

Auschwitz: Technique & Operation of the Gas Chambers

Or,

*Improvised Gas Chambers & Casual Gassings
at Auschwitz & Birkenau,
According to J.C. Pressac (1989)*

Part I

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Jean-Claude Pressac's massive study of the homicidal gas chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau appeared two years ago. Had it actually presented the slightest proof for the existence of the alleged gas chambers, media throughout the entire world would have resounded with the news. But instead of an uproar, there has been silence. The explanation for this silence lies in the fact that the author, far from presenting the expected proof, has unintentionally proved that the Revisionists were correct to conclude from their own researches that the gas chambers were only mythical. As will be seen, the Pressac book is a calamity for the Exterminationists, a windfall for the Revisionists.

Since 1978, there have been innumerable books, documents, and films supposed to prove, once and for all, the reality of the Hitlerian gas chambers. For their part, the professors and researchers, who made the rounds from conferences on the "Holocaust" to colloquia on the "Shoah," promised us that, on this subject, we were about to hear the last word. But when all was said and done, nothing surfaced in fulfillment of the expectations which had been created. Nothing. Ever.

Nevertheless, the appearance of these books, documents, and films as well as the staging of the conferences and colloquia was usually accompanied by an ephemeral media brouhaha or the appearance of intellectual ferment, as if

something new had actually been produced. The fever fell rapidly, but for some days at least the illusion of an event had been created.

Nothing of the sort with Pressac's book. This time the silence was shattering. A single journalist remarked upon the book: Richard Bernstein, whose article appeared in the *New York Times* of December 18, 1989 (section C, p. 11, 14). The title of this article and the photograph taken from Pressac to illustrate it are indicative of the reporter's confusion. The headline reads: "A New Book Is Said to Refute Revisionist View of Holocaust."

The photograph shows a wooden door with a metal frame and, in the center, a peephole; moreover, one sees chalked on the door German and Russian words. The *Times* caption reads:

A photograph of a gas chamber door from the book "Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers." A warning written on the door after the camp's liberation reads "Attention! Danger! No entry!"

The journalist is honest enough to stress that the writing on the door stems from after the war but doesn't reveal to the reader that this photograph is presented by Pressac himself in the chapter on gas chambers... for *disinfection* (p. 50). Truth to tell, the unfortunate journalist could have found none better: among the hundreds of photographs and documents in this tedious tome, it is impossible to find a single one which could be decently presented as proof of the existence of a single gas chamber.

In a different edition of the *New York Times* published on the same date, an identical article (Section B, p. 1, 4) appeared under a different title: "Auschwitz: A Doubter Verifies the Horror."

This time, Bernstein chose a photograph of a blueprint of a crematorium and a photograph of prisoners carrying their shoes after showering. The first photograph comes from page 141 of the book, on which the blueprint is said to concern a crematorium *without a homicidal gas chamber*. The second photograph is taken from page 80, where the naked men are said to be prisoners who, with their shoes in hand, are leaving the shower room for the "drying room; clean side," both rooms in a large installation for showering and disinfection.

The content of this article would bear reproduction in full for its author's circumspection regarding Pressac. And, as we've seen, none of the three photographs supports the thesis of an extermination in gas chambers.

In France there has been brief mention, here and there, of the Pressac book, with the air of a drowning man's last grasp at a straw. In this regard, the case of Pierre Vidal-Naquet is heart-rending. This professor has, in recent years, championed two authors whom he counted on to answer the Revisionists: Arno Mayer and Jean-Claude Pressac or, as he described them, an American Jewish historian "teaching at the very elitist Princeton University" and a Frenchman, "suburban pharmacist, trained in and practicing chemistry" (Arno Mayer, *La "Solution finale" dans l'histoire*, Preface by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *La Découverte*, 1990, p. viii). His colleague and friend Arno Mayer has just done him a nasty turn by writing:

Sources for the study of the gas chambers are at once rare and unreliable. (English original text: *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?: The "Final Solution" in History*, New York, Pantheon, 1988, p. 362).

Which led Pierre Vidal-Naquet to write:

Nobody at all, from now on—I mean after Jean-Claude Pressac's book—will be able any longer to speak, regarding the gas chambers of Auschwitz, like Mayer of "rare and unreliable" sources. (French edition, p. ix)

But what Vidal-Naquet prefers to ignore is that Pressac, too, has unintentionally made a fool of him (see below, p. 43, note 2).

Neither Arno Mayer nor Jean-Claude Pressac has succeeded in discovering the slightest proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz or at Birkenau.

An Author and a Book That Are Concealed from Us

So, J.C. Pressac is a pharmacist. He practices in the Parisian suburbs, at La Ville de Bois (Essonne). Around 1979-1980, he first offered his services to the Revisionists, who ended up in dismissing him; about 1981-1982, he besieged Georges Wellers, director of *Le Monde Juif*, who finally sent him on his way; then he presented his services to the Klarsfelds, who still use him today, but in an odd manner. Serge and Beate Klarsfeld have not published his book in its original French version, but in an English translation in America. It is unobtainable from the indicated address: The Beate Klarsfeld

Foundation, 515 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10002. One might say that this odd work has been placed under lock and key, in a few tabernacles, and is accessible only to a handful of the elect. In January 1990 I was able to obtain a copy by chance.

In October 1990, during my trip to Washington, I visited those two sanctuaries of international research, the Library of Congress and the National Archive and, out of simple curiosity, asked to see the book. Impossible; it was, to be sure, listed in the general catalogue, but oddly absent from the shelves, with no one able to explain its absence.

When Pressac, who has a burning desire to speak on the radio and at conferences, makes an appearance, one has the feeling that his handlers are attempting either to cut him short or to keep him altogether silent. Thus he was recently forbidden to speak at an anti-Revisionist colloquium organized at Lyon by the Union of Jewish Students of France and the Council of Representatives of Jewish Institutions of France; a journalist wrote: "[J. C. Pressac], who was present, could not even present his work yesterday, and he took it badly" (*Lyon Matin*, April 24, 1990, p. 7).

His friends have good reasons for confining him to a minor role; they know that, as soon as Pressac opens his mouth, they must fear the worst for their own cause: the whole world could then become aware that the unfortunate pharmacist suffers grave difficulties in expressing himself, that he advocates a horribly confused thesis and that he takes a real joy in making blunders.

A Windfall for the Revisionists

I will consider Pressac's book at some length for the following reasons:

1) The work is absurd to the point of zaniness and on that ground constitutes a historical and literary curiosity which the historian has no right to ignore; the author's mental fragility, combined with his taste for cooking his data, for padding his figures, for strewing sand in his critics' eyes and for making assertions without evidence provides a treat in itself for the connoisseur of eccentricity;

2) The thesis defended by Pressac illustrates the state of decomposition into which the theory of the extermination of the Jews has fallen; according to our pharmacist, one can no longer maintain, as did the judges at Nuremberg and the authorities at the Auschwitz State Museum, that the Germans

deliberately built vast gas chambers, veritable factories for gassing at Auschwitz, which functioned impeccably for years; for Pressac, the Germans tinkered with innocent rooms to transform them, for better or worse, into homicidal gas chambers (in the case of two large crematoria) and carried out improvised and episodic gassings (in the case of two other crematoria); in short, to use expressions I've heard many times from the mouth of our subject, at Auschwitz and at Birkenau there was a good deal of "improvisation" and "casual gassing": these words sum up Pressac's book in its entirety;

3) This voluminous compilation is like a mountain which gave birth to a mouse, and the mouse is Revisionist; indeed, the little of substance which one draws from reading Pressac fully confirms that the Revisionists were—and are—right;

4) For the first time, an Exterminationist agrees, apparently at least, to a debate with Revisionists on terrain dear to them: that of scientific and technical argumentation; the opportunity to demonstrate the impotence of the Exterminationists on this terrain as well is too good to be missed.

A Deceptive Title

Pressac has chosen a deceptive title for his book. He devotes not a single chapter to *homicidal* gas chambers and even less to the "technique" or to the "operation" of such chambers. He never stops asserting that these chambers existed, but nowhere does he demonstrate this. Often I've done the following: opening the book to a half-dozen different pages, I've invited people to confirm that each time, without exception, either there's no question of homicidal gas chambers, or the *question of the homicidal gas chambers is conflated with something different*; or finally, according to the author himself, it's a matter not of "proof" but of "clues" and "traces" of the gas chambers. Chapters are allotted to Zyklon B, to delousing installations, to the *Zentral Sauna* (a large complex of showers and disinfection equipment located at Birkenau), to crematoria, to testimonies, to the Revisionists, to the town of Auschwitz and to the private life of J.C. Pressac. There are treatments in detail, invariably confused, of faucets, of plumbing, of ventilation, of stairs, of masonry, of heating, and even fairly intimate personal revelations, all in the worst disorder and in a style never anything but baffling. On the gas chambers described as *homicidal*, however, one finds not a single chapter nor even so much as a single autonomous

treatment which can be detached for a second from the whole for study on its own.

Pressac wishes to deceive us utterly; or more specifically, to mistake showers, disinfection gas chambers, and morgues for homicidal gas chambers.

Scribbler's Methods:

Disinfection Gas Chambers or Homicidal Gas Chambers?

Pressac in no way respects his book's plan. The disorder is general. The book swarms with needless repetitions. The technical discussions are disjointed. The book's title justified one in expecting a technical treatment, thoroughly documented, of the "murder weapon."

Since, according to the author, at Auschwitz and at Birkenau there was a considerable number of disinfection gas chambers (p. 550) and because such chambers could not, for obvious physical reasons, be used for killing people, how is a homicidal gas chamber to be distinguished from a disinfection gas chamber?

Since, according to the author, in one document (p. 28) the words *Gaskammer* (gas chamber), *Gastür* or *gasdichte Tür* (gas-tight door), *Rahmen* (frame), *Spion* (peephole) are all employed for a disinfection gassing, how are the words *gasdichte Tür* alone suddenly able, in another document, to supply proof of a homicidal gassing?

Doesn't one risk, at every moment, believing he's discovered a homicidal gas chamber where, in reality, the German document speaks only of a disinfection gas chamber?

Left with no criterion, without the least direction, we are condemned, from the opening pages of this utterly disorganized book, to doubt, to uncertainty, to the worst errors, and all that while wandering through a maze of heterogeneous reflections by the author.

I awaited with curiosity Pressac's response to these elementary questions. Not merely did he fail to give us answers, but he confessed his own embarrassment and, as we shall see, he devised a pitiful technical explanation to extract himself from the mess. Here is what he has written:

Since the homicidal and delousing gas chambers using Zyclon-B [sic] had been installed and equipped according to the same principle, they had identical gas-tight doors fabricated in the same workshops [at Auschwitz]. Confusion [...] was

inevitable, since at this time it was not known how to distinguish between the two types of gas chamber. [...]. The only difference is in the gas-tight doors: there is a hemispherical grid protecting the peephole on the interior of the doors of homicidal gas chambers.

The author returns to this subject on page 49 and above all on page 50, as if there he had a technical proof, a material proof of the existence of the famous homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz. This apparent proof is based on two photographs of poor quality. On the left is the exterior of a gas-tight door with a peephole and, on the right, the interior side of this same door with a peephole protected by a hemispherical grid. It is this grid which makes the difference between the door of a homicidal gas chamber and the door of a disinfection gas chamber: it protects the peephole; thanks to it, the victims could not break the glass through which the SS were watching them! On page 50, Pressac is not so affirmative; he writes that this protective grid "makes it reasonable to conclude a homicidal use." But, nearly 200 pages later, he reproduces the two photos again, but with a different caption; this time, more boldly, he states plainly that it concerns (indisputably) "a gas-tight door from a homicidal gas chamber (as can be seen by the heavy hemispherical grill protecting the inspection peephole on the inside)" (p. 232). There one sees a characteristic example of Pressac's inability to put his thoughts in order, of his endless repetitions, of his mania for passing from hypothetical statement to pure affirmation on the same subject. The reader's confusion grows when, another couple of hundred pages further, he discovers a photograph of a wooden door with the following caption:

An almost intact gas-tight door found in the ruins of the western part of Krematorium V [...]. *This door has no peephole* [emphasis in the original] even though it was used for homicidal gassings (p. 425).

But how does Pressac know that this door was used [sic] for such gassings?

The Pressacian confusion probably reaches its height when, at the end of the book, the photograph of a small brick building at Stutthof-Danzig is presented to us in these terms:

[...] This chamber, originally used for delousing effects, was later used as a homicidal gassing chamber. This mixed usage is an extreme example of the confusion created over a period of thirty years and more by the difficulty of distinguishing

between, or the deliberate refusal to distinguish between, disinfection and homicidal gas chambers (p. 541).

In the end the reader is unable to understand what, for Pressac, constitutes the physical characteristics of a homicidal gas chamber at Auschwitz, or of even a mere gas chamber door at the camp. It is the author who, according to his whim, decides to class as homicidal this chamber or that door, which in fact could have been entirely innocent.

But, to return to the grill which so preoccupies him, our pharmacist ought to have consulted an expert in disinfection gas chambers and asked him, for example, the following question: didn't the grill simply protect either the extremity of a device to measure the temperature of the chamber, or a cylinder for chemically testing the density of the gas? (See *The Leuchter Report* [David Clark, P.O. Box 726, Decatur, Alabama 35602], 1989, p. 16, column C, and J.C. Pressac himself, "Les Carences et Incohérences du Rapport Leuchter," *Jour J, La lettre télégraphique juive*, December 1988, p. viii, where there is mention of the "thermometer" of a disinfection gas chamber at Majdanek.)

The confusion between disinfection gassings and homicidal gassings continues with the business of the trucks which left Auschwitz to pick up Zyklon-B at the factory in Dessau, a city south of Berlin. Pressac cites "movement authorizations," of which Revisionists are perfectly aware (p. 188). In my *Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet* (La Vieille Taupe, 2nd ed., 1982, p. 40), I reproduced the text of a radio message dated July 22, 1942, signed by General Glücks and addressed to the Auschwitz concentration camp:

By this [radio message] I authorize a round-trip journey from Auschwitz to Dessau by 5-ton truck in order to pick up gas intended for gassing the camp to combat the epidemic that has broken out.

The German words are "Gas für Vergasung": gas for gassing. Here, and in two other documents of the same type, it is expressly a question of gassing for disinfection (July 22 and 29, 1942 as well as January 7, 1943). In the meantime, on August 26 and October 2, 1942, two other documents of the same sort speak of "material for special treatment" and "material for the transport of the Jews." There Pressac sees proof that, *both times*, what is meant is gas for killing the Jews! This is no proof at all. As the general context (three other texts of the same sort) demonstrates, the gas was for disinfecting clothing or rooms

on account of the arrival of the Jews who had been deported. The term “special treatment” (*Sonderbehandlung*) here designates transport (*Transportierung*) of the Jews (*Réponse à Vidal-Naquet, op. cit., p. 24*). The more people arrived at Auschwitz, which functioned as a turntable for redistributing a large number of deportees to other camps after a quarantine period, the more necessary was Zyklon-B.

The Six Gassing Locations According to Establishment History and to Pressac

These six places are, first, *Krematorium I* or *Krema I* (also called *Altes Krematorium* [Old Crematorium]), located in the main camp of Auschwitz and visited by innumerable tourists (it is presented as if in its original state); then, located at Birkenau, *Bunkers I and II* (their location is not very certain); *Krematoria* or *Kremas II and III* (in ruins which can be investigated) and *Kremas IV and V* (of which there remain only traces).

According to Pressac, *Krema I* was planned with criminal intent and the homicidal gassings in the crematorium constitute an “established fact.” But he offers only assertions unsupported by any arguments, any documents, and, in the 38 pages he devotes to this building (pp. 123-160), he is content essentially to report *testimonies* of gassings rather than proof. These testimonies, to which I shall return, leave one absolutely unsatisfied. He recalls, following the Revisionists, how after the liberation of the camp the Poles altered and disguised this crematorium so better to convince visitors of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber. The tricks were many. It was, for example, to conceal some of them that the Poles, Pressac tells us, covered the roof with “roofing felt” (p. 133). The loveliest of these ruses, discovered by the Revisionists and reiterated by Pressac (p. 147), is the pretended door for victims entering the gas chamber; in reality, this door was constructed much later by the Germans to give access to the air-raid shelter into which the structure had been converted. In short, for Pressac, what the tourists visit today is to be considered an “authentic symbol of homicidal gassings at Auschwitz” (p. 133), which is to say an imaginary representation, because, here, a symbol is not a reality and an “authentic symbol” is still further from reality.

In the conclusion to this section, he plays a real sleight-of-hand trick. He appeals to the Leuchter Report as the material proof—the only one—of the reality of homicidal gassings in that place. He says that Fred Leuchter, whose qualifications he cites, removed seven samples of brick and cement and that upon analysis six of them revealed the presence of cyanide; then he writes in bold-face type:

These results, virtually all (6 out of 7) positive, prove the use [of] hydrocyanic acid in the "Leichenhalle" of Krematorium I, hence its use as a homicidal gas chamber.

Pressac omits stating that Leuchter:

—came to exactly the opposite conclusion: for Leuchter, a gas chamber did not exist and could not exist there;

—based his findings on physical inspection;

—reinforced this finding with chemical analyses entrusted to an American laboratory; these analyses revealed that, in the alleged homicidal gas chamber, the amount of ferric-ferrocyanide was either zero or infinitesimal by comparison with samples from a disinfection gas chamber (recognized as such by the authorities of the camp museum), which had quantities of ferric-ferro-cyanide equal to 1050 mg per kilo, that is, at least 133 times that of the quantities found in the alleged homicidal gas chambers.

I shall return later to the Leuchter Report and the use to which Leuchter puts it.¹ Let us note for the moment that our author exploits the report and the chemical analyses it contains to his own profit. Georges Wellers does the same (see "A propos du 'rapport Leuchter' et les [sic] chambres à gaz d'Auschwitz," *Le Monde Juif*, April-June 1989, p. 45-53), judging that "the results of the chemical analyses were obtained by a very competent and conscientious specialist [Fred Leuchter]" but that "his understanding of the problem posed is minimal" (*ibid.*, p. 48). Vidal-Naquet thus took advantage of general credulity when, before an assembly of students of the Lycée Henri IV, in Paris, on September 24, 1990, he stated regarding the Leuchter Report:

This is a grotesque document which proves nothing. Wellers and Pressac have expressed what is to be thought of it.

Let it be added that Pressac states that Leuchter was "commissioned" by the Revisionists, thus implying that these had been beaten at their own game and that the American

engineer had cruelly deceived his "silent partners." Leuchter, however, has in fact demonstrated that the Revisionists were correct. Furthermore, he functioned in a completely independent spirit, as a man who had up to then believed in the reality of the German homicidal gas chambers

Since Pressac admits that the Poles drastically altered the site, it is incumbent on him to study the question of gassing in the alleged gas chamber as it originally was before all alterations, according to the plans which he presents to us, plans which I had discovered in 1976, published in 1980, and for which he is indebted to me. However, he hasn't done so because then he would have to admit the obvious: vast gassing operations, right beside the oven rooms and twenty meters from the SS hospital, would have resulted in a general catastrophe.

The premises could have been disinfected with Zyklon B, as suited a storage place where in particular corpses of those who had died from typhus were piled; whence, doubtless, the infinitesimal traces of ferric-ferro-cyanide.

Neither Gerald Reitlinger nor Raul Hilberg nor Pierre Vidal-Naquet seems to believe that there was a gas chamber there; as for Olga Wormser-Migot, she stated expressly in her dissertation that Auschwitz I had no (homicidal) gas chamber (*Le Système concentrationnaire nazi (1933-1945)*, PUF, 1968, p. 157).

Pressac is thus perhaps the last believer in the "homicidal gas chamber of Krematorium I." At least publicly, for I recall that in private, in the company of Pierre Guillaume and me, he ridiculed the idea.

As for Bunker 1, he admits that in the last analysis even the physical site is unknown to us (p. 163). He adds that no one has either physical traces or an original plan (p. 165). As for the mass graves which were supposedly alongside this bunker and whose odor was allegedly unendurable, he considers them to be a product of the imaginations of the "eyewitnesses" and the odor in question to have arisen from decantation basins for sewage (p. 51, 161).

Regarding Bunker 2, there is no more evidence. Pressac believes he's found traces of this house but he furnishes only "testimonies" that he himself considers implausible; these testimonies are sometimes accompanied by drawings; in addition there are vague area plans owing to a Soviet commission (p. 171-182).

The factual balance established by Pressac up to this point is pitiful, if one considers that a good portion of the history of homicidal gassings at Auschwitz is founded on the certitude that the Germans carried out massive gassings at these three places (*Krema I*, *Bunker 1*, *Bunker 2*). This certitude, which one sees today as based on no evidence, has invaded the history books and the court dockets: goodly numbers of Germans have been convicted of the alleged gassings in *Krema I*, in *Bunker 1* and in *Bunker 2*.

Krema II is supposed to have been planned WITHOUT a homicidal gas chamber (p. 200). It is here that the Pressac thesis differs totally from the traditional thesis. According to him, the Germans transformed a harmless, half-underground morgue (*Leichenkeller 1*) into a homicidal gas chamber. To that end they improvised, but without modifying the ventilation; this is supposed to have remained in conformance with that of a morgue, evacuating contaminated air at the bottom; that would have contradicted the ventilation of a hydrocyanic gas chamber, in which the warm air and the gas would have necessitated removing the contaminated air at the top.

Krematorium II is supposed to have functioned as a homicidal gas chamber and a crematorium starting on March 15, 1943, before its entry into official service on March 31 [1943], to November 27, 1944, "annihilating a total of approximately 400,000 people, most of them Jewish women, children, and old men" (p. 183).

Pressac offers no proof in support of such statements. He even states that the "industrial" extermination of the Jews at Auschwitz-Birkenau was "planned between June and August 1942 and actually implemented between March and June 1943 by the entry into service of the four *Krematorien*" (p. 184). These dates are known to be those on which the Germans, alarmed by the spread of typhus, decided to build these crematoria, and later completed the construction, but one cannot see what allows Pressac to assert, *additionally*, that these dates coincide with a decision to gas and an employment for gassing! Nowhere does he reveal to us who made such a decision, when, how, why, what were the authorizations, the instructions, the funding, and, as well, who, on the spot, was requisitioned for such an undertaking and what it must have taken to set in motion the modalities of this gigantic murder. He states that documents specifying the

date of the decision to modify the crematorium for “criminal” ends are lacking (*Ibid.*)!

Krema III, too, is said by Pressac to have been planned WITHOUT a homicidal gas chamber (p. 200). The Germans are supposed to have carried out the same “do-it-yourself” improvisation as in Krema II. Krema III is supposed to have operated from June 25, 1943 to November 27, 1944, “killing about 350,000 victims” (p. 183).

Krema IV and V are supposed to have been planned WITH homicidal gas chambers (p. 384). They are supposed to have functioned, one beginning on March 22, the other on April 4, 1943 (p. 378), but to have been scarcely used. “After two months, Krematorium IV was completely out of service. Krematorium V did not enter service until later, but was scarcely any better.” (p. 384, 420). The gassing procedure is described as “illogical to the point of absurdity” (p. 379) and as “constituting a circus act” for the SS man carrying out the gassing (p. 386; see p. 43-46 below).

It is important to recall here that in 1982 Pressac maintained that Kremas IV and V had been planned WITHOUT homicidal gas chambers; the Germans had, according to him, transformed harmless rooms into homicidal gas chambers (“Les ‘Krematorien’ IV et V de Birkenau et leurs chambres à gaz, construction et fonctionnement,” *Le Monde juif*, July-September 1982, p. 91-131). He never lets us know why he renounced that thesis in order to adopt one diametrically opposed now.

To sum up, if one is to believe our guide, one obtains, as to crematoria planned WITH or WITHOUT homicidal gas chambers, the following sequence, arranged in chronological order according to initial date of operation:

Krema I: planned WITH homicidal gas chamber

Krema IV: planned WITH (Pressac’s thesis in 1982: WITHOUT)

Krema II: planned WITHOUT

Krema V: planned WITH (Pressac’s thesis in 1982: WITHOUT)

Krema III: planned WITHOUT

Neither logic nor chronology can be served by such caprice and such incoherence.

For Pressac, Almost No Zyklon B Used to Kill People

According to our author, more than 95 per cent of the Zyklon B was used to exterminate vermin, which take time to kill, and less than 5 per cent to exterminate people, who are easy to kill (p. 15). He doesn't let us know how he has arrived at these figures. Here, we are at a far remove from the claims of the run of Exterminationists, in particular Raul Hilberg, who assures us that:

Almost the whole Auschwitz supply was needed for the gassing of people; very little was used for fumigation (*The Destruction of the European Jews*, New York, Holmes and Meier, Revised and Definitive Edition, 1985, p. 890).

One can imagine the consternation of Exterminationists on this point, as on many others, if, instead of vaunting the book without having read it, they should happen to open it up and start reading.

He Can't Explain the Absence of Blue Stains

According to our pharmacist, if the Germans used so little Zyklon B to murderous ends, that's because in order to gas a million men (750,000 in *Kremas II and III* and 250,000 elsewhere, p. 475), only tiny quantities were required, whereas much more was needed to kill insects. Pressac holds to his belief in this matter because it is for him the only way to explain a stupefying physico-chemical anomaly: the complete absence of blue stains in the places at Auschwitz and Birkenau at which, supposedly, Zyklon B was used to kill human beings on an industrial scale, while, on the other hand, one notices the presence, today, of large blue stains on the walls of the disinfection gas chambers at Auschwitz, at Birkenau, or in other concentration camps. These blue stains in the disinfection gas chambers are due to the presence, at one time, of hydrocyanic (or prussic) acid; this acid has remained in the walls where, combining with iron contained in the bricks, it has produced ferric-ferro-cyanides.

Pressac dares to state (p. 555) that, in the case of homicidal gassings, the hydrocyanic acid went directly into the victims' mouths before it could spread elsewhere and impregnate the ceiling, the floor, and the walls. The gas was not even deposited on the bodies of the victims, from which it could have emanated throughout the room. This naive explanation amounts to supposing that the hydrocyanic gas, in this case

and this case only, consisted of molecules with homing devices, so organized that these molecules divided up the job of being inhaled, each vanishing into its own particular mouth.

According to even its manufacturers, Zyklon B (employed since the early 1920's and still used around the world today under other trademarks) presents the inconvenience of needing "difficult and lengthy ventilation, due to the gas's strong capacity for adhering to surfaces" (doc. NI-9098). Pressac forgets that, according to his own theory, in *Leichenkeller 1* (less than 210 sq. meters) of *Krema II* alone 400,000 persons were gassed in 532 days (see p. 36 above), which implies that gassings of human beings were carried out with great speed and in quasi-continuous fashion. He knows that hydrocyanic acid is absorbed through the skin (p. 25). So many corpses, representing a skin surface far larger than that offered by the insects and impregnated, like it or not, by hydrocyanic acid, would have constituted no less a source of emanation of the dread gas, which would have gone on to settle all over the room. These corpses would have been, further, impossible to handle in the way we've been told, and I shall not recall here the extreme precautions which, in today's American penitentiaries, are required of the doctor and his two helpers in order to remove a single cyanic corpse from a hydrocyanic gas chamber.

The ruins of *Krema II* are eloquent: they do not bear the least stain of blue ferric-ferro-cyanide. Therefore, the Germans certainly never used Zyklon B there in the quantities needed to gas 400,000 persons.

He Admits That the Germans' Code Language Is a Myth

Pressac opens an enormous breach in the edifice of the traditional historians and especially in that of Georges Wellers when he rejects the thesis according to which, in order to camouflage their crime, the Germans used a secret language or "code." He states twice that this is a "myth," explaining himself at length (p. 247, 556). He well sees that the secret of such a massacre would be impossible to conceal. Following the Revisionists, he submits documents which prove that the camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau were, if one may say so, transparent. Thousands of civilian workers mingled each day with the prisoners (p. 313, 315, 348,...). Numerous civilian

firms, located at different places in Germany and Poland, received orders for the construction of the crematoria, the disinfection gas chambers or the gas-tight doors. The *Bauleitung* alone comprised around a hundred employees; photographs show engineers, architects, and draftsmen in their offices (p. 347) where—as was known long before Pressac—the plans of the crematoria were displayed for all to see. The aerial photographs taken by the Allies show that at Auschwitz, as at Treblinka too, the farmers cultivated their fields right up to the camp fences. On the other hand, it is certain that the Germans sought zealously to conceal their industrial operations at Auschwitz (in vain, by the way). Thus the following paradox would arise: at Auschwitz, the Germans strove to hide what was going on at all their factories (armaments, synthetic petroleum, synthetic rubber, etc.) except...at their “death factories,” supposedly located in the crematoria.

Unsubstantiated Statements and Manipulations

The book abounds with unsubstantiated statements and manipulations throughout.

What evidence does the author have to support the claims, hitherto unproved, according to which on September 3, 1941 Zyklon B was used, for the first time, to kill 850 people in the basement of *Block 11* at Auschwitz I (p. 132)? He states that, shortly afterwards (?), Russian prisoners were gassed in the morgue (*Leichenhalle*) of *Krema I*. He provides not a single bit of evidence. He states that, according to the “confession” of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss, these prisoners numbered 900, then slips in the following words: “in fact between 500 and 700.” The method is characteristic of Pressac: undoubtedly recognizing that the figure 900 is impossible in view of the dimensions of the room, he “corrects” it, and instead of making clear that his lower number is hypothetical, he asserts that “in fact” there were 500 to 700 hundred victims. I believe I could cite a good fifty examples of this process, which consists of introducing an unbelievable testimony, altering it to make it credible, and finishing up by according the result of this transformation the status of an established fact a little further on in the text, without reminding us that the original text was changed on the basis of a hypothesis.

Pressac alters words, numbers, dates, sometimes informing the reader of these changes with laborious justifications, at other times leaving him in the dark. Page 18 offers an example of this procedure. There the author sets forth the different characteristics of hydrocyanic acid (HCN, principal component of Zyklon B): molecular weight, etc. Suddenly, in a list of fifteen characteristics, he slips in the following: "Concentration used in homicidal gassing at Birkenau: 12 g/m³ (1%) or 40 times the lethal (or mortal) dose." By so doing, he gives to understand, from the outset of his book, that the homicidal gassings at Birkenau are a scientific fact of equal standing with the molecular weight of the gas under discussion; and he would have us believe that the amount of Zyklon used to kill people at Birkenau can be, almost to the gram, scientifically established!

This technique, a mixture of guile and aplomb, is standard operating procedure throughout the Pressac book. Page 227 includes surprising assertions. Without providing the least justification, the author declares that *Krema II* was used to gas Jews before it was even completed (the undressing room was not finished) and before it was handed over to the camp administration on March 31, 1943. He lets fly, as self-evident fact, that around 6,900 Jews were gassed in twelve days. And he specifies the exact numbers and dates: 1,500 Jews from the Cracow ghetto on Sunday evening, March 14; 2,200 Jews from Salonika on March 20; nearly 2,000 more Jews from Salonika on March 24; and 1,200 more the day after. None of these data is accompanied by the citation of any source other than "The Auschwitz Calendar," compiled by Polish Communists. If indeed those Jews arrived at the camp on these dates, on what authority does Pressac tell us they were gassed? The accusation made here against Germany is exceptionally grave and would require a sheaf of evidence of extreme precision.

Repeatedly Pressac mentions "Himmler's order of 26th November 1944 to destroy Birkenau *Krema II* and *III*," "thus making the end of the gassings official" (p. 115, 313, 464, 501, 533, etc.) but our autodidact can only repeat here, without verification, what leading Jewish authors have stated (with some variation as to the date). This order never existed, but one understands why it had to be invented: in the first place to explain why, when the camp was liberated, there were no traces whatsoever of the crime; further, to make up for the absence of any order to begin the gassings.

On what authority does Pressac assert that Himmler was present in person at a homicidal gassing at Bunker 2, on the day of July 17, 1942 (p.187)? How can he accuse Dr. Grawitz, "Head of the German Red Cross," of having seen the extermination of the Jews (in gas chambers, from the context) with his own eyes (p. 206)?

To begin with, whence has he derived his summary of the homicidal gassing procedure at Auschwitz such as it appears, fragmentarily, on page 16? His sketch surprises one.

What the reader of a work entitled *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* would expect is an in-depth study bearing on the technique and operation of these extraordinary chemical abattoirs without precedent in history, then a complete description of the process by which a million victims were gassed. But the author evades the subject. He furnishes nothing but vague, fragmentary hints, with the reader unable to determine whether they are based on "testimony," documents, or are simply the result of further extrapolations. Nowhere in his book does he return to the central subject of gassing procedure. To be sure, he mentions, but only in the context of Kremas IV and V, the procedure peculiar to the gassings in these two locations, a procedure so absurd that he speaks of it as "a circus act" (p. 386).

How is he able to write: "In May 1942, the large-scale gassings of arriving transports of Jews began in Birkenau Bunkers 1 and 2" (p. 98), especially given that, as we've seen above, he acknowledges knowing nothing about Bunker 1 (appearance, make-up, and even site)?

How does he know that, when the Zyklon B was poured through the openings in the roof of Krema I, the SS men in the hospital located right next door avoided watching the operation because "at such times it was forbidden to look out the windows" (p. 145)?

In what way does a pile of shoes offer proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers (p. 420)?

How is he able to maintain that the SS envisaged the possibility of alternately using *Leichenkeller 1* and *Leichenkeller 2* as gas chambers (p. 233)?

How could anyone serve up the enormity enthroned at the top of page 188 (column 2)? There Pressac declares that the “terrible hygienic conditions in the camp” required enormous deliveries of Zyklon B and that the SS, in order to hide these conditions, pretended to order Zyklon B... for exterminating the Jews; these requests were addressed to superiors who had “a general knowledge” of the extermination “without being informed of the practical details”!

The “Circus Act” of Krema IV and V

Had he been honest, the author would have begun the section he devotes to Krema IV and V by recalling his interpretation of 1982. At that time, he maintained in *Le Monde juif* (op. cit.) that these two Krema had been planned WITHOUT criminal intent, as simple crematoria; then, later, the Germans had carried out improvisations in order to transform certain rooms there into homicidal gas chambers. In 1985 the author was still sticking to this thesis (Colloque de l'École des Hautes Études en sciences sociales [François Furet and Raymond Aron], *L'Allemagne nazie et le génocide juif*, Gallimard/Le Seuil, 1985, p. 539-584).

But in the present work Pressac makes a 180-degree turn, giving his reader no warning other than after the fact, in veiled terms at that (p. 379, 448). Since Pressac is always confused, readers will be unaware of why he held his former thesis (that these Krema were planned WITHOUT criminal intent), or what led him to adopt a new thesis, diametrically opposed to the earlier one (these Krema were planned WITH criminal intent).²

The author's embarrassment is considerable. One wonders if he wouldn't be happy to send to the devil the history of these two Krema IV and V which—he insists on this point—should not have worked because they were so badly designed and constructed that the ovens were quickly out of service (p. 384, 420).

He writes that at the end of May 1944 most of the members of the *Sonderkommando* who lived in a section of the Men's Camp at Birkenau—and therefore, he adds in passing, openly and publicly—were transferred “to Krema IV, which was converted into a dormitory for them” (p. 389).

In the Holocaust literature the revolt of the Jewish *Sonderkommando*, which set fire to Krema IV out of despair at having gassed and burned masses of their co-religionists, is

presented as a page of heroism. For his part Pressac doubts the “veracity” of this story and writes that Krema IV was only a dormitory at that time and that

this rebellion was an act of despair on the part of prisoners who were overcrowded and underoccupied, who had seen too much and felt that their end was near (p. 390).

As one will see right away, the layout of the premises was such that, at Krema IV and V, it would have made a mockery of a homicidal gassing operation.

Let's take either of these two Krema. To start with, since there was no undressing room, the crowd of victims is supposed to have been led into the morgue, where bodies were already piled up. There, the victims undressed with the corpses in full view. Then they were led into an antechamber, and next a corridor. Wisely, they passed the doctor's office, then a coal storage room. Next, at the end of the corridor, they were divided up between two “homicidal gas chambers,” each equipped with a coal stove which was fired from the corridor. Then an SS man, stationed outside the building, is supposed to have poured the granules of Zyklon B through shutters on the roof. Due to the height, he had to use a ladder. He had to position the ladder and climb up for each shutter; he would open the shutter with one hand and empty the contents of the Zyklon can with the other. Quickly, he would close the shutter and go on to the next. At the next he would move all the more quickly because, HCN being lighter than air, the emissions from the granules from the first made the operation more dangerous, even if our SS man was wearing a gas mask.

At the end of the operation, he would have had to ventilate these rooms at length and with care. Given the small size of the shutters and the absence of any sort of equipment for ventilation, one can't see how the operation could be carried out. The doors would have to be opened, and thus the antechamber, the doctor's office, etc. The corpses would have to be removed from each of the two gas chambers; then dragged the length of the corridor and past three successive doors to end up... in the morgue, where presently other prospective victims would be arriving.

In his 1982 study in *Le Monde juif* (op. cit., p. 126), Pressac wrote: “This improvisation is stupefying,” concluding:

So, it becomes obvious: KREMATORIUM IV AND V WERE NOT PLANNED AS CRIMINAL INSTALLATIONS BUT WERE CONVERTED INTO SUCH [Pressac's capitals].

In the great opus under review, he makes obscure reference to his feelings of "1980"; he says that at that time he found that the operation was "illogical to the point of absurdity" (p. 379).

Nine years later, has our pharmacist finally arrived at either explaining this operation, "illogical to the point of absurdity," or discovering that the Germans in fact used a different procedure, one logical, sensible, explicable? Not at all.

He begins by relating that the SS took note of the fact that their procedure "had become irrational and ridiculous" (p. 386). The SS gasser had to pour the Zyklon B through six openings (Pressac considers that there were three gas chambers, not two, the hall doing service as the third!). This SS man, he states, had to go up or down his ladder no fewer than eighteen times while wearing his gas mask.

According to our guide, after two or three gassings carried out in this fashion, the *Bauleitung* (Construction Office) determined that natural ventilation was dangerous and that the method of introducing the poison resembled "a circus act."

For ventilation a door was installed which resulted, Pressac assures us, in preventing the west wind from blowing the gas in a dangerous direction and which allowed the rooms to be ventilated only by the north or south winds.

As to the procedure for introducing the gas (the "circus act"), that remained the same, except that the shutters were widened by 10 centimeters. Pressac writes, in all seriousness, that

The method of introduction remained the same, however, the camp authorities considering that a little physical exercise would do the medical orderlies responsible for gassing a world of good.

Here, as elsewhere, our pharmacist shows marvelous aplomb, telling his story without supplying his reader a reference to any evidence whatsoever. Where has he seen, for example, that the camp authorities (which? when?) decided that the "circus act" was absurd but that "a little physical exercise would do the medical orderlies responsible for gassing [the Jews] a world of good"?

One of the constants in Pressac's writings is the stupidity which the SS demonstrated by its boasts. He uses this to explain many of the anomalies, absurdities, and ineptitudes in the stories of homicidal gassing. It is curious that he apparently doesn't suspect that this "stupidity" could be

attributed precisely to those who describe to us the activities of the SS gassers in such fashion. Or yet again, since all these operations are supposed to be tinged with stupidity, is it the SS's stupidity or that of Pressac himself?

Lastly, it is surprising that before concluding that Krema IV and V definitely had homicidal gas chambers, he didn't wonder whether they didn't simply house showers or delousing chambers. I have in my archives a sketch of Krema IV and V, after a plan which I entrusted to him; I see written plainly in our subject's handwriting the words "Showers 1" and "Showers 2" at the places he calls the homicidal gas chambers today. And, on his third gas chamber, I read "Corridor."

Instead of One Proof, One Single Proof...

Thirty-Nine Criminal Traces

In his chapter on proof, Pressac capitulates immediately. He is aware of his failure; despite his rodomontade, he admits:

The day when a newly discovered drawing or letter makes it possible to explain the reality in black and white the revisionists will be routed (p. 67).

This statement, which he lets slip regarding a detail, could be applied to the work as a whole: Pressac hopes one day to discover a "specific German document" which will prove the Revisionists wrong but, as of now, he hasn't yet found anything.

He recalls that in 1979 I launched a challenge. I was asking for proof, a single proof of the existence of a single homicidal gas chamber. He is not up to this challenge. His title for Chapter 8 speaks volumes. It reads:

"One Proof...One Single Proof": Thirty-nine Criminal Traces (p. 429).

For my part, I was expecting to find a chapter entitled: "One Proof...One Single Proof? Thirty-nine Proofs."

By "criminal traces" he intends "traces of the crime" or "clues to the crime." That is to say, as the author specifies, "presumptive evidence" or "indirect proofs." Pressac tells us that "in the absence of any 'direct,' i.e. palpable, indisputable and evident proof," an "indirect" (author's quotation marks) proof "may suffice and be valid." He adds:

By “indirect” proof, I mean a German document that does not state in black and white that a gas chamber is for HOMICIDAL purposes, but one containing evidence that logically it is impossible for it to be something else (p. 429).

And at this point the reader is offered thirty-nine indirect proofs.

But let us return for a moment to my challenge, in its meaning and its rationale. And let us also see in what terms Pressac admits that he is unable to provide what he himself calls a “direct proof” or a “definitive proof.”

On February 26, 1979, exercising my right of response, I sent a letter on this matter which *Le Monde* refused to publish and which is reproduced in my *Mémoire en défense contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier l'histoire* (La Vieille Taupe, 1980, p. 100). At that time I wrote:

I know a way of advancing the debate. Instead of repeating *ad nauseam* that there exists an abundance of proofs attesting to the existence of the “gas chambers” (let us recall the value of this alleged abundance for the—mythical—“gas chambers” of the Altreich), I propose that, to begin at the beginning, someone supply me with one proof, one single precise proof of the actual existence of one “gas chamber,” of one single “gas chamber.” Let us examine this proof together, in public.

It goes without saying that I was prepared to consider as “proof” what my opponents themselves chose to designate as such. My challenge is explained by an ascertainment: the Exterminationists all employed the all-too-facile system of “converging bundles of presumptions” or again, as it was called in past times, “adminicles” (parts of a proof, presumptions, traces). Each of their alleged proofs, rather shaky, was supported by another proof, itself rather fragile. There was much use of testimonial proof, which is the weakest of all since, as its name indicates, it is based only on testimony. The “essence” of the testimony of Kurt Gerstein was called on, supported by the “essence” of the confession of Rudolf Höss, which rested on the “essence” of a personal diary in which, they say, in veiled language, Dr. Johann-Paul Kremer revealed, and at the same time concealed, the existence of the gas chambers. In other words, the blind man leans on the cripple, guided by the deaf man. In the past, at the time of the witchcraft trials, judges made great use of

adminicles and, in order to condemn witches and wizards, relied on a strange accounting method whereby a quarter of a proof added to a quarter of a proof, itself added to half a proof, were considered to equal a real proof (the film *Les Sorcières de Salem* [the French version of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*] depicts a judge practicing this type of arithmetic). Naturally, one couldn't provide definitive proof of the existence of Satan and of a meeting with him. It was impossible to prove his existence as one would prove that of a human being. That wasn't the fault of the judges, the thinking went, but precisely that of Satan, who, it was no doubt thought, was too naughty to leave traces proving his misdeeds. Intrinsically perverse by nature, Satan left at the most only vague traces of his passing through. These traces did not speak of themselves. One had to make them speak. Especially wise intellects were skilled at detecting them in places where ordinary people saw nothing. For minds such as these, Satan had tried to cover his tracks but had forgotten to hide the traces of his so doing, and, beginning there, learned magistrates, helped by scholarly professors, were able to reconstruct everything.

It was no different from any of the trials in which, since 1945, SS men have been tried for their participation, always indirect, in the homicidal gassings. Like adepts of Satan, these SS men allegedly left not a single trace of the gassings, but trained minds (the Poliakovs and the Wellers), testifying in their writings or at the bar of justice, have known how to foil their tricks, unravel the mystery and reconstruct the crime in all its Satanic horror; they have interpreted, deciphered, decoded, and decrypted everything.

No "Direct Proof," He Finally Concedes

Pressac writes:

The "traditional" historians provided him [Faurisson] an "abundance of proofs" which were virtually all based on human testimony (p. 429).

He also states that there have been photographs of which certain have traditionally passed as proof of the existence of homicidal gassings, but he admits that not a single one of these can be "presented as definitive proof" (*Ibid.*).

Not a single one of the numerous plans of the Krema of Auschwitz and Birkenau in his possession indicates "explicitly," he writes, the use of homicidal gas chambers

although in the trials certain of these plans were employed as though they were explicitly incriminating (*Ibid.*).

There remain, he writes, only the various items of correspondence and official documents of German origin, which have, for example, been used in the "Faurisson trial"; but which, according to him, have never formed more than a convincing body of presumptive evidence (*Ibid.*).

The list of thirty-nine "criminal traces" brings to mind an enumeration (in the style of François Rabelais or Jacques Prévert) of disparate objects. One sees a parade of harmless technical terms drawn from the realms of the architect, the heating engineer, or the plumber, over which our pharmacist from La Ville de Bois wracks his brain to uncover darker designs. Pressac is without equal in making screws, nuts, bolts, and even the very screwheads speak.³ It would be tedious to go through all thirty-nine clues. I shall restrict myself to the ones which, according to him, are essential.

Harmless Technical Terms

But beforehand I would like to call to the English-speaking reader's attention several German technical terms in fairly commonplace usage.

In order to designate a delousing gas chamber (or a gas chamber for training recruits in the use of gas masks), the Germans use the word "Gaskammer" and, when the context is sufficiently clear, simply "Kammer." A gas-tight door is a *Gastür* or *gasdichte Tür*; English speakers use "gas-proof door" as well as "gas-tight door"; this type of door can be used either for delousing gas chambers or for airlocks (for example, airlocks in an oven room or in an air-raid shelter).⁴ In a more general fashion, a gas-tight door may be found anywhere in a building where there is a risk of fire or explosion; this is so in a crematorium, where high-temperature ovens are in operation. I believe that in Germany—this has to be verified—doors to basements with central heating installations are, generally if not compulsorily, gas-tight to contain fire, explosion, or gas leakage. "Gasprüfer" means "gas detector." "Brausen" means "shower heads" (for watering, spraying, showering). "Auskleideraum" means "undressing room" and, in delousing installations, refers to the room in which, on the "dirty side" (*unreine Seite*), persons undressed; it is not impossible, but I

haven't been able to verify, that in a morgue the same word is applied to the room in which clothes were removed from the corpses. Pressac introduces into evidence the existence of words such as "*Drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung*," which he translates as "wire mesh introduction device," and "*Holzblenden*," "wooden covers"; I do not think these words call for any special comment.

On the other hand, it is inadmissible that at the very start of his book, where he claims to enumerate the terms used by the *Bauleitung* in order to designate "delousing" or "disinfection," he noted the words *Entlausung*, *Entwesung*, and *Desinfektion* without taking the chance to recall that one of the terms most frequently used by the Germans to designate this type of operation is: *Vergasung*, which is translated by "gassing." For example, to stick to the documents cited by Pressac, Nuremberg document NI-9912, which I was the first to publish and for which he is indebted to me, designates gassing only by *Durchgasung* or *Vergasung*; this last word, which figures in the first paragraph of Section III, was translated into English as "fumigation" (p. 18, col. D). In a document cited by Pressac himself, General Glücks speaks of "gas for gassing" the camp due to the typhus epidemic: "*Gas für Vergasung*" (see above, p. 32); as for Commandant Höss, he referred to disinfection gassings as "*Vergasungen*" (see Part II of this article in the next (Summer) issue of *The JHR*.).

In passing I wish to specify that, for the reader's convenience, I have translated "*Entlausung*" and "*Entwesung*" the same, that is, by "disinfection." I note moreover that in the language used by the *Bauleitung* or in the ledgers of the locksmith of Auschwitz, there is a tendency to use the words interchangeably, without always distinguishing between "delousing" and "disinfestation."

In *Krema II* and *III*, the ventilation of the area which Pressac dares call a gas chamber, whereas it was a morgue, was exactly the opposite—and he admits this—of the way it must have been if Zyklon B had been employed there. Zyklon B is essentially hydrocyanic acid, a gas lighter than air. Therefore ventilation would have had to proceed from the bottom to top, with air blowing in at ground level and being extracted at ceiling level. But it was done from top to bottom as... in a morgue. Pressac does not try to explain this anomaly, which destroys his thesis, at its foundations, one could say. He makes

note of it, then does not even attempt to come up with an explanation.

Fourteen Shower Heads and A Gas-Tight Door

A discovery on which he prides himself, truth to tell the only one which he presents as “definitive” (p. 430) before declaring that it “indirectly” (p. 430) proves the existence of a homicidal gas chamber, is an inventory from *Krema III* for 14 shower heads (*Brausen*) and a gas-tight door (*gasdichte Tür*). Giving in to enthusiasm at first, our inventor writes on page 430:

[THIS] DOCUMENT [...] IS DEFINITIVE PROOF OF THE PRESENCE OF A HOMICIDAL GAS CHAMBER IN LEICHENKELLER 1 OF KREMATORIUM III.

In 1986, the magazine *VSD* had published an interview with Serge Klarsfeld under the title “Les historiens du mensonge” ([“The Historians of the Lie”], May 29, p. 37). There Klarsfeld admitted that until then “no one [had] bothered to compile the material proofs” of the existence of the gas chambers. To the question “Why were there no longer real proofs?” he answered:

There were the beginnings of proofs which embarrassed the Faurissonians but had not yet silenced them. In particular, two letters analyzed by Georges Wellers, dating from 1943, which spoke, one of a gassing cellar, the other of three gas-tight doors to be installed in the crematoria.

Klarsfeld announced that he was eventually going to publish “a monumental work on Auschwitz-Birkenau by Jean-Claude Pressac.” He added that the author had discovered the “proof of proofs”:

In all he has found 37 proofs, one of them definitive, of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in [*Krema III*] at Birkenau.

The interview was accompanied by “the irrefutable proof” in the form of a reproduced document described as follows:

On this receiver from [*Krema III*] signed by the camp commandant of Auschwitz, one reads at the top of the last two columns: 14 shower heads (*Brausen*), 1 gas-tight door (*gasdichte Tür*).

Regarding this “definitive” or “irrefutable” proof, Klarsfeld declares that it concerns

A document which mentions both a gas-tight door and 14 shower heads.

To which he adds by way of commentary:

Come, let us be logical, if this was a shower room, why this gas-tight door? The logic is flawless.

The logic is certainly not flawless and besides, as is obvious, here Klarsfeld makes use of a rhetorical technique dear to Pressac: preterition (and what's more, in the interrogative form).

I sent the magazine a text by way of right of response but they refused to publish it.

To begin with, this interview is actually a confession. In it Klarsfeld acknowledges that, until then, nobody had bothered to gather the material proofs. For his part Pressac declared at about the same time: "Until now there have been the testimonies and only the testimonies" (*Le Matin de Paris*, May 24-25, 1986, p. 3). In other words a terrible charge, an atrocious accusation against Germany had been broadcast throughout the world up to that time with no real proof, merely with the "beginnings of proofs" or with "testimonies." The murder weapon had never been subjected to expert examination.

The text I submitted by right of response recalled that the gas-tight doors were commonplace and that, for example, before and during the war it was compulsory to equip every place which could serve as a bomb shelter with gas-tight doors. I added that the gas-tight doors didn't imply, any more than do gas masks, a homicidal gassing.

Serge Klarsfeld, embarrassed by my use of citations from his interview in a text I devoted to Elie Wiesel ("Un grand faux témoin: Elie Wiesel" [A Prominent False Witness: Elie Wiesel], *Annales d'Histoire Révisionniste*, no. 4, 1988, p. 163-168 [published as a leaflet by IHR, 1822½ Newport Blvd., Suite 191, Costa Mesa, CA 92627]), blundered by publishing a letter in *Le Monde Juif* (January-March 1987, p. 1) in which he stated that his interview was "mistakenly edited" at certain points. But there are denials which are as good as confirmations, and such was the case here, since Klarsfeld, compounding his mistake, was then impelled to write:

It is evident that in the years following 1945 the technical aspects of the gas chambers have been a neglected topic

because back then no one imagined that their existence would have to be proved.

Pressac had before his eyes a typed form, probably mimeographed, in numerous copies. Headings down the side of the page listed various parts of a building (rooms, elevator cage, hallway, toilet, etc.); across the top were headings for different fittings (lamps, chandeliers, lanterns, ovens, electrical plugs, etc.). Both horizontal and vertical listings left blank spaces for additional headings. The form in question referred to rooms in *Krema III*, among them *Leichenkeller 1* and 2. Regarding *Leichenkeller 1*, alleged to have been the homicidal gas chamber, the following had been entered: 12 of a certain type of lamp, 2 water taps, 14 shower heads and (handwritten in ink) 1 gas-tight door. For *Leichenkeller 2*, allegedly the undressing room, 22 lamps and 5 faucets have been noted.

From the juxtaposition of 14 shower heads and a gas-tight door in the same room (part of a morgue), Pressac concludes that he is confronted with a homicidal gas chamber (!) outfitted with dummy shower heads; these shower heads, he adds with admirable composure, were “made of wood or other materials and painted” (p. 429; see also p. 16)!

The reasoning here is disconcerting. Pressac frames it in expressly the following terms:

- A gas-tight door can be intended only for a gas chamber [implying: a homicidal gas chamber];
- Why does a [homicidal] gas chamber have showers in it?

This reasoning evinces, aside from its innuendoes, a grave error. A gas-tight door can be found, as I’ve already stated, at any place in a structure in which, as is the case in a crematorium, ovens operate at high temperatures, with the risk of fire, explosion, and gas leakage. They may also be in air-raid shelters, in disinfection gas chambers, in morgues, etc. Finally, *Krematorium III* could have had, in all or in part of its *Leichenkeller 1*, a shower or wash room (every crematorium has a room for washing corpses). Furthermore, in another passage, Pressac writes that Bischoff, head of the construction office, requested, on May 15, 1943, the firm of Topf & Sons, specialists in the construction of crematoria, “to draw up the plans for 100 showers using water treated by the waste incinerator of *Krematorium III*” (p. 234); we know that there

was a shower room on the ground floor because the plan is detailed enough to show it; on the other hand, the plan of the basement is not detailed and indicates only the general layout of *Leichenkeller 1* and 2.

But Pressac must sense the frailty of his argument since, once his enthusiasm has receded, he writes, nine pages later, in regard to this same document:

This document is the only one known at present that proves, indirectly [my italics], the existence of a HOMICIDAL GAS CHAMBER in *Leichenkeller 1* of *Krematorium III* (p. 439).

Let us observe, in consequence, that at issue here is the sole real proof and this proof is now indirect, although earlier it was decreed to be “fundamental” (p. 429) and “definitive” (p. 430). Georges Wellers himself, despite his readiness to entertain the most tainted “proofs,” has conceded, since 1987, his total skepticism regarding the probative value of the document disclosed in VSD the year before. He told Michel Folco:

Good, and the story of the shower heads on the form, you know, that isn't proof of what it was (*Zéro*, Interview, May 1987, p. 73).

As long as one refuses to carry out complete excavations of *Krema II* and *III* or to publish the explanations as to the function of these places furnished by the architectural engineers Dejaco and Ertl at the 1972 trial in Vienna, the matter can only be speculated on.

Four “Introduction Devices”

When Pressac discovers on another inventory that four “wire mesh introduction devices” and four “wooden covers” for *Leichenkeller 2* are mentioned, he puts forward the hypothesis that the inventory is in error and that it should read *Leichenkeller 1* (p. 232 and 430). His hypothesis is not gratuitous; it is founded on a material observation: an aerial photograph showing, apparently, four openings on the roof of *Leichenkeller 1*. But he is wrong to present subsequently his hypothesis as a certainty and to decide that the wooden covers belong to *Leichenkeller 1* (p. 431). If these devices were used to convey the Zyklon-B granules to the floor of the alleged gas chamber, how would they have been protected from the pressure of the crowd of victims and how would the gas have been able to spread through the room? I recall that, in the

procedure for disinfection gassing, the granules were not piled together or thrown in bunches but rather spread out on matting so that the gas could rise from the floor to the ceiling without hindrance or obstacle; after the gassing, the personnel, always wearing gas masks equipped with a particularly powerful filter, entered, following a long period of ventilation, to recover the dangerous granules, taking great care that none were left behind. Finally, Pressac seems to ignore that in 1988, at the Zündel trial in Toronto, the Revisionists were able to show that, if the four apparent openings are present in Brugioni and Poirier's work at the date of the aerial reconnaissance of August 25, 1944, curiously they no longer appear on the aerial photograph "6V2" of September 13, 1944, which Brugioni and Poirier didn't publish. Are they patches? Retouchings? Discolorations? On this matter one must read the expert testimony of Kenneth Wilson (Robert Lenski, *The Holocaust on Trial*, Decatur, Alabama, Reporter Press, 1990, p. 356-360, with a photograph of the expert at work, p. 361). The imposing block of concrete which constituted the roof of *Leichenkeller 1* and which can be inspected today on its outer as well as its inner surface bears not a single trace of these mysterious openings. As for the support columns, they were entirely of concrete and were not hollow. To conclude, if the inventory shows that these "devices" and "covers" belonged to *Leichenkeller 2*, it is dishonest to transfer them arbitrarily to *Leichenkeller 1* as Pressac has done in his "recapitulatory drawing for *Krematorien II and III*" on page 431.

Vergasungskeller

Pressac makes use, but not without hesitation, of the shopworn argument based on the presence of the word "*Vergasungskeller*" in a routine letter that the Auschwitz Construction Office addressed to the competent authorities in Berlin (doc. NO-4473). This letter, dated January 29, 1943 which contained nothing confidential and was not even stamped "Secret," states that in spite of all kinds of difficulties, and in particular, despite the frost, the construction of *Krema II* was nearly completed (in fact this *Krema* would not be operational until two months later). The letter states specifically that due to the frost it has not yet been possible to remove the formwork from the ceiling of the corpse cellar (which isn't assigned a number), but that this is not serious

since the *Vergasungskeller* can be used as a provisional morgue (p. 211-217, 432). For Pressac the use in this letter of the word *Vergasungskeller* involves an "enormous gaff [sic]" (p. 217), revealing the existence of a homicidal "gassing cellar" which could only have been *Leichenkeller 1*.

Since the word "*Vergasung*" is standard in German technical language to designate either the phenomenon of gasification⁶, or carburetion in a motor, or disinfection gassing (translated in English as "fumigation"; see p. 50 above), it is impossible to see how, on the part of the author of the letter at Auschwitz, or on the part of the addressee in Berlin, a meeting of minds could result in the understanding that, for the first and last time, a *homicidal* gassing was at issue here! If Pressac, relying on another document, is correct in saying that the *Leichenkeller* in question here can't be *Leichenkeller 2*, he is wrong to deduce that consequently it can only be *Leichenkeller 1* (which recalls a homicidal gas chamber). He doesn't examine seriously another hypothesis: *Leichenkeller 3* with its three rooms.

To place myself in the framework of his hypothesis, if the word "*Vergasung*" is to be taken here in the sense of "gassing," Pressac must, before jumping to the conclusion of a homicidal gassing, consider the possibility that the word may refer to a disinfection gassing and since (locating myself throughout in the framework of his book), he makes great play of the testimony of the Jewish cobbler Henryk Tauber, I remind him that, according to this testimony, *such as Pressac reads it himself*, Zyklon B cans were stored in one of the rooms of *Leichenkeller 3*. According to him, the room of which Tauber speaks would have been the one, on plans in our possession, which is labeled "*Goldarb[eit]*"; perhaps he considers that this room, before it was used for melting down the dental gold⁷, served as a storage room for the Zyklon cans (see p. 483 and the annotated plan on p. 485, number 8) but perhaps another room of *Leichenkeller 3* is meant. What is certain is that materials for gassing (*Vergasung*) were stored, if possible, in locations protected from heat and humidity, well-ventilated, and locked; a cellar was recommended.

Expressed otherwise, always in Pressac's frame of reference, the letter of January 29, 1943 might mean that the morgue couldn't yet be used but in the meantime the corpses could be placed in the storage room provided for the gassing

materials: in the *Vergasungskeller*, that is the “cellar for gassing [material]” (as *Vorratskeller* means “cellar for provisions”).

On the other hand, if one makes of *Vergasungskeller* a cellar for homicidal gassing, if this cellar was *Leichenkeller* 1, and if the Germans contemplated making it into a provisional morgue, where would the victims have been gassed? *Leichenkeller* 1 could not have been simultaneously a homicidal gas chamber and a morgue.

I notice on pages 503 and 505 that Pressac believes that I have given three successive and differing interpretations of *Leichenkeller* 1. I am supposed to have seen this room as first a room for carburéation, then as a morgue, and finally as a disinfection gas chamber. Not at all. In the first case, I recalled Arthur R. Butz’s interpretation of the word *Vergasung* in the sense of “gasification” or “carburetion” but neither Butz nor I located this *Vergasungskeller* which, in any case, would have had to be close to the oven room and not in a dependency far-removed from the ovens. In the second instance I reminded Pierre Vidal-Naquet that the word *Leichenkeller* meant morgue or cold room and I specified: “A morgue has to be disinfected” (*Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet, op. cit.*, p. 35). I added that chemical analysis would be able to reveal traces of cyanide because Zyklon B is an insecticide with a hydrogen-cyanide base. Rooms designated to hold corpses, in particular corpses of those dead of typhus, would have to be disinfected (I remind here that I use the word disinfection for “disinfestation,” fumigating for insects, as well as for disinfection proper).

One will remark that Raul Hilberg mentions this document NO-4473 and cites three extracts in German, but avoids reproducing the word *Vergasungskeller* (*The Destruction of the European Jews, op. cit.*, p. 885). I imagine that as someone with a good command of the German language he saw that, had the Germans wanted to speak of a gas chamber, they would have used the words “*Gaskammer*” or “*Gaskeller*” (?) and not “*Vergasungskeller*,” which one cannot translate as “gas chamber” without dishonesty. Besides, at the end of his book, Pressac himself is resigned to writing that the *Vergasungskeller* document “does not in itself constitute the absolute proof of the existence of a HOMICIDAL gas chamber in the basement of Birkenau Krematorium II” (p. 505).

Four Gas-tight Doors

On page 447, as “criminal trace” no. 22, Pressac cites a document which makes mention of, regarding Krema IV, four gas-tight doors. This time, for reasons which are not clear, he judges that this document does not amount to a “conclusive” proof of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber. This admission tends to reduce much of the value of his initial and fundamental “criminal trace,” on which he cites the mention of a single gas-tight door on an inventory from Krema III as if it were a conclusive proof (see above, “Fourteen Showers and a Gas-tight Door,” pp. 51-54).

A Key for a Gas Chamber

On page 456 he offers us as the 33rd “criminal trace” a document dealing with a “key for gas chamber.” He does so with some embarrassment. That is understandable. Can one imagine a keyhole in a door, gas-tight, to a room which itself is supposed to be gas-tight? He writes that this is “incomprehensible with our present state of knowledge”; but why then represent this document as a “criminal trace”? The key might have been the one to the room in which the cans of Zyklon B were stored.

A Peephole for a Gas Chamber.

Still on page 456, he confesses that the 34th “criminal trace” is nothing of the sort, whatever may have been believed. In question is an order regarding “The fittings for one door with frame, airtight with peephole for gas chambers” (*Die Beschlüsse zu 1 Tür mit Rahmen, luftdicht mit Spion für Gaskammer*). In 1980, during proceedings brought against me by the LICRA (International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism), LICRA and all the rest offered this document as proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers. Pressac, however, concedes that the document at issue was a command concerning a disinfection gas chamber, as I had already indicated in my *Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet* (op. cit., p. 80).

Other False Findings

“Criminal traces” nos. 33 and 34 ought never to have figured on Pressac’s list of the 39 “criminal traces.” Indeed, he presents no. 33 to us as “incomprehensible with our present state of knowledge,” while no. 34 proves, as Pressac admits, the

existence of a disinfection gas chamber, not that of a homicidal gas chamber.

The business of the ten gas detectors, which he brings up on page 432, has already been scotched on page 371, where Pressac reveals that the firm Topf & Sons, manufacturers of crematory ovens, routinely supplied detectors for CO and CO₂; 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 that in this case it was to supply detectors for HCN (and not of CO and CO₂) and... that it would be in a position to furnish an item that it didn't manufacture?

On pages 223 and 432, Pressac reveals what he believes is a document, dated March 6, 1943, according to which *Leichenkeller 1* of *Krema II* and *III* had to be "preheated." Pressac is triumphant. Why would one bother to preheat a morgue? And he implies that what they wanted to preheat was... a homicidal gas chamber. But nineteen days later, on March 25, 1943 to be exact, the authorities learned that such a preheating wasn't possible (p. 227).

On page 302 Pressac regales the reader with an account of how a corpse chute was replaced by a stairway, but toward the end of his book he abandons any attempt to include this in the "39 criminal traces."

He Ought to Have Pondered the Lesson of the Dejaco/Ertl Trial (1972)

I have had occasion to say that the real "Auschwitz Trial" was not that of certain "Auschwitz guards" in Frankfurt (1963-1965), but the trial in Vienna, in 1972, of two men responsible for constructing the crematoria of Auschwitz, above all those at Birkenau, Walter Dejaco and Fritz Ertl, architectural engineers. Both were acquitted.

If the scantiest of the fragments presented here by Pressac (and, as he admits, already known at the time), could have proved the existence of homicidal gas chambers, this trial would have been played up with great fanfare and the two defendants been crushingly condemned. The trial, which was long and meticulous, and which was at first noisily heralded, above all by Simon Wiesenthal, demonstrated—as Pressac concedes—that the prosecution's designated expert was unable to trouble the two defendants; the expert "virtually admitted defeat" (p. 303). In July 1978 I paid a visit to Fritz Ertl

(Dejaco had died that January), in hope that he could clarify certain points regarding the plans of the crematoria which I had found at the Auschwitz Museum. I discovered an old man, panicked by the prospect that his troubles were beginning anew. He was obstinate in refusing me the slightest information but he told me all the same that, for his part, he had never laid eyes on homicidal gas chambers either at Auschwitz or at Birkenau.

It is no secret that I would be delighted to have access to the documents from the pre-trial investigation as well as the transcripts of the Dejaco/Ertl trial. I am convinced that these would include detailed answers on the architecture of the Birkenau crematoria, on their internal layout, on their purpose, and, lastly, on their possible modification. This Dejaco/Ertl trial, the preliminary investigation of which began in 1968 at Reutte (Tirol), is all too often forgotten: it prompted, for the first time, a general mobilization to prove the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz. It marked the first time that the Soviet Union really played a role in furnishing valuable documents, and it witnessed the establishment of a sort of direct conduit between Moscow and Vienna through the intermediacy of Warsaw (Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland) and Auschwitz (archives of the Auschwitz Museum) (p.71). Officials from the Jewish community throughout the world, alerted by Simon Wiesenthal, spared no effort. The two unlucky architectural engineers thus saw massive forces combined against them. Let it be added that, since they were quite unaware of the chemical and physical impossibilities of homicidal gassing in the facilities they had built, their plea was that the buildings' construction was perfectly normal, but that surely it was possible that certain Germans had used them to commit crimes. Dejaco went as far as to say: "And every big room could serve as gas chamber. Even this hearing room" (Kurier, January 20, 1972). Dejaco was greatly mistaken, since a homicidal gas chamber can only be a small room requiring a very complex technology and specific equipment, but nobody caught the error. It was during this trial (January 18-March 10, 1972) that the only Jewish "witness" to the gassings, the all-too-renowned Szlamy Dragon, "fainted" on the stand, and gave no further testimony (AZ, March 3, 1972). Pressac says that he demonstrated "total confusion" (p. 172).

The Leichenkeller at Sachsenhausen Ought to Have Been Visited

In order to get an idea of the several *Leichenkeller* at Birkenau, Pressac ought to have visited the *Leichenkeller* at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, which is still intact and which, modernized in 1940/1941, offers a standard model of this type of building: on the ground floor there was a dissecting room, a doctor's office, etc., and in the basement three rooms occupying about 230 square meters. They could hold 200 corpses. Each room had its own function. One was designed for the undressing and laying out of 80 corpses; the next for laying out 100 corpses; the third was for 20 infected corpses. It is not claimed that there was a homicidal gas chamber in the Sachsenhausen crematorium. Pressac could have verified on the spot that a *Leichenkeller*, which has to be cool, possesses as well heating vents, humidification equipment, a special system for the isolation of the infected corpses (no direct drainage into the sewage system), a chute (*Rutsche*) very similar to those in *Krema II* and *III* at Birkenau with, on both sides, steps for the personnel who ran the elevator for transporting the corpses. Finally, at Sachsenhausen it is confirmed that the very word *Leichenkeller* is generic and is used of the building, ground floor and cellar, as a whole. This point of nomenclature alone should make us cautious regarding every invoice, every work sheet, every accounting record which, apparently referring to a basement room, perhaps actually concerns a room on the ground floor. For example, at Sachsenhausen the well-lit dissecting room or the doctor's office, both located on the ground floor, are described as belonging to a *Leichenkeller* (underground morgue).

He Ought to Have Done Work in the Archives at Koblenz

In the German Federal Archive at Koblenz, Pressac could have discovered, as I did, the extraordinary collection of documents NS-3/377, relative to the 1940 modernization of the *Leichenkeller* at Sachsenhausen. The three plans—of the foundations, the basement, and the ground floor—might have been done by an artist. There is in addition a collection of 90 pages itemizing the materials supplied and the expenses accrued; Pressac would perhaps have found in these pages the actual sense of words which he unjustifiably invests with

sinister meanings when he finds them in the records of the workshops at Auschwitz. By the way, I also have in my possession extracts from these records, carefully selected by the Polish prosecution: from them one can determine that the Germans and the internees under their discipline were scrupulous in entering the slightest order and job; reference is often made to disinfection gas chambers.

He Ought to Have Visited a *Leichenkeller* in Berlin

Pressac, who in his book speaks more of the crematoria and their ovens than of the gas chambers, should perhaps have visited the Ruheleben crematorium at Berlin-Charlottenburg to see a contemporary *Leichenkeller* capable of receiving 500 bodies at a time (see Hans-Kurt Boehlke, *Friedshofsbauten*, Munich, Callwey Verlag, 1974, p. 117, which shows a plan of the above).

He Ought to Have Given Thought to the Example of Stutthof-Danzig

Towards the end of his book (p. 539-541), Pressac devotes some attention to a small brick building which, at the camp in Stutthof-Danzig (not to be confused with the camp at Struthof-Natzweiler, in Alsace), is occasionally represented in the "Holocaust" literature as a homicidal gas chamber although it was obviously, as shown by its external stove, a disinfection gas chamber. Pressac's discussion is incoherent. He begins by stating, correctly, that, given the presence of the stove, the building was a gas chamber for delousing prisoners' effects (p. 539). Then, suddenly, with not a shred of supporting evidence, he declares that from June 22, 1944 (one admires his precision) to the beginning of November 1944 the building was used as a homicidal gas chamber for executing groups of about 100 people. Finally, on the next page (p. 540), Pressac changes his mind and concludes that no scientific examination of the "murder weapon" was ever made. From this he concludes, judiciously:

which means that we do not know how the chamber functioned as a delousing installation and are unable to provide material proof of its criminal use.

It should be brought to Pressac's attention that therefore he had no right, a few lines earlier, to charge anyone with

homicidal gassing. What's more, what holds for this camp near Danzig is just as valid for Auschwitz and it is inadmissible, there as elsewhere, to accuse the Germans of having used an abominable weapon without even having the weapon submitted to expert examination.

No Expert Report on the Weapon No Real Excavation

Until 1988 there had been no expert report on the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau. We had to wait until April 1988 for Fred Leuchter, a specialist in execution gas chambers at American penitentiaries, to publish a 193-page report on "the alleged execution gas chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Majdanek." Ernst Zündel, a German resident of Toronto, Canada, had hired Leuchter to examine those gas chambers and to gather samples there. The result was spectacular: there had never been any homicidal gas chambers in these camps. Only the sample taken from a gas chamber at Birkenau—officially recognized by the present camp authorities as having been used for disinfection with Zyklon B—contained meaningful, and even considerable, traces of cyanide; moreover, this chamber had the blue blotches which reveal that a gas containing hydrocyanic or prussic acid had been used in the past.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet dared to state in 1980 that an expert report had been "accomplished in June 1945 on the ventilation orifices of the gas chamber at Birkenau [Krema II], on twenty-five kilos of women's hair and on the metallic objects found in the hair" (re-edited in *Les Juifs, la mémoire et le présent*, Maspero, p. 222, n.41). I replied to him:

I am familiar with the expert reports ordered by examining magistrate Jan Sehn and carried out by the laboratory located on Copernicus Street in Cracow. They are not reports establishing specifically that such and such a building was a homicidal gas chamber (*Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet, op. cit.*, p. 35).

I shall not deal here with the explanations that I have advanced for the possible presence of traces of hydrocyanic gas in the vents, in the hair or in other objects. S. Klarsfeld knew of this expert report but he knew its limitations as well, since, in his 1986 interview (see above, p. 50-51), he admitted that up to that time real proof had never been published; but

an expert report would have constituted real proof. Pressac mentions the expert report of 1945 but is a long way from sharing Vidal-Naquet's views since he points out that, while scrapings from certain metallic objects described as galvanized plates originating from *Leichenkeller I* of *Krema II* were analyzed, this analysis, which revealed the presence of cyanide compounds, is only *qualitative* (Pressac's own emphasis—p. 233), although to serve as proof the analysis would have had to have been *qualitative* and *quantitative*.

Pressac informs us that the German association for "reconciliation with the Jews" and for "repentance," *Sühnezeichen* (Sign of Atonement), had in 1968 begun excavations in the ruins of the "gas chamber" of *Krematorium II*; I would be curious to know why these excavations were almost immediately broken off. In 1987 I received a revelation from French journalist Michel Folco. During a trip to Auschwitz organized together with Pressac, the two of them had met with Tadeusz Iwaszko, chief of the Auschwitz Museum archives, with whom I became personally acquainted in 1976. Folco asked him why the Poles had never resolved to carry out excavations and an expert examination, the results of which would have enabled them to silence the Revisionists. Iwaszko's response was that if proof of the crime were not discovered, the Jews would accuse the Poles of having suppressed it. Pressac wrote that in 1980 Iwaszko had already told him that excavations would have been of no value because in any case, whatever the results, the Poles would be accused of having "arrange[d]" the site (p. 545).

That's where the shoe pinches the accusers: they dread the results of excavations and analyses. The Revisionists, for their part, have risked undertaking such researches; their reward for doing so has been the Leuchter Report, which proves that there were no homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz, at Birkenau, or at Majdanek ("The Leuchter Report: The How and the Why," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Summer 1989, p. 133-139).

Notes

1. See Appendix 1 below (to be published with Part II of this article in the Summer 1991 issue of *The Journal of Historical Review*).
2. Our druggist is used to making blunders. In order to illustrate that, I recommend page 558. There he recounts how no one was willing to give credence to his first thesis (Krema IV and V were planned *without* criminal intent) but that fortunately one man came to his aid, a man who "launched" him and who allowed him to present his thesis at the Sorbonne Colloquium in 1982, a man who, he wants to confide, found his exposé "clear and remarkable." This individual, who in 1982 supported a thesis whose exact opposite Pressac sustains today, was none other than . . . Pierre Vidal-Naquet!
3. On page 500 he presents us with three "gas-tight" wooden shutters, the provenance of which he doesn't indicate but which probably were part of the disinfection gas chamber. He points out that the fixing bar is "attached to the shutter by two nuts and bolts. The bolt heads are ON THE INSIDE and the nuts are ON THE OUTSIDE" [original emphasis]. And he adds: "an arrangement that calls for no further comment . . .," thus giving to understand, without saying so expressly (Pressac makes frequent use of preterition), that these shutters were part of a homicidal gas chamber and that, had the bolts been "on the inside," the victims would have unscrewed the fixing bar and made their escape!
4. In a bombing attack, the door to an air-raid shelter is supposed to guard against two effects, among others, caused by exploding bombs: suction of the oxygen out of the shelter and penetration of CO into the same shelter.
5. This observation, which destroys his thesis, he makes three times. On page 224, he writes: "The ventilation system of *Leichenkeller 1* [the homicidal gas chamber] had initially been *designed for a morgue*, with the fresh air entering near the ceiling and the cold unhealthy air being drawn out near the floor. Its use as a gas chamber really required the reverse situation, with fresh air coming in near the floor and warm air saturated with hydrocyanic acid being drawn out near the ceiling. But the SS and [engineer Prüfer] chose to maintain the original morgue, ventilation system in the gas chamber, hoping that it would be efficient enough." On page 289, he recalls this "technical reality" of a ventilation system "inappropriately designed for a gas chamber." On page 489, he finally writes: "The levels of the air inlets (above) and extraction holes (below) prove that the system was designed for an underground morgue and not for a gas chamber, where the extraction of the WARM noxious air should be in the UPPER part."
6. See "die Vergasung der Koks" (coke gasification) in a technical study of the crematoria which appeared in 1907: *Handbuch der Architektur* (Heft III: Bestattungsanlagen), Stuttgart, Alfred Körner Verlag, 1907, p. 239. In this work I found much information on "Leichenkeller," "Leichenkammer," "Sezierraum" (dissecting room), on hygienic rules, aeration, disinfection, on particular precautions for infected corpses

(separate room with special aeration and lower temperature), on showers, on the doctor's office, on the washing room, on the length of time for cremation. When all is said and done, *Krema II* and *III* were simply classic types.

7. Pressac is right to recall, regarding this practice (commonplace during wartime where "recovery of non-ferrous metals" is carried out everywhere), that the "recovery of gold from corpses is current practice, even though it may be considered repugnant" (p. 294); medical students know that it isn't an activity peculiar to the SS!

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appetite for the *minutiae* of the planning, construction, and operation of the Auschwitz crematoria and delousing facilities than IHR editorial advisor Robert Faurisson, who preceded Pressac into the Auschwitz archives and served as the strange French pharmacist's first mentor in the on-site, material study of the realities on the ground (and underground) in the famous concentration camp. Here, in the first part of a monumental study of the Pressac thesis and its import for Revisionism (translated from the original French as originally published in *Revue d'Histoire Révisionniste*, no. 3, November-December 1990–January 1991, pp. 65-155), Dr. Faurisson spares all but the masochistic the chore of moiling through Pressac's mammoth (and all but unavailable) tome by reducing its author's unprecedented efforts to exploit the material evidence to so much grist for the Revisionist mill.

Seeing is believing, especially for Revisionists. Our new associate editor, Mark Weber, has selected and commented on just a few of the many revelatory, "tell-tale" documents and photographs which make Pressac's *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* a windfall for Revisionism. The relief one feels at the restoration of the architecture and equipment of Auschwitz to its original banality is a measure of just how bizarre and sinister a phantasmagoria the wizards of Exterminationism have conjured up. Truly Mark and Dr. Faurisson and their colleagues are benign magicians, wielding their restorative powers to dispel the hateful projections of the liars of Auschwitz!

The Journal of Historical Review is proud to publish, for the first time ever, the final plea of the defense lawyer in the 1947 trial of nineteen Germans for their role in alleged war crimes

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