

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-CLAUDE PRESSAC

(As originally published in "Histoire du Negationnisme en France" by Valerie Igounet)

Translator's Notes:

In 1979, General Sir John Hackett published *The Third World War*, which became very popular. The book was a "future history", detailing the course of a war that was projected as taking place six years in the future. This novel technique of imagining the history of the future using present conditions as a credible starting point may have inspired the "Terminator" series of movies; that same year it also seems to have inspired the imagination of a French pharmacist with dreams of writing an alternate history of World War II that would be exciting and credible. To what degree General Hackett's book motivated Jean-Claude Pressac to pursue his dream is not stated. But Pressac did borrow H.G. Wells practice from *The War Of The Worlds* to actually visit the places where his alternate history would be set, and get precise and if possible previously unknown details of famous events for his characters to participate in. This was to have monumental consequences.

We will never know Pressac's alternate history. As planned his book would be episodic, but the episode set in the Nazi complex at Auschwitz ran into frustration. As Pressac states, if he had obtained clear and precise information on how the camp was laid out and how the gas chambers worked, he would have been able to write his episode and finish his book and that would have been the end of it. But the information he needed wasn't there. And when he went to the source to find out what the truth was, he found a history in tatters; incoherent and contradictory.

And his "calm life as a suburban pharmacist" was forever changed.

This is of course a "pirate" translation and a little rough. It was made necessary because no authorized translation has ever been commissioned. Following my own ambitions as a playwright I also have to do deep research and can empathize with Pressac's struggle to get clear information about dramatic events that may contain inconvenient truths. Why certain very important books and documents have never been translated into English is suspicious. As Pressac has said, history is built without hatred, with lucidity, starting from the surviving documents, which make verification possible according to what the participants said. But if those original documents are suppressed, however benignly, there is no other course of action except to follow Pressac's example and embrace the Cartesian principle of critical thinking, pursuing the truth regardless of the consequences. I believe Pressac and I were kindred spirits in one sense – if asked what side we were on about any issue, we would probably both reply: "My side".

This translation is presented without commentary on Pressac's conclusions or the controversy it caused and still causes to both sides of the Holocaust debate. Hopefully authorized translations of Pressac's entire body of work will someday appear; until then the historical record on the "Holocaust" will continue to be as "rotten" as Pressac says it is. French does not directly translate into English. As you read this, remember that this is an interview, an oral history of Pressac's journey into revisionism in his own peculiarities of speech. Some may take issue with my greater-than-usual use of paraphrasing, but with what modest skills I've developed from writing dialogue, I'm confident that this translation is both correct and accessible for the native English speaker.

Vivé la France. Vivé la vérité. Vivé Jean-Claude Pressac.

KAM

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA.

June 22, 2009.

Interview with Jean-Claude Pressac

Conducted by Valerie Igounet at La Ville-du-Bois, Thursday, June 15, 1995

(Note for the interview with Jean-Claude Pressac: After carrying out the first interview with Mr. Pressac, he decided it was necessary to make major alterations to it. The interview that follows is thus not a faithful transcription of the recording. This text as written was keyed on computer by Jean-Claude Pressac; we therefore reproduce it as it was given to us, without corrections. Certain questions were not posed by the interviewer. It goes without saying that remarks of Jean-Claude Pressac were not inserted by Valerie Igounet; or by Editions de Seuil.)

VI: Could you tell us about your path up through the Eighties? How does one become a revisionist?

JCP: A little after the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, I read *Death Is My Trade*, a fictionalized biography by Robert Merle of the premiere commandant of the Auschwitz camp, Rudolf Hoess. I was very young, eighteen years old. I was then planning to prepare for the St. Cyr Military School. Merle's book made me aware of the nature and limit of the orders that as an officer I would have to give and receive. Like him, could I blindly obey and destroy hundreds of thousands of people without quivering? More prosaically, could I order a hundred or more young men to go out and kill, in the majority of cases for nothing? I gave up the idea of a career in the Army and diverted to pharmacy.

Around age thirty, I undertook to carry out a work of political fiction – the political-military history of an alternate future – in which I posed the possibility of a complete victory of the Third Reich in Europe, ending however in a defeat in the Fifties from American nuclear power. Contrary to many authors who define the framework of their book at once, each one of my chapters was to be held in a different place and to treat one particular theme. Several chapters were written; on the actions of the Milice, on the last operations of this group on June 6 of 1944; on the week of the Great Uprising in Paris in July of 1944 with the intervention of the English SS Division "Black Prince", on the formation of European SS officers in Bad Tolz at the end of 1944 and on the last battle in Scotland in the summer of 1945, completing the August campaign in England which provokes a declaration of war by the United States in September of 1945. The first and the last chapters as written were centered on the atomic question. The other chapters were to relate to the secret weapons at Peenemunde and in East Prussia, the path of the "Final Solution" at Auschwitz, the partisan war in Yugoslavia, the German colonization of the Ukraine, etc.

My writings were dependent on my financial resources and my travels to locations during the holidays. I needed to know the places - regions, sites or buildings - which I evoked. Thus a visit to Zagreb, formerly Agram, the capital of the Croatian state was planned three times, each time postponed and could not be carried out. It was during the preliminary work on the chapter on Auschwitz that my research turned out badly, at the end of October of 1979.

VI: Why do you say that your research turned out badly?

JCP: If it had gone well, that is to say if I had succeeded in obtaining clear and precise documentation and specifications on KL Auschwitz, my account of this "alternate" history would have been completed ages ago, would have long since been, or not been published; and I would not be here answering your questions.

In August of 1966, well before I began writing, I visited the Auschwitz Museum and was probably one of the rare Frenchmen of my generation to visit there. I had purchased some books on the spot which I thought would be useful in 1979, but the result was disastrous. Either the explanations of the Polish historians were deplorable or I understood nothing. My souvenirs were not of any help. I situated the crematories badly, grasped even less the interior arrangement that Robert Merle had described in his novel (an immense gassing room for 3,000 people served to the furnaces by four elevators). By chance, the American mini-series *Holocaust* was going to be broadcast on television, and I impatiently waited for it. What I had not expected was the scene, alleged to have been staged in front of the whirring furnaces of Auschwitz that presented instead a furnace which was the dimensions of one at Mauthausen. I had forgotten that historical truth is absent from American productions that are intended above all to make money. But, for now ignorant that this "detail" was obstructing my understanding, I swam in full confusion, not sure how to reconcile this scene with what I thought I knew. At Birkenau in 1966, I viewed the ruins, but no sign indicated their functions; no master plan explained what was there. While there, I met a Polish guard, a former member of the International Brigade in Spain, who told me that in Krema IV people were automatically electrocuted and incinerated on an assembly line basis. He repeated the allegations of an article published in *Pravda* in May of 1945.

Completely blocked, I decided to return to Auschwitz to clear up these contradictions. Having read that during the war, the Polish resistance reigned as masters of the camp and that its members entered and left as they wished under the nose of the SS, and that photographs of the extermination had been taken there, I wrote to the Auschwitz Museum to ask permission to view the photos. Agreed. When I entered the consultation room of the archives, three photos waited on a table. I was amazed; I had believed they had dozens of them. I asked the Conservator of the Archives, Tadeusz Iwaszko, if others did not exist. He reassured me and brought several albums of photos. There were gathered prints coming primarily from three sources; the Soviet film *1945 Chronicle Of The Liberation Of The Camp*, another one called "The Auschwitz Album" (initially distributed by the Jewish Museum of Prague), and the "Album of the SS Construction Directorate" (which I found and purchased later on from Yad Vashem). For this last source, the prisoners working at the camp photo laboratory had clandestinely recreated small prints by direct contact between the negative and reagent paper and had placed them in two bottles which were then buried. Only one, with about fifty photographs, remained intact and was recovered with the liberation.

I had started to doubt the existence of the crematories before my trip to Poland. However, on several photographs presented, I saw them perfectly and some in the course of construction. Of particular interest was the planned implementation by the SS of those buildings which the Soviets had filmed. At the time, my German was not good. On the other hand, I have a good eye for architecture and a plan informs me more about a building or an installation than a descriptive file. I had then almost reached my goal: to set the evolution of the principal character in my book in the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. I was missing only one thing; and with it my research was done; plans of the crematories. These I requested - as one launches a bottle into the sea - from the Conservator. They existed and Iwaszko brought the originals drawn by the SS Camp Construction Directorate (the *Bauleitung*).

What I was going to discover in these blueprints – some were magnificently colored - was to create an upheaval from top to bottom that would forever change the calm life I had known as a suburban pharmacist.

In his presentation of the plans, Iwaszko involuntarily made an enormous error, because it was an impossibility to reconcile the drawings with the account at the time. Preserved with the Auschwitz Museum were seventeen plans of Kremas II, III and IV (valid also for V) established by the SS *Bauleitung*, along with the plans from the civilian companies HUTA and Konrad Segnitz of Beuthen (nine of those in all). The first of the SS Birkenau crematory plans refers to Krema II and was drawn on January 15, 1942; the last of these was drawn March 19, 1943, shortly before it was completed. However, there are radical differences between these plans. In the first, at the time of the drawing, there is nothing criminal about the building. In the last, several modifications can be explained only because the building has become a criminal instrument.

At the time the historians believed, according to the confession of Rudolf Hoess that the order for the extermination of the Jews had been given by Himmler towards the end of 1941. It is now known that Hoess is mistaken about the date and have accepted a date for the beginning of mass extermination, at his camp, in June of 1942. Consequently what is now alleged is that this order was given in the summer of 1941; that an experimental first gassing was practiced in the cellars of a block in the main camp on September 3, 1941 and that the SS *Bauleitung* at Auschwitz had in January of 1942 drawn the plan, a crematory with gas chamber, allowing them to achieve this mission. Therefore Iwaszko, certain that he knew them to be “chronologically correct”, showed me the plans of the series known as “930” from the beginning of 1942, persuading me of their criminality. Indeed, the number 932 was an underground plan which comprised two half-sunken mortuaries, designated Leichenkeller or L-Keller 1 and 2. L-Keller 1 was ventilated, with intake and exhaust. L-Keller 2 was not. It was tempting and at the same time logical to conclude that L-Keller 1 was a gas chamber where the poison gas could be extracted, whereas L-Keller 2, without such installations, was used as cloakroom for the victims. To the uninformed eye all the plans resembled each other, and you could see that the first from Krema II was a beautiful document, contrary to the last, which was hardly readable.

An installation indicated in plan #932 drawn on January 23, 1942, appeared a bit odd. It indicated that L-Keller 1 was equipped with a door that had a double leaf. I would have thought that it would be more rational for a gas chamber to have a single door. Then, I was given master plans of the layout of Krema IV. On the plan #2036 of January 11, 1943, the victims entered a big central room, were directed left towards three rooms where they were gassed, again brought to the center of the building and then brought to incinerators found to the right of where they had entered, where they were progressively cremated in a furnace that had eight crucibles. This circuit was absurd and I pointed that out to Iwaszko. It should have been in the following order; cloakroom giving way to a gas chamber, which itself would lead to a furnace room.

Iwaszko committed another gross psychological error. Instead of acknowledging to me that nothing there made itself understood, that these plans posed a problem, he preferred to impose this unexplained data while declaring “Sie müssen das glauben” (“you must believe that”). This was a matter of some awkwardness since I was French, a member of a people known for their Cartesian spirit and critical thinking. Iwaszko had just started my revisionism.

He could have given a different answer to my doubts, by showing me the successive plans from Krema II, and in particular the last drawings at the time of its delivery in March of 1943. Would I have been able to distinguish the differences between these plans? I think yes – considering my exclusively architectural approach – and would then have pointed them out to Iwaszko. Conjecturing the turn of events is difficult, especially since Iwaszko, noting my reserved attitude regarding his explanation of the Kremas added “Don’t be like Laurisson!” I learned that this “Laurisson” was a very

bad Frenchman who had also come to the museum files and also did not find the commentary of the Polish historians on the crematories to be very clear. It was the first time that I had heard of Faurisson. Unfortunately, the next day was All Saints Day. Having had problems starting my rented car at the time of my departure from the museum, I had requested help from compatriots on the spot, former prisoners returning in pilgrimage. They were very interested by my thoughts, but also critical of my reservations on certain points. And in the course of the conversation there appeared the aforementioned Laurisson as a model not to follow. These two mentioned meeting this person, who it seemed had doubts similar to mine before me. Intrigued at this point I decided to learn about him or even to meet him.

On returning to France, I did some searching to find out who Laurisson was. I found a university professor, Robert Faurisson – after correcting the phonetic orthography – in Vichy. I telephoned him and it was a cerebral explosion. I thought I knew so much about Auschwitz. He knew a hundred times more than me. He affirmed that the operation of the homicidal gas chambers, such as it was presented in its extreme simplicity, would have succeeded in killing everyone, Jews and SS. To back up what he said, he emphasized his study of gas chamber execution as it was practiced in the United States. On one hand, according to the *Memoires* of Rudolf Hoess, the premiere commandant of the camp, 3,000 people were asphyxiated in one blow in immense buildings – the Polish assertion - with a primitive technique which despised any safety regulations, however obligatory with a poison as powerful as hydrocyanic acid; on the other hand in America there was a sophisticated installation with a precise and complex operational method intended to execute only one condemned person at a time. Moreover, the floor plan of the current gas chamber in Krema I did not correspond to the building plans preserved in the files of the Museum and all homicidal gassing in this part – visited daily by thousands of tourists – would have been impossible since one of its doors had a window opening the height of a man, with a window pane which could not help but be broken by the victims.

We really didn't see eye to eye. Faurisson had studied the operation of the homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz and from the nonsense that he had discovered there he concluded that the SS had never been able to kill a million Jews as the survivors and the Poles affirmed. Me, I was disturbed by the arrangement of the crematory buildings that Iwaszko had presented as being criminal, but which I knew were not. But both of us, each with his own reflections and criticisms, brought water to the mill of the other.

A collaboration was thus founded which lasted six months. Faurisson formed my approach to historical criticism - which certain people will always reproach me for. Establishment of the fact requires solid evidence. They can be in the personal writings or testimonies of participants (SS and prisoners) with the condition that they be independent from each other; can be researched in the correspondence and the official writings of the SS, and on the existing photographs and in the remaining ruins or buildings. However, for forty years this history had been the exclusive privilege of the deportee's accounts, regarded as sacred. Any contrary word from the SS was a lie, unless the SS account backed up charges against them and made them more culpable. The SS were said to write in code. No one knew what the key to the code was, but decoding was already known in advance: inoffensive terms became as if by magic "shootings", "gassings", "gas chambers", etc. Everything was twisted in a negative way. The old-fashioned suspension hooks in the incinerator furnace rooms could have had no other use but to hang prisoners. When the prisoners took a shower it was never a normal shower but a torture shower (by alternating cold and hot water) or a "gassing shower" (by diffusing hydrocyanic acid gas through the shower heads, which is physically impossible). The American film producer Steven Spielberg deeply exploited this fear of a gas shower

for commercial gain and with contempt for historical truth in the film *Schindler's List*, by presenting an installation totally unknown in the concentration camps, a gas chamber which can also be a shower. Spielberg seems to accept the mixed operation of a gas chamber shower where the shower heads can diffuse either gas or water. He recycles to his profit a tall tale coming from Dachau. The delousing by Zyklon-B of a prisoner's hut was a prophylactic hygiene measure aimed at killing the lice who were transmitters of typhus – and it has been presented as being only a different method of extermination that would demand that the prisoners forsake their hut for 24 hours in what would be for them a true catastrophe, because the procedure was obligatorily in winter and they had to remain outside in the freezing cold. Unfortunately for this story, an epidemic of typhus starts only in spring or in summer, a relatively lenient time. This is a subjective impression of reality, that all appears black and negative for the great mass of detainees. Thus after the war, the gas chambers for delousing clothing, sometimes designated in German reports as the "Entwesungskammer", literally the "life-removal room", were considered to be homicidal gas chambers since life was removed there. But it was not people but lice that were killed there.

Gradually, during my working sessions with Faurisson, I learned that he was engaged in several lawsuits. One of them related to his abrupt conclusions about the gas chamber at KL Natzweiler-Struthof, while being contemptuous of the confession of one of the former commanders of the camp, SS Captain Joseph Kramer. Kramer stated that at the end of August 1943, approximately 80 detainees selected from Auschwitz were gassed who were to be useful to an SS doctor, Professor Hirt of Strasbourg, who wished to establish a cranium collection. For that, Kramer poured water on "salts" and obtained hydrocyanic acid gas. In chemistry, an acid plus a base results in a salt and some water. But the reaction is not reversible, and therefore chemically impossible. For Faurisson, the SS story was not important and nothing in it was true. Now it is thought that Kramer employed the following products: a crystallized acid mixture of potassium or sodium cyanide. In an anhydrous medium, the mixture has the appearance of a "salt" and is stable. If one adds water, there is a reaction and a release of hydrocyanic acid gas. Or, Kramer made use of a well-known commercial product in the fight against insects, "Cyanogas" or calcium cyanide, releasing hydrocyanic acid gas three minutes after hydration. But at the time, nobody had raised and even less studied this apparent inconsistency.

On that occasion, the archives of the military tribunal of Natzweiler were consultable. French military justice had released a photographic album entitled "Concentration Camp Struthof", comprised of many exterior and interior views of the crematory, gas chamber and especially the plans of these installations. The crematory plan showed that the building was divided into two parts: one reserved for incineration and the other allowing the prisoners to wash themselves in a shower and to delouse their effects by gas in a small joint cell. The warm water of the showers comes from a maze of pipes heating water at the top of the incinerator, or when this is not functioning from a coal hearth. This unfortunate shower room was presented, I don't know for how long, as a homicidal gas chamber with the poison gas "falling" from the showerheads and in spite of windows which the victims would have smashed to smithereens. To have in hand the findings on the crematory installations drawn up by the justices in 1945 made it possible to discover a much more serious assembly, little elaborated on before the camp was opened to the public. The urn storage was located beside the autopsy room and the room occupied by the prisoners was by the furnace close to the entry. The prisoner's room included a hand washing basin which could not be seen across from the urn storage. The functions of the rooms were deliberately reversed. The urns were transferred to the prisoner's room, with a now irrelevant and no longer used hand washing basin. The urn depository was freed to become a room with bedsteads and its door, of normal construction, was equipped with large bolts in order to

make believe that this was a prison where the SS doctors - naturally insane - came seeking guinea-pigs to appease their mania for vivisections. Once you know what this arrangement is it appears so crude that one is amazed at the silly thing and at human blindness. From the first revisionism wanted to denounce such frauds, presented to endorse the worst excesses of concentration camp memory. A person such as Faurisson was born from these excesses.

The commentaries on the gas chamber at Struthof are similarly absurd or incoherent for lack of historical knowledge. Usually, the homicidal gassing of 86 Jews and Jewesses is presented as having been done by pouring granules of Zyklon-B into a funnel with a tap for the liquids. Again physically impossible. After these criminal gassings experiments for protection against a poison gas, phosgene, by ingestion or injection of urotropine (hexamethylenetetramine) was practiced in the gas chamber. The first series of eleven of these experiments on German prisoner volunteers; ethically carried out by a civilian, Professor Bickenbach in December of 1943, killed no subjects and showed that urotropine provided some protection against the effects of phosgene. One experiment was held as follows: two subjects, having absorbed through bone or received an intravenous injection of urotropine, entered the gas chamber with an ampoule containing some grams of phosgene. With the door sealed, one of them threw the ampoule to the ground which broke, letting the gas escape; at the end of twenty minutes, Bickenbach estimated the remaining concentration of phosgene in the room by aspirated gas which passed through an apparatus measuring the electrical conductivity of the gas flux; the measuring device being connected by a flexible tube with a metal end penetrating the door of the gas chamber. Then the ventilator was started, evacuated the gas and the prisoners finally left the room. In May of 1944, a second series was practiced by Hirt who estimated that Bickenbach's tests were not close enough to battlefield conditions. Working by himself and tolerating the presence of Bickenbach only to measure the residual phosgene rates, Hirt used Gypsy prisoners condemned to die in four groups of four subjects (two being control subjects receiving only saline water injections and two others being protected with urotropine, one through bone absorption and the other through intravenous injection). The augmentation of the phosgene concentrations leads to the death of four of the sixteen subjects from acute pulmonary edema. The tube end fixed into the door of the gas chamber is now presented as a tube for the adduction of gas; that is to say to bring gas into the room. Its function was inversed, now introducing instead of extracting gas.

Today, in the gas chamber building, which was a restaurant before the war used by skiers for meals after a good run, are located three tiled tanks which were used to preserve sauerkraut or potatoes. These tanks are presented now as "tomb tanks filled with formol used for the preservation of the bodies of gas chamber victims ". A doubly erroneous explanation, because the bodies preserved in the tanks at the Anatomic Institute of Strasbourg were not in formol – a method preventing any subsequent handling because of the rigidity it would induce in tissues - but in synthetic alcohol at 55 degrees.

One is dismayed by the imbecilic explanations advanced in this business which, while spectacular, are minor points in the history of the camps. And when one studies the homicidal gassings which were practiced, in camp after camp there emerges an accumulation of silly things, each more stupid and dim-witted than the ones before it, which proves the pitiful level of science in concentration camp studies, based exclusively these days on the "sacrosanct" testimonies.

VI: So after what you say about the state of knowledge about the concentration camp system, why didn't you remain a revisionist?

JCP: It was exactly at a working session with Faurisson on the French military justice files concerning Struthof when the first of the alarm signals rang in my ears which would motivate me to leave Faurisson at the end of six months of collaboration.

I was still working on the 86 Jewish victims of Struthof. On their arrival at KL Natzweiler, they were in fact 87 and came from Auschwitz where they had been selected for their morphological characteristics. Any movement of prisoners was registered in the SS weekly manpower reports as effective in camp. That of August 14, 1943 indicates the loss by death of 30 Jews. In the weekly report of August 21, the loss by death of 57 Jews. Normally, the reason for each of these deaths, which were also required to be registered at the Natzweiler town hall, was carefully noted; for example, disease, escape attempt, hanging, shooting, etc. If for some reason this was unknown, that fact was to administratively appear in the back of the manpower report. However, in the case of these 30 and 57 (87 in all) Jewish prisoners, no explanation is given for these sudden and massive deaths. Faurisson, embarrassed by this obviousness, having noticed that the August report which first mentions the entrance of the 87 Jews was printed in Roman characters, and that both of the exit entries were in Gothic script, declared coldly that the SS had made a mistake on the line (the exit entry) and that the Jews had been released, which explained the annotation defect failing to list cause of death in the back...certain thoughts have the power to radically open one's eyes, and those of Faurisson certainly had.

The second alarm signal came from "The Fabre Report". Fabre was a professor of toxicology at the Pharmacy Faculty of Paris. Because of his expertise, and at the request of the military justice, he engaged in a search for cyanides on the remaining corpses at the Anatomy Institute of Strasbourg and in the gas chamber at Struthof. The results were negative in both cases. Faurisson gave enormous importance to this report, which seemed to back up his case. No cyanide traces; therefore, no homicidal gassings. But when one takes into account the proper data on these gassings, one sees that it was foreseeable that the Fabre Report would come up negative for the gas chamber. Made out of concrete, therefore washable; and lined with white, washable square tiles. Number of gassings? Probably 3. Duration of application of the hydrocyanic acid? 5 to 10 minutes. Evacuation of the gas, by a high powered ventilator, for the duration of about a quarter of an hour. Fabre had to scrape the ceiling to take samples. But to find cyanides with such little use and such a brief time of contact is illusory. Unfortunately, the report did not appear in the transcripts of the trial and to this day remains untraceable. For Faurisson, this was an additional proof, one he dissimulated as a "capital fact". For me, being a pharmacist by trade, it was the second time that I had cause to doubt the validity of Faurisson's arguments.

VI: You then left Faurisson?

JCP: No. For if I had started to understand that Faurisson had his limits, my doubts concerning the crematories the not been cleared up. Faurisson expanded my initial investigations without bringing any convincing answers. If I wanted to see clearly in this business, it was necessary that I make my own personal investments and not depend on the sayings of a maestro who sometimes slipped up. It was the money question which dictated the roles. Contrary to the hysterical declarations of Jean-Pierre Bloch, the president of LICRA, claiming that Libya was financing revisionists, they did not give a penny. However, Faurisson's file relating to KL Auschwitz was rather thin and a complement of

documentation was necessary for him. This demanded new studies with the Oswiecim Museum. Faurisson could not return there since he feared they'd refuse to consult with him. Moreover, his only resources came from his wages from the National Education. Not being "undesirable" at Oswiecim and being the only one able to pay for my travels, it was I who set out again to Poland in August of 1980.

On arrival at the museum at Auschwitz, I was in a delicate position. I had known very little at the time of my last visit and that was not true anymore. I had gathered important revisionist assets, and my vision of the crematories as perfect instruments of death had been altered. I wanted to check the thesis of Faurisson and I believed in its validity for two days. That is to say, vis-à-vis the ruins of the Birkenau crematories and the SS archives in the museum, the thesis of Faurisson that mass homicidal gassings were impossible held up for two days.

Knowing perfectly the basement plan for Krema II, it was easy for me to find the arrangement in the remaining ruins. I discovered on this level of "Corpse Cellar 1", the aforementioned gas chamber, openings which were not reproduced on the plan. I went down and found screwed into a separate conduit a valve which seemed to communicate with the air exhaust vents of the room. Same observation for the other openings. This gas chamber had more holes than Swiss cheese and was incapable, for lack of air tightness, to ensure homicidal gassings, at least with hydrocyanic acid. I believed that Faurisson had been right.

The next morning, having carefully indexed my argument in the night, I confronted Iwaszko about *Bauleitung* Plan #932. In the master plans there was the inept double door which opened in the wrong direction, the reverse of what it should have been; the intake ventilation in the ceiling and the exhaust ventilation in the floor, whereas for a gas chamber the opposite was imperative; the evacuation of waste water polluted with prussic acid through pipes which communicated with the ground-floor bathrooms of the SS doctors; the lack of openings for the introduction of Zyklon-B; the projection of the corpse slide which had corpses obstructing the passage of victims from the cloakroom to the gas chamber; the absence from the plan of staircase access to the cloakroom which was visible from the ruins and obviously added later; finally, the presence of three or four openings around the gas chamber not mentioned in the plan I had discovered. In conclusion, this confirmed that "Corpse Cellar 1" of Krema II could not have supported a gas chamber. But Iwaszko was imposing. He did not answer, but left the meeting room where we were looking at documents, and while I savored my victory, he returned with a later SS plan, #1300 of June 18, 1942, entitled "Krematorium-Entwässerung/Krematory [II], Water Drainage". In all my life, I have never received such a slap in the face – figuratively, of course.

Plan #1300 was an answer to all my comments concerning drainage from Krema II. The water drainage used had been modified by the *SS-Bauleitung* in June of 1942: the conduit leading to a cesspool that was linked to the bathroom of the autopsy room had been sealed. Waste water from "Corpse Cellar 1" left the room, passing by the sump from which it descended and caught up to the principal conduit coming from the crematory, which moved towards a distant evacuation pit. Thanks to this new provision, separately evacuating water polluted with poison, the SS could gas the room in complete safety.

I let Iwaszko know that, while this plan had perfectly answered my criticisms on crematory drainage, I had other big questions about physical impossibilities that needed to be explained. We came to an agreement. To answer my doubts, he would arrange for me to study all the crematory plans drawn

by the Auschwitz SS-*Bauleitung*. When I was convinced, I would tell him. Iwaszko offered these facilities because he knew I had admitted that I had been misled on the drainage issue and therefore I was not there for insincere reasons.

At that moment I thought that the Faurisson thesis was still half-valid, and that an intense study of the SS plans would enable me to come to a definite conclusion one way or the other. I counted on finishing up this research in one or two additional trips to Poland. I seriously underestimated the data and other factors which escaped me. There was a mass of files to be accessed and studied. I was unaware of at least ten civilian companies that participated in the construction of these buildings, and that between two of them, HUTA of Kattowitz and Konrad Segnitz of Beuthen who had drawn their own plans, there also existed progress reports from the building sites written by the foremen of these enterprises. I was ignorant of the essential role of Topf and Sons of Erfurt, designers of the incinerators and the people in charge of their construction. I thought that the two crematory plans published by Faurisson were the only ones. This was false. Therefore, if I wanted to obtain an indisputable result, I had to study all the documents preserved in the museum archives referring to the crematories of Auschwitz. There was also posed the problem of duplication of documents. A photocopier is as simple to come by as a hello in the West. In the land of the People's Republic, photocopiers were rare, often broken down and practically unusable. I decided to reproduce by photography the parts I selected. The Auschwitz museum had only a small photo laboratory with three employees, of whom two were usually absent, so to get copies was not a small matter and was spread out over several months.

This study, much longer than planned, required a score of trips to Poland and many long years. So I followed a sort of free university education with Iwaszko in the beginning as a professor, then alone when I started to release results which contradicted the communist history of the camp. Little by little my tenacity in this research payed off. The doors progressively opened. Iwaszko answered all my – sometimes unwarranted - demands for consultation of the documents. If I wanted to view a film on the subject, a projection room reserved only for me was made available. Iwaszko was irritated that I lived and learned at a Western rhythm but when I wasted time, I also lost money, because these trips were expensive for me. Then the Pole became accustomed to my noisy and demanding ways. My last stay at the Archives was marked by a swirl of requests for files, urgent photocopies (at last!), prints of plans that I needed immediately. I stayed until I had become, in the eyes of the historians at the Oswiecim Museum, the best specialist on this question.

VI: What were your first results, and how did you arrive at a conclusion?

JCP: The first results obtained were of two sorts. Concerning the history of the camp, it could be demonstrated that the Kremas had started off as normal sanitary facilities; then later changed into liquidation centers for “Jews unable to work”, that is women, children and the elderly. That doesn't appear to change the fact of the slaughter of the Jews, but the crucial question was and always will be - for lack of a written document, one that would be an SS report saying so – when was the order given? According to Kommandant Hoess, it was in the summer of 1941. However, the criminal transformation of the Kremas was a job that began at the end of November of 1942. This one year difference can only be explained if Hoess was mistaken about the date. Affirming that Hoess accepted the liquidation order at the beginning of June of 1942 implies that all the books written for the past 50 years on this question, books that indicate that the decision to begin this massacre came in the summer of 1941, are inaccurate and need to be reexamined. Such were the first results of a simple study of the files of the SS-*Bauleitung* at Auschwitz and a study which would have to be

carried out for a long time. As for the thesis of Faurisson, it was an execution. When I had started to consult the construction plans and files of the Kremas, many difficulties emerged. The writing of some plans was in a Gothic script that I could not read. I ended up breaking up the words letter by letter. I had to approach the construction files with nothing but my schoolboy German. I worked on researching key words: Gaskammers/gas chambers, Gastur/gas door, Gasdichte Tur/gastight door, Ofen/oven, Einascherungsofen/incineration oven, Krematorie/crematory. As soon as I understood a word, I found I had to grasp the context in which it was employed. Often, I called Iwaszko in to help me decipher something so I could understand it. These files had not been studied by the Polish historians because, being handwritten, they were not easily readable. It was by the pen of a foreman of the civilian firm Reidel and Sons of Bielitz that I found the first two “criminal traces” concerning Krema IV.

What I indicate as being "criminal traces" arise from the difference between the normal installations of a normal crematory, one intended just to incinerate the dead and primarily including one or more mortuaries, along with an autopsy room which was legally mandated and a room for furnaces and coke storage; and those in an abnormal crematory which would have a homicidal gas chamber. This installation or this transformation required particular pieces of equipment which one finds mention of in the SS correspondence with the civilian firms or in their building site logs. A better definition would be “traces of criminal installations”. The search for such “traces” would not be possible if the Kremas had a criminal beginning, as the Polish historians believed for 40 years.

In the Reidel and Sons records for Krema IV appeared under the heading “Work to be carried out” the following notations: February 28, 1943, “to hang gastight windows”, and on March 2, 1943, “concrete has to be poured in gas chamber”. Later, in the joinery file of the camp, I discovered an order for “12 gastight doors of approximately 30/40 centimeters” – these would actually be windows, considering the dimensions – dated February 13 and delivered on the 26th. The dates agreed perfectly and in a room in Krema I are displayed three of these gastight windows, retrieved from the rubble of Krema IV after its dynamiting by the SS on January 22 of 1945. Kremas IV and V each had six of these gastight windows installed, and it was through these that the SS poured Zyklon-B into the gas chambers.

VI: You had informed Faurisson of your discoveries?

JCP: Faurisson declared that he could not decide when to see the documents in question, which was normal. Same attitude held for Pierre Guillaume, his publisher, who followed Faurisson’s blindness.

VI: They took into account what you reported from the Auschwitz Museum?

JCP: No, they no longer could. Faurisson and Guillaume were too urgently engaged in the various lawsuits then in progress to backpedal. From that moment on I was obstructing soothsayers. To continue my studies of the Kremas meant to be working against them. Faurisson was biased. With my agreement and in order not to prove him wrong he directed that my investigations show installations for delousing the effects of the detainees at Auschwitz and to demonstrate that, if hydrocyanic acid had been used in certain rooms of the crematories, it was to kill lice in clothing and not men.

His idea was astute, but impotent against historical reality. However this work was necessary, even obligatory and Faurisson would have had to carry it out himself before coming to the same conclusion. He would have realized that one could employ hydrocyanic gas without difficulty in such highly improvised installations provided that they were equipped with ventilators to expel the poison.

Here's a list of all the camp "Entlausungsanlagen/Delousing Installations". At the central camp at Auschwitz, there were three gas chambers for exterminating lice with Zyklon-B; one on the ground floor of Block 1 and two on the first floor of Block 3. There was also a project near the prisoner's reception building for the installation of a battery of nineteen cells for delousing with Zyklon-B, cells of the Degesh type, the firm that distributed this product. In "Canada 1", the warehouse for stocking the effects recovered from Jews, there was another. In Birkenau there were also two in Buildings B5a and B5b. Much later, in the documents of the *SS-Bauleitung* conserved at the KBG Archives in Moscow I would discover a new building, destined to delouse the clothing of civilian workmen in the concentration camp complex. Without counting them, the "Entlausungsanlagen/Delousing Installations" for the destruction of parasites using hot air were located in three places situated in Birkenau: in the Central Sauna, the Gypsy Camp and in the sector called "Mexico". And let us not forget the autoclaves using steam: one in Block 26 of the Auschwitz Central Camp and five in Birkenau. Later on Faurisson used the study called "The Leuchter Report". In my study, the access I enjoyed served to establish that ninety-five percent of the Zyklon-B delivered to Auschwitz was employed in delousing, and only five percent at maximum was used to asphyxiate Jews; contrary to what Raul Hilberg has stated; and I then went on to prove that at Majdanek the rooms presented by the Polish as being gas chambers were only delousing chambers. The comic twist of this business is that Faurisson's idea was proven at Majdanek but not at Auschwitz.

An essential concept emerged from this work: the constant modification of these installations or their transformation according to need or as the result of higher orders. Thus delousing using hydrocyanic gas was prohibited by Berlin in 1940 and was to be replaced by hot air. But Zyklon-B was rapid and effective when introduced into a room which was sealed off and equipped with ventilators. The hot-air rooms necessitated a room with more complex and expensive equipment. The SS preferred to hold onto a sure method; thus hydrocyanic acid. For example at Birkenau, the delousing gas chamber in Building BW5a, after having functioned with Zyklon-B was transformed to use hot air, unlike the BW5b cell which continued to use Zyklon-B. At Auschwitz, the nineteen Degesh type cells in the reception building were never stripped of their equipment for diffusing Zyklon-B. They thought of using another gas there, Areginal (methyl formate), manufactured by I.G. Farben, but this project was abandoned for want of adequate equipment. Lastly, part of this installation, built in May but unutilized, was used for an experimental delousing facility with two stations where ultrashort radio waves (microwaves) broadcast by equipment developed at this point in time by Siemens in Berlin was used. At Majdanek, the delousing block underwent three successive modifications; first it functioned with hot air, then with hydrocyanic acid, and finally was transformed to kill those unfit for work with carbon monoxide. Nothing was fixed and each building evolved into the role wished for it according to the circumstances. This structural evolution, which I had already encountered at the Kremas, was checked for and found at other sites and became the principal pivot of my later conclusions.

VI: When did you leave Faurisson?

JCP: While undertaking this "derivative" study of other buildings, I simultaneously continued working on the plans and records of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Kremas. I found more and more "traces of criminal installations" and to top it off they were new and unknown to all, including the associations of

former deportees who had last attacked Faurisson. These criminal blunders of the SS and these civil proceedings started to strongly weigh on my relations with the Professor, which became distant starting from December of 1980. One day in April of 1981, a crisis occurred between him and me, because the divergence of our interpretations had become deep and irreconcilable. Faurisson claims that he threw me out *manu militari*. There was separation at that final point. I otherwise gracefully left him seventeen explanatory plans of the crematories which I had drawn to help him understand the engineering problems and which he regarded as "masterworks". He used them later in several conferences. I could see that this rupture was catastrophic to him and that he was furious, but for me, with his thesis not holding water, I could not continue to work for him anymore.

VI: During your passage among revisionists, who did you know?

JCP: I knew relatively few revisionists, exactly three other than Faurisson. Eric Delcroix, who was Faurisson's lawyer; politically to the right and who still fanatically supports and defends the delirious nonsense of his client. Serge Thion, who I encountered once or twice while understanding immediately, I only had to see it, that he was not politically on my side, and that we did not have anything to say to each other, which did not prevent him, following the publication of my book *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation Of The Gas Chambers* with CNRS-Editions, to speak to me on the telephone, but still with nothing to say. And finally Pierre Guillaume, who was impossible not to know since all the meetings of this small revisionist world were held at his place. Guillaume is a former "Brution", the name used by those who are alumni of the Arrow Military Academy, of which I am one. Being aligned with the extreme left, it is in the name of vague Marxist theories that he discovered, aided and published Faurisson. Guillaume never checked the work of the Professor which placed him in an intolerable situation of subjection. I had a guarded and intermittent contact with him after my rupture with Faurisson, and never during our talks could he counter my opposite assertions. Then, from behind, in scornful writings he derided my work without advancing the least proof supporting the direction of his mocking remarks.

VI: What did you do after this break with Faurisson?

JCP: At the time, I lost much. In particular, all his documentation, at least I thought so. When I speak about Faurisson's documentation, I have to say more exactly the Oswiecim Museum's documentation. Four *Bauleitung* plans of the crematories (two of Krema I, one of Krema II and one of Krema IV) that had come from there. Also, the photos. The correspondence of the SS had been provided by different parties and generously translated entirely into French. These weapons went to the enemy. Faurisson lived on other people and waited on them until they proved the infallibility of his assumptions. Payed by state education with nothing to lose, and universally adulated as the "pope of revisionism", he had declared in the late review *Zero* that the gas chambers were "magic" and lived the good life. Since 1980, he exploited naïve idealists, such as Pierre Guillaume, Carlo Mattogno, Henri Roques, Ernst Zundel, Fred Leuchter, John C. Ball, David Irving, myself, etc, and has sometimes wrecked their careers by involving them in "the largest intellectual adventure of the end of the century".

To reconstitute the store of documents on which I worked, I returned to the Oswiecim Museum, let Iwaszko know about the situation, informed him that I was still not convinced and asked him for his assistance. In little time, I had exceeded Faurisson's level of documents.

So that my results would be undeniable, I had to carry out a score of stays in Poland. In the beginning, Iwaszko did not understand my obstinacy in having to gather all the papers concerning the crematories and the gassing installations, delousing and homicidal. The employees of the Museum were working then on the histories of the multiple additional sub-camps of the concentration camp complex and this key question, old to them, did not concern them anymore.

This subject had been explored at the end of the war by the Polish judge Jan Sehn, who was responsible for providing information for the charges filed against the ex-commandant of the camp, Rudolf Hoess. Sehn had died in the Seventies, and he did not get to the bottom of the subject, something I realized there, considering that I followed in his footsteps. I simply continued the work of this man whose memory I respected. This research was extraordinarily interesting, improving and probably transforming me. A comrade has compared it to a Masonic initiation. One has to climb a mountainous peak. As the ascent progresses, the view improves. Thus, I could judge the combat between Faurisson and Georges Wellers, the director of CDJC (Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation) in Paris. Wellers appears with the honorary title of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris and the former racial deportee drapes himself in its dignity. Faurisson prides himself on his infallible position as a Professor and wears the halo of a Martyr of the Truth. Their level of knowledge being equal, they fought with record blows authoritative and scathing, without one being able to carry the other because their arguments were pitiful, their own fault for not having acquired the whole of the data to settle the argument. From a certain height, one meets less and less of the world and suddenly one is tired of complete loneliness. I acknowledge that it was very hard. I was soon obliged to speak, speak in a banal manner, of my problems when I returned to the Oswiecim Museum to meet Iwaszko. And at the same time that became difficult, because the field which I explored was not Iwaszko's specialty, he was concerned with the living conditions of the prisoners in the former camp. The evidence of successive functional modifications to the crematory buildings for the needs of the SS explained my questions and lifted my initial doubts. Of course, it was not sudden, like a celestial revelation, but progressive, as I was driving at reading all the writings and plans of the *SS-Bauleitung* and the German civilian firms, which nobody had done before. Moreover, that a technical study of the crematories would often reveal serious errors in the official history of Auschwitz, established and published for 40 years by renowned historians, would never have come to me without this sort of spirit. Here is a minor but immediate repercussion; the study of the crematories as they relate to *Doctor At Auschwitz*, the book by Dr. Miklos Nyiszli. He states that in Krema II, where he lived for seven months, four elevators lifted the gassed bodies from the underground gas chamber to the ground floor furnace room. Eight *Bauleitung* plans as well as the ruins show only one elevator. A medical examiner, therefore supposedly precise and rigorous, he adds that one crammed up to 3,000 people into 210 square meters, an unrealistic assertion. Nyiszli died in the Fifties and his manuscript in Hungary was never found. But there exists multiple translations of his account, propagated to the whole world.

German documents on the massacre of the Jews are rare. Berlin being bombed, the Central SS offices sitting there saw their papers flaming. The mass of decisive documents carrying the orders, known as "centrals", were destroyed, unlike the documents of some concentration camps, which were seized with the liberation and are called "peripherals". Thus, one seeks to reconstitute the "central" orders from the pieces of the "peripheral" orders, whatever they are. Of importance is to establish a chronology of construction and the criminal transformation of the crematories of Birkenau, compensating to allow for the lack of "central" documents. Having consulted the totality of the documents of the *SS-Bauleitung* at Auschwitz, that is to say after having linked up the Oswiecim files

with that of the KGB Archives in Moscow, I could not really shake the chronology of the massacre of Jews at Auschwitz after that.

VI: How were you then accepted as a historian?

JCP: Until the publication of my first important work, *Auschwitz: Technique And Operation Of The Gas Chambers*, I was meaningful to only three people. Iwaszko met my request to bring the book to a former French detainee at Monowitz (also known as Auschwitz III), Jacques Zybermine; he put me in contact with Georges Wellers. Wellers asked for a sample of what I knew. Documents relating to Kremas IV and V being relatively few, I wrote a text on these buildings of a score of pages and gave it to him. Then I awaited his reaction. He did not have any. Thanks to new documents coming from my repeated trips to Poland, I expanded my initial writing which was now up to 40 pages, and I communicated that to Wellers. Still no reaction. Wellers blocked my work, because the German documents that I used were completely unknown to him and the original data in these disturbed his personal arrangement of this history. The little that I had provided on Kremas IV and V, small compared to what I had accumulated on II and III, was already much too revolutionary for him. During a one-on-one meeting, we had heatedly discussed an SS photo dated May-June of 1944 showing Krema IV. Clearly visible, it was not camouflaged as Wellers thought it had been and as it was presented in a later air photograph, surrounded by a hedge. He refused to recognize the obvious and did not accept the fact. His deliberate and stupid blindness astounded me. I discovered that, like Faurisson, Wellers had identical limits, narrow and insuperable. My work interested him to the degree it confirmed his ideas, but it was out of the question to publish what opposed them.

I was very disconcerted that Wellers could only reply with an irrational attitude. Having been by impressed by the article "A Paper Eichmann", published in the review *Esprit* and denouncing Faurisson, I telephoned the author, Pierre Vidal-Naquet and announced to him that if he wished to see a second history of Auschwitz, I was creating it. I gave him a booklet of about eighty pages, again on Kremas IV and V. Vidal-Naquet considered my demonstration on the evolution of the buildings valid, accurately regretted that my writing was still too badly organized to publish, but concluded that the documents produced were too important to be ignored. He found a solution by promoting me as a speaker at a conference on "Nazi Germany And The Extermination Of The Jews" which was held at the Sorbonne from June 29 to July 2 of 1982. On the afternoon of June 30, I spoke for exactly eighteen minutes by projecting thirty-six slides of unknown documents to this learned assembly. Vidal-Naquet congratulated me for being the only one to have produced and presented new historical material - though he thought that there was a chance in a thousand that at the last moment I would turn and defend the revisionist theses. Seeing the effect obtained by my presentation, Wellers, who took part in the conference sitting just across from me, announced to me that the printing of my results was now extremely urgent. In September *Le Monde Juif*, the review of the CDJC, published an article on Kremas IV and V at Birkenau. In the introduction, Wellers, forced to present the article and to recognize the originality of my work, condemned my theory of the evolution and interior arrangement of the buildings, all in vain since the documents confirmed it. And I continued my research alone.

It was the Oswiecim Museum that completely by chance presented me with the "Album of Auschwitz", distributed by Serge Klarsfeld about whom I had intended to speak of as a "Nazi Hunter". I do not accept his approach, which consists of dragging dotty old people in front of the courts because they had participated in or were the authors of "crimes against humanity", a highly random definition of certain actions generated by the war. I do not believe in the educational value of the trials, especially

since the testimonies, debates and sometimes the documents produced cannot be consulted again for 50 or even 100 years. History is built without hatred, with lucidity, starting from the surviving documents, which make verification possible according to what the participants said. Having learned in Oswiecim that Klarsfeld lived in Paris and in spite of my reservations about his activities, which would only get stronger through the passing years, I telephoned him so I could acquire the "Album of Auschwitz". I believe that I was a complete unknown to him. I had forgotten to tell him about my publication in *Le Monde Juif*. He gave me a copy of "The Album" which I immediately started to study. It was a reproduction of a photo album created by the SS at the time of the transfer of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz in May and June of 1944. Some were selected to work in the arms factories and were then sent to just about everywhere in Germany, the remainder were liquidated. It was the ultimate time for Kremas II, III and V, as well as the installation known as Bunker II which functioned simultaneously. The last large massacre at Auschwitz. The SS photographs records the arrival of these people, their descent from the coaches, their separation into two columns, men in one and woman and children in the other, their selection by SS doctors for work or death, the departure of the unfit towards the crematories – II and V at that time, and their entry onto the grounds of these buildings. Three photos were important because in the background they showed victims of Kremas III and IV. But the SS album stopped in front of the Kremas, and the ultimate fate of the condemned women, children and elderly was not photographed. That was drawn after the war by a member of the Sonderkommando at Krema III, David Olere.



From "The Auschwitz Album", one of the three photos Pressac thought had evidentiary value. Hungarian Jews on the Birkenau railway ramp, with Krema III behind them. Pressac noted the pile of what looks like duffel bags and clothing visible in the background on the Krema grounds on the right, possibly the personal effects of previously gassed Jews removed from the undressing cellar and awaiting transport to Canada I.

The album distributed by Klarsfeld was a rough document, without captions. I researched the sequences taken by the SS and reclassified the whole by placing them in Birkenau. This work was published by "Le Seuil" in 1983. In 1985 Klarsfeld had me do a short study on the homicidal gassings at Natzweiler-Struthof, which his foundation published. In October of 1989, the sum of my research on Auschwitz-Birkenau was published in English, again by the Klarsfeld Foundation, with the title *Auschwitz: Technique And Operation Of The Gas Chambers*. This hefty tome only has a thousand copies, but it was enough to seal my reputation among the specialist historians on the subject. Then I wrote a refutation of the famous "Leuchter Report", also published in English. The opening of the KGB files in Moscow and the rediscovery of the files of the *SS-Bauleitung* at Auschwitz, seized by the Soviets in 1945, allowed me to make a complete synthesis of this history which the Editions du CNRS published in 1993 under the title *The Crematories of Auschwitz*.

VI: Do you think that one can attribute a political agenda to revisionism?

JCP: For a number of people, revisionism is the prerogative of the extreme right. That is, nowadays. When I met Faurisson in 1980, the extreme left disputed the official presentation of the concentration camp universe and the reality of the homicidal gas chambers, which at that time was grudgingly accepted by the extreme right. Then, in front of the unquestionable success of this "setting in doubt", they recovered for their account this unhopd-for gift which exempted them of a major defect.

In fact, all depends on the field of application of the word "revisionism". The first contemporary revisionism related to the responsibility for the start of the First World War. The Allies accused the Central Powers of having destabilized the mechanism of European alliances, which became uncontrollable after the Austro-Hungarian mobilization. In 1919 in Versailles, the Germans were destined for universal vilification and charged with all conceivable depravities, invented by Allied war propaganda. The true party in charge of this butchery was Russia, supported and financed by France, which by mobilizing its army first caused in four years the deaths of eight million men. Although this fact is obvious and was known in the Thirties, how could it be made acceptable to the "poilus" who sacrificed in vain and for whom the "boche" remained the hereditary enemy? After the Second World War, the same problem of responsibility will be put back, but a possible true answer will be given only when all the actors of the conflict disappear. The principle question of actual revisionism is "who is responsible for the conflagration"? This question is not manageable as long as the "locals" remain.

From the beginning the legal foundations of the Nuremberg Trials were attacked. Its expeditious procedures, the retroactive charges and the acceptance of charges without evidence were denounced in France by Maurice Bardeche who repeated his denunciations with the Dachau trials or alleged that American personnel had tortured the SS judged. Then and many times later in France, the living conditions in the concentration camps were approached by a former detainee, Paul Rassinier. The rolls of the "Haftlingsfuhrung/prisoner government" were mainly Communist who, glorified after the war for the "good" that they had done there, were instead described by Rassinier as being harmful, even fatal for the noncommunist prisoners, which is to say the large majority of prisoners. At the time, there was the belief that each concentration camp possessed the proper gas chamber for liquidating Jews, communists and detainees who had reached the "muselman" stage. Rassinier, who had been a prisoner in Buchenwald asserted that there had been no gas chamber there and the same for Dora, which is historically correct. There was a huge uproar and he was publicly accused in November of 1950 of denying the presence of gas chambers in concentration camps, a generalization which he had never made. Denounced with aggressiveness and fanaticism

by the former communist detainees, he was forced to be published by extreme right editors. Nowadays the work of Rassinier, with its obsolete documentation, can only be considered as a curiosity heralding negationism.

“The Persecution of the Jews in the Eastern Countries” [Translators Note: Pressac is referring to Nuremberg Document PS-2233] details the treatment inflicted on the Jews by the Germans until the end of the Forties. The judgment formed at Nuremberg relates to “persecution” and not “genocide” and stated: “The Methods Leading to the Final Solution” - it would have been necessary to add: “such as it was defined at the end of March of 1942” – as follows:

“...the Jews were brought together in camps, where the decision was made for their life or death according to their physical condition. All those who still could were sent to work; those which were in no state to do so were exterminated in gas chambers, after which their corpses were burned. Certain concentration camps such as Treblinka and Auschwitz were mainly chosen for this end”.

Two major books will introduce a particular thesis, always believed nowadays by a majority of people, but the inadmissibility of which is essential thanks to a gradual study of the German files, general and technical, a study free of the obsessional mania to see “code words” everywhere to somehow mitigate the lack of documents. They are *The Final Solution* by the British author Gerald Reitlinger in 1953 and *The Destruction Of The European Jews* by Raul Hilberg in 1961. These books present the massacre of Jews as a genocide, coldly organized and carried out in an uninterrupted manner and with the same starting point; the text of *Mein Kampf* where Hitler thinks, if, during the First World War 12 to 15,000 Hebrews had been subjected at the front to poison gases or liquids, in this way a million German lives could have been saved; followed by the administrative discrimination measures of 1933 and then the ultimate goal, the massive destruction at Auschwitz in 1944. However, Reitlinger noted that the survivors had a tendency to exaggerate, the better to render comprehensible the despair of their lives in the camps, and that the figures advanced had to be drastically reduced. Whereas Reitlinger recognized that he could not explain certain episodes that contradicted what he thought was a systematic extermination planned in advance by the Nazis, Hilberg passed on these awkward details. Hilberg’s two less nuanced books carried the day and became classics of the genre, to the point that they eclipsed those of Reitlinger completely. Currently, at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, one can buy ALL the books published on this subject EXCEPT those of Reitlinger! Rassinier attacked the work of Hilberg, but without success for lack of new documents or files. At the beginning of 1970, an American electrical engineer, Arthur R. Butz, was revolted by Hilberg’s argument which he saw as a gross fraud, so much so that he considered what is known as the “genocide of six million Jews” to be “The Hoax Of The Twentieth Century”, which became the title of his book of refutation, published in 1976. No more than Reitlinger, an artist and collector, or Hilberg, a political scientist, is Butz a historian. But he brought a scientific knowledge and spirit which the traditional historians do not have, their background being literary. In addition, I think the recent “conversion” of the celebrated English historian David Irving to revisionism is also due to the excesses of the genocidal thesis shown by Hilberg.

Then along comes Faurisson and his savage negation of the homicidal gas chambers. The “Professor of Vichy” is a literary person, and has grasped the central importance of the instrument of mass murder, but is unable to scientifically refute its existence. He made use of Butz’s arguments and is the primary reason for the absence of a French translation of Butz’s book.

Among the important disciples of Faurisson are to be held the Italian Carlo Mattogno, working on the furnaces of the Topf firm in order to show that their incineration output was inadequate for the number of victims that had to be burned, and English-Canadian John C. Ball, specializing in the study of air photographs of the concentration camps, which he holds prove, *inter alia*, that Belzec was only a logging camp. Their work is often original, but the axiom of Faurisson on the nonexistence of the homicidal gas chambers prevents them from obtaining results of value. Have to mention his share, for his role as a propagandist baiting revisionist theses, the English-Canadian Ernst Zundel, who was accused in two trials heard in Toronto.

This revisionist movement is broad and attracts people of different political sensibilities. Their dispute often comes from having discovered the obvious falseness of an episode which they previously believed had been definitely established. This tendency to reexamine the history of the Second World War is peculiar to our time, judging the fact from a half-century of distance. Lately in the United States, the fiftieth anniversary of the destruction of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has opposed war veterans against American historians, "protesters" or "revisionists", on whether or not the employment of the atomic bomb was justified. To limit the duration of the war and to avoid the sacrifice of a million American lives to conquer Japan are the traditional alibis used since the end of the war to legitimize two nuclear slaughters. Completely false justifications. Japan hopelessly sought an "honorable" exit, and was ready to surrender on the intangible condition that the emperor remain in place. The losses the Americans projected for a last decisive military operation oscillate between 26,000 and 46,000 and have no relationship with the million casualties generally stated. The two bombs were loosed on Japanese civilians especially to intimidate the Soviets and incidentally to convince the American taxpayers that the billion dollars spent on the "Manhattan Project" had not been in vain. But what is striking is the voluntary blindness of the actors refusing to challenge what was "gained". In the United States, the war veterans have carried the day over the historians. For the moment.

VI: According to you, to make the current history of the period from 1940-1945 evolve is always impossible?

JCP: On minor points, all is possible, or even better is allowed. But when one touches on the great questions or delicate affairs, nothing goes any more.

That is to say an official government authorization or that of a "recognized" authority would be necessary, for without it either the publication of a result will be accepted but the result itself will not be and would remain a dead letter, or the text will suffer a lethal blow from a prohibition measure such as the Gayssot Law in France, which exists to repress the contestation of "the existence of crimes against humanity sanctioned by a French or international jurisdiction". This imbecilic communist-reactionary vote by a majority of self-described "progressive" deputies will not be able to politically frame history for much time, because the historical account is not fixed for eternity and fluctuates according to political decisions, the documents retrieved or investigations cross-checked and unattackable.

The massacre of Polish officers at Katyn was blamed by the Nuremburg Tribunal on the Germans, but everyone knew it was a shameless lie. In the Seventies, an article on Katyn accusing the Soviets would be obligatorily counterbalanced by a communist corrigendum indicating that the dirty German fascists were the only true culprits. The government of the USSR recognized its guilt only in 1990. From 1945 to 1990, it was not allowed to speak the truth about who was responsible for the slaughter. Now, it is.

The unjustified Hitlerian aggression against the peaceful Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in June of 1941 is a cliché that millions of children have recited on school benches. The first great German victories were achieved because the Wehrmacht surprised the Red Army in full movement of concentration a few weeks before it was to be hurled on the German motorways, and prevented it from trying to subject Europe. The Soviet armament back then is strictly shown: fast tanks unsuited to fighting inside Russia; the formation of a million parachutists, offensive corps par excellence; attack aircraft piled up on the ground on the edge of the German-Soviet border. The destruction of its own frontier fortifications was another sign which did not mislead Hitler about Soviet intentions. These facts are known, irrefutable, but to Mister Everywhere the Germans had started the conflict, being in a hurry to attack a peaceful country whose industry, proclaiming plans for the production of goods and equipment amply meeting the needs of the people, had manufactured many tens of thousands of tanks which involved a shameful reduction of the standard of living of the people, a miserable situation maintained by an omnipresent terror.

Without pushing it until it has the absurdity of Faurissonian negation, the study of the homicidal gas chambers sometimes holds big surprises. At Dachau, the construction of the new crematorium, where the gas chamber is sited lasted from the end of 1942 until April of 1943. It was to be used for liquidating Western Jews. Thanks to sabotage by prisoners outfitting it, it became operational only in 1945, too late to be used. This is the story provided after the war by the International Committee of Dachau.

A gassing at Dachau was described by a former detained physician, Dr. Blaha, having been carried out under the direction of an SS physician, Dr. Rascher. According to the official version, this can only have happened in 1945. But Rascher was arrested by the German police on March 28, 1944 because his wife, pretending for six months to be pregnant at the age of fifty-one, had stolen an unweaned infant and presented it as being his child. Thus the gassing reported by Blaha can only be placed in 1944, before the arrest of Rascher. Anyone with curiosity can go up to the crematory attic and note that the whole of the technical equipment of the gas chamber is installed there and is practically intact, except for some damage due to the American Army rabble. On the box of the blower a manufacturer's plate is fixed giving the ventilator specifications and its year of manufacture: 1944. The gassing took place between January and the end of March of 1944; most probably in mid-March. Relating to seven prisoners, two seemed to have died of it. The gas used was a vesicant, such as Yperite or Lewisite, the diffusion of which Rascher wanted to study at various temperatures.

Thus it is about an experimental medical gas chamber and nothing more, having been used only once. The horror film turned out by Allies on the camps and projected at the Nuremberg Tribunal shows only one gas chamber presented as being that of Dachau, and as being homicidal and functioning with Zyklon-B, which is doubly inaccurate. What's left in this film, *sensu stricto*, of the charges of massive homicidal gassings?

I sent to the director of the Dachau Museum an article of a score of pages on his gas chambers in which I exposed the documents at greater length, the facts and the reasons leading me to think that this chamber had not been built on the initial levels of the new crematory, that it had been built in the crematory mortuary at the end of 1943 and through the beginning of 1944 as well, on the order of Dr. Rascher to carry out a series of medical experiments on the diffusion of vesicant gas as a function of temperature. To this day, I have not received any reply to my text. No comment. On account of blindness.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the camps, a memorial book was published by Marcel Ruby mentioning eighteen camps of concentration and extermination. Ruby's book is not based on any published histories and he did not begin to do research in any files. I will not hold to the victim count quoted in his work. For Dachau, he states 70,000 whereas the Dachau Museum states approximately 30,000. Natzweiler-Struthof is stated as having caused 11,000, a figure given by the camp's committee of inquiry in contempt of the reality, which is nearer to 2-3,000. For the extermination camps, Ruby takes refuge behind Hilberg "whose work is authoritative". Hilberg's figures came from Polish sources that hadn't been corrected since 1950. But in 1990, the Poles declared these figures "emotional" because they were established under the shock of the opening and discovery of the death camps and - without praising it themselves, during the Stalinist period. This system, to consistently take shelter behind others, becomes dangerous to the first who deviates from the line.

I have tried to define the number of victims in what are known as extermination camps on a material basis: the surface area of the gas chambers and the number of people they were able to hold along with how long a gassing took, number of gassings per day, number of convoys arriving per day as a function of the real capacities of the chambers, etc. Compared to Hilberg's figures, borrowed from the Poles, here are the figures I obtained. Chelmno: 80 to 85,000 instead of 150,000; Belzec: From 100 to 150,000 instead of 550,000; Sobibor: 30 to 35,000 instead of 200,000; Treblinka: 200 to 250,000 instead of 750,000; Majdanek: less than 100,000 instead of 360,000. In fact, Ruby, while taking pride in Hilberg's authority, does not take into account the minor corrections of the Polish figures and produces them with their original exaggeration. The emotional coefficient to multiply by varies from 2 to 7 and is on average 4 or 5. This average applies perfectly to Auschwitz. In the case of this complex, by 1945 the SS recognized that they had lost any notion of the number of deaths, because there was too much of it for the human spirit to conceive. As for former detainees, their figures are the fruit of the rumors of the time amplified by their imaginations. The actors in the drama were unable to provide the least of valid figures, as well as the SS, either from what they inflicted on the prisoners or from the overflow by epidemic mortality, for lack of concrete information. Only the historians can try to quantify and obtain an order of magnitude. The figure of 4,000,000 victims, fixed after the war after negotiations between the Soviet Communist and Polish authorities, is propaganda without historical foundation. Even Ruby thinks it is advisable to advance the figure of 1,200,000. The most serious figure before my estimate is that of a Polish historian, Franciszek Piper, who advanced the figure of 1,100,000 in 1990. Regarding my quote, I had proposed 800,000, then after a more detailed study of the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, 700,000. Ruby, as well as Vidal-Naquet who knows nothing about it, can only find my result too small. The Polish government did not hold to Piper's study and has imposed, for political reasons, the dictum that 1,500,000 people died at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The obstinacy of the former deportees seriously compromises a defense of the facts or examination of the historically unacceptable figures by a wish to transmit "Memory". By imposing a repressive law on the judgments of the Court of Nuremberg, they kill the only relatively valid part of "Memory", which is to know the published German documents that support it. What value will future generations be able to retain of a trial with German translations that were biased, where certain files were pruned (such as the case of the SS file on the new crematory at Dachau), and to top it off, with an accusatory film that rested mainly on nothing? I do not count the tortures inflicted on the accused at the time of the Dachau trials.

As for the massacre of the Jews, several basic concepts must be taken up again in their entirety. The figures advanced have to be reexamined basically from the top. The term "genocide" is no longer appropriate. In 1961 Hilberg employed the word "destruction" in the title of his book. It is necessary to give up the concept of a systematic extermination program undertaken from the beginning. Rather, it got tougher progressively, imposed by the war which was itself exacerbated by the violent anti-Semitism of Hitler and his close entourage. Increasingly drastic coercive measures were worked out and applied until they lead, starting in April 1942, to a "large scale massacre".

VI: It seems that to you revisionists have a good side and a dialogue with them is possible, which a man such as Vidal-Naquet absolutely refuses. How do you explain this divergence?

JCP: An Italian called Carlo Mattagno incontestably became the best researcher on the revisionist side. In the first issue of *Annals of Revisionist History* in the spring of 1987, the principal article is by him and is entitled "The Myth Of The Extermination Of The Jews". The method utilized by Mattagno rested on confronting the testimonies, the usual Faurissonian process and concludes, after raising and reexamining their multiple contradictions, that he has established their inadmissibility and with that the nonexistence of the gas chambers. He does not especially seek to explain these divergences. On the subject of the number of incineration furnaces at Birkenau, there existed five tri-muffle furnaces in Krema II, the same for Krema III, two quad-muffle furnaces in Krema IV, the same for Krema V, in all 46 incinerators. When Kommandant Hoess talks about 10 furnaces; he is talking about the 10 tri-muffle incinerators of Kremas II and III. When he says 15 furnaces, he's talking of the 15 muffles in the incinerators equipping Kremas II or III. In his turn a former Hungarian Jewish forensic physician, Dr. Miklos Nyiszli, having worked with SS doctor Josef Mengele in Krema II, described 15 furnaces there, the same quantities advanced by a member of the Sonderkommando, Dov Paisikovic. These two witnesses are still referring to the 15 muffles in the incinerators of Kremas II or III. Similar contradictory situations can be explained on the condition of knowing the evolution of the crematory buildings. Hoess affirms that "after a short time, Krema IV was out of service and could never be used again", whereas another SS member of the Political Section, Pery Broad, stated that "the four crematories all emitted exhaust. But soon, following a continuous overcharge: the furnaces broke down, and only Krema IV still smoked". Hoess made indirect reference to the short two month warranty given by the firm Topf of Erfurt for the quad-muffle double furnace of Krema IV, which because of excessive use broke down in mid-May of 1943. Hoess presents it as a very precise fact, confirmed by a note of opinion from the engineer Kurt Pruffer of April 8, 1943, recently found in the files of the former Topf firm; and a letter of April 10, 1943 signed by Ernst Wolfgang Topf and conserved in the Oswiecim Museum since 1945. The episode of only Krema IV "smoking" is isolated – and in the imagination of Broad is during the summer of 1944. But this account does refer to a singular moment in the history of Birkenau. At the end of May, 1943, only Krema V was functioning; II being broken down, III unfinished and IV forever out of service. He is mistaken on the date and in the order of events in the crematories. The offices of the Political Section are situated in the principal camp at Auschwitz; close to Krema I. Broad knows little about Birkenau, and seldom goes there except sometimes when convoys arrive. A direct view of Kremas IV and V is not possible from the selection ramp at Birkenau and he is probably confused about the buildings. On the other hand, Broad has also accurately related an episode concerning the exposition of about thirty crematory photographs in the service entry of the Auschwitz *Bauleitung*, because he participated in its prohibition. The number of known photographs of the Birkenau crematories is 25 (in fact 26, because one of Krema II is always left out). It is very easy to "demolish" a testimony. To replace it in context and to explain it is otherwise very difficult.

Thin, with obvious limitations, this first revisionist work of Mattogno opened the trail which he would follow: the question of the number of Hungarian Jews deported to Birkenau, and that of the output of the Topf incinerators. For the Hungarian Jews, he was right in 1987 to assert that the deportations happened in May and June of 1944; whereas Danuta Czech, the Polish redacter of the *Calendar of Events at Concentration Camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1939-1945*, and also Wellers who used this source without checking, supported that they progressed from May through October of 1944. Wellers refused to correspond with Mattogno on this subject on the basis of the policy that one never talks to revisionists. An arrest warrant was even launched by a zealous judge against Mattogno in the event that he entered French territory. Czech had published her *Calendar* in the Sixties, the date Wellers started calculating the number of victims at Auschwitz (1.6 million instead of 4). A second, corrected edition was published in 1989. Of the 91 convoys originally indexed, there remained only about 50. Czech was mistaken and had assimilated the transfers from camp to camp in Birkenau as being the arrival of convoys. Thus, on July 15, 1944 when Mengele had taken two Hungarian Jewish twins from the sector called Mexico, and after registering them placed them in the infirmary of the Bllf camp, Czech had then estimated that from a convoy of 3,000 people who had arrived, only two people had been selected and registered and that the remaining 2,998 had been gassed. As Czech had not found any more than 50 convoys with 150,000 people instead of the 438,000 that she believed to have been deported to Auschwitz, she "compensated" by increasing the figure of the May and June convoys by asserting - without evidence - that on such days, instead of a "convoy", "convoys" were arriving at Birkenau, making herself guilty of false history. However, no international arrest warrant was brought against Czech.

As for Wellers' accounts, after the publication of the second *Calendar* they were worthless, which did not prevent the Poles from utilizing Wellers' erroneous results as a "serious" reference...

Mattogno also studied the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz, said by the Poles to have happened from the 3rd through 5th of September in the basement of Block II in the principal Auschwitz camp. The gassing, according to the Poles, is the direct consequence of the order to exterminate the Jews received by Kommandant Hoess in Berlin from the mouth of Himmler and this in the summer of 1941, except that it was carried out on Russian prisoners of war and the incurably sick, not the Jews. Mattogno concluded first that this was a pure fabrication, second that this episode rested on no historical foundation. I discussed this question with the Poles. Here came a nimble little answer: "This gassing began on the birthday of a prisoner who took part in it, therefore he remembers the date exactly." The prisoner in question, Michael Kula, declared to remember it exactly since it was the anniversary day of his arrival at the camp, the 15th of August... and not September 3. It is now known that Hoess did not receive the order to kill the Jews in the summer of 1941, but at the beginning of June, 1942. If this first gassing took place, it is placed in December of 1941, even in January of 1942 and has no connection with the massacre of the Jews.

The setting in doubt of the incineration capacities of the Topf furnaces is an old business already touched upon by Faurisson. It had been enough for him to consult, not that it mattered, with specialists in the current civilian crematories and to hear for himself the answer that a normal incineration - body and coffin - required one to one and a half hours. He compared this output with that obtained in the furnaces of Birkenau, which according to the prisoners were able to reduce twenty thousand people per day to ashes, which would mean the cremation of a corpse in ten minutes. He then spoke out against this technical impossibility, which was far from being original. His "indignation" rests on a double error, because Faurisson had brought together two different methods of incineration, one civilian and the other concentration, and emphasized the unrealistic

figures claimed by the prisoners. Mattogno has tried to refine the reasoning of the "Master" by studying the technical potential of German incinerators before the Second World War. With this investigation he has truly opened a new method of research which, to the embarrassment of those blocking revisionists offers promising perspectives, but which could be exploited only after the discovery at the beginning of 1995 of the files of the former Topf firm and in particular the plans and remaining documents of the D IV division - that of the crematories - and of engineer Kurt Prufer.

Mattogno, for his part, has compared the furnaces of engineers Volckmann and Ludwig of Hamburg to those of Topf of Erfurt in order to establish that the Topf output was insufficient. Without archival documents he can only be misled, especially if his goal is to show that the Topf furnaces were junk. However, the forward setting by Mattogno of the Volkmann-Ludwig furnace, manufactured by the firm of H.R. Heinicke of Chemnitz, is historically premonitory.

The tests of the Volkmann-Ludwig furnace led the two inventors to operate a series of incinerations in Hamburg, authorized because this was a free city and not subject to Prussian incineration fees. To incinerate in series consisted of introducing a first coffin into the muffle of this furnace. Once this was reduced to a load of coarse ashes, it was then placed in the post-combustion ashtray to complete the incineration and obtain fine, white ashes. With the muffle empty, one could charge it with a second coffin. Thus an incineration output of seventeen bodies per day could be reached. But this method implied the simultaneous presence of two different bodies in the furnace, which was generally prohibited in the different German states. What was practical in Birkenau is only the extension of this process. The competition between the two firms, Heinicke and Topf, for the conquest of the German civilian cremation market would involve several lawsuits beginning in 1933 which would be completed only in October of 1948, to the advantage of Topf. This success was commercially mixed but technically crushing, since Mr. Jaecker, the owner of Heinicke, without admitting that the arrangement of the VL-furnace with its cold-air injectors was inferior to that of the pre-heated air furnace of Prufer, regretted the absence of Prufer - then in the hands of the Soviets - and deplored that the two firms did not merge in the pre-war period instead of entering into divisive judicial proceedings. The terminal phase of these lawsuits provides technical information necessary to understand the development of the Topf civilian furnaces of the pre-war period and the development of the model with pre-heated air which can carry out a complete incineration in only 35-40 minutes, as well as its construction in East Germany until the Seventies and its use there until 1993-1994. As for incineration in series in concentration camps, a report of September 1942 from the engineer Fritz Sander, Prufer's boss, dissects the various aspects and shows that a direct comparison with civilian incineration is not valid.

I met several times with Carlo Mattogno. Our meetings were interesting and instructive. I ceased any dialogue with him as soon as I realized that instead of taking note of the Topf documents which I had published, incontestable documents since they were written by the engineers of the firms, he took refuge behind an insincere argument purely to deny them.

The refusal of dialogue recommended by Vidal-Naquet comes at the cost of him having to hypocritically say "Don't do what I already did". A few months before Thion published his "Political Truth or Historical Truth?" Vidal-Naquet, in the presence of a third person, engaged in a discussion of several hours with him. It was a matter of intellectuals, proud of their leftist conscience, the accuracy of their thoughts and the safety of their reasoning. One spoke about anti-Semitism – it is the practice of leftists to evoke an attitude which does not exist anymore in France except in their delirium – the other mentioned a small "technical possibility"; one rants and the other goes on at length about "beliefs". The true material questions were not brought up, being unworthy of these beautiful literary

spirits. Letters were exchanged between Vidal-Naquet and Thion. One addressed the other tenderly there as "tu". They mentioned the gas chambers only once, but within the framework of the T-4 program (the euthanasia of the mentally ill) which has no connection with homicidal gassings at Auschwitz. The T-4 program is lamentable but null. The common denominator between Vidal-Naquet and Thion is that the money they live on comes from the National Education, just like Faurisson. The most instructive of these exchanges revealed by Thion is the amazing fickleness of Vidal-Naquet. Faurisson asserted that the *Diary of Anne Frank* is a fake and Vidal-Naquet admitted it. Then, following the publication of a Dutch expert report, he sponsored a revised edition of the *Diary*. Getting into much more serious business, after a justified denunciation by Gitta Sereny, Vidal-Naquet rejected as a fabrication *For Those I Loved*, the story of the life of a Treblinka "witness" by Max Gallo and Martin Gray. That did not prevent a movie based on this Treblinka fable from being made and played again and again on television. A cartoon strip was based on this same book, made by one of the most famous French graphic designers, Paul Gillon. Two albums of this strip evoking the life of the Warsaw Ghetto appeared. But the series foundered before taking us to Treblinka, and the third album, which would have treated the death camp and its eight gas chambers, was not born, for good reason. In spite of this Vidal-Naquet, having met Gray and with the sight of Polish "certificates" that he showed him, admitted to being mistaken about the reality of his stay at Treblinka. The "certificates" were never made public.

When my book was published, I received from Vidal-Naquet a letter of congratulations where he recognized that he had never thought that my technical research could succeed and arrive at such a result. Three days later, I received a letter of reprimand which regretted the first, because I had explained to a journalist at *Le Monde* why an amateur had been able to deal with this question. More than one would think, university academics who have approached it find themselves - after studying files resting mainly on testimonies and, for lack of unknown documents either SS or technical which they would have discovered in the files if they had taken the pains to look – they find themselves in front of a crucial choice. Either to continue leaning towards the Faurissonien side and compromising their career, or to give up the subject to preserve their post. The journalist had summarized what I said as "university cowardice" a phrase that I did not use. I would have used the word "cowardice", for that applies perfectly to the attitude that "professors" face this significant topic with. Vidal-Naquet can compare himself to a hollow weather vane turning into the wind of publications and topicality because he himself did not undertake the basic research to support his peremptory and sanctimonious declarations.

VI: I acknowledge not understanding the interest which you have, just as Carlo Mattogno does, with the incinerators instead of concentration camp veterans, since the essential argument of the revisionists is the negation of the gas chambers. How do you explain it?

JCP: The study of the furnaces themselves is tiresome for the common run of people. The interest comes from the repercussions. Besides, to stick to the Topf furnaces is too limiting and it is the whole manufacturing firm of Erfurt which should be taken into account because four of its spheres of activity were connected to the machinery of mass murder. One: the incineration of the bodies by its D IV division (engineer Prufer along with the people in charge of the four subdivisions of D, engineers Sander and Erdman). Two: the air-conditioning – intake and exhaust ventilation - of the buildings by its B division (engineer Shultze). Three: The gassing of grain storage using Areginal – a liquid until it has reached 32 degrees Centigrade, just as hydrocyanic acid is a liquid until it reaches 27 degrees Centigrade – by its A division. Four: The manufacture of metal gas-tight doors by its C division. As

only divisions D IV and B were solicited by the SS, this unutilized versatility puts a different light on what is called the genocide of the Jews.

In spite of his official writings, Mattogno maintains reservations on the technical impossibility of the homicidal gas chambers. For him, the "Schwerpunkt", the decisive point is at the level of the Topf furnaces, insufficient to daily incinerate thousands of alleged gas victims. He represents the retreat position of the revisionists, and has to be alert in case the first line of Faurisson should crumble. It is important to know his work in order to fight it on his ground. But this combat becomes minor vis-a-vis the new data revealed by the study of the furnaces or even better of incineration in general. It is about the question of smoke. All the surviving detainees of Nazi concentration camps - except for rare exceptions - speak about chimneys smoking 24 hours a day while spitting high flames visible for kilometers in the neighborhood. The revisionists, after having studied all the aerial photos of Auschwitz-Birkenau taken from May of 1944 through January of 1945, affirm that there is no smoke leaving the chimneys of the crematories, which for them means that they were not functioning, and this during the height of the massacre of the Hungarian Jews.

At the time of the first European congress on cremation in the city of Dresden in 1878, strict rules were defined for the conduct of cremations and the companies building the furnaces had to obey them. One of these rules indicated that "the products of the cremation must not befoul the vicinity". Smoke and odors were proscribed. The Topf firm, whose primary activity from its foundation was the construction of hearths of every kind, had an obsession with the emission of smoke, the sign of a badly adjusted hearth. One of its commercial prospectuses appealed to future customers with this advertisement: "If your chimney smokes, you're losing money". The Topf furnaces did not smoke and neither did those of competing firms. At the beginning of its career, the Volckmann-Ludwig furnace was shown to emit black smoke, which was the worst criticism one could make against it. Certain photographs of the euthanasia centers belonging to the T-4 program show them with abundant smoke going up to the sky and judiciously prove that there were burned the bodies of the mentally ill who were killed. They are vulgar photographic montages. The incinerators of these care facilities, often built before their assignment to T-4, were not allowed to smoke, since the builders had been constrained by regulations and the competition of the market.

Interrogated on the concentration camp incinerators by the Soviets after his arrest in March of 1946, Prufer explained their characteristics to them. The civilian incineration furnaces functioned with preheated air, so that the corpse incinerated itself more quickly and without smoke. As the furnaces in the camps were very different structures, the use of this process was impossible. The corpses incinerated more slowly and smoke developed. To counter that, it was enough to pulse air into the crucible of the incinerator. Indeed, the three bi-muffle furnaces at the central camp of Auschwitz were teamed with blowers. The tri-muffle furnaces mounted in the crematory at Buchenwald and in Kremas II and III of Birkenau were likewise equipped. While thus operating with a technique identical to the pulse blowing on the fire of a forging mill, Prufer obtained cremation durations close to his civilian furnaces and avoided the formation of smoke. On the other hand, the 8-muffle furnaces of Kremas IV and V did not have any blowers, but compensated for that by a strong draft pulling through two chimneys 16 meters in height. As for the concentration camp furnaces of Heinrich Kori of Berlin, fired by fuel oil or coke, his were manufactured and built without ventilators.

All generalizations must be avoided. Rassinier's dispute came from an abusive generalization affirming that all the concentration camps had a gas chamber. For the furnaces, each situation has to be treated separately and according to the chronology. The new crematory at Majdanek was teamed

to a group of five Kori mono-muffle furnaces without ventilators and connected to a collective chimney. To say that this chimney smoked is true. The new crematory at Dachau accepted four Kori mono-muffle furnaces without ventilators giving it a chimney which, of course, smoked. At the liberation, soot stained the outside of almost all the heights of this chimney. The Kori furnace fired by coke and without a ventilator at the crematory of Natzweiler-Struthof, had a metal chimney. It glowed and smoked. On the other hand, the chimney of Krema I of Auschwitz with its three bi-muffle Topf furnaces never smoked. None of the thousands of former Polish detainees who lived within two steps of this crematory has complained about either smoke or odor. The villa where the family of Kommandant Hoess lived is in direct proximity to Krema I. If Pruffer had not practiced his trade correctly, there is no doubt that the engineer would have been snubbed and that he could never have obtained the contracts following for Birkenau. But then, all miraculously changes. In Krema II, there are the same Topf furnaces, but tri-muffle, ventilated like a bi-muffle and connected to a large collective chimney. Of this it is said it spouted immense flames two or three meters in height with the top ending in a large column of smoke "obscuring the skies". A scene in the movie *Schindler's List* is famous for the glaring realism of this symbolic image, unrelated to reality and the same that David Olere will draw. Olere has told me why he had been obliged to present Krema III thus. Very weak after his return from deportation, he had to be confined to bed, and yet people pressed themselves to his bedside to ask him for news of theirs. In order to render comprehensible to them the drama with a striking simplicity, Olere drew Krema III in an aerial view with its chimney spitting a black smoke containing the faces of deaths. By answering the questions with this allegory, he had peace and could rest. In his later drawings, Olere will continue to present the chimneys expelling flame and smoke. Illustrating one of the three incineration pits active behind Krema V in May-June 1944, he rendered Krema V spitting flames from its two chimneys whereas actually the eight-muffle furnace was at this time turned off.

I had Madame Vaillant-Couturier carry out a mini-survey with former detainees of Birkenau on smoke which they remembered during the summer of 1944. Of six questioned, all answered that the chimneys smoked. Three said the smoke was white, three said the smoke was black. Though no smoke rose from the chimneys of Kremas II and III, the witnesses do not lie, they confuse. They describe smoke, black or white according to the moment, which came from the open-air incineration pits of Krema V and assimilated them as being from the whole of the four crematories. There exist for evidence two photographs taken by the Polish resistance of the northern pit of Krema V with white smoke and two aerial photographs of May 31, 1944 of this same pit in action with a crescent of black smoke rising to the top of Krema V. They are most ridiculous, the explanations of the revisionists. Faurisson states that white smoke comes from fires of birch branches, lit to drive out the odors. Which one? Mystery. As for John C. Ball who has veritably uncovered the aerial photographs of May 31, 1944 and who is an expert in the interpretation of such pictures, he does not see it. That is much simpler.

In short, the revisionists make use of a true fact, the absence of smoke from the tops of Kremas II and III, a fact confirmed technically and photographically; and based on imprecise data from what the former detainees of Birkenau said conclude that there was no massacre, that the place was a holiday camp surrounded by a calm countryside where peaceful Polish farmers worked and that the gas chambers are a sorry humbug.

VI: What are your projects for the future?

JCP: Because he studied furnaces, I've waited for years for the books by Carlo Mattogno, in which he will dismantle brick by brick my work on the crematories of Auschwitz. When you're made like me, you take your dignified suffering and await this formidable work which will destroy mine.

Enough of the jokes. After getting authorization from the director, Mr. Udo Braun, I am studying the remaining technical documents of Topf preserved in the cellars of the Erfurt factory with what has been called since the fall of the Berlin Wall the "Erfurter Malzerei und Speicherbaun" abbreviated "EMS".

What I have found confirms the accuracy of my book nearly 90-95%. This is what concerned me most, because now there remain only minor points to correct. Fortunately, the discovery of 33,000 photostats of plans of the firm, illustrating its activity from 1932 to 1948, makes it possible to extract some nearly 600 plans of the "Crematory Construction" division and almost from day to day to follow its production and the evolution of the research carried out by Prufer that lead to the Topf hot-air incinerator. Moreover, the files of the Heinicke lawsuits against Topf and vice versa contain six original plans, selected by Prufer, to illustrate the development of this furnace. The future book of denier Mattogno, if it appears some day, will not be able to say anything against the rediscovered Topf technical documents.

In 1996, I will begin a book on the Topf enterprise, from its creation in Erfurt in 1878 to the dissolution of its Western entity in Wiesbaden in 1963. Relating primarily to the degree of engagement and the responsibility of the firm in the measures taken in concentration camps regarding the incineration questions, it will also approach certain methods of gassing which were also a Topf specialty. The Topf documents clarify the beginning of concentration camp incineration during the very hard winter of 1939-40 (file "Krematoriumbau, Schawkin, SMA" photostat #19,455 in the Topf family archives, regarding the crematory at the Dachau camp with two electrically heated civilian furnaces), clarify the technical parameters (report of engineer Sander of September of 1942), give the true incineration rate of the Birkenau crematories (Prufer's note of September 1942), proves once more (is this really necessary?) the installation of a gas chamber in Krema II (note of Sander of February 1943), and brings answers to obscure episodes mentioned in the known correspondence such as the hypothetical case of a crematory at the labor camp of Krakow-Plaszow found in photostat #35,284. It will moreover be a treatment of all the Nazi gas chambers, particularly those utilized in the death camps, but in a format which remains to be defined and promising unusual results.

VI: What are your conclusions on all this business?

JCP: Michel de Bouard, former "Nacht und Nebel" prisoner at Mauthausen, is of the opinion that the record (on the concentration camp system) is "rotten". First of all, there is a premium on appeasing resentment and revenge. Then memory is placed above history. Second, the seizure by the Communists of the principal administrative units in the camps, the formation after the liberation of associations under their establishment and control during fifty years of the "democratic proletarian" history of the camps have introduced the virus of a formalized antifascist language. Approximation, exaggeration, omissions and lies characterize the majority of writings of this period. The unanimous, unappealable discredit which the communist writings are struck with can only rub off on a concentration camp history tainted by their ideas and destroy it.

Can one correct the record? No, it is too late. A general correction is humanly and materially impossible. Any historical change involves the devaluing of this fixed memory already presented as being definitive. However, new documents will inevitably emerge and more and more upset the official certainty. The current form of the presentation of the universe of the camps, however triumphant, is doomed. What will one save? Few things. Indeed, glorifying the universe of the camps comes at a price, one has to solve the squaring of the circle, has to change black to white. The conscience of the people doesn't like sad histories. The life of a zombie is not promising, all the more so as much of the pain experienced was then exploited into various currency: decorations, pensions, posts, political influence. One cannot be a victim and privileged at the same time, even taking a turn at being the executioner.

Of all these facts, terrible for having caused the deaths of women, children and the elderly, only the facts that are firmly established will survive. The others are destined for the dustbin of history.