian trip on the west coast, Irving arrived in Toronto. There he added some new statements to his arsenal.: “[Y]ou can sum up my case on the Holocaust in the following nut shell: more people died on the back seat of Senator Edward Kennedy’s motor car in Chappaquiddick than died in the gas chamber in Auschwitz.” Then he turned once more to his favourite maritime metaphors, describing the cruise ship Holocaust as a massive vessel “with luxury wall-to-wall fitted carpets and a crew of thousands” and “marine terminals established in now virtually every capital in the world, disguised as Holocaust memorial museums.” The ship was in for rough seas. “The cruise ship Holocaust, where will this story...what,

where will its crew be ... where will the Auschwitz survivors be, now the fact has come out that the index cards which list all the people who passed through the gates of Auschwitz, "Arbeit macht Frei." Who they were? Suddenly a lot of people are not claiming to be Auschwitz survivors any more. Eliah Wiesel, for one, for example. He was always a bit unsure whether it was Auschwitz he had been in or Dachau or Buchenwald. When I say that, because there is a photograph, a photograph on which he identifies himself as being in a photograph of various prisoners in a bunk house, in a barracks in the concentration camp in Buchenwald. And he says, "Yes that is me." But it turns out that photograph is in Auschwitz and he says "Oh yes I meant Auschwitz." Eliah Wiesel. I mean what can we do about these people? Poor mister Wiesel. I mean it is terribly bad luck that he is called Wiesel, but that is no excuse. I mean these people do have a bad time, they have a very very hard time. And I do want to speak a few words of sympathy for them like, I mean on Halloween night for example, or Saint Wiesenthal's night as we call it. So they have had a very very bad time and it is going to get tougher for them now that people are going to challenge them as to whether they really were in Auschwitz or not because we now know exactly who was and who was not. And they have gone to immense troubles, ladies and gentlemen: even the ones who have got tattoo marks on their arms. Because the experts can look at a tattoo and say, "Oh yes, 181,219 that means you entered Auschwitz in March 1943." So if you want to go and have a tattoo put on your arm, as a lot of them do, I am afraid to say, and claim subsequently that you were in Auschwitz, you have got to make sure a) that it fits in with the month you said you went to Auschwitz, and b) that it is not a number which anyone has used before. So there are actual kind of train-spotter guides of numbers that have been used already. And the whole of that hoax is now going to collapse because the Russians have released the index cards." And so Irving continued with his coarse and insulting talk, descending to levels of baseness which even Zündel had managed to avoid. There is, of course, no factual basis for any of his allegations: the

revelations from the Soviet archives did not cause to a single person to change his or her claim of having been an Auschwitz survivor; there is no scarp of evidence that suggests that anyone ever went to a tattoo parlor to acquire an Auschwitz number for the purpose of proving to have been an Auschwitz survivor. And in my more than ten-year study of Auschwitz, I have never come across or even heard about “trains-spotter guides of numbers.”

At the end of the lecture Irving returned to his usual topic, giving special prominence to the Hinsley’s book on the British codebreakers. “He states “that upon analysis of the daily returns of the Auschwitz concentration camp it becomes completely plain that nearly all of the deaths, nearly all of the deaths, were due to disease. The others were by execution, by hanging, and by firing squad. There is no reference,” and I am quoting this page, “there is no reference whatever to any gassings.” So why has not this extraordinary revelation been headlined in the newspapers around the world? It is not just some cranky, self-appointed British neo-fascist, neo-Nazi, pseudo historian. And you journalists who are present can take those words down. It is not just some pseudo historian from Britain saying this. This is the British official historian, Professor Hinsley, who had unlimited access to the archives of the SIS, the Secret Intelligence Service, and to the archives of the British code-breaking agency, who says that in Auschwitz nearly all the deaths were due to disease. There is no reference whatsoever to gassings.” Irving claimed that he was prevented from speaking because together with the death books his findings “are the two torpedoes which would sink the battleship Auschwitz, if it was not already foundering of its own accord.”

In March 1991 Irving found himself in Munich in the company of Fred Leuchter, Robert Faurisson, Wilhelm Stäglich, Mark Weber--Zündel who should also have been there was arrested on his arrival in Munich, and was in jail. The occasion was the so-called “Leuchter Congress,” organized by Zündel and Ewald Althans. Originally meant to take place

in the conference hall of the Deutsches Museum, the conference changed into a protest rally held in the open after it had been banned by the authorities. The newsletter published by the Institute of Historical Review, recorded that “[s]peaking excellent German, best-selling British historian David Irving addressed the crowd in his typical witty and engaging style.” That same newsletter described a news conference held after the protest rally. “Ewald [Althans] distributed copies of the astonishing document prepared by the Krakow Forensic Institute that essentially confirms Leuchter’s findings about the alleged extermination gas chambers of Auschwitz.(See the April 1991 IHR Newsletter. Irving called this “Polish Leuchter Report” a “disaster” for the defenders of the orthodox extermination story. However, none of the journalists present seemed interested in the Krakow report, or, for that matter, in Leuchter’s 1988 investigation.”

The Leuchter Congress had been a failure, but it had attracted a lot of media attention, and it had given Irving the idea to invite Leuchter to speak later that year in England, on the occasion of the publication of a new, revised edition of his *Hitler’s War* Preparations began in the early summer, and Irving began to inform the press. Some proved less than excited about the prospect of a Leuchter speech in Britain. On July 12 the *Jewish Chronicle* ran the headline “Keep Holocaust ‘apologists’ out of Britain, Home Secretary is told. “The article quoted David Winnick, M.O., that “[r]evisionists and apologists for Nazism are highly offensive to the memory of all those who were murdered. It contaminates British soil to have them here.” Irving was said to be unmoved by the protests. “I won’t be intimidated, I won’t knuckle down.” In the end, anti-Irving activists were able to convince the Government that Leuchter’s presence would not serve public interest, and while still in the United States, Leuchter had been informed by the Immigration and Nationality Department that the Home Secretary had given directions “that you should not be given entry to the United Kingdom on the grounds that your presence here would not be conducive to the public good.” Both

Irving and Leuchter decided to ignore this letter, the former because he needed Leuchter to attract the attention of the media, the latter because he had been convinced by Zündel that a lecture tour to Europe could be profitable: the latter had lined up some “catacomb meetings” in Germany where Leuchter would speak before his appearance with Faurisson in London. The date for Leuchter’s appearance was set for November 15, and to mark the importance of the occasion, Faurisson was to give an introductory lecture, while Irving was to function as the host.

Amidst the preparations for the Leuchter/Faurisson/Irving extravaganza to be held in Chelsea Old Town Hall, Irving left for his by now annual Fall lecture tour through Canada. On October 5, 1991 he spoke in Milton, Ontario. Irving complained that it had become increasingly difficult to speak in Germany, and that he risked arrest doing so. His situation was, in his own words, not unlike that Goebbels faced in Weimar Berlin, when the police chief “Isidore” [Bernhard] Weiss tried to stop the Nazi party rallies. And Irving lamented that the Germans should know better than to stop him, “the Englishman who first revealed to the outside world what we British and Americans did to Dresden, where we killed over 100,000 people, burned them alive in three hours in one night in February 1945.” Yet, he predicted that things would change for the better in the near future. “And gradually the word is getting around Germany. Two years from now too the German historians will accept that we are right. They will accept that for fifty years they have believed a lie. And then there will come about a result, not only in Germany, but around the world, which I deeply regret and abhor. There will be an immense tidal wave of antisemitism. It is an inevitable result. And when people point an accusing finger at me and say, “David Irving you are creating antisemitism,” I have to say, “It is not the man who speaks the truth who creates the antisemitism, it is the man who invented the lie of the legend in the first place.” After announcing how he would publish in the next month the new edition of *Hitler’s War*,

providing ample evidence of the “Allied Holocaust” of the Germans through the publication of a “double-page photograph, in full colour, showing the thousands of air-raid victims after the Dresden air raid being [piled] up on funeral pyres in the center of the town square ready for cremation, on these open fires,” Irving turned once more to that other Holocaust. “[T]he only way to overcome this appalling pseudo-religious atmosphere that surrounds the whole of this immense tragedy called World War II is to treat these little legends with the ridicule and bad taste that they deserve. Ridicule alone is not enough, you have got to be tasteless about it. You have got to say things like, “more women died on the back seat of Senator Edward Kennedy’s car at Chappaquiddick than died in the gas chamber at Auschwitz. “You think that is tasteless, what about this? I am forming an association especially dedicated to all these liars, the ones who try to kid people that they were in these concentration camps. It is called “The Auschwitz Survivors, Survivors of the Holocaust, and Other Liars”--ASSHOLES. Can’t get more tasteless than that. But you’ve got to be tasteless because these people deserve all our contempt, and in fact they deserve the contempt of the real Jewish community and the people, whatever their class and colour, who did suffer.” It seems that the public liked it.

After his Canadian tour, Irving travelled to Germany where he spoke among other places in Pforzheim. There he met with both Zündel and Leuchter. The former was in Germany to face trial in Munich. Irving flew back to London on November 10. Fred and Mrs. Leuchter followed a day later. They had rented an Opel Kadett in Frankfurt, driven to Calais, and on November 11 taken the ferry to Dover where they had been able to enter the country despite the exclusion order. Given the fact that Leuchter was illegally in Britain, it would have made sense not to attract public attention to his speech. But desiring publicity, Irving had continued to advertize the evening, with Leuchter as the great attraction. The flyer Irving had printed to advertize the occasion announced in large type “Leuchter is Coming!” After introducing his credentials, it

announced its major claim: “After examining the construction of the facilities said to be gas chambers and after having had samples taken from their walls forensically examined, Leuchter was able to testify under oath: 1. That the facilities were incapable of functioning as gas chambers; 2. That these rooms had never been used for any such purpose.” All of this triggered off a dramatic chain of events which undoubtedly served Irving’s desire for publicity, but brought Leuchter and his wife some very uncomfortable hours in a London police station and the indignity of immediate deportation.

In his welcoming word, Irving described the “revisionist” project he, Faurisson and Leuchter had undertaken as “;the greatest intellectual adventure of the twentieth century.” In his introduction to Faurisson, Irving praised him as a scholar experienced in “microscopic textual analysis, the analysis of words in enormous detail.” “In 1960 he began to research the word “gas chamber”, at first in a vacuum. It was fourteen years before he saw the light--before he suddenly asked himself, “what is a gas chamber?” That was in 1974. Five years later, in Los Angeles, he heard Ernst Zündel speak for the first time. Six years later still he saw Zündel at the first trial in Canada. That was a real turning point in this entire controversy, he says. At the beginning of 1988, Zündel said to Faurisson, “Dr. Faurisson, you have letters written to you from penitentiaries about gas chambers. Can I see them?” Zündel’s lawyer Barbara Kulaszka wrote to those penitentiaries. One governor replied, Bill Armontrout, and he said: “One man is a real specialist in gas chambers. We can recommend him. He is Fred Leuchter.” Shifting to a short statement about Faurisson’s troubles, Irving concluded his introduction with the statement that “Faurisson is one of the bravest historians I know.”

The French academic talked for some time about the impossibility of the gas chambers, and then vacated the platform for the main speaker of the evening: Leuchter. According to an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* entitled “Death’s salesman cut off before his time,” Irving introduced

Leuchter with “boy have we got a treat for you,” and proceeded to tell the audience how he had smuggled Leuchter into the country. According to the article, Leuchter started in form. “It was like listening to a lesson in how to gas people”--a lesson meant to show that the Germans had not done so. The police were present in case of trouble, but as Irving had publically told the audience that Leuchter ought not be there, had checked if indeed there was an exclusion order. Confirmation came after five minutes. “Mid-speech, a police officer whispered from the wings the appropriate: “Can I have a word with you, sir?” Mr Irving rose to explain: “We’ll have a five-minute pause while Mr. Leuchter speaks to certain gentlemen.” The audience filtered into the foyer ready for action. They chanted: “Freedom of Speech, freedom of speech.” But action never came. The police spirited Mr Leuchter out of a side entrance. The meeting ended. Chief Insp. Philip Selwood explained: “Fred Leuchter has been made subject of an exclusion order to this country and in order to resolve the matter, a gentleman who goes by that name has agreed to come to the police station in order to resolve the matter” The article also recorded Irving’s answer when asked if he was mad: “When you’re working on the edge of intellectual hyper-strain, sometimes you must say: “Have I flipped?” Unfortunately, there’s no intellectual thermometer you can slip in your mouth to find out.”

The same day that the *Sunday Telegraph* ran the sorry story for all the world to read, Leuchter issued his own press release, stating that the United Kingdom had “joined the ranks of terrorist nations of the world.” The Home Secretary had violated international law when he incarcerated Leuchter in a frigid cell “with known felons (a dangerous and potentially lethal place for a maker of execution equipment).” It was defiantly signed by “Fred A. Leuchter Jr., Citizen of the United States of America.”

Later that month *The Independent* ran a long article about the event and its context in an article entitled “David Irving resells Hitler’s War.” It carried a photo of Irving and Leuchter just before the intervention by the police. Interestingly enough, it also provided a telling quotation the *Sunday Telegraph* had not chosen to print: “Mr. Irving told his Chelsea audience that in the new edition of *Hitler’s War* they would “not find one line on the ‘Holocaust’” “Why dignify something with even a footnote that has not happened?” Clearly, the new edition of *Hitler’s War* looked not to the past, but to the future. As the article recorded, Irving had turned prophet not only in Milton, but also in Hamburg. “Two weeks ago Mr Irving told a Hamburg audience that in two years “this myth of mass murders of Jews in the death factories of Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka etc. etc. Which in fact never took place... This horrific ghost of guilt from which the German people have suffered for the last 45 years, will be laid.” History proved Irving wrong.

XI Irving Adrift (1993 -1998)

As the dust generated by the aborted Leuchter lecture began to settle, Irving became again an object of media attention. In the month that preceded the Leuchter lecture debacle, Irving had visited Buenos Aires. A year later, he recalled what had happened then. “Well when I was in Argentina in October, a man came up to me at the end of the meeting, who had written to me vaguely a couple of years before, mentioning papers that he thought I ought to see. And the next day he came back and he gave me two thick brown paper parcels which turned out to contain the writings of Adolf Eichmann when he was in custody, not in custody, when he was in hiding in Argentina in the 1950s. ” The pages were transcripts of a series of taped interviews of Eichmann with the Belgian Nazi Willem Sassen, who had also chosen exile in Argentina over justice in his homeland. The Sassen interviews were well known: some pieces of it had been published as early as 1960, while a more substantial part had been edited for publication by the former

Nuremberg defense attorney Rudolf Aschenauer and published in 1980 under the title *Ich, Adolf Eichmann*. A set of transcripts had come into the hands of a former Flemish Waffen-SS volunteer Hugo Byttebi-er, and he in turn had seen it as his duty to hand them to Irving.

When phoned in January 1992 by a journalist for a comment on Ye-huda Bauer's assessment of the number of victims of Auschwitz, Irving mentioned that he was reading Eichmann's papers. Whatever Irving said, or whatever the journalist heard, is not exactly clear, but within a few days major newspapers carried the story that on the basis of the Eichmann papers Irving had recanted his negationist position. *The Times* had this to say about it. "The most interesting part of the memoirs, Mr Irving said, were these chilling words from late 1941. "Heydrich [Eichmann's superior] said to me: 'I have come from the Reichsführer [Himmler]. Now the Führer has ordered the physical destruction of the Jews.'" Mr Irving said: "That shows that Eichmann believed there was an order from Hitler, though it still does not prove there was one. Eichmann's family did not want Mr Irving to see the memoirs because Eichmann admits total guilt for sending Jews to their death. In the light of this Mr Irving said his view that Hitler did not give the order will be "open to reassessment." Mr. Irving says that the memoirs are "very disorganised." He is using them, however, to write a biography of Eichmann. "I see him as a desiccated bureaucrat. He was an efficient transport officer rather than a mass murderer." Martin Gilbert, author of *The Holocaust: the Jewish Tragedy*, said yesterday: "For many years Mr Irving had denied these facts about the Holocaust and now makes a virtue of finding them." The facts Gilbert referred to were the generally accepted account of the Holocaust. Yet he could also have referred to Irving's "discovery" of Eichmann's account of his conversation with Heydrich. After all, it is to be found on page 177 in the 1980 edition of the papers edited by Dr Rudolf Aschenauer: "Around the end of 1941 or the beginning of 1942 Heydrich. The Chef of the SIPO [Security Police] and SD [Security Service], told me in conversation that the Führer

had ordered the physical destruction of the Jewish opponent.” On the next page, Eichmann mentioned that Heydrich talked about “an order for physical destruction,” and quoted once more the Führer order. “When Heydrich told me, “I come from the Reichsführer; the Führer has henceforth given the order for the physical destruction of the Jews,” were these words that were so far-reaching in their consequences, that one could not even remotely measure their significance at the moment that they were spoken.” And on page 229 one can find Eichmann’s second thoughts about this conversation, when he determines that it was not Heydrich’s idea to kill the Jews, but Hitler’s. “I remember exactly the moment that he told me “The Führer has ordered the physical destruction.” I heard that word for the first time in my life, and therefore it stayed with me: I may have forgotten much, but this moment I will never forget. Neither [Gestapo Chef] Müller nor [RSHA Chef] Heydrich nor Eichmann nor anyone else of the RSHA were responsible for this, but the decision was made by the Führer and the Reichsführer. ” In other words, Irving’s “discovery” was not so much the result of having unearthed new material, but of not having paid attention to a source easily available since 1980.

Faurisson immediately realized that Irving had stirred a tempest in a teacup. On Sunday, January 12--the very day that the *Sunday Telegraph* ran the story of Irving’s conversion--Faurisson faxed an angry note to Irving. “As it happens that I know a little bit about the Eichmann topic, perhaps would you be interested to have my position on “Eichmann and the Gas Chambers” (Höttl, Sassen, Aschenauer and, especially, Servatius). I wrote something about that in my interview of *Storia illustrata* and in my *Response to a Paper Historian*. Eichmann had never seen a “Gas Chamber”, and, as everyone, had not the slightest idea how it could look like. But, being rather naive and gullible, he would have been ready to believe more or less what Poliakov and Co. had written on the topic. If you need some details, please, tell me.” Irving responded that same day, and faxed Faurisson the two newspaper articles, ac-

accompanied by a note in which he not only tried to control the damage in his relation with Faurisson, but also give the whole thing a positive spin. “The suggestion that I have E’s diaries has unleashed a furore. I have made plain they are only E’s “unexpurgated” memoirs and recollections, which were given to me in Buenos Aires. I have also stressed that E’s version of what Heydrich said: “ich komme vom Reichsführer; der Führer hat die physische Vernichtung der Juden angeordnet”, is interesting but only Hörensagen, not zulässig in even an Amtsgericht as evidence. It shows what Eichmann believed, not what was necessarily true. Also, I have stressed that despite his many visits to Auschwitz he never saw a gas chamber, and that he refutes what Höß, Wisliceny, Höttl said as lies. I agree: he swallowed a lot that he read in Reitlinger, Poliakov, etc. But it is useful publicity, because it brings the whole controversy out into the open. Today, ten newspapers, three television stations, BBC radio etc. How else can we “purchase” such publicity for our real arguments?!” In his response, Faurisson stated that he considered “the whole matter as **terrible**,” and challenged Irving to make his reservations public. “Have you sent any fax to those newspapers to say what you are telling me in your fax about Eichmann “only [hearsay]”, “not permitted even in a court as evidence”, “never saw a gas chamber”, “refutes what Höss, Wisliceny, Höttl said as lies”, “swallowed [...]”?”

It was clear that the Faurisson’s original doubts about Irving’s reliability as a hard-core negationist had once more surfaced. Also other Holocaust deniers feared that Irving had changed sides. Tom Marcellus of the Institute of Historical Review and Irving had a telephone conversation on January 16, and in a follow-up letter Irving tried to make light of the whole situation as “an object lesson in the worldwide, global, influence of certain media networks.” And he added: “My position remains unchanged: that there were certain My-Lai-type atrocities by troops in Russia; that the gas chambers and factories of death are Hollywood legends; that there is no wartime evidence of a Hitler Order;

that what Eichmann says in these papers is “hearsay.” One day later the *Jewish Chronicle* ran front-page article about the issue. “Holocaust revisionist David Irving this week strongly denied press reports that he has “recanted.” In an exclusive interview, he reiterated his claim that Hitler knew nothing about the Holocaust, called the gas chambers “a legend”: and predicted a new, more powerful Germany, and the destruction of Israel within 10 years. [...] At his Mayfair flat, surrounded by framed newspapers from Nazi Germany, Mr Irving sat at an antique desk playing with a small swastika flag. Behind him, a figurine proclaimed him to be “the World Greatest Dad.” The Jews are very foolish not to abandon the gas chamber theory while they still have time,” he said. He predicted a new wave of anti-Semitism within 18 months, because the Jews “have exploited people with the gas chamber legend.” He also foresaw the rise of “a greater Germany, including Austria and Slovenia with an economic hegemony over Eastern Europe.” He added: “In 10 years, Israel will have ceased to exist and the Jews will have to return to Europe.” Mr Irving said that he had not visited the sites of the death camps in Europe, describing himself as a “field marshal” who would tour the “battlefield” only once the final victory had been achieved.”

Yet many deniers felt uncomfortable, and in the January 30 issue of his own newsletter *Power* Zündel felt obliged to address the issue as many of his supporters had approached him about it. He recalled the personal problems he had with Irving in the past, and expressed his considerable unease with the way Irving had accepted the Eichmann papers as genuine. He should have known better. “Irving also knew that the uncritical and gullible press would print just about anything, as long as it supported their version of history. He was right. They ate it up! Suddenly, the “outcast,” or “Nazi-historian” or “Parlour-Fascist” as he has been called by the media since he “switched sides” in 1988, became quickly, once again, the darling of the media establishment. What ever motivated Irving to launch this particular “torpedo”, I don’t know.

Maybe he was lonely? Maybe he had not seen his name in the papers for a while? Maybe he was temporarily swayed by some arguments contained in those 100 pages? I don't know! [...] I work with David Irving, because I like his mind and his courage. Sometimes his gruff manner, which can be intolerant of associates, as well as his icy manner, which makes him seem arrogant, infuriate me, like it does others. [...] As far as David Irving is concerned, I will "keep the faith" with him, as long as I feel he serves the cause of truth about my own people, even though he might err sometimes, or disappoint me or my friends in some detail. He has courage, good looks, charisma, an ability to think on his feet and to string words together coherently, like few other people I know. I am asking you, you who have been so very loyal and supportive of me, for so long, to trust my instincts." A week or so later, the Institute of Historical Review also expressed its confidence in Irving, claiming that "Irving remains steadfastly Revisionist," and blaming the media for routinely misrepresenting history and sensationally distorting what "prominent Revisionist scholars have to say about the historical record."

Things calmed down, and slowly confidence between Irving and the North-American deniers returned. By mid-summer Irving and Mark Weber of the Institute for Historical Review agreed that Irving would talk about the Eichmann papers at the Eleventh International Revisionist Conference, to be held that Fall in California. Irving promised a talk that would show the potential of the Eichmann document to support and damage the negationist cause. "Basically: they contain good and bad; gripping accounts of mass shootings he witnessed; a savage attack on the reliability of the Höß memoirs; data on his dealings with the Zionists--which are presumably the reason the published Eichmann were quietly suppressed by the media; descriptions of inspections tours of Auschwitz which describe everything--but omit any reference to the gas chamber; so why does he casually refer to Jews being "gassed"...?" The question remained open, for the time being.

More doubt must have arise about the wisdom of his 1988 conversion when, in the summer of 1992, Irving discovered in the Public Record Office the interrogations of Kurt Aumeier. On June 4, 1992 Irving faxed a letter to Tom Marcellus and Mark Weber of the negationist Institute for Historical Review. Irving reported that “working in the Public Record Office yesterday I came across the 200pp handwritten memoirs, very similar in sequence, to the Gerstein Report versions, of an SS officer Aumeier who was virtually Höß’s deputy.” “He was held in a most brutal British prison camp, the London Cage (the notorious Lt. Colonel A. Scotland). These mss. are going to be a problem for the revisionists, and they need analyzing now, in advance of our enemies, and answering. I attach my transcript of a few pp., and you’ll se why. He becomes more lurid with each subsequent version: first no gassings, then 50, then 15,000 (total).” Irving, of course, tried to suggest that the inflation in the death toll and the increasing lurid descriptions were the result of some coaching by his interrogators. And, clutching to the flimsiest arguments in the face of the new evidence he had found that supported the very understanding of the historical role of Auschwitz he had been fighting since 1988, Irving added, “Brute force by interrogators, perhaps.”

The discovery of the Aumeier material brought Irving in a very difficult position. While publication of it would once more desomnstrate his ability to find interesting new archival, publication would discredit him as an analytical historian. Faced with this dilemma, Irving decided to do nothing. Suppressing his discovery, he buried a reference to it in a footnote of his book on Nuremberg.

In 1992 Irving was not willing to break ranks with the other negationists, and he chose to attend the eleventh revisionist conference organized by the Institute of Historical Review. At that occasion, bygoness were bygoness. In the subsequent chronicle of the event, Faurisson, Butz and Irving were grouped together in a section entitled “The End of the Auschwitz Story.” It claimed that these men dealt directly with

the “historiographical demise of the Auschwitz gas chamber imposture, and referred to the effort now underway to transform a pretended historical fact into a vague, non-historical myth of religious veneration. Faurisson “delivered a kind of funeral oration over the prostrate cadaver of the Holocaust-as-history,” and Butz not only reviewed his own misinterpretation of the word *Vergasungskeller*--offering countless other suggestions--but also explained to the participants why the whole Holocaust edifice stood or fell with the issue of the Auschwitz gas chambers. Finally “headline-making” David Irving talked in a speech entitled “The Worldwide Anti-Irving Lobby and the Eichmann Memoir” about the way his opponents made his life miserable, how he had found in Moscow parts of the Goebbels diary, and came clean on the Eichmann Affair that had caused him so much trouble earlier that year by offering what the IHR Newsletter defined as “a controversial assessment of its importance in understanding Germany’s wartime Jewish policy.”

The controversy was certainly not about Irving’s attempt to put a negationist spin on whatever would bear it. He explained that whenever Eichmann uses the noun “*Endlösung*” (Final Solution) he refers to the plan to deport all the Jews to Madagascar, and Irving added that, as far he was concerned “that would have been an ideal solution. The Madagascar solution.” It earned him a long applause. Furthermore Irving noted that Eichmann is obsessed with the question “who is behind it, and what is behind it?” “What was behind the Holocaust? And he keeps coming back to the appalling thought “Did they manage to use us? Did they use us? Did the Zionists use us Nazis, in order to further their own ends? Was the Holocaust something that they themselves inflicted on their own body in order to bring about their Zionist cause in the long run?” This was Eichmann’s theory at the end, at the end of his life effectively, because a year or two later he was kidnapped, and a year after that he was at the end of a rope in Israel. “Did they manage to use us?” And he keeps on coming back to it, and every time he comes back

to it, it becomes more and more plausible to him. And perhaps this is a reason why the Eichmann papers were not supposed to see the light of day.”

After having conjured the spectre of the Elders of Zion as those who managed to make the Germans do their bidding by killing some Jews to realize the Zionist ideal, he suggested that, after the war was over, the leader of the World Jewish Congress, through an intermediary, had approached Eichmann to have him confirm that Eichmann had overseen the murder of six million Jews. The Zionists needed this in their negotiations for reparation payments. Irving also recounted how Eichmann thought that, compared to the allied bombings of the German cities, the German treatment of the Jews was nothing. “Compared to what they were planning to do with us this was nothing.” Irving quickly admitted that one crime does not justify another crime, “[b]ut this is in the memoirs.” And then he gave an interpretation of Eichmann’s interpretation of Höss’s confessions. “And round about 1958 he then gets hold of the Adolf--of the Rudolf Höss memoirs. The so-called memoirs of Rudolf Höss that were published by the Institute of History in Munich in 1958. Rudolf Höss wrote these memoirs while he was in Krakow in Polish captivity. They have always been a problem, let us be frank about it. They have been a problem to Revisionists, the Rudolf Höss memoirs. Eichmann’s comments on the Rudolf Höss memoirs are annihilating. At the stage where Rudolf Höss is saying that 2.5 million Jews have been liquidated in Auschwitz, the camp at which he was Commandant, Rudolf Höss comments--Adolf Eichmann comments: “Where does Rudolf Höss believe that he got these 2.5 million Jews from? Not from me. Because to have liquidated 2.5 million decrepit, elderly, unworkable Jews, I must have had to feed to him three, four, five, six or seven million Jews in that space of time. And from the transport point of view alone, this would have been totally impossible.” You see the memoirs of Eichmann are very useful in this respect. He was the transport specialist, whose job it was to round up the Jews of

Hungary, Slovakia, and ship them off to Germany for forced labour and for dissipation to the other labour camps. And he knew that shipping off millions of Jews to Germany was not something you do with a snap of your fingers. You had to have meetings and conferences with the railway officials, and the road officials, and with the guards, and the electricity, and everybody else who was going to be involved in all this. You had to provide the food for the transports that were going to be on the roads on the rails for four, or five, or six days. All this had to be prepared and planned with typical German bureaucracy and method and this took meetings and conferences. And Eichmann said if you are going to ship five or six million Jews across Europe at that time to Auschwitz--"Let me tell you how many trains that would have taken." And he worked out how many trains it would have taken because he knew. And he said, "But wait a minute, you are not only going to have trains going that way full of Jews, you are going to have to have empty trains coming back, and you are going to have to have a circulation time, a time where they are unloading at one end, a time where they are loading at another end. You are going to need so many millions of wagons of rolling stock." And he worked out exactly how much rolling stock would have been needed in his memoirs and he said: "This alone proves that Rudolf Höss is talking through his hat. These figures are totally fantastic and what the hell is Höss up to writing this kind of garbage?" So if Leuchter had argued that it would have been "impossible" to gas more than 105,688 and incinerate more than 85,092 people in the crematoria in Auschwitz, Irving (with the help of Eichmann) now added to this the argument that it would have been "impossible" to transport more than a undetermined low number of people to the camp--a suggestion Irving makes whilst he attacks the "straw-man" of 2.5 million deportees to Auschwitz.

The question which must be raised at this point is if Irving provided a reliable account of Eichmann's comment on Höss's testimony. Having checked the published version of Eichmann's memoirs, published in

1980 by Rudolf Aschenauer, I was able to find Eichmann's reaction to Höss's one-time statement that 2.5 million Jews had been brought to Auschwitz. In Aschenauer's edition of the Eichmann memoirs, the passage is as follows: "Like the testimony of Hauptsturmführer Wisliceny, also Höss's Nuremberg testimony, that he killed 2.5 million Jews in Auschwitz, seems to have been made under pressure. I knew Höss as a decent comrade, a good family man, decorated in the First World War with the Iron Cross, a man who, because of his national socialist belief, served many years in prison before the Machstübernahme. Höss told me once that the Reichsführer had inspected the whole process of destruction and that he had said that "the coming generations will not need to fight these battles"--a statement that inspired him to fulfil his difficult duty. The number of 2.5 million Jews liquidated in Auschwitz I always considered to be beyond belief, because the camp did not have such a capacity. Besides which I have never brought so many Jews to Auschwitz. It is true that I was not the only one who deported [Jews to Auschwitz], but also other authorities like the Sipo (Security Police), but even when we add all up, 2.5 million could not have gone to Auschwitz and certainly not could not have been destroyed. After 1945 the so-called "Auschwitzer" emerged like mushrooms after the rain, and still today hundreds of thousands enjoy a good health, just because they were put to work." In a different context in the same memoirs, Eichmann did discuss the train-schedules when he challenged the common assumption that over 430,000 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz during the Hungarian Action. "It is completely impossible that between earliest the middle of May 1944 and July 8, the day that enemy sources call the date that the last railway transport left Hungary, that is in 50 days, it would have been possible to transport 434,000 people (according to the same sources). This would imply that every day, including Saturday and Sunday, 10,000 and more people would have been transported. In addition to that the majority survived. There was a rule that between 25 and 30 men accompanied every deportation train. I only had 250 men available. If the numbers from enemy

sources would be right, I should have had a thousand men at my disposal. This is bloody nonsense! Even the commander of the Order Police in Hungary would have been delighted, if he had had a thousand men at his disposal for such a task. Also it would have been necessary to have many trains in reserve. Because while the first people went on their way, one would have been forced to load the next one. It took two days to go from Hungary to Auschwitz; so two days going and two days returning. I had to struggle constantly to get trains at all, especially in the for the war very important days of the early summer of 1944, when the invasion and the Soviet offensive made it impossible to obtain such a number of trains, even if one calculates that each train would have gone on its way with a maximum of 3,000 people. It is therefore nonsensical what post-war literature had written about the Hungarian evacuation numbers.” I must assume that Irving took these two parts of Eichmann’s memoirs--one dealing with Eichmann’s refusal to accept the 2.5 million figure and another made in order to lower the number of deported Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz from 430,000 to 300,000--cobbling them together into a completely fictive account to prove that “Höss is talking through his hat.” It seems that, at least for Irving, anything goes to solve the “problem” of Höss’s confessions!

Irving also mentioned that Eichmann recalled that he visited Auschwitz several times--a point in his lecture where Irving began to conjure up the worst nightmares of Holocaust deniers in order to put them to rest again, with a less than convincing logic and without any attempt to review important corroborating evidence, such as Eichmann’s account of his trip to Auschwitz given in Israel. “And he describes several grisly scenes. He describes going past an open pit where bodies were being burned. And he says it was an infernal sight the likes of which he would never forget. He describes how the commandant Höss tells him they are doing these things on Himmler’s orders and that it is a sacred task that has been imposed on the SS. He describes many things. But what he does not once mention during this vivid description of the vis-

it to Auschwitz is gas chambers. He does not mention gas chambers. He just mentions the disposal of bodies in open pits by fire, and the comments to him by the commandant, Rudolf Höss. I find that a very significant omission, because Eichmann, let us face it, when you read these papers, he is not exactly being modest about what he has seen. He describes how, in July 1941, if we piece together the actual month and the date, he describes how he is summoned to Berlin, he is summoned to Berlin to visit Reinhard Heydrich, the chief of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*. And Heydrich utters to him the fatal words, “*Ich komme von Reichsführer SS*” -- “I come from the Reichsführer of the SS, Heinrich Himmler.” “*Der Führer hat den Befehl zur physischen Vernichtung der Juden gegeben*” -- “The Führer has given the order for the physical destruction of the Jews.” And that of course, in quotation marks in the manuscript, is what gave me pause for thought. I have always said that Hitler was not involved, whatever happened. Hitler gave the orders; there is no proof of it. In fact here we have Eichmann writing something very specific. Indeed what is the explanation? Well if I can digress here and look just at that sentence and say, you have only got to change one or two words and you get a completely different meaning. If it was not “the Führer has ordered the “*physische Vernichtung*,” the physical destruction of the Jews, but the “*Ausrottung des Judentums*.” You have only changed the words by a fraction and yet you have got a totally different meaning and you get something that is much more familiar to those who are familiar with Adolf Hitler’s public utterances and speeches. “*Ausrottung des Judentums*,” the destruction of Judaism, is something totally different. You do not do that by gas chambers and the machine gun, anymore than destroying Christianity or destroying usury would be done by the gas chamber and the bullet. It is a different concept. So why should Eichmann have written this and not that?” Obviously it will be superfluous to note the manner in which Irving applies his unique hermeneutical method to inconvenient evidence. Of course, everyone knows that changing one or two words in a sentence often produces a completely different meaning. Everyone knows, too,

that it is the duty of a historian to interpret evidence as it is given, and only when there is no way that one could come a reasonable explanation of the words as they are transmitted, speculate about a possible change that occurred in the transmission. The meaning of the sentence, "The Führer has given the order for the physical destruction of the Jews" is straightforward, and is confirmed by the context. But that does not convince Irving. "So why should Eichmann have written this, and not that? Well by 1958 he is well aware that since Höss's memoirs have been published and Eichmann is mentioned on 20 or 30 pages of Rudolf Höss's memoirs, the hue and cry is up. They are out looking for him. He knows that his days may be numbered. And although I am sure that, given his German, decent, bureaucratic mind he is not doing this consciously, the mind has a wonderful synthetic and analytical function. And the mind has a habit of suppressing, and distorting, and embellishing, in a manner in which the owner of that mind would wish. And I am sure that Adolf Eichmann's mind is already lying awake at night, feverishly looking for extenuating circumstances. And what more extenuating circumstances would there be for an Adolf Eichmann than that the Führer has ordered the physical destruction of the Jews. So his mind may well have adapted the sentence that Rudolf Höss, that Reinhard Heydrich actually uttered to him." Of course, there is absolutely no evidence at all that Heydrich "actually" said anything different from what Eichmann reports. As I have noted above, Eichmann gave in at least three different places in his memoirs a virtually identical version of the content of Heydrich's message: "the Führer had ordered the physical destruction of the Jewish opponent;" "the Führer has henceforth given the order for the physical destruction of the Jews;" "[t]he Führer has ordered the physical destruction." Given the fact that Irving has absolutely no evidence to support his point, and given the point that Eichmann seems to insist on the interpretation Irving so stubbornly rejects, there is at least in my mind no doubt that Irving violates the most basic rule of historical scholarship. It is clear that, whatever his claims to the contrary, he is not a historian.

Perhaps he realized this himself, because as quickly as he had conjured his alternative interpretation, he went on to say that nothing what Eichmann would have said matters, that all evidence is really irrelevant. “It is immaterial one way or the other, because we must never overlook one fact. This is a post-war document. And there is no overlooking the basic fact that any historian can now confirm, that nowhere in all the archives of the world has yet been found one wartime document referring to a Führer’s order to destroy the Jews, or for that matter one wartime document referring to gas chambers, or gassings. All the documents that refer to Führer’s orders and gas chambers are post-war documents. Statements by the people in the dock at Nuremberg, memoirs by commandants at Auschwitz, at Krakow in Poland, and the like. And you can not overlook this basic watershed between wartime and post-war, when you come to look for the documents. If there is no wartime document that says there was a Führer order, no wartime document talks of gas chambers, then there has to be some explanation for that.” The one possible explanation that the Führer order was never committed to paper, and that it was perfectly possible to design a usable gas chamber without writing the word “Gaskammer” or, for that matter, “Vergasungskeller” in the blueprints of the crematoria was, of course, not admissible to Irving.

At his introduction of Irving, Mark Weber had told the audience that “he has also promised to let us in on some of the new ways he has found to make liberal flesh creep.” It is obvious that Irving could neither resist to make negationist flesh creep by mentioning that the Eichmann papers contain a vivid description of a shooting in Minsk which he saw from so close proximity that blood splashed on his coat. “I do not know why he wrote it in his memoirs. It is in the conversations. It is an ugly piece of circumstantial evidence, what a writer calls verisimilitude, it lends credibility and authenticity to the description. It did not surprise me. He also describes, and I have to say this being an honest historian, going to another location a few weeks later and

being driven around in a bus and then being told by the bus driver to look through a peep hole into the back of the bus, where he saw a number of prisoners being gassed by the exhaust fumes. So I accept that this kind of experiment was made on a very limited scale, but that it was rapidly abandoned as a totally inefficient way of killing people. What I do not accept is that the gas chambers existed and this is well known.” Many must have thought that, perhaps after all, the doubts that had been raised in January had not been without justification.

Following the conference, Irving was to make his annual Canadian lecture tour. The Canadian government had told him that he was not welcome, but Zündel (who had not been allowed into the United States to attend the Eleventh IHR Conference) had told Irving that while he was going to be arrested, it was worth it for the publicity. In fact things worked out as predicted: Irving got arrested, and was thrown out of Canada with much publicity. But the indignity of deportation was more than Irving had expected. The long simmering tensions between Irving and Zündel blew up into a nasty row. Both men felt that they had done everything to accommodate the other, without getting much in return. Zündel sent Irving long letters itemizing all the expenses he had incurred on behalf of the historian, and Irving responded in kind. As far as he was concerned, his life had been perfect until he met Zündel, “on that historic day in October 1987.” “I had few enemies, my publishing basis was intact, my books were reviewed with respect tinged with admiration more usually than with malice. It is fortunate that I met you in private, because I at once realized that you had been grossly maligned by the media moguls, and that--like Hitler--your public persona was very different from the true persona. Accordingly, in April 1988 I unhesitatingly agreed to aid your defence as a witness in Toronto. I would not make the same mistake again. As a penalty for having defended you then, and for having continued to aid you since, my life has come under a gradually mounting attack: I find myself the worldwide victim of mass demonstrations, violence, vituperation, and

persecution....” Yet the two men who had condemned each other continued in to remain each other’s company. In the course of 1993, amicable relations were to be restored.

While Irving seemed to regret his 1988 “conversion,” he was not yet ready to make any attempt to undertake the necessary action to reclaim some of his credibility as a historian and appease the people he had enraged. And the negationists did not want to let Irving go. The first issue of the newly formatted *The Journal of Historical Review*, which was published in January 1993, showed Irving on the cover. In Mark Weber’s introduction to the new journal, one read that “[i]n recent years, no historian has provoked greater controversy, or has stimulated more people into reassessing stereotypical notions about contemporary history, than David Irving.” “The best-selling British historian is also a good friend of the Institute who has delighted attendees at four IHR Conferences. We are accordingly pleased to begin this premiere issue of the “new” *Journal* with an essay summarizing Irving’s remarkable career and impact. The British historian himself then provides a fascinating and humorous report on the increasingly desperate and sometimes criminal international campaign to silence him and to suppress openness in history.”

Irving proved himself worthy of the honour, and throughout 1993 he did not disappoint his friends as the Institute of Historical Review, and continued to preach the negationist gospel. When in March 1993 Mark Weber invited him for a revisionist news conference to be held on April 22 concurrent with the dedication of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Irving responded enthusiastically. “I am clearly interested, and you can state that ‘David Irving has been invited.’” Yet all was to depend on the availability of a fee for his attendance. In return, Irving predicted that “my presence might break the conference into the real news media, given the worldwide attack on my International Campaign for Real History.” In the end Weber and Irving agreed on expenses, a fee of \$1,000, and a free notice in *The Journal of Historical Re-*

view appealing for financial contributions to Irving's "Legal Fighting Fund." Sharing the stage with Robert Faurisson and Mar Weber, Irving performed as requested in the event entitled "Saying NO to the US Holocaust Museum."

In a lecture entitled "The Search for Truth in History Banned," Irving complained that the "traditional enemy" were using Nazi methods against him. As to the history of Auschwitz, he now claimed that probably 100,000 Jews had died in Auschwitz--"but not from gas chambers. They died from epidemics." "Even if we say that of those 100,000 people who died a fraction were murdered, hanged, or shot. Suppose we say a quarter were murdered. 25,000 people murdered in Auschwitz in the three years, if we take that generous figure, then I would say that 25,000 people murdered in Auschwitz in three years is still half the number of people that we murdered in Hamburg, burning them alive in one night in 1943. We are looking at crime and crime. They are both crimes. One crime gets all the publicity. One crime is the only one that is referred to in the media today and the other crime you put up a statue to commemorate the man who carried it out. There is something wrong about that." Irving broke new ground in his interpretation of history when he dealt with the question why so many Germans believe, nay even witnessed, that Jews were being exterminated. "There is hardly a German who has not been listening clandestinely to the BBC who has not heard talk about the gas chambers. And they begin mentioning it in rumors to each other. From one washerwoman to the next the rumor goes around Germany, until finally they have actually seen about it and their son is working in a unit and he has heard about it too. And that is how the legend gains credibility from the German side too." As to the "real" fate of the Jews, Irving reached back to the theme that they had all been killed by allied bombs whilst being evacuated. "Many concentration camps, as the Russians approached, were evacuated and set out on the long cold march through the European winter of December 44, January 1945 to the West. The con-

centration camp inmates arrived in Berlin or in Leipzig or in Dresden just in time for the RAF bombers to set fire to those cities. In Dresden a million-and-a-half people camping out in the streets on the night of February 13, 1945. Nobody knows who they were. Refugees, concentration camp prisoners, citizens of Dresden itself. After the bombers retired, 45 minutes later another wave came, and at then at noon on February 14 the American air force joined in. Over 130,000 people died in that particular air raid. The same kind of raids took place on Leipzig, Berlin, Cottbus: refugee centers up and down the center of Germany. Nobody knows how many Jews died in those air raids, nobody knows how many Jews died on the roads of hunger or starvation or just sheer cold. Nobody knows how many Jews then survived World War II in the Displaced Persons Camps. And this is one of the most interesting aspects. It is possible to research it, I suppose, but to my knowledge none of the Holocaust historians have done so. The National Archives in Washington houses a report this thick of the Office of Strategic Services, the American secret service, in which are investigated the activities of the Hagana, the Jewish, Zionist underground organization, in those very Displaced Persons Camps in the first months after World War II. The Hagana went from DP camp to camp scouring them for all the Jews they could find who were still living in these camps, these wretched people, loading them onto trucks and shipping them then with United Nations funds and resources all the way across Europe, through the Middle East to Palestine. So Mr. Goldman, who is found in a camp somewhere in Bavaria, is put aboard a truck with his family, and shipped across the Middle East to Palestine where he is given a new life and a new identity. An Israeli identity with a Hebrew name. Mr. Goldman has vanished and the Hebrew gentleman in the Middle East then starts drawing compensation because Mr. Goldman has vanished. This is the irony, which a lot of the Germans are now beginning to worry about."

Irving did not only add new themes to his lecture offerings. He also looked for new publishing initiatives. Years earlier he had announced that he was to write a book on Auschwitz--his final one--but this project had never materialized. But in 1992 a book entitled *Air Photo Evidence* had appeared in Canada which formed, together with the Leuchter Report, the book-ends of revisionist obsession with the gas chambers. If Leuchter had tried to prove through the chemical analysis of some wall samples that no gassings had taken place, John C. Ball from Delta, British Columbia thought he could do the same through the study of air photos of Auschwitz and Birkenau taken by allied planes on April 4, May 31, June 26, August 25, September 13, 1944. Ball's reasoning was simple: "Nothing is hidden from air photos. Looking at the air photos will be just as if we went back in time to World War II to take a series of airplane flights over the different areas." His alleged aim was equally simple. "My objective was to *analyze* World War II German controlled detention camps in Poland for evidence to confirm the claims that mass murders, burials, and cremations had been conducted there"--a statement that, given the contents of the book, reminds one of Leuchter's often-repeated assertion that he went to Auschwitz to prove that the gas chambers had been efficient killing mass installations. Of course, like Leuchter, Ball came to the opposite conclusion. "[T]here is *no* evidence mass murders and cremations occurred at or near the Birkenau crematoriums, which were visible from both inside and outside the camp, or the Auschwitz I or Majdanek detention camps." In fact, as a 16-page insert that accompanied the Ball book declared, the situation was quite opposite to what all witnesses had said: "Auschwitz inmates enjoyed a wide range of healthy activities."

Unlike the Leuchter Report, Ball's book, published by the author, had not much of an impact. Yet both Zündel and Irving believed that it had potential. It was exceedingly well illustrated with many seemingly informative air photos from the National Archives in Washington. The problem was the text, which was in fact nothing more than a series of

captions to the photos. In 1993 Zündel bought the German rights for the book, but at the same time Irving found a right-wing German publisher who would distribute the book under Irving's "Focal Point" imprint. The deal was that Irving would write a foreword as he had done for the Leuchter Report and, as he explained to Zündel, make the book understandable. "The problem with John Ball's book is, as others than I have also said, that the caption texts are too *opaque*. They needed a good editor to ask Ball questions, which he would then answer. Nobody looking at the book can fail to be impressed by the quality of the job and the layout; but everybody I know has put it down scratching his head and asking, "What was Ball getting at?" Therefore he suggested that he would edit the captions, "so that the reader is in no doubt at all what Ball is getting at on each page."

Zündel predicted that Ball would not agree. "He is very proud of his work and not willing to merely be the supplier of the pictures," and therefore suggested that Irving would write a very long foreword, which would become in some way a replacement for the missing text. But a few days later Zündel informed Irving that Ball was not excited about the prospect of surrendering control to Irving, and beyond that there was of course the issue of Zündel's reward if he was to transfer the rights to Irving. In the end, it seems that the whole project collapsed. Ball was not to be another Leuchter, and *Air Photo Evidence* was not to be another Leuchter Report. As a publisher of path-breaking negationist pamphlets, Irving began to loose his touch.

Irving increasingly began to reap the bitter harvest of the carelessly phrased seeds sown in the years before. He always had taken pride in his prophetic gifts, and in 1991 he had announced that the Holocaust Hoax would have only another two years of life. But in 1994 he had to admit that his prophecy had not been realized, and that "our world-wide Traditional Enemy has pulled every dirty trick he can--short of doing a Tonya Harding to every single revisionist writer--to breathe a

few more years of life into the rotting corpse of his profitable legend.” And then, of course, there was the publication of Deborah Lipstadt’s *Denying the Holocaust*, which is the subject matter of this litigation.

Yet he was still welcome at the annual conference of the Institute of Historical Review. At the twelfth conference, held in September 1994, Irving discussed his forthcoming biography of Goebbels, concentrating on Goebbels involvement with the “Final Solution.” A few months later he published an adapted version of his talk. In it he stated that “I’ve gone through the diary with a special interest in the Jewish issue, and particularly the ‘final solution.’” “There’s no question that whatever tragedy befell the Jews in Germany during the Third Reich, Dr. Goebbels himself was the prime moving force behind it. He wasn’t just the person who created the atmosphere of hatred, he was also the one who pulled the levers and started the trains in motion. What happened at the other end is still a matter of debate, and this issue is one of the moving causes of revisionism at this moment.” Eighteen years after having absolved Hitler from all responsibility for what might have happened to the Jews, Irving presented Dr. Goebbels as his scapegoat, with Albert Speer as his sidekick (both men cooperated in pressing for the deportation of Jews from Berlin in the summer of 1941). There is no need to review Irving’s reasonings as to why Goebbels had such a central role. It will suffice to state that by making Goebbels the central character in whatever happened to the Jews, Irving was able to ignore the whole machinery of destruction embodied by the death camps with their gas chambers and, in the case of Auschwitz and Maidanek, crematoria.

Instead of considering Goebbels antisemitism as described by Irving, let us look at Irving’s assessment of how it shaped the fate of the Jews. Irving described at one moment in the lecture the massacre of German Jews in Riga in order to introduce his theory, introduced in his *Hitler’s War*, that Hitler explicitly forbid the killing of Jews, and then continued with his creed: “Here I want to mention something that I’m very adam-

ant about. Although we revisionists say that gas chambers didn't exist, and that the "factories of death" didn't exist, there is no doubt in my mind that on the Eastern front large numbers of Jews were massacred by criminals with guns--SS men, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, whatever--to get rid of them. They were to line up next to pits or ditches, and then shot. The eyewitness accounts I've seen of this are genuine and reliable." One wonders why those eyewitness accounts may be trusted, and those that described the gassings not....

Whatever may be the case, Irving ended his talk with a consideration of one of the most damning pieces of evidence about the Holocaust in Goebbels' diaries: the entry of March 27, 1942. "On March 27, 1942, Goebbels dictates a lengthy passage about another SS document that had been submitted to him, and which appears to have been much uglier in its content. "Beginning with Lublin," he states, "the Jews are now being deported eastward from the General Government (occupied Poland). The procedure is pretty barbaric and one that beggars description, and there's not much left of the Jews. Broadly speaking one can say that 60 percent of them will have to be liquidated, while only 40 percent can be put to work." It's a very ugly passage, and it's easy to link this diary passage with everything we've seen in the movies and on television since then. He's describing "Schindler's List" here--or is he? I don't know. All he's actually saying here is that the Jews are having a pretty rigorous time. They're being deported, it's happening in a systematic way, and not many of them are going to survive it." It is unclear to me why Goebbels' diary entry should not be taken literally, given massive corroborating evidence. He mentions not merely that deportation will probably result in many people dying, but that deportation is the pre-amble for the liquidation of those who can not work. "The conclusion I draw therefore is that, between them, Speer and Goebbels started a ruthless campaign in 1941 to drive out and deport the Jews from Berlin--Goebbels for political reasons, and out of sheer visceral hatred of the Jews, and Speer for the mundane reasons of real estate

and ambition. They didn't really care what happened to the Jews. Even so, we must put all this in the context of the brutal war being fought on the Eastern front at the time, in which neither side was giving the other any quarter. By this time (March 1942) we British had just begun bombing German towns on a ruthless scale. The devastating aerial bombardment of Lübeck, for example, came just two days after this diary entry. It's not difficult to imagine Dr. Goebbels' attitude: "So what if Jews are being machine-gunned into pits? They had it coming to them. They declared war on us, and this is no time for sympathy and sentiment." That's the way he may well have looked at it." Goebbels may have thought this, or not, but what is clear is that Goebbels referred in his diary entry to a systematic policy which has commenced in areas far from those targeted by the RAF, and there is absolutely no evidence at all to interpret the deportations from Poland "eastward" as a response to the air raids.

Before I will conclude my discussion of Irving's essay, I would like to make the following observation. While a historian has the responsibility to state clearly "I don't know..." when the evidence does not allow him to establish the facts, he also has the responsibility, when engaged in a historical investigation, to say clearly "This is so..." when the evidence clearly converges towards a (admittedly always provisional) conclusion about the facts. If, for whatever reason, the historian refuses to establish a historical fact when there is sufficient evidence to do so, and when he refuses to propose an (admittedly always provisional) interpretation of this fact in the context of other facts, he ceases to be a historian. In politics and poker, ambiguity has its use and justification. In history, it has not.

This brings us to the historian's obligation to provide, in the words of the Australian historian C. Behan McCullagh, a fair representation of the past. McCullagh introduced the useful distinction between "true descriptions" of a fact and "fair representations" through a simple example: "If I say that my dog has an ear, an eye, a leg and a tail, that

statement would be literally true. It has got all of those things. But the statement does not give a fair description of my dog, which has two ears, two eyes, four legs and one tail. As a description of the dog it may be literally true, but it is also misleading for anyone who reads it as providing a fair description of the dog. Normally people do intend their descriptive statements about the world to provide fair descriptions of it, though occasionally that is not their intent.” Fair descriptions of a historical fact must therefore include the predominant feature(s) of that fact. If major features are ignored then a description ceases to be balanced and fair, and becomes misleading. It also ceased to be fair, when the description cease to operate at the same level of generality and with the same degree of detail. For example, in the case of the German attempt to come to a “Final Solution of the Jewish Question,” whatever an important leader like Goebbels writes in his diary on March 27, 1942 probably belongs to the same level of generalization as evidence about a meeting of bureaucrats in a villa in Wannsee two months earlier, or the transformation in Birkenau of a peasant cottage into a gas chamber in mid March, or the negotiations held in Bratislava between German and Slovak officials about the deportation of Jews. But the fact that a piece of a press report is marked “secret” or that half of a report marked “secret” was torn off, or the possible thoughts of a stenographer about the sentences he jotted down belong to a different degree of generalization--one that may possibly provide an illustration of the appropriate generalization of one’s attempt to reconstruct the facts concerning the German attempt to come to the “Final Solution,” but which cannot provide a substitute for those generalizations.

Let us return to the end of Irving’s lecture. We left him with his speculation what Goebbels might have thought about the historical justice of deporting the Jews when Germany’s cities were about to be bombed. “By this time, ugly rumors were already circulating abroad, fuelled by British propaganda. The London *Daily Telegraph* quoted Polish claims that seven thousand of Warsaw’s Jews were being killed each day, often

in what it called “Gas chambers.” One of Goebbels’ worried civil servants responded by telaxing a request for information to Hans Frank’s press office in Krakow and to the propaganda field office in Warsaw. The reassuring reply spoke of the Jews being used to construct defences and roads. Be that as it may, in Goebbels’ files the original press report, which had merely summarized the British newspaper item, was rubberstamped *Geheime Reichssache* “Secret Reich Matter.” How much did Goebbels know? Among his surviving files are papers suggesting a broad general knowledge of atrocities. One is from a large collection of original Goebbels’ papers on file at the Jewish Yivo institute in New York. Reporting to Goebbels on November 11, 1942, his legal expert, Dr. Hans Schmidt-Leonhardt, whom he had sent to inspect conditions in Hans Frank’s Polish dominions, noted that the Warsaw police had deemed it too dangerous to visit the ghetto there; in the Krakow ghetto he had found all the Jews put to work; in Lublin the ghetto had already been cleared away, and there were now bloody disturbances. “As a *Geheime Reichssache*,” reported the legal specialist, “Frank related to us the following characteristic recent instance:...” But whatever this was we cannot know, because a shocked member of Goebbels’ staff cut off the rest of the page. This is something that you have to look for, this “top secret” endorsement. By contrast, the Auschwitz documents found in the Moscow archives by French researcher Jean-Claude Pressac have no “secret” classification whatsoever. But this document, with its missing half page, tells me that Goebbels knew damn well that something ugly was probably happening on the Eastern front, and that he didn’t want members of his staff asking awkward questions, so he had part of the page torn off and locked away in his safe. I sometimes wonder what his stenographer, Richard Otte, must have thought about the man whose words he transcribed day by day for this diary. So there are the facts about Dr. Goebbels and the “final solution.” If we’re looking for a culprit, if we’re looking for a criminal behind the “final solution” or the “Holocaust,” whatever it was, for the man who started it in motion, then it was undoubtedly Dr. Goebbels

first and foremost. Not Julius Streicher, nor Adolf Hitler, nor any of the other Nazis. Goebbels was the moving force, and the brain behind it in every sense of the word. We still don't know if he knew what exactly happened at the other end, but then this isn't surprising, because we ourselves don't know either." Nothing Irving described in these last paragraphs is patently untrue, but as a whole, it does not add up to a fair description of the facts under consideration.

January 1995 brought the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In order to mark the occasion, the French magazine *L'Express* carried a section with articles about the camp. One of these, written by the journalist and historian Eric Conan, concerned the problems of historic preservation, restoration, and presentation. Conan's article provided a solid account of problems the conservator Witold Smerk faced in controlling the decay of the remaining barracks, which had been erected as temporary structures more than 50 years earlier, and the degradation of the hair, shoes, and other exhibits in barracks not equipped with any climate control. And then there was the great problem the museum authorities faced in removing from the presentation the overly communist interpretation of the murders that had taken place at the site--one that had inflated the number of victims, while simultaneously suppressing the Jewish identity of the vast majority of the those killed. Conan quoted a senior advisor to the museum and the Ministry of Culture who said that there was now a unanimous resolve "to make an end to the nationalist-communist discourse at the place, and find for the genocide of the Jews a central place in the memory of Auschwitz." In the five years since the fall of communism much had been achieved. "The biggest blunders have been rectified but the main discussions are never-ending and far from being settled. I may even say that the essential debates, distressing, and sometimes unexpected, are only beginning."

Conan described the ongoing discussions of the museum with people from all over the world of how to improve the presentation, including a short description of a conference that I attended in 1993. And then he turned to two “delicate” subjects: the issue of the hair, which many Jews would like to see removed from the exhibition and buried, and the problem of ill-considered restorations done shortly after the war. “In the 1950s and 1960s, various buildings that had either disappeared or had changed function were reconstructed with great errors, to be presented as authentic. Certain of those, too “new” have been closed to the public. And we do not have to mention the delousing gas chambers sometimes as homicidal gas chambers. These aberrations have served the negationists well, who have drawn raw material from this for their fabrications. The example of crematorium 1, the only one in Auschwitz 1, illustrates the problem. The first gas chamber was installed in its morgue. It was in operation for some time, in the beginning of 1942. The gassings necessitated the isolation of the zone where it was taking place, and this disturbed the operation of the camp. Therefore it was decided, at the end of April 1942, to move the homicidal gassings to Birkenau, where they were undertaken on an almost industrial scale, with most of its victims being Jews. Crematorium 1 was then transformed into an air-raid shelter, with an operation room. In 1948, when the Museum was created, crematorium 1 was reconstructed in what one supposed to be its original state. Everything there is wrong: the dimensions of the gas chamber, the locations of the doors, the openings for pouring in Zyklon B, the ovens that were rebuilt according to the recollections of some survivors, the height of the chimney. At the end of the 70s, Robert Faurisson exploited those falsifications all the better because at that time the Museum officials refused to admit them. An American revisionist has just shot a video in the gas chamber (still presented as authentic): one may see him questioning the visitors with his “revelations” Jean-Claude Pressac, one of the first to reconstruct the exact history of this gas chamber and its modifications during and after the war, proposes to restore it to its

state in 1942, using the German blueprints which he found in the Soviet archives. Others, like Théo Klein, prefer to leave it in its present state, explaining to the public the misrepresentation. “History is what it is: this is all that needs to be said, even when it is not simple, it is better than replace one artifice with another.” Krystyna Oleksy, who works in the director’s office that is housed in the old SS hospital directly opposite the crematorium, does not want to resolve it. “For the time being we are going to leave it in the present state, and not give any specifics to the visitors. It is too complicated. We will see later on.”

Conan’s observations about the problems of the restoration, conservation and presentation of crematorium 1 were perfectly justified. Yet the second part of the paragraph, which talked about the misrepresentations without the context that clearly established the historic functions and its attendant changes that had occurred in 1942 and 1943, would prove excellent raw material for the Holocaust deniers. Indeed: they immediately hailed Conan’s article as a breakthrough. Faurisson told anyone willing to hear that he had been right all along. “[A]lready in 1976 I demonstrated the falsehood of this entire story by questioning Museum official Jan Machalek, and by finding in the Auschwitz Museum files original plans clearly showing that, in fact, the alleged ‘gas chamber’ was, between October 7, 1941, and August 31, 1943, a room with a single entrance where dead bodies awaiting cremation were stored” And he challenged the museum officials to rebuild the room as it was during the war, which meant that they would have to close the back-entrance adjacent to the place where Höss was executed in 1947. This, Faurisson argued, would provide a problem as the museum officials would not be able anymore to explain how the victims had entered the gas chamber. “I do not think the officials would dare contend that the victims entered by way of the door of the ovens room.” Of course, there would have been no need for that: as a plan preserved in the Osobyi archive clearly indicates, there were two doors that gave access to the gas chamber: one from the incineration

room, and one from a small ante-room that was directly connected to the vestibule. The victims did not have to go along the ovens to reach the gas chambers.

Irving celebrated Conan's article in the May 1995 issue of his *Action Report*. **"L'Express: 'Tout y est faux'--Everything About It Is Fake French Make a Clean Breast: Admit Forty-Seven-Year Auschwitz 'Gas-Chamber' Fraud** Paris--Braving the risk of prosecution under France's draconic new Fabius-Gayssot Law, the mass circulation national weekly magazine L 'Express has admitted that the gas chamber shown to tourists at Auschwitz is a fake--built by the Polish Communists three years after the War. This was the claim which British writer David Irving made in Munich in April 1990: a remark for which the German government fined him DM 30,000 (\$22,000) and banned him from Germany in 1993." Remaining silent about Conan's discussion of the war-time history of crematorium 1, Irving defined the "admission by L'Express that 'everything is fake' about the Auschwitz gas chamber" may be defined as "the fourth great triumph for the world-wide revisionist movement"--the other three were the admissions that "there were never homicidal gas chambers in Dachau," that "the soap story was a propaganda lie," and that not four million, but only between one and 1.5 million people had been murdered in Auschwitz. "Now the Auschwitz gas chamber legend is finally crumbling too. Just as the leading revisionists promised that it would."

As Irving had indicated in the beginning of his article, the issue had practical importance for him because a German court had fined him three years earlier him first DM 10,000 and later DM 30,000 for stating that the gas chambers shown in Auschwitz were fakes. Ignoring the fact that he had made a statement about all the gas chambers, and that Conan's article only concerned the gas chamber in crematorium 1--those of crematoria 2, 3, 4, and 5 were never reconstructed--Irving felt that the time had come to call for a revision of the case. "It is now essential for this revisionist triumph to be consolidated. David Irving has

already written personal letters to the president and Federal Chancellor of Germany, as well as to the two judges who sentenced him after refusing to hear any evidence presented in his defence drawing, their attention to the L'Express article. **Action Report** has launched a world-wide campaign to tell German diplomatic officials and journalists about the article and its findings. Our readers are mailing thousands of postcards and letters drawing attention to the sensational admissions by L'Express."

German officials did not seem to have been impressed. Probably they re-read the statements Irving had made in 1990, and the revisionist distortion of Conan's argument, and realized that Irving had no case.

It is possible that, despite his call to "consolidate this revisionist triumph," Irving also had doubts. Less than two months after he had published his article about the "breakthrough" Irving seemed to begin a retreat from the extremely offensive position he had adopted in 1988. When interviewed in July on Ron Casey's morning radio show in Australia, Irving was prepared to admit that there had been a Holocaust of the Jews through his remark that if Churchill had "taken a different turning in 1940 that the world would have been spared a lot of suffering and would also, incidentally, have been spared what is now called the Holocaust." When Casey pointed out to Irving that he had admitted the Holocaust, Irving tried first some evasive action. "I don't like talking about The Holocaust as though there was only one Holocaust, it's just that I get a bit unhappy about the fact that the Jewish community have tried to make a monopoly of their own suffering." Casey did not give up. "Casey: "What is your estimate of the number of Jews who died at the hands of Hitler's regime in the war years? What number--and I don't like using this word--what number would you concede were killed in concentration camps?" Irving: "I think, like any scientist, I'd have to give you a range of figures and I'd have to say a minimum of one million, which is a monstrous crime, and a maximum of about four million, depending on what you mean by killed. If putting people into a

concentration camp where they die of barbarity and typhus and epidemics is killing then I would say the four million figure because, undoubtedly, huge numbers did die in the camps in the conditions that were very evident at the end of the war.” Casey: “I’m finding this interview more and more surprising as we go along, Mr. Irving.” Irving: “Yes.” Thus, by the middle of 1995, Irving seemed to abandon the extreme negationist position he had taken in the Tenth International Revisionist Conference, and in fact seemed to suggest that four million Jews had been killed in concentration camps, a number that actually exceeds Raul Hilberg’s estimate that up to three million Jews had been killed in the camps. (Of course, the great difference between the two assessments was that Hilberg’s was based on careful study of the evidence, and Irving’s was just another wild guess.) The only point where Irving’s new position still related to the one he had adopted in Toronto in 1988 was the fact that he credited the causes of death to be “barbarity and typhus and epidemics,” carefully avoiding mentioning the gas chambers.

Irving’s remarks generated much anxiety in negationist circles, especially after it had been picked up by the anti-fascist monthly *Searchlight*, and published in their September issue. In response, Faurisson wrote Irving on September 29, 1995. “May I also take the opportunity of this fax to ask you whether it is true or not that, on July 27, on an Australian radio show you said to Ron Casey: “If putting people into a concentration camp where they die of barbarity and typhus and epidemics is killing, then I would say the four million [Jews] figure because, undoubtedly, huge numbers did die in the camps in the conditions that were very evident at the end of the war”? This I found in *Searchlight*, “The International Anti-Fascist Monthly” (September 1995, p. 2). The front page has your photograph and the words “David Irving’s Holocaust Admission”.” And, without probably realizing the irony, Faurisson added plaintively the sentence “If it is not true, did you send them a denial?”

Irving did not respond--claiming later that he had not received the letter. He only engaged Faurisson's complaint when the latter published his letter in the newsletter of the negationist Adelaide Institute. In response, Irving wrote a letter to Faurisson in which suggested the possibility that the interview had been edited "to fake what I actually said," and repeated that while the number of victims could have been as high as four million, the causes of death would have been "air raids, forced marches, starvation, disease, epidemics, old age." And, to fully answer Faurisson's concern, Irving quoted his own diary record of the interview: "July 27, 1995 (Thursday) London 00:25 a.m. 2GB interview (Ron Casey) with me; straightened him out that I am not a "denier", but challenge figures and facts. He was very reasonable, sounded amazed that I am not a "denier" as claimed. What a blessing live interviews are. He asked if I would undertake to debate with leading Jews on television about the Holocaust when I come; I said, "you have my word for it." (But not to bank on the other side accepting)." Faurisson was not impressed. He waited for three days, and then responded curtly: "According to your November 28 letter, it appears that Searchlight said the truth when they reported your "admission" that the figure of Jews who might have died during WW II was about 4 million. They did not "edit" and they did not "fake" *that*. Such an admission or statement is a very serious one. May I ask you what is your evidence for saying that perhaps 4 million Jews died in WW II? Why not 5,100,000 as Hilberg says? Or any other figure? Quite another question. You insist on the fact that you are not a "denier". It happens that I, for one, always insist on the fact that revisionists are not "deniers" since Galileo Galilei did not deny anything but *affirmed*, after researches, that the sun was *not* revolving around the earth; the same for us: we *affirm* that there was *no* German policy of exterminating the Jews, especially with execution gas chambers. But I am afraid that what you mean by not being a "denier" is that Faurisson and Co. are "deniers" whereas you are definitely not a "denier". Am I wrong?"

He was not. Irving had begun to shift ground to a new position which offered a more ambiguous and at times even apparent equivocatory stance on the issue of the death camps. Instead of the blatant depreciatory declarations of the early 1990s he now preferred to address the issue by the more cunning and in a fundamental sense disingenuous means of innuendo and insinuation, whilst at the same time putting some distance between himself and Faurisson. The gas chamber issue, which Irving had so enthusiastically embraced in 1988, had proved a hot potato. Unbendable as ever, Faurisson was very disappointed, and was prepared to share his feelings with the world. On July 7, 1996, he sent a letter to the Adelaide Institute, which published it as their lead-article in August. The gist of Faurisson's argument was simple: Irving was a spineless opportunist. "Irving is good at historical research in the matter of World War II, but, like thousands of other historians, he had not even suspected the essential: the "Holocaust" which--like it or not--has become the central feature of that war, was nothing but a hoax! (Let's say, in passing, that I agree with Arthur R. Butz that the proper word here is not "lie" or "myth" but "hoax".) The big problem for Irving is that most of his work on the Third Reich rests on the theory that there was a "Holocaust" (defined as the planned extermination of the Jews especially with execution gas chambers), but Hitler ignored it! In 1983-4, I warned Irving that this resembled too much the story of the "half-pregnant woman". I developed my arguments in a long article entitled "A Challenge to David Irving", most of which appeared in *The Journal of Historical Review* (Winter 1984, pp.289-305). Unfortunately, Willis Carto, without warning me, had cut some parts of my text because he wanted to "spare D. Irving". After my protest, he published "Dr. Faurisson's Comments" (Spring 1985, p. 8 and...122) but the sorry fact is that my article was still partly cut. Perhaps with the total text, Irving would have better understood my warnings. In April 1988, benefiting from the enormous work I had done for years and under the worst circumstances for my family and myself, and benefiting also from the fact I had won F. Leuchter to both E. Zündel's and

my revisionist views, I saw Irving suddenly jump, as I said, onto the revisionist band-wagon in Toronto. He declared the *Leuchter Report* to be “shattering”. His face was shining with optimism. The next day, on the witness stand in that city’s Zündel trial, he began to have serious difficulties in answering the prosecutor’s questions for whom it was child’s play to quote what Irving himself had written in his books about the so-called planned extermination of the Jews which he had believed up to that time. We needed Irving and his prestige then. I, for one, did my best to support him against the criticism of several revisionists. In March 1991, at the Leuchter Congress in Munich, I felt that something was wrong with Irving. He was afraid of being arrested. I remember telling him that we should calmly consider it “as normal” to be sent to jail, to be seriously wounded, to lose all of our status or money, and even, to be killed. I also told him, “You should know that a real revisionist must be ready for one lot of bad news each day, and one humiliation each week.” He did not say a word. Some time later, in Los Angeles, seeing that he was more and more worried, and especially about money and publicity matters, I repeated, “You should know ...” And explained to him why it could not be otherwise and, consequently, why we had to stick to our guns and appear as remaining steadfast in adversity. He kept silent. I could also add something about my stay at his house in London, and about the conference he organised for Leuchter and me (Leuchter, together with his wife, was arrested and sent back to Boston), but this will wait for another day. In recent years I have watched Irving become more and more upset, and trying to distance himself from the revisionists. He began by saying strange things about German atrocities, about Eichmann, about Goebbels, about the different figures of Jewish deaths--now he has opted for four million, but, as I see it, in Peter Ellingsen’s article, it could have been “some 3 million”! We are, in this way, getting back to the “half pregnant woman”! Nearly every man or woman, especially when he/she is getting to their 60s, knows or has known personal dramas. That, tragically, is Irving’s case. The question is how to resist. I have no answer. But when

it comes to problems involving other people, I wonder if the solution is not simply to be clear. Clarity is what people expect from us. Thanks to the efforts of real revisionists in propagating true, total and clear revisionism, especially through the Internet, I believe that perhaps some governments (but probably not the German or the Austrian ones) will realize that to forbid revisionism or revisionists in their country no longer makes sense. I hope the day will come soon enough for Irving so that he will again be permitted to access archives in those countries and to make anew a good living from his books. If he stops changing and shifting, if he decides to repeat clearly what he first said about the “shattering” *Leuchter Report* and the “sinking battleship, Auschwitz”, without desperately trying to regain the favour of the “Establishment”, he will be respected and feared by everybody, including his worst enemies: It is the best tactic.” Faurisson’s comments did not cause a total break. The two men remained in correspondence, and on January 29, 1997, Irving sent Faurisson a letter wishing him a happy New Year, assuring Faurisson that “you have few greater admirers of your courage than me,” describing the action against Penguin and Lipstadt, and his continued enjoyment in the revisionist battle. “Apart from the occasional sniping from you, Robert, the fight is very rewarding, in the spiritual sense: an intellectual crusade against powerful, wealthy, and evil forces trying to crush Real History.” The letter accompanied a personal gift. “I am happy to enclose my latest book on Nuremberg--I would very much have liked to use a colour photograph of Höss, but it appears that you are holding these close to your chest!--but you may be particularly interested in page 246; I am not *all* that bad!” For the record, page 246 concludes the chapter on “The Final Solution.” It follows the description of Höss’s execution in April 1947. “Höss had attempted to smuggle out of Nuremberg prison a letter to his wife in which he apologised to her and his family for “confessing” to the atrocities in Auschwitz; he claimed that he had been tortured into making spurious admissions. Seized by prison officers and never delivered, the letter is still in private hands in the United States; the owner

offered it in 1996 to Ben Swearingen, one of the country's foremost autograph experts. He refused to touch it, fearing that it was "political dynamite." Irving failed to reveal his source for this remarkable allegation. Like so many of his statements, it can only be taken seriously when he will be able to provide evidence for the existence of the letter. Until now, he has not done so. Whatever may be the case, Faurisson did not seem very impressed with either the book, or the "political dynamite" contained in page 246. He politely thanked Irving for the book, but he never commented on its content--which then remains my own task.

As we have seen, Zündel had been one Irving's supporters when he had decided to write a definitive revisionist account of the Nuremberg Trials. Zündel believed that, in discrediting the allied judges and prosecutors and the proceedings, the book would also discredit the evidence presented, levelling so to speak the playing field between "revisionists" and "exterminationists." Irving's *Nuremberg: The Last Battle* (1996) became indeed a highly partisan description of the trial. Remarkably enough, Irving went further than Zündel had originally suggested: he did not limit himself to the task of discrediting the trial as such, but even went as far to include a whole chapter on the way the alleged Holocaust of the Jews figured in the proceedings.

This chapter is one of the most remarkable examples of an academic smokescreen I have ever encountered. From the very outset, Irving tried to sow doubt and generate confusion, manipulating the evidence to the point of falsification. Ignoring a whole literature on the subject of the systematic and planned Nazi extermination of Jews, gypsies, and others, Irving flatly stated that "[t]he whole of the Nazi drive to liquidate their enemies had proceeded in such a ramshackle, haphazard, and disorganized manner that it is difficult even now to state with certainty precisely what happened and what did not." It may be true that there is still work to be done, but the Holocaust is probably one of the most researched aspects of modern history, and the level of scholarship has been, in general, excellent.

Throughout the chapter, which claims to present an account of the way the Holocaust figured in the Nuremberg proceedings, Irving is engaged in misconstruction and misrepresentation. At no point does his account meet McCullagh's standard of fairness. Twisting his sources, remaining silent about important testimonies given at Nuremberg, and unwilling to maintain one level of generality and one degree of detail, his only interest seems to have been produce an extremely biased, partisan vindication of the accused. Like a lawyer for the defendants before the International Military Tribunal, Irving sees it as his major task not to create a fair representation of the trial, but to apply the old technique of "poisoning the wells" by discrediting the witnesses who testified about the death camps.

In fact, he had already begun this task earlier on, when he wrote about the preparations for the trial. "Naturally there were many among the prosecution team who continued, or wanted, to believe the more far-fetched atrocity legends. One American lawyer on Kempner's team wrote home at this time from Nuremberg: "Imagine making dentists pull out all the gold dental work from the teeth of victims before they were killed and while still conscious! We have pictures of a soap factory where they hit victims, mostly Poles, with a blunt instrument, and the heads are cut off and boiled in one vat and the bodies in other vats. Three hundred heads were found in one vat at the time of discovery." All of this was fiction. So was much else that was sworn at Nuremberg. The Polish member of the United Nations War Crimes Commission had sworn an affidavit that human beings had been killed by steam in the Treblinka and Belzec extermination camps. Three members of Jackson's own staff had provided a sworn affidavit testifying to the existence of lethal gas chambers at Dachau concentration camp--James B. Donovan, Lieutenant-Colonel Calvin A. Behle, of the judge-advocate general's department, and Lieutenant Hugh Daly, of the 32nd U.S. Rainbow Division. The Czech prisoner Dr. Franz Blaha had sworn to the same chamber's existence. (The German government has long

since certified that no lethal gas chamber was ever operated at Dachau.” The suggestion is clear: no eye-witness testimony about the Holocaust could be trusted.

Indeed, throughout his description of the evidence of the Holocaust presented in Nuremberg, Irving chose to ignore the (for the defendants) embarrassing bulk of each witness’ testimony. Irving chose to mention only the pieces of evidence which, for some reason or another, provides him with an occasion to sow doubt and confusion. His first victim was Dr. Wilhelm Höttl, who had worked in the Gestapo, and who had had in his home in Budapest in 1944 a conversation with Eichmann. As it had become clear that the Germans were going to lose the war, and Eichmann had told Höttl that he was doomed as he had been instrumental in the killing of millions of Jews. When Höttl had asked him if he could provide a more precise figure, Eichmann responded that Himmler had earlier asked him the same, and that he had drawn up a report for him. Eichmann had determined that four million had died in the camps, while another two million had been killed by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other mobile units. Irving dismissed Höttl’s testimony. “It is necessary to see Höttl’s testimony in the light of his attempt to secure an early release from American confinement. In this he was remarkably successful, despite his background in the murkier and more murderous reaches of the S.S, operations in the Balkans.” Irving concluded with the statement that Höttl was successful in getting released, and felt no need to offer any other comment. The suggestion that remains is, of course, that Höttl said whatever he said in order to please his captors.

Irving did not mention that, fifteen years later, on June 21, 1961, and a free man, Höttl repeated his account of that meeting with Eichmann under oath. Examined as a witness for the Eichmann trial in the Court of Instance at Bad Aussee, Austria, Höttl made the following statement: “I was alone in the room with Eichmann and, as far as I know, there was no one from my or Eichmann’s staff around. The conversation on

which I testified in 1945 before the Nuremberg Tribunal developed as follows, as I remember it: Eichmann stood up and said farewell with the following words: "We shall probably never see each other again," or something similar. Then apparently he felt obliged to explain his pessimistic attitude and indicated that he was convinced that, with the German defeat, which was now to be expected, he stood no chance any more. When I asked him why he thought this, Eichmann said that, in view of his role in the programme to exterminate the Jews, he was considered by the Allies to be a top war criminal. When he made this comment, I immediately grasped the opportunity to say that I always wanted to hear reliable information about the extermination programme, and particularly about the number of Jews exterminated. To my surprise Eichmann responded to that, and said something along the following lines (in 1945, when I testified before the Nuremberg court, I obviously remembered the details more clearly than today, seventeen years later. I therefore apologize for any minor deviations): He said that the number of murdered Jews was a very great Reich secret, but with the situation in which he, Eichmann, found himself today, he still could tell me something about it, particularly since I was a historian. Eichmann then told me that, according to his information, some 6,000,000 (six million) Jews had perished until then--4,000,000 (four million) in extermination camps and the remaining 2,000,000 (two million) through shooting by the Operation Units and other causes, such as disease, etc. I presumably reacted in a very shocked fashion to this figure, because Eichmann immediately commented that Himmler believed that the figure of six million Jews killed could not be correct, and that the overall figure must be higher. I do not remember Eichmann making any form of personal statement or excuse. Eichmann also did not say that he felt himself guilty of the deaths of these six million Jews; as I have said, he simply answered my question as to how many Jews had actually been exterminated." If, as Irving suggests,

Höttl lied under oath in Nuremberg in order to obtain a release from captivity, why would he have lied again, in 1961, when he could have changed his story without any penalty whatsoever?

Perhaps more importantly, Irving suppressed the fact that, during his interrogations by the Israeli Police Captain Avner Less, Eichmann did admit to having given an estimate that five million Jews had been killed. Less had asked Eichmann about the way he had kept track of the number of Jews deported, and he had answered that he did not.” “Less: “What figure did he arrive at?” Eichmann: “He covered the whole extermination process in the East. It came roughly--taking account of emigration, and including the figure of natural diminution, as he called it--to 4.5 or 5 million. That figure stuck in my memory. Thus--the report concluded--thus the Jewish problem in Europe was to all intents and purposes solved.” After the report had been completed, Himmler had asked Eichmann to keep him posted with the progress of the Final Solution on a monthly basis. Eichmann was only to send information about the number of Jews killed. Eichmann speculated that Himmler probably thought that the monthly reports had become too long. “Less: “Then your reports had previously contained more?” Eichmann: “Yes, they covered the whole situation, all the difficulties encountered in the various countries. An overall, how should I put it?--comprehensive work report, naturally in appropriate, hmm...Appropriate telegraphic style. But about how many were killed I had no figures. When the statistician was with me, a week or maybe two, in my office, day after day, making his inquiries, he sent telegrams et cetera all over the place...So I believe ... The following may be possible...Yes, now, it’s plain to me, why the letter says “for purposes of camouflage.” Most likely I supplied the statistician with the figures shipped, but not the figures killed.” Less: “Since when had you known Dr. Wilhelm Höttl?” Eichmann: “I met Höttl in Berlin, I don’t remember the circumstances, I believe he, too, was with the SD.” Less: “Was he with the SD the whole time? Was he in Hungary, too?” Eichmann: “I

can't say at the present moment whether Höttl was in Hungary. But if he was, I must have spoken with him there." Less: "Did you tell Höttl that you supervised and organized the deportation of the Jews in Hungary to the death camps?" Eichmann: "Supervise and organize--I would never have told Höttl anything like that." Less: "What would you have told him?" Eichmann: "I'd have told Höttl the truth, because at that time--I think--Höttl had long been a department head in Section VI of Reich Security Headquarters. He knew as much about the business as I did. Section VI was an intelligence outfit. So naturally they knew all about the activities of their--well, of their own organization." Less: "Did you tell Höttl how many Jews had been exterminated?" Eichmann: "My estimation? If he asked me, I may have given him an estimated figure--yes, I may have." " Less proceeded with reading Höttl's full statement, and while Eichmann had problems with some parts of it, he admitted, in the end that "I must have told him the contents of the statistician's report. I must have told him that. I think the comprehensive report ended with a total of five million. That's what I seem to remember." Irving chose not to mention the fact that Eichmann confirmed the substance of Höttl's affidavit.

Irving also misrepresented the testimony of one of Eichmann's aides, Dieter Wisliceny. In his long testimony, given on January 3, 1946 Wisliceny provided substantial and detailed evidence about the deportation of the Slovak, Greek and Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. I will give here some samples of Wisliceny's examination by deputy prosecutor Lieutenant Colonel Smith W. Brookhart. "Lt. Col. Brookhart: "Altogether, how many Jews were collected and deported from Greece?" Wisliceny: "There were over 50,000 Jews. I believe that about 54,000 were evacuated from Saloniki and Macedonia." Q.: "What is the basis for your figure?" A.: "I myself read a comprehensive report from Brunner to Eichmann on completion of the evacuation. Brunner left Saloniki at the end of May 1943. I personally was not in Saloniki from the beginning of April until the end of May, so that the action was carried out by Brun-

ner alone.” Q.: “How many transports were used for shipping Jews from Saloniki?” A.: “From 20 to 25 transport trains.” Q.: “And how many were shipped in each train?” A.: “There were at least 2,000, and in many cases 2,500.” After some further questions about the transports, Brookhart asked Wisliceny about the fate of the Saloniki Jews. “Q.: “What was the destination of these transports of Jews from Greece?” A.: “In every case Auschwitz.” Q.: “And what was the ultimate disposition of the Jews sent to Auschwitz from Greece?” A.: “They were without exception destined for the so-called final solution.” Earlier on in his testimony, Wisliceny had testified that Eichmann had shown him a letter signed by Himmler which stated that “The Führer had ordered the final solution of the Jewish question.” Brookhart had questioned Wisliceny as to the meaning of the term “final solution.” “Q.: “Was any question asked by you as to the meaning of the words “final solution” as used in the order?” A.: “Eichmann went on to explain to me what was meant by this. He said that the planned biological annihilation of the Jewish race in the Eastern territories was disguised by the concept and wording ‘final solution.’ In later discussions on this subject the same words ‘final solution’ appeared over and over again.” Wisliceny also testified that he had participated in the deportation of some 450,000 Jews from Hungary. “Q.: “What became of the Jews to whom you have already referred--approximately 450,000?” A.: “They were, without exception, taken to Auschwitz and brought to the final solution.” Q.: “Do you mean they were killed?” A.: “Yes, with the exception of perhaps 25 to 30 percent who were used for labor purposes. I here refer to a previously mentioned conversation on this matter between Hoess and Eichmann in Budapest.”

Irving suppressed Wisliceny’s examination. Instead he mentioned only one sentence--the last one of the following exchange. “Q.: “In connection with the Jews about who you have personal knowledge, how many were subjected to the final solution, that is, to being killed?” A.: “The exact number is extremely hard for me to determine. I have only

one basis for a possible estimate, that is a conversation between Eichmann and Hoess in Vienna, in which he said that only a very few of those sent from Greece to Auschwitz had been fit for work. Of the Slovakian and Hungarian Jews about 20 to 30 percent had been able to work. It is therefore very hard for me to give a reliable total.” Q.: “In your meetings with the other specialists on the Jewish problem and Eichmann did you gain any knowledge or information as to the total number of Jews killed under this program?” A: “Eichmann personally always talked about at least 4 million Jews. Sometimes he even mentioned 5 million. According to my own estimate I should say that at least 4 million must have been destined for the so-called final solution. How many of those actually survived, I am not in a position to say.” Q.: “When did you last see Eichmann?” A.: “I saw Eichmann towards the end of February 1945 in Berlin. At that time he said that if the war were lost he would commit suicide.” Q.: “Did he say anything at that time as to the number of Jews that had been killed?” A.: “Yes, he expressed this in a particularly cynical manner. He said he would leap laughing into the grave because the feeling that he had 5 million people on his conscience would be for him a source of extraordinary satisfaction.”

Irving quickly engaged in damage control, quoting Eichmann’s initial response to Wisliceny’s remark--“*Blödsinn* (rubbish)”--and Eichmann’s subsequent admission that he probably had something of the sort, but that he had spoken of “enemies of the Reich” and not of “Jews.” Let us look at Eichmann’s testimony given during his interrogation by Avner Less. Twice he referred to his exchange with Wisliceny, in which he had mentioned the figure of five million Jews. The first occasion for his remark was a question about his own relation to Auschwitz. Eichmann did acknowledge that Auschwitz was a major killing center, and that all those sent there for “Special Treatment” were murdered, yet that his own responsibility only involved transport. “Less: “How many Jews were killed and gassed at Auschwitz?” Eichmann: “Herr Hauptmann, I’ve read, and Höss is supposed to have said, that he killed four million

Jews. Up to now, I've thought that figure exaggerated. But if we're going to talk about figures, whether it's one million or four million or a hundred amount to the same thing in principle. In these last fifteen years, I've done some figuring myself. At the end of the war, I spoke to my officers of five million. I saw that figure as a kind of cloud in my mind's eye. In that brief--hmmm, how shall I put it?--apocalyptic speech, or whatever you may choose to call it, I wasn't looking for exact figures. I don't remember whether the Jewish Year Book published at that time gave the figure of ten million Jews for Europe, or whether that figure covered the German-occupied Russian territories. In any case, I tried to work out a basis to figure on. I've read that a few months after the war the Allies reckoned that 2.4 million Jew were still in existence. I read that somewhere. Emigration from Austria, Germany, the U.S.S.R.--I said to myself, let' say that 1.2 million Jews emigrated. Then comes natural diminution. I am no statistician. I just figured that out for myself. So on that basis I said to myself: Yes, one way or another, about six million Jews must have been killed. Whether I was right or not, I don't know, Herr Hauptmann."

Later in the interrogations Less confronted Eichmann directly with Wisliceny's recollection. "Less: "Wisliceny was asked: 'How many Jews, concerning whose fate you personally are informed, were subjected to the final solution, that is, killed?' He replied: 'I am very badly placed to give you an exact figure. All I have to go by is a conversation between Eichmann and Höss in Vienna, in which he said that only a very few of the Jews who came to Auschwitz from Greece had been fit for labor. Twenty-five to thirty percent of the Jews from Slovakia and Hungary had been fit for labor. It is very hard for me to give a total. Eichmann himself always spoke of at least four million Jews; sometimes he went as high as five million. In my personal estimate, there must have been at least four million Jews.' Have you any comment?" Eichmann: "I...I believe I did say that...In substance, Herr Hauptmann." Less: "And it checks with what you said at an earlier date." Eichmann:

“Approximately. That must have been in February 1945; what I said in the presence of several of my subordinate officers. It must be true in the main. Except that I absolutely can’t remember that conversation with Höss in Hungary or Vienna, or the percentages.” Less: “Wisliceny was further asked whether at the time you had said anything more about the number of Jews killed. He answered: ‘Eichmann put it in a particularly cynical way. He said that the knowledge of having five million Jews on his conscience gave him such extraordinary satisfaction that he would jump into his grave laughing.’ Eichmann: ‘That is...theater, theater! That is...I can’t think of anything else to call it but theater. All that is...it’s...it’s...This business here, Herr Hauptmann...this, this...this last passage...about suicide and so on...and so on...That was my...my, my, my last speech, my last speech to my men, as I’ve already told you. I may not have got the wording exactly right, but the meaning and substance, yes...exactly. Because that was my...my...Summation in the...in the...how shall I put it...in the apocalyptic situation...which, which for a few days threw me into a state of shock...not nervous shock, but...moral shock: the Reich is kaput, it’s all been a waste, it’s all been for nothing, the whole war has been for nothing. That’s what I said, that’s what I told you. But this is theater! I never said it, never said it, Herr Hauptmann. The grave, yes, that’s the only part that’s right. The grave is right, I did say that...’ Less: ‘Not in this context?’ Eichmann: ‘...but not in this context. No, it wasn’t cynical at all. On the contrary. I was...I was in a state of mind that left no room at all for cynicism; I felt...all I felt was deep sorrow, because of the millions of victims on our side...And the millions in the enemy camp...and there again I mentioned the roughly five million...that’s right, and I said it was...all for nothing...And then I...I said only one thing: For five years they had to batter the Reich. That was the one thing I said. But cynicism? Not a trace!’ Less: ‘On the one hand, when Wisliceny says here: ‘The knowledge of having five million Jews on his conscience gave him such extraordinary satisfaction that...’ Eichmann: ‘No, no, Herr Hauptmann, that I must reject, that I must really reject. That sen-

tence is not at all my style. And besides, it wouldn't have been true. My men would have taken me for a megalomaniac, because they knew I hadn't killed five million Jews. Wisliceny knew as well as I that killing wasn't in our department." Less: "In all your statements you keep hiding behind 'That wasn't in my province, that wasn't my department, those were the orders I was given, the management of the German railways decided that,' and so on." Eichmann: "But you see, Herr Hauptmann, I have to say these things, because as head of Bureau IV B 4 I really wasn't responsible for everything, only for a rather narrowly circumscribed field. And that narrowly circumscribed field can be checked at any time. I wasn't free to do as I pleased." Reading the transcript, it is clear that Eichmann did admit twice of having mentioned a figure of four, even five million Jews. The particular element in Wisliceny's testimony that he found objectionable was the fact that he would have shown glee about that number of victims, or that he would have shown pride in having had a central role in the Final Solution. It is important to remember here that also Höttl remembered that, when Eichmann had mentioned the figure of six million murdered Jews, he was careful to state that he did not feel personal responsibility for this result. In the end Eichmann did state, in his interrogation, that: "Yes, I did mention that five million Jews were killed, but I did not joke about it in front of my subordinates, and furthermore I had no responsibility for the actual killings, since I merely ran the transportation department." What is important is that Eichmann did confirm the one central issue in Wisliceny's recollection of that last meeting: the fact that, in his own estimate four to five million Jews had been killed.

Irving's presentation of the testimony given on January 28, 1946 by Marie-Claude Vaillant Couturier, a gentile inmate of the women's camp in Birkenau, seems at first sight to do a little more justice to the evidence. Irving begins with paraphrasing in a few lines some of the elements of her statement about the impossible conditions of life in Birkenau. Yet, he never quotes her testimony directly. Perversely, he

chooses to present her testimony through the tendentious perspective of Judge Francis Biddle's notes--a gross violation of the principle that any historical account that claims to offer a fair representation of the past should offer a constant level of generality and a constant degree of detail. The result is a rather surrealistic interpretation of conditions in Birkenau. This is how Irving presents the evidence. "She described vividly how they had been forced to stand for a roll call throughout one freezing day in February, and then struck to make them run. "Those who could not were taken to Block 25, the ante-room of the gas chamber, where they were killed. Corpses in the courtyard," noted Biddle, "a hand or head would now and then stir in the corpses, seeking to free itself." The moaning, in all languages, continued from morning to night: "Water! Water!" They "sang Marseillaise when the gas truck [*sic*] started to move." Reading Irving's transcript of Biddle's notes, one starts indeed to doubt the veracity of Vaillant-Couturier's testimony: gas trucks, in which the Germans loaded Jews to be gassed by exhaust fumes, were never used in Auschwitz. Hence Irving happily interjects his *sic*! in Biddle's account. Yet let us look at the official transcript of Vaillant-Couturier's testimony. It concerns the after-effects of a particularly violent selection that took place on February 5, 1943, when the women were sent at 3.30 A.M. into the fields, and forced to run back to the barracks. Those who could not run were brought to Block 25, the "waiting block" for the gas chamber. "When all the internees were back in the camp, a party to which I belonged was organised to go and pick the bodies of the dead which were scattered over the plain as on a battlefield. We carried to the yard of Block 25 the dead and the dying without distinction, and they remained there stacked up in a pile. This Block 25, which was the anteroom of the gas chamber, if one may express it so, is well known to me because at that time we had been transferred to Block 26 and our windows opened on the yard of Block 25. One saw stacks of corpses piled up in the courtyard, and from time to time a hand or a head would stir among the bodies, trying to free itself. It was a dying woman attempting to get free and live. The rate of

mortality in that block was even more terrible than elsewhere because, having been condemned to death, they received food or drink only if there was something left in the cans in the kitchen; which means that very often they went for several days without a drop of water. One of our companions, Annette Époux, a fine young woman of 30, passing the block one day, was overcome with pity for those women who moaned from morning till night in all languages, "Drink, Drink. Water!" She came back to our block to get a little herbal tea, but as she was passing it through the bars of the window she was seen by the Aufseherin, who took her by the neck and threw her into Block 25. All my life I will remember Annette Époux. Two days later I saw her on the truck which was taking the internees to the gas chamber. She had her arms around another French woman, old Line Porcher, and when the truck started moving she cried, "Think of my little boy, if you ever get back to France." Then they started singing "The Marseillaise." Reading the transcript, the compressed surrealism of Biddle's account dissolves to reveal a clear narrative that allows us to understand cause and effect. It also shows that Biddle wrongly interpreted the testimony when he understood the truck or lorry taking the women from Block 25 to the gas chambers as a gas truck --a mistake Irving was all too happy to exploit for his own purposes.

Let's continue with Irving's account. "As the judges jotted this all down their minds became too numbed by the horror of it all to ask pertinent questions or to analyse: "The sick would often die of exposure in front of the hospital." (Why was a hospital needed at an "extermination camp"? Neither Biddle nor his colleagues made any comment.) "The women often preferred to die at work." Irving uses here Biddle's notes to insinuate that the testimony should have been examined more closely because there is a logical inconsistency between the presence of a hospital--the word Vaillant-Couturier used was "*Revier*," which means more properly sick--ward, and not hospital--and the function of Birkenau as an extermination camp. He implies that either Birkenau

had a hospital, or it was an extermination camp, but it could not be an extermination camp with a hospital, and as Vaillant-Couturier testified that there was a hospital, Birkenau could not have been an extermination camp. As we have seen in the first part of this report, Irving falls here in the fallacy of composition, in assuming that conditions all over Birkenau were the same, and in the fallacy of bifurcation, in which he sets up a contrast between “hospital” (healing) and “extermination camp” (killing), ignoring the middle ground in which part of an extermination camp was a slave labour pool where sick-wards were useful within the context of keeping those inmates suffering from relatively minor ailments in proper working condition.

Irving continues to present the evidence from the perspective of Judge Biddle. Irving presents Biddle’s notes on Vaillant-Couturier’s testimony on the gassings in a paragraph that begins with the words “Some of her story was evidently based on hearsay,” and immediately after having noted that “[o]nce, finally articulating his feelings about this woman’s testimony, Biddle noted his own scepticism, and wrote: ‘This I doubt,’ but he continued to write down what the witness told the court.” Having cleverly insinuated (by the use of the adverb “finally” and the conjunction “but”) that Biddle did not trust any of the following testimony, Irving proceeds to give Biddle’s account of what Vaillant-Couturier had to say about the selections. “Selected, out of convoys of Jewish women, the old and sick and children, who were gassed at once, not even taken to the camp. Orchestra with internee personnel played cheerful tunes like the “Merry Widow” when they arrived to be gassed, so they would not know their fate. Went to red brick building, undressed, given towel, gassed. Died in agony. Gold teeth extracted from ashes of burned bodies. One night there was not enough gas and the children were hurled alive into the furnaces.” Again, in the compressed form of Biddle’s notes, Vaillant-Couturier’s account becomes surreal, and unbelievable. Yet when reading the transcript of the statement as a whole; with all its pertinent details, the logic is restored, and

a profound sense of veracity achieved. “[Deputy Prosecutor Charles] Dubost: “What do you know about the convoy of Jews which arrived from Romainville about the same time as yourself?” Vaillant-Couturier: “When we left Romainville the Jewesses who were there at the same time as ourselves were left behind. They were sent to Drancy and subsequently arrived at Auschwitz, where we found them again 3 weeks later, 3 weeks after our arrival. Of the original 3,000 only 125 actually came to the camp; the others were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Of these 125 not one was left alive at the end of 1 month. The transports operated as follows: When we first arrived, whenever a convoy of Jews came, a selection was made; first the old men and women, then the mothers and the children were put into the trucks together with the sick or those whose constitution appeared to be delicate. They took in only the young women and girls as well as the young men who were sent to the men’s camp. Generally speaking, of a convoy of about 1,000 to 1,500, seldom more than 250--and this figure really was the maximum--actually reached the camp. The rest were immediately sent to the gas chamber. At this selection also, they picked out women in good health between the ages of 20 and 30, who were sent to the experimental block; and young girls and slightly older women, or those who had not been selected for that purpose, were sent to the camp where, like ourselves, they were tattooed and shaved. There was also, in the spring of 1944, a special block for twins. It was during the time when large convoys of Hungarian Jews--about 700,000--arrived. Dr. Mengele, who was carrying out the experiments, kept back from each convoy twin children and twins in general, regardless of their age, so long as both were present. So we had both babies and adults on the floor at that block. Apart from blood tests and measuring I do not know what was done to them.” Q.: “Were you an eye witness of the selections on the arrival of the convoys?” A.: “Yes, because when we worked at the sewing block in 1944, the block where we lived directly faced the stopping place of the trains. The system had been improved. Instead of making the selection at the place where they arrived, a side line now

took the train practically right up to the gas chamber; and the stopping place, about 100 meters from the gas chamber, was right opposite our block though, of course, separated from us by two rows of barbed wire. Consequently, we saw the unsealing of the cars and the soldiers letting men, women, and children out of them. We then witnessed heart-rending scenes; old couples forced to part from each other, mothers made to abandon their young daughters, since the latter were sent to the camp, whereas mothers and children were sent to the gas chambers. All these people were unaware of the fate awaiting them. They were merely upset at being separated, but they did not know that they were going to their death. To render their welcome more pleasant at this time--June-July 1944--an orchestra composed of internees, all young and pretty girls dressed in little white blouses and navy blue skirts, played during the selection, at the arrival of the trains, gay tunes such as "The Merry Widow," the "Barcarolle" from "The Tales of Hoffman," and so forth. They were then informed that this was a labor camp and since they were not brought into the camp they saw only the small platform surrounded by flowering plants. Naturally, they could not realize what was in store for them. Those selected for the gas chamber, that is, the old people, mothers, and children, were escorted to a red-brick building." Q.: "These were not given an identification number?" A.: "No." Q.: "They were not tattooed?" A.: "No. They were not even counted." Q.: "You were tattooed?" A.: "Yes, look. [*The witness showed her arm.*] They were taken to a red brick building, which bore the letters 'Baden,' that is to say 'Baths.' There, to begin with, they were made to undress and given a towel before they went into the so-called shower room. Later on, at the time of the large convoys from Hungary, they had no more time left to play-act or pretend; they were brutally undressed, and I know these details as I knew a little Jewess from France who lived with her family at the 'Republique' district." Q.: "In Paris?" A.: "In Paris. She was called 'little Marie' and was the only one, the sole survivor of a family of nine. Her mother and her seven brothers and sisters had been gassed on arrival. When I met her she was employed to

undress the babies before they were taken into the gas chamber. Once the people were undressed they took them into a room which was somewhat like a shower room, and gas capsules were thrown through an opening in the ceiling. An SS man would watch the effect produced through a porthole. At the end of 5 or 7 minutes, when the gas had completed its work, he gave the signal to open the doors; and men with gas masks --they were too interneers--went into the room and removed the corpses. They told us that the interneers must have suffered before dying, because they were closely clinging to one another and it was very difficult to separate them. After that a special squad would come to pull out gold teeth and dentures; and again, when the bodies had been reduced to ashes, they would sift them in an attempt to recover the gold....”

Irving ends his discussion of Biddle’s understanding of Vaillant-Couturier’s testimony as follows: “Cross-examined, this female witness admitted “curtly (in German!)” as Biddle noted with surprise, that she had been arrested for resistance activity, as a communist. Streicher’s defence attorney Marx asked her: “How do you explain you came through so well?” Says she’s been out a year.” Judge Biddle jotted down, recording her answer. “Most of her statements based on personal experience,” noted Biddle in quotation mark--which implied that he assessed that quite a lot were not.” Let us look again at the official transcript. First Irving’s remark about the reasons for Vaillant-Couturier’s arrest. “Dr. Marx: “For what reason were you arrested?” Mme. Vaillant-Couturier: “Resistance. I belonged to the resistance movement.” Neither Vaillant-Couturier, nor Streicher’s lawyer Dr. Hanns Marx, nor anyone else mentioned the word communist during her testimony. Marx tried to undermine her credibility as an witness by suggesting, in asking the loaded question why she had been able to survive Auschwitz as well as she did, that she had been a privileged inmate functionary. Irving quotes the insinuating question, but does not give the utterly convincing rebuttal, except through once more Biddle’s per-

spective. “Dr. Marx: “How do you explain that you yourself came through these experiences so well and are now in such a good state of health?” Mme. Vaillant-Couturier: “First of all, I was liberated a year ago; and in a year one has time to recover. Secondly, I was 10 months in quarantine for typhus and I had the great luck not to die of exanthematic typhus, although I had it and was ill for 3 1/2 months. Also, in the last months at Ravensbrück, as I knew German, I worked on the Revier roll call, which explains why I did not have to work quite so hard or to suffer from the inclemencies of the weather. On the other hand, out of 230 of us only 49 from my convoy returned alive; and we were only 52 at the end of 4 months. I had the great fortune to return.” Dr. Marx: “Yes. Does your statement contain what you yourself observed or is it concerned with information from other sources as well?” Mme. Vaillant-Couturier: “Whenever such was the case I mentioned it in my declaration. I have never quoted anything which has not previously been verified at the sources and by several persons, but the major part of my evidence is based on personal experience.” All in all, Irving shows himself to be an unscrupulous falsifier of evidence. Largely suppressing and otherwise skewing genuine evidence given under oath in court, he chooses to manipulate a private diary until he has achieved an utter misrepresentation of the event.

After having finished with Vaillant-Couturier, Irving continues to apply his method of discrediting prosecution witnesses in his description of the testimony of another Auschwitz inmate, Dr. Severina Shmaglevskaya. “On February 27 Biddle paraphrased in his notebooks the evidence of a Polish woman who had been at Auschwitz. “Selection for death made by doctors and S.S.,” recorded Biddle. “Youngest and strongest entered camp. Women with small children were sent to the crematory where the children were separated and taken separately into the gas chamber. In 1940 it was ordered that the children should be thrown living into the furnace without being first gassed.” (Neither the Auschwitz camp nor its Birkenau offshoot existed in 1940.) “You

could often hear the cries. Whether this was to save gas or because there was no space in the gas chamber is hard to say....Often they worked in the gas chamber 'from dawn to dusk.'" So far Judge Biddle's notes. Irving uses them to sow, once again, doubt about the witness, who would have claimed that there was a 1940 order to burn children alive.

But what if Biddle's notes were wrong? Let's look at the official transcript of Soviet deputy prosecutor L.N. Smirnov's examination of Dr. Severina Shmaglevskaya. "Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: "Tell me, Witness, did you yourself see the children being taken to gas chambers?" Shmaglevskaya: "I worked very close to the railway which led to the crematory. Sometimes in the morning I passed near the building the Germans used as a latrine, and from there I could secretly watch the transport. I saw many children among the Jews brought to the concentration camp. Sometimes a family had several children. The Tribunal is probably aware of the fact that in front of the crematory they were all sorted out." Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: "Selection was made by the doctors?" Shmaglevskaya: "Not always by doctors: sometimes by SS men." Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: "And doctors with them?" Shmaglevskaya: "Yes, sometimes, by doctors too. During such a sorting, the youngest and healthiest Jewish women in very small numbers entered the camp. Women carrying children in their arms or in carriages, or those who had larger children, were sent into the crematory with their children. The children were separated from their parents in front of the crematory and were led separately into gas chambers. At that time, when the greatest number of Jews were exterminated in the gas chambers, an order was issued that the children were to be thrown into the crematory ovens or the crematory ditches without previous asphyxiation with gas." Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: ""How should we understand that? Were they thrown into the ovens alive or were they killed by other means before they were burned?" Shmaglevskaya: "The children were thrown in alive. Their cries could be heard all over the camp. It is hard

to say how many they were.” Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: “Nevertheless, there was some reason why this was done. Was it because the gas chambers were overworked?” Shmaglevskaya: “It is very difficult to answer this question. We don’t know whether they wanted to economize on the gas or whether there was no room in the gas chambers. I should also add that it is impossible to determine the number of these children--like that of the Jews--because they were driven directly to the crematory, were not registered, were not tattooed, and very often were not even counted. We, the internees, often tried to ascertain the number of people who perished in gas chambers; but our estimates of the number of children executed could only be based on the number of children’s prams which were brought to the storerooms. Sometimes there were hundreds of these carriages, but sometimes they sent thousands.” Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: “In one day?” Shmaglevskaya: “Not always the same. There were days when the gas chambers worked from early morning until late at night.” It is clear that Biddle wrongly noted down that the decision to burn the children alive had been taken in 1940. The official transcript records that Shmaglevskaya said that the decision was taken “at that time, when the greatest number of Jews were exterminated in the gas chambers.” That time, is commonly known, was the late spring of 1944, during the height of the Hungarian action.

It is clear that, as a historical account of the way evidence of the Holocaust was presented in Nuremberg, Irving’s chapter “Final Solution” is quite worthless at best, and completely distorted at worst. To make matters worse, he completely suppresses in his account the proceedings of the afternoon session of February 27, 1946, when Samuel Rajzman testified. Rajzman was a survivor from the Treblinka extermination camp, where he was interned from August 1942 to August 1943. His testimony about the operation of Treblinka as an extermination camp occupies five pages in the official transcript. I will quote just one, very small part of it. “Mr. Counsellor Smirnov: “I beg you to describe

this camp to the Tribunal.” Rajzman: “Transports arrived there every day; their number depended on the number of trains arriving; sometimes three, four, or five trains filled exclusively with Jews--from Czechoslovakia, Germany, Greece, and Poland. Immediately after their arrival, the people had to leave the trains in 5 minutes and line up on the platform. All those who were driven from the cars were divided into groups--men, children, and women, all separate. They were all forced to strip immediately, and this procedure continued under the lashes of the Germans guards’ whips. Workers who were employed in this operation immediately picked up all the clothes and carried them away to the barracks. Then the people were obliged to walk naked through the street to the gas chambers.” Q.: “I would like you to tell the Tribunal what the Germans called the street to the gas chambers.” A.: “It was called Himmelfahrt Street.” At the end of Rajzman’s testimony there was general silence. Even Hanns Marx did not find the courage to challenge the witness. Yet the silence in the court after the testimony does not mean that Irving represents the proceedings justly by burying the evidence about Treblinka in silence.

We have now dealt with the first half of Irving’s chapter “Final Solution.” It is clear that it does not stand up to close and critical scrutiny. The second half is not much better. It has only one single purpose: to scrupulously destroy the credibility of the testimony given by Auschwitz Kommandant Rudolf Höss. In hiding since the end of the war, the British had arrested him on March 11, 1946. By his own account the British treated Höss roughly. During his later trial in Poland, Höss recalled these interrogations as follows. “When I was interrogated for the first time in the British Zone, 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 a total of three million. But I was relying on the fact that I could not mention any other number--I always said this--namely that I was unable to mention any other than the one which I have now arrived at, and that is two and a half." Irving makes a lot about the fact that Höss first confession was given in a situation of duress. "This confession, which subsequently came to be submitted to the Nuremberg tribunal as document NO-1210, had taken three days of torture, as his captor, Sergeant Bernard Clarke himself would describe, to obtain. It contained numerous perhaps deliberate errors, for instance the identification by Höss of an extermination camp at "Wolzek near Lublin," in addition to those at "Belzek" and "Tublinka," all spelt thus. Wolzek has never existed, and the two other camps, Belzec and Treblinka, were not in existence at the time that Höss testified to." Irving is right in that Höss's first confession was obtained when the witness was denied sleep for three days, but he does not mention that while this confession was submitted to the Tribunal, it was never used in court. Instead, the Tribunal heard on April 15, 1946 extracts from the affidavit which he signed on April 5, 1946, after a few days of in this case civilised interrogation in the witness wing of the Nuremberg prison. The interrogation took place with the help of an interpreter. During this interrogation Höss was asked if he could confirm that Jews started to arrive in great numbers in 1942. Höss did, and then gave a detailed list of the numbers: 250,000 from Poland, 65,000 from Greece, 100,000 from Germany, 90,000 from Holland, 110,000 from France, 90,000 from Slovakia, 20,000 from Belgium and 400,000 from Hungary. The conversation continued as follows: "Q.: "Now you just told us that you had facilities for 130,000. If you add all those figures they amount to a much greater number than 130,000. How could you accommodate all those people?" A.: "They were not supposed to be employed in work there, but they were supposed to be exterminated."

On 5 April Höss was given an English language version of the affidavit, which he read through. A few days later he received the German version, which he corrected and ultimately signed. In the affidavit, which was to be partially read in court on April 15, 1946, Höss admitted that he was appointed commandant of Auschwitz on May 1, 1940. "I commanded Auschwitz until 1 December, 1943, and estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total dead of about 3,000,000.... 4. Mass executions by gassing commenced during the summer 1941 and continued until fall 1944. I personally supervised executions at Auschwitz until the first of december 1943 and know by reason of my continued duties in the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps WVHA that these mass executions continued as stated above.... 6. The "final solution" of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941. At that time there were already in the general government three other extermination camps; BELZEK, TREBLINKA and WOLZEK. These camps were under the Einsatzkommando of the Security Police and SD. I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their exterminations. The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was principally concerned with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. He used monoxide gas and I did not think his method were very efficient. So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz I, I used Cyclon B, which was crystallized Prussic Acid we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one-half hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses. 7. Another improvement we made over Treblinka

was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each. The way we selected our victims was as follows: we had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transport of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the Camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavoured to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under the clothes but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.” On Monday, 15 April Höss was called to the witness stand. There he confirmed, during crossexamination by American prosecutor Colonel John Harlan Amen, that the affidavit was true. “Col. Amen: “I ask that the witness be shown Document 3868-PS, which will become Exhibit USA-819.” [*The document was submitted to the witness.*] Q.: “You signed that affidavit voluntarily, Witness?” Höss: “Yes.” Q.: “And the affidavit is true in all respects?” A.: “Yes.” Amen read then the most salient passages of Höss’ affidavit in court, and asked Höss three times: “Is that all true and correct, Witness?” Each times Höss answered “Yes.” Finally, at the end of the affidavit Amen read Höss’ final declaration, in which Höss declared that he understood “English as it is written above,” that “the above statements are true,” and that “this declaration is made by

me voluntarily and without compulsion.” After having read this, Amen turned one last time to Höss. “Col. Amen: “Now I ask you, Witness, is everything which I have read to you true to your own knowledge?” Höss: “Yes.”

Irving chose not to quote this affidavit, which was probably the most important piece of evidence about the Holocaust to be presented during the Nuremberg proceedings, and which was publically confirmed by Höss in court, but spent much energy to discredit it. “On April 5 the Americans placed before him a three-page affidavit, which they themselves had drafted and typed, for his signature. Written in English throughout, it contained the admission by Höss that he had “gassed” 2.5 million people in Auschwitz in addition to the half million who had died there of diseases. “We have prepared an affidavit written in English--,” they began by informing their prisoner; whereupon, according to the verbatim transcript, the witness (Höss) “read through” the statement that followed and replied that he had read it and understood it. “Yes,” continues the transcript, “I understand everything that I read.” In reality Höss could not understand English. It merits passing comment that this English affidavit by Höss was *not* in fact signed at any point by him, although the Nuremberg interrogating officers and interpreter all pre-signed the document as witnesses to his “signature.” Not for three days was Höss shown a German translation of the English affidavit (“which you signed”); the transcript of this new conversation on April 8 shows Höss belatedly insisting on changes to the text. An anonymous hand interpolated entire lines, while other lines were deleted by a stroke of the pen; there are no initials in the margin to endorse such changes, but Höss signed this entire German document in its new form on each page (“after reading over the statement”). It included the following curiously worded statement typed in English at its foot: “I understand English as it is written above. The above statements are true; this declaration is made by me voluntarily and without compulsion.” The fundamental premise that guides Irving’s attack on the

credibility of the affidavit is the assumption that Höss could not read English. He also uses this argument when he writes, a little further, that Höss confirmed in court the passages of his affidavit that had been read in English. Yet Höss did know English. In his autobiography, written a year later in a Polish jail, Höss recalled how he learned English during his imprisonment in the 1920s for his participation in Parchimer Vehme murder. "After this low, this breakdown, my life in prison passed without particular incident. I became more and more calm and clear-thinking. In my free time I eagerly studied English. I even had textbooks sent to me. Later I had them regularly send me books and magazines in English, so that in about a year I learned this language without anyone helping me. This was a terrific discipline for my mind." If Irving had been right on the issue of Höss's lack of foreign language abilities, one could have made the case that there were real problems with the affidavit he endorsed in court. Now all that remains are a few small quibbles about the lack of initials to confirm some insertions--objections that are of no significance in the context of the repeated willingness of Höss to confirm the affidavit as his own.

Irving, who was throughout this chapter so ready to quote Biddle's notes when it suited him, and who invokes the diary of Dr Gustave Gilbert, the Nuremberg prison psychologist, whenever it suits his exculpatory cause, found no reason to quote Gilbert's record of his conversations with Höss. This diary is a historically important and reliable source, a fact that was well established during the Eichmann Trial, when the court questioned Gilbert on the manner by which he had compiled the diary. The reason for Gilbert's appearance in Jerusalem was that Höss had made a number of observations on Eichmann's role in the Final Solution, and as he could not be cross-examined having been executed fourteen years earlier, Gilbert's account of Höss's testimony became quite important. On 29 and 30 May, 1961, in the 55th and 57th sessions of that trial, Gilbert testified. He was asked when and how he made his notes. "[Witness Gilbert]: "I made very extensive

notes after every conversation--but not in their presence. I recorded the summary of our conversations with extensive verbatim quotations, and compiled this in my own diary; and the defendants were unaware of this until the end of the trial." The next day, in cross examination by Eichmann's lawyer Robert Servatius, the issue was revisited. "Dr. Servatius: "The value of a diary assuredly depends on whether the entries were recorded immediately or at a later time. Were these entries recorded the same days as the date they bear?" Witness Gilbert: [*replies in German*] "They were always taken down on the same day and then dictated to my secretary." Q.: "Did you supplement or revise them later, or has everything remained as it was originally recorded?" A.: "I would rather carry on in English." Presiding Judge: "Please do." Witness Gilbert: [*in English*] "In dictating the notes to my secretary, I took advantage of the trial manuscripts and any additional facts that I recalled in the meantime. But this dictation usually took place the next day. There was no long time between the conversation and the actual dictation of notes for the diary." Dr. Servatius: "Do you want your diary to be regarded as an authoritative and scientific account?" Witness Gilbert: "The diary comprises the original raw data for later scientific evaluation. So, to answer your question about expert evaluation, that really takes place in the second book, in which I evaluate all of the factual data which I collected, and on that basis make my expert evaluation of the Nazi system and its leaders, including Hitler." Q.: "For evaluating material, it is assuredly important whether a report has been written *sine ira et studio* (without wrath and excessive eagerness)--the concept will surely be known to you--in other words, without preconceptions, without bias. Was that how this diary was written?" A.: "Yes, I had the advantage of American ignorance of the Nazi system, except for a little briefing as a military intelligence officer; I also had the advantage of being completely uninformed and incredulous about the events that we are discussing today, and I had to be convinced, more and more, about what actually took place. It took me a year to get the whole picture."

The Israeli court accepted the evidentiary value of the Gilbert diary--the same diary that Irving was happy to quote whenever it suited him. Irving found no use for the following extraordinary account of Gilbert's conversation with Höss on April 9, 1946. "He readily confirmed that approximately 2 1/2 million Jews has been exterminated under his direction. The exterminations began in the summer of 1941. In compliance with Goering's scepticism, I asked Hoes how it was technically possible to exterminate 2 1/2 million people. "Technically?" he asked. "That wasn't so hard--it would not have been hard to exterminate even greater numbers." In answer to my rather naive questions as to how many people could be done away with in an hour, etc., he explained that one must figure it on a daily 24-hour basis, and it was possible to exterminate up to 10,000 in one 24-hour period. He explained that there were actually 6 extermination chambers. The 2 big ones could accommodate as many as 2,000 in each and the 4 smaller ones up to 1500, making a total capacity of 10,000 a day. I tried to figure out how this was done, but he corrected me. "No, you don't figure it right. The killing itself took the least time. You could dispose of 2,000 in a half hour, but it was the burning that took all the time. The killing was easy; you didn't even need guards to drive them into the chambers; they just went in expecting to take showers and, instead of water, we turned on poison gas. The whole thing went very quickly." He related all of this in a quiet, apathetic, matter-of-fact tone of voice."

Another important piece of evidence, which Irving chose to ignore when he wrote his *Nuremberg*, was the autobiographical essay Höss wrote on request of Gilbert in the Nuremberg jail. In Jerusalem, Gilbert told the court that throughout his Nuremberg tenure he had sought to substantiate his conversations by getting additional documentary evidence--"first, for psychological evidence, and secondly, because some of it was so incredible that I felt I had to have a record of these people, because my colleagues would never believe me." "Presiding Judge: "What was the material that you recorded?" Witness Gilbert:

“There were essays written by the defendants in their own handwriting which further substantiated what we talked about.” Attorney General: “These essays are still in your possession to this day and have not been published--is that correct?” Witness Gilbert: “That is right. These essays are in my possession, and most of it has not been published--hardly any of it, in fact.” Gilbert told the court that he also asked Höss for such an autobiographical essay. This was a different document than the autobiography he later wrote in Polish captivity. “Q.: “You have kept it in your possession until now, and it has not been published so far?” A.: “That’s right--that is one of the original written documents I had to confirm my conversations, and it hasn’t been published except for excerpts which I used in analyzing the case of Rudolf Höss in my second book, *The Psychology of Dictatorship*.” Q.: “Did Höss write it before he wrote his autobiography in Poland?” A.: “Oh,yes--definitely; he had not yet been brought to Poland to stand trial, and I was the first one, I believe, to ask him for his case history.” Q.: “I notice there is a date at the top--10 April 1946. And Höss ended it on 12 April. It took him two days to write--would that be correct?” A.: “Yes, that would be about right.”

Gilbert explained that Höss also wrote another piece for him, in response to a very specific challenge. After Höss had testified, most of the defendants had shown various guilt reactions when Gilbert engaged them in conversation. Göring, however, reacted differently. “A.: “Well, in connection with getting these guilt reactions, I would have to present the reaction of Göring, which leads to the next document which I received from Colonel Höss. Göring’s reaction was to try to brush it all aside, to tell everybody that this was all exaggerated propaganda. ‘Oh they are a bunch of SS *Schweinehunde* doing some dirty things, but it is all exaggerated, it’s all propaganda.’ So, I would engage Göring in conversation in front of the others and say: ‘Well, now,you can’t just brush off the murder of two and a half million people. The German people themselves will demand to know how this did happen.

The conscience of the world demands to know how this did happen. Do you want to go down in history as a man who just laughed it off?...’ And we would argue along this line. You see, the only way of appealing to Göring was not through conscience, but through his egotistical role in history. And I knew that he was trying to brush aside the crimes, so that he would not lose his chance to get his picture in the German history books, because he knew that even the German people would be horrified by it, particularly because women and children had been murdered. The killing of the men would not damage his picture in the German history books, he told me. Now then, realizing that he was determined to try to blot out the memory of this horrible crime from history, I felt that, psychologically, historically and humanly, it was absolutely necessary to see to it that this was properly documented--both from the historical and the psychological point of view.” Q.: “And then, what did you do?” A.: “I therefore told him...I’m sorry. No, the next step was *his* clinching argument, namely, that it was technically impossible to exterminate two and a half million people inside of the three or three and a half years that Colonel Höss was Commandant of Auschwitz, This seemed to be very convincing to some of the other Nazi leaders.” Q.: “What did you do, then?” A.: “I told him that there was an expert in the witness wing, and I could get the details from him. I was, of course, referring to Colonel Höss.” Asked by Gilbert to provide more detail, Höss wrote later that month a short memorandum which Gilbert presented to the Jerusalem court. It gave a detailed description of the arrival, selection and killing of the deportees. “The freight trains with the Jews destined for extermination moved along a special railroad installation which had been laid down especially for this purpose right up to the extermination installations. Notification of these trains was given in advance by Obersturmbannführer Eichmann of the RSHA, and they were allocated consecutive numbers, together with letters of the alphabet, in order to prevent a mix-up with transports of other prisoners. Each cable relating to these transports bore the reference: “In accordance with the specified directives, and are to be sub-

jected to special treatment.” These trains consisted of closed freight cars and contained, on the average, about 2,000 persons. When the trains arrived at the aforementioned ramp, the accompanying railway personnel and the accompanying guard--members of the Security or Order Police--had to leave the area. Only the transport commander who had delivered it remained until it had been completely handed over, and the numbers checked, to the duty officer of the camp. After the trains were off-loaded and the numbers determined (lists by names were not drawn up), all the people had to file past two SS duty doctors, and in the course of this, those who were fit for work were separated from those who were unfit. On the average about twenty-five per cent were found to be fit for work. These were marched off immediately into the camp, in order to change their clothes and be received there. All the luggage remained on the ramp and, after those unfit for work had also been sent off, it was brought to the store of personal effects, to be sorted out. Those unfit for work were classified according to sex--men, women, and children--and marched off to the nearest available extermination installation. Those unable to walk and women with small children were transported there on trucks. When they arrived, all of them had to strip naked in rooms which gave the impression of being delousing installations. The permanent labour unit of prisoners who worked in these installations--and who were also housed there and did not come into contact with other inmates of the camp--helped with the undressing and coaxed the hesitant to hurry up, so that the others would not have to wait so long. They were also told to take note where they put away their clothes, so that they would be able to find them again immediately after taking their bath. All this was done on purpose, in order to dispel any fears which might arise. After they had taken off their clothes, they were taken into a nearby room--the gas chamber itself. It had been prepared to look like a washroom--that is to say, showers and pipes were installed throughout, water drainage channels, etc. The moment the entire transport had entered the chamber, the door was closed, and simultaneously the gas was forced in

from above through a special aperture. It was Zyklon "B" gas, cyanide acid in the form of crystals, which vaporized immediately, that is to say, it took effect immediately upon coming into contact with oxygen. The people were dazed already on taking their first breath, and the process of killing took from thirteen to fifteen minutes, depending upon the weather conditions and the number of people locked up within. Thereafter, nothing moved any more. Thirty minutes after the gas had been released and had entered the chambers, they would be opened, and the transfer of the bodies to the crematoria would commence. Throughout all these years, I never came across a single case of a person coming out of the gas chambers while still alive. While the bodies were taken out, the women's hair was cut, and gold teeth and rings removed by prisoner dentists who were employed in this unit. In Birkenau there were five installations--two large crematoria, each of which had a capacity for receiving 2,000 persons in the course of 24 hours. That is to say, it was possible in one gas chamber to put to death up to 2,500 persons; in five double ovens heated with coke, it was possible to burn at most 2,000 bodies within 24 hours; two smaller installations could eliminate about 1,500 people, with four bigger double ovens to each of them. Furthermore, there was also an open-air installation--that is, an old farmhouse was sealed and turned into a gas chamber, which could also contain 1,500 persons at one and the same time. The incineration was carried out there in an open pit on wood, and this was practically limitless. In my estimation, it was possible to burn there, in 24 hours, up to 8,000 persons in this way. Hence it was possible to exterminate and eliminate up to 10,000 people within 24 hours in the installations described above. As far as I am aware, this number was attained only once in 1944, when delays occurred in the arrival of trains, and consequently five transports arrived together on one day. The ashes of the burnt bodies were ground into dust, which was poured into the Vistula in remote places and swept away with the current. On the basis of the figure of 2.5 million, which is the number of people who--according to Eichmann--were brought to Auschwitz for

extermination, it may be said that on average, two transports arrived daily, with a combined total of 4,000 persons, of whom twenty-five per cent were fit for work, the balance of 3,000 were to be exterminated. The intervals in the various operations can be computed together at nine months. Thus there remain 27 months, with 90,000 people each month--a total of 2,430,000 people. This is a calculation of the technical potential. I have to keep to the figure mentioned by Eichmann, for he was the only SS officer who was allowed to keep records concerning these liquidation operations, according to the orders of the Reichsführer-SS. All other units which took part in any way had to destroy all records immediately. Eichmann mentioned this number in my presence when he was called upon, in April 1945, to present a report to the Reichsführer-SS. I had no records whatsoever. But, to the best of my knowledge, this number appears to me much too high. If I calculate the total of the mass operations which I still remember, and still make allowance for a certain percentage of error, I arrive, in my calculation, at a total of 1.5 million at the most for the period from the beginning of 1941 to the end of 1944. But these are my computations which I cannot verify. Nuremberg, 24 April 1946 (Signed) Rudolf Höss (At the bottom of the document): Hungary – 400,000; Slovakia – 90,000; Greece – 65,000; Holland – 90,000; France – 110,000; Belgium – 20,000; the region of the Generalgouvernement and Upper Silesia – 250,000; Germany and Terezin – 100,000. Total – 1,125,000.”

Already in Nuremberg Gilbert asked the question if Höss's statements could be trusted. In his diary he noted that, during one of his visits to Höss, the latter remarked that, as a psychologist Gilbert, undoubtedly would want to know if he was normal. Höss declared that he was normal. “Even while I was doing this extermination work, I led a normal family life, and so on.” When Gilbert asked him if the Jews who were killed deserved such a fate, Höss replied that this was an unrealistic question as it showed a great ignorance of the world of the SS. “Don't you see, we SS men were not supposed to think about these things; it

never even occurred to us.--And besides, it was something already taken for granted that the Jews were to blame for everything.” Höss admitted that the work was unpleasant. “But Himmler had ordered it and had even explained the necessity and I really never gave much thought to whether it was wrong. It just seemed a necessity.” “In all of the discussions Höss is quite matter-of-fact and apathetic, shows some belated interest in the enormity of his crime, but gives the impression that it never would have occurred to him if somebody hadn’t asked him. There is too much apathy to leave any suggestion of remorse and even the prospect of hanging does not unduly distress him. One gets the general impression of a man who is intellectually normal but with schizoid apathy, insensitivity and lack of empathy that could hardly be more extreme in a frank psychotic.”

In Jerusalem the court revisited the issue because, having admitted Höss’s statement that indicted Eichmann as evidence, Attorney-General Gideon Hausner could not examine and Eichmann’s lawyer Robert Servatius could not cross-examine him. Remarkably the latter, who had served in Nuremberg as counsel to Fritz Sauckel, did confirm that the accused willingly and without coercion cooperated with Gilbert. He noted also that “subsequently the accused men held conversations amongst themselves, in which they made sarcastic references to their discussions with the witness, and they even voiced a kind of mocking comment on the ‘soul examiner.’” Servatius therefore accepted that the documents could be accepted in evidence, but that Gilbert should limit his comments to those. The court agreed, and therefore it asked Gilbert to comment on Höss’s mental state when he gave his public and private testimony. “Q.: “I take it that, as a psychologist, you certainly understand that sometimes there is a state of mind of the accused which tends to drag down other people, as it were, and to incriminate them?” A.: “Yes, I certainly understand that. It’s one of the common guilt defences.” Q.: “Would you say that Rudolf Höss was in that particular state of mind when you were speaking to him?” A.: “No, definitely

not. As I said before, he was a man who was just automatically telling the facts as he knew them. It apparently meant nothing to him that he had murdered millions of people, he had no hesitation in describing everything in detail, and without any attempt to share blame, or to prepare a defence or anything, quite spontaneously--certainly not with any urging on my part--the name of Eichmann came into his statements again and again and again, and finally I realized that this man was a key figure in the extermination programme. May I amplify a little further? By contrast, I saw that Kaltenbrunner was a liar. When he tried to disclaim knowledge of the atrocities and shove the blame onto someone else, I could see--and got corroboration from actual statements from the others--that this was outright perjury, false testimony, outright lies. So I was aware at all times that it is possible that any of these men might be lying, but Höss definitely was not."

Considering Irving's description of the way the Holocaust in general, and Auschwitz in particular figured in the Nuremberg Trial, it is clear that it has no value. A historian would have considered all the evidence at hand, Irving only chose to (mis)quote whatever suited his preconceived notions.

Nuremberg: The Last Battle offers Irving's last more or less "comprehensive"; statement on the Holocaust in general and Auschwitz in particular. It shows that, perhaps under the pressure of events, he has chosen to distance himself from the explicit negationist rhetoric he adopted in the wake of the Second Zündel Trial, but beyond the ambiguous smokescreen one still discerns a negationist agenda. Using the more cunning and in a fundamental sense disingenuous means of innuendo and insinuation, Irving has abandoned the depreciatory declarations of the early 1990 to adopt the posture of an experienced trial lawyer, who tries to undermine the credibility of the most important witnesses. And it was so recognized by *The Journal of Historical Review*. A

lengthy review of the book that appeared in early 1998 ended with the conclusion that “[r]eading this book, one can dismiss fears that Irving has somehow ‘given up.’”

To understand the origin of Irving’s latest venture into Holocaust denial, it is necessary to consider the way he rewrote certain parts of his *Hitler’s War* after his 1988 conversion. The original edition included references to the use of Auschwitz as an extermination camp, and these Irving suppressed and reworked for the 1991 edition. Using a technique he was to perfect in his book on Nuremberg, Irving described Himmler’s July 1942 visit to Auschwitz selectively using Höss’s memoirs whenever it suited him, neutralizing the more damaging parts of Höss’s account--which mention Himmler witnessing a gassing, and the latter’s conversation with Höss about the expansion of the role of Auschwitz in the Holocaust--and introducing the exculpatory, skewed perspective of one his aides, Albert Hoffmann. The latter had stated after the war that he “totally disbelieves the accounts of atrocities as published in the press.” Hoffmann’s skepticism gave Irving the opportunity to add that, “[b]y late 1945 the world’s newspapers were full of unsubstantiated, lurid rumors about ‘Factories of death’ complete with lethal ‘gas chambers.’”

Having redefined historical facts as lurid rumors, Irving introduced a new version of the idea that the reports about the extermination camps were versions of the atrocity propaganda. By defining these reports as “rumors,” Irving did suggest that they were untrue, but did not imply that these “rumors” were necessarily concocted by some allied secret--service officials. The sentence allowed for the possibility that the “rumors” about Auschwitz had arisen spontaneously. This then, seems to be Irving’s current position. It is reflected in the contents of his internet website, <http://www.cpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/Auschw.html>--most particularly in the argument of a seemingly scholarly piece written by a person who identifies him/herself by the nom-de-plume of “Samuel Crowell.” Entitled “The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes: An

Attempt at a Literary Analysis of the Holocaust Gassing Claim,” Crowell’s article encompasses, in printed form, 71 pages of text annotated with 449 endnotes.

As the (electronic) publisher of “The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes,” Irving seems to repeat his 1989 attempt to join the avant-garde of Holocaust denial. Then he jumped on the Faurisson-Leuchter bandwagon, now he sponsors a new approach that seeks “to deliberately review the gassing claim, with the object, not to prove that gassings did or did not take place, but rather investigate whether a plausible basis for revisionist doubt exists.” Nothing could be more reasonable, at least not to the uninformed visitor of <http://www.tpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/Auschw.html>. And indeed, at first sight, even the academically trained visitor is surprised to find not the obviously insane rants of the Holocaust deniers of the old school (Rassinier, Butz, Faurisson), but what seems some interesting literary analysis. Crowell’s model is Elaine Showalter’s study *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Media* (1997), which explains claims of alien abduction, chronic fatigue syndrome, recovered memory, the Gulf War syndrome, and multiple personality disorder as psychogenic epidemics in which the narrative similarity between independent accounts of, for example, instances of alien abduction, does not mean that these actually took place. “Literary critics...realize that similarities between two stories do not mean that they mirror a common reality, or even that the writers have read each other’s texts. Like all narratives, hystories have their own conventions, stereotypes, and structures. Writers inherit common themes, structures, characters, and images; critics call these common elements *intertextuality*. We need not assume that patients are either describing an organic disorder or else lying when they present similar narratives of symptoms. Instead, patients learn about diseases from the media, unconsciously develop the symptoms, and then attract

media attention in an endless cycle. The human imagination is not infinite, and we are all bombarded by these plot lines every day. Inevitably, we all live out the social stories of our time.”

In one of his notes Crowell referred to this paragraph as his source of inspiration--but only to the first half of it. It is clear that the second half, in which Showalter stresses the importance of the media in the process of intertextuality, effectively challenges any attempt to apply the thesis about the origin and growth of hystories to the war-time situation in 1940s Europe, when people were starved of information, and when the media that were still operating were not only completely silent on the issue, but also unavailable to those very eastern European Jews whom Crowell credits with having created the hystory of mass extermination through gassing.

Be that as it may, let us forget for the moment the fundamental inappropriateness of Showalter’s understanding of the nature of “hystories” as an explanation of any story--true or not--that developed during the Second World War in occupied Europe, and follow Crowell’s seemingly open-minded approach to the history of the Holocaust. “[W]hile sceptical of the gassing claim, we are not setting as our primary objective to prove either that gassings did, or did not, take place. Rather what we want to do is simply narrate the emergence of the gassings claims, from the Spring of 1942 through the end of the Nuremberg and Auschwitz Trials in 1947. We call the analysis “literary” because what we will be concerned with above all are the themes, motifs, tropes, or story elements that comprise the gassing claims. To put it another way, we want to take the gassing claims and view them as narratives or as “texts”, arrange them in order, and analyze them separately and in combination.” Identifying the story elements of “the gassing claim story,” and revealing their “textual links” to other texts, Crowell argues that this allows us to explain how the gassing claim would have arisen spontaneously without having to resort to the well-worn conspiracy theory, embraced by Holocaust deniers until recently, that the Holo-

caust with its attendant claims was a deliberately created hoax made up in some secret service headquarters or some hidden council of Jewish elders. The gassing claim, Crowell asserts, comprised elements of specific concern to East European Jews since the early 19th Century. “We will also find that the traditional extermination scenario, featuring a shower-gasburning sequence, is rooted in profound European and American concerns over disease and disease prevention, the use of poison gas and other mysterious weapons of mass destruction, and finally anxiety and fear over the recent reappearance of cremation as a means of disposal of the dead. In short, we will find that the generation of a delusion of mass gas extermination did not require a conspiracy, or a hoax, nor much conscious effort at all, but only a social and cultural climate that would facilitate the generation of such rumors, at a time of war, hatred, and social anomie. We will find that such rumors, facilitated here and there by a little solicitous fraud, and above all a willingness to believe the worst about one’s enemies, would allow them to be stated as fact and to become themselves part of that social and cultural landscape of which we are only half-consciously aware.”

Crowell reports on various reports on gassings that emerged in 1942, and notes some claims that, in the end, were not substantiated. The main motif is what Crowell calls the shower-gas-burning sequence, “[t]he idea that victims would be led into a bathing facility of some kind, and then be executed (the claimed method focussing on gas more and more as time went by), and then burned so that no trace would remain.” These claims, Crowell notes, all originated in Poland. This legitimate observation does not lead him to the obvious, that is an investigation of the specifics of German occupation policies in Poland, but to the in the whole constellation of events rather peripheral issue of eastern Jewish anxieties about delousing procedures. Ironically, Crowell’s point of departure is a text Debrah Dwork and I introduced in our *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (1996). It describes the procedures the Germans used at the end of the nineteenth century to delouse lice-rid-

den east European immigrants at their borders as witnessed by Mary-ashe Antin, a young girl from Polotzk. Antin recorded that the train stopped, and that the passengers were told to get out. They were led into a large yard where many men and women dressed in white awaited them. "This was...a scene of bewildering confusion, parents losing their children, and little ones crying; baggage being thrown together in one corner of the yard, heedless of contents, which suffered in consequence; those white-clad Germans shouting commands, always accompanied with 'Quick!Quick!'-the confused passengers obeying all orders like meek children, only questioning now and then what was going to be done with them....Our things were taken away, our friends separated from us; a man came to inspect us, as if to ascertain our full value; strange-looking people driving us about like dumb animals, helpless and unresisting; children we could not see crying in a way that suggested terrible things; ourselves driven into a little room where a great kettle was boiling on a little stove; our clothes taken off, our bodies rubbed with a slippery substance that might be any bad thing; a shower of warm water let down on us without warning; again driven to another room where we sit, wrapped in woollen blankets till large, coarse bags are brought in, their contents turned out, and we see only a cloud of steam, and hear the women's orders to dress ourselves--'Quick! Quick!' or else we'll miss--something we cannot hear. We are forced to pick up our clothes from among all the others, with the steam blinding us; we choke, cough, entreat the women to give us time; they persist, 'Quick! Quick!--or we'll miss the train!--Oh, so we really won't be murdered! They are only making us ready for the continuing of our journey, cleaning us of all suspicions of dangerous sickness. Thank God!" The deloused transmigrants were herded back to the railway cars, and sent straight to the ports.

Taking this text as his point of departure, Crowell asserts that eastern European Jews must have faced a culture shock when faced with such delousing procedures. During the Second World War Germans simply

continued earlier practices: they “aggressively pursued the containment of disease using all these methods.” Crowell attaches special significance to the fact that the initiation procedures in the concentration camps, in which people were stripped, shaved, and showered, also served a hygienic purpose. “There seems little reason to doubt,” he observes, “that the level of disorientation and fear had changed little since the time of Mary Antin 50 years before.” On this basis, Crowell has little difficulty explaining that the stories about gassings in Sobibor and Treblinka, which were circulating in Europe by the end of 1942, were merely a reflection of the profound psychological impact of “the application of delousing measures on the populations of Eastern Europe, and particularly on Jewish people who were being resettled to the east or dragooned into the Labor Service.”

Having neutralized the claim that the Operation Reinhard camps had been the centers of extermination, Crowell turned to the tougher assignment to explain the war-time rumors about gassings in Auschwitz as the result of Jewish anxiety about delousing procedures. One of the problems he faces is that, in the summer of 1944, two escapees from Auschwitz, Rudi Vrba and Alfred Wetzlar, wrote a report that described the gassings in great detail. “[T]he witnesses who wrote the report were repeating rumor, and, even if the witnesses believed it, the existence of a rumor is certainly not proof of the facts which the rumor alleges,” Crowell writes. And he adds that “[t]he only thing the report really shows is that gassing rumors were current in Auschwitz at the time.” Yet, according to Crowell, even Vrba and Wetzlar had made no attempt at fabricate a hoax. In the confused and confusing reality of war-time Auschwitz, rumors continued to arise spontaneously, until they were backed up by partly fabricated official reports, creating a kind of mutually reinforcing, infernal information feedback loop.

Positive fabrication of evidence began, Crowell asserts, only with the Soviet liberation of Maidanek. Until then rumors had just arisen spontaneously. “The reverberations of the Majdanek Special Commission

were extremely broad, many of the symbols of the Holocaust have their beginning here. Among these one may note the huge piles of clothes, shoes, and hair, which were taken as *prima facie* evidence of exterminations of a million and a half human beings, although we now know that these piles of belongings indicate no such thing, and the current evaluation holds that less than 100,000 perished at Majdanek. But the most notorious element of the Majdanek report was the gas tight door with peephole, whereby the Germans supposedly witnessed the death throes of their victims.” Crowell offered a very simple explanation for the gas tight door with peephole: the Vrba-Wetzlar Report included a statement that visiting Germans were present at the first gassing in crematorium 2, and that “the special peephole fitted into the door of the gas chamber was in constant use.” The conclusion was obvious: it had to come from the Majdanek report. The problem of Crowell’s assertion is, of course, the fact that at the time of publication of the Maidanek Report the Vrba-Wetzlar Report had not yet been published, and that there is no evidence of any kind that the Soviets were in possession of the unpublished manuscript. Crowell certainly does not provide any evidence to support his suggestion.

According to Crowell, in the three weeks that separated the liberation of Bergen-Belsen (April 15, 1945) and the publication of the Soviet Report on Auschwitz (May 6, 1945) the “Canonical Holocaust” came into being. The awful scenes that confronted the English and American soldiers seemed to provide proof of the gassing claims. Crowell did not consider the detailed eye-witness accounts that were recorded in those weeks. The Soviet Report was, as Crowell was concerned, a worthless document. “The Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz is probably the most important document ever issued on the gas extermination claim. Indeed, it is somewhat shocking to see the extent to which the claim is traced back to this slim and insubstantial brochure. But at the time it established not only the fact of the gas extermination claim but also the implementation of that alleged policy at the largest of all the

concentration camps. On the other hand, the report offers no proof of the claims which it makes, only two documents in circumstantial support, and assertion of the number of victims based merely on arbitrary multiplication of cremation rates, and is buttressed only with large amounts of eyewitness testimony that fail to even come close to providing details of the gassing procedures.” Crowell ignored the detailed statements made in April and May 1945 by Jankowski, Dragon and Tauber, or the forensic investigations done by Dawidowski. While in fact a mass of evidence had become available in the spring and summer of 1945, Crowell maintains that there was nothing but the “slim and insubstantial brochure” published by the Soviets.

This then leads him to engage the evidence he could not ignore, as it was and remained widely known in the West: the confessions by Kramer and others in the Lüneburg Trial. In his attempt to neutralize these independent corroborations of the eye-witness testimony of survivors, Crowell made most of the fact that the Soviets had come to the conclusion that four million people had been killed in Auschwitz. “The fact that the eyewitness testimonies and confessions in the postwar period correspond to the Soviet Special Commission could be taken as simple corroboration of the Soviet report, except that it has now been recognized that the Soviet report was wrong, in particular on its totally arbitrary calculation of four million victims (current estimates hold one million or less.) That figure derived from the Soviet calculation of cremation capacities. It did not derive from testimony. On the other hand, we have several testimonies and confessions which support it. But since the figure is wrong, it follows that the testimonies and confessions which support the calculation were influenced by the report. If a witness or a confessor makes statements that corroborate statements in an official and widely publicized report, that witness may be viewed as independently verifying the truth, although the absence of material and documentary support would still leave the matter in doubt. But when the witness or confessor corroborates statements and

the statements are false, then one can presume that the witness and confessor statements were simple derivative of the reports. To put it another way, several testimonies may converge on a truth, but several testimonies cannot converge on a falsehood: in such a case one is dealing either with statements derived from a common erroneous source or a kind of mass hysteria determined by the authority of an erroneous source. Such is the problem with all witness testimonies and confessions for the gas extermination claim, particularly for this initial period, but even more subsequently. The allegations of mass gassings had been widely disseminated since 1942, and had assumed official status by the Fall of 1944. Under these circumstances it would have been impossible to obtain “blind” testimony or an untainted confession. Only statements that provided high levels of corroborative detail would be really probative, yet that is precisely what was never offered. Eyewitness testimonies and confessions made the gravest errors, whenever they strayed into details....” If the central issue at stake had been if four million people had died in Auschwitz, and if Kramer and his colleagues had all maintained that the victim total had been indeed four million, then Crowell would have had a point. But in the Lüneburg Trial the issue of the number of victims never arose. As we have seen, the essential elements of both the eyewitness testimonies of Bimko and others, and the confessions of Kramer and others, concerned the fact that gassings took place, and its attendant procedures. In other words, the Lüneburg Trial generated new evidence that went into the greatest possible detail about events that the Soviet report did not touch upon.

In order to make plausible that a text, and not a historic event, was the cause for all the “gas chamber stories,” Crowell was forced to assign to the Soviet report a weight it never had. It had authority, he claimed, because it had been issued by the Soviet Government. Therefore it became a point of departure for all, serving witnesses as a means to refresh their memory, and interrogators to determine if captured Auschwitz personnel spoke the truth. “As soon as a witness or confessor

made statements corroborating the Soviet Special Commission, then those statements themselves acquired the Soviet report's weight of authority because they matched its claims. Over time the proof of the mass gas exterminations at Auschwitz would not be traced in the popular mind back to the Soviet Auschwitz report itself, but rather to testimonies and confessions that were clearly produced under its influence. Thus a version of the gassing claim, what we would call the Canonical Holocaust, evolved almost entirely through oral testimonies that built upon the basis of a report that had no substance. Meanwhile, the damning newsreels of Belsen would be manipulated and juxtaposed from camp to camp according to the whim of the prevailing culture, and provide the unanswerable ground to the claim." It is an interesting theory, but sadly for Crowell, there is absolutely no evidence, even not a scrap of it, that the Soviet Report played any part in the Lüneburg proceedings.

In his account of the Nuremberg Trials, Crowell first makes the erroneous claim that the presentation for the mass gassing and extermination claims was conducted by the Soviets, who drowned the courtroom in a "hysterical atmosphere of endlessly ramifying atrocity." He ignored the fact that the major presentation of the Auschwitz testimonies was done by the French prosecutors, who did not quote the Soviet Report, but allowed witnesses to speak for themselves. Yet, without engaging the contents of these testimonies and affidavits, Crowell dismisses them out of hand. While he admitted that the Höss affidavit seems "impressive and authoritative," Crowell judges that it "contributes absolutely nothing to what was already known as a 'fact of common knowledge' at the time." After flagging each of the possible sources for each of the statements, Crowell concludes that "[i]t is ultimately an extension and confirmation of the Canonical Holocaust as represented by the Soviet report." And therefore "it is practically valueless from a historiographical point of view." By why, one would ask, would Höss so emphatically have rejected the Soviet claim that

four million people had been killed in Auschwitz? As to the very extensive notes Höss made in Poland, Crowell limited himself to a short paragraph in which he remarked that there is no documentary support for the claims he makes, and that it is also a “model of incoherence and contradiction.” In fact, the situation is exactly the opposite. There is ample evidence that corroborates Höss’s detailed descriptions of the camp and its operations.

Engaging Dr. Kremer’s diary, Crowell repeats, without attribution, Faurisson’s shoddy hermeneutical analysis.

Crowell thus asserted as fact that, by the Spring of 1946, the myth of the crematoria with its gas chambers had been fully formed. “So far we have seen that through the Spring of 1946 the gassing claim continued to develop, acquiring weight from authoritative reports and the judicial notice of the court, and acquiring immediacy and broad acceptance through the medium of popular paperbacks and graphic photos and newsreel footage. After two years, the claim has fastened on the new-familiar shower-gas-burning sequence, and beginning in the Summer of 1944 that claim was imposed upon the physical facts of the camps. By the Summer of 1946, the mass gassing claim, as a “fact of common knowledge” had been saturating popular consciousness for four years, even though up to this point, as we have seen, no direct material or documentary evidence had been offered in its support.” Yet he faced a problem: why was the myth of the gas chambers with their dummy showers, which had according to him originated in response to delousing procedures, so insistent on the fact that the gas chambers were located in crematoria? Crowell had a simple explanation. While the *Ostjuden* had feared delousing, Germans did not trust cremation. In 1934 the German government had introduced legislation to support cremation, and this was the cause of great anxiety. “Probably as a result of these anxieties about cremation, the procedure became the focus of a number of strange ideas. One of these was that cremation was suspicious, because, by burning a body a post mortem on the cause of death

would be next to impossible to carry out. Under such conditions, all manner of murder, poisoning, and other activities could be carried out secretly.” Thus the institution of a crematorium, which made it so much more difficult to detect foul play, came to suggest the presence of foul play. A rational procedure of corpse disposal became of necessity the terminus of a sinister chain of events. Crowell does not, however, offer any evidence of such a wide-spread anxiety about incineration.

The Germans did not merely fear cremation. They also suffered from a deep anxiety about poison gas--a direct result of the gas attacks of the First World War and the Italian use of gas in the Abyssinian War. After giving a couple of literary references, Crowell concluded that “the culture was primed for accusations of poison gas usage.” In response, the Germans “invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the preparation of air raid shelters.” “From the beginning, all German air raid shelters were designed to protect against poison gas as well as against bombs. As a result, special air raid shelter doors were developed, usually made of steel. The doors would feature a round peephole covered with a perforated steel plate to prevent breakage, the peephole meant to facilitate visual inspection without having to break the gas-tight seal by opening the door.”

Crowell assumed that these civil defense measures were also applied to concentration camps: “[E]ach of the Birkenau crematoria was equipped with a gas-tight bomb shelter, and that these shelters also included decontamination facilities in the form of showers and baths. In this respect it is important to note that the Crematorium at the base camp was known to have been used as an air raid shelter, although its poison gas protection features have rarely been commented on. We should emphasize that all of the material and documentary evidence, when placed in a larger context, points to gas tight air raid and anti-gas shelters, although it is likely that at least two of the traces--the gas detectors, and possibly the term “*Vergasungskeller*”--are rooted in other benign procedures, including disinfection. There is no material or doc-

umentary support for the claim that these spaces were designed, let alone used, as extermination gas chambers.” In a footnote to this section, Crowell refers to one of his earlier postings on the web and the internet articles of Arthur Butz. He also offers the following observation. “Both Dr. Butz and myself have construed “*Vergasungskeller*” in a civil defense context; however, if anything “*vergasen*” type words are even more firmly rooted in disinfection and delousing procedures. While convinced that we are correct in identifying several civil defense and gas protection features to Leichenkeller 1 of Krematorium II (i.e., the “*Vergasungskeller*”) it is conceivable that part of it was intended for the disinfecting or delousing of clothing of the dead or the corpse handlers, but in that case it is doubtful that the entire *Keller* would have been set aside for that purpose: then the use of the word would be an example of metonymy, and the facility itself could well have been used for a variety of purposes: disinfecting corpse handlers, *ad hoc* disinfection and delousing of camp arrivals, and decontamination. Such multi-purpose use harmonizes with German civil defense procedures in the cities.”

Crowell’s argument, made both in the main body of his text and in the footnote, does not make any sense. As we have seen above, the architectural lay-out of the basement of crematoria 2 and 3 do not follow the strict division between an unclean and clean side characteristic of delousing facilities, and there is absolutely no indication anywhere in either the plans of these spaces nor in the correspondence that these spaces were designed to support “disinfecting corpse handlers, *ad hoc* disinfection and delousing of camp arrivals, and decontamination.” Of course, in theory anything is possible, but only few things are probable, and historians take the probable and not the possible as the point of departure of their musings. Furthermore the design of the two morgues does not support the claim that these were meant as air-raid shelters. As we have seen in our discussion of Wilhelm Stäglich’s claim that these spaces had been air-raid shelters, when the Germans desig-

nated crematorium 1 as a shelter for those working and recovering in the SS hospital in Auschwitz I, they subdivided the space in small inter-connected cells, separated by sturdy walls that gave extra support to the roof. There is absolutely no evidence that such a structural modification was ever contemplated or executed for the basement spaces of crematoria 2 and 3. Furthermore the location of the alleged air-raid shelters in the crematoria, at more than a mile distance from the SS camp, does not make any sense. Finally: sufficient mutually corroborating evidence of different origin converges on the conclusion that the morgue 1 of both crematorium 2 and 3 were used as gas chambers.

It is important to observe that even if Crowell would have been able to make a plausible case that the basement spaces of crematoria 2 and 3 would have been used as air-raid shelters, he would still have faced the problem of explaining the above ground gas chambers of crematoria 4 and 5. Both the plans, elevations and sections of these spaces have been preserved, and none shows any indication that these spaces could have offered any protection during an air-raid. Apart from that, these spaces in no way follow the standard lay-out for delousing facilities.

Finally Crowell ventured in a contorted argument in which he argued that because all the “non intentional” evidence of gas chambers in Auschwitz can be explained in terms of civil air defense and disinfection literature, one may safely infer that “there is no longer any documentary or material evidence that mass gassings took place at all.” This argument is an obvious example of a *non sequitur*, as is Crowell’s assertion that because Dawidowski and Sehn misinterpreted these documents that attested to the presence of air-raid shelters in the crematoria as proof for the use of the crematoria as killing installations, one may infer that “there was never any merit to the extermination gassing claim in the first place.” “In other words, civil air defense literature, along with disinfection literature, does more than explain all

of the alleged documentary and material for mass gas exterminations. Shown in their proper context, these documents, now clearly seen as having been misused, bring us face to face with the possibility of a deliberate Polish and Soviet communist fraud.” In the footnote to this passage, Crowell once more refers to another of his articles, and adds the following thought. “This conclusion is, we believe, inescapable. At the beginning of our research we explored the possibility that the Soviets and other communists misconstrued the air raid shelter evidence, and it is certainly at least possible that many individuals did, and probably most Westerners. However, at no point in the historical record, or in the elaboration of these materials since then, has there ever been a recognition of the air-raid shelter origins of these gas-tight features. It is beyond belief that the association never occurred to an establishment historian on this subject, particularly in Eastern Europe, where the only extant “gas chamber” facilities are located. Therefore we are forced to conclude that establishment historians in Poland and the Soviet Union failed to point out the implications to their thesis, namely that the Germans had constructed air raid shelters but had used them for exterminations. This failure can only be understood as a desire to suppress the issue of air raid shelters *per se*, because otherwise it most certainly would have been (and would be!) a valuable addition to our knowledge of the Holocaust. Hence we conclude that the air raid shelter origin of gas-tight features was suppressed because of the questions it would raise, namely, the questions it would raise about the validity of the extermination hypothesis overall.” The problem, of course, with Crowell’s theorizing is that the “establishment historians” in Poland had no reason to consider the possibility that the gas-tight features pointed at air raid shelters because there was no reason to do so. Information derived from many different sources--both intentional and non-intentional evidence--pointed clearly at the use of *Leichenkeller 1* in crematoria 2 and 3 as gas chambers, and before Stäglich raised the possibility in the late 1970s, not one source suggested that these spaces would have been used as air raid shelters. Crowell may

continue to accuse Auschwitz scholars of suppressing (non-existent) evidence relevant to the understanding of the gas chambers, but his own argument will easily stand as one of the most remarkable cases of special pleading I have ever encountered.

In his conclusion Crowell responds to the observation that many eyewitness accounts could not be lying. This he calls a worthless “sally” because, due to the fact that the shower-gas-burning model was widely disseminated during the war--a claim he does not support--anyone could have devised the story. Crowell compared it to the claims of many who claim to have been abducted by UFO’s, and quoted Elaine Showalter to prove that narrative similarity does not mean much. “Literary critics, however, realize that similarities between two stories do not mean that they mirror a common reality, or even that the writers have read each other’s texts. Like all narratives, hystories have their own conventions, stereotypes, and structures. Writers inherit common themes, structures, characters, and images; critics call these common elements intertextuality.” This, then, led Crowell to treat the gassing claim as a story that arose out of intertextuality to become a massive “hystorie.” “The gassing claim of the Holocaust derives from a complex of delusion and censorship. We are now in a position to encapsulate how both tendencies reinforced each the other. The gassing legend seemed to have been endemic in Europe for several years before the outbreak of World War Two. At that time, and in conjunction with the National Socialist euthanasia program, conducted in secret, the rumor of gassing developed more widely. Once the Germans began large-scale deportations in the Spring of 1942, the typical disinfection rumors arose, as they had in previous decades, but this time they tended to focus on the gassing claim. These rumors passed through the BBC, which gave the rumors authority, and in turn created the feedback loop for their further development. In this respect the growth of the gassing rumors should be distinguished from such phenomena as the *War of the Worlds* panic, because in the latter case official denunciation

of the claim was immediate. But in this case there were no official pronouncements about the extermination rumors at all, but simply the repetition of these claims. The combination of frightful epidemic scenes in the Western camps combined with a series of Soviet Special Commissions, including the Auschwitz report, set the seal on the story, providing the canonical Holocaust, which, in its function was scarcely distinguishable from one of the manuals of interrogation from the days of the great witch hunts or the Inquisition. The evolution of the Canon continued at the postwar trials, where the presentation on the alleged mass gassings and exterminations was in the hands of a state which had already demonstrated its schizophrenic tendencies in its approach to handling various internal crises while following a path of rapid and forced industrialization and modernization in the previous two decades. The residue of such rapid change is furthermore well understood to be anomie, disorientation, and other social pathologies, and these also profoundly affected the Jews of eastern Europe, who were themselves not only subject to almost continuous persecution during this time but also to the disorientation and social disintegration characteristic of grand socio-economic transformations. This is the context in which the claim of mass gassing and extermination arose and found its fulfilment.”

Crowell’s attempt to explain the origin and development of “the gassing claim” could have claimed some importance because it could have begun to redress what has been, until now, the single largest liability of the Holocaust deniers: their inability to produce, in forty years of effort, a plausible counter-narrative to the inherited history of the Holocaust or, more particularly, the history of Auschwitz. The negationists claim to be revisionist historians, but they have yet to produce a history that offers a credible, “revised” explanation of the events in question. Until Crowell’s piece appeared, Rassinier and his disciples have had an exclusively nihilist agenda. They have attacked the inherited account on the unproven assumption of some general conspiracy, but

they have not been able, or willing, to even begin writing a single piece of investigative journalism--let be it produce one product of serious revisionist historiography--that gives us the origin and development of this conspiracy, the reason why and how it seized on, of all places, those very “ordinary” Auschwitz concentration camps as the fulcrum of its effort to hoodwink both gentiles and Jews, to leverage the international community in general, and defraud the Germans and the Arabs in particular. Crowell’s article attempts to create a plausible narrative could have begun, at least superficially, to engage with issues of relevancy and causation, and to apply judgement. This having been said, one cannot but judge Crowell’s attempt an utter failure. As a hypothesis, the air-raid-shelter origin of the “myth” of the gas chambers does not stand up to serious criticism. Not only do his claims make little sense, but his hypothesis is without any value because he did not submit it to the essential test: if Auschwitz would have been equipped with substantial gas-tight civil defence measures within its crematoria, than one ought to expect that one could deduce as its entailed consequent either the fact that also other concentration camps would have been equipped with such installations, or the fact that, if those camps did not show similar installations, one could establish very clear reasons why Auschwitz would have been equipped with substantial gas-tight air raid shelters within the crematoria, and the other camps not. Crowell did not test his hypothesis, and therefore it cannot be verified. He has not offered a single scrap of evidence that confirms the entailed consequent of the hypothesis. Hence, for all his effort, his hypothesis that the gas chambers can be explained as substantial gas-tight civil defence measures is without any value.

Irving does not seem to be bothered by all of this. Not only does he continue to offer his website to Crowell’s essay, but recently also increased Crowell’s offering, accompanied by the following introduction. “New Documents on Air Raid Shelters at Auschwitz Camp Brief Introduction AMERICAN WRITER “Samuel Crowell” [*pseudonym*], author of

Technique and Operation of German Anti-Gas Shelters in WW2, published in German translation in Germar Rudolf's journal *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung* [VffG/VHO@aol.com] submitted three documents recently obtained from the archives of the former Soviet special state archives (the "trophy") archives. [For Crowell's other writings see <http://www.codoh.com/inconshr123.html>]. These bear on his thesis that the gas-tight doors found at the Auschwitz site (a facsimile of which is displayed at the Holocaust Memorial Museum at Washington DC) were nothing more sinister than the remains of air-raid shelters; all such shelters were fitted with gas-tight doors, in anticipation of Allied poison-gas attacks. What the documents do not state explicitly, in our opinion, is whether the shelters were for prisoners, the camp guards, or both. Focal Point Publications." The three letters that Crowell obtained from Moscow with the help of an anonymous donor indeed concern the creation of air-raid shelters. Two of the documents date from late 1943, and concern problems in the production and delivery of 176 pre-fabricated concrete arches that were installed over small, one-and two-person trenches that were created at regular intervals around the perimeter of Birkenau in order to provide, in case of an air raid, shelter for the SS men guarding the camp. These small shelters, which are still to be seen all around the perimeter of the camp, were not gas-tight, but completely open towards the prisoner compound, so that the guards could continue to cover the part of the perimeter assigned to them with their machine guns. Both the letters of October 25 and November 5, 1943 clearly refer to these small, open shelters, and neither letter contains any reference to a gas-tight shelter.

The third letter dates from November 16, 1944. By the late fall of 1944, allied air raids on the Auschwitz area had become commonplace, and the Soviet army had advanced within sixty miles of Auschwitz. The Central Construction Office was now ordered to create a few larger shelters for a maximum of 50 men each, and a smaller shelter with room for 20 persons and an emergency operation room. These were to

accommodate SS personnel, and were to be built in the large SS compound at Birkenau--primarily in the eastern section of the SS camp to service the SS hospital. The design for the shelter for 50 men, which survives in the archive of the Central Construction Office, consisted of a C-shaped trench covered with 66 of the same kind of pre-fabricated concrete arches as had been used for the small, one-to two-person shelters designed a year earlier. Only now these were interconnected to make four interconnected bombproof corridors, each 1.50 metres wide. Each corridors was designed to accommodate in theory 15 men, but as the letter indicates, the Berlin headquarters indicated the need to lower the maximum accommodation from 60 to 50 people. The blueprints show attached to the four corridors that make up the main shelter four small toilet spaces, and four entrances. At each of the four entrances the architects projected a small vestibule identified as "Gasschleuße" (gas-lock). The second design shows a trench shelter reinforced with masonry walls, covered with a concrete roof. Like the other design, it is equipped with a gas lock. These air-raid shelters were thus indeed gas-tight. It is, however, interesting to note that the architects achieved their aim to produce a gastight shelter by means of a lock that was designated as a gas-lock in the drawings. None of the blueprints of the crematoria show a space identified as a "Gasschleuße"--another indication that Crowell's hypothesis does not hold. None of the designs for morgue 1 of crematoria 2 and 3 show the required emergency exit--every air raid shelter was required to have such an alternative exit. None of these designs show the required strength of the walls and roofs, or the required 80 centimeter thick earth covering. The designs for the two air-raid shelters designed for the SS compound in Birkenau follow the norms published in Neufert's 1944 edition of his *Bau-Entwurfslehre*--a fact that should not surprise as this book was owned by the SS Central Construction Office in Auschwitz.

In his comments on the letter, which took the form of nine points, Crowell assumed that the letters of late 1943 and the letter of November 1944 referred to exactly the same kind of shelter. “#3 The three documents give us some idea of scope and cost. We know we are talking about trench shelters, because these usually hold about 50 people (letter of November 11, 1944) and are built for the prisoners (“Defending”, Part 2). We must be discussing at least 176 such shelters, so as I interpret the “Bogenstücke”....” The blueprint BW 14 makes it clear that the shelter was to accommodate SS men, and there the suggestion that there would have been 176 of such shelters is simply absurd. The shelter BW 14 uses 66 of the pre-fabricated concrete arches, and the letter of October 25, 1943 mentions the delivery of only 176 pieces, that is barely enough to make only three of these shelters. But, as we have seen, in 1943 the issue was not to create large shelters, but many small ones serving the SS men guarding the periphery of the camp.

In points 5 to 7 Crowell presents a remarkable example of false analogy. “#5 The German civil defense philosophy was that Luftschutzkreisen were designed to be fully integrated; in other words, you did not build just a few shelters for a few people, you endeavored to build shelters for everyone (“Defending,” Part 1). The presence of these trench shelters, in other words, strongly implies that fixed structures were also equipped with air raid shelters. #6 To put it another way, the presence of these trench shelters strongly argues that the crematoria were also equipped with their own air raid/gas shelters, because that accords with German LS policy. #7 Since #6 is the argument of “Technique”, we can safely argue that each crematorium had such air raid/gas shelters. But in that case, where were the gas chambers?” While it is true that the German civil defence system was based on the principle that in principle all citizens were to have equal access to air-raid shelters, one cannot argue that this philosophy also applied to the concentration camps, and certainly not to Jewish inmates imprisoned in those camps. Primo Levi recorded shortly after his return from Aus-

chwitz-Monowitz that, when in August 1944 the bombings began of the IG Farben Buna plant, the inmates were not allowed to seek shelter.

“Entry to the reinforced shelters was forbidden to us. When the earth began to tremble, we dragged ourselves, stunned and limping, through the corrosive fumes of the smoke bombs to the vast waste areas, sordid and sterile, closed within the boundary of the Buna: there we lay inert, piled up on top of each other like dead men, but still aware of the momentary pleasure of our bodies resting. We looked with indifferent eyes at the smoke and flames breaking out around us: in moments of quiet, full of the distant menacing roar that every European knows, we picked from the ground the stunted chicory leaves and dandelions, trampled on a hundred times, and chewed them slowly in silence.

When the alarm was over, we returned from all parts to our posts, a silent innumerable flock, accustomed to the anger of men and things; and continued that work of ours, as hated as ever, now even more obviously useless and restless.” Thus the presence of a few shelters for SS men does not imply the presence of shelters for the inmates. And certainly it does not lead to the conclusion that the crematoria would have been equipped with shelters. After all: if the narrow, uncomfortable concrete-reinforced trenches would have been good enough for the SS, why would the inmates have deserved better? Crowell assumed that “fixed structures were also equipped with air raid shelters.” It is up to him to show evidence for this. The only “fixed structure” in Auschwitz that was retro-actively fitted with an air raid shelter was crematorium 1. Located next to the SS hospital of Auschwitz I, it was to serve sick SS men. No other buildings were so equipped. This can be easily determined by means of an even cursory glance at the blueprints preserved in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oswiecim, or by visiting the remaining “fixed structures.” So therefore the reasoning that

1. there are trench shelters in Auschwitz *therefore*
2. the “fixed structures” in Auschwitz are equipped with shelters *therefore*
3. the crematoria are equipped with shelters *therefore*

4. the crematoria did not contain gas chambers fails.

For the record, I will provide the last two points Crowell made after having “proved” on the basis of the existence of trench air raid shelters that the gas chambers did not exist. “ #8 It is also noteworthy that the SS would go to so much time, expense and trouble, to build gas-tight air raid shelters for people who were supposed to be condemned to extermination. #9 It is furthermore noteworthy that neither Pressac, nor any establishment Holocaust historian, has ever bothered to even notice the importance of these civil defense measures. After all, if you have hundreds of air raid shelters, that’s a lot of gas tight doors.” I presume that, as one undoubtedly considered by Crowell as a “establishment Holocaust historian,” I stand accused for having so misinterpreted the kindness of the SS to the Jews, and for having so misunderstood the significance of all those gas tight doors. Yet as a scholar willing to change his mind whenever the evidence proves me wrong, I will just pose Crowell this one, simple question: “If there were so many hundreds of gas-tight air raid shelters, with so many hundreds of gas-tight doors, where are all those hundreds of gas-tight doors? Or if they were destroyed at the end of the war, where are in the archives references to all those hundreds of gas-tight doors? Where are the work-orders, where are the bills?” I only know of a very few references, and strangely enough those all seem to refer to doors and shutters used for spaces usually identified as homicidal gas chambers....

For all its idiocy, Crowell’s piece is without doubt the most substantial piece concerning Auschwitz to be found on Irving’s website. For the rest, Irving seems to use this medium as an electronic flea-market where he makes all his old ideas about Auschwitz available to the public. For example, he provides a full transcript of his 1988 testimony in the Zündel Trial as provided in Barbara Kulaszka’s partisan digest of the case entitled *Did Six Million Really Die?* With a foreword written by Robert Faurisson, Kulaszka’s 564-page long digest, which included the condensed version of The Leuchter Report (pages 469 to 502) was pub-

lished by Zündel's publishing venture Samisdat Publishers Ltd. in 1992. Or one can inspect at Irving's site one of his trumpcards: the passage from Professor Hinsley's book *British Intelligence in the Second World War* that notes that "[t]he returns from Auschwitz, the largest of the camps with 20,000 prisoners, mentioned illness as the main cause of death but included references to shootings and hangings. There were no references in the decrypts to gassing."

Many of the items Irving posts on his website aim at "poisoning the well." For example, one article entitled "On a Lecture to German Schoolchildren by Kasimierz Smolen, former director of the Auschwitz site," posts a picture of Smolen lecturing a group of adolescents. "A news item in the *Westfälische Nachrichten* Mar. 10, 1997 shows one Kasimierz Smolen, 76, identified as a former director of the Auschwitz museum 1955 to 1991, lecturing to two hundred innocent teenaged school boys and girls in an indoctrination class at the *Friedensschule* (Peace School) in Münster, Germany." At every point the article tries to discredit Smolen, or use him to discredit the testimony of other eyewitnesses. For example, Smolen is identified as "a clerk in the camp's Political Section, and from Aug. 1942 he was, he admitted, one of the hated 'Kapos.'" Irving's designation of Smolen as "one of the hated Kapos" is simply slanderous: Smolen remained employed as a clerk in the registry department throughout his stay in Auschwitz. What Irving does not mention is that Smolen was active in the camp resistance, Together with Ludwik Rajewski, Tadeusz Szymanski, Tadeusz Wasowicz and Jan Trebaczewski, Smolen collected evidence of the crimes the SS committed in Auschwitz by keeping at the risk of his own life a private record of the transports brought to the camp and the number of deportees admitted to the camp after selection. Yet Irving proves capable of turning Smolen's resistance activity to challenge the historical record concerning the selections. Smolen "claimed to have copied out a twenty-eight page summary of the arriving transports: the first rosta showed prisoner No.1 arriving on June 20, 1940...." "There were ten-

wty-six pages of Frauentransporte (women's transports)--No. 1 arrived on Mar. 23, 1942 and No. 75, 697 on Feb. 26, 1944 (Smolen thus seemingly discounts the heart-rending stories of separations of man from wife as they stepped off the train onto the dreaded "Ramp" at Auschwitz." Contrary to Irving's suggestion, the two lists of male and female prisoners, made upon their registration into the camp, does not contain any information about the way these inmates had arrived in Auschwitz. They contain no information if the transports were all male, or all female, or mixed. Irving's comment in the parentheses either shows his ignorance of the nature of the lists, or his partisan view of Smolen. It certainly does not testify to his ability as a historian. "After the decision to go for the final solution, taken, Smolen assured the teenagers, at the (Jan. 1942) Wannsee conference, a death machine without parallel had been installed at his camp, with between seventy and ninety percent of arriving Jews taken direct from the railroad ramp to the gas chambers as they were unfit for work. (Anne Frank's family evidently escaped this drama: all three members survived at the camp from 1944 until her father fell ill; he was being cared for in the S.S. hospital, when he was liberated in Jan. 1945; and her sister died of typhus, to which plague the wretched Anne herself, like hundreds of thousands of others, also succumbed after being evacuated from the camp in 1945 to Bergen-Belsen.)"

One must admit to a certain sense of awe when confronted with Irving's attempt to suggest that the history of the Frank family casts doubt on the alleged role of Auschwitz as an extermination camp. A quick consideration of the facts of the case, however, makes clear that once more his challenge has no other base than a combination of (at best) ignorance and the fallacy of composition, added to which is (likely) a good dose of special pleading and a tendency to discredit in advance any evidence contrary to Irving's position on Auschwitz. On August 4, 1944 the Franks were found and arrested. The 55-year old Otto Heinrich Frank, the 44-year old Edith Frank-Holländer, the 18-

year old Margot Betty Frank and the 15-year old Annelies Marie Frank had been relatively well fed and were in good health. After a four-week stay in the transit camp at Westerbork, where their condition did not deteriorate, the Franks were deported to Auschwitz on September 2, 1944--their train was the last transport from Holland to Auschwitz. One September 5 the train arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the 1,019 deportees were subjected to selection. In total 258 men and 212 women were admitted to the camp, the rest were killed in the crematoria. Both because of their age and their health, all the Franks fitted the category of those deemed "fit for work." Otto was brought in Auschwitz I, Edith, Margot and Anne in the women's camp in Birkenau. In the end of October the SS began the evacuation of the camp, and on October 28 Margot and Edith were put on transport to Bergen-Belsen. Edith remained behind, and given her deteriorating health probably would have been killed in the gas chambers if not for Himmler's order to dismantle the killing installations. Edith was brought to the inmate infirmary in the women's camp, and died there on January 6, 1945. Otto survived because, through the intervention of a Dutch doctor, he was admitted to the infirmary in Auschwitz 1, where he was liberated by the Russians on January 27, 1945. While he received no treatment in the infirmary, he was spared the beatings he had received before. The more than six-feet tall Otto weighed 114 pounds when the Russians arrived. Margot and Anne, fatally weakened by the journey from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen, succumbed to the typhus epidemic that killed 17,000 inmates in March, 1945.

Like the hiding experience of the Franks between 1942 and 1944, their sojourn in Auschwitz was not typical. When they arrived in the camp the killing of those *considered to be on arrival* as "unfit for work" was still going on on a daily basis but, owing to the increasing scarcity of labour and the increasingly important role of concentration camps as pools of forced labour, the SS had decided to lengthen the average lifespan of the inmates destined for ultimate elimination. Therefore the camp

routine which had been absolutely murderous two years earlier had been made somewhat more bearable for the inmates, and the killings at the whim of individual Kapos and SS guards had stopped. As a result, the decline of health of the Franks was slower than it would have been under “normal” Auschwitz conditions. By the time that their health had deteriorated to such a point that, under the normal camp regime as it had existed between 1942 and 1944, they would have been selected for the gas chambers in one of the regularly occurring selections within the women’s and men’s camps, the machinery of death was already in a state of dissolution: the last selection for the gas chambers to which the Frank women could have been subjected, which occurred in the infirmary in the women’s camp, happened on October 20, 1944--that is eight weeks after their arrival. By the time Otto Frank was taken in the infirmary, selections of male inmates had come to an end.

In conclusion: any attempt to take the exceptional experience of the Franks--none of them was gassed in Auschwitz--as a basis for a universal conclusion--therefore no gassings took place in Auschwitz--is a classic example of the fallacy of converse accident, or tabloid thinking. This form of argument has been a favourite device of propagandists, and has no place in historical discourse.

The rest of the article on Kasimierz Smolen’s lecture continued to present speculative arguments, misinformation, and *non sequiturs*. “The German newspaper reports alas little of the subsequent discussion: no doubt some of the brighter children will have asked Smolen--who miraculously survived Hitler’s Final Solution although languishing five years within Auschwitz as a Pole, a Jew, a resistance fighter, and a communist--about his different evidence at the Nuremberg Trials, about the fake (“reconstructed”) gas chamber and crematorium chimney erected at the Auschwitz museum site in 1948, and about why he continued to pass this building off as genuine for thirty-five years; and about that tablet of stone erected under his stewardship

commemorating “over four million” liquidated at the camp, a figure which the communist Smolen defended rigidly until his enforced resignation in July 1990.” For the record: Mr. Smolen survived “Hitler’s Final Solution” because he was a gentile, and not a Jew. And Smolen did encourage Dr. Piper’s path-breaking research into the number of victims, and endorsed his conclusions during the internal review in 1986. Still under his directorship, the Auschwitz museum moved in 1990 to change the official assessment of the number of victims from the range of 2.5 million to 4 million to a range between 1 and 1.5 million victims. As director Smolen endorsed this change, yet privately he did state that while he believed that while Piper’s minimum numbers were solid, he did not rule out the small possibility that the real number of victims would have been higher. Asked about the 4 million number, he stated that “while in my opinion no-one can deny with absolute certainty the number of 4 million, it must however be considered to be unlikely.” Given the great emotional issues attached to the change in the official victim count of Auschwitz, I easily can understand why Smolen preferred to make the statement the way he did. I cannot understand, however, how Irving could see Smolen’s general endorsement of Piper’s calculations as a rigid defence of the Soviet figure.

Let us continue towards the end of Irving’s discussion of Smolen’s Münster lecture. “The figure on the stone tablet was erased immediately, and replaced some years later, grudgingly, with one alleging the deaths of one million. There is no doubt that large numbers of Jews and other innocents died at Auschwitz. The circumstances are however very much in dispute, and the true figure is coming down with each week that passes.” Given the enthusiastic support of the staff of the museum and the International Council that oversees the museum, I do not see any reason for the adverb “grudgingly.” Furthermore there is no justification for the clause “and the true figure is coming down

with each week that passes.” Neither the museum nor legitimate historians working in the field have proposed a major revision of Piper’s number of victims.

The article ended with another speculative argument followed by some misinformation, which has no bearing on Smolen’s Münster lecture, but offers once more insight in Irving’s current position concerning the war-time history of Auschwitz. “Some children may even have asked about the forensic tests conducted by Fred Leuchter, by Germar Rudolf, by the Jan Sehn institute of Kraków and by other bodies, all of which show no trace of cyanide-compound residues in the alleged homicidal structures.” It is unlikely that these “children”--I presume Irving calls these high school students “children” as it allows him to invoke the fairy tale of the Emperor’s New Clothes--would have asked about Leuchter, Rudolf, and the late Professor Markiewicz. But if they did, then it is possible, yes even probable, that Smolen would have told them about the final conclusion of the report that came from the Jan Sehn Institute in Cracow: “The present study shows that in spite of the passage of a considerable period of time (over 45 years) in the walls of the facilities which once were in contact with hydrogen cyanide the vestigial amounts of the combinations of this constituent of Zyklon B had been preserved. This is also true of the ruins of the former gas chambers. The cyanide compounds occur in the building materials only locally, in the places where the conditions arose for their formation and persistence for such a long time.” All-in-all, Irving’s account of Smolen’s lecture offers little except negationist propaganda.

One can go on, and subject every offering at Irving’s website to similar kinds of criticism. The overriding aim of the various items presenting eye-witness-testimony is to discredit them. For example, Irving presents under the general heading of “Liars and other eye-witnesses” an article that appeared under the headline “Book ‘An Artistic Picture’: Survivor never saw actual gassing deaths” in the *Toronto Star* on January 24, 1985. It reported on Christie’s bullying cross-examination of

Vrba during the Zündel Trial. “Defence attorney Doug Christie, of Victoria, challenged Vrba’s earlier testimony that he saw a Nazi SS soldier in a gas mask pouring poison gas into a lower bunker connected to a Birkenau crematorium. Vrba yesterday admitted he was never inside that particular bunker, after Christie suggested it was the roof of a mortuary Vrba had seen, not a gas chamber.” One wonders, of course, how Vrba’s observation of an SS man pouring Zyklon B into the underground space can be discredited by his admission that he never was in that underground space. But Irving has no difficulty in quickly condemning Vrba as a “liar,” throwing in an editorial aside even doubt on Vrba’s 1944 escape from Auschwitz, adding to this the suggestion of a widespread conspiracy concocted by Slovak Jews and the American Jew Henry Morgenthau.... “IT IS WORTH COMMENTING that Rudolf Vrba, alias Walter Rosenberg, is not just any survivor: he and a certain Wetzler claimed to have escaped the camp in the spring of 1944, and it was their horrific eye-witness account, edited by the Slovakian Jewish community leaders, which was released in November 1944 by the War Refugee Board in Washington (in fact by Henry Morgenthau acting behind the back of, and against the wishes of, the two other Board members Henry Stimson and Cordell Hull).”

For the record, here an excerpt from the 1985 proceedings of the first Zündel Trial. Vrba had told the court that he had escaped Auschwitz in April 1944 in order to warn the Jewish community in Hungary that the crematoria were prepared for them. Then he told the court that, soon after the Hungarian action had begun, the Auschwitz crematoria became overloaded, and the Sonderkommando began to incinerate bodies in large incineration pits. During cross-examination, Christie wasted no time to use this statement to discredit the testimony of Vrba. “[Mr. Christie]: “Did you see one body being taken out of the crematorium and hauled to a pit?” [Mr. Vrba]: “This happened in May and June and July 1944. And I escaped in April. In other words--” Q.: “The answer is no.” A.: “In other words, I have not [been] present during the

mass murder of the Hungarian Jews. Indeed, my job was to escape from Auschwitz before this mass murder started and to warn them.” Q.: “In spite of the fact that you weren’t a witness to such a thing, you have told us these things were fact. Right?” A.: “These things can be considered as a fact. Also, I haven’t been on the moon. I consider it a fact that somebody landed on the moon, and that the picture was not made in the Star Trek atelier because there are certain informations that a person doesn’t doubt. If I used your logic, you can come to me and say that the earth is flat. Everybody can see it, and I can’t prove otherwise, and the astronauts who went to the moon, they were filmed with an atelier together with Star Trek, and all of this was invented. How can I object against this argument?”

Vrba’s anguished outburst may not have measured up to the decorum of judicial proceedings. But for anyone who has been forced to deal for months on end with the dismal sophistries of men like Christie, and the relentless ability of the people on whose behalf he acted to interminably offer new suggestions to deny the obvious, Vrba’s sense of utter exhaustion and despondency with the whole affair rings only all-too-true. And so I use him to bring my report to closure--despite the fact that in this day and age of chameleonesque media, which allow for a continuous changing and updating of information, endings have become almost impossible to achieve. One knows that in such a world one can only repeat Samuel Beckett’s Clov: “Let’s stop playing.”

“Hamm: “Never!” (*Pause*) “Put me in my coffin.” Clov: “There are no more coffins.” Hamm: “Then let it end!....With a bang!” *With a bang* . . .

As I wrote at the beginning of this report, Resnais’ and Cayrol’s 1955 movie *Night and Fog* provided my entrance into the world of the camps. As I have come to the end the descriptive part of this report, I will leave you with the haunting words which, at some time in the early 1970s, sent me on my way to become a student of the history of Auschwitz--a history that included and continues to include, as we have seen, its

own negation and as such refuses to be imprisoned in the past--a history which, unless studied, understood, properly (re)presented, and taught, could generate a new and awful present.

Night and Fog ends with an evocation how, at the end of the war, the concentration camp universe collapsed under its own weight, to leave mountains of unburied corpses, dazed "survivors," and the people who designed and operated the camps. "A Kapo, a Junker, and then an earnest, pleasant-looking young man testify in court. "I am not responsible," says the Kapo. "I am not responsible," says the officer. "I am not responsible." A final look at a mountain of naked, mutilated corpses. "Then who is responsible?" (Into color): Moving over a rich field with flowers; the twigs and rocks on the ground are reminiscent of the human bones. "At the moment I speak to you, the icy water of the ponds and ruins is filling up the hollows of the charnel house. A water as cold and murky as our own bad memories. war is napping, but with one eye always open.' Moving along the sunny landscape, flowers swaying in the breeze; the camps are in the background. "The faithful grass has come up again on the *Appelplatz*, around the cell blocks. An abandoned village, but still full of peril." Still moving: crematorium ruins; twisted wires; broken watchtowers; crumbled chambers; slabs of cracked concrete; abstract figures in stone. "The crematorium is no longer in use. The devices of the Nazis are out of date. Nine million dead haunt this landscape. Who is on the lookout from this strange tower to warn us of the coming of new executioners? Are their faces really different from our own? Somewhere among us, there are lucky Kapos, reinstated officers, and unknown informers. There are those who refused to believe this, or believed it only from time to time. And there are those of us who sincerely look upon the ruins today, as if the old concentration camp monster were dead and buried beneath them. Those who pretend to take hope again as the image fades, as though there were a cure for the plague of these camps. Those of us who pre-

tend to believe that all this happened only once, at a certain time and in a certain place, and those who refuse to see, who do not hear the cry to the end of time.”

CONCLUSION

In the case of David John Cawdell Irving, plaintiff, and Penguin Books Limited and Deborah E. Lipstadt, defendants, there are a number of points of contention that touched my own expertise as a scholar of Auschwitz. At the end of my report, I believe that it is indeed possible to reduce the issues at stake to the ten questions asked in the Introduction. Four of which concern the history of Auschwitz:

- (i) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz was equipped with homicidal gas chambers, and has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that these gas chambers were systematically used?
- (ii) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz functioned between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944 as an extermination camp for Jews?
- (iii) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that most of the Jews who arrived in Auschwitz were murdered shortly after their arrival in the aforesaid gas chambers?
- (iv) Has it been established beyond reasonable doubt how many Jews were killed in the gas chambers upon arrival in Auschwitz, how many Jews were killed or died from the effect of general deprivation, exhaustion or disease whilst in the camp, and how many others died in the camp as the result of various causes? Six questions concern the plaintiff:
- (v) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that Auschwitz had homicidal gas chambers and that these gas chambers were systematically used?
- (vi) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that Auschwitz functioned between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944 as an extermination camp for Jews?
- (vii) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that most of the Jews who arrived in Auschwitz were murdered shortly after their arrival in the aforesaid gas chambers?

(vii) Did David John Cawdell Irving frivolously deny, without having done any serious research in the matter, the results of responsible scholars into the number of people who died in Auschwitz?

(ix) Did David John Cawdell Irving ally himself with well-known Holocaust deniers, including individuals such as Dr Robert Faurisson, and Ernst Zündel?

(x) Is David John Cawdell Irving a Holocaust denier?

I will review these questions one by one:

(i) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz was equipped with homicidal gas chambers, and has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that these gas chambers were systematically used?

The answer is yes: the “intentional evidence” given by former inmates and the most important perpetrators is corroborated by the “non-intentional evidence” provided by the documents in the archive of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office, the results of the forensic investigations done in 1945 by Jan Sehn and Roman Dawidowski, and the testing of samples of the walls of the gas chamber of crematorium 1 and the ruins of the gas chambers of crematoria 2, 3, 4 and 5. The attempts by Holocaust deniers such as Rassinier, Faurisson, Butz, Stäglich and Leuchter to discredit the evidence on the basis of hermeneutic analysis of “intentional evidence” and scientific analysis of the “non-intentional evidence” has been shown to be of little or no significance, and do not discredit the overwhelming evidence that converges on the conclusion that Auschwitz was equipped with homicidal gas chambers and that these gas chambers were systematically used.

(ii) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that Auschwitz functioned between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944 as an extermination camp for Jews?

The answer is yes: the “intentional evidence” given by former inmates and the most important perpetrators is corroborated by the “non-intentional evidence” provided by the records of transports to Auschwitz. The attempts by Holocaust deniers such as Christophersen and

Stäglich to discredit the evidence on the basis of their own eye-witness testimony has been shown to be of no significance, and do not discredit the overwhelming evidence that converges on the conclusion that Auschwitz was a place where Jews were systematically put to death.

(iii) Has it been proven beyond reasonable doubt that most of the Jews who arrived in Auschwitz were murdered shortly after their arrival in the aforesaid gas chambers?

The answer is yes: the “intentional evidence” given by former inmates is corroborated by the “intentional evidence” given by the perpetrators. Deliberate murder was the main cause of death in Auschwitz, and not the effects of general deprivation, exhaustion or disease, or the effects of allied bombing on inmates evacuated as Irving speculated to Dresden in early 1945.

(iv) Has it been established beyond reasonable doubt killed in the gas chambers upon arrival in Auschwitz, how many Jews were killed or died from the effect of incidental cruelty, general deprivation, disease whilst in the camp, and how many others died in the camp as the result of various causes?

The answer is probably: the “intentional evidence” given by Höss is can be largely corroborated by the “non-intentional evidence” provided by the records of the transports to Auschwitz, and demographical studies that study total Jewish mortality of all causes during the Holocaust and subtracts from this number the mortality caused by deprivation in the ghettos, open-air shootings, and killings in the Operation Reinhard camps and other concentration camps. Probably between 800,000 and 900,000 Jews were killed in Auschwitz upon arrival at the camp as part of the state-initiated and state-sponsored “Final Solution of the Jewish Question,” to which must be added another 100,000 Jews who died in the camp from the effect of incidental cruelty, general deprivation, exhaustion or disease. This brings a total of between 900,000 and 1,000,000 Jewish victims of Auschwitz. In addition to which “120,000 other inmates” (or “another 120,000 in-

mates”) died in the camp as the result of German policy or negligence. The largest sub-group of these victims were the Poles (74,000), followed by Romani people (21,000) and Soviet prisoners-of-war (15,000). Holocaust deniers such as Irving have not been able to create a substantial challenge against this assessment of the total mortality of Auschwitz.

Six questions concern the plaintiff, and I will consider them one by one:

(v) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that Auschwitz had homicidal gas chambers and that these gas chambers were systematically used?

The answer is yes: He has done so at various occasions, for example in the flyer that announced the publication of the Leuchter Report (1989), in his open letter to Hugh Dykes, M. P.(1989), in his lectures in Moers and Toronto (1990), in his presentation at the Tenth International Revisionist Conference (1990), and in his lecture in Milton, Ontario (1991).

(vi) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that Auschwitz functioned between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944 as an extermination camp for Jews?

The answer is yes: he did so explicitly or implicitly at the occasions mentioned above.

(vii) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny that most of the Jews who arrived in Auschwitz were murdered shortly after their arrival in the aforesaid gas chambers?

The answer is yes: whenever he addressed the issue specifically, he preferably sought to blame the responsibility for their deaths on the effects of the allied bombing raids. See the Leuchter Report press conference (1990) and his lecture “The Search for Truth in History Banned” (1993).

(vii) Did David John Cawdell Irving deny, without having done any serious research in the matter, the results of studies into the number of people who died in Auschwitz done by responsible scholars?

The answer is yes: he did so in his presentation at the Tenth International Revisionist Conference (1990) and in his lecture “The Search for Truth in History Banned “ (1993).

(ix) Did David John Cawdell Irving ally himself with well-known Holocaust deniers, including individuals such as Dr Robert Faurisson, and Ernst Zündel, and institutions like the Institute for Historical Review?

The answer is yes: since 1988 Irving has had a business relationship with Ernst Zündel, was in frequent contact with Dr. Robert Faurisson, and essentially adopted the latter’s brand of Holocaust denial when he endorsed and published the Leuchter report.

(x) Was David John Cawdell Irving by the time Deborah Lipstadt’s *Denying the Holocaust* went to press a Holocaust denier?

The answer is yes.

I have been advised by my Instructing Solicitors of my overriding duty to the Court which I understand is paramount in my role as an expert of the Court. I understand that I am to assist the Court in all matters within my expertise regardless of whom my instructions are from and who is paying my fee. I confirm that this report is impartial, objective and unbiased and has been produced independently of the exigencies of this litigation.

I believe that the facts I have stated in this report are true, and that the opinions I have expressed are correct.

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