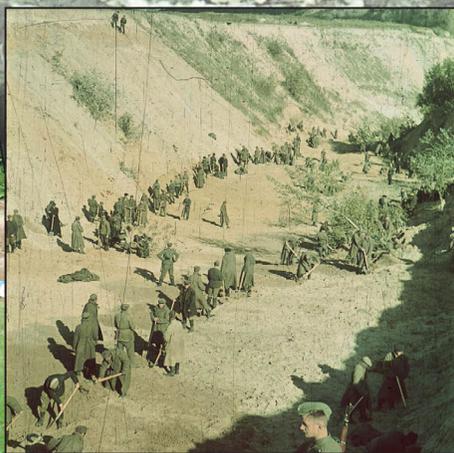


**HOLOCAUST HANDBOOKS · VOLUME 39**

**CARLO MATTOGNO**

**THE  
EINSATZGRUPPEN  
IN THE OCCUPIED  
EASTERN TERRITORIES**



**Genesis, Missions and Actions**



**PUBLISHED BY CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS**

THE EINSATZGRUPPEN



**Carlo Mattogno**

**The Einsatzgruppen**  
in the  
Occupied Eastern Territories

Genesis, Missions and Actions



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**HOLOCAUST HANDBOOKS, Volume 39:**

Carlo Mattogno:

*The Einsatzgruppen in the Occupied Eastern Territories:*

*Genesis, Missions and Actions*

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Note on quoted source material: This volume contains English translations of the original German text of most of the important documents. Transcripts of the original German texts will be contained in the German edition of this book, which is slated to appear in 2019. The text of many cited documents not quoted in the present work can be found in Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013 (English translation) and the equivalent extended PDF version, which also contains the original German texts.

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## Foreword

Throughout the 19th Century, tsarist Russia was a predominantly agricultural society where many of its mostly orthodox-Christian subjects lived in serfdom to the few landowners of the nobility until the serfs were emancipated in 1861. This system might be described as a mild form of slavery, only that, instead of one ethnic or national group enslaving another, as has been the rule throughout the history of slavery, in this case the majority of the lower class of a people was enslaved by the upper class of that same people.

The abolition of serfdom by Tsar Alexander II did not change the fact, however, that most land was owned by the nobility, so that the peasantry continued to be at the mercy of the nobility to earn an income.

The Jews in tsarist Russia, although in their majority not engaged in agricultural activities, had their own grievances, most notable among them the fact that they were not allowed to settle wherever they wanted, and that they were subjected to a form of restrictive affirmative action in practicing certain professions.

Since the highly urbanized Jews of Russia were on average far more educated than their Christian fellow countrymen, Jews were overrepresented in many intellectual fields, revolutionary activities included. Although Russia's Christian peasantry had more reasons to strive for radical change, they were to no small degree kept in line with the tsarist regime first and foremost by their lack of education, but also by the Russian Orthodox Church, which was to no small degree an extension of tsarist power control. It was also a main driver behind anti-Jewish sentiments among Russia's Christians.

Of course, the history of Jewish-Christian animosities goes all the way back to the years when Christianity was born. During the first years of its existence, with the Jews being a powerful majority in Palestine and the Christians a powerless minority, Jewish persecution of Christians prevailed. The tables were turned when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire. Ever since, humanity has had to deal with a series of anti-Jewish measures by Christian rulers and the mob. While the uneducated masses may have been stirred up against the Jews with pseudo-arguments such as "Jews killed our Lord Jesus Christ" – which isn't even true because, strictly speaking, Jesus was killed by the Romans, if we were to take the New Testament's narrative at face value – the Christian clergy had a more-sophisticated approach to this issue, as is evidenced for instance by the Roman Catholic Church's century-long ban of the Talmud for its anti-Christian and anti-Gentile contents, or by Martin Luther's critique of Jewish teachings in this regard in his book *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* (*On the Jews*

*and Their Lies*). While such anti-Jewish attitudes were socially acceptable in Russia and most of Europe during the 19th Century, they are severely frowned upon today, to say the least, although more-recent studies have to a large degree justified the 2,000-year-old critique of Jewish scripture and its influence on the behavior of some – mostly orthodox and fundamentalist – Jews (see Shahak and Shahak/Mezvinsky).

To what degree this anti-Jewish attitude was socially acceptable back then can be gleaned from the *Antisemitismus-Streit*, an argument among scholars and prominent personalities that erupted onto the public stage in Germany in 1879, although it had been smoldering in less-popular circles many years prior to this and had a tradition going all the way back to Martin Luther.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish newspaper of record, *The New York Times*, commented on this argument in an editorial on 27 February 1880 as follows:

*“The war, which has for some time raged in Germany between the natives and the Jews, seems rather to increase than diminish in intensity. It is something more than a popular prejudice, it is a national passion and the ablest, most dignified, and most learned men have ranged themselves on either side. To us here it seems very strange that such a contest of races can be going on in a land of so much intelligence and intellectual pretension, and in the year 1880, too. The crime of the Jews appears to be comprehended chiefly in their financial prosperity. No sin is as great as success in the eyes of the non-successful. The charge is made that of the 600,000 Israelites in the empire, hardly any engage in agricultural or mercantile pursuits; but that they control trade, rule the money markets, and are eating up the country with their avarice and usury.”*

Societal and financial envy were only a side show of this German debate, however, while at its core was the criticism of Jewish teachings about how to regard and interact with Gentiles, as laid down in Jewish writings such as the *Talmud* and the *Shulchan Aruch*, facts which the *New York Times* carefully hid from its readers.

Fuel into the fire of anti-Jewish sentiments in Germany and in Russia was the publication and analysis – in Russia but also in the German language – of the minutes of the Council of Jews of the Minsk Ghetto (see Brafman), which undergirded the accusations that Jews are inherently hostile toward Gentiles. Since the Russian nobility was heavily influenced by German society and to a large degree related to its nobility, political and ideological discussions circulating in the German public inevitably had an impact in Russian intellectual circles.

Of course, this is also true for anti-tsarist circles, who eagerly picked up the German ideas of socialism and communism. While the German upper classes tried to cut the ground out from under these radical ideas by creating a constitutional monarchy and a parliament with far-reaching powers (after the German unification in 1871), and by implementing social reforms and social welfare,

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<sup>1</sup> A rather comprehensive bibliography of anti-Jewish writings predominantly in Germany from the year 1500 all the way up to 1887 can be found in Frey, pp. 209-219.

Russia seemed to be too far behind with everything to be able to keep up with the modernization pace expected by the radicals.

As a result, the last two decades of the 19th Century as well as the first two decades of the 20th Century were marked by several attempts of political radicals in Russia to overthrow the tsarist regime, starting with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, and ending with the successful revolution in 1917.

Considering the backwards, at times even reactionary nature of the tsarist regime and Russian society in general during those years, one should think that the majority of Christian Russians should have had an interest in radical change just as any other disadvantaged group. In each of these attempts at overthrowing the tsarist regime, however, individuals with a Jewish background were vastly overrepresented among those radicals. While Christians identified with their notionally Christian tsars and their rule – or were led to identify with it by way of the Orthodox Church – Jews and other religious groups, as well as marginalized ethnic groups, did not have that allegiance. Jews, being outsiders both by religion and by race – at least they were treated this way, and many Jews saw themselves this way, too – had the highest probability of supporting the most radical changes most vociferously. And so they did.

While there were also non-Jews among those revolutionaries, the Russian mainstream was eager to focus on the Jews as the main drivers behind these events. The results were pogroms against the Jews, most prominently among them the ones triggered by the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II, and by the abortive 1905 revolution. I have described these events in more detail elsewhere, where I also showed that they were the 19th Century's breeding ground for media buzzwords such as "holocaust" "six million" and "extermination" in connection with the persecution of the Jews in Russia (introduction to *Heddesheimer*, pp. 7-37).

It is understandable that media outlets such as the *New York Times* championed a development in Russia that would create something similar there to what existed in the U.S.: a republic with guaranteed civil rights for everyone. The hope that a revolution would do the job can be read between the lines of several *New York Times* articles of those days.

In 1917, the revolution in Russia led to a civil war lasting several years, and it was not clear at all from the outset that the revolutionaries would win this war. While it was raging, readers of the *New York Times* learned how the authors and editors of that newspaper trembled at the thought of the revolution failing. They knew that this time, after so much bloodshed, pogroms against Jews would threaten to wipe them out completely. For instance, in an article of 20 July 1921 on page 2 titled "Begs America Save 6,000,000 in Russia", we read in the subtitle that "Russia's six million Jews are facing extermination by massacre" as the power of "the counter-revolutionary movement is gaining and the Soviet's control is waning."

Of course, at that point everyone not blind to self-evident facts could see that those revolutionary Soviets neither planned to install a republic in the Soviet Union nor to grant civil rights to everyone. In fact, news spread throughout the world about widespread massacres by the Soviets against the former nobility, the Christian clergy, the “bourgeoisie,” the “kulaks” (small independent farmers) and, in fact, anyone standing in their way. But at that point, the *New York Times* and many other similarly minded media outlets in the U.S. had stopped reporting most of the shocking news that should have been fit to print, and instead concealed with deafening silence the horrors unfolding in Russia. By looking away and supporting the perpetrators – millions of dollars were raised with the help of these newspapers to support whatever was going on in Russia at that time – they had become accomplices in the slaughter of millions, most of them Christians by faith.

The terrifying truth about Soviet Russia’s many massacres unfolding during the civil war and in the two decades afterwards, which was plain to see for everyone next door in Europe, foremost in Germany, was to a large degree hidden from the American public for decades. In fact, only the Cold War breaking out after the conclusion of World War II allowed for a more balanced view of what had happened in Russia since 1917.

Who was responsible for these Soviet massacres?

Robert Wilton, the correspondent for the London *Times* during WWI and shortly thereafter, reported for his newspaper about events unfolding in Russia during the revolution. In 1920, while the civil war was still raging, he published a book on *The Last Days of the Romanovs*, in which he laid out the extreme dominance of individuals with Jewish backgrounds in carrying out the revolution, and in manning the leadership of the early Soviet Union. More-recent contributions have since confirmed this observation, although many of them are not available in the English language – one may wonder why.<sup>2</sup>

More convincing for many readers are perhaps statements made by Jews themselves who – confronted with what was going on in Soviet Russia perpetrated to a large degree by individuals with Jewish backgrounds – were not only horrified, but also spoke out in warning as to what that means for Jews in general. The Russian Jewess Sonja Margolina analyzed some of these early voices in her German 1992 book whose title translates to *The End of Lies: Russia and the Jews during the 20th Century*. This book was never translated into English either. In it, Margolina reviewed in detail a book that had appeared in 1924 in Germany under the title *Rußland und die Juden (Russia and the Jews)*. This 1924 book examined the causes of the Russian Jews’ conspicuously above-average participation in the excesses of the 1917 revolution and the tyranny that followed it. The book also contains an appeal by German Jews “To the Jews in all Nations!” where we read (Margolina, p. 58):

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance Weber 1994; Bieberstein 2002; Solschenizyn 2003.

*“The Jewish Bolsheviks’ overeager participation in the subjugation and destruction of Russia is a sin that already bears within itself the seeds of its retribution. For what greater misfortune could happen to a people than to have its own sons engage in excesses? Not only will this be counted against us as an element of our guilt, it will also be held up to us as reproach for an expression of our power, for a striving for Jewish hegemony. Soviet power is equated with Jewish power, and the grim hatred of the Bolsheviks will transform into a hatred of the Jews [...]. All nations and peoples will be swamped by waves of Judeophobia. Never before have such thunderclouds gathered above the heads of the Jewish people. This is the bottom line of the Russian upheaval for us, for the Jewish people.”*

Margolina quotes further from this 1924 anthology (*ibid.*, p. 60):

*“The Russians have never before seen a Jew in power, neither as governor nor as policeman, nor as postal official. There were both good and bad times in those days too, but the Russian people lived and worked, and the fruits of their labors were their own. The Russian name was mighty and threatening. Today the Jews are at every corner and in all levels of power. The Russians see them at the head of the Czarist city, Moscow, and at the head of the metropolis on the River Neva and at the head of the Red Army, the ultimate mechanism of self-destruction. [...] The Russians are now faced with a Jew as judge as well as executioner; they encounter Jews at every step, not Communists who are just as poor as they themselves but who nevertheless give orders and take care of the interests of the Soviet power [...]. It is not surprising that the Russians, in comparing the past to the present, conclude that the present power is Jewish, and so bestial precisely because of that.”*

In the early 1990s, German professor Dr. Ernst Nolte, who specialized in the history of totalitarian ideologies, also pointed out the Jews’ intimate entanglement in Communism (Nolte, pp. 92f.):

*“For readily apparent social reasons, was not the percentage of persons of Jewish extraction particularly great among the participants in the Russian Revolution, different from the percentages of other minorities such as the Latvians? Even at the start of this century Jewish philosophers were still pointing with great pride to this extensive participation of the Jews in Socialist movements. After 1917, when the anti-Bolshevist movement – or propaganda – stressed the topic of the Jewish People’s commissars above all others, this pride was no longer expressed, [...] But it took Auschwitz to turn this topic into a taboo for several decades.*

*It is all the more remarkable that in 1988 the publication Commentary, the voice of right-wing Jews in America, published an article by Jerry Z. Muller who recalls these indisputable facts – though of course they are open to interpretation:*

*‘If Jews were highly visible in the revolution in Russia and Germany, in Hungary they seemed omnipresent. [...] Of the government’s 49 commissars, 31 were of Jewish origin [...]. Rakosi later joked that Garbai (a gentile) was chosen for his post ‘so that there would be someone who could sign the death sentences on Saturdays.’ [...] But the conspicuous role of Jews in the revolution of 1917-19 gave anti-Semitism (which ‘seemed on the wane by 1914’) a whole new impetus. [...]*



*Historians who have focused on the utopian ideals espoused by revolutionary Jews have diverted attention from the fact that these Communists of Jewish origin, no less than their non-Jewish counterparts, were led by their ideals to take part in heinous crimes – against Jews and non-Jews alike.”*

Summarizing what was to follow, U.S. journalist Jerry Muller put the two large historical events of the 20th century into this nutshell:

*“The Trotskies make the revolutions [i.e., the GULag] and the Bronsteins pay the bills [in the Holocaust].”*

Hence, the buzzword “Jewish Bolshevism,” which was later used by the German National Socialists as one reason to persecute Jews, was not a pure figment of the imagination, and we do not have to rely on their sources (such as Kommos 1938) to learn about the veracity of their claims.

The counter-revolutionary forces fighting the Soviets in the years 1917 to 1921 were eventually defeated. The Jews of Russia and their brethren abroad could breathe a sigh of relief – for a while. The more the Soviets stabilized their tyranny in Russia, the more they laid their eyes upon other nations where they planned to carry out similar revolutions on their path to their dream of a “world revolution.” Germany was considered the most-important stepping stone to reach that goal. But Germany, defeated and weak after World War I and in constant civil-war-like turmoil, was putting up a tough fight of resistance against such a bloody revolution. The most radical among the counter-revolutionary forces in Germany were the National Socialists, who tried to cut the ground out from underneath the revolution by making their own top-to-bottom socialist revolution on a national level while at the same time mercilessly combating any Soviet attempt at instigating a foreign-led, Jewish-dominated communist revolution.

On a national level, the National Socialists were sensationally successful in the years of peace, but with this success inevitably came confrontation with other foreign powers, among them first and foremost Stalin’s Soviet Russia, which saw its plans of instigating a revolution in Germany foiled, hence considered war the only option left to conquer Central and Western Europe.

The German-Russian – or rather National-Socialist–Soviet-Communist – Clash of Titans started on 22 June 1941. The present book tries to uncover what subsequently happened to the Jews who lived in, or were deported into, the temporarily German-occupied territories of the Soviet Union. Unlike almost all mainstream authors writing about the topic, Carlo Mattogno is aware *and takes into consideration* that the “information” we have about those events is steeped in Soviet atrocity propaganda; that witness testimony and Soviet forensic expert reports are equally riddled with distortions, exaggerations and inventions; that the Soviets did not shy away from outright forgeries, even blaming their own massacres on the Germans, as in the case of Katyn Forest. With the historical record so contaminated with Soviet mendacity, what can we believe?

Hence, the critically minded scholar – and no other type of scholar should be trusted in these matters – may not take anything at face value; source criticism is absolutely crucial.

\* \* \*

As National-Socialist Germany prepared her invasion of the Soviet Union, she did so as a counter-revolutionary power, as an avenger for Soviet terror past and present, with the intention to wipe out Judeo-Bolshevism once and for all. The reader of this book will read repeatedly that, as the German army moved into one Soviet city after another, the German authorities taking over behind the advancing front found confirmation after confirmation that Jews were indeed the mainstay of Soviet power and terror on many if not all levels. But was that really true? Can we take these claims in German contemporary documents at face value?

In 2001, Russian researcher Nikita Petrov published a paper which addressed the question to what degree Jews were involved in the Soviet Union's most prominent government agency of repression, the NKVD. This was possible because the NKVD itself had kept records on the ethnic affiliation of its employees and associates, and Jews were seen as a separate ethnic group, not as members of a religion. If we look at this data – see the table below – it turns out that up to 1937, Jews filled almost 40% of all the higher positions within the NKVD, while only some 2% to 3% of the Soviet population was Jewish at that time.

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Proportion of Jews in the upper echelons of the NKVD

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	10 Jul. 34	1 Oct. 36	1 Mar. 37	1. Sep. 38	1 Jul. 39	1 Jan. 40	26 Feb. 41
Jews	38.54%	39.09%	37.84%	21.33%	3.92%	3.49%	5.49%

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The drastic decline in the NKVD's Jewish composition was mainly due to the massacres committed among all government officials in the course of the purges carried out by Stalin in the years 1937/38. Because Jews were so extremely overrepresented among those officials, they were also among the main victims of these purges.

It is therefore safe to assume that, when the German army moved into Russia in June 1941, the astounding predominance of Jews in the Soviet state bureaucracy was to a considerable degree a matter of the recent past.

But why, then, did German contemporary reports as quoted in the present book state the opposite?

The first question to ask is always: how could they know? It is a fact that most Soviet officials fled when the Germans arrived. What the Germans found out about the ethnic composition of government personnel may have relied more on witness testimony and hearsay than on official records. At least that is the impression I received from reading these German reports, for they never mention the thorough analysis of employment records.

The next question to ask is: can we trust those witnesses? The answer to this is simple and clear-cut: no, we cannot. Anyone making statements in this regard to the Germans was evidently willing to collaborate with the enemy, and with the

reputation the Germans had as Jew-hating anti-Semites, many witnesses may have anticipated what the Germans wanted to hear. Hence, this is a clear case of confirmation bias. The Germans were probably mostly hearing their own echo rather than independently collected, reliable data. It is also conceivable that claims about Jewish dominance in positions of power contained in these documents were completely unfounded, hence made up in order to “justify” mass executions of Jews.

Does that mean that the Jews in Russia were not the enemy the Germans perceived them as? Not necessarily. If we put ourselves into the Jews’ shoes for a moment, there are mainly two things to consider.

First, although the Soviet terror apparatus was to an astounding degree “Jewish” in nature until 1937, that does not mean that most Jews were involved in that apparatus. In fact, by the time of the Stalinist purges of 1937/38, it must have become clear to everyone in the Soviet Union that literally everyone was a victim of the Soviet or rather Stalinist terror. Even the perpetrators of that terror regime were caught up in a nightmare of horrors which they could not escape, and many of them were eventually swallowed up by this maelstrom they had helped create and maintain. From that point of view, everyone in the Soviet Union needed to be liberated, Jews and Gentiles, perpetrators and victims, government officials and the general populace. Had the Germans moved in with that attitude – to liberate everyone from the Bolshevik nightmare – they might have won the war. But that is not what they did.

Instead, the Germans moved in with the attitude of an eye for an eye. And as Gandhi correctly observed, that attitude merely makes the whole world blind. Even if many of Russia’s Jews were not necessarily hostile to the Germans before the war, once the Germans had assumed a radical, to one degree or another eliminatory anti-Jewish stance when advancing into the Soviet Union, the Jews had little choice but to align themselves with the only power that could and would protect them from the counter-revolutionary, anti-Jewish wrath the Germans were both bringing with them and unleashing among the local non-Jewish populace.

Stalin was smart enough to recognize that he had to unite the peoples of his realm and beyond to win this war. So he reinvented Russian patriotism, resurrected the Orthodox Church, and rallied the Jews around him – only to revert all this again after the war, but that’s beside the point. Hence, even if Stalin’s Russia in 1938 wasn’t more Jewish than Hitler’s Germany at that time, as the German forces started committing massacres against the Jews on Russian territories, Stalin’s Russia once more became the central focus of Jewish support – from within the Soviet Union itself, but also from the U.S. and elsewhere.

While Stalin turned many of his former enemies temporarily into “friends” and sowed discord among the rest of his enemies, Hitler, with his sweeping anti-Jewish stance and racist attitudes toward the Slavs, sowed discord among his potential friends and united his enemies.

Hence, if some Jews weren't already hostile toward the Germans when the war started, most if not all of them became enemies as it progressed. This in turn served as a justification for increasingly severe German measures against the Jews. This way, a vicious, ever-escalating cycle was created that turned the entire conflict into a bloodbath. In a way, therefore, the Germans created, maintained and helped grow an enemy that needed not exist in the first place. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts.

As noble as the intention was to slay the Bolshevik monster, by applying methods similar to those of the Bolsheviks, *i.e.*, by declaring entire sections of the population as enemies (the nobility and bourgeoisie here, the Jews and Soviets there) – rather than by waging a war merely against ideas – and by perpetrating wholesale slaughters on a scale unprecedented in German history, the National Socialists and with them many millions of loyal German followers turned into a mirror image of the monster they were claiming to fight. It's an oft-repeated tragedy in the history of mankind.

Although these facts can make us understand why things happened as they did, none of it can excuse them.

In this sense, the present book tries to shed light on what exactly happened without trying to justify or excuse. Did the Germans go into Russia with the intention to slaughter all the Jews they got their hands on wholesale? Or was it a reaction to Soviet atrocities and a perception that Jews were primarily responsible for them? What exactly did happen? And how many Jews fell victim to these massacres?

The last question in the above list is probably also the most vexing one. Although Carlo Mattogno has given well-documented estimates in the past about the probable, actual death tolls of certain National-Socialist camps, the reader will be disappointed in this regard with the present book. Although Chapter 5 of Part One deals with this question, it merely makes us realize that it is close to impossible to pinpoint even an approximate figure. As a matter of fact, after having digested this voluminous work, the reader will understand that there are a number of seemingly insurmountable obstacles to determining a death toll. First, the numbers given in German documents are anything but reliable because the data contained in them are, to use Mattogno's words "chaotic and disordered," and the numbers given "almost never coincide with the declared totals" (see p. 271). Many scholars have suspected that the numbers in those documents may be exaggerated, but after reading Mattogno's analysis, one can safely say that they are entirely unreliable, and that anything is possible: exaggeration and understatement.

Next, there is reason to suspect that the German documents do not include all the massacres that have occurred. Most of these suspicions are based on mere witness claims of massacres that are not backed up by documents. Although mere claims by witnesses do not prove that a massacre occurred, if a forensic team finds a mass grave based on such witness testimony, and there is no known Ger-

man document confirming that there has been a massacre, this can mean either that it wasn't documented, or else that this mass grave contains other victims instead, such as those of a Soviet massacre. Mattogno discusses one such case in Subchapter 1.6. of Part Two. Of course, the other extreme is possible, too, namely that mass-execution events reported in German documents may have been invented from whole cloth. That possibility is discussed by Mattogno as well.

Ultimately, the only thing that could settle the question as to whether death-toll figures in German documents are correct would be to do numerous complete and thorough forensic exhumations of all victims found in a mass grave associated with a documented massacre, determine as best as possible the number and identities of the victims, the probable cause and approximate time of death, and the likely perpetrators. That is standard procedure in any other case of mass murder.

As Mattogno documents thoroughly, however, it is in particular Jewish religious authorities who successfully veto that such examinations occur. It is difficult to say whether this intentionally or unintentionally obstructive stance will ever change, or whether non-Jewish government authorities will ever muster enough backbone to do what should have been done a long time ago, no matter what some Jewish personality wishes. For now, all we can do is wait and hope. Of course, as decade after decade passes, this task will not become any easier, since the evidence needed to come to clear conclusions deteriorates steadily.

Mainstream death-toll claims for massacres committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* and associated German units usually vary between just under a million (Hilberg 2003, p. 408) and up to three million (Schwarz, p. 220). For now, little can be said about these figures other than that they are more speculative in nature than based upon hard, confirmable data. Their order of magnitude may be in the correct ballpark, though. If so, these are indeed shocking numbers. But if we compare these figures with the death toll of Soviet atrocities committed since 1917 until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, we are dealing with "peanuts." Estimates of that Soviet death toll up to 1941 range in the tens of millions, hence a factor ten higher than that of Jews (and non-Jews) presumably killed by Germans in the Soviet Union.

Yet when we go into libraries of the western world, we find more than 100,000 books on the Jewish WWII Holocaust, but only very few works dealing with the Soviet massacres in the years 1917-1941 – and beyond. Why is that?

While mainstream scholars claim that the Jewish Holocaust is one of the best- and most-thoroughly investigated genocides in the history of mankind, or even of *any* major event in our species's history, the Soviet massacres – a series of many genocides and non-genocidal mass murders of far greater magnitude – are hardly researched in a systematic and thorough manner by anyone in the western world. The former Soviet-occupied countries which suffered greatly under Soviet rule, such as the Ukraine and the Baltic countries, have done their share of investiga-

tions since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but they have garnered little attention in the West. Why?

The answer to these questions can be found when we realize who holds cultural hegemony over the western world. This hegemony evidently results in this one-sided and lopsided historical perspective that is hiding cause and effect, and turns history into an unintelligible black-and-white image of supposed absolute evil versus supposed innocent good. The forces that accomplish this are the same forces which, in the U.S. for many years since 1917, have to a large degree hidden from public view what was going on in the Soviet Union.

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The book you are holding in your hands presents the results of the first-ever revisionist effort to comprehensively investigate the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* behind the German-Soviet front during World War Two. According to mainstream sources, the murders perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other associated German units encompass roughly one third of the Holocaust, quantitatively speaking (give or take a million victims, depending on the source). It is a vast topic in many respects: by the number of claimed events, by the size of the geographic area where these events are said to have occurred, by the amount of source material available, and by the number of – almost exclusively mainstream – studies already published about it. Carlo Mattogno has taken on a huge task.

The original Italian edition of this book was published in 2017. That edition has attracted the attention of a group of hostile commentators who, in August 2018, started to analyze and critique it in a series of blog entries online.<sup>3</sup> At that point in time, the editing efforts of the present English translation of Mattogno's book were well under way. Right after I was informed about these critical blog entries, I informed Carlo Mattogno about them. Since it was obvious that these blog entries had just started and were to be continued, probably for many months to come, reacting to them would have meant suspending the entire project, waiting for the bloggers to finish their critique, then do more research and finally rewrite the book where necessary, first in Italian, then in English. This would have delayed the English edition for a year, if not more. Add to this the volatile nature of blog entries, which can be changed and deleted at a moment's notice. In other words, Carlo Mattogno was not willing to go on a wild-goose chase just to refute some bloggers. If their critique were to be published in a conventional print format where the contents are fixed, then he would consider it. Otherwise, he will not give some hostile critics the power to postpone the publication of his own book *ad indefinitum*.

The reader, on the other hand, is invited to take notice of the arguments of both sides in this debate. When reading about the bloggers' contentions regarding Mattogno's comments on the "Jäger Report," for instance, we notice first of all that the alpha and omega of historiography – source criticism – is something the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/>

bloggers evidently don't like at all. All Mattogno does in this regard in the present book is to raise some questions about this document. He does the same with the *Einsatzgruppen's* infamous Incident Reports. Source-critical questions are not illegitimate, as the bloggers suggest, but pivotal. This alone shows the utterly unprofessional, biased approach of these bloggers. The next thing to notice with regard to the "Jäger Report" is that the bloggers accuse Mattogno of claims or mistakes he did, in fact, not make. Just read carefully what Mattogno wrote and what the bloggers claim (provided they haven't changed it by now), and you will realize their skewed perspective. Whether this is due to their incompetence or mendacity may be left for the reader to decide.

In another blog entry, they accuse Mattogno of not having used all the secondary source material available on some aspects of the present study, and to have taken into consideration only a limited number of witness testimonies. Such accusations are inevitable and unreasonable. They are inevitable, because it is physically impossible to cover all existing sources in a book of a reasonable size written by only one author within a finite time span. In addition, quoting all the secondary sources in existence – of which there are thousands – would be a book-inflating exercise which would only annoy the reader without adding much information. At the end of the day, a study such as the present one must be based primarily on primary sources, not on other scholars' opinions.

Furthermore, when it comes to witness testimonies, these accusations are unreasonable as well, because the present book proves with ample examples that many if not most witness testimonies are filled with absurd claims that give rise to the conclusion that we simply cannot rely on them. Adding thousands more of these sometimes absurd and even grotesque statements won't change that conclusion. Such expansion of the data pool can only confirm it.

At the end of the day, it does not matter how many witnesses have claimed that witches ride on broomsticks and have sex with the devil (not necessarily both at once nor in that order). If it can be shown that many of these statements are untrustworthy, we need to seek better, more reliable types of evidence. In our case, as already stated, the type of evidence needed consists of thorough and independent forensic examinations of the mass graves that can be located. Nothing else will do. If such evidence is never developed or presented, the world will have to live for all eternity with critical, skeptical and even denying voices regarding the claimed *Einsatzgruppen* massacres.

Germar Rudolf  
1 November 2018

## Introduction

After the end of the Second World War, the nascent historiographical propaganda, which drew its lifeblood from the trials of the various military tribunals against the defeated Germans, concentrated above all on the “extermination camps” and specifically on the homicidal “gas chambers,” which soon became the focus of what was later defined as the Holocaust.

During their trial of members of the *Einsatzgruppen* (September 1947 to April 1948), however, the Americans had brought to the fore the executions perpetrated by these units in the temporarily German-occupied eastern territories. Although these killings were numerically considerable (the indictment repeated the figure of two million victims mentioned in that of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal<sup>4</sup>), they did not particularly capture the collective imagination, both for the workaday execution method used – shooting, although more-exotic murder weapons were also claimed as a “corrective,” such as the “gas vans” – as well as for their problematic historical context (the merciless warfare against the Soviet Union). Already in 1951, the French Jewish historian Léon Poliakov, in his compendium *Bréviaire de la Haine*, established the hierarchy of crimes attributed to the Germans by calling the *Einsatzgruppen* shootings “chaotic exterminations” and the institutionalized killings carried out systematically in “gas chambers” “methodical exterminations.”

Precisely because the “gas chambers” captured the imagination in an extraordinary way and made the alleged crime “unique” in some way, they soon assumed absolute dominance in the orthodox Holocaust literature, with the Auschwitz Camp as the center of gravity. Even if, starting with Gerald Reitlinger,<sup>5</sup> issues related to the *Einsatzgruppen* were investigated with increasing depth, the “extermination camps” and their “gas chambers” kept an unchallenged predominance in orthodox Holocaust literature for a long time. Revisionism was born and evolved as a critical re-examination of this central aspect. When the orthodox narrative of Auschwitz, the “symbol of the Holocaust” *per se*, began to falter under the impact of revisionist criticism, the emphasis gradually shifted to the so-called “Action Reinhardt” camps, namely Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka, for which specific documentation is notoriously non-existent. Since that edifice also stood on extremely shaky ground (see Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013), the orthodoxy began concurrently to increasingly emphasize the *Einsatzgruppen*’s activities, for which there is at least abundant and specific documentation. This trend, already

<sup>4</sup> TWC, Vol. IV, p. 53, with explicit reference in footnote 2 to IMT, Vol. I, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> In his 1953 book *The Final Solution*, Reitlinger devotes two chapters to the *Einsatzgruppen*.



inaugurated at the end of the 1980s, especially by Arno Mayer (1988), and further developed a few years later by Michel Korzec,<sup>6</sup> has more-recently found new vigor thanks to Father Patrick Desbois (2007/2008).

Orthodox Holocaust studies on the *Einsatzgruppen* have grown enormously in recent years. This also resulted from the fact that the proper “extermination camps” are now exhausted as a topic of historiography. The latest book with scientific claims on Auschwitz (apart, for obvious reasons, from the in-house publications of the Auschwitz Museum) is Robert Jan van Pelt’s *The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial*, which dates back to 2002. For the “extermination camps,” the focus is now only on mere collections of testimonies such as the one edited by Dariusz Libionki for the Majdanek Museum: *The Belżec Extermination Camp in Survivor Testimonies and Depositions of Polish Witnesses*, which appeared in 2013.

Although it is true that the last orthodox convulsions on the “gas chambers,” published in the anthology *New Studies on National-Socialist Mass Killings with Poison Gas*, dates back only to 2011 (Morsch/Perz), it marked precisely the collapse of this essential aspect of the orthodox Holocaust narrative (see Mattogno 2016b). The research field dealing with the *Einsatzgruppen* is instead broad and partly unexplored, as a result of which we may expect a substantial shift of the holocaustic center of gravity toward this theme.

Although revisionist literature on the Holocaust has become very diverse and abundant for all these reasons over the past two decades, no revisionist study has existed so far specifically dealing with the *Einsatzgruppen*, with the sole exception of two 40-page brochures devoted to the subject by Udo Walendy (1983), which are now quite dated and moreover do not address many central issues.

The work I present here aims to fill this gap by providing the essential elements to orient the reader in this complex topic. Given the vastness of the problems involved, I preferred to deal with the fundamental issues as listed in the Table of Contents. Despite this self-limitation, the work has nevertheless become quite voluminous.

Unlike the “extermination camps” and “gas chambers,” a large and certainly authentic documentation exists that attests to mass executions of Jews by shooting of an enormous magnitude that were carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other associated units in the German-occupied eastern territories, although the exact death toll is difficult to quantify (see Chapter V of Part One). In this regard, therefore, it makes even less sense to label revisionist research efforts as “negationist” in nature, as does the silly stereotype affixed to revisionism by its adversaries. The fundamental problem is whether or not these shootings were carried out on the basis of a governmental extermination order (by Hitler, Himmler or Heydrich), and whether the Jews were shot merely because they were Jews. These two issues are essential conditions for including these executions in the or-

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<sup>6</sup> Korzec 1995. The author claimed that, of the 5 million murdered Jews, only “some seven- or eight-hundred thousand were probably gassed.”

thodox Holocaust as it was defined by Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman in their 2002 study *Denying History*:

“When historians talk about the ‘Holocaust’, what they mean on the most general level is that about six million Jews were killed in an intentional and systematic fashion by the Nazis using a number of different means, including gas chambers.”  
(p. XV)

If the killings neither target Jews as such nor were ordered as such from above, they simply did not occur “in an intentional and systematic fashion,” which refers to an extermination order or at least a “decision.” In that case, they would be mere war atrocities in the context of an atrocious war conducted by both sides. Questioning the authenticity of the *Einsatzgruppen*’s reports does not make sense, but the fact that they are authentic does not necessarily mean that their statements are true. On the contrary, their contents at times cause a lot of consternation, and this concerns not just the death-toll figures, but extends to the well-founded suspicion that certain mass executions mentioned in them may have been completely invented. I will divulge the reasons for this in due time during the present study.

Since no certain *documentary* criterion exists that can be used to gauge the veracity of the enormous amount of data and numbers contained in the various *Einsatzgruppen* reports and related documents, I have used the only possible criterion that can provide at least a defensible order of magnitude: the material criterion of the discovery of mass graves and the corpses they contain.

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, the number of victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* is said to have ranged from a minimum of about 900,000 (Hilberg) to a maximum of about 2,600,000 (Arad). These and other figures are examined in Chapter 5 of Part One. Because the bodies of the victims were buried, in theory it should still be possible to find them in the mass graves. Hence, the material criterion would allow the *corpus delicti* to be discovered in a literal sense.

It is well known, however, that one of the cornerstones of the orthodox Holocaust narrative on the subject of the *Einsatzgruppen* is that, since 1943 at the latest, the Germans are said to have engaged in an institutionalized and systematic activity of locating the mass graves, exhuming the bodies contained in them, and burning the remains of the victims on outdoor fires (the so-called “Aktion 1005”). Given the importance of the topic, I considered it necessary to present it in as much detail as possible. Hence, the entire second part of this work is dedicated to this “Aktion 1005,” meaning the alleged cremation of millions of corpses buried on Soviet territory temporarily occupied by the Germans.

Carlo Mattogno  
September 2016



PART ONE:  
*THE EINSATZGRUPPEN*



## 1. The *Einsatzgruppen*: Structure, Missions and Reports

### 1.1. The *Einsatzgruppen* in the Polish Campaign

The *Einsatzgruppen* that operated in 1941 within the framework of “Operation Barbarossa” had their forerunners in the *Einsatzgruppen* which were deployed in 1939 (Matthäus/Böhler/Mallmann, pp. 2f.):

“During the Polish campaign, the *Einsatzgruppen* and their subunits, the *Einsatzkommandos* (EK), consisted of a force of roughly two thousand members of the German security police (*Sicherheitspolizei*, *Sipo*) – a combination of the Criminal Police (*Kriminalpolizei*, *Kripo*) and the secret state police (the notorious *Geheime Staatspolizei*, *Gestapo*) under the command of Reinhard Heydrich – and the Nazi Party’s (NSDAP) intelligence service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or *SD*, also headed by Heydrich). These *Sipo/SD* units, subordinated since late September 1939 to the newly created Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, *RSHA*) with Heydrich at the helm, were established in the planning phase of the war to cooperate closely with the German military in the goal of ‘pacifying’ the occupied Polish territories. Almost immediately they became a deadly tool in the repertoire of Nazi subjugation policies, targeting thousands of real or imagined ‘enemies of the Reich’ (‘*Reichsfeinde*’) and enforcing the ‘Germanization’ of vast parts of Poland. According to estimates, ten thousand civilians were executed during the fighting. Up to the end of October, the German military, SS, and police units shot an additional sixteen thousand Polish noncombatants, among them an unknown number of Jews.”

At first, and during the Polish campaign, the Germans deployed a variety of units:

- *Einsatzgruppe* I, based in Vienna: this was commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Bruno Streckenbach and consisted of 4 *Einsatzkommandos* of 90 men each; their field of action was western Galicia and eastern Slovakia;
- *Einsatzgruppe* II, based in Oppeln (today’s Opole), under the command of SS *Obersturmbannführer* Emanuel Schäfer, with 2 *Einsatzkommandos*;
- *Einsatzgruppe* III, based in Breslau (today’s Wrocław), commanded by SS *Obersturmbannführer* Hans Fischer, with 300 men;
- *Einsatzgruppe* IV, based in Dramburg (today’s Drawsko Pomorskie), commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Lothar Beutel, with 200-250 men;
- *Einsatzgruppe* V, based in Allenstein (today’s Olsztyn), Prussia, commanded by SS *Standartenführer* Ernst Damzog, initially had 2 *Einsatzkommandos* consisting of 250 men each, to which a third was later added;
- *Einsatzgruppe* VI, based in Frankfurt/Main, led by SS *Oberführer* Erich Naumann, included 2 *Einsatzkommandos*;
- *Einsatzgruppe* z.b.V. (*zur besonderen Verwendung*, for special use), under the command of SS *Obergruppenführer* Udo von Woysch, consisted of 4 battali-

ons of *Ordnungspolizei* (regular German police) and 1 *Sonderkommando* of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*), with 350 men;

- *Einsatzkommando* 16, formed at Danzig (today's Gdansk) on 12 September 1939 with a strength of 100 men; its command was entrusted to SS *Obergruppenführer* Udo von Woysch (*ibid.*, pp. 9-12).

An agreement between the Wehrmacht and Sipo/SD regarding “Guidelines for the Foreign Deployment of the Security Police and the SD,” undated (August 1939), describes the tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen* as follows (*ibid.*, Doc. 1, p. 32):

*“The mission of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos has been determined by agreement with the Army High Command (OKH), as is confirmed in a letter from the Army High Command (6. Abt.-II-Gen-StdH. No. 1299/39 g.Kdos) dated July 31, 1939: ‘The mission of the Security Police Einsatzkommandos is to combat all elements hostile to the Reich and to Germans in enemy territory to the rear of the combat troops.’”*

The collection of documents from which the above data are derived dedicates a special section to the topic of “Persecuting Jews,” consisting of 20 documents (Nos. 42-61; *ibid.*, pp. 89-120), made up, for the most part, of testimonies and interrogations, photographs and quotations from books – there are only five contemporary German documents, only two of which are *Einsatzgruppen* reports.

Document 56 is a daily report by the Chief of the Sipo/SD dated 20 September 1939 from *Einsatzgruppe* VI. These few lines are the **only ones** mentioning Jews: the document calls for the formation of “special commissioners to liquidate businesses whose Jewish owners have fled” and informs us that “a total of 40 Jewish businesses in the city of Posen are closed” (*ibid.*, p. 112).

The express letter from *Einsatzgruppe* z.b.V., Kattowitz, to the Sipo in Berlin, dated 8 November 1939 has as its subject “Jewish population” (*Jüdische Bevölkerung*). It contains a list of six Jewish communities (*Gemeinden*) from the district of Kattowitz, indicating the total number of inhabitants for each of them, as well as the total number of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), Jews and the possible presence of a “Jewish council of elders.” The total number of Jews is very small: 1,875 out of a total population of 251,201 persons. The letter states that “the number of Jews is constantly declining as a result of illegal emigration [*Abwanderung*] or the deportations [*Abtransporte*] from here” (*ibid.*, p. 118).

Document 52 is Heydrich’s notorious express letter dated 21 September 1939 (PS-3363) addressed “to the heads of all task forces of the Security Police,” which has as its subject the “Jewish Question in the occupied territory.” In it, Heydrich sets forth his plans, based on the distinction between:

- 1) the final goal [Endziel] (which requires a longer time frame), and
- 2) the stages [Abschnitten] in the fulfillment of this final goal (which can be carried out in the short term).”

His directives are delineated in five paragraphs:

*“The first prerequisite for the final goal is initially to concentrate the Jews from rural areas in the larger cities.”*

This is followed by instructions for the formation of a “Jewish council of elders” (“In each Jewish community, a council of Jewish elders is to be established, composed, if possible, of remaining influential individuals and rabbis. The council of elders is to consist of up to 24 male Jews (depending on the size of the Jewish community)"); the necessary measures were taken in close collaboration with the authorities of the local civil and military administration. Paragraph IV addressed the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* with regard to the Jews (*ibid.*, pp. 104-108):

*“The chiefs of the Einsatzgruppen will report to me on an ongoing basis regarding the following matters:*

*1) Numerical overview of the Jews present in their areas (if possible, broken down into the categories indicated above). Here the numbers of Jews being evacuated [zur Abwanderung gebracht] from the countryside and the numbers of Jews already in the cities are to be stated separately.*

*2) Names of the cities that have been designated as points of concentration [Konzentrierungspunkte].*

*3) The deadlines set for moving [zur Abwanderung] the Jews to the cities.*

*4) Overview of all Jewish-owned branches of industry and enterprises within their areas that are of vital and strategic importance or are relevant to the Four Year Plan.”*

The “final goal” referred to deportation or expulsion, as may be deduced from Document 54, a file memo by RSHA “resettlement” expert SS *Hauptsturmführer* Adolf Eichmann dated 6 October 1939, which refers to a discussion with *Gauleiter* Wagner at Kattowitz “regarding the expulsion of 70,000 to 80,000 Jews from the Kattowitz District” and to a concurrent expulsion of Jews from the town of Mährisch Ostrau (*ibid.*, pp. 109f.).

In June 1939, Walter Stahlecker, the future commandant of *Einsatzgruppe A*, was appointed Commander of the Security Police and the SD at Prague. A file memo dated 16 October informs us that on 12 October, SS *Oberführer* Stahlecker, together with SS *Hauptsturmführer* Eichmann, had traveled from Mährisch Ostrau to Cracow to discuss the “Establishment of an appropriate area for the settlement of Jews” and reports:<sup>7</sup>

*“In addition to the establishment of an appropriate area, the food conditions, housing possibilities, if any, and the transport’s travel route should be clarified with the prospective terminus.”*

This was in relation to the plan for a Jewish reservation in the area of Nisko, in southwestern Poland. The first Jewish transport from Mährisch Ostrau left on the morning of 15 October to build a “transit camp” at Nisko, a locality on the river San, as stated in the related “daily report” from the head of the SD office at Mäh-

<sup>7</sup> YVA, O.53-87, p. 129.



risch Ostrau.<sup>8</sup> The term probably referred to the fact that Nisko was the destination railway station whence the deportees were then distributed within the region.

In conclusion, no German document attributes executions of Jews to the *Einsatzgruppen* in Poland. If the estimate adopted by Matthäus *et al.* – that of 26,000 Polish civilians killed, including an unknown number of Jews – is based on German documents, we are not told which ones they are. As regards the Jews, Szymon Datner presents a thorough set of statistics on executions carried out by the Germans in Poland between 1 September and 25 October 1939, during the first 55 days of the occupation. It lists the number of executions and victims in two columns, showing 12,137 (September) and 4,199 victims (1-25 October), for a total of 16,336 victims (Datner 1967, pp. 110-112). It then provides a breakdown of these victims into twelve voivodats (*ibid.*, pp. 113-117); another table summarizes these data, also reporting the percentage of the 16,336 victims and those of the 714 executions (*ibid.*, p. 118). Jews are mentioned only in the table “*Liczba ofiar*” (number of victims), which refers to executions carried out in the district of Łódź, namely, 2,387 of the 2,393 victims, which are distributed as follows:

- executions in which only Poles died: 1,773 victims
- executions in which only Jews died: 112 victims
- executions in which Poles and Jews died: 502 (*ibid.*, p. 120).

If these figures be accepted, what do they mean? What is the relationship between the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Polish campaign and those in the Russian campaign? The authors of the document collection cited above only provide a partial answer to these questions. Within the scope of “Operation Barbarossa,” the *Einsatzgruppen* killed “between five and eight hundred thousand civilians, the overwhelming majority of them Jews”; these units moreover “recorded many – though far from all – of these murders and communicated the details back to the RSHA, which compiled extensive reports on German occupation policy in the Soviet Union.” But what made such violence possible? The roots of the violence were derived from the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* during the Polish campaign, and, more precisely, in the concept of “‘pacifying’ the rear army areas,” implying a sort of complicity on the part of the Wehrmacht (Matthäus/Böhler/Mallmann, pp. 154f.):

“On March 30, 1941, just as he had on August 22, 1939 prior to the attack on Poland, he [Hitler] put forward his views before the assembled senior generals, but this time with even more ominous implications: Bolshevism was an ‘asocial crime’; Germany would ‘have to step back from soldierly comradeship. The communist was not and is not a comrade. This is a fight of annihilation.’ The war was about the ‘destruction of the Bolshevik commissars and the communist intelligentsia’, a task that the Wehrmacht could not accomplish alone and that called for the assistance of Himmler’s forces.”

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<sup>8</sup> YVA, O.53-87, p. 149.

This explains the difference in the *Einsatzgruppen*'s activities during the Polish and the Russian campaign: both were focusing on “pacifying” the areas behind the front, but in Poland, the *Einsatzgruppen* were only fighting Jews, while in the Soviet Union, they were fighting “Judeo-Bolshevism,” which explains why the killings in Poland were very limited, and incomparably greater in the conquered Soviet territories.

This concept found expression in the very first *Einsatzgruppen* reports. *Ereignismeldung* (EM; Incident Report) No. 31 dated 23 July 1941 expresses it as follows (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 166):

*“At least one and a half million Jews live in the Byelorussian settlement area; their sociological structure in the former Polish and former Soviet areas is not uniform. While the Jews in former Poland were officially insignificant and enjoyed no particular protection as Jews, in the Soviet Union they considered themselves part of the ruling class. Polish Jews lived in constant fear of hostile popular demonstrations; wherever they were not clearly in the majority, they considered it advisable to tread carefully and timidly. Soviet Jews, by contrast, had been stiffened up by a quarter century of Jewish-Bolshevist rule, so much so that they very often behaved self-confidently, even arrogantly, even when German troops moved in.”*

In his comment on the “Draft of establishing provisional guidelines for the treatment of Jews in the area of RKO” [*Reichskommissariat* for the East] dated 6 August 1941, Walter Stahlecker, commander of *Einsatzgruppe* A, reiterated (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 37, p. 92):

*“Leaving the Jews in their previous dwellings and workplaces in the General Government did not result in any serious political trouble. By contrast the Jews that lived in the East or were sent there by the Red rulers considered themselves essential bearers of Bolshevist ideals. Numerous Jews were avowed communist activists. Past experience certainly teaches us that focal points of unrest will remain even long after the military occupation of the Eastern territory. Acts of sabotage and terror will not just be incited and committed by communists who were not arrested during the latest purge. Rather, precisely the Jews will exploit every possibility to stir up trouble. Already the absolutely necessary, rapid pacification of the East requires the quickest possible elimination of disturbances during our constructive work.”*

The fact that the presumed order to exterminate the Jews was issued when the Polish campaign was already over in no way detracts from this conclusion, since the “pacification” was carried out regardless of the enemy, and that Jews are mentioned, not as Jews, but as supporters of Bolshevism.

Even one of the principal witnesses confirming the existence of an extermination order during the *Einsatzgruppen* trial, the Defendant Walter Blume, placed it within the framework of the struggle against Bolshevism.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Interrogation of W. Blume on 13 January 1949. YVA, O.53-141, p. 55.

*“I have used the wording that is somehow stuck in my memory, that eastern Jewry was the intellectual reservoir of world Bolshevism, and that for this reason, a military victory over Russia would not mean the end of Bolshevism as long as eastern Jewry still existed. This is why Eastern Jewry must be destroyed.”*

In this context, it is important to stress that, in the handling of the “Jewish question,” military necessity overrode ideological and political directives: the end goal of National-Socialist Jewish policy was the deportation or expulsion of European Jews to various regions above the Arctic Circle or at least beyond the Urals, but this policy also had to deal with the politico-ideological character and behavior of the Jews in the various geopolitical areas.

## 1.2. Structure of the *Einsatzgruppen*

As is well known, the *Einsatzgruppen* consisted of four units designated A, B, C and D with a total strength of approximately 3,000 men.

*Einsatzgruppe A*, with a documented strength of between 909 and 990 men (see further below), operated in the area of Army Group North, in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. It was commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Walter Stahlecker (22 June 1941 – 23 March 1942), succeeded by: SS *Brigadeführer* Heinz Jost (29 or 30 March – 2 September 1942), SS *Oberführer* Humbert Achamer-Pifrader (10 September 1942 – 4 September 1943), SS *Oberführer* Friedrich Panzinger (4 September 1943 – May 1944) and SS *Oberführer* Wilhelm Fuchs (May – October 1944). It was organized in four sub-units:

- *Sonderkommando* (or *Einsatzkommando*) 1a: commander SS *Standartenführer* Martin Sandberger (appointed KdS<sup>10</sup> Estland on 3 Dec. 1941), operative area Estonia.
- *Sonderkommando* (or *Einsatzkommando*) 1b: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Erich Ehrlinger, then SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eduard Strauch (from 3 Dec. 1941 until June 1943), followed by SS *Standartenführer* Erich Isselhorst (from 30 June until October 1943), operative area Byelorussia.  
On 9 December 1941, Ehrlinger was appointed by Heydrich, representing Himmler, “Commander of the Security Police and the SD for the General District Kiev in the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine.”<sup>11</sup>
- *Einsatzkommando* 2: SS *Standartenführer* Rudolf Batz (1 June – 4 Nov. 1941), replaced by SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eduard Strauch (4 November – 3 December 1941) and by SS *Sturmbannführer* Erwin Rudolf Lange (from 3 December 1941 until October 1944), appointed KdS Lettland on 3 December 1941; operative area Latvia.

<sup>10</sup> *Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei*, commander of security police

<sup>11</sup> NARA, T-175/240, 2729887, Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, Schnellbrief (express letter) dated 9 December 1941.

- *Einsatzkommando 3*: SS *Standartenführer* Karl Jäger, who then became KdS Litauen; Wilhelm Fuchs (15 September 1943 – 6 May 1944), and finally Hans Joachim Böhme (11 May 1944 – 1 January 1945); operations area Lithuania.

*Einsatzgruppe B* had approximately 665 members; it was commanded by SS *Brigadeführer* Arthur Nebe until the end of October 1941, followed by SS *Brigadeführer* Erich Naumann (beginning of November 1941 – March 1943), SS *Standartenführer* Horst Böhme (12 March – 28 August 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Erich Ehrlinger (28 August 1943 – April 1944), SS *Standartenführer* Heinz Seetzen (28 April 1944 – August 1944) and once again by Horst Böhme (from 12 August 1944). This unit operated in Byelorussia, in the area assigned to the Army Group Central, and was sub-divided into:

- *Sonderkommando 7a*: SS *Standartenführer* Walter Blume (until September 1941), SS *Standartenführer* Eugen Steimle (September – December 1941), SS *Hauptsturmführer* Kurt Matschke (10 December 1941 – 29 February 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Albert Rapp (February 1942 – 28 January 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Helmut Loos (June 1943 – June 1944), SS *Sturmbannführer* Gerhard Bast (June – November 1944).
- *Sonderkommando 7b*: SS *Sturmbannführer* Günther Rausch (until February 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Ott (mid-February 1942 – January 1943, replaced between July and October 1942 by SS *Sturmbannführer* Josef Auinger), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Karl Rabe (January 1943 – October 1944).
- *Einsatzkommando 8*: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Otto Bradfisch (until 1 April 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Heinz Richter (1 April – September 1942), SS *Standartenführer* Erich Isselhorst (September – November 1942), and finally SS *Obersturmbannführer* Hans Schindhelm (13 November 1942 – October 1943).
- *Einsatzkommando 9*: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Alfred Filbert (until 20 October 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Oswald Schäfer (October 1941 – February 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Wilhelm Wiebens (February 1942 – March 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Friedrich Buchardt (January 1943 – March 1944).
- *Vorkommando Moskau* (Advance Unit Moscow): SS *Brigadeführer* Franz Six (until 20 August 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Waldemar Klingelhöfer (until December 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Erich Körting (September – December 1941). In January 1942 this formation was merged with the *Teiltrupp* (sub-squad) of SS *Obersturmführer* Döring and became *Sonderkommando 7c*; the commanders were SS *Standartenführer* Wilhelm Bock (December 1941 – mid-1942), SS *Hauptsturmführer* Rudolf Schmücker (June – autumn 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Wilhelm Bluhm (autumn 1942 – July 1943) and SS *Sturmbannführer* Wilhelm Eckardt (July – December 1943).

Einsatzgruppe C had a strength of 700-820 men and was active in *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine under Army Group South. It was led by SS *Brigadeführer* Otto Rasch (until the beginning of October 1941), followed by SS *Gruppenführer* Max Thomas (October 1941 – 28 August 1943) and by SS *Standartenführer* Horst Böhme (from 6 September 1943 until the end of March 1944). It consisted of:

- *Sonderkommando* 4a: SS *Standartenführer* Paul Blobel (until January 1942), SS *Standartenführer* Erwin Weinmann (13 January – July 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eugen Karl Steimle (August 1942 – 15 January 1943) and SS *Sturmbannführer* Theodor Christensen (January – end of 1943).
- *Sonderkommando* 4b: SS *Sturmbannführer* Günther Herrmann (until September 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Fritz Braune (1 October 1941 – mid-March 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Walter Haensch (mid-March – July 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* August Meier (July – November 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Friedrich Suhr (November 1942 – August 1943), SS *Sturmbannführer* Walter Krause (August 1943 – January 1944).
- *Einsatzkommando* 5: SS *Brigadeführer* Erwin Schulz (until the end of September 1941), SS *Obersturmbannführer* August Meier (end of September 1941 – January 1942). The unit was dissolved in January 1942.
- *Einsatzkommando* 6: SS *Standartenführer* Erhard Kroeger (until November 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Robert Mohr (November 1941 – September 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Ernst Biberstein (September 1942 – May 1943), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Friedrich Suhr (August – November 1943).

Einsatzgruppe D consisted of approximately 600 men and operated in the area of the 11th Army and the Rumanian army (Bessarabia, southern Ukraine, Crimea, Caucasus). It was commanded by SS *Oberführer* Otto Ohlendorf (until June 1942), followed by SS *Oberführer* Walter Bierkamp (July 1942 – July 1943). It consisted of:

- *Sonderkommando* 10a: SS *Standartenführer* Heinz Seetzen (until July 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Kurt Christmann (1 August 1942 – July 1943).
- *Sonderkommando* 10b: SS *Sturmbannführer* Alois Persterer (until February 1943), SS *Sturmbannführer* Eduard Jedamzik (until May 1943).
- *Sonderkommando* 11a: SS *Sturmbannführer* Paul Zapp (until July 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Gerhard Bast (November – December 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Werner Hersmann (December 1942 – May 1943)
- *Sonderkommando* 11b: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Hans Unglaube (until July 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Bruno Müller (July – October 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Werner Braune (July – October 1941), SS *Sturmbannführer* Paul Schultz (September 1942 – February 1943).
- *Einsatzkommando* 12: SS *Obersturmbannführer* Gustav Noske (until February 1942), SS *Sturmbannführer* Erich Müller (February – October 1942), SS *Obersturmbannführer* Günther Herrmann (October 1942 – March 1943).

With the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the position of *Höhere SS und Polizeiführer* (Higher SS and Police leader) in Russia was occupied by:

- Russia North and *Ostland*: SS *Gruppenführer* Hans-Adolf Prützmann, later replaced by SS *Obergruppenführer* Friedrich Jeckeln;
- Russia Central: SS *Obergruppenführer* Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski;
- Russia South und Ukraine: SS *Obergruppenführer* Friedrich Jeckeln, later replaced by SS *Gruppenführer* Hans-Adolf Prützmann.

The documents known as the first and second Stahlecker Reports contain two graphs describing the strength of *Einsatzgruppe A* dated 15 October 1941<sup>12</sup> and 1 February 1942<sup>13</sup> (see Documents I.1.1 and I.1.2). The following table places the related data side by side, so they can be compared easily:

	15 October 1941	1 February 1942
Total strength	990	909
Regular police force	133 = 13,4%	134 = 14,8%
Female employees	13 = 1.3%	22 = 2.4%
Emergency food services		53 = 5.8%
Teletypist	3 = 0.8%	9 = 0.9%
Radio operator	8 = 0.8%	23 = 2.5%
Active Waffen-SS	340 = 34.4%	151 = 16.6%
SS reservists		126 = 13.9%
Drivers	172 = 17.4%	185 = 20.3%
Administration	18 = 1.8%	26 = 2.9%
Special envoys		3 = 0.3%
SD	35 = 3.5%	37 = 4.1%
Criminal police	41 = 4.1%	55 = 6.1%
State police	89 = 9.0%	85 = 9.4%.
Interpreters	51 = 5.1%	
Auxiliary police	87 = 8.8%	

It is strange that the strength of this supposed extermination unit would be reduced by 81 persons when there still remained much work to be done; at the same time, they increased the non-combatant forces and forces not directly linked to extermination: Female employees, teletypists, radio operators, drivers.

No less strange is the disappearance of the 51 interpreters, who must have been indispensable, whatever the activities of the *Einsatzgruppe*.

The first Stahlecker Report supplies an “Allocation plan for members of *Einsatzgruppe A* among the *Einsatzkommandos*”<sup>14</sup> (see Document I.1.3.), the data of which is summarized in the following table:

<sup>12</sup> RGVA, 500-4-93, Annex 1a, p. 144, “Gesamtstärke der Einsatzgruppe A.”

<sup>13</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> RGVA, 500-4-93, Annex 1b, p. 145.

**Table 2**

	E.K. 1a	E.K. 1b	E.K. 2	E.K. 3
Total strength	105	110	170	141
Female employees	1 = 0.9%		4 = 2.4%	1 = 0.1%
Teletypist			4 = 1.8%	
Radio operator	2 = 1.9	1 = 0.9%	2 = 1.2%	1 = 0.7%
SS reservists	25 = 24%	26 = 23.7%	41 = 23.6%	32 = 22.9%
drivers	23 = 22.1%	34 = 30.9%	50 = 29.4%	34 = 24.3%
Administration	3 = 2.9%	2 = 1.8%	4 = 2.4%	1 = 0.7%
SD	8 = 7.8%	3 = 2.7%	8 = 4.8%	10 = 7%
Criminal police	11 = 10.5%	6 = 5.4%	13 = 7.8%	10 = 7%
State police	18 = 16.2%	12 = 11%	26 = 15.6%	29 = 20.6%
Interpreters	14 = 13.7%	6 = 5.4%	18 = 10.8%	8 = 5.6%
Auxiliary police		20 = 18.2%		15 = 10.5%

The total number of men in the four *Einsatzkommandos* was 526. Which tasks were carried out by the remaining 464 is not clear, since the total strength of *Einsatzgruppe A* was 990 men.

According to the Activity Report (*Tätigkeitsbericht*) of *Einsatzgruppe B* of 14 July 1941 relating to the period from 23 June – 13 July 1941, this unit had a strength of 521 men, allocated as follows (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 19, p. 58):

**Table 3**

	Leader	Subunit leaders	Men	Drivers	Total
Staff	15	11	3	23	52
SK 7a	10	37	15	31	93
SK 7b	11	38	15	27	91
EK 8	13	53	27	48	141
EK 9	15	51	32	46	144
Total	64	190	92	175	521

To the above must be added the second company of *Polizei-Ersatz-Battalion* (Police Substitute Battalion) 9 with 3 officers, 51 non-commissioned officers and 80 soldiers.

A schema relating to the organization of the “Higher SS and Police Leader South” dated 18 August 1941 indicates the strength of the units of *Einsatzgruppe C*: *Einsatzkommando* 4a and 4b consisted of 160 men each, while *Sonderkommando* had 5 and 6,250 men each,<sup>15</sup> a total of 820 men (see Document I.1.4).

*Einsatzgruppe D* consisted of 400-500 men and had approximately 170 vehicles at its disposal (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 205). Ohlendorf declared that the strength of the unit commanded by him amounted to 500 men, 200 of whom were drivers (TWC, Vol. X, p. 1278).

<sup>15</sup> YVA, O.53-131, p. 14.

In addition to the *Einsatzgruppen*, other SS units, some of which were numerically larger, participated in operations in the eastern territories occupied by the Germans.

Starting at the end of July 1941, the three “Higher SS and Police leaders” (“*Höhere SS- und Polizei-Führer*”) each disposed of three police battalions, precisely:

- HSSPF Nord (North): Polizeibataillon 53, 319, 321
- HSSPF Mitte (Center): Polizeibataillon 307, 316, 322
- HSSPF Süd (South): Polizeibataillon 45, 303, 314.

The total strength of this battalion was 8,000-9,000 men (Curilla 2006, pp. 97f.). The *Kommandostab Reichsführer SS* consisted of the following units:

- Begleit-Bataillon Reichsführer SS
- SS-Freiwilligen-Standarte Hamburg
- SS-Flak-Abteilung “Ost”
- SS-Kavallerie Brigade
- 1. SS-Infanterie Brigade
- 2. SS-Infanterie Brigade.

The strength of these units, according to Yehoshua Büchler, was 25,000 soldiers (Büchler, p. 14).

### 1.3. Missions of the *Einsatzgruppen*

The “Fact sheet for the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos* of the Security Police and SD for Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” drawn up according to the order of the Wehrmacht High Command dated 26 March 1941, lists the missions of the *Einsatzgruppen* as follows:<sup>16</sup>

“a) *Non-combat zone of the Army operational area:*

*Securing objects predetermined prior to commencement of the operation (materials, archives, card files of organizations, units, groups, etc. that are hostile to the Reich or [German] state) as well as particularly important individual persons (leading emigrants, saboteurs, terrorists, etc.). [...]*

b) *Non-combat zone of the Armed Forces operational area*

*Investigation and combating efforts hostile to the [German] State and Reich, insofar as not incorporated into the hostile army, as well as general briefing of the commanders in the non-combat zone of the armed forces operational area as to the political situation.”*

Point 8, headlined “Arrests, Searches and Confiscations” prescribed:

*“Upon every arrest, a form from the issued ‘Arrests’ form book is to be completed with 2 copies. The original copy and 1st carbon copy are to be forwarded to the leader of the Einsatzkommando; he has to send it to the Einsatzgruppe using the*

<sup>16</sup> YVA, O.53-1, pp. 1-5.



*most expeditious method. The carbon copy should remain with the Einsatzkommando, while the 2nd carbon copy should remain in the form book, which is to be given to the leader of the Einsatzkommando once used up.*

*Upon every confiscation, seizure, search, etc., a form taken from the issued 'Searches' form book is to be completed with 2 carbon copies; the procedure is otherwise identical to that followed in connection with arrests.*

*The delivery of confiscated objects is to be certified by the recipient agency on the 2nd carbon copy of the search report. Particular care is to be taken in the proper storage and securing of confiscated objects."*

Point 12, "General Behavior," required impeccable behavior:

*"All members of the Security Police and SD are to be repeatedly instructed in the most emphatic terms, including the threat of severe punishment, to maintain impeccable, disciplined, soldierly conduct. The mission requires the strictest discipline on the part of both leaders and men, both on duty and off duty. Official duties also include the maintenance of health and working strength. Any inordinate use of alcoholic beverages and neglect of duty under the influence of alcohol are to be prevented by immediate intervention. Personal relationships with the non-German population are prohibited; particularly, all contacts with women of other races are to be considered an offense against discipline and German honor."*

Point 15, "War Diary," says:

*"From the very outset of the mission, the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos are to keep a continual war diary, in which all important incidents and observations which may be of importance and/or interest in the future are to be noted chronologically. Care must be taken to ensure safe storage of all war diaries."*

The various reports drawn up by the *Einsatzgruppen* show that these units had executive and informational responsibilities.

The executive responsibilities were both negative and positive in character. The negative aspect was the capture, identification and elimination of all those who were considered ideological and political enemies or who committed hostile acts against German troops or the populations of the occupied countries, starting with the partisans. However, as stated by the Danish researcher Therkel Stræde, the executive tasks did not initially contemplate mass executions, because (Stræde, p. 27):

*"when the German police forces moved into Soviet territory in June 1941 they did not have a standard procedure for mass executions like this one, although the mass shooting of civilians and POWs had already been exercised during the Polish campaign in 1939. No detailed orders specifying the organizational and technical details of such massacres were handed out, and it is obvious from actual variations in the ways they were carried out that the methodology of mass killing was to a large extent left up to the commanders of the authorities and units to decide."*

The positive aspect consisted of the restoration of the administrative, social and economic structure of regions devastated by the Soviets during their withdrawal or by the combatants.

Ohlendorf, in his deposition at the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial (October 1947), provided a good explanation of what this aspect consisted of (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 252f.):

*“First, the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos never had the task to eliminate groups of the population because they were racially inferior, and even so that was not the main task. It was an additional assignment which, in itself, was foreign to the actual task of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos, because never was such a task of the security police or of the SD for that matter – and never by any means, as it is mentioned in another place in the indictment were they trained for such exterminations and executions.*

*Rather, the general task of the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos was that the security of the army territory in the operational theaters should be guaranteed by them, and within the framework of this security task the execution order was, of course, one of the basic orders. But, in reality, the Einsatzgruppen’s task was a positive one, if I leave out this basic order for exterminations and executions. It must be realized, of course, that a group of about 500 people who, on the average, had charge of an area of 300 to 400 square kilometers, could not terrorize such an area, even if they had wanted to do so. Therefore, if we regard it intelligently these tasks could only be called positive ones, and as such they were developed by myself.*

*The first experiences I collected was when the task was transferred to us by the army to harvest the overdue crop in the Trans[n]istria. The larger number of Kommandos for weeks dealt only with this one task of harvesting in Trans[n]istria; I had given orders for this measure which was the basis of my policy altogether. First, the institution of a self-administration, as it were, in the communities and the communal settlements, and also in the municipalities; secondly, a recognition of private property; thirdly, the payment of wages the population received for each fifth sheaf of the entire harvest. I guaranteed this wage, even to the Rumanian authorities. Fourth, cultural places were restored that is, the population was supported in restoring the cultural centers and they were inspired to take up a new cultural life. It is not for me now to describe or discuss the success which this had with the populations of such places. I can only state that because of these measures the population was on our side, and they themselves reported any disturbances which might happen in these territories. Therefore, by this positive winning over of the population, the security of the territory internally could be guaranteed, and actually, in our territory a partisan resistance movement did not come into existence, but it was formed by external elements and was artificially extended.”*

Such activity is attested to by the very *Einsatzgruppen* reports themselves. For example, as early as EM No. 21 dated 13 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe B* reported as follows (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 113):

*“Dr. Tumash and his staff are endeavoring, as their most urgent tasks, to secure the food supply of the city population, to reintegrate the able-bodied population into the labor force by way of an employment agency, and to put the rural population back on the land which had migrated into the cities under Bolshevik pressure since 1928.”*

At the beginning of August 1941, *Einsatzgruppe B* was engaged, among other things, in administrative activities and reconstruction measures (*ibid.*, p. 235):

*“In all the localities and cities with which the Einsatzgruppen had any contact, temporary administrations were set up, in some cases by armed-forces units, in other cases by the Einsatzgruppen themselves, with the help of Byelorussian emigrants brought in by the Einsatzgruppen [...]. These administrations concerned themselves primarily with securing the food situation, restoring economic life, registering all livestock, finding shelter for residents whose homes had been destroyed, and even creating ghettos in this context.”*

The reconstruction measures even included a religious aspect. For example, on 6 August 1941, SS *Sturmbannführer* Karl Tschierschky sent the following radio message to the RSHA (Angrick, *et al.*, Doc. 38, p. 95):

*“Einsatzgruppe A, with the consent of Army Group North, has helped supply the occupied former Soviet-Russian territory with Orthodox priests, who are to begin caring for the spiritual needs of the Russian population in the next few days.”*

*Einsatzbefehl* (mission order) No. 10, issued by Heydrich on 16 August 1941, which had as its subject “Handling of ecclesiastical issues in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union,” shows that in this field, the greatest concern of the Germans was political in nature. It was necessary to prevent attempts by the Catholic Church to exert an influence over the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, because this would have reestablished contact with the Vatican. It was not even desired to support the Orthodox Church, but where the population had expressed the desire for religious assistance and a priest was available, “the resumption of ecclesiastical activity” could be tolerated. The “living Church” should be kept under control, because it was not yet clear whether it was an organ of Soviet control. In the Baltic countries, the same principles applied with regard to the Evangelical churches: religious activity could only be permitted if it corresponded to a real desire on the part of the population (*ibid.*, Doc. 42, pp. 101f.). The *Einsatzgruppen* were supposed to deal with this religious obstacle course as well.

The informational tasks were those carried out institutionally by the Security Services and regarded all spheres of life in the occupied territories, *i.e.*, political, economic, social, cultural, racial, religious, commercial matters, etc. These tasks also included the gathering of important documents. This task was referred to in a radio message from the RSHA IV A 1 to the *Einsatzgruppen* on 1 August 1941 with the subject “Procurement of Illustrative Material.” Gestapo Chief Heinrich Müller made the following request (*ibid.*, Doc. 32, p. 86):

*“Ongoing reports on the work of the Einsatzgruppen in the East must be presented to the Führer from now on. Especially interesting illustrative material, such as*

*slides, posters, leaflets and other documents will be needed for this purpose. Insofar as such material becomes available or can be procured, I request that it be forwarded by the fastest means possible."*

Müller's concern shows that perhaps Hitler was not overly interested in mere numbers.

The so-called first Stahlecker Report, that is, the "Overall report up to 15 October 1941,"<sup>17</sup> shows the vastness of the tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen*. This is a 143-page letter with 18 appendices, including two duplicates, for a total of 221 pages. Only a very small part is dedicated to the Jews, and only a very small part relates to executions, that is, the paragraph "Struggle against Jewry"<sup>18</sup> and the synopsis "Overview of the Number of Executions Carried Out until the Present," while the paragraph "Jewish Influence over the Living Areas in the East" deals with historical, economic and historical matters. Among the annexes is a study of the structure of Soviet power in the past, a "Special Report on the GPU in Latvia"<sup>19</sup> and an "Overview of the Chief Agencies of the Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic."<sup>20</sup>

The "Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942" of *Einsatzgruppe A* for the period 16 October 1941 – 31 January 1942 (the second Stahlecker Report), an extremely long report of 228 pages plus 19 appendices, lists the various fields of its activity, corresponding to as many tasks as shown by the index:

- I. General Overview
- II. General Situation in Basic Terms
  - 1.) Report on Morale
  - 2.) Politics and Administration
  - 3.) Propaganda
  - 4.) Cultural Areas
  - 5.) Ethnicity
  - 6.) Public Health
- III. Jews
- IV. Church
- V. Economy and Sustenance
  - 1.) Economic Policy
  - 2.) Food Situation
  - 3.) Agriculture
  - 4.) Industry and Trade
- VI. Resistance Movements

Among the appendices are the following:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941," GARF, 500-4-93. Extracts from this long document were published as L-180 in IMT, Vol. 37, pp. 670-717, and NCA, Vol. VII, pp. 978-996. The longest extract may be found in Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 70, pp. 161-209.

<sup>18</sup> GARF, 500-4-93, pp. 30-34.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix 7.

<sup>21</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, pp. 1-228. A brief extract from the text was produced as Document PS-2273. IMT. Vol. 30, pp. 71-78.

- Ethnicity in Byelorussia
- Religious Denominations in Latvia and Estonia
- Religious Life in Estonia
- Churches in Byelorussia
- Ratio between the Minimum Wage and the Existential Minimum
- Social Insurance in the Reich Commissariat East
- Age Distribution in Latvia
- Livestock in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia
- Types of Crops in Latvia and Estonia
- Carriage of Goods in Latvia
- Number of Persons Employed in Trade and Industry in Latvia.

The multiplicity and complexity of the tasks entrusted to the *Einsatzgruppen* is made obvious by many reports, such as the Activity and Situation Report of *Einsatzgruppe* B for the period of 16-30 September 1942. The subjects dealt with are as follows:

General situation and morale; cultural areas; the cultural life of the Russian population during the Soviet era and today; the cultural care of the population of the Soviet Union; cultural institutions; theater; administrative structure; repertoire; actors' responsibilities; theater of the Soviet ear in the area of the present Army Group Center; a) theater b) film c) musical life d) libraries e) radio f) recital activities g) museums; participation of the Russian population and their reception of the events; economy; trade; labor and social affairs; development and implementation of labor deployment; working morale and performance; procurement of manpower into the Reich; propaganda for the recruitment of Russian manpower for the Reich (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 156, pp. 433-461).

The handling of these topics was not even sporadic, as shown by the following table, summarizing the data set forth by Ronald Headland in his "Appendix B" (Headland, pp. 223-225), although it only refers to politico-cultural matters. The figures in the columns indicate the number of reports dealing with the related topics.

	EG A	EG B	EG C	EG D
Propaganda	5	10	4	5
Economy	10	9	13	7
Churches	11	8	9	7
Education, Culture, Science	6	2	6	6
Press	4	/	/	/
Agriculture, Food	3	4	14	9
Jews, Jewish Question	4	5	/	6
Ethnic Groups	11	10	27	16

The interests of the *Einsatzgruppen* extended beyond the above to other spheres, such as sports,<sup>22</sup> the prices of consumer goods,<sup>23</sup> food rations,<sup>24</sup> the structure of Soviet schools,<sup>25</sup> with an indication of the subject matter and number of hours required for each class,<sup>26</sup> the registration of farm animals,<sup>27</sup> wages,<sup>28</sup> and the health situation.<sup>29</sup>

The fulfillment of all these tasks, which were informational and, above all, administrative and organizational, required appropriate cultural training. Precisely this was the case of the accused at the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, as tersely stressed by Judge Michael Angelo Musmanno (Earl, p. 96):

*“Since the twenty-[four] defendants were charged with one million murders, one would expect to see in the dock a band of coarse, untutored barbarians. Instead, one beheld a group of men with a formidable educational background.”*

The cultural training of the defendants was so obvious that it was highlighted by the very first commentators on the trial, such as Anatole Goldstein (Goldstein, pp. 21-23).

Earl notes that “a disproportionate number” of the defendants “were university trained – specifically in the profession of law – and a number of them even held doctoral degrees. Of the fifteen *Einsatzgruppenführer* who worked in Russia between 1941 and 1943, six (40%) had earned doctoral degrees, while all the rest had some university training. These statistics strongly suggest that the leadership corps of the *Einsatzgruppen* comprised men who were neither misfits nor failures; in fact, the opposite is true, as one historian has noted, they were more frequently “of above average intelligence, talent and ambition” (Earl, p. 100); he dedicates an entire paragraph to the topic “Education of the Defendants” and summarized the defendants’ cultural degrees in a table (*ibid.*, pp. 117-122).

The decision, on the part of the RSHA, to recruit personnel with such a high degree of university training is a very strong indication that their primary task did not consist of extermination at all, precisely because that would have required “a band of coarse, untutored barbarians.”

On 1 March 1942, Admiral Canaris and Heydrich signed the “Principles for cooperation between the Security Police and the SD and the Counter-Intelligence

<sup>22</sup> For example, “Sportorganisation Dynamo,” EM No. 74 dated 5 September 1941.

<sup>23</sup> The prices, including those of the black market, are sometimes listed in appropriate tables, as in “Meldung aus den besetzten Ostgebieten” (MbO) No. 34 of 18 December 1942.

<sup>24</sup> Even the food rations are listed in tables, such as, for example, EM No. 150 dated 2 January 1942, EM No. 170 dated 18 February 1942, MbO No. 36 dated 8 January 1943.

<sup>25</sup> For example, “Sowjetisches Schulwesen” (Soviet School System), EM No. 78 dated 9 September 1941; “Schulwesen,” EM No. 88 dated 19 September 1941.

<sup>26</sup> MbO No. 41 dated 12 February 1943.

<sup>27</sup> MbO No. 22 dated 25 September 1942, containing notations of the number of cattle existing in 17 districts under the Soviet government as well as in 1942.

<sup>28</sup> For example, MbO No. 28 dated 6 November 1942.

<sup>29</sup> No. 18 of MbO dated 28 August 1942 contains a detailed set of statistics relating to syphilis and gonorrhea patients in Smolensk between January and June 1942. NARA, T-175/236, p. 16, 2724770.

Agencies of the Armed Forces” which defined their respective powers. Those of the *Einsatzgruppen* are summarized as follows:<sup>30</sup>

*“The task of the Security Police and SD is, as far as a cooperation with the Foreign Office/Counter-Intelligence Agency in the Armed Forces High Command is considered, to investigate and combat all ethnic and political enemies, and to preemptively carry out all measures in order to prevent and fend off their intentions and machinations, as well as to bring to justice the perpetrators while combatting illegal acts.”*

An information report from Heydrich dated 2 March 1942 contains a “Compendium of Mission Orders and other Instructions for Deployment in the East” from 2 July 1941 to 14 February 1942. This is a collection of 15 mission orders and 9 decrees (pp. 263-265). Those mentioning Jews directly or indirectly are:

- Mission Order No. 1 dated 29 June 1941, reporting on self-purging efforts of anti-communist and anti-Jewish groups;
- Mission Order No. 2 dated 1 July 1941, clearing-up actions among Bolsheviks and Jews (in the former Polish territories): “It is a matter of course that the clearing-up actions are to be carried out primarily against the Bolsheviks and Jews” (p. 275).
- Mission Order No. 8 of 17 July 1941, “Guidelines for units of the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service to be assigned to PoW camps,” probably republished in Mission Order No. 14 of 29 October 1941, “Guidelines for units of the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service to be assigned to PoW and transit camps.”

Other directives addressed various tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen*:

- Decree of 23 Aug. 1941, securing of file materials of the agencies;
- Mission Order No. 10 of 16 August 1941, handling of ecclesiastical issues in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union;
- Decree of 1 October 1941, police measures to prevent interventions in the economy;
- Decree of 30 Aug. 1941, spectators during executions (Heydrich ordered “to prevent the gathering of spectators during mass executions, even if this concerns Wehrmacht officers”; p. 307).

A directive of *Sonderkommando 4a* “to all unit leaders of SD field units” dated 19 March 1943 summarized the tasks of the *Einsatzgruppen* as follows:<sup>31</sup>

*“The task of the Security Police and SD is the investigation and combating of enemies of the Reich in the interests of security in the operational area, particularly the security of the troops. Besides the destruction of active adversaries, all those elements which, due to their basic convictions or past history, may become active as enemies under favourable circumstances are to be eradicated as a precautionary measure. The Security Police is carrying out this task corresponding to the general instructions of the Führer with all necessary severity. Harsh and decisive*

<sup>30</sup> YVA, RG O.53-3, p. 219; subsequent page numbers from there, unless noted otherwise.

<sup>31</sup> PS-3012. IMT, Vol. 31, p. 493.

*action is especially necessary in regions threatened by gangs [partisans]. The jurisdiction of the Security Police in the area of operations is based upon the Barbarossa Order. The measures recently taken by the Security Police on a considerable scale are considered by myself to have been necessary for two reasons."*

#### 1.4. Drafting and Reliability of the *Einsatzgruppen* Reports

The question of the origin and probative value of the *Einsatzgruppen* reports was discussed during the related trial held by the Americans after the war. The defense counsel declared (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 96):

*"The principal proof offered by the prosecution in support of counts one and two of the indictment were more than ninety Einsatzgruppen reports. These reports were consolidated reports prepared by a special office of the RSHA in Berlin from the reports of the individual Einsatzgruppen. These top secret reports were distributed to a number of state and Party offices in Germany. Between July 1941 and April 1942 approximately 195 consolidated Einsatzgruppen reports were prepared in Berlin and distributed.*

*The defense alleged that the consolidated reports contained many inaccuracies and even willful exaggerations concerning the number of exterminated people. The defense also claimed that the author of the reports had no first-hand knowledge of the observations contained therein, that his identity was unknown, and therefore the documents constituted inadmissible hearsay evidence."*

Before entering into a more-detailed study of the reliability of the reports, it is advisable to examine the question of how, and where, they were discovered. The reports formed part of a collection of two tons of documents confiscated on 3 September 1945 on the fourth floor of the general headquarters of the Gestapo in Berlin. The documentation was taken to the Berlin Document Center. Given the massive quantity of documents which had been discovered – between 8 and 9 million – it was a long time before the reports were found. Although Ohlendorf mentioned them in his testimony during the Fourth Military Trial at Nuremberg in January 1946, Benjamin Ferencz, the future Chief Prosecutor in the *Einsatzgruppen* Case, was not looking for them in any particular way. He became aware of them between late 1946 and early 1947. The correspondence of the Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality mentioned the *Einsatzgruppen* reports on 15 January 1947, but from other letters it appears that by the beginning of February the reports had still not gained their attention, and did not come into Ferenczy's hands before March-April 1947 (Earl, pp. 77f.). In this regard, Hilary Earl stated (*ibid.*, p. 78):

*"Whether the reports were found in late 1946 or early 1947 remains a matter of speculation. Ferencz does recall, however, his excitement when one of the German researchers who worked in his office accidentally discovered twelve binders (Leitz Ordners) filled with top secret daily reports from the eastern front itemizing the carnage of the mobile security and killing units."*



The version of the documents' discovery as recounted by Tom Hofmann is completely different, in that the date, place and office all differ (Hofmann, pp. 117f.):

*“In the spring of 1947 one of Ferencz’s many diligent researchers, Fred Burin, burst excitedly into Ferencz’s office. He had come upon some German files while searching through a Foreign Ministry annex located near the Tempelhof airport. He had found a nearly complete set of secret reports that had been sent by the Gestapo office in Berlin to perhaps a hundred top officials of the Nazi regime. [...] The reports described the daily activities of special SS units nondescriptly called Einsatzgruppen – roughly translated as ‘Special Action Groups.’ They were organized in four units (A, B, C, D) ranging from about 500 to 800 men each. Their secret reports bore an innocuous title, which translated as ‘Report of Events in the Soviet Union.’”*

Another little enigma appears at this point. Before discussing it, a minor explanation is required. The Incident Reports were drawn up in multiple copies, up to a maximum of 77. Every copy bears an indication of its specific number and the total number of copies produced. For example, Report No. 25 (see below) is the twenty-second copy of thirty-four: *“34 Ausfertigungen 22. Ausfertigung.”* Now, Krausnick and Wilhelm declare (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 649):

*“From the testimony of Mr. Benjamin Ferencz, Chief Prosecutor at the Einsatzgruppen Trial at Nuremberg, on 9 September 1947, it follows that Ferencz had the originals of the USSR Incident Reports brought from Berlin to Nuremberg for the above-named trial, where the defense attorneys were allowed to examine them [...]. Said originals were subsequently sent to the United States, filmed there, and within the framework of the return of confiscated documents to the Federal Republic of Germany, they were finally transferred to the [German] Federal Archives at Koblenz. There, they may be consulted in Inventory R 58.”*

Headland supplies additional information in this regard (Headland, p. 231):

*“The complete original surviving set of the Operational Situation Reports (Ereignismeldungen UdSSR) and the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories (Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten) is today found in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, under Bestand R58, Reichssicherheitshauptamt, Numbers 214-221, and Numbers 697, 698, 222, 223, and 224. A complete set of the Operational Situation Reports is found in the National Archives in Washington, on microfilm as part of the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) Microfilm Publication T175, Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, rolls 233-235. A complete set of the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories is found on Microfilm Publication T175, rolls 235-236. Copies of the reports are found in other archives, including the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich.*

*The originals of all the Activity and Situation Reports (Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte der Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in der UdSSR), with the exception of Report 9, are found in the Political Archives of the Foreign Office in Bonn under the reference: Inland IIg, 431 Russland: SD-Einsatzgruppen, Berichte 1941-1942.”*

It is nevertheless a fact that these same *original* reports with the same number of copies are located in the Russian State War Archive (RGVA), where Jürgen Graf and I saw them and photocopied them in part at the end of the 1990s (see Documents I.1.5. and I.1.5a.).

As regards the rediscovery, it is odd that the binders which contained the Incident Reports on the fourth floor of the headquarters of the Gestapo at Berlin contained copies designated for various offices. At the end of each report, under the heading “*Verteiler*” (distribution list), there is normally an indication of the offices to which the individual copies were to be sent. Starting with EM No. 38 (30 July 1941), there is also an indication as to which copy was sent to each individual office. The most complete list, relating to 55 offices, is in EM No. 128 of 3 November 1941.

The serial number of the copies appears for the first time in EM No. 6 (27 June 1941). The following table is my indication of the EM number, the serial number of the existing copy (*Ausfertigung*, x) and the total number of those distributed (y):

EM	x of y	EM	x of y	EM	x of y	EM	x of y
6:	21 of 23	16:	19 of 30	24:	23 of 33	31:	30 of 40
7:	19 of 23	17:	21 of 32	25:	22 of 34	33:	17 of 41
9:	24 of 25	18:	18 of 32	25:	22 of 34	34:	29 of 41
10:	23 of 25	19:	19 of 32	26:	23 of 34	35:	27 of 43
12:	20 of 24	20:	21 of 32	27:	23 of 36	36:	32 of 43
13:	6 of 30	21:	21 of 32	28:	27 of 36	37:	23 of 45
14:	18 of 30	22:	22 of 30	29:	28 of 36		
15:	18 of 30	23:	21 of 32	30:	27 of 36		

EM No. 38 is Copy 33 of 45; in subsequent Incident Reports, Copy No. 36 prevails, as shown in the following summary:

**Table 6**

Copy #	# of times recurring	EMs in which the copies recur
11	2	44, 120
29	1	48
33	2	38, 45
34	4	39-42
35	3	43, 46, 47
36	71	49-51, 53-93, 95-97, 99-101, 103-119, 121-123, 127
47	1	102
48	1	125
51	46	128-132, 134, 136-144, 146-149, 152, 155, 160, 161, 163, 164, 169, 171-183, 186-188, 190, 192, 193, 195
52	1	145
57	17	133, 150, 153, 154, 156, 157, 159, 162, 165-168, 170, 184, 185, 189, 191, 194
60	1	135

The addressees of the copies of the reports were for the most part offices of the RSHA. The following is a list of those appearing in the table reproduced above:

**Table 7**

Copy No.	Addressee
11	Group II A 1 (Organization of the Security Police and Security Service) /RSHA
29	Group III A (Legislative and Reich Organizational Matters) /RSHA
33	Group IV B 4 (Jewish Matters, Evacuation Matters) /RSHA
34	Group IV E 2 (General Economic Matters, Industrial Counter-Intelligence) /RSHA
35	Group IV B (Sects) /RSHA
36	Higher SS and Police Leader Russia North
47	Group IV A ORR [ <i>Oberregierungsrat</i> ; Senior Civil Servant] Panzinger /RSHA
48	Group IV A 1 – <i>Kriminaldirektor</i> (Head of the Criminal Division) Lindow /RSHA
51	Group IV A 1 – KK ( <i>Kriminalkommissar</i> , Detective Superintendent) Dr. Knobloch /RSHA
52	<i>Belegexemplar</i> (specimen copy)

Every office mentioned in the distribution list should have possessed the complete series of copies of the Incident Reports intended for that office; for this reason, the above-described mixture of such disparate copies in the individual folders found by the Americans (and we do not even know to which office they belonged) is rather odd.

Headland affirms that EM No. 18 of 10 July 1941 contains the name Theodor Paeffgen in the distribution list for the first time, and notes that, comparing the copy number of the individual reports with the corresponding copy number in the distribution list, he found that many of the copies discovered by the Americans were sent to Paeffgen, and that, therefore, it is precisely to him “that we probably owe our knowledge of the reports. He, or his subordinates, obviously neglected to destroy the copies that were sent to him” (*ibid.*, p. 50).

This claim is nevertheless unacceptable, because, as shown by the distribution list of EM No. 38 of 30 July 1941, Paeffgen was supposed to receive the 33rd copy only (“Mission Intelligence Leader – RR Paeffgen (33rd copy)”; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 209). But, as seen in Table 6, Copy No. 33 only pertains to two reports. Even if senior civil servant Paeffgen is mentioned in EM Nos. 12-17 as the particular addressee of the copy serial number (of EM No. 18, where he appears in the distribution list), it is clear that the majority of the copies of the reports found by the Americans could not have been sent to his office.

No less strange is the fact that almost 9,700 copies were made of these reports, which were supposed to be so secret and so compromising, but the Americans only found 194 out of 195 (report No. 158 is missing in the American collection). We must therefore assume that the SS destroyed the other 9500, approximately, and left only copies of these 194 EMs intact.

I do not wish to state that the Incident Reports currently available are forgeries, but these anomalies certainly deserve resolution.

There is another anomaly which no one appears to have noticed. In addition to the 195 Incident Reports, the documentation of the *Einsatzgruppen* includes 55 “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” (“*Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*”) and 11 “Activity and Situation Reports” (“*Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte*”). A total of over 10,000 copies were also made of these reports, each of which was no doubt read by several SS or police officials. Nevertheless, there is no known mention, not a single known comment, on these reports by their intended recipients, starting with Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich, right down to the last National Socialist official involved in the alleged extermination of the Jews. The immense majority of the German documents confiscated by the Allies constitute a dense fabric of reciprocal connections; the 261 *Einsatzgruppen* reports, by contrast, form a body unto itself, with no direct or indirect relationship to other documents, and this, too, should be explained.

There is another problem which orthodox Holocaust historiography has never even mentioned. The “Fact sheet for the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos* of the Security Police and SD” cited earlier ordered the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* to keep a war diary.

The diaries of various units of the SS and Police are still in existence, but where are those of the *Einsatzgruppen*? As far as I know, there are no references to them in documents or testimony.

In the affidavit of 24 April 1947 (NO-2890), Ohlendorf gave a detailed account of the origin of the reports (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 94):

*“The reports of the Einsatzgruppen went to the armies or army groups and to the Chief of the Security Police and SD. Normally weekly or bi-weekly reports were sent to the Chief of the Security Police and SD by radio and written reports were sent to Berlin approximately every month. The army groups or armies were kept currently informed about the security in their area and other current problems. The reports to Berlin went to the Chief of the Security Police and SD in the Reich Security Main Office. After the creation of the command (headquarters) staff of the Chief of the Security Police and SD in about May 1942, this (staff) prepared the subsequent reports. The command staff consisted basically of Gruppenfuehrer (SS Major General) Mueller, chief of office IV, and Obersturmbannfuehrer (SS Lieutenant Colonel) Nosske, group chief in office IV, to whom specialists of offices III, IV, and VI were available for coordinating the composition of the reports. Questions which had to do with the personnel of the group and with garrisons went to office I. Administrative questions and matters concerning equipment were taken care of by office II. Information concerning the spheres of life (SD) went to office III. The chief of office IV received reports on the general security situation, including Jews and Communists. Information about the unoccupied Russian areas went to office VI.”*

Other defendants in the *Einsatzgruppen* trial supplied other important details in this regard. For instance, Heinz Hermann Schubert, former SS *Obersturmfuehrer* and member of *Einsatzgruppe D*, declared in his affidavit dated 4 February 1947 (NO-2716; *ibid.*, p. 98):

*“The Einsatzgruppe reported in two ways to the Reich Security Main Office, once through radio, then in writing. The radio reports were kept strictly secret and, apart from Ohlendorf, his deputy Standartenfuehrer Willy Seibert and the head telegraphist Fritsch, nobody, with the exception of the radio personnel, was allowed to enter the radio station. This is the reason why only the above-mentioned persons had knowledge of the exact contents of these radio reports. The reports were dictated directly to Fritsch by Ohlendorf or Seibert. After the report had been sent off by Fritsch, I received it for filing. In cases in which numbers of executions were reported a space was left open, so that I never knew the total amount of persons killed. The written reports were sent to Berlin by courier. These reports contained exact details and descriptions of the places in which the actions had taken place, the course of the operations, losses, number of places destroyed and persons killed, arrest of agents, reports on interrogations, reports on the civilian sector, etc.*

*When Ohlendorf was absent from the staff of the Einsatzgruppe, no reports were sent to Berlin.”*

Ex SS *Sturmbannfuehrer* Kurt Lindow supplied other information in this regard in his affidavit dated 21 July 1947 (NO-4327; *ibid.*, pp. 99f.):

*“3. In October 1941, till about middle of 1942, I first was deputy chief and later on chief of subdepartment IV A 1. This subdepartment dealt with communism, war*

crimes, and enemy propaganda; moreover, it handled the reports of the various *Einsatzgruppen* until the command staff was set up in 1942. The *Einsatzgruppen* in the East regularly sent their reports to Berlin by wireless or by letter. The reports indicated the various locations of the *Gruppen* and the most important events during the period under survey. I read most of these reports and passed them on to inspektor Dr. Knobloch of the criminal police who made them up into a compilation which at first was published daily under the title 'Operational Situation Reports U.S.S.R..' These reports were stencilled and I corrected them; afterwards they were mimeographed and distributed. The originals of the reports which were sent to the Reich Security Main Office were mostly signed by the commander of the *Einsatzgruppe* or his deputy.

4. The reports 'Operational Situation Reports U.S.S.R.', nos. 114, 115, 118, 121, 122, 128, 138, 141, 142, 144, 159, as shown to me, are photostats of the original reports drawn up by Dr. Knobloch in subdepartment IV A 1 of which I was the chief. I recognize them as such by the red bordering, discernible on the photostat, by their size, the types, and partial bordering. I identify the handwritten initials appearing on the various reports as those of persons employed with the Reich Security Main Office, but considering that 6 years have elapsed since, I cannot remember the full names of these persons whose handwritten initials appear on the documents. From the contents of the handwritten notes I conclude that these were made by Dr. Knobloch, and moreover I notice that various parts of the above-mentioned reports are extracted from the original reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* to the Reich Security Main Office.

5. On the strength of my position as deputy chief and, later on, chief of subdepartment IV A 1, I consider myself a competent witness, able to confirm that the 'Operational Situation Reports U.S.S.R.' which were published by the chief of the security police and the security service under file mark IV A 1 were compiled entirely from the original reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* reaching my subdepartment by wireless or by letter."

When the German army occupied a territory, an *Einsatzkommando* or *Sonderkommando* arrived from the *Einsatzgruppe* in charge, which was subdivided into *Teilkommandos* (sub-units or partial units). A task was assigned to each *Teilkommando*, which, when the task was completed, drew up a report, which was sent to the head of the *Teilkommando*. The heads of the *Teilkommandos* summarized them and transmitted them to the head of the *Einsatzkommando* or *Sonderkommando*. The reports were forwarded by courier or radio to the head of the *Kommando*. These were then discussed, compiled and drawn up in more detailed reports. This task was carried out by the personnel of the *Kommando* (generally, the head, his substitute and a few officials from the police and SD), each of whom concerned himself with one specific aspect of the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*. The reports drawn up by the *Kommando* were then transmitted to the headquarters of the *Einsatzgruppe*. Here, other specifically appointed officers analyzed them and made new rough drafts of them. The final drafting of the reports was performed with the participation of the various heads of the SD, as well

as the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*. The reports, signed by the head of the *Einsatzgruppe* or his deputy, were then sent to Berlin.

Headland concludes:

*“Thus the reports to this point were the result of several steps in a series in which a number of people – the men carrying out the operations, their leaders, various officials in the Kommandos, and those on the staff of the Einsatzgruppen headquarters – all came to bear on the content of the reports. The Kommando leaders and ultimately the Einsatzgruppen leaders exercised control over the reports, either by writing, reading, editing, approving, or signing them before forwarding them to Berlin.”*

The RSHA did not receive reports through this channel alone. The commanders of the Security Police and Security Service were unable to control the flow of information relating to their area of competence, and many reports reached Berlin through other channels, such as the reports of the Higher SS and Police leader (Headland, pp. 37-39).

Further along, Headland returns to the matter, summarizing it as follows (*ibid.*, p. 166):

*“It will be recalled that generally the leader of the subunits of the Kommandos would summarize the reports sent to him by his subordinates. This draft would then be sent to the leader of the Einsatzkommando or Sonderkommando, who would then compile a more comprehensive report from the reports of the various subunits. From the Einsatzkommando staff this report would then be sent to the headquarters of the Einsatzgruppe, where it would be combined with others and used as part of a further summary report drafted at Einsatzgruppe headquarters. These reports were then sent by the Einsatzgruppe to the RSHA. We have also seen that reports often bypassed the Einsatzgruppe headquarters and were sent directly to Berlin.”*

The directives for the collection of information and the drafting of reports were issued by Heydrich by means of Circular Decree of 3 July 1941 with the subject “Operation Barbarossa – here: Command Staff and Mission Intelligence Leader of the Reich Security Main Office.”

The mission intelligence leader was responsible for optimizing garrisons and operational direction of travel of *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos*, in addition to all the informational technical links; another duty was to control the informational traffic between the RSHA and the *Einsatzgruppen* and vice versa. In particular, at the Berlin headquarters of the RSHA, the mission intelligence leader was entrusted with the task of:

*“issuing all reports and documents received from the Einsatzgruppen A to D, including their commands, following completion of fact-checking and compilation, without delay and without exception.”*

His office was therefore operational day and night. Teletypes, radio messages, or others arriving after 20:30 at night had to be presented without delay. Every day by 9:30 in the morning, the report compiled the day before, previously submitted

to the personal attention of SS *Brigadeführer* Heinrich Müller, had to be delivered to this same person in his capacity as head of the Gestapo, in addition to copies to the following offices:

- a) *Head of the Security Police and SD = 1 copy*
- b) *Adjutancy of the Security Police and SD = 1 copy*
- c) *Kommando Staff at Office IV = 2 copies*
- d) *Office head I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII = 7 copies*
- e) *Main Office = 1 copy*
- f) *II D, II D 1, II D 2, II D 3 = 4 copies*
- g) *Reserve = 5 1 copy, Sa. 21 copies.*"

The post of mission intelligence leader was entrusted to the previously mentioned SS *Hauptsturmführer Regierungsrat* Dr. Paeffgen (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 15, pp. 49f.). The list of 21 addressees constituted the distribution list mentioned earlier.

On 21 October 1941, Müller issued a decree with the subject "Operation Barbarossa – Incorporation of the Mission Intelligence Leader into the Command Staff," which amended the Circular Decree of 3 July. The office of the Mission Intelligence Leader was abolished on July 26. Its tasks were reassigned to the Command Staff of Office IV, which was responsible for "both the technical and material evaluation of the reports from the *Einsatzgruppen* and squads deployed in Operation Barbarossa." There then followed the third and last decree (*ibid.*, Doc. 73, p. 213):

*"From this time forward, all incoming reports and documents received from Einsatzgruppen A to D are to be forwarded to the Command Staff from the Main Office (special entry point) by way of the Office Head IV after the completion of factual marking and compilation. Reports received during the night [are to be forwarded] at the start of the following working day."*

During the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, there was lengthy discussion of the essential question of the true and proper drafting of the Incident Reports and other reports (Activity Reports and *Meldungen*) by the RSHA. Dr. Willi Heim, defending Paul Blobel, formulated the discussion in these terms: The documents may be classified as either "signed" or as "anonymous." In the first case, the document is "authentic" if it really originates from the signatory; in the contrary case, it is "false." But if it is not possible to ascertain who the signatory is, we cannot say whether the document is "authentic" or "false." Heim did not deny that the documents in question were "authentic," in the sense that they undoubtedly originated from the RSHA, but this did not necessarily imply that they were also the truth. All the defendants declared under oath that the reports were "highly unreliable, inaccurate and faulty, and that not only with regard to figures, but also with regard to the contents and the actual wording." This depended upon the compilation process of the reports, and therefore it was necessary to examine two crucial questions (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 105f.):



*“How were the ‘Situation Reports U.S.S.R.’ and the ‘Operational situation reports’ of the Reich Security Main Office drafted? And the additional question: What sources of mistakes were thus provided and what effect did they have?”*

Incident Reports and Activity Reports were drafted in Department IV A 1 of the RSHA (Office IV constituted the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo) and was directed by SS *Gruppenführer* Heinrich Müller), which concerned itself with “Communism, Marxism and accessory organizations, war crimes, illegal and enemy propaganda.” Until the end of April 1942, this section was the center into which flowed the reports from the *Einsatzgruppen*. Officials assigned to their processing included the head of the department, Kurt Lindow, and two of his colleagues, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Günther Knobloch and Rudolf Fumy. The *Einsatzgruppen* reports referred to the scope of tasks of Department III (*Deutsche Lebensgebiete*), which concerned itself with administrative, racial, cultural and economic matters, for which Office IV, which specialized in executive tasks, did not possess the necessary competence. Office IV was therefore called upon to deal with matters with which it was not familiar, leading to inexactitude and error. Department IV A 1 moreover had extremely limited personnel, who did not even possess the technical tools to clarify dubious cases.

Another source of error was the insufficiency of communications media. The *Einsatzgruppen* were often more than 1000 km from Berlin, rendering the transmission of information difficult, not so much due to the distance in itself, but rather because the forwarding of teletypes and written reports depended upon the contingencies of the communications equipment, which worked at highly variable rates of speed, resulting in the irregular arrival of reports, leading to distortions and misunderstandings. Under such circumstances, there was the possibility that the same information might arrive by teletype or by courier; various reports with succeeding dates were registered before reports drawn up previously, which took longer to arrive at the analytical center of Department IV A 1. In dubious cases, it was considered preferable to repeat the same figures or simply use the highest ones.

The conditions under which the reports were drawn up were so unsatisfactory that in April 1942 a radical change was made in their compilation. The personnel of Department IV A 1 worked under Heydrich’s orders, and were therefore highly interested in presenting the most favorable picture of the situation possible, and in evading the risk of unpleasant consequences in the contrary case. After all, Russia was far away, and no one could verify the correctness of the data appearing in the reports. The problem of unreliable reports increased as the war dragged on, as Himmler himself lamented in his speech at Posen on 4 October 1943 (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 108f.):

*“I now come to a fourth virtue which is very scarce in Germany – truthfulness. One of the major evils, which developed during the war, is untruthfulness in reports, statements, and information, which subordinate offices send to their superior offices in civilian life, in the state, Party, and armed forces. Reports or state-*

*ments are the base for every decision. The truth is that in many branches one can assume in the course of this war that 95 out of 100 reports are plain lies or only half true or half correct.”*

The fundamental problem therefore remained, i.e., the fact that the original documents originating from the *Einsatzgruppen* which were used by Department IV A 1 in drawing up the reports were no longer available, and that, therefore, no one could ascertain the degree of reliability of the reports (*ibid.*, p. 109):

*“The statements made hitherto were concerned only with the working conditions which existed in suboffice IV A 1. If the unsatisfactory conditions which prevailed there were already enough to cause this office to turn out piece work and incomplete results only, the sources of deficiency were further extended by the so-called report or information channel from subordinate to superior offices. We established – suboffice IV A 1 received the reports directly from the *Einsatzgruppen*. However, these reports were again only a summary of that which the individual detachments reported in writing, orally, or by teletype; added to this were other sources which, in case of measures to be taken by other, independently working units, or in case of cooperation of several units, were supplied. There is no doubt that the evaluation of the reports collected by the *Einsatzgruppen* was handled differently and was subject, to a great extent, to the attitude of the group chief and his departmental assistants. But this had taken place once already in a similar manner in most of the *Einsatz-* or *Sonderkommandos*, because it was not expedient to have the reports sent directly from the *Teilkommando* to the *Einsatzgruppe*, which might have resulted from a particularly difficult task or from special conditions of the area of operations.*

*It was a rule to send the reports of the *Teilkommandos* first to the *Kommando* chiefs. He based his activity report to the *Einsatzgruppen* on the reports received by him, or he had them drafted by his assistant [*Sachbearbeiter*], according to the distribution of task which was in force in his detachment. If the exhibits submitted by the prosecution were identical with the above-mentioned original reports and if they perhaps even bore the signature of the *Kommando* chief concerned, then objection against their correctness would have little hope to be successful; then the fact that the author of the document would have lied either when drafting the document or now in the trial because he is not brave enough to state the truth would be established.*

*The defense too – its interest in the establishing of the unrestricted truth is just as great as that of any other party in the trial – regrets that it is not possible to submit the original reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatz* or *Sonderkommandos* as documentary evidence.”*

Headland notes that, according to the above-mentioned Rudolf Fumy, the reports drawn up by Department IV A 1 contained “errors, distortions, and omissions of various kinds”; these errors, in the words of this German official, “should not be considered an exact description of the actual events and that they can be taken as a literal repetition of the original reports in a very limited scope only.” Department personnel were insufficient to concern themselves with the constantly in-

creasing quantities of material, and this fact resulted in an increasing superficiality of the work. Moreover, Heinrich Müller played an important role in preparing the reports, accentuating or eliminating material in the reports depending on whether it was favorable or unfavorable to the other bodies of the Reich (Headland, p. 167).

This situation also had repercussions on the statistics relating to executions. During the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, Ohlendorf declared that the figure of 90,000 persons executed by himself, as mentioned in various interrogations, was approximate, and that 15-20% of them resulted from double counting. Indeed, he went even further, stating that he was amazed that he could remember the figure in question, since he had no record of the numbers of executed persons, adding (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 256):

*"I must now state solemnly that in the Reich Security Main Office, Heydrich, Mueller, and Streckenbach, and all the others who knew about these matters, intentionally exaggerated and invented the numbers of Einsatzgruppen A, B, and C. In the case of B, I mean the period of Nebe especially. I am convinced that these figures, which, if I add the numbers in the documents, are not even half of what the prosecution charges me with, are exaggerated by about twice as much."*

Dr. Rudolf Aschenauer, Ohlendorf's defense counsel, noted that EM No. 89 dated 20 September 1941 attributed the execution of 8,890 Jews and Communists between 19 August and 25 August to *Einsatzgruppe D*, positioned at Kikerino; the same date appears in EM No. 95 dated 26 September 1941, but in reference to Nikolayev as its position, commenting:

*"It is my opinion that from the operational situation reports, not a single sentence can be identified with a sentence of an original report from the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos, but on the contrary, as becomes evident from these two reports, the operational situation reports are made up from the original reports, and they are full of mistakes and are not compiled with the viewpoint of passing on accurate figure reports."* (*ibid.*)

Another striking example of this laxity may be found in EM No. 106 dated 7 October 1941, where *Einsatzgruppe C* reported that at Kiev "the liquidation of approximately 35,000 Jews on 29 and 30 September 41 made an equivalent number of houses available" ...then, in the same EM, that "*Sonderkommando 4a* executed 33,771 Jews on 29 and 30 September [1941]" (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 640, 642).

A repetition of identical figures also appears in two other reports. EM No. 152 of 7 January 1942 says:<sup>32</sup>

*"420 persons were court-martialled and shot in Vilnius on 22 December 41. 385 of them were Jews, the rest Poles guilty of participation in Communist activities."*

EM No. 154 of 12 January notes:<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 9 (2723314).

<sup>33</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 28 (2723583).

*“402 persons were court-martialled and shot in Vilnius on 22 Decembr 41. 385 of them were Jews, the rest Poles.”*

Headland supplies additional examples of errors and repetitions (Headland, p. 169). EM No. 86 of 17 September 1941 attributes 6,584 victims to SK 7a (“Bolsheviks, Jews and asocial elements”; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 477) to *Sonderkommando* 7a, while EM No. 80 of 11 September states: “The execution total of SK 4a thus reached 7,152 persons on 24 August 41” (*ibid.*, p. 444).

EM No. 19 of 11 July 1941 announced the killing of 600 Jews at Tarnopol (Ternopol; *ibid.*, p. 104); this is repeated in EM No. 47 of 9 August (*ibid.*, p. 264).

EM No. 165 of 6 February 1942 says: “The last 38 Jews and Gypsies were executed on 1 February 42 in Loknya”;<sup>34</sup> this communication also appears in EM No. 181 of 16 March: “38 Jews and 1 gypsy were shot in Loknya.”<sup>35</sup>

Aschenauer moreover notes that EM No. 117 of 18 October 1941 gives a total figure of 40,699 persons executed by 15 October by *Einsatzgruppe* D, (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 696), but EM No. 129 of 5 November supplies a total of 31,767 (*ibid.*, p. 753).

In Ohlendorf’s cross-examination, he was asked to supply a minimum figure of persons shot by *Einsatzgruppe* D, since he considered the figure of 90,000 previously mentioned by him to have been exaggerated. The defendant replied:<sup>36</sup>

*“In my direct examination I have already said that I cannot give any definite figure, and that even the testimony in my affidavit shows that in reality I could not name any figure. Therefore, I have named a figure which has been reported ‘approximately.’ The knowledge which I have gained by this day through the documents and which I have gained through conversations with my men, make me reserve the right to name any figure and strengthen this reservation. Therefore, I am not in a position to give you a minimum figure, either. In my direct examination I have said that the numbers which appear in the documents are at least exaggerated by one-half, but I must repeat that I never knew any definite figure and, therefore, cannot give you any such figure.”*

In his appeal for clemency, submitted by Defense Counsel Rudolf Aschenauer, Ohlendorf asserted that the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* did not amount to one million, as claimed by the prosecution, but 450,000 (Earl, p. 268). This does not diminish the horror of the crime, but is undoubtedly of value in terms of historiography.

Headland recognizes that “there is also evidence to suggest that some of the *Einsatzkommando* and *Einsatzgruppen* leaders deliberately exaggerated the numbers of persons shot for their own self-aggrandizement” (Headland, pp. 97, 102). He also supplies some important data in this regard.

<sup>34</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 11/2723799.

<sup>35</sup> NARA, T-175/235, p. 7/2723987.

<sup>36</sup> TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 257-258, and 270.

A number of documents indicate that the total number of victims as of 2 February 1942 for the area of *Einsatzgruppe A* was 163,003. But the “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942,” in its statistical summary of executions, supplies a total of 229,052 Jews killed. He also notes that “when we add up the totals that are given in this report by area, we get a total of 274,605 persons killed, including the pogroms in Lithuania” (*ibid.*, p. 103).

Headland states that the “Summary Report until 15 October 1941” (the first Stahlecker Report) mentions a total of 81,171 persons killed in Lithuania. The document in question explicitly declares that “the total number of liquidated Jews amounts to 71,105,” a figure to which the 5,000 pogrom victims should be added, so that the total should be 76,105 (L-180, IMT, Vol. 37, p. 688). But the summary of executions supplies the figure of 80,311 Jews and 860 Communists, a total of exactly 81,171 (*ibid.*, p. 702).

Headland informs us that this figure also contains approximately 42,000 persons killed by the *Einsatzkommando* at Siauliai before *Einsatzkommando 3* reached the area on 2 October 1941 (Headland, table on p. 98). The Jäger Report lists 100,332 victims by 15 October 1941, plus 3,050 over the period from 28 September to 17 October. Given the lengthy period of time over which the executions were carried out and the order of magnitude of the total figures, the figure for the period 15-17 October can hardly be considered important, since the total figure amounts to 103,382 victims. To this should be added the 4,000 Jewish victims of pogroms carried out by Lithuanians, *i.e.*, a total of 106,798. This figure does not include the approximately 42,000 victims mentioned above, which brings the grand total to more than 145,000. How are we to reconcile this figure with Stahlecker’s figure of 81,171?

Headland admits that

*“the claim that the numbers were exaggerated would also seem to have some basis in fact. Sources other than those used at the trial suggest that numbers were altered to produce a more favorable picture. Some historians have quite readily accepted that exaggerations took place in order to prevent [sic; read: convey] an impressive picture of the Kommando’s activities.”* (Headland, p. 173)

The “Summary Report from 16 October 1941 to 31 January 1942,” also known as the second Stahlecker Report, devotes an entire paragraph to Latvia. Based on the 1935 census, there were only 93,479 Jews in the country.<sup>37</sup> An undated set of statistics, entitled “*Juden in Lettland 1940*” (“Jews in Latvia 1940”) provides a detailed report on the Jewish population of the country: 93,904 persons, 44,122 of them in the city of Riga, 7,552 in the county of Liepaja (Libava), 17,763 in Daugavpils County.<sup>38</sup> Stahlecker informs us that,

*“when the German troops moved in, there were still 70,000 Jews in Latvia. The rest had fled with the Bolsheviks. The remaining Jews were highly active as sabo-*

<sup>37</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> LVVA, P-1026-1-3, p. 213.

*teurs and arsonists. The Jews set so many fires in Daugavpils that a large part of the city was destroyed.”*

The report then says that 30,000 Jews had been executed by October 1941:

*“The remaining Jews who were still indispensable in terms of economic life, were confined to ghettos, set up in Riga, Daugavpils and Liepaja.”*

Approximately 2,500 Jews were shot at Riga, approximately 950 at Daugavpils and approximately 300 at Liepaja, a total of 3,750. Other executions took place after October 1941: 11,034 Jews were shot at Daugavpils on 9 November, 27,800 at Riga at the beginning of December and 2,350 at Liepaja in mid-December, a total of 41,184.<sup>39</sup>

According to the summary table of executions, which extends to 1 February 1942, 35,338 Jews were shot in Latvia, plus 5,500 killed “in pogroms.” But this figure is listed in the columns for “Lithuania” and “Latvia,” and therefore refers to these two countries.<sup>40</sup> The Jäger Report attributes 4,000 victims to the pogrom in Lithuania (see Chapter 4), therefore 1,500 regard Latvia, and the number of Jews killed according to this report was 36,738. Now, if 30,000 Jews were shot by the month of October, and another 41,184 were killed in the two following months, for a total of 71,184, why does the summary table of executions report them as numbering 35,238 (+ 1,500)? On the other hand, since there were 3,750 Jews in the ghettos, there were not 70,000 Jews in Latvia, upon the arrival of German troops, but  $(71,184 + 3,750 =) 74,934$ .

The Jews killed in Lithuania, according to the summary table of executions, amounted to 136,421, plus some fraction of those 5,500 killed in the pogrom – according to the Jäger Report, 4,000 persons, for a total of 140,421. The total figure of Jews executed according to this report is some 135,352, but this includes 9,606 Latvian Jews from Daugavpils, so that for Lithuania the figure of  $(135,352 - 9,606 =) 125,746$  should apply. Adding these 9,606 to the total for Latvia, we obtain  $(35,238 + 1,500 + 9,606 =) 46,344$ , a figure which does not square with that of 71,184.

The report in question contains another obvious error. On 11 November 1941, “The commander of the security police and SD Latvia, Office Daugavpils,” informed the local District Commissioner: “On 9 November 1941, 1,134 Jews were executed in Daugavpils.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, if 17,763 Jews lived in the county of Daugavpils in 1940, 9,606 of whom were shot in August 1941, and 950 were in the ghetto on 1 February 1942, it is not possible for there to have been 11,034 victims on 9 November, because in that case the total number would have been greater than the initial figure:  $9,606 + 950 + 11,034 = 21,590$ . The correct figure should therefore be 1,134. This is confirmed by the letter from the General Commissioner in Riga to the Reich Commissioner for the *Ostland* (*Reichskommissar für das Ostland*) dated 20 October 1941, according to which “there are 2,185 Jews in the

<sup>39</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, pp. 58f.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>41</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-14, p. 33.

county of Daugavpils”;<sup>42</sup> subtracting the 950 detainees in the ghetto, there were 1,235 remaining persons, a figure compatible with the execution of 1,134.

As regards Liepaja, the figure of 2,350 does not correspond to the figure stated in War Diary No. 1 of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Liepaja (*Kriegstagebuch Nr. 1 des SS- und Polizeistandortführers Libau*) and other documents: 2,749 (see Part Two, Chapter 7).

It follows that  $(1,134 + 27,800 + 2,749 =)$  31,683 Jews were shot in Latvia during the months of November and December 1941, making 61,683 Jews, if we add the 30,000 shot at the end of October; but even this figure contradicts the figure 35,238 (+1,500) in the summary table. What is more, even the figure of 27,800 Jews shot at Riga is contradictory and unsupported by evidence (see Chapter 4).

The number of Jews shot in “Lithuania,” according to the Stahlecker Report, as stated above, was 136,421 (without the pogrom). This figure is taken from a communication from the “Commander of the Security Police and SD, Kaunas” (in German: Kauen, Kovno or Kowno) addressed “to Group A – Riga” dated 8 February 1942, which explicitly states that the figure in question – 136,421 – represented the number of executions carried out “by *Einsatzkommando 3*” starting on 1 February 1942. The total number of victims is given as 138,272, which includes 1,851 non-Jews.<sup>43</sup> The Jäger Report, the source of this figure, reports a total of 133,346 persons shot (without the pogrom), 131,656 of whom were Jews and 1,960 were non-Jews. The total number of Jewish victims includes 3,031 Jews from Byelorussia, 9,012 Latvian Jews (from Daugavpils) and 4,934 Jews from the Reich, for a total of 16,977 non-Lithuanian Jews, not included in the statistics for Lithuania; the correct figure should therefore be  $(136,421 - 16,977 =)$  119,444.

As regards the reliability of the figures for these executions, there is another, more-specific problem, which no one has ever bothered with: how did they perform the counts and register the victims? The documents report interminable series of figures, but do not explain how they were established. The ordinary practice of the *Einsatzkommandos*, when they reached a locality, was to set up a ghetto or Jewish district, require the Jewish population to wear a distinctive sign, and register them by name. The resulting lists would have constituted a valid support for the executions, because they would have made it possible to establish not only the exact numbers of persons shot but the names of all persons who may have escaped execution as well. But no such use of the lists in question was ever attested to by any document. As an alternative, it would have been necessary to appoint an officer or non-commissioned officer responsible for counting the victims and annotating the numbers in an appropriate register (as fantasized about in the stories concerning “Aktion 1005” where counting the exhumed and cremated bodies is mentioned; see Part Two of this study). However, not even this is supported by

<sup>42</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 46.

<sup>43</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 170.

documentary evidence. Ohlendorf, in this regard, explicitly declared (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 256):

*“I did not keep a register of these figures.”*

Since the *Einsatzgruppen* reports often dwell at length on absolutely insignificant matters, the fact that the aspects mentioned above were never mentioned can only mean that they never existed.

Hence one might argue that the victim figures, except for the most insignificant ones, were not the results of a real count, but mere approximate guesses, sometimes rounded up, to give an impression, such as, for example, the figure for the number of victims at Babi Yar: 33,771!

But there is also the problem of willful exaggerations, as noted by Headland (as quoted here on p. 59). It is obvious that the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, on all levels, wished to give their superiors the impression of being hyper-active in all realms, including executions.

There is another important matter with regard to which the reports are very reticent. On 22 January 1942, von dem Bach-Zelewski stated, in a report to the SS, that the temperature had fallen to  $-42^{\circ}\text{C}$  for two days.<sup>44</sup>

EM No. 170 of 18 February 1942 dwells at length on Leningrad and supplies the following information (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 161):

*“In the course of January there began a veritable mass die-off among the civilian population. In particular, towards the end of the day, the bodies were brought out of the houses on hand-sleds to the cemeteries, where they were simply thrown into the snow, due to the impossibility of digging graves in the hard-frozen ground.”*

EM No. 189 of 3 April 1942, *Einsatzgruppe A* mentions a temperature of  $-45^{\circ}\text{C}$  (*ibid.*, p. 256), while EM No. 195 from *Einsatzgruppe B* of 24 April 1942 speaks of  $-48^{\circ}\text{C}$  in Smolensk (*ibid.*, p. 327). On 6 February 1942, the same source mentioned that “the ground in Byelorussia was frozen solid to a depth of 2 metres,” as a result of which, we may suppose, it was impossible to dig mass graves. The winter of 1942 was particularly harsh, and the soil remained frozen solid for months. On the other hand, the executions listed in the reports would have required the excavation – which would never have been easy – of numerous mass graves. How were they dug – and filled in again afterwards? Were these difficulties, which would inevitably have influenced the number of executions, really unworthy of mention in the reports?

## 1.5. *Einsatzgruppen* “Justifications” for Killing Jews

Headland notes that

*“the Einsatzgruppen reporters for the most part did not simply record the killings, but felt the need to use euphemisms in their reports to cover up the act of murder.”*

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, HW 16-53.



*In the same way they also gave ‘reasons’ for their actions in order to justify them.”* (Headland, p. 72)

The importance of the problem is obvious: If Hitler, in the summer of 1941, had ordered the extermination of the Soviet Jews, as Jews, what need did the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* have to justify their individual killings?

Headland claims that this was done based on two fundamental ideas (*ibid.*):

*“The first was the fact that in presenting justifications for their deeds, the Einsatzgruppen leaders believed they were thereby providing themselves with a ‘legal’ basis for the killings. While they may have believed that it was correct to annihilate the Jews, such a belief certainly had no foundation in law. With an eye to the future, and for their activities, the Einsatzgruppen constantly depicted the executions as reprisals against so-called criminal acts of Jews, partisans, and others. This protection was therefore outward-looking, a means of the defense against external scrutiny.”*

One might object that, for convinced National Socialists, like the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen*, any *Führerbefehl* was sufficient source of “legality,” and that, at a time when they were convinced that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not far off, they were unlikely to have been so far-seeing as to create alibis for themselves in any future trial brought against them by the Allies. In addition, the majority of the reports were intended for offices and departments of the RSHA. This interpretation is therefore unsustainable.

Headland’s reasoning is also logically unfounded, since it presupposes as fact that the Jews were killed “as Jews,” and not, as constantly stated in the reports, “as reprisals against so-called criminal acts of Jews, partisans, and others.” Headland therefore presupposes that these explanations are false, and then uses the alleged falsity of the explanations to prove that they are false, and to explain why they are false!

The second idea, Headland continues, was more subtle: a sort of self-justification to render the onerous reality of the killings acceptable (*ibid.*, pp. 72f.). Such an explanation reminds us to some extent of Raul Hilberg’s claim that “psychological justifications were an essential part of the killing operations” (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 341).

This may be valid for the material executors of the killings, but it certainly does not apply to the compilers of the final reports, who were simple office-bound bureaucrats in Department IV A 1 of the RSHA, working only with pencils and typewriters. They had no reason to “justify themselves.”

Krausnick’s conjecture that the above-mentioned justifications were imposed by Heydrich upon the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* as a sort of “convention of speech” (*Sprachregelung*; Headland, p. 74), quite apart from contradicting Headland’s explanations, has no basis in documentary fact. As regards the various locutions used in referring to the killings, one may speak of “euphemisms” in the sense of an ordinary bureaucratic language. Since the original reports have not survived, we do not even know whether this practice was adopted by the

heads of the *Einsatzgruppen* or by the compilers of the final reports in the Gestapo.

Headland himself notes that, in the improbable event that the alleged “camouflaging and justifications” had really achieved their purpose, it does not explain why they were not adopted in all the reports; moreover, alongside “camouflage terms” such as “special treatment” or “rendered harmless,” the reports also use crude and ordinary terms such as “shoot, liquidate, or annihilate.” In view of this simple fact, Headland has no answer except the trite chorus of the “irrationality” of National Socialism (*ibid.*, p. 77):

*“This question provides an example of the inexplicable and irrational quality inherent in much National Socialist thinking and methodology.”*

Thus is the irrationality of orthodox Holocaust historiography “explained” by blaming it on the alleged “irrationality” of the National Socialists.

Hilberg lists 25 terms and locutions used in the reports to refer to executions, some of which are very explicit, as Headland admits, such as “*hingerichtet*” (put to death, executed), “*exekutiert*” (executed), “*ausgemerzt*” (eradicated), “*liquidiert*” (liquidated), “*erledigt*” (finished off; Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 338). Now, if “conventions of speech” really existed, it would necessarily have been adopted by the compilers of the reports of Department IV A 1, which would have applied the system uniformly to the reports redacted by themselves, always utilizing the same pre-established terms.

On the other hand, the true significance of the “camouflage” terms may sometimes only be seen from the context; when this is not explicit, the meaning should not be taken for granted. This is true in particular for “*Sonderbehandlung*” (special treatment), “*Sonderaktion*” (special operation) and “*Umsiedlung*” (resettlement). For example, EM No. 156 of 16 January 1942 mentions “special treatment” (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 89):

*“The evangelical-Lutheran church is attempting to obtain special treatment from German authorities, which should manifest itself in the form of governmental support of a financial nature in particular.”*

No. 6 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” (5 June 1942) refers to a “special operation” in which “2500 cubic metres of firewood, among other things, were distributed to needy persons.”<sup>45</sup> No. 50 (16 April 1943) says:<sup>46</sup>

*“A certain quantity of manpower was obtained by means of police special operations.”*

A message intercepted by the British on 15 August 1941 mentioned a “student special operation” which consisted of allocating 30,000 RM to the students.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> NARA, T-175/235, p. 21, 2724466.

<sup>46</sup> NARA, T-175/236, p. III, 2725806.

<sup>47</sup> TNA, HW 16-6, Summary of messages intercepted between 15 and 31 August 1941. ZIP/MSGP.28/12.9.41, p. 6.

“*Umsiedlung*” is sometimes clearly used as a synonym for execution, while on other occasions it means what it translates to: resettlement;<sup>48</sup> in some cases it seems to be distinct from execution, as in this example:<sup>49</sup>

*“As a result of the measures taken by Einsatzkommando 6, the towns of Gorlovka and Makeyevka are now free of Jews. Some of them, remaining in Stalino, will be resettled as soon as the weather permits it. A total of 493 persons were executed here (including 80 political activists, 44 saboteurs and looters and 369 Jews).”*

Here, by contrast, we appear to have the inexplicable use of the “camouflage” term “resettled” and the undisguised word “executed” in the same context.

The same is true of the term “evacuation.” For example, the “Activity Report of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Liepaja” of 29 December 1941, notes:<sup>50</sup>

*“2,749 Jews were evacuated in the period from 14 to 17 December 41.”*

The reference is to the executions at Liepaja (see Part Two, Chapter 7); but just a few pages before, the report informs us:<sup>51</sup>

*“100 Gypsies were evacuated from the city of Liepaja on 5 December 41.”*

War Diary No. 1 of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Liepaja, which covers the period from 20 September 1941 to 30 November 1943, lists all the executions of Jews and non-Jews carried out at Liepaja during this period, but these 100 Gypsies are not mentioned (see Krausnick/Wilhelm, pp. 571-574).

An “Annex of All Administrative Orders of the Commander” in the rear of Army Group Center of 1 August 1941 says:<sup>52</sup>

*“Jews have been evacuated from numerous municipalities. [...] The Jewish evacuations resulted in numerous Jews of all ages and both genders wandering across the countryside from village to village and from city to city.”*

In some cases the execution was the consequence of a scheduled evacuation that proved unfeasible, as in the report from Kriminalrat Schmidt (*Reichssicherheitsdienst, Gruppe Geheime Feldpolizei, Sicherungsgruppe Ost*) of 12 January 1942:

*“227 Jews lived in the village of Strihawka[?]. The large number of Jews is attributed to the fact that there was a large GPU camp in the area. Since the Jews represented a great danger to the installation, I filed an application with the district commissioner to evacuate them. As a result of especially difficult circumstances, evacuation proved impossible. The Jews were therefore executed on 10 Jan. 1942 between 8.30 and 10.30 hrs.”*

The mass grave was excavated with explosives due to the frost.<sup>53</sup> Of course, this raises the question of how those graves were later filled in.

<sup>48</sup> See Subchapter 3.5 and Part Two, Subchapter 8.6.

<sup>49</sup> EM No. 177 of 6 March 1942. Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 195.

<sup>50</sup> LVVA, P-83-1-25, p. 50.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>52</sup> LVVA, P-70-5-23, p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> YVA, O.53-6, pp. 20f.

There is another problem. Some documents appear to testify to the existence of an order to exterminate the Jews. For example, in the “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942,” *Einsatzgruppe A* reports:<sup>54</sup>

*“According to the basic orders, the systematic cleansing operation in the East included the elimination of Jewry as completely as possible. With the exception of Byelorussia, this objective was largely achieved through the execution of 229,052 Jews so far (see Annex).”*

The “Summary Report until 15 October 1941” of *Einsatzgruppe A* mentions the “carrying out of basic orders” (“*Durchführung grundsätzlicher Befehle*”).<sup>55</sup>

What these “basic orders” were, and where and by whom they were issued, remains unknown. But if they really existed, it would have made no sense to justify the various executions, as it would have been more than sufficient to indicate (as in other documents) that the victims were “treated as per orders.”

The existence of “basic orders” does not in any case resolve the question raised in the preceding paragraphs, because we still do not know whether they regarded Jews as Jews or as supporters of Bolshevism. These hypotheses are excluded explicitly by the first report, since at the end it contains a paragraph titled “The Jews from the Reich,” which refers to the deportation of 20,000 Jews from the Reich to Riga who were not subjected to any policy of extermination.

There is another possibility that does not appear ever to have been taken into consideration by orthodox Holocaust historiography, and that is a diversification of the orders to the individual *Einsatzgruppen* based on the theaters of operation in which they operated. This could explain the occasional differences in methods followed, which may not necessarily be attributable to the differing rates of speed of advance of the units of the army to which the *Einsatzgruppen* were linked.

The *Einsatzgruppen* reports moreover present aspects which clash not only with Headland’s interpretation as presented above, but with the general statistics of the shootings as well. There are frequent reports of shootings of minuscule groups of Jews, sometimes a single individual, usually with a plethora of explanations and wealth of detail. The following are a few examples.

EM No. 20 of 12 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C*:

*“150 Ukrainians were found murdered in Stryi. By way of initiated investigations it was possible to arrest 12 Communists sharing responsibility for the murders. They consisted of 11 Jews and 1 Ukrainian, who were shot with the participation of the entire population of Stryi.”* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 109)

EM No. 24 of 16 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe A*:

A report of a case of arson at Daugavpils (*ibid.*, p. 128):

*“The Jews were decisively involved in the arson cases. 5 Jews were caught in the act during the first 3 days and instantly shot.”*

<sup>54</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92 (PS-2273), p. 56.

<sup>55</sup> L-180. IMT, Vol. 37, p. 689.

EM No. 36 of 28 July 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“12 Jewesses were also shot who could be proven to have been active as Communist Party agitators already during the Polish campaign.” (ibid., p. 195)*

EM No. 47 of 9 August 1941, Einsatzgruppe C:

*“2 Jewish Communists who had attempted to lure smaller detachments into an ambush were also finished off.” (ibid., p. 265)*

EM No. 67 of 29 August 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“11 Jews were executed in the villages of Szuchari [Sukhari] and Yasna. Some of them had been guilty of sniping, others of engaging in Communist agitation. Among the liquidated Jews was one Communist party official who is said to have been a commissar.” (ibid., p. 376)*

One Jewess was shot “for sabotage,” as well as 8 male Jews, “for attempting to intimidate the population through the spreading of false rumors.”

*“A Jewess who treacherously persuaded a German soldier to open a door, detonating an explosive charge which tore his lower arm off, was arrested after an investigation conducted by the Einsatzkommando. The Jewess was then publicly hanged.”*

*“Another 10 Jews from Minsk, who spread anti-German propaganda among the population until the end, were also shot.” (ibid.)*

EM No. 73 of 14 September 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

1 male Jew “who had destroyed a cable installation of the German army” was shot (*ibid.*, p. 403).

EM No. 92 of 2 September 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“In Novozybkov, an elderly Jew and a former NKVD militia man, who had been in constant contact with the partisans and had transmitted messages to them, were treated accordingly, in improvised fashion.”*

*“Further a half-Jew was transferred from the POW camp in Minsk, who, as a long-time party member, had been a Politruk and political divisional commander in the Russian army. He was liquidated together with 3 other Jews, who had worked actively in the NKVD under Bolshevik rule and who refused to wear the insignia prescribed for Jews. In Minsk, a Jewess who had worked as an interpreter with the Field Commander’s Office and who had pretended to be a Pole in order to be appointed to that position, was shot.” (ibid., p. 545)*

EM No. 131 of 10 November 1941, Einsatzgruppe A:

*“On 20 October 1941, the Jew Max Wulfson was arrested in his dwelling in Riga. Wulfson was under heavy suspicion of having acted as a contact man for Karl Kühndorff, a teacher who had emigrated from Germany in 1933 and who was in contact with Soviet Russian and English agents.” (ibid., p. 767)*

*“During the arrest of a Jew from Liepaja, large quantities of strychnine, enough to poison over 1,000 people, were found in his dwelling. The poison had been in the hands of the Jew for quite some time. He gave unbelievable explanations as to the origins of the poison. He was executed.” (ibid., p. 768)*

EM No. 133 of 14 November 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“On the same day [16 October 1941] the Jews Stanislaus Bonski and Tolja Ahonim as former NKVD-agents, and the Jews Simon Alexandrovich, Schuster Peiser and Michael Sakei were liquidated for possession of explosives. On the same day, the Jewess Cadine Orlov was executed for failure to wear the Jewish identifying mark and for refusing to move to the ghetto. On 18 October 1941, the Jews Lova Wasmann, Ferna Birkman, Jakob Saravo, Abraham Linden, Abraham Baraniche, Salomon Katzman and Behr Katzmann as well as the Jewess Fenia Leikina were liquidated for refusing to wear the Jewish identifying mark and for distributing anti-German agitation propaganda. On 20 October 1941, the Jew Stanilov Naum and the Jewish married couple Alär were liquidated for concealing themselves outside the ghetto in Mogilev. On 14 October 1941, the Jew Isaak Pyaskin, who had been a political collaborator of the Red Army and was found on the forward advance road towards Vyazma under suspicious circumstances, was shot by the advance unit of EK 9. On 17 October 1941, the Jew Maria Spirina was shot by the advance unit of EK 9 for serving as a gunwoman. On 21 October 1941, the Jew Joel Lyubavin was shot after being found in a Russian bunker in possession of a firearm not far from Vyazma.”*

*“On 17 October 1941, the Jew Samuel Goffmann was shot for carrying a false identity document for the purpose of concealing the fact that he was a Jew. [...] 2 Jewesses were liquidated for setting fire to two houses in Bobruisk during an aerial attack during the night of 13 October 1941.” (ibid., p. 788)*

EM No. 146 of 15 December 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“The Jew Elia Lapitzki and the Russians Ivan Matveyev, Nikolai Stepanenko, Gregory Skobilev and Semen Agafonov were shot for membership in a partisan group and/or for acting as informants for partisans. The Jew Bruck, residing in Bychikha, was proven to have supplied the partisans with several pigs. He was handed over to the Wehrmacht at their request and publicly hanged.”*

*“In connection with Rishin’s arrest [Rishin was a Russian arsonist], 7 Jews were arrested and convicted of partisan activities. All 8 persons were hanged.” (ibid., p. 883)*

The following persons were also shot:

*“A Jew, who had been a member of the Communist Party and NKVD agent since 1920, and had attempted to set fire to the village of Zavodeyki[?] near Mogilev using gasoline; 8 Jews and Jewesses, who had concealed themselves outside the ghetto in Mogilev; [...] 9 Jews who had considerably terrorised the population of Mogilev through price-gouging; [...] In Vyazma, a Jew who had belonged to the Communist Party since 1928 and had been active in agitation activities; [...] the*

*Jew Naikhin, his wife and another 3 Jews who had made derogatory remarks about the German armed forces.” (ibid., p. 886)*

EM No. 148 of 19 December 1941, Einsatzgruppe B:

*“2 Jews and 2 Russians guilty of repeated acts of looting, [...] were court-martialled and shot.” (ibid., p. 888)*

In this context the presumed legal and psychological justifications make no sense, either because the executions took place “after a court-martial” (“*standrechtlich*”) or in an improvised manner (“*behelfsgemäß*”) and were considered legal by the persons carrying out the executions, or due to the insignificant number of persons concerned, required no “auto-justification.”

The case of Kodyma moreover shows that the motivations for the shootings carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* cannot be reduced to simplistic patterns. The report from *Einsatzgruppe D* to the Army High Command 11/Ic of 4 August 1941 contains an appendix with the subject “Meetings of Jews in Kodyma” by *Sonderkommando 10a*. A Ukrainian woman had reported that a clandestine meeting of approximately 50 Jews had taken place at Kodyma to coordinate attacks against individual German soldiers. Investigations confirmed the allegation, and the Jewish quarter was surrounded by approximately 400 soldiers, with orders to arrest all Jews over the age of 15. Due to resistance from the Jews, it was necessary to have recourse to arms in some cases. At the end of the operation, approximately 400 persons were arrested, all males. The interrogators ascertained that approximately 98 of them had participated in the clandestine meeting or had committed acts of insubordination or were members of the [local] Jewish “intelligence” [organization]. 100 persons were Ukrainians or Russian and were of advanced age, as a result of which they were released.

*“The remaining approximately 175 persons, without exception Jews, could not be proven guilty of participation. They were transferred to the armed forces prisoner of war camp as hostages, while the above-mentioned 98 persons were shot after taking their personal data.” (Angrick 2013 et al., Doc. 35, pp. 88f.)*

In other cases, in which shooting should have been inevitable, the outcome was otherwise. For example, a “letter (No. 989) by the head of the Ukrainian district administration of Kamianka to the village eldest and the police chief of Stepanivka date 29 July 1942” states that the district commissioner of Krivoy Rog, Hans Frick, was in possession of information according to which four Jews were hiding in the district and ordered (*ibid.*, Doc. 139, pp. 336f.):

*“The Jews must be arrested and brought to the labor camp of the city of Verkhnedneprovsk. All prisoners of war who are without work and without documents and are just loafing around in the villages, should be sent there too.”*

The numbers are another jarring element in the general context of statistics. The reports laconically mention thousands and tens of thousands of executions but then dedicate many lines to dealing with individual cases of Jews mentioned by name.

It is obvious that these facts do not square with the hypothesis of an order to exterminate Jews as Jews. The reports clearly show, by contrast, that the general motivation for the killings was the fact that the Jews were considered by the Germans to be hardcore supporters of Bolshevism and the partisans. Thus, for example, in EM No. 127 of 31 October 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C* states this line of reasoning quite clearly:

*“Already today it can be stated without hesitation that the Jew has acted in the service of Bolshevism without exception.*

*“As a result, the necessity arose for the Security Police of special measures against Jewry,”*

precisely because the Jews were considered “the true carriers of Bolshevism” (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 740f.).

EM No. 124 of 25 October 1941 reports a specific application of this principle (*ibid.*, p. 732):

*“The Krupski region may therefore be considered free of Jews. The complete liquidation of the Jews in the localities mentioned was necessary to deprive the numerous partisans and parachute infiltrators of all the support that they had been accustomed to receive precisely from the Jews.”*

Another contrived accusation against the *Einsatzgruppen* as well as – and even more so – against the police battalions and the Command Staff SS, which were more directly involved in the struggle against the partisans, is that the SS used the struggle against the Bolsheviks as a cover to conceal the real object: *i.e.*, the massacre of the Jews.

It may be appropriate at this point to include a brief *excursus* on Himmler’s annotation dated 18 December 1941 in his diary, an orthodox interpretation of which is provided by Christopher Browning (Browning 2004, p. 410):

*“On December 18 Himmler met with Hitler. The cryptic remark in Himmler’s appointment book stated simply: ‘Jewish question/to be exterminated as partisans’ (Judenfrage/als Partisanen auszurotten). Most likely, they discussed how the killing of the Jews was to be justified and what were the rules for speaking about it.”*

The editors of Himmler’s *Dienstkalender* (service calendar), which includes a transcript of the annotation, comment (Witte *et al.*, p. 294):

*“This was obviously a follow-up discussion of Hitler’s speech on the Reichs- und Gauleitertagung on 12 December and Himmler’s meeting with Hitler, Bouhler and Brack on 14 December 1941 [...]. The broad expression ‘Jewish Question’ indicates that Himmler was taking note of Hitler’s justification for the murder of the European Jews as a whole [...].”*

The editors refer to the well-known article by Christian Gerlach on Hitler’s presumed decision to exterminate all the European Jews, where he examines this document (Gerlach 1998, pp. 780f.):

*“Himmler and Hitler met on the afternoon of December 18, 1941. In regard to the first topic discussed, Himmler recorded, ‘Jewish question / to be exterminated as*



*partisans.* There can be no doubt that what Himmler wrote down after the vertical line represented the results of the conversation. But what did the brief notation mean? Linguistically, the statement is an order. The term ‘partisans’ may at first glance seem to suggest the situation in the Soviet Union, but the execution of Soviet Jews had been decided some time ago and was already under way. Further, at that point there was not yet a significant number of Jewish partisans in the occupied Soviet territories. These considerations suggest that Himmler’s notation meant something else – that it referred to potential partisans and to the supposed ‘Jewish threat.’ It is significant that Himmler’s note lists the topic of conversation not as ‘Jews in the east’ or as ‘Soviet Jews’ but rather as the all-encompassing ‘Jewish question.’ By itself, Himmler’s notation is difficult to interpret unambiguously, but there is some justification for interpreting Hitler’s statement in a global sense.”

The annotation of 18 December 1941 should be placed in correlation with the presumed “decision to ‘exterminate the Jews in Europe,’” which, according to Gerlach, “must have been made after December 7 and before December 14, 1941” (*ibid.*, p. 784). Specifically, the meaning of the annotation is thought to be as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 786f.):

“Hitler viewed the Jews as opponents, revolutionaries, saboteurs, spies, ‘partisans’ in his own backyard – an area that now, in light of the expected United States attack, included all of Europe. That was what Hitler had meant by his remark, recorded by Himmler on December 18, 1941, ‘to be exterminated as partisans.’”

The explanation is obviously a bit forced. The reference to partisans, in this context, would only make sense in relation to the Jews of the East: only these could be killed *in the quality of* (als), not as *like* (wie) partisans to justify the killings. But the motivations adopted in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, as set forth above, also continued to be highly variegated and only refer to a minimum extent to killings of Jews in the capacity of partisans. Are we to believe that no one paid any attention to this alleged *Führerbefehl* ?

Ulrich Herbert, in his critique of Gerlach’s conjectures – to which I shall return in the next chapter – also examined the annotation of 18 December 1941, noting that the German historian first presupposes the existence of a “Führer decision,” and then adduces the annotation as *proof* of its existence, but “that is methodically problematic.” Without the conjectural context created by Gerlach, the precise meaning of the annotation remains rather unclear (Herbert, p. 69).

In the “Monologue” at the *Führerhauptquartier*, the *Reichsführer* SS (Himmler) is invited to lunch by Hitler on December 14th, to lunch on the 17th, and to lunch once again on the 18th, but at table Hitler did not speak of any *Judenfrage* (Jewish question) or of partisans (Jochmann, pp. 152-156).

The original text of the annotation is of no assistance in clarifying the matter (see Document I.1.6).

The term *Judenfrage* is separated from “to be exterminated as partisans” by a dash, and it is unclear whether this expression is an order or a conclusion linked

to the preceding term. Holocaust historians presuppose that the text implies “Jewish question. [The Führer has ordered that] the Jews are to be exterminated as partisans,” but this is dubious at the very least, precisely because we do not know the topic of the discussion between Hitler and Himmler.

In reference to the memorandum of 16 July 1941, according to which Stalin’s order on partisan warfare gave the Germans the opportunity to kill “whatever opposes us” (see next chapter), we can also imagine a more general directive according to which it was considered necessary to “exterminate” all adversaries “as partisans,” whether they were Jews or non-Jews.

Returning to the theory of the anti-partisan struggle being utilized by the Germans as a pretext to cover up the extermination of the Jews, Yehoshua Büchler, one of its principal supporters, says (Büchler, p. 14):

*“The war against the partisans was utilized by Hitler not only as a mask for mass murder, but also as a way to build a broad consensus of all the Nazi forces operating in the occupied areas in regard to the murder of Jews. The Jews were portrayed by the Nazis as partisans or potential partisans, both as a group and as individuals. This conceptual integration of Jews and partisans was quickly internalized by a receptive SS and by German army soldiers, and provided the mass murder of the Jews with the legitimization of a ‘war against the partisans.’ All branches of the German state took part in the anti-partisan warfare, including the SS, police, army, civilian administration, local collaborators and parts of the armed forces of Germany’s allies.”*

It is still a fact that War Diary No. 1 of the Command Staff SS, which covers the period from 16 June to 31 December 1941 and which condenses the reports from all the subordinate units, only reports on partisan activities and does not even mention the term “Jude” (facsimile in Baade, pp. 13-101).

It is also true that the subordinate units drew up their own reports, which speak of killings of Jews, but the context is not the one imagined by Büchler.

The first known report from the 1st SS [Infantry] Brigade, the “Activity Report for the time 27 July 41/12.00 o’clock – 30 July 41/12.00 o’clock,” dated 30 July 1941, contains the first reference to any killing of Jews:

*“Furthermore, approximately 800 Jews and Jewesses aged 16 to 60 years were shot by the end of the reporting period for aiding and abetting Bolshevism and Bolshevik partisans.” (ibid., p. 106)*

The report provides an exact description of the brigade’s mission for the period in question:

*“Arrest and/or destruction of:*

- a) what remains of the 124th Soviet Rifle Division;*
- b) armed gangs;*
- c) partisans;*
- d) persons guilty of aiding and abetting the bolshevist system;”*

The report also declares that “the overall operation was led by SS *Obergruppenführer* and Police General Jeckeln” (*ibid.*, p. 105).

The Activity Report for the period 3-6 August 1941, drawn up on 6 August (“Number 1”), reports a “cleansing operation” in the areas of Ostrog, Gritsev and Kunyov-Radogoshch with the following justification:

*“Especially the Jews have encouraged Bolshevistic gangs in these localities.”*

As a result of this operation, 1,384 Jews and 1 Soviet soldier were shot; the Jews consisted of “men” and “women,” *i.e.*, no children were killed (*ibid.*, p. 108).

The “Activity Report” for 6-10 August states with regard to Korosten:

*“The Jews encouraging the gangs were shot. 2 Jews were publicly hanged in Zhitomir, for having 1,000 murders on their conscience, at least in part.”* (*ibid.*, p. 110)

The “Activity Report” for the same period, relating to “Number 3,” announces, in particular, the general tasks of the brigade (*ibid.*, p. 111):

*“Aggregated order for the 1st SS Brigade during the reporting period was: prevent hostile gangs from threatening Highway North in the regions of Zhitomir – Fasova – Yemilchino – Zwiahel; mop up scattered military units and gangs in the indicated area, and secure the extreme left wing of the 17th Army Corps in the vicinity of Yemilchino and west of it.”*

In this context, anti-Jewish actions were also carried out. “232 Jews guilty of encouraging bolshevist gangs” were shot at Chernyakhov on 1 August; “9 bolshevist Jews” were shot the same day at Mal-Goroschki (*ibid.*, p. 114); “3 bolshevist Jews” were shot in other localities on 9 August; “59 Jews were shot” in the area of Chernyakhov-Zhitomir-Bolyarka-Vilsk, while “36 bolshevist Jews” were shot in other localities, all on the same day, 9 August (*ibid.*, p. 115).

The “Activity Report” for the period 17-20 August 1941 reports the “aggregated order 1st SS Brigade” (*ibid.*, p. 116):

- a) prevent hostile gangs from threatening the Highway North in the Sokolov – Krayevshchina – Belka – Zwiahel region,*
- b) mop-up scattered military units and gangs in the indicated area,*
- c) particularly, secure the Zwiahel-Korosten supply road,*
- d) secure the left flank of the 17th Army Corps.”*

No Jews were killed.

According to the surviving reports – which contain many gaps – the number of Jews shot as of 26 November 1941 amounted to approximately 6,500.

The activity of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade is known solely through a few reports. The “Activity Report” for the period 7-14 November 1941 contains only one single reference to Jews (*ibid.*, p. 197):

*“Party officials and Jews put themselves in a better situation regarding food supplies, since most of them are sitting at the source. The attitude of the population towards the Jews has become much more hostile over the past few days.”*

The “Activity Report” for 21–28 November (*ibid.*, pp. 205–214) and the “Partisan News and Instruction Sheet No. 11 (reporting period 22–28 Nov. 41)” (*ibid.*, pp. 215f.) speak only of partisan activity, without any reference to Jews.

Police Battalion 322, as mentioned above, was under the jurisdiction of the Higher SS and Police leader Center, which was active in the Białystok area from the beginning of June to mid-July 1941; on 18 July, it was transferred to Baranovichi, and on 7 September it was moved to Mogilev. On 25 May 1942, it arrived at Kattowitz.

The war diary of Police Battalion 322 extends from 10 June 1941 to 26 May 1942.<sup>56</sup> It records various anti-Jewish actions, most of which involved numerically insignificant numbers. On 8 July 1941, the battalion shot 12 Jews and 4 Poles “for denying the possession of looted property” (p. 33). 22 more persons, including one woman, were shot on 8 July at Białystok. The victims were said to have been “looters, fugitives, and almost exclusively Jews” (p. 35). From 6 to 17 July, still at Białystok, “105 civilians and soldiers of the Red Army (prisoners) were shot for looting or attempting to escape. Among them were 94 Jews” (p. 40). 36 Communists were captured and shot in the Białowicza area on 2 August. “Among these 36 were 5 Jews, 6 women, including one Jewess.” Furthermore “2 arrested Jews were shot for attempting to escape” (p. 56). On 9 August, the 3rd company of the battalion “is taking all the male Jews between the ages of 16 and 45 in Białowieża and is carrying out the evacuation of all other Jews out of Białowieża.” These Jews were shot the next day; the victims were “77 Jews aged 16 to 45” (p. 63). From the context we may deduce that the other Jews were really evacuated. On 15 August, the 3rd company conducted a “Jewish operation” at Mrowka Mala:

*“259 women and 162 children were resettled to Kobrin. All male Jews aged 16 to 65 (282 people) were shot, and 1 Pole for looting.”* (p. 65)

On 31 August, the 7th and 8th company arrested 700 Jews including 64 women, and shut them up in the local prison. The next day, 914 Jews, including those arrested the day before, were shot (p. 76). On 1 September, the battalion shot 64 Jews, “because during the raid they were found not to be wearing the Jewish star” (p. 78).

On 16 September, at Knyazevka, 1 Jew, 89 Russians and 1 Communist were shot “for supporting the partisans” (p. 90). At Barsuki on 22 September, the battalion shot 5 Jews and 3 Jewesses (p. 98). On 25 September, at Knyazhitsy, 13 Jews, 27 Jewesses, and 11 children were found among the population. “Of these, 13 Jews and 19 Jewesses were executed in collaboration with the SD” (p. 104). 8 Jewesses and the 11 children were left alive. On 2 October 1941, the 7th, 8th and 9th companies participated in a “Jewish operation” in the ghetto, together with the Staff of the Higher SS and Police leader Center as well as the Ukrainian auxiliary police. 2,208 Jews were captured and 65 killed on the spot. On 13 October, these Jews were shot; the 7th Company shot 378 of them, while the 9th shot 545

<sup>56</sup> YVA, RG O.53-127, pp. 1-254; subsequent page number from there unless stated otherwise.

(pp. 110f.). On 7 October, the battalion shot “3 Jews and 4 Jewesses for supporting partisans” (p. 115), and two days later, “4 Jewesses for Communist machinations.” On 11 October, 6 Jews were killed “for Communist propaganda” (p. 116); the next day, another 8 were shot, together with 4 communists, “for supporting partisans” (p. 119). On 13 October, the battalion shot “7 Jews and 1 Jewess and 9 Russian [members of the] ‘Wander’ movement” (p. 121). On 26 October, 2 Jews were killed “for sedition” (p. 130); the next day, “another 7 Russian soldiers and 2 Jews” were shot “while attempting to escape” (p. 130). On 6 November “2 Jewish tramps arrested by the 8th Company in the vicinity of Yanovo found to be wearing parts of Russian uniforms under their civilian clothing were shot while trying to escape” (p. 139).

The next execution dates to a bit over a month afterwards: On 8 January 1942, a Jew was killed on the road through Orsha (p. 181). Almost a month after that, on 3 February, “in Gnezdovo, a non-local Jewess was arrested and court-martialled and shot for Communist activity and for failure to wear the Jewish star” (p. 192).

On 27 February, the battalion carried out 8 executions (p. 202):

*“5 Jews were court-martialled and shot for sedition against the measures of the German armed forces and the spreading of troubling rumors in Yanovo (approximately 21 km southeast of Smolensk). 3 Jewesses were arrested 5 km west of Smolensk on the road to Vitebsk and shot for leaving the Smolensk Ghetto without permission as well as for failure to wear the star of David.”*

Finally, on 2 March 1942, “4 Jewesses were arrested on the road Smolensk-Vitebsk about 5 km west of Smolensk. They were court-martialled and shot for leaving the Smolensk Ghetto without permission and for failure to wear the star of David” (p. 202).

Also, the battalion shot Jews “aged 15 to 65 years” and transferred Jewish women and children to other localities (see also Part Two, Subchapter 8.6.).

War Diary No. 3 of the 1st Company of the Reserve Police Battalion 13 covers the period from 31 July 1941 to 31 December 1942. For this long period, only three executions are recorded: on 4 August 1941, “67 Jews were shot”;<sup>57</sup> on 14 October there was an execution probably involving 137 Jews. This annotation, like the entire war diary, is densely written with a fountain pen and is difficult to read. Finally, on 26 November 1941, 61 Jews were shot from Wysokie Litewskie.<sup>58</sup>

According to Edward B. Westermann, Police Battalion 310, “believed that theirs was the task to ‘cleanse’ the East of threatening ‘infidels’ (Ostmenschen, Jews, Communists) in the name of their own ‘holy’ ideology” (Westermann, p. 63).

The battalion was transferred to Lvov on 4 August 1941, whence it was transferred to the front, south of Leningrad, on 21 February 1942. Towards mid-July it

<sup>57</sup> YVA, O.53-15, pp. 30-230, here p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 221.

was stationed at Daugavpils, in Latvia. On 9 July, Himmler ordered the merger of Battalions 305, 306 and 310 into Police Regiment 15, and Battalion 310 took over the name of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Regiment. On 21 August 1942, Regiment 15 was sent to Kobrin in Byelorussia.

The war diary for this battalion has survived. It covers the period from 1 October 1940 to 24 November 1942.<sup>59</sup> Up until this time, starting on 4 August 1941, the battalion was only deployed in two anti-Jewish operations: the evacuation of the Brest Ghetto (October 1942) and executions at Pinsk (November 1942), in which the 10th Company participated (see Chapter 5).

The executions of Jews involved with the partisans were subsequently carried out not as a simple “pretext,” but for the active support made available to the partisan movement by the Jews.

Jürgen Förster cites a few of the Situation Reports of the “Commandant in Byelorussia of the Armed Services Commander Ostland” and commander of the 707th Infantry Division, General Gustav Freiherr von Bechtolsheim, who referred to this matter as follows:

*“Since, then and now, they [the Jews] make common cause with the Communists and partisans, the complete extermination of this alien element is being carried out’ (Monthly Report of October 1 – November 19, 1941).*

*‘The measures introduced against the Jews, as bearers of the Bolshevist idea and as leaders of the Partisan Movement, have shown tangible results. The confining of the Jews in ghettos and the liquidation of Jews convicted of partisan activity and fomenting agitation are to be continued; these are most effective in furthering the pacification of the country’ (Monthly Report of November 1 – November 30, 1941).”*

Notwithstanding the concentration of the Jews in the ghettos,

*“we repeatedly receive reports which show that Jews make common cause with partisans, and that considerable numbers are even armed and belong to the partisan bands. Jews are also continually involved in acts of sabotage’ (Report of January 8, 1942).”*

The Situation Report of February 1-15, 1942 clearly states that, “without a single exception, Jews and partisans are an identical concept” (Förster, pp. 30f.).

A letter from the General Commissioner for Byelorussia Wilhelm Kube to Reich Commissioner for the Ostland Hinrich Lohse, which has as its subject “Combatting partisans and Jewish operation in the General District Byelorussia,” is particularly explicit in this regard:<sup>60</sup>

*“In all clashes with partisans in Byelorussia, it has been found that Jewry is the principal supporter of the partisan movement, both in former Poland and in the former Soviet part of the General District, together with the Polish resistance movement in the East and the Red Army in Moscow. As a result, the handling of Jewry in Byelorussia, in view of the threat to the entire economy, represents a*

<sup>59</sup> YVA, RG O.53-12.2, pp. 70-415.

<sup>60</sup> PS-3428. IMT, Vol. 32, p. 280. Original text in: YVA, O.53-132, p. 98.

*prominently political issue which must consequently be tackled based, not on economic considerations, but on political ones. In detailed meetings with SS Brigadeführer Zenner and the magnificently hard-working leader of the SD, SS Obersturmbannführer Dr. jur. Strauch, we have liquidated approximately 55,000 Jews in Byelorussia during the last 10 weeks.”*

In this context belongs for instance Operation Swamp Fever (*Sumpffieber*) as carried out on Himmler’s order from 21 August to 21 September 1942 for the purpose of annihilating the partisan bands in the General District of Byelorussia. The outcome, according to the conclusive report of the Higher SS and Police leader for the East of 6 November 1942, was this: 389 “armed bandits” killed in battle; death sentences followed by the shooting of 1,274 suspects; “8,350 Jews executed”; evacuation of 1,217 persons (PS-1113, p. 5). The Jews were found to be supporters of and collaborators with the partisans.

## 1.6. The Historical Value of the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial

Headland stressed that the military trials of exponents of the National Socialist regime, in addition to pursuing legal objectives, permitted the gathering of an enormous amount of information. Whatever one’s opinion of these trials, it is a fact that, as a result of the trials, a great many documents were very rapidly discovered and examined, and that this has contributed “immeasurably” to our knowledge of the National Socialist regime (Headland, p. 177).

This is also the limitation of such trials, as noted by Earl (Earl, p. 186):

*“After all, criminal trials are adversarial, and testimony is most frequently given in an attempt to establish legal exculpation [or incrimination], not to document historical truth. By their very nature, criminal trials can act as strong impediments to the attainment of historical truth, when by excluding or altering historical facts a defendant can demonstrate innocence or a prosecutor guilt.”*

It should be stressed that all the documents exhibited in these trials were prosecution documents, since the documents were screened solely for the following purpose (Hofmann, p. 112):

*“The Berlin branch staff was divided into different teams; their instructions were to locate and study all official Nazi records that might contain incriminating information needed by the twelve new subsequent trials being prepared. The documents, which were in German, would be summarized in English, and the Staff Evidence Analyses (SEAs) would be distributed to all lawyers in Nuremberg dealing with related prosecutions. If it was considered very important evidence, the original would also be sent.”*

This practice inevitably gave rise to a unilateral and tendentious view of the facts on the one hand, while depriving the defense of true defense documents.

As regards the case under discussion, 30 days before trial, the defense attorneys “received copies of every document the prosecution intended to use in evi-

dence. They had ample time to prepare for trial” (*ibid.*, p. 124). Thus, all the documents available to them were, exclusively and precisely, prosecution documents.

This tendentiousness is reflected in the very interpretation of the documents, including a distortion of their real meaning. Thus, for example, as recalled by Hofmann,

“when defendants insisted that they knew nothing about the murderous plans of the EG, Ferencz introduced a September 21, 1939 order from the chief of the security police, Reinhard Heydrich, to all EG units describing in detail how Jews were to be rounded up for annihilation. Among many other such revelations, Ferencz’s staff produced the July 31, 1941 instruction from Reich Marshal Hermann Göring, who had ordered the security police to carry out ‘a complete solution of the Jewish question.’” (*Ibid.*, pp. 130f.)

Ferencz probably did not even realize that the intended *Einsatzgruppen* recipients of the *Schnellbrief* dated 21 September 1939 (PS-3363) were those involved in the Polish campaign, and not those in the Russian campaign; and, if he did understand it, he acted in bad faith, because the document contains no reference to “annihilation.” During the trial, he declared (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 667):<sup>61</sup>

“The initial steps for the ‘final solution’ of the Jewish problem, that is, the extermination of the Jews, were taken shortly after the invasion of Poland. On 21 September 1939, Heydrich directed as follows: [...]”

This interpretation, as I have explained above, is quite fallacious. On the second document, Ferencz asserted (*ibid.*, p. 667):

“On 31 July 1941, Heydrich was ordered by Goering to bring about the ‘final solution’ of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe. Following the issuance of this directive, the wholesale slaughter of the Jews began.”

This is a blatant distortion, upon which I shall focus in the next chapter.

If it is true, as stated by Alfred Streim, that the statements of Otto Ohlendorf and the other defendants relating to the “*Führerbefehl*” are false, since they formed part of a defense strategy (see Subchapter 2.7., p. 131), it is easy to understand that the trial testimonies do not possess the intrinsic characteristics of veracity, and may be historically misleading.

Where the documents are concerned, there is no doubt that those introduced at trial do possess probative value. For this reason, the prosecution summation was unusually short, lasting hardly two days (8 & 9 April 1948).

It is also true that the presentation of these documents – extrapolations regarding the executions – while legitimate from the legal point of view, inevitably altered the historical perspective, since it depicted the *Einsatzgruppen* as units having as their sole and exclusive task the extermination of Jews as such. The following are a few examples of such a procedure:<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> The document was introduced into evidence as EC-307-I, TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 118-123.

<sup>62</sup> NMT, Case IX, transcript, 8 April 1948, pp. 6657f.



*“A Teilkommando of Sonderkommando 4a, operating in Poltawa, reported as of 23 November 1941:*

*‘Altogether 1,538 Jews were shot.’ (NO-3405).*

*Einsatzgruppe D operating near Simferopol communicated:*

*‘During the period covered by the report 2,010 people were shot.’ (NO-3225).*

*An Einsatz unit, operating in the Ukraine, communicated that in Rakow:*

*‘1,500 jews were shot.’ (3876-PS).*

*A report on activities in Minsk during March 1942 reads:*

*‘In the course of the greater action against Jews, 3,412 Jews were shot.’ (NO-2662).”*

Ohlendorf’s protest against this distortion was given short shrift (Earl, p. 213):

*“During his direct testimony, Musmanno asked him whether or not it was true that the task of the Einsatzgruppen was to execute groups of people because they were racially inferior. Ohlendorf appeared incredulous at the suggestion. Jews were killed, he conceded, not because they were Jews, but because they were enemies of the Reich.”*

Notwithstanding the volume of the documents examined, from the historiographic point of view, the trial was characterized by great shortcomings. The first regarded the very topics constituting the specific object of debate, as noted by Earl (*ibid.*, p. 180):

*“Who committed genocide, how it was carried out, when it was decided upon as a policy, and who made the decision are the issues that are at the heart of this trial. In spite of this focus, definitive answers to these questions are impossible to ascertain. More than half a century after the conclusion of this trial, historians still only agree on one issue: that the mass killing of Soviet Jews by units of the Einsatzgruppen beginning in the summer of 1941 marks a watershed in Nazi racial policy towards Europe’s Jews. Beyond that, there is non consensus.”*

But even the number of defendants – and consequently the related selection from among all the former members of the *Einsatzgruppen* at the Allies’ disposal – depended upon purely contingent factors, which have nothing to do with the requirements of justice (Hofmann, p. 120):

*“The total number of mass killers to be tried depended upon finances and furniture. No Nuremberg tribunal could try more than 24 defendants in the same trial. The reason was that there were only 24 seats in the dock. Historians may not believe it, but it’s true.”*

The 24 defendants were:

1. Heinz Jost, commander, *Einsatzgruppe A*
2. Erich Naumann, commander, *Einsatzgruppe B*
3. Otto Rasch, commander, *Einsatzgruppe C*
4. Otto Ohlendorf, commander, *Einsatzgruppe D*
5. Adolf Ott, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 7b* of EG B

6. Eduard Strauch, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 2* of EG A
7. Emil Haussmann, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 12* of EG D
8. Ernst Biberstein, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 6* of EG C
9. Erwin Schulz, commanding officer of *Einsatzkommando 5* of EG C
10. Eugen Steimle, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 7a* of EG B
11. Franz Six, commanding officer of *Vorkommando Moscow* of EG B
12. Gustav Nosske, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 12* of EG D
13. Heinz Schubert, officer in *Einsatzgruppe D*
14. Lothar Fendler, deputy chief of *Sonderkommando 4b* of EG C
15. Martin Sandberger, deputy chief of *Einsatzgruppe D*
16. Matthias Graf, officer in *Einsatzkommando 6* of EG D
17. Paul Blobel, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 4a* of EG C
18. Waldemar Klingelhöfer, officer of *Sonderkommando 7b* of EG B
19. Waldemar von Radetzky, deputy chief of *Sonderkommando 4b* of EG C
20. Walter Blume, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 7a* of EG B
21. Walter Haensch, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 4b* of EG B
22. Werner Braune, commanding officer of *Sonderkommando 11 b* of EG D
23. Willi Seibert, deputy chief of *Einsatzgruppe D*
24. Felix Rühl, officer of *Sonderkommando 10b* of EG D.

The greatest criticism that can be raised against the Tribunal was no doubt that of completely neglecting the question of “Aktion 1005,” the presumed operation consisting of the exhumation and cremation of the bodies of those who fell victim to the *Einsatzgruppen* and other units of the SS and Police, to which Part Two of the present study is devoted. Incredibly, although the supposed author of the operation was right there, *i.e.*, Blobel, the chief of counsel for the prosecution, Telford Taylor, not only never interrogated him on the topic of the exterminations in any specific way, but relied on the fanciful declarations of Rudolf Höss instead of asking the defendant directly concerned: Blobel. In the indictment, Taylor stated:<sup>63</sup>

*“Although forming no part of the charges in the indictment, the systematic attempts to destroy the graves of the slain as described in official German documents are interesting in that they shed some light on the mental attitude of the executioners. Did they regard the executions as culpable acts, ocular evidence of which should be destroyed? The defendant Blobel in his affidavit, signed June 18, 1947, stated that in June 1942 he was entrusted by Gruppenfuehrer Mueller with the task of removing the traces of the executions carried out by Einsatzgruppen in the East. He leaves nothing to the imagination: [”<sup>64</sup>...]*

*So intent was Blobel, evidently in obedience to orders, to wipe out the incriminating evidence of the killings, that he even tried to destroy the corpses by means of dynamite. Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp,*

<sup>63</sup> NMT, Case IX, transcript, 8 April 1948, p. 6741.

<sup>64</sup> This omitted part will be quoted and discussed in Section 4.2.12 of Part Two (p. 502).

*who supervised these experimentations, stated that the dynamiting method was not successful: [65...]*”

This type of behavior is an indication of the “mental attitude” of the prosecutors and judges. This is also made apparent by the heated exchange between Defendant Ohlendorf and the representatives of the prosecution as to the legality of the executions. Ohlendorf declared that the exterminations in the East were the consequence of a total war aimed at the annihilation of an ideological enemy (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 355).

In response to James E. Heath, a consultant for prosecution counsel, who criticised him for killing children, Ohlendorf raised the topic of the Allied population bombings. His accuser asked indignantly whether he wished to establish a moral equivalency between the deliberate killings of children by the *Einsatzgruppen* and those of the Allies; the defendant replied (*ibid.*, p. 357):

*“I cannot imagine that those planes which systematically covered a city that was [not<sup>66</sup>] a fortified city, square meter for square meter, with incendiaries and explosive bombs and again with phosphorus bombs, and this done from block to block, and then as I have seen it in Dresden likewise the squares where the civilian population had fled to – that these men could possibly hope not to kill any civilian population, and no children. And when you then read the announcements of the Allied leaders on this – and we are quite willing to submit them as document – you will read that these killings were accepted quite knowingly because one believed that only through this terror, as it was described, the people could be demoralized and under such blows the military power of the Germans would then also break down.”*

Ohlendorf then drew his accusers’ attention to the American atomic bombs dropped on Japan, establishing a strategic parallel with Hitler’s conduct in the war in the East. The Führer wished to weaken the enemy’s ability to resist through the adoption of draconian measures, just like the American government where Japan was concerned, or, in the words of Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War from 1940-1945 (*ibid.*, pp. 360f.):

*“To extract a genuine surrender from the emperor of Japan and his military advisers, a tremendous shock must be administered which should carry convincing proof of our power to destroy the Empire. Such an effective shock would save more lives, both American and Japanese, than it would cost.”*

Telford Taylor, in his closing statement, claimed that the atomic bomb was a weapon like any other, just more powerful, and that its use was in no way prohibited (*ibid.*, p. 381):

*“The atomic bomb, therefore, is neither more nor less legal than ordinary bombs; under the laws of war, the question is not as to the character or explosive capacity of the bomb, but how it is used. It is sad but true that the destruction of an ene-*

<sup>65</sup> This is followed by two fragments from Rudolf Höss’s “Notes” on Blobel.

<sup>66</sup> I have added the negation, which is missing in the original, contrary to all logic.

*my's power of resistance by air attacks against urban industrial centers has become an accepted part of modern warfare."*

But this is precisely the problem, how it was used: on two cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing the deaths of tens of thousands of persons, including those same children, who – if they had been Jewish – would have caused an outpouring of tears of indignation from the American prosecutor, but who left that same American prosecutor quite indifferent when they were Japanese or German; in the latter case, it would have been merely “an incident, a grave incident to be sure, but an unavoidable corollary of battle action” (*ibid.*, p. 467).

In his reading of the indictment, Taylor stated:<sup>67</sup>

*“It was argued in behalf of the defendants that there was no normal distinction between shooting civilians with rifles and killing them by means of atomic bombs. There is no doubt that the invention of the atomic bomb, when used, was not aimed at non-combatants. Like any aerial bomb employed during the war, it was dropped to overcome military resistance.”*

But the executions of Jews, from the German point of view, were also carried out “to overcome military resistance” – the resistance of the Soviet Union, depriving Bolshevism of its life-giving humus and support to the partisans.

There is no point in compiling a whole moral classification of the various crimes committed by the Germans and by the Allies, just as it makes no sense to balance the one against the other; but one cannot refrain from stigmatizing the hypocritical moralism of the Anglo-Americans: their absurd pretense of fighting Hitler’s dictatorship – in favor of Democracy and Justice – while allying themselves with an even worse tyranny, their claim to be fighting against a criminal regime while standing side by side with an even more-criminal regime, their ambition to wage war for the liberation of Europe leaving half of Europe under Stalin’s yoke at the end of the war.

It is furthermore well known that the first concentration camps were built by the English in 1901, to be used against the Boers; it is less well known that the Americans almost immediately followed their example. As a consequence of the Spanish-American War (1898), the Americans occupied the Philippines; on 4 February 1899, the Filipinos rebelled, and another war broke out. The rebels used guerrilla tactics against the Americans, and in 1902, the Americans responded with “cruelty, including scorched earth tactics, torture, and internment of non-combatants in concentration camps” (Tucker, Vol. 1, p. 969).

The fact that the United States should build itself up into the proud scourge of Hitlerian racism is typical of Soviet propagandistic shamelessness, since the Americans were profoundly pervaded by racism against Afro-Americans – a racism systematically professed even inside the army (Tischauer, p. 101):

*“The army, navy, army air force, marines, and coast guard did nothing to change their long-held racist structure or attitudes during the war. Every military unit*

<sup>67</sup> NMT, Case IX, transcript, 8 April 1948, p. 6723.

*remained segregated, black soldiers continued to serve only in transportation and construction units, and they faced racist hostility and hate in their training camps and in military bases throughout the entire war. Of the one million African Americans who served in the military during the four years of war, not one served in an integrated unit."*

The true politico-ideological nature of the Allied military trials was admirably summarized by Maurice Bardèche (Bardèche, pp. 17-19):

*"The true basis for the Nuremberg Trial, the one which no one has ever dared to point out, is, I suspect, not fear: it is the spectacle of the ruins, it is the panic of the victors. It is necessary that the others be in the wrong. It is necessary, for if, by chance, they had not been monsters, how would the victors bear the weight of all those destroyed cities, and those thousands of phosphorus bombs? It is the horror, it is the despair of the victors which is the true motive for the trial. They have veiled their faces before what they were forced to do and, to give themselves courage, they transformed their massacres into a crusade. They invented a posteriori a right to massacre in the name of respect for humanity. Being killers, they promoted themselves to policemen. [...]*

*To excuse the crimes committed in conducting the war, it was absolutely necessary to discover some even more serious ones on the other side. It was absolutely necessary that the English and American bombers appeared like the sword of the Lord. The Allies did not have a choice. If they did not solemnly affirm, if they did not prove by any means whatever that they had been the saviors of humanity, they were nothing more than murderers. If, one day, men ceased believing in the German monstrosity, would they not demand an accounting for the devastated cities?"*

To believe that such trials could result in "justice" or "historical truth" is an epic delusion.

## 2. The *Einsatzgruppen* and the Order to Exterminate the Soviet Jews

### 2.1. Positing the Problem

The problem of the order to exterminate the Jews must be examined from three different but crucial points of view:

1. Did the *Einsatzgruppen* receive an order to exterminate the Jews before or after the start of Operation Barbarossa?
2. Were the Jews killed by the *Einsatzgruppen* killed because they were Jews?
3. Were the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* part of a general plan of extermination which also included the Western Jews?

The third question concerns the broadest topic of National-Socialist policy with regard to the Jews, and for this reason it seems appropriate to begin with it.

### 2.2. National-Socialist Plans for an Extra-European Jewish Reserve

At the end of 1939, Walter Stahlecker, before becoming commander of *Einsatzgruppe A*, collaborated on National-Socialist plans to deport the Jews, particularly the “Nisko Plan” (see Subchapter 1.1.).

Later, in a “Draft of establishing provisional guidelines for the treatment of Jews in the area of RKO” [*Reichskommissariat Ostland*] dated 6 August 1941, he outlined the following program (Angrick 2013 *et al.*, Doc. 37, pp. 92-95):

*“The draft foresees, as the most important and most decisive measure, the cleansing of the countryside of Jews. On the other hand, Jews should be prohibited from residing in localities of economic, military, or spiritual significance, or health resorts and spas. Hence, only a small number of small and medium-sized cities would be left for them as future places of residence. The number of these localities is extremely limited, given the spaciousness of the most-thinly settled East, which, apart from a few large cities, must be considered flat land. In these localities, the possibility would hardly arise of providing the Jews with useful employment.*

*The draft is apparently planning the Jewish resettlement measures listed under Number V not as an immediate measure, but is rather being reserved for a later, gradual development. This would mean that considerable numbers of Jews would, at first, remain in the same dwelling places as before. In the East, like everywhere else, the Jews have concentrated themselves mainly in the big cities. In view of the small number of German law enforcement and security personnel, the Jews would continue their parasitic existence there for a long time and remain a perpetual source of unrest. [...]*

*The draft provides for a resettlement from the flat land into the cities. If the resettlement is approached already now, it must basically proceed as follows: Certain districts in the vast open spaces of the East will be set aside as Jewish reserva-*

tions. The population that has resided in these areas so far and which must now be resettled, can easily be pumped into other areas. Male and female Jews will be housed separately in the Jewish reservations. Until reaching reproductive age, boys will remain with their mothers. The Jews can be immediately set to useful work in the Jewish reservations. Thus, for example, building their own dwellings, or for agricultural work, forestry, or building roads. If additional manpower is available, the Jews can be put to work as closed work gangs for road construction even outside the reservation. In the meantime, if the overall cleansing of the European space of all Jews can still not be implemented, new employment possibilities can be created later through the founding of artisanal and industrial undertakings in the Jewish reservations. The Jews in the reservations will only be allowed as much shelter and food as are absolutely necessary to maintain their working strength. To the extent to which the necessary housing is not already available, it will be built by the Jews themselves, by building simple wooden barracks. The agricultural produce of the reservation itself will suffice for their food. Nor should sealing off the Jewish reservations cause any difficulty. The Jews must be prohibited on pain of death from leaving the reservation. Compliance could be supervised by numerically rather small units of auxiliary police.

Insofar as necessary, exceptions to the compulsory confinement to the Jewish reservation may be permitted, insofar as Jews practicing certain occupations, such as, for example, physicians or skilled workers, are still urgently needed outside the reservation at first. These Jews would be housed, insofar as possible, in the vicinity of their workplace, in sealed camps, separated by sex [...].

Finally, in sum, it may be said that the above-mentioned handling of the Jewish question will accomplish the following:

1. An almost 100% immediate cleansing of Jews from the entire East
2. Prevention of Jewish natural increase
3. Possibility of the greatest possible exploitation of Jewish working strength
4. A considerable facilitation of the subsequent collective relocation into a non-European Jewish reservation.

It will only be possible to implement these radical measures through the deployment of units of the security and regular police force.”

Andrej Angrick and Peter Klein commented (Angrick/Klein, fn 26, p. 122):

“In this context, it is worth noting that a general killing order apparently did not yet exist, and that the ‘reservation policy’ was still being pursued with certain borrowings from concepts involving the use of Jews for forced labor, especially regarding road construction. According to E[insatz]G[ruppe] A’s recommendation, this was to be pursued by Jewish labor details outside the ‘Jew reserve’ as well, an idea that reappeared in modified form during Heydrich’s remarks at the Wannsee Conference. In that instance, German Jews were to be deported for ‘constructing roads to the east.’”

Discussion of a “Jewish reservation” or “reservations” in the East continued, even over the succeeding years. On 5 October 1942, Martin Luther, an official from

the German Foreign Office, reassured the Hungarian ambassador Döme Sztójay about the fate of the Hungarian Jews who were to be deported, stating (NG-1800. Text in Adler, p. 265),

*“that all evacuated Jews and therefore also all Hungarian Jews would be employed building roads and later housed in a Jewish reservation.”*

A “Recording of the discussion between Reich Foreign Minister and the Duce [Mussolini] in the Palazzo Venezia on 25 February 1943 in the presence of ambassadors von Mackensen and Alfieri and the state secretary” reports (Rothfels 1978, p. 296):

*“The Duce is aware that Germany has a radical attitude towards the treatment of the Jews. Developments in the war in Russia have made this even more obvious. All Jews are being deported out of Germany and the German-occupied territories to reservations in the East. He (the Reich Foreign Minister) knows that these measures would be considered cruel particularly by the enemy side.”*

And there are even indications of at least a partial activation of the plans for a Jewish reservation in the East.

The report in the April 1942 issue of *Contemporary Jewish Record* on “over 30,000” Jews allegedly removed from the Vilnius Ghetto as of February 1942 informs us that “it is believed that half are now in labor camps on the Soviet front, and the remainder have either been interned or executed.”<sup>68</sup>

On 11 July 1942, the *Generalkommissar* for Latvia, Otto-Heinrich Drechsler, wrote a letter to Lohse concerning the treatment of “half-Jews.” As one of the measures to be taken against “Mixed-race persons of 1st degree (half-Jews),” Drechsler proposed “later maybe deportation to old Soviet territory” (Hoppe/Glass, p. 626). The term “old Soviet territory” used here most likely meant the German-occupied Russian territories to the east of the Baltic region. Accordingly, this region must have been viewed as a suitable destination for transports of people of “undesirable” ethnic or religious background.

This measure formed part of a proposal consisting of three points: registration, sterilization and deportation; hence we may assume that the latter really meant what it said rather than being a camouflage term for extermination.

National-Socialist programs with regard to the Jews of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* naturally form part of a much broader general plan.

On 16 September 1941, Hitler, Himmler and Otto Abetz, Germany’s ambassador in Vichy France, met in the Führer’s headquarters, where Abetz took advantage of the opportunity to set forth the proposal made available to him by his advisor Carltheo Zeitschel on 22 August 1941, in which he advocated the deportation of all European Jews in the recently conquered Eastern territories, beginning as follows (CDJC, V-15):

*“The continuing conquest and occupation of the vast Eastern territories may currently bring the Jewish problem all over Europe to a final satisfactory conclusion*

<sup>68</sup> *Contemporary Jewish Record*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (April 1942), p. 190.



*within the shortest period of time. Judging by the cries for help from all the Jews of Palestine in their press to American Jewry, over 6 million Jews live in the territories occupied by us during the past few weeks – particularly, Bessarabia – which means, one third of all world Jewry. In the reorganization of the East, these 6 million Jews would have to be gathered together in one way or another, and presumably a special territory would have to be set aside for them. It shouldn't be too big a problem in these matters if the Jews from all other European countries were to come here as well, and if also the Jews currently crammed into ghettos in Warsaw, Lodz, Lublin and so forth will also be deported there.”*

On the same occasion, Hitler declared that he would kick all the Jews out of Europe, beyond the Urals (Rothfels 1970b, pp. 424f.):

*“The Asians and Bolsheviks have to be kicked out of Europe, the ‘episode of 250 years of Asianism’ was over, he said. The Urals would be their border, beyond which Stalin and his pals could do what they liked. German encroachments over the Urals from time to time would make sure that Stalin wouldn't come entirely to rest there either.”*

This intention is also made clear in other documents. For instance, on 5 October 1941, while traveling through the General Government, including the district of Galicia, Hans Frank spoke of the evacuation of the Jews to “reservations in deepest Russia (the Urals)” (Sandkühler, p. 134). When Hitler spoke of the disappearance of Jewry from Europe,<sup>69</sup> he meant precisely their deportation to areas beyond the Urals. This was expressly declared by Rosenberg on 18 November 1941 (see Subchapter 2.9).

Initially, one of the intermediate stages was the Yanovsky Camp near Lvov. Thomas Sandkühler notes in this regard that barracks construction work began at this camp in mid-October 1941, presumably to house transports of Austrian and Czech Jews. On 1 November, the area was fenced in and transformed into a forced-labor camp (Sandkühler, p. 156):

*“Evidently, Heydrich and Eichmann were really planning to deport ‘evacuation contingents’ not only to Lodz and the Baltic but also to Lvov, where the ghetto was apparently to be subdivided into a ‘supply depot’ and a ‘labor camp’, i.e., the Janowska forced-labor camp. Presumably, Katzmann was to lead the Jews ‘to the East while building roads.’”*

On 17 September 1941, Hitler met with Ribbentrop and Himmler, and on the next day Himmler sent Greiser the well-known letter which states:<sup>70</sup>

*“The Führer wishes the Old Reich and the Protectorate to be emptied and freed of Jews from the West to the East. I therefore strive to transport, if possible already this year, the Jews from the Old Reich and the Protectorate initially, as the*

<sup>69</sup> “das Judentum aus Europa verschwindet,” Hitler Sportpalast speech on 30 January 1942. Domarus, Vol. II, 1st Half-Volume, pp. 1828f.

<sup>70</sup> Himmler letter to Greiser of 18 September 1941, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, NS 19/2655, p. 3; reproduced in Witte, p. 50.

*first stage, into the Eastern territories newly acquired by the Reich two years ago, in order to deport them off even further East next spring.*

*I intend to take approximately 60,000 Jews from the Old Reich and the Protectorate for the winter into the Lodz Ghetto, which, from what I hear, has enough room for them. I ask you, not only to understand this measure, which will certainly cause difficulties for your district, but to support it with all your power in the interests of the entire Reich.*

*SS Gruppenführer Heydrich, who is to undertake this migration of the Jews, will contact you directly, or via SS Gruppenführer Koppe, in due time."*

The treaty of Tighina, signed at the beginning of September 1941, had granted Transnistria to Romania; Clause 7 said (Arad 2009, p. 233):

*"Evacuation of the Jews across the River Bug is not possible at the moment. Therefore they must be concentrated in labor camps and put to work until the cessation of hostilities when it would be possible to move them to the East."*

On 10 October, Heydrich, during a meeting, explained to Karl Hermann Frank (HSSPF Bohemia-Moravia), Horst Böhme (BdS Prague), Hans Günther (head of the Central Agency for Emigration of Jews in Prague) and Eichmann, as follows, as shown by the related record titled "Notes from the conference of 10 Oct. 41 on the solution of Jewish issues" (T/294):

*"Difficulties resulting from the evacuation. It was planned to start with it [the transports] on about 15 October 1941 in order to get the transports gradually rolling by 15 November up to the limit of about 5,000 Jews – only from Prague. For now, lots of consideration must still be given to the Lodz authorities. Minsk and Riga are to receive 50,000. [...] The 5,000 Jews from Prague are now to be evacuated over the coming weeks. SS Brigadeführers Nebe and Rasch can accommodate Jews in the camps for communist prisoners in the area of operations. This is already being initiated according to information from SS Sturmbahnführer Eichmann."*

A file memo dated 24 October 1941 on a "Conference in Berlin on 23 Oct. 41 at [Department] IV B 4 presided over by SS Sturmbannführer Eichmann" informs us that the subject was an "Order of the Führer. (Evacuation of 5,000 Jews from the Old Reich, including Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia)." Jews older than 60 were exempt from evacuation due to "frailty," without [further] regard for age. "For the medical care of the Jews during transit and later in the camp," "sufficient sanitary material to take along" was to be made available to the deportees.<sup>71</sup>

This reflected Heydrich's intentions as already expressed a few weeks earlier. Götz Aly writes (Aly, p. 274):

*"On 23 September 1941, Heydrich assured Goebbels, who was urging in his capacity as Gauleiter for Berlin, that the Jews would be shipped off to the communists' polar sea camps as soon as the military situation permitted."*

<sup>71</sup> YVA, O.23-76, pp. 2f.

As early as 14 August 1941, Paul Worm, Police Colonel and commander of the Police Regiment Galicia at Lvov, sent an order to Police Battalions 315, 133 and 254, as well as to the police units in Lvov, Tarnopol and Stanislaw with the subject “Jewish Forced-Labor Camps”, which read:<sup>72</sup>

*“Prisoner of war camps set up by the Russians are said to exist in almost every larger locality in the district of Galicia. They are said to be equipped with all the necessary facilities and to be well-suited for establishing Jewish forced-labor camps.*

*All existing camps are to be investigated and reported upon immediately. The holding capacity and properties are to be determined at the same time.”*

On 9 November 1941, Friedrich Trampedach, one of Lohse’s officials, sent Rosenberg a telegram. After announcing the arrival of the first two transports with Jewish deportees – one at Minsk on the 10th, the other at Riga on the 19th of November according to information from the Security Police – he stated:<sup>73</sup>

*“Urgent request to prevent [further] transports, since Jewish camps must be relocated much further east.”*

Angrick and Klein commented (Angrick/Klein, p. 189):

*“Why this transfer farther east was necessary remains a mystery, but Trampedach seemed to know, at least in the case of Minsk, that the Security Police there in fact wanted to send two arriving transports to Borisov and Bobruisk. This would have meant that the civil-administered General Commissariat Byelorussia would have merely served as another stop along the way for additional evacuations to military administered Rear Area Army Group Center. But the railroad situation in Army Group Center refused to permit this during the battle for Moscow.”*

This is at least partially refuted by a German radio message intercepted by the British on 15 January 1942:<sup>74</sup>

*“To the Higher SS and Police leader Russia North. Secret.*

*The Fuehrer has ordered that troops of Jewish forced laborers must be more quickly put to work in the Russian combat zone for the performance of important construction work. Starting on 18 Jan. 42, [they] are being sent by special transport into the construction zone in the Daugavpils-Moscow region assigned to the Silesian Einsatzgruppe. The Jews wear black work clothing with green armbands. Working assignment: Reich Autobahn. Guards provided by Organization Todt. Please make sure that the stock in forced labor will not be reduced.*

*Higher SS and Police leader, South East”*

On 13 November Georg Leibbrandt, head clerk at Rosenberg’s ministry, sent Lohse a telegram with the following content:<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> RGVA, 1323-2-292b, p. 158.

<sup>73</sup> RGVA, 7445-2-145, p. 52.

<sup>74</sup> TNA, HW 16/53, Teleprinter message.

<sup>75</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 54. The telegram is written in capitals, without umlauts.

*“Regarding Jewish transport to the East. Exact document on its way. Jews to be sent further East. Camps in Riga and Minsk temporary measure only, therefore no objection here.”*

Major clues in favor of the plan to deport the Jews even further east may also be found in subsequent documents. For instance, at the end of November, Hans Frank, according to a British source of 1942, declared in Cologne “that all Jews will be removed into the Russian Sphere further East beyond the Polish Frontiers.”<sup>76</sup>

On 4 December 1941, Leibbrandt sent Lohse a letter with the subject “Solution of the Jewish Question” (“Lösung der Judenfrage”) with reference to the following “directives”:<sup>77</sup>

*“The local doings of the General Commissioners in Riga with regard to the transport of Jews from the Old Reich to Riga and the construction of the Jewish camps have been forwarded to me. As SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich informed me during a conference a few days ago, the Jewish camp, the construction of which was to occur in the vicinity of Riga, was to be built near Pskov. I have already requested the Reich Security Main Office, by letter dated 12 Nov. 1941, to inform me in the future prior to the introduction of measures for the implementation of the solution of the Jewish question so as to avoid the difficulties which have thus far arisen as a result of failure to inform my offices, or informing them too late.”*

The Wannsee Conference was originally planned for 9 December 1941, but was delayed due to the American entry into the war. Heydrich’s letter of invitation to the other participants, including Luther, to whom the copy I quote was addressed, bore the date 29 November, and stated (reproduced in Kempner, pp. 127f.):

*“On 31 July 1941, the Reich Marshal of the Greater German Reich, with the participation of the other central instances concerned, ordered me to make all the necessary preparations in organizational, physical and material regards for a comprehensive solution to the Jewish question in Europe, and to present him with an overall draft in this respect.*

*In view of the extraordinary significance attributed to these matters and in the interests of attaining an identical conception on the part of the central agencies involved in the other work connected with this final solution, I suggest making these problems the subject of a common discussion, particularly since Jews are already being evacuated to the East from the territory of the Reich, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia territory, since 15 October 1941 in rolling transports.*

*I therefore invite you to such a conference, followed by breakfast, at 12:00 A.M., 9 December 1941, in the offices of the International Criminal Police Commission, Berlin, Am grossen Wannsee, No. 56-58.”*

<sup>76</sup> TNA, FO 371-30938B, “Anti-Jewish Legislation in National-Socialist Germany from 1933-1941,” p. 37,

<sup>77</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 64.

Heydrich explicitly referred to the well-known mission entrusted to him on 31 July 1941.<sup>78</sup>

*“Supplementing the orders already conveyed to you by decree dated 21. Jan. 39, to solve the Jewish question most favorably according to temporal circumstances in the form of emigration or evacuation, I hereby order you to devise all the necessary preparations in organizational, physical and material regards for a comprehensive solution to the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe.*

*Insofar as the responsibilities of other competent central authorities are affected by these measures, they are to participate.*

*I further order you to present me with an overall draft of the organizational, physical and material preliminary measures for implementation of the desired final solution to the Jewish question.”*

The meaning of the invitation was so clear that the German Foreign Office, on 8 December 1941, “in preparation for tomorrow’s meeting with SS *Obergruppenführer* Heydrich,” that is, in anticipation of the Wannsee Conference to be held the following day, drew up a note for Luther’s attention titled “Wishes and ideas of the Foreign Office on the anticipated comprehensive solution of the Jewish Question in Europe.” Point 1 set forth the following objective (NG-2586-F):

*“Deportation of all Jews of German nationality resident in the German Reich, including Croatian, Slovakian and Rumanian Jews, to the East.”*

A similar “evacuation” of all the Jews whose German citizenship had been revoked, of all Serbian Jews and those handed over by the Hungarian government was furthermore requested.

Göring’s decree of 24 January 1939 referred to the institution of a “Central Reich Office for Jewish Emigration” which had the task of promoting “the emigration of the Jews from Germany” by all means (NG-2586-A).

On 31 July 1941, emigration or evacuation was extended to all Jews under German domination; this is the reason why the document refers to a “comprehensive solution.” There is therefore a strict continuity in National-Socialist policy from the decree of 24 January 1939, to the letter of 31 July 1941, to the invitation of 29 November 1941, and to the Wannsee Conference itself of 20 January 1942: a policy of emigration/evacuation/resettlement without any extermination “decision” at all.

The Wannsee Conference, as I have already noted, was originally convened for December 9th to inform the offices concerned of the Führer’s decision to expel the Jews from Europe. On December 12th, Hitler informed high Party members as a preliminary matter. The new unforeseen event – the American entry into the war (December 11th), also upset Rosenberg’s speech, which he was to have delivered on December 18th; on the 16th, he agreed with Hitler that it no longer served any purpose to speak of the “extirpation of Jewry” (*“Ausrottung des Ju-*

<sup>78</sup> PS-710. IMT, Vol. 26, pp. 266f.; original reproduced in Kempner, p. 98.

*dentums*”), or the evacuation of the European Jews to the East – this being the meaning of the Führer’s “decision” – because he had wished to brandish the idea about as a threat, precisely to deter American entry into the war; but now, in face of a *fait accompli*, such a threat served no purpose, because the European Jews were going to have to suffer the consequences through evacuation to the East anyway.

That the alleged “decision” to “exterminate the Jews in Europe” – which was supposedly taken by Hitler after 7 December and before 14 December, as Gerlach conjectured (Gerlach 1998, p. 784) – was a mere announcement of a previous decision to evacuate the Jews to the East, which had to have been made before 9 December – the originally planned date for the Wannsee Conference – is shown by a *Schulungsblatt* (Training Sheet) of the *Ordnungspolizei* dated 1 December 1941, which stated (Curilla 2006, p. 59):

*“The Führer’s prediction that a new war unleashed by Jewry would lead, not to the smashing of anti-Semitic Germany, but rather, to the end of Jewry, is being fulfilled in these very days. The gigantic spaces of the East, which are now available for colonization by Germany and Europe, will also enable the final solution to the Jewish problem in the near future, that is, not only the fall from power, but also the actual elimination of the parasitic race from the European family of peoples. That which appeared impossible two years ago, is now, step by step, becoming a reality: at the end of the war stands a Europe free of Jews.”*

On 30 December 1941, Luther drew up a “Note by the Germany Division on No. 5 of the protocol dated 27 November 1941 on the reception of the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Popov by the Reich Foreign Minister in Berlin on 24 November 1941,” which begins as follows (Rothfels 1969, p. 132):

*“After an explanation of the Führer’s decision that all European Jews will have to leave Europe, the difficulties with Jews of Hungarian, Rumanian, Spanish and other nationalities mentioned by Bulgarian Foreign Minister Popov will be obviated.”*

On 16 December 1941 the Romanian leader Marshal Ion Antonescu convened his cabinet, on which occasion the following was stated (Ancel, p. 259):<sup>79</sup>

*“The Germans want to bring the Yids [sic] from Europe to Russia and settle them in certain areas but there is still time before this plan is carried out.”*

Nearly five years later, in 1946 at the Paris Peace Conference, members of the Romanian Foreign Ministry presented a study to the Allied victors in which they insisted that this indeed was the information which Germany had provided them concerning the fate of the Jews (*ibid.*, p. 269):

*“In the fall of 1941, the German Legation presented to Antonescu’s Government a plan that included Germany’s intentions vis-à-vis the Jewish population in Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary. The Jews of these countries should have been deported to a region situated northeast of the Black Sea, beyond the line*

<sup>79</sup> Quote from a protocol of a Romanian Cabinet meeting held on 16 December 1941.

*Rostov-Kharkov, where it was planned to establish an immense ghetto for [them]. For this purpose the Romanian Jews were to be gathered and deported to Transnistria, this [territory] being considered as a first stage of the deportation. After that the Jews would have been transferred farther [east] to the region that was allotted to them."*

The "Minutes of discussion of senior government advisor for the occupied Eastern territories Walter Labs, dated 16 January 1942," provides information as to Hitler's decisions on Heydrich's related tasks (Klein 1995, p. 40):

*"A few days before Christmas, on the premises of County Court Judge Wetzel, Main Department I, specialist for racial matters, a discussion took place regarding the draft of an order, forwarded here a while ago, regarding the concept of 'Jew', with the additional participation of: [...]"*

*A few days before this talk, I had a similar discussion with the specialist of the Reich Ministry for the Interior, government advisor Feldscher. The latter explained the foreseeable development of the concept of 'Jew' as follows: SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich, with the Führer's permission, has been assigned the mission, by the Reich Marshal, of devising preparations for the implementation of the immediate and uniform solution to the Jewish problem in Europe upon conclusion of the war. In fulfillment of this mission, Heydrich convened a conference of the state secretaries of the participating departments, but the conference then had to be postponed until the month of January due to the session of the Reichstag."*

On 25 January 1942, Heydrich sent the bodies subordinate to him, including *Einsatzgruppen* A-D, a letter bearing the subject "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) in which he wrote:

*"As an enclosure, I am sending a photocopy of an order from the Reich Marshal of the Greater German Reich/commissioner for the Four-Year Plan and chairman of the Ministerial Council for the Defense of the Reich dated 31 July 1941, for information purposes, and asking that it be given due consideration. According to the letter, I have been assigned with devising all necessary preparations from the organizational, factual and material point of view for a comprehensive solution to the Jewish question within the German sphere of influence in Europe. The tasks to be prepared for are being introduced."* (Angrick 2013 et al., p. 269)

Here, Heydrich was explicitly recalling the mission entrusted to him by Göring on 31 July 1941, which was becoming a reality, the preliminary stages for which began precisely with the Wannsee Conference. These documents contain not the slightest trace of any "Hitler extermination order," allegedly issued at the start of December 1941. The Wannsee record therefore refers to a real evacuation, and the fact that the above-mentioned Heydrich letter was also sent to the *Einsatzgruppen* shows that the Jewish deportations occurring in the areas in which the *Einsatzgruppen* were in operation were not aimed at exterminating the deportees.

A circular letter from the Higher SS and Police leader Russia South with the Reich commissioner for the Ukraine to the general commissioners in Brest, Zhi-

tomir, Nikolayev, Dnepropetrovsk and Kiev from 12 January 1942 stated (Hoppe, Doc. 53, pp. 182f.):

*“Subject: Establishing Ghettos*

*Pending the decree ordering the establishing of ghettos, I request already forthwith to ensure that preparations be gotten underway immediately. Ghettos are, insofar as possible, to be established in such a way that Jews from the Old Reich can be housed there already during 1942.*

*Apart from firmly defined ghettos, barracks installations and the like can also be considered to house the Jews.*

*Reporting deadline: 10 February 1942.*

*Every district commissar must indicate where, and how many, Jews can be housed in his district. Locations linked by rail should be indicated as a priority.”*

Eichmann’s express letter (*Schnellbrief*) dated 31 January 1942 and addressed to “all Police head offices of the Old Reich (including the Gau of the Sudetenland), the State Police offices in Vienna, the central office for Jewish emigration in Vienna” issued directives for the deportations of Jews from the Old Reich, stating:

*“The evacuation of Jews to the East, recently carried out in individual areas, represents the beginning of the Final Solution to the Jewish question in the Old Reich, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia”*

Various categories of Jews were exempted from the evacuation, including:

*“Jews a) aged over 65; b) as well as Jews aged 55-65, if they are particularly frail and therefore incapable of travelling.” (T/730; underlining in original)*

Also on 4 February 1942, a couple of weeks after the Wannsee Conference, Heydrich himself, in a speech before officials and party members from the protectorate, explicitly mentioned the future fate of all European Jews, whether or not they were able to work (Friedländer, pp. 370f.):

*“Those who cannot yet be Germanized can perhaps be used during the continuing exploitation above the Arctic Circle – where we will, after all, take over the Russian concentration camps that have, according to our present information, some 15-20 million deportees and that can thereby become an ideal home for the 11 million Jews from Europe in the future – maybe we can deploy those Czechs who cannot be Germanized in a positive way in pro-German tasks as overseers, foremen, etc.”*

In this context we must also see the letter written on 21 June 1942 by Walter Föhl, Deputy General Manager of the Department for Population and Social Care of the General Government:<sup>80</sup>

*“Every day we take in 10 trains with over 1,000 Jews each, from all over Europe, give them medical care, accommodate them more or less temporarily, and then usually deport them further, into the swamps of Byelorussia towards the Arctic Ocean, where they will all be assembled at war’s end – if they survive it (and the*

<sup>80</sup> Aly, p. 275. Cf. Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 506-507 and 572f.



*Jews from the Kurfürstendamm or Vienna or Pressburg certainly won't), but not without having finished building a few highways. (But let's not talk about that)."*

The Wannsee Conference signaled the definitive suspension of the Madagascar Plan. The related decision was announced on 10 February 1942 by Franz Rademacher, head of Department D III of the German Foreign Office, in a letter to Legation Councilor Harald Bielfeld (NG-5770):

*"In August 1940, I forwarded you the draft plan for the final solution to the Jewish question, drawn up by my office, according to which the island of Madagascar would be demanded of France in the peace treaty, the practical implementation of the task would however be transferred to the Reich Security Main Office. According to this plan, Gruppenführer Heydrich was tasked by the Führer with implementing the solution of the Jewish question in Europe. In the meantime, the war against the Soviet Union has given us the possibility to make other territories available for the final solution. Hence, the Führer has decided that the Jews are not to be sent to Madagascar but rather deported East. Madagascar therefore no longer needs to be earmarked for the final solution."*

Here is additional, complete confirmation of the real meaning of the Wannsee Conference and the "Führer decision," as well as the fact that the term "final solution" (*Endlösung*) was not a "euphemism" for extermination at all.

Heydrich had already given consideration to the idea of evacuating all the Jews overseas as early as 1940. On 30 October of that year, he issued an order on the "Handling of persons returning to Germany from the occupied territories," in which he ordered:<sup>81</sup>

*"The treatment of the above-mentioned Jews should not pre-empt plans for the settlement of the Jewish question in the parts of Europe under German influence following conclusion of a peace treaty. Immediate measures must be taken, however, in order to prevent the danger of a back-flow of Jews with German (including former Austrian, Czechoslovakian and Polish) nationality or, rather, former German, etc. nationality. These Jews, including their Jewish relatives, are all to be collected in internment camps and placed under guard. The internment of Jews with German or former Austrian, Czechoslovakian and Polish nationality makes it possible that, in case of a possible comprehensive evacuation from Europe, these Jews be the first ones who can be seized and transported off. It is therefore expedient to build internment camps for Jews at locations from where the subsequent evacuation overseas can be carried out most conveniently."*

On 7 March 1942, Goebbels wrote the following annotation in his diary:<sup>82</sup>

*"I am reading a detailed memorandum from the Security Service and the police on the final solution to the Jewish question. A great number of new viewpoints result from it. The Jewish question must now be resolved within a comprehensive European framework. There are still more than 11 million Jews in Europe. They*

<sup>81</sup> YVA, O.53-59, p. 406 (74).

<sup>82</sup> Lochner, p. 114. My quotation is taken from Werner, pp. 43f.

*must later be concentrated in the East, to start with; maybe they can be assigned an island after the war, such as Madagascar.*

*In any case, there will be no peace in Europe unless the Jews are completely put out of operation [ausgeschaltet]. This raises a great quantity of extraordinarily delicate questions. What happens to the half-Jews? What happens to all the persons related to them by marriage, or married to them? We're really going to have our hands full here, and a whole series of personal tragedies will no doubt occur within the framework of solving this problem. But that is unavoidable. The situation is now ripe to ultimately solve the Jewish question. Later generations will no longer possess the vigor, nor will they possess the vigilance of instinct.*

*We therefore do well to proceed radically and consistently. The burdens that we impose upon ourselves here will be an advantage, a blessed bit of good fortune for our descendents."*

The "detailed memorandum from the Security Service and the police on the final solution to the Jewish question" referred to by Goebbels was the protocol of the Wannsee Conference. Goebbels states that it contained "a great number of new viewpoints," which refutes Gerlach's claim that it was closely connected to Hitler's supposed decision to exterminate all the Jews of Europe.

These "new viewpoints" consisted, in fact, of the solution to the Jewish problem "within a comprehensive European framework" (and no longer solely within the territory of "Greater Germany"), that is, as an "comprehensive solution" ("*Gesamtlösung*") by deporting the Jews to the East – not to be killed there, but to be sent elsewhere "after the war," perhaps to Madagascar. This proves that Hitler's famous "decision" referred to this expansion to a Europe-wide level in his dealings with the Jewish question.

Goebbels's annotation is additional confirmation of the fact that the Wannsee Conference, as I outlined above, was linked to the National-Socialist plan of emigration/evacuation/resettlement as ordered by Göring on 31 July 1941.

A "Report on a discussion that occurred on 6 March 1942 at the Reich Security Main Office – Department IV B 4" dated 9 March 1942 states as follows:<sup>83</sup>

*"As an introduction, SS Obersturmbannführer Eichmann first spoke about the further evacuation of 55,000 Jews from the Old Reich as well as from Austria and the Protectorate.*

*Among other things, Prague and Vienna are most heavily involved in this – with 20,000 and 18,000 Jews to be evacuated, respectively. The strength of the other transports is determined proportionally, according to the number of the Jews still present in each State Police (headquarters) district. Düsseldorf has been assigned 1,000 Jews in this connection."*

The following part of this same document should be given particular attention in light of the claim that Hitler – according to the orthodox Holocaust narrative – allegedly had decided to exterminate the Jews almost three months earlier, and

<sup>83</sup> T/37(39) = T/734.

that the Wannsee Conference, which is said to have condemned to death without exception all Jews unable to work, had been held almost two months earlier:

*“In this context, SS Obersturmbannführer Eichmann called attention to the fact that the guidelines issued, particularly with reference to age, frailty, etc. should be respected to the utmost, since during the transport to Riga, according to Jewish elders who filed complaints through Gauleiters Lohse and Meyer to SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich, there were some 40 to 50 cases of wrongful evacuation. Although the majority of these cases turned out, upon closer examination, to have been fully justified evacuations, the utmost effort should be made to avoid such complaints under any circumstances. SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich will therefore hold the State Police leaders personally responsible for respecting the guidelines in this respect.*

*To ensure that individual State Police headquarters are ‘spared the temptation to deport recalcitrant older Jews along with the others’, SS Obergruppenführer Eichmann remarked, it should, for reassurance, be said that, over the course of the summer or fall, these Jews remaining in the Old Reich would very probably be deported to Theresienstadt which was earmarked as a ‘ghetto for the elderly.’ This town was now being cleared out, and temporarily 15-20,000 Jews from the Protectorate could already be resettled there. This was being done, ‘to save face before the outside [world].’”*

Eichmann was referring to the “Guidelines for the technical implementation of the evacuation of Jews into the General Government (Trawniki near Lublin)” from the beginning of January 1942, which exempted four categories of Jews from deportation, including:<sup>84</sup>

*“4./Jews*

*a) aged over 65,*

*b) aged 55-64, who are particularly frail and entirely unable to travel.*

*For Jewish married couples, in which one spouse is below 65 and the other is older than 65, both partners can be evacuated if the partner older than 65 is no older than 67 and an attestation can be produced from a public health officer showing that this spouse is fit for work. Additional exceptions are not permitted.*

*(For Jews not to be evacuated on the grounds of age, separate provisions will be drawn up later).*

*Jewish legal advisors are to be included only in an appropriate ratio to the number of the initially remaining Jews.*

*Divorces as well as the separation of children aged up to 14 from their parents should be avoided.”*

The report dated 9 March 1942 entirely confirms the validity of the above, particularly with regard to the prohibition against deporting frail, elderly Jews to the East. Thus, to prevent local Gestapo units from illegally including them in the transports, Eichmann felt himself obliged to calm them down, prematurely an-

<sup>84</sup> T/1395 [15-18].

nouncing that they would be transferred to the “Old-People’s Ghetto” of Theresienstadt, which was therefore indeed an old-people’s ghetto. If this was intended to “save face,” this does not necessarily mean that Theresienstadt was created solely for propaganda purposes,<sup>85</sup> but rather, that the SS wished to avoid foreign criticism for deporting these types of individuals. All of which is completely incompatible with a logic of extermination.

The following statement by Richard Headland, a scholar not otherwise without acumen, is therefore surprising for its seeming partisanship (Headland, p. 52):

*“The essential thrust of German policy toward the Jews until 1941 was thus one of removal – the expulsion of Jews from the territory of the Reich proper. The decision to attack the Soviet Union brought with it a fundamental shift in this attitude. With the acquisition of the Soviet territories, the Germans realized they would now be faced with having several million more Jews on their hands. Again, while one cannot be absolutely certain, the available evidence seems to indicate that sometime in the spring of 1941, in the context of preparations for the imminent attack, the decision was taken to destroy the Jews in the Soviet territories.”*

The only known *Führerbefehl* is therefore mentioned in the subject line (“*betrifft*”) of the file memo dated 24 October 1941 on a “Conference in Berlin on 23 Oct. 41 at [Department] IV B 4 presided over by SS *Sturmbannführer* Eichmann,” which states that the Führer’s order concerned the “Evacuation of 5,000 Jews from the Old Reich, including Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia.” Eichmann issued directives which had to be scrupulously obeyed: Jews in mixed marriages, those with foreign nationality, those involved in working employment were to be exempt from evacuation, just as those over the age of 60; also exempted were sick and weak Jews, regardless of age.<sup>86</sup> These were directives which were then repeated and restated in greater detail, as we have already seen.

The directives regarding exemption from deportation for Jews unable to work were not simple enunciations of principle. On 27 May 1942, the State Police Headquarters in Düsseldorf sent a telex to the RSHA summarizing the deportations from its area of competence, with reference to Eichmann’s express letter dated 31 January 1942:<sup>87</sup>

*“Jews destined for the old-people’s ghetto at Theresienstadt fall into the following categories:*

*1. Jews over the age of 65 and frail Jews over 55: 1,545, among them 571 males and 974 females.”*

Furthermore, there were 56 spouses from no-longer-existing mixed marriages (#2); 83 persons of “mixed race” (#3); and 51 “Jews with serious war wounds or

<sup>85</sup> A draft by SS *Sturmbannführer* Wilhelm Zoepf, Eichmann’s representative in the Netherlands, dated 5 October 1942, contains the expression “*Propagandalager Theresienstadt*,” the import of which may easily be misrepresented. T/537.

<sup>86</sup> YVA, O.53-76, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> T/1395 [89].

bearers of the wound badge or of high decorations for bravery.” The report concludes that

*“from the local district can be deported to the East:  
154 Jews, and to the old-age ghetto in Theresienstadt:  
1,735 Jews.”*

The candidates for deportation underwent a medical examination attesting to their fitness, or lack thereof, for the labor concerned, the findings of which were transcribed in an appropriate dossier referred to as the “Examination Results” by the “physician under police contract.”<sup>88</sup>

On 26 May 1942, the Essen outpost of the State Police Headquarters in Düsseldorf sent a report to the headquarters on the distribution of the local Jews according to the pre-established categories. Of a total of 654 Jews, 245 were listed as scheduled for deportation to Theresienstadt, and only 83 were available for evacuation to the East.<sup>89</sup>

On 9 August 1942, the State Police Headquarters of Düsseldorf sent Eichmann’s office a report on deportations to the Old-People’s Ghetto of Theresienstadt:<sup>90</sup>

*“Of the 1,735 Jews reported based on the FS Decree No. 974 30 of 21 May 1942 – IV B 4 a - 2093/42g, 965 Jews were deported on 21 July 1942 on Special Train Da 70, while another 694 Jews, for a total of 1,649, were deported to Theresienstadt on 25 July 1942 on Special Train Da 71.”*

Some of the (1,735 – 1,649 = ) 86 persons not included had committed suicide; some had died or fled. One was bed-ridden and was therefore “exempted from the transport.”

The option of a Jewish reservation on the Polar Sea or at any rate somewhere beyond the Urals, in which the Soviet Jews would also have been interned, is in direct contradiction to a deliberate policy of extermination, so that the genesis of the presumed “*Führerbefehl*,” in addition to clashing with the total absence of documents, also collides with this real deportation policy.

### 2.3. Operational Service Orders Issued to the *Einsatzgruppen*

The question of a “*Führerbefehl*,” must also be examined in the context of the orders issued to the *Einsatzgruppen* from the very time they were formed, and the tasks assigned to them.

The first mention of the *Einsatzgruppen* appears in a document dated 3 March 1941, which Hilberg describes as follows (Hilberg 2003, Vol. 1, pp. 282f.):

*“The context for deploying the Einsatzgruppen was operation ‘Barbarossa’, the invasion of the USSR. A written notation of the mission appeared in the war diary*

<sup>88</sup> T/1395 [45-48].

<sup>89</sup> T/1396 [110].

<sup>90</sup> T/1397 [223].

*of the OKW's Wehrmachtführungsstab (WFSt) on March 3, 1941, at a time when invasion plans were already far advanced. The topic of the entry was a draft directive to troop commanders, which had been prepared by Warlimont's office Landesverteidigung in the WFSt, and which had been submitted by WFSt Chief Jodl to Hitler for approval. The war diary contains Jodl's enclosure of Hitler's comments, including a philosophical point defining the coming battle as a confrontation of two world views, and several specific statements, in one of which Hitler declared that the 'Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia (Intelligenz) would have to be 'eliminated' (beseitigt). According to Hitler, these tasks were so difficult that they could not be entrusted to the army. The war diary went on with Jodl's instructions to Warlimont for revising the draft in conformity with Hitler's 'guidelines.' One question to be explored with the Reichsführer-SS, said Jodl, was the introduction of SS and Police organs in the army's operational area. Jodl felt that such a move was needed to assure that Bolshevik chieftains and commissars be 'rendered harmless' without delay. In conclusion, Warlimont was told that he could contact the OKH about revisions, and that he was to submit a new draft for signature by Keitel on March 13, 1941. On the specific date, the revised directive was signed by Keitel."*

As his source, Hilberg cites: "Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtführungsstab), edited by Percy Schramm and Hans Adolf Jacobsen (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), vol. I, pp. 340-42" (*ibid.*, fn 8, p. 283). In this work, we read in the above-mentioned "Hitler guidelines" (Schramm 1982a, p. 341):

*"This coming military campaign is more than a contest of arms; it is also leading to a conflict between two ideologies. In order to end this war, it's not enough, with all the vast areas involved, simply to smash the enemy armed forces. The entire area must be dissolved into states, with their own governments, with which we can conclude peace. [...] Today's Russia is no longer even conceivable without the socialistic ideal. It alone can form the domestic political basis for the formation of new states and governments. The Jewish-Bolshevist intelligentsia, as the 'oppressor' of the people until now, must be eliminated. The former bourgeois-aristocratic intelligentsia, insofar as it is still present particularly among emigrants, must be ruled out as well."*

The document continues as follows:

*"In accordance with these guidelines of the Führer, the instructions must be amended as follows:*

*The border fortifications may only extend to the areas of operation. Whether it will be necessary to deploy institutions of the Reichsführer SS in addition to the Secret Field Police must be examined with the Reichsführer SS. In favor of it is the necessity to render harmless immediately all Bolshevist warlords and commissars."*

According to Hitler's directives, the "Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia" would therefore have to be "eliminated" within the framework of a profound political rearrangement of the Soviet Union, more for the fact of being Bolshevist than for

being Jewish; and in fact, the orders issued by Alfred Jodl in conformity with these Hitler directives placed the accent on the “Bolshevist warlords and commissars,” rather than on a “*Jewish-Bolshevist intelligentsia*.”

Hilberg then continues his narration (2003, Vol. 1, pp. 283, 287):

*“The decisive paragraph was a statement informing the troop commanders that the Führer had charged the Reichsführer-SS with carrying out special tasks in the operational area of the army. Within the framework of these tasks, which were the product of a battle to the finish between two opposing political systems, the Reichsführer-SS would act independently and on his own responsibility. He was going to make sure that military operations would not be disturbed by the implementation of this task. Details would be worked out directly between the OKH and the Reichsführer-SS. As the start of operations, the border of the USSR would be closed to all nonmilitary traffic, except for police organs dispatched by the Reichsführer-SS pursuant to directive of the Führer. Quarters and supplies for these organs were to be regulated by OKH/GenQu (High Command of the Army/General Quartermaster – Wagner).”*

At this point Hilberg refers to a “Directive by OKW/L (signed Keitel), March 13, 1941, NOKW-2302.”

Nevertheless, this directive speaks of “special tasks” (*Sonderaufgaben*) entrusted to Himmler by Hitler, but makes no mention at all of any “*Jewish-Bolshevist intelligentsia*” (Hitler’s phrase), nor “Bolshevist warlords and commissars” (Jodl’s wording), much less the Jewish population.

This directive added that the future struggle would be between two visions of the world:<sup>91</sup>

*“In the area of operations of the army the Reichsführer SS is receiving special tasks for preparation of the political administration by order of the Führer, which arise from the terminal struggle between two opposing political systems. Within the framework of this task, the Reichsführer will act independently and on his own responsibility.”*

In practice, any mention of “*Jewish Bolshevism*” simply vanished along the way between Hitler and Keitel.

On 26 March 1941, Heydrich and Göring had a talk on the “Solution of the Jewish question.” The related document states:<sup>92</sup>

*“The Reich Marshal spoke to me, saying, among other things, that for a deployment in Russia, a very short, 3- to 4-page instruction should be prepared for distribution among the troops. On the dangerousness of the GPU organizations, the political commissars, Jews, etc., so that they know in practice whom to put up against the wall.”*

<sup>91</sup> PS-447. IMG, Vol. XXVI, p. 54. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, “Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekutionen sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener,” in: Buchheim *et al.*, pp. 166-169 (transcript of the document) and p. 167 (my citation).

<sup>92</sup> Klein 1997, pp. 367-368. The document is presented as “Aktennotiz für Himmler über eine Unterredung Heydrichs mit Göring am 26.3.1941.”

This vague directive, as shown by subsequent documents, was not referring to a policy of Jewish extermination, but rather to the extermination of the members of the Soviet state apparatus.

Discussing this document in its historical context, Götz Aly in fact reaches the conclusion “that Heydrich’s considerations on the ‘solution of the Jewish question’ referred to the territory of the Soviet Union since March 1941 at the latest.” He adds (Aly, pp. 271f.):

*“Hence in March at the latest, parallel to the conceptual formulation of the later Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the Security Service, Heydrich prepared in the same context the deportation of all European Jews who lived west of the German-Soviet border of interests.”*

This interpretation is also shared by Christian Streit, according to whom the expression “deportation to the East,” in the summer and fall of 1941, “was usually used in its most literal sense: it meant the enforcement of the migration of all Jews to Siberia”; thus, in his opinion, not only were Western Jews to be deported, but Soviet Jews as well, after the leadership had been eliminated (Streit 2002, p. 107):

*“Once the Einsatzgruppen had liquidated the Jewish leaders, it would be an easy task to push the Jewish masses east simply by showing what was in store for them if they chose to stay.”*

In practice, the policy of deportation or evacuation and the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* developed in a parallel and distinct manner.

On 30 March 1941, Hitler gave a speech at the Reich Chancellery to 250 senior officials who were to occupy administrative positions in the future Eastern campaign. Chief of General Staff Franz Halder noted in his diary (Streit 1997, p. 34):

*“Struggle between two worldviews, each opposed to the other: devastating judgement of Bolshevism, equals asocial gangsterism. Communism monstrous danger for the future. [...]*

*Struggle against Russia: Destruction of the Bolshevik commissars and the Communist intelligentsia. The new states must be socialist states, but without their own intelligentsia. It will be necessary to prevent the formation of any new intelligentsia. A primitive socialist intelligentsia will be enough.”*

The circle of the *Einsatzgruppen*’s predestined victims broadened progressively, but the center of gravity was always focused on Bolshevism, and later on partisans as well.

The order issued by the High Command of the Army on 28 April 1941 on the “Regulation of the deployment of the Security Police and Security Service in conjunction with the Army” explained the deployment assignments of the related *Sonderkommandos* in the zone of operations, but always *without* mention of Jews.<sup>93</sup> These directives were echoed to the letter in the already-mentioned “Fact

<sup>93</sup> NOKW-2080, transcript in: Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 1, pp. 26f.



sheet for the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Einsatzkommandos* of the Security Police and SD for Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” which is undated but positively was issued before 22 June 1941 (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 4, p. 30; see text on p. 39).

On 19 May 1941, the Wehrmacht High Command promulgated the “Guidelines for the behavior of the troops in Russia” which opened with the following general ideological declaration (Hoppe/Glass, p. 120):

*“Bolshevism is the mortal enemy of the National-Socialist German people. Germany’s struggle is to defeat this subversive worldview and its carriers.*

*This struggle demands a ruthless and energetic crackdown on Bolshevistic agitators, franc-tireurs, saboteurs, Jews and complete elimination of all active or passive resistance.”* (Emphases in original.)

On 17 June, Heydrich invited the heads of the *Einsatzgruppen* to Prinz-Carl-Palais at Berlin-Glienicke, but there are no written records of the meeting. On the 29th, in reference to the oral remarks at that meeting, he issued orders on the instigation of anti-Jewish pogroms:<sup>94</sup>

*“No obstacle should be placed in the way of the self-cleansing efforts of anti-Communist or anti-Jewish groups in the newly-occupied territories. On the contrary, they should be provoked, but without leaving a trace; they should be intensified, if necessary, and guided in the right directions, without allowing these local ‘self-protection groups’ to be able to appeal to orders or political promises later. [...]*

*The formation of permanent self-protection squads with centralized leadership should be avoided at first; instead, local people’s pogroms should be provoked, as described above.”*

The directive was put into writing the next day and became *Einsatzbefehl No. 1*.

The thrust of these orders, according to Streit, is to be explained by the fact that Heydrich wanted an alibi “in case the murders met with opposition from the Wehrmacht” (Streit 2002, p. 105), because

*“the wording of the agreement between Reinhard Heydrich and the Army Quartermaster General, General Eduard Wagner, of 26 March 1941, which laid down the rules for the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the rear army group and army areas, did not permit them to execute all Jews summarily.”* (*ibid.*, p. 104)

and Heydrich was reluctant to act without the full support of the Wehrmacht.

On 20 June 1941, the headquarters of the 22nd Infantry Division issued orders on “Prisoner Interrogation, Captured Papers” which included the Jews as well:

*“The Jews, and members of other nationalities and Party members, are specially marked in paybooks and card files. It is particularly important to register them, since most of them speak several languages and are more intelligent than the mass of prisoners. Predictably, the Jews are particularly numerous in all management positions and behind-the-lines services (field kitchens, canteens, etc.). Using them to help interrogate other prisoners may be very useful. The mass of*

<sup>94</sup> YVA, RG O.53-3, p. 273. Cf. Klein 1997, pp. 325f.

*Jews should be separated and treated according to Ic-Conference of 20 June 41.”* (Hoppe/Glass, pp. 125f.; emphases in original)

On 2 July 1941, Heydrich sent the Higher SS and Police leaders appointed for deployment during Operation Barbarossa the “most important orders” which had been sent by him to the “*Einsatzgruppen* and *-kommandos* of the Security Police and the Security Service.” First of all, he discussed the principal objectives to be pursued (Klein 1997, p. 325):

*“Immediate objective of the overall mission is the political pacification, meaning most essentially the pacification of the newly occupied territories by the Security Police. The final objective is the economic pacification.”*

The attainment of these objectives would require a variety of measures, including executions, measures which regarded well-defined categories of persons:

*“Persons to be executed include all officials of the Comintern (just as the professional Communist politicians as such), the higher, medium and lower-level officials of the Party, of the Central Committee, of the regional and district committees, People’s Commissars, Jews in party and state positions, other radical elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, assassins, agitators, etc).”*

unless they were useful for the reconstruction (*Wiederaufbau*) of the occupied territories.

A memorandum dated 16 July 1941 on a meeting among Hitler, Rosenberg, Lammers, Keitel and Göring regarding German designs on the Soviet Union contains the following consideration, which some interpret as a sort of a green light for the indiscriminate killing of women and children:<sup>95</sup>

*“Now the Russians have issued an order for partisan warfare behind our front. This partisan war also has its advantage: it gives us the possibility of exterminating everybody who opposes us.”*

Yitzhak Arad states that this document “indirectly” mentions the Jewish question and comments (Arad 1979, p. 270):

*“Indeed, many reports about the execution of Jews in various places in the Soviet Union mention the sabotage activities of the Jews, either as partisans or giving assistance to such.”*

But this contradicts Arad’s own unfounded hypothesis that the “special tasks” assigned to Himmler and the SS on 14 March 1941 “in actual fact meant the total liquidation of Soviet Jewry by the Special Task Force (*Einsatzgruppe*) of the Security Police, the SD and other SS units” (*ibid.*, pp. 268f.). The directive of 16 July referred, in fact, to partisan activities.

Not even *Einsatzbefehl* No. 8, drawn up on 28 June and promulgated on 17 July 1941 as “Guidelines for units of the Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service to be assigned to the PoW camps” permitted the indiscriminate ex-

<sup>95</sup> L-221. IMT, Vol. 38, p. 88.

termination of Jews, although it does mention “all Jews” among the PoWs whom it was necessary to identify.<sup>96</sup> According to these directives,

*“The task of the units is the political vetting of all camp inmates and the separation and further treatment of a) politically, criminally, or otherwise unacceptable elements among them, and b) of persons who can be useful in the reconstruction of the occupied territories.”*

The categories of prisoners to be identified were as follows:

*“First and foremost, the mission is to identify:*

- *all important officials of the State and Party, particularly:*
  - *professional revolutionaries,*
  - *Comintern officials,*
  - *all important Party officials of the Soviet Communist Party, and their auxiliary organizations in the central committees, district and regional committees,*
  - *all people’s commissars and their deputies,*
  - *all former political commissars in the Red Army,*
  - *leading personalities in the central or mid-level agencies of government authorities;*
  - *leading personalities in economic life,*
  - *the Soviet Russian intelligentsia,*
  - *all Jews,*
  - *all persons identified as firebrands or fanatical Communists.*

*As already mentioned, it is no less important to identify all those persons who could be useful in the reconstruction, administration and management of the conquered Russian territories.”*

The *Kommandos* for whom the above-mentioned directives were intended were to “identify” the prisoners in these categories; the RSHA was then to decide as to their fate, which *also* provided for executing them, called “special treatment” (“*Sonderbehandlung*”). The procedure to be followed was as follows:<sup>97</sup>

*“Every week, the leader of the EK sends a short report to the Reich Security Main Office by teletype or express letter. The report should contain:*

- 1) *A short description of the past week’s activity,*
- 2) *Number of persons to be definitively considered suspicious (giving a number is enough),*
- 3) *Names of persons identified as*
  - Comintern officials,*
  - Important Party officials,*
  - People’s Commissars,*

<sup>96</sup> German text of the document in Buchheim *et al.*, Vol. 2, pp. 202-204.

<sup>97</sup> PS-502. IMT, Vol. 26, pp. 113f.

*Political Commissars,  
leading personality [sic]  
with short description of their position*

4) *Number of persons to be identified as unsuspecting*

a) *Prisoners of war*

b) *Civilians*

*Based on these activity reports, the Reich Security Main Office will then promptly communicate the further measures to be taken."*

The camps to which the order applied were *Oflag*<sup>98</sup> 52, 53, 56, 57, 60, 63, 68 and *Stalag*<sup>99</sup> 331 of Military District I and *Stalag* 307, 316, 319, 324 and 327 of the General Government<sup>100</sup> plus approximately twenty others in the territory of the Reich.<sup>101</sup>

These directives were subsequently summarized and updated in Mission Order No. 14 dated 29 October 1941, which referred to "Guidelines for units of the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service to be assigned to PoW and transit camps." The updating related to the "Guidelines for the separation of suspicious Soviet-Russian PoWs and civilian internees of the eastern campaign in the PoW and transit camps of the area behind the front." Bolshevism was National-Socialist Germany's mortal enemy; Bolshevik soldiers did not fight in conventional ways, but by all means possible; they were not, therefore, protected by the Geneva Convention, and had to be treated pitilessly and energetically. As regards the categories of persons to be identified, Jews were mentioned in the following context:<sup>102</sup>

*"8) Members of the Soviet intelligentsia and Jews, insofar as they are professional revolutionaries or politicians, writers, editors, Comintern officials etc."*

That Jewish prisoners of war were not inevitably destined to be shot without prior screening is shown by the "Report on the inspection of the collection camp in Trawniki" dated 14 July 1941 (Blumental, p. 259):

*"The collection camp for escapees and suspicious persons arrested by the Wehrmacht is located in Trawnicki [sic] on an estate. The camp itself is in a secluded location and specially marked off. The overwhelming majority of camp inmates are Jews, including Russian political commissars and instigators, for whom a special area fenced in by barbed wire was set aside.*

*The rest of the camp consists of Russians, Poles and also some 141 Ukrainians, separated from each other. There are currently a total of 676 camp inmates."*

<sup>98</sup> *Offizierslager*, PoW camp for officers.

<sup>99</sup> *Stamm lager*, PoW camp for soldiers and NCOs.

<sup>100</sup> Annex 3 to Einsatzbefehl No. 8. YVA, RG O.53-3, p. 295.

<sup>101</sup> "Verzeichnis der Lager im Reichsgebiet, in denen bereits sowjetrussische Kriegsgefangene untergebracht sind, oder die demnächst belegt werden," 21 August 1941. YVA, RG O.53-3, p. 297.

<sup>102</sup> YVA, RG O.53-3, p. 321.

Before the beginning of the Russian campaign, therefore, no general order to exterminate the Jews existed. If such an order was ever issued, it must have occurred in the following months, as Hillgruber assumed (1984, p. 226):

*“Even if one were inclined to doubt the truthfulness of Otto Ohlendorf’s testimony of 5 November 1945 before the Nuremberg Tribunal during the Trial of the Major War Criminals, and that of Dr. Walter Blume before the Nuremberg Tribunal during the ‘Einsatzgruppen’ Trial on 29 June 1947, according to which the secret order to shoot all the Jews was issued to the ‘Einsatzgruppen’ leaders in May 1941 – Heydrich furthermore is said to have declared, ‘in a small group’ before the leaders of the ‘Einsatzgruppen’ and ‘Einsatzkommandos’ that Eastern Jewry, in the Führer’s opinion, is the reservoir of Bolshevism and must therefore be destroyed – the very high numbers of Jews killed already during the very first few weeks of the campaign, as reported by the ‘Einsatzgruppen’ and HSSPF, are a very clear indication that the victims cannot have consisted ‘only’ of Jews in Party and governmental positions, but that, at least during the campaign in the summer and fall of 1941, there was an intention to kill all Jews in the German-occupied part of the Soviet Union right away, even if its realization posed problems which could hardly be solved, in view of the massive numbers involved.”*

This point of view will be examined in the next subchapter.

## 2.4. Military Orders Concerning the Jews

The military orders provided for a determined struggle against Bolshevism and the Jews, but not for their extermination. The “Guidelines for the behavior of the troops in Russia,” promulgated by the High Command of the German Army on 4 June 1941, ordered the following in the first two points (NOKW-1692; see here on p. 104):

*“Bolshevism is the mortal enemy of the National-Socialist German people. Germany’s struggle is to defeat this subversive worldview and its carriers.*

*This struggle demands a ruthless and energetic crackdown on Bolshevistic agitators, franc-tireurs, saboteurs, Jews and complete elimination of all active or passive resistance.”*

On 12 September 1941, *Generalfeldmarschall* Wilhelm Keitel, head of the Wehrmacht High Command, issued an order concerning “Jews in the newly occupied eastern areas,” which stated:

*“The struggle against Bolshevism demands a ruthless, energetic crackdown, most of all also against the Jews, the main carriers of Bolshevism.”*

This did not imply a policy of extermination, because the document continues as follows:<sup>103</sup>

*“All cooperation between the Wehrmacht and the Jewish population, whose attitudes are openly or covertly anti-German, as well as the use of individual Jews in*

<sup>103</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 34.

*any kind of preferred auxiliary services for the Wehrmacht must not occur. On no account are military agencies to issue ID cards for Jews permitting them to work for the Wehrmacht.*

*The only exception to this rule relates to the use of Jews in especially assembled work gangs, to be deployed under German supervision only."*

A secret order from *Generalfeldmarschall* Walter von Reichenau dated 10 October 1941 with the subject "Conduct of the Troops in the Eastern Territory" began as follows:<sup>104</sup>

*"A number of unclear notions still exist regarding the behavior of the troops towards the Bolshevik system.*

*The most important objective of the campaign against the Jewish-Bolshevik system is the total smashing of its instruments of power and the extirpation of its Asiatic influence in the European cultural environment. Tasks result from this that extend beyond the conventional, singular military tradition. A soldier in the eastern territories is not merely a fighter according to the rules of the art of war; rather, he is also the bearer of a relentless ethnic idea, and the avenger of all the atrocities inflicted upon the Germans and other ethnically related peoples. This is why the soldier must have an understanding of the necessity for the hard, but just punishment of Jewish sub-humanity. It has the further purpose of stifling in the bud any uprisings in our rear which, as experience shows, are always incited by Jews."*

The document then lists the various duties of the troops, and summarizes them as follows at the end:

*"The terror of German counter-measures must be stronger than the threats by vestiges of Bolshevism lingering around. Before all future political considerations, the soldier must accomplish two things:*

- 1.) The complete eradication of all Bolshevik false teachings, as well as the Soviet state and its armed forces,*
- 2.) The merciless eradication of all ethnically alien treachery and cruelty, and thus the securing of the viability of the German armed forces in Russia.*

*Only in this way can we live up to our historical mission of liberating the German people from the Asiatic-Jewish danger once and for all."*

Von Reichenau did not, therefore, order that German soldiers commit atrocities against the Eastern populations, as the document is occasionally interpreted; rather, he recommended the prevention of Bolshevik atrocities through the protection of the German army.

Jewry was to be annihilated to the extent to which it identified itself with Bolshevism, as General Erich von Manstein wrote on 20 November 1941:<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> NOKW-3411. TWC, Vol. XI, pp. 329f., Facsimile of the original; D-411. IMT, Vol. 35, pp. 84-86; UK-81. NCA, Vol. VIII, pp. 585f.

<sup>105</sup> PS-4064. IMT, Vol. 34, p. 130.

*“Jewry constitutes the middleman between the enemy in our rear and the still-fighting residues of the Red Army and the Red leadership. More-strongly so than in Europe, it occupies all the key points of political leadership and administration, of commerce and trade, and further constitutes the germ cell for all unrest and possible insurrection. The Jewish-Bolshevik system must be eradicated once and for all. Never again must it be permitted to encroach upon our European living space.”*

## 2.5. Ghettoization and Use for Labor

Alfred Streim noted that

*“not in accordance with the assumption of the disclosure of the ‘Führer order’ between the end of July and the end of August 1941, however, is the fact that, at that very time, the Einsatzgruppen reported the establishing of ghettos and the registration of Jews ‘as ordered,’ for ghettoization and registration do not point to exterminating people, but, rather, to keeping them alive.”*

The contradiction could be explained by the argument that these were merely measures taken in preparation for subsequent execution, for which purpose it was necessary to register all the Jews beforehand (Streim 1985, p. 114).

Raul Hilberg also considers ghettoization to have been merely a phase preliminary to the actual killing (2003, Vol. 1, p. 355):

*“The inadequacy of the first sweep necessitated an intermediary stage during which the first three steps of the destruction process – definition, expropriation, and concentration – would be implemented. In most of the occupied USSR, however, the usual order was reversed, for in the wake of the killings the bureaucrats thought first of ghettoization and only later of economic measures and definition. The initial concentrations were effected by the mobile units themselves. These ghettoizations were by-products of the killing operations in the sense that the Security Police were forced to defer the complete annihilation of certain communities,”*

either because the communities were too numerous, or due to economic implications.

However, it should be noted on the one hand that the ghettoization lasted well beyond the end of August 1941, and on the other hand that the declared purpose was the deployment of able-bodied Jews, who therefore were able to support those unable to work from the proceeds of their labor. This practice was adopted precisely in the Baltic countries, which, according to the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, experienced an almost total extermination of the local Jews.

The policy toward the Jews that was to be implemented in the occupied Eastern territories is clearly outlined in the “Brown Folder,” dated 3 September 1941, and more precisely in the paragraph reading “Guidelines for the Handling of the Jewish Question,” which, due to its importance, I shall now present in full (Hoppe, Doc. 1, pp. 87f.):

### *“1. General Issues.*

*All measures regarding to the Jewish question in the occupied territories in the East must be taken from the point of view that the Jewish question will be solved in a general way for the whole of Europe after the war. They must, therefore, be conceived as preparatory partial measures and must be coordinated with other decisions in this domain.*

*On the other hand, the experience gathered in connection with the treatment of the Jewish question in the occupied eastern territories may have a bearing on the solution of the problem as a whole, as the Jews in these territories, together with those of the General Government, constitute the largest contingent of European Jewry.*

*Any kind of purely vexatious actions, being unworthy of a German, are to be abstained from.*

*Possible actions by the local populace against Jews should not be hindered, insofar as it is compatible with the need to maintain calm and order in the rear of the fighting troops. Activities by street thugs and other shady elements, who are merely interested in looting Jewish stores and in robbing Jewry for their own material gain, should be opposed harshly.*

### *2. Population Status.*

*Jewry forms very different shares of the population in the individual Reich Commissariats and within them in the General Commissariats. For example, millions of Jews, locally resident for generations, live in Byelorussia and the Ukraine. In the central regions of the USSR, however, Jews moved in for the most part only during the Bolshevik era. The Soviet Jews who moved into Eastern Poland, the Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia, the Baltic countries, Bessarabia and Bucovina in the wake of the Red Army in 1939 and 1940 represent a special group. Varying methods of treatment regarding these various groups may to some extent be appropriate.*

*Above all, the Jews who moved into the territories newly occupied by the Soviets in the last two years, insofar as they have not fled, are to be separated with severe measures. Since this group have earned the intense hatred due to their terror against the population, their separation for the most part has been taken care of by the local population simply upon the appearance of German troops. Such retaliatory measures are not to be opposed. The remaining resident Jewish population should first be registered by introducing compulsory registration. All Jews will be marked by visible insignias (yellow Jewish star).*

### *3. Segregation from Other Population Groups.*

*One first main objective of the German measures must be to segregate Jewry strictly from the remaining population. Since the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet Jewry, especially in the core regions of the USSR, has continually attempted to disguise itself in order to advance inconspicuously to ruling positions. To this end, numerous Jews have abandoned their Mosaic creed and have adopted Russian family, first and father's names. Orders are to be given that all name chan-*



*ges of Jews made during the life of the person subject to compulsory registration, or, insofar as known, among his ancestors, are to be reported and reversed. The same applies to individuals who left the Jewish religious community earlier and who converted to other creeds (often several times over). Smashing the Jewish camouflage will be easier in the Reich Commissariats East and Ukraine, where a larger part of Jewry has lived for generations, than in the other Reich Commissariats. Soviet archival material, insofar as extant, should be used for this.*

*Freedom of movement is to be eliminated immediately for all Jews. Transfer to ghettos is to be aimed at, which will be facilitated in Byelorussia and the Ukraine due to the availability of numerous more or less contiguous Jewish settlements. These ghettos can be granted Jewish self-administration with Jewish police. Guarding the borders between the ghettos and the outside world is entrusted to the Commissariat's police forces.*

*Further intermingling with the rest of the population, for example through weddings, business mergers, common cultural activities, etc. is to be prohibited. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that Jewry is gradually eliminated from public life."*

In September 1942, this text was reproduced in the "Green Folder," which established "Guideline for the economic administration of the newly occupied territories," a document more than 200 pages long, drawn up by the Economic Administration Staff East and distributed in a total of 6,000 copies.<sup>106</sup>

On 13 August 1941, Hinrich Lohse, *Reichskommissar* for the Ostland, drew up a regulation titled "Preliminary guidelines for the treatment of the Jews in the area of the Reich Commissariat Ostland" which ordered, among other things:

- "a) The countryside is to be cleansed of Jews.*
- b) The Jews are to be removed from all trade, but most urgently from all trade in agricultural products and other food products.*
- c) Jews are to be prohibited from residing in localities of economic, military or spiritual significance or in spas or health resorts.*
- d) Insofar as possible, the Jews are to be concentrated in cities or districts of large cities already possessing a predominantly Jewish population. Ghettos are to be established there. Leaving the ghettos is to be prohibited to them."*

As regards provisioning, the document says:

*"In the ghettos, [the Jews] should be left with only just as much food as the rest of the population can spare, but no more than is sufficient to meet the minimum needs of ghetto residents. The same applies to other vital commodities."*

Able-bodied Jews were to be compelled to perform forced labor, the wages for which were only paid in the form of subsistence "for the forced laborer and his family members unfit for work."<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> EC-347. IMT, Vol. 36, pp. 348f.; T/296 – PS-702.

<sup>107</sup> PS-1138. IMT, Vol. 27, pp. 19-25. Original document in: GARF, 7445-2-145, pp. 22-27, which includes a handwritten annotation dated 13 August 1941.

Lohse stated (Hoppe/Glass, p. 528):

*“These temporary guidelines are only intended to ensure minimum measures of the General or Regional Commissars where, and insofar as, further measures related to the final solution of the Jewish question are not possible,”*

and also added (*ibid.*, p. 527):

*“For the final solution of the Jewish question in the area of the Reich Commissar East, the instructions of my address in Kaunas of 27 July 41 apply.”*

Hoppe and Glass, who provide their readers with a transcript of the document, inform us that no record of this speech has been found, but that Lohse made another speech on the same problem on 1 August 1941 at a meeting held by *Reichsminister* Rosenberg, in which he stated:<sup>108</sup>

*“According to the Führer decision, the Germanization of the Reich Commissariat East is to be the final objective; the Jews are to be removed from these regions to the last man.”*

EM No. 53 dated 15 August 1941 (from *Einsatzgruppe A*) informs us that (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 294):

*“The Reich Commissar for the East in Kaunas has drawn up the draft of a decree on guidelines for the treatment of Jews in the region of the Reich Commissariat East and made it available to the Higher SS and Police leader for an opinion.”*

Order No. 12 from “Department VII” (probably from *Feldkommandantur*) dated 28 August 1941 was already concerned with the “Establishing of Ghettos”:

*“The establishing of ghettos in towns with large Jewish shares of the population, particularly cities, should be undertaken when such establishing is necessary or at least expedient.”*

The order did not apply if the situation in the territory of operations rendered it impracticable due to lack of means or due to the urgency of other requirements.<sup>109</sup>

A letter of the General Commissar in Kaunas dated 12 September 1941 to the directors of the employment agency in Kaunas, Vilnius, Siauliai and Panevezys required, among other things, the “registration and deployment of Jews.”<sup>110</sup>

On 30 September 1941, the City Commissar of Vilnius, Hans Hingst, promulgated detailed “Guidelines for the deployment of Jewish labor units” regarding their registration, payment and assignment to certain jobs (pp. 510-510a).

On 15 October 1941, the head of the employment agency in Vilnius informed the Jewish Council in the ghetto (p. 558):

*“The assignment of Jewish manpower from the ghetto to labor assignments is subject to the Vilnius Employment Agency alone.”*

<sup>108</sup> Hoppe/Glass, p. 527, fn 3; the source given is: “Besprechungsprotokoll der Sitzung bei Reichsminister Rosenberg am 1.8.1941 vom 5.8.1941.”

<sup>109</sup> YVA, O.53-131, p. 17.

<sup>110</sup> LCVA, R-626-1-14, p. 542; next three page numbers from there.

When, on 1 October 1941, a soldier forcibly withdrew a certain number of Jewish workers from the employment agency without permission, the head of the latter agency petitioned Government Advisor Dünbier that he be reprimanded (p. 504).

An undated letter, written before 15 October 1941, headed “Abt. IIa” (Department IIa of the Reich Commissariat East) and addressed to the Regional Commissioners of Riga City and County, Jelgava, Liepaja, Daugavpils, Valmiera and Velikiye Luki, issued directives on the “Establishing of ghettos, Jewish labor camps and labor deployment of the Jews. Registration and obligation to surrender Jewish assets.” The document begins as follows:<sup>111</sup>

*“To cleanse the countryside of Jews, the following measures must be taken, giving due consideration to local and, in particular, economic conditions. All Jews must be confined to ghettos, that is, in larger cities that already host a large number of Jews.”*

This is followed by detailed instructions as to the organization of the ghetto – which was to enjoy “self-administration” under the supervision of a regional commissar – and on the “labor deployment of the Jews”:

*“In order to employ the Jews fit for labor at productive work, it is appropriate to set up an employment agency for Jewish workers. Any request for Jews for any kind of labor deployment has to go through this agency.”*

The wages earned by the Jews were to be paid into an appropriate account of the Regional Commissar.

*“The remuneration for the working Jews, however, is not to correspond to the actual work done. The regional commissar will establish the sums required to defray the necessary maintenance of all ghetto residents. The highest rate for the procurement of the necessary maintenance is equal to the locally existing social-security maintenance rate. For the other, non-working Jews, the maintenance will be defrayed out of the wages earned by the working Jews. To attain the stipulated living standard (support rate), the Council of Jewish Elders will attempt to make as many Jews available for work as possible. The Regional Commissar will establish the quantity of food required for all ghetto residents.”*

If the workplace was located at a great distance from the ghetto, a labor camp could be set up. The Jews were required to report their asset situation by the 15th of October.

During this period, the idea arose and was developed of creating a concentration camp in Latvia. On 20 October 1941, Otto-Heinrich Drechsler, the general commissar for the region, drew up a file memo in which he stated:<sup>112</sup>

*“SS Brigadeführer Stahlecker visited me in my private quarters on 11 October 1941 and explained that, according to the desire of the Führer, a large concentration camp for Jews deported from the Protectorate and the Reich was to be set up in the region of Riga, Jelgava and Tukums. On that occasion, he asked me to help him in the procurement of the necessary materials. I sympathized with him in view*

<sup>111</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-19, pp. 54-56.

<sup>112</sup> YIVO, Occ. E 3-29.

*of this situation, but explained that naturally everything would have to be done to fulfill the Führer's wish."*

A handwritten note informs us that the then head of *Einsatzkommando 2* of *Einsatzgruppe A*, SS *Sturmbannführer* Rudolf Lange, communicated to Drechsler by phone that the camp was to be built 20 km from Riga, with a capacity of 25,000 inmates. The first inmates were scheduled to arrive on 10 November 1941. "A second camp for 25,000 [inmates] is to be built within the framework of the Minsk Ghetto."<sup>112</sup>

Surprisingly, the proposal to build a concentration camp was brought up by Lange, a subordinate of Stahlecker, leader of *Einsatzgruppe A*, who had allegedly received the order to exterminate all the Jews in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. In a file memo with the subject "Establishing a concentration camp in Latvia" dated 1 October 1941, he noted that, at the time, there were approximately 3,000 inmates in the prisons of Riga, but that there was no way to employ them for any useful work:<sup>113</sup>

*"Already for this reason it therefore appears imperative to establish a concentration camp in order to enable a greater exploitation of the inmate labor force.*

*Another aspect in favor of establishing a concentration camp in the vicinity of Riga is the fact that there are still approximately 23,000 Jews in Riga. Cramming the Jews into a ghetto can only be a transitional solution. The necessity will arise shortly to free up the dwelling space occupied by the Jews for other purposes. If possible, an effort must also be made to put 100% to work all the male and female Jews who have been put only partially to work by armed forces agencies etc. Finally, the ghetto offers no possibility of preventing their continued procreation."*

The camp location would have to meet certain requirements, and Lange occupied himself with these as well:

*"The land in the triangle between Riga, Jelgava and Tukums meets all these requirements. It is rather thinly settled countryside."*

Lange had inspected it on 27 September. The small farm houses in the zone could form the point of departure for the construction of the camp. The territory was rich in timber, and the inmates could be employed in the extraction of peat, which was abundant. It was also possible to produce electricity using peat instead of coal, in Riga. The territory permitted agriculture and animal husbandry. The camp could have absorbed the brick factories along the Jelgava-Tukums road. In closing, Lange described the significance and scope of his proposal:

*"Already now it can be said that the earmarked region offers so many possibilities that all the Jews remaining in Riga and even all of Latvia could be concentrated there. When so doing, the male Jews would have to be housed separately from the females right from the start to prevent any further procreation. Children under 14 will have to remain with the women."*

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<sup>113</sup> RGVA, 504-2-8, pp. 148-150.

Lange's view of the future was therefore totally incompatible with the prospect of extermination allegedly ordered by his superior, Stahlecker.

At Berlin, Lange's proposal was amended based on the planned deportation of Jew from the Reich into Latvia, resulting in the concentration camp at Salaspils, but this does not alter the fact that the initial concept was in contradiction to any policy of extermination.

The response of the district commissar of 20 October 1941 is well known: the above-mentioned directives of the *Reichskommissar Ostland* on the "Establishing of ghettos, Jewish labor camps and labor deployment of the Jews." The letter describes the measures undertaken by the civil administration of Latvia:<sup>114</sup>

- 1. Registration of all Jews for numerical and personal recording in special reporting office.*
- 2. Marking of all full-blooded Jews with Star of David and imposition of individual prohibitions and regulations, for example, use of public transportation, possibility of presence in public, etc.*
- 3. Obligation to work for all Jews fit for work, both male and female.*
- 4. Appointment of a Jewish Council of Elders, to whom the responsibility for the entire Jewish community and the administration thereof shall be transferred.*
- 5. Preliminary work on the establishment of a ghetto in the district of the Moscow suburbs."*

Particular attention is given to the "Region of Riga City":

*"A Jewish problem as such exists only in the area of the City Commissariat in Riga. According to the registration carried out so far, approximately 30,000 Jews could be recorded. The establishing of the ghetto in the Moscow suburbs is nearing completion. The last Jew will have disappeared from the cityscape by 1 November 1941. The Aryans residing in this part of the city pose a particular difficulty when establishing the ghetto. The number of Aryans living in the Moscow suburbs amounted to 7,000. A Jewish security service, equipped with rubber billy clubs, was set up to maintain calm and order in the ghetto. The ghetto residents take care of their affairs by way of self-administration. The Jewish council of elders set up by the military administration was maintained for this purpose. This council of elders also takes care of the traffic between the ghetto and the German agencies.*

*The labor deployment of the Riga Jews and the residents of the Riga Ghetto is coming along extraordinarily well. Preparatory measures taken by the labor office were already taken in order to take individual working Jews out of the military agencies. Insofar as possible, Jews are to be employed by the armed forces only where Latvian workers*

- a) cannot be deployed and*
- b) are not available.*

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<sup>114</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, pp. 44-46.

*Apart from that, the forestry service and the supervisory authorities for the supply of heating fuel make efforts to employ larger contingents of male Jews. These are then housed separately from their wives in labor camps.*"

On 20 November, the general commissar in Riga sent the Reich commissar for the East a detailed report on the three ghettos in Latvia. There were 29,602 Jews in Riga, including 5,652 "children up to the age of 14," 2,794 boys and 2,858 girls. There were 15,650 Jews fit for work between the ages of 15 and 65, consisting of 6,143 men and 9,507 women. There were 8,300 unemployable Jews, consisting of 2,069 men and 6,231 women. The ghetto at Liepaja had a population of 3,890 Jews, including 782 "children up to the age of 14," 409 boys and 373 girls; there were 3,002 Jews fit for work aged between 15 and 65 (617 men and 2,385 women), and 106 unemployable Jews (29 men and 77 women). At Daugavpils there were 935 Jews, 173 of them up to the age of 14 (86 boys and 87 girls), 719 Jews fit for work aged between 15 and 65 (298 men and 421 women), plus 14 unemployable Jews (10 men and 4 women).<sup>115</sup>

On 27 August 1942, the Reich commissar for the East, Lohse, sent the general commissars for Riga, Kaunas and Minsk a letter on the administration of the Jewish ghettos, in which he pointed out the following:<sup>116</sup>

*"The establishing of the ghetto is a political measure. Responsibility for it lies with the political division. Apart from establishing the ghetto, the administration also includes maintaining it and the means for the maintenance of the Jews' working strength (food and clothing, structural improvements in the ghetto)."*

The "working strength of the Jews" was considered an "accumulated asset."

On 25 September 1942, Lohse informed the general commissars for Riga, Tallinn (German: Reval), Kaunas and Minsk:<sup>117</sup>

*"In the interests of maintaining the Jews' ability to work, I request that care be taken to hold back and store, out of the accumulated Jewish assets, sufficient quantities of laundry, clothing, shoes and other objects necessary for bare sustenance."*

These measures were intended to avoid "jeopardizing the future labor deployment of the Jews due to a lack of the necessary equipment."

On 8 August 1941, *Reichsminister* Fritz Todt promulgated an "ordinance" on the "Deployment of the Organization Todt in the occupied territories." The aim was the formation of units of the Organization Todt to improve the road system in Russia. The "OT I" was responsible for providing logistical assistance to combat troops. The "OT II" was subdivided into three "lines" responsible for road construction: the first, directed by the engineer Helmut Thiele, was to concern itself with "Thoroughfare XII from the former German Reich border near Taurage through Riga-Pskov and/or Tartu in the direction of Petersburg," in addition to Thoroughfare XIIa, which was to link Ostrov with Pskov; Line 2, headed by the

<sup>115</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-19, pp. 21-27.

<sup>116</sup> YVA, O.53-1, p. 19.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, p. 234.

engineer Grimm, was assigned to Thoroughfare IX, while Line 3 was entrusted to Director of Construction Office Spörl, who was to build Thoroughfare VII and VIII.<sup>118</sup>

These grandiose projects required large amounts of manpower. On 7 December 1942, *Einsatzgruppe* Russia North of the Organization Todt had 48,649 workers, including 2,580 Jews.<sup>119</sup>

Angrick lists at least 20 camps in the central Ukraine alone, deploying Jews for Thoroughfare IV (Angrick, pp. 210f.), at least 25,000 of whom are said to have died (*ibid.*, p. 213), which means that the total number of Jews working there must have been far greater than that.

Other fragmentary bits of information confirm the use of Jews for their labor in these construction projects. For instance, a message intercepted by the British in very early 1942 said:<sup>120</sup>

*“The Regional Commissars in Letischew, Stara-Konstantinow, Kaspopol, Sarny and Vladimir-Wolinsk have each been asked to provide 400 male Jews, making a total of 2000, for urgent work on bridge construction.”*

The *Deutsche-Ukraine Zeitung* No. 89 of 6 May 1942 reported the following news item with reference to Shepetovka:<sup>121</sup>

*“A Jewish labor unit is at work building roads and stone bridges. A 19 km long road is being built from Sch. to Berezdov.”*

## 2.6. The “Führerbefehl”

As early as the early 1970s, orthodox Holocaust historiography made a clear distinction between the fate of the Western Jews and that of the Eastern Jews under National-Socialist German rule. Already in 1961, Raul Hilberg summarized his position in these brief sentences (Hilberg 1961, p. 177):

*“Basically, we are dealing with two of Hitler’s decisions. One order was given in the spring of 1941, during the planning of the invasion of the USSR; it provided that small units of the SS and Police be dispatched to Soviet territory, where they were to move from town to town to kill all Jewish inhabitants on the spot. This method may be called the ‘mobile killing operations.’ Shortly after the mobile operations had begun in the occupied Soviet territories, Hitler handed down his second order. That decision doomed the rest of European Jewry. Unlike the Russian Jews, who were overtaken by mobile units, the Jewish population of central, western, and southeastern Europe was transported to killing centres.”*

The theory of the two-fold extermination order became an indispensable cornerstone of the whole orthodox narrative, since it left every historian free to choose whatever dating system seemed best suited their agenda.

<sup>118</sup> LCVA, R-1368-1-1, pp. 1-3.

<sup>119</sup> LVVA, P-752-2-1, p. 242.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, HW 16-6. Summary of messages intercepted between 15 January and 15 February 1942. ZIP/SMGP/ 33/17.3.42, p. 11.

<sup>121</sup> YVA, O.53-138, p. 2.

In the third edition of the same work forty-two years later, the two alleged Hitler “decisions” have dissolved; Hilberg amended the above passage as follows (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 276):

*“The annihilation phase consisted of two major operations. The first was launched on June 22, 1941, with the invasion of the USSR. Small units of the SS and Police were dispatched to Soviet territory, where they killed Jewish inhabitants on the spot. Shortly after these mobile killings had begun, a second operation was instituted, in the course of which the Jewish populations of central, western and southeastern Europe were transported to camps equipped with gassing installations.”*

Historians inherited the “Führerbefehl” from the Otto Ohlendorf trial, in which it played a crucial role, as noted by Earl:

*“The court believed that there was an order issued by Hitler to liquidate civilians and that it was given to the leadership of the Einsatzgruppen before the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. Importantly, the court also believed that this order explained the defendants’ criminal actions; the Führerbefehl was the reason these men were on trial for crimes against humanity. No Hitler, no crime. [...]”*

*The defense lawyers cite the order to justify and excuse the behavior of their clients in Russia; it was their defense. The judge and the prosecutor also saw it as integral to the trial because they believed it was the directive that was at the heart of Hitler’s racial war against the Jews.”* (Earl, pp. 147, 186f.)

It remained an undemonstrated supposition which was nonetheless accepted, because it suited both the prosecution and the defense in the same way (*ibid.*, p. 94):

*“Not only did the prosecutors fail to prove that the defendants were party to, or even knew about Hitler’s Final Solution, but there was also no attempt to show that the murders they did participate in constituted a systematic Russian- or European-wide program of murdering Jews.”*

Initially, the historiographical debate on the alleged extermination order issued to the *Einsatzgruppen* was not very heated: it was merely a question of determining whether the presumed order was issued before the beginning of Operation Barbarossa or afterwards. I shall concern myself with this question in the paragraphs below.

Debate among Holocaust historians on the presumed order to exterminate the European Jews, by contrast, was more heated; after a clumsy series of conjectures of all kinds, in the end, they adopted Christian Gerlach’s hypothesis that “the decision to ‘exterminate the Jews in Europe’ must have been made after December 7 and before December 14, 1941” (Gerlach 1998, p. 784).

But even this conjecture, like the others, is completely unfounded, as I have shown elsewhere.<sup>122</sup> What is important here is the fact that even Gerlach sticks to the above-mentioned dichotomy, although he does not take a clear position on the

<sup>122</sup> Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, Chapter 5, “The Führer Order and the Alleged NS Extermination Policy,” pp. 166-377.



order allegedly issued to the *Einsatzgruppen*, with regard to which he limits himself to saying (Gerlach 1998, pp. 761f.):

*“In the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, immediately following the German invasion of June 22, 1941, a systematic destruction of Jews began with the murder of men of military age. The executions were carried out by special mobile ‘task forces’ (Einsatzgruppen) of the Security Police and the Security Service (SD), by police battalions, by brigades of the Armed SS (Waffen-SS), and, to a more limited extent, by rear guard units of the army. Beginning in August and September of 1941, women and children were also included. Beginning in September and October, entire Jewish communities were liquidated, initiating the phase of total destruction.”*

He then summarizes the dominant positions of orthodox Holocaust historians:

*“The point of transition to a policy of exterminating the Jewish people, or the initial preparations for it, can thus be clearly seen in a number of occupied territories and regions beginning in September and October of 1941. [...] In the context of these developments, most historians have hitherto equated the decision to deport German Jews with the decision to liquidate them. At the most, it is assumed that there were two separate decisions. One, involving the execution of Soviet Jews, would have occurred in July or August of 1941. The second, concerning the extermination of Jews from the rest of Europe, is supposed to have been reached in September or October of that year.”* (ibid., pp. 763f.)

His contribution, as I have mentioned above, is in having propounded a Führer “decision” in December 1941.

The problem of the two-fold order (or double decision) therefore remains open: why didn’t Hitler issue a single extermination order valid for all Jews without distinction? Why were two orders required? Even orthodox Holocaust historians admit that, at least at the beginning, the fate of the European Jews was quite distinct from that of the Soviet Jews. As Browning put it as early as 1982:

*“In deciding to kill all the Russian Jews, Hitler broke the vicious circle which meant that, with each new military success, an ever-increasing number of Jews ended up under German rule. The Nazi Jewish policy in the rest of Europe was not immediately transformed, however. They continued to speak of emigration, expulsion and plans for future reinstallation. [...] In February 1942, the Minister of Foreign Affairs officially abandoned the Madagascar plan. Preparations for the murder of the Jews did not therefore produce any immediate repercussions on Nazi Jewish policies in other countries. The idea of the Final Solution for the European Jews was formed by means of a separate process and resulted from a distinct decision.”* (Browning 1985, p. 198)

More than a decade later, Dieter Pohl reiterated (1993, p. 98):

*“Although the order to kill Jewish women and children en masse as well was presumably issued to the Einsatzgruppen at the same time – end of July/beginning of August – the plan for the total extermination of all European Jews was not as yet predetermined by this.”*

These considerations supply the response to the second question which I set forth above: if the presumed extermination of the European Jews required a separate decision and a distinct order, the killing of the Soviet Jews did not regard the Jews as Jews, but the Jews as *Soviets* within the general context of the struggle against Bolshevism. The Hitlerian concept of “Jewish Bolshevism,” which had already emerged in *Mein Kampf* (see Hillgruber 1987, pp. 105-107), always remained at the center of Hitler’s world view.

The day of the attack on the Soviet Union, 22 June 1941, the Führer issued a *Proclamation to the German People* in which he declared as follows, among other things:

*“It was not Germany that ever attempted to export its National-Socialist world view to Russia, but the Jewish-Bolshevist rulers in Moscow have incessantly attempted to force their rule upon our people, and the other European peoples, and this not only intellectually, but above all militarily and through power politics. This regime’s activity has only resulted in chaos, misery and starvation in all countries.”* (Domarus, Vol. II, 2nd half-volume 1941-1945, p. 1727)

At the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, the defense introduced an “expert legal opinion” by Dr. Reinhard Maurach, professor of criminal law and eastern-European law, in which Point “C” regarded Germany’s war against the Soviet Union. He noted, first of all, that the clash between these two powers was, and could only ever be, ideological (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 346):

*“The enemy was not a state securely linked to the community of nations consisting of one nation or a self-sufficient union of nations, but rather an ideology that considered the state it had created only as one of the vehicles of its power, that basically denied the forms of existence of other nations and states, and which had unmistakably shown in all of its assertions of power up to the outbreak of the war that it would not consider the coming conflict merely as a ‘war’, i. e., as an armed conflict that would be waged according to certain minimum international rules, but that over and beyond this it was determined to fight it out without regard to basic agreements and with every means at its disposal. All persons in authority in both the German and the Soviet Russian camps were well aware, even before it began, that the war in the East could not be considered a ‘normal war.’”*

In this context, the killing of Jews – unjustifiable from the objective point of view – had to be considered from the subjective point of view (*ibid.*, p. 347):

*“General extermination measures cannot be justified by any war situation, no matter how exceptional; therefore we must examine to what extent they could have seemed necessary subjectively. And this leads us to the question of the relationship of bolshevism and Judaism (a) in reference to National-Socialist ideology and (b) in reference to the conceptions of the defendants themselves.”*

In this regard, Dr. Maurach wrote (*ibid.*, p. 351):

*“As a result of the historical sociological study of Russia during the past decades it has been established beyond doubt that the percentage of the Jewish population*

*in political, cultural, and economic key positions within the Soviet Union is in fact an extremely high one.*

*These findings were not only the result of inquiries by Germans and Russian emigrants but also, at least until about 1934, by Soviet Russian inquiries. But even according to the Soviet statistical system which is reducing the Jewish percentage, it is established that the percentage of the Jewish population in the aforementioned key positions exceeded their numerical strength (about 4-5 percent of the total population) by a considerable margin on the average. Individually the Jewish participation fluctuated and fluctuates in various offices, economic enterprises, and organizations, according to rank and positions. However, on the basis of Soviet statistics it is possible to establish in general that the share of the Jews was the greater, the more influential the office was, politically or economically, and the more influence was attributed to the bearer of the office (de facto if not de jure).*

*The infiltration of Jews into official positions amounted to about 20 percent on the average at the time the statistics were made; the percentage was considerably higher in Party positions, the average of which fluctuated considerably. Thus, the Ministry of Foreign Trade with its representations abroad can be called a Jewish domain to an especially high degree. This can be applied in a similar way to the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry for National Security, and to the majority of the Economic Ministries; the Jewish percentage within the armed forces is especially large in the so-called political administration. Here the Jewish infiltration into the higher key positions comes up to 65 percent.*

*We have seen (see above) that the National-Socialist ideology was rashly prepared to regard this circumstance as a conclusive, if not decisive, proof for the fact that bolshevism was a Jewish invention and was only serving the interests of Jewry."*

In this regard, however, according to Maurach, the National-Socialist ideology had confused the effect with the cause. Initially, Russian Jewry gathered around two principal organizations: the Zionist groups, who were anti-Soviet, and the Bund, with the Menshevik platform. With the passage of time, a great number of Jews, who belonged predominantly to the intellectual classes, infiltrated the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus, and it was precisely "this opportunism, and not an ideological and fateful link between Judaism and Bolshevism, which explains the great Jewish influence within state and party" (*ibid.*, p. 352).

But German soldiers, as they gradually penetrated Soviet territory, became increasingly aware of the preponderance of Jews in the Soviet state apparatus, and took this as confirmation that the theory of "Jewish Bolshevism" proclaimed by National Socialism was a fact of life (*ibid.*, p. 353).

Beginning at the end of July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C*, stationed at Zhitomir at the time, reported:<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Mallmann 2011 *et al.*; p. 201. EM No. 31, dated 23 July 1941.

*“Many Jews, particularly the intelligentsia, are as active as they possibly can be as informants and spies for the NKVD. They receive quite preferential treatment from the Soviet authorities. They were employed primarily as administrative employees, warehouse managers, kolkhozes and sovkhoses (80% of the Soviet officials in the Zhitomir region were Jews). In administering their religion, the Soviet officials hardly caused them any problems at all. In contradistinction to the Orthodox churches, their synagogues were always available to them for practicing their religious rituals. Among the Jews, there is still the hope that the Bolsheviks will return in the shortest time. Based on the attitude of the Jewish population under Bolshevik rule, the population, apart from a few exceptions, is deliberately anti-Semitic.”*

A few days later, a report stated:<sup>124</sup>

*“The prevailing role in the life of the people is played by the Bolshevik Party, whose main carriers are the Jews. Apart from a few exceptions, the Jews were also the sole beneficiaries of the system. Leading positions were almost without exception occupied by Jews. They exercised absolute power and enjoyed wide-ranging economic liberties. [...] Jews, insofar as they did not belong to the Party, were raised from the masses to leading positions through promotion by their racial comrades.”*

The Jews were consequently considered “a factor of disruption of the very worst kind.”<sup>125</sup>

In EM No. 81 dated 12 September 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C* declared:<sup>126</sup>

*“Experiences made confirm the earlier claim that the Soviet state was a Jewish state of the purest water.”*

It should therefore be quite clear, explained *Einsatzgruppe C*,<sup>127</sup>

*“that the German people are not conducting this war against the peoples of the USSR, but rather exclusively against Jewish Bolshevism.”*

This conception also appears quite clearly in other private, non-propagandistic reports, such as that from the commander of the Security Police in Minsk, Burkhardt, of January 1942 (Hoppe, Doc. 50, pp. 176-178):

*“In the areas of Byelorussia that were Bolshevik even before the Russo-Polish war, living conditions for lower-class Jews were the same as in the Polish sector. Here as well, there were decidedly poor Jewish areas of settlement. Since the nationalized economy in Russia didn’t offer Jews anywhere near the same possibilities as in other countries, the Jews strived to gain decisive influence over the state apparatus itself and the Communist Party.*

*Particularly desirable, of course, were the true Soviet power centers, the Central Committees of the Party and the Politburos. The extent to which leading Party positions were infiltrated by Jews, is shown by the following figures: With 1.77%*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218; EM No. 40, dated 1 August 1941.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439; EM No. 80, dated 11 September 1941.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 609. EM No. 100 of 1 October 1941.

*of the total population, Jewry accounted for 5.2 % of all Party members, the Jews were represented with 25.7% in the Central Committee of the Party, and with 38.8% in the Politburo, a figure which rose to 42.9% by the close of the Lenin era. These figures are averages for the entire territory of Soviet Russia. With this one has to keep in mind that in a territory with a large and very dense Jewish population, such as Byelorussia, the percentage was much higher. [...]*

*Even the attitude of the Jews themselves is completely different in the two parts of Byelorussia. While in the former Polish territory the Jew was persecuted for untold ages and was therefore reluctant to take center stage, even in recent years, the Soviet Jew, in the 25 years of Soviet rule, adopted an extraordinarily self-confident and arrogant attitude, which he maintained even after the invasion by German troops. Only the solution to the Jewish question as initiated by the Security Police and Security Service was capable of bringing about changes here. [...]*

*This is contrasted by the fact that it is precisely Jewry that continues to be the most reliable carrier of the Bolshevik ideal, and will continue to be. A dramatic increase in Russian resistance and partisan activity is also noted in all the regions with Jewish settlements. Even if the Jew does not himself become active as a partisan or proceed against the Germans due to his racially determined character features, he still supports resistance forces by supplying them with information, clothing, etc.”*

Maurach's interpretation does not appear more justified than the National-Socialist interpretation, since it is possible that it is Maurach's interpretation which mistakes effect for cause; a 1943 German brochure explains that (Leibbrandt, p. 33):

*“[...] in 1903, there was a split in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks ('menshinstvo' – minority). It is characteristic that – as long as the outcome of the Revolution was still unclear – Jews held leading positions in every political party in Russia. In 1905, Jewry's hour appeared to have come. The chairman of the Revolutionary Committee in Riga was a Jew, a second Jew raged in Liepaja, and Bronstein-Trotsky was chairman of the Worker Soviet in Petersburg. But the Czar was not overthrown.*

*All the Jewish activity in the Czarist state aimed at the collapse of the state, the elimination of the anti-Semitic ruling class, and the creation of preliminary conditions for Jewish rule in Eastern Europe on the path to world domination by Jewry sprang from the so-called 'Ahadha'amistic' movement, led by Ascher Ginzberg. After Ginzberg's move from Odessa to London, Ahadha'amism became the foundation for world Zionism, the leadership of which became the general staff of the Jewish campaign against the rest of the world.*

*Czarism collapsed in February 1917. Jewry triumphed with the abolition of the exemption clause on 3 April. Seven months later (7 November 1917), Lenin took power, with 6 Jews, 1 Russian, 1 Pole and 1 Georgian on his side.”*

This position, at least with regard to Bolshevism, coincided with that expressed by Winston Churchill in 1920. It distinguished between national Jews, whose be-

havior was unexceptionable, and international Jews, guilty of organizing a “world-wide conspiracy” (Churchill 1920, p. 5):

*“In violent opposition to all this sphere of Jewish effort rise the schemes of the International Jews. The adherents of this sinister confederacy are mostly men reared up among the unhappy populations of countries where Jews are persecuted on account of their race. Most, if not all, of them have forsaken the faith of their forefathers, and divorced from their minds all spiritual hopes of the next world. This movement among the Jews is not new. From the days of Spartacus-Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxembourgh (Germany), and Emma Goldman (United States), this world-wide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality, has been steadily growing. [...]*

*There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the actual bringing about of the Russian Revolution, by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews, it is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others. With the notable exception of Lenin, the majority of the leading figures are Jews. Moreover, the principal inspiration and driving power comes from the Jewish leaders. Thus Tchitcherin, a pure Russian, is eclipsed by his nominal subordinate Litvinoff, and the influence of Russians like Bukharin or Lunacharski cannot be compared with the power of Trotsky, or of Zinovieff, the Dictator of the Red Citadel (Petrograd) or of Krassin or Radek – all Jews. In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing. And the prominent, if not indeed the principal, part in the system of terrorism applied by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combating Counter-Revolution has been taken by Jews, and in some notable cases by Jewesses. The same evil prominence was obtained by Jews in the brief period of terror during which Bela Kun ruled in Hungary. The same phenomenon has been presented in Germany (especially in Bavaria), so far as this madness has been allowed to prey upon the temporary prostration of the German people. Although in all these countries there are many non-Jews every whit as bad as the worst of the Jewish revolutionaries, the part played by the latter in proportion to their numbers in the population is astonishing.”*

Churchill concluded with this appeal to the national Jews:

*“It is particularly important in these circumstances that the national Jews in every country who are loyal to the land of their adoption should come forward on every occasion, as many of them in England have already done, and take a prominent part in every measure for combating the Bolshevik conspiracy. In this way they will be able to vindicate the honor of the Jewish name and make it clear to all the world that the Bolshevik movement is not a Jewish movement, but is repudiated vehemently by the great mass of the Jewish race.”*

But even assuming Maurach’s interpretation to be completely valid, there remains the fact that the National-Socialist vision of the world perceived the problem to be real, and thus, while it does not justify the massacres committed by the

*Einsatzgruppen*, it at least permits an understanding of their motive, *i.e.*, the fact that Eastern Jews were considered the architects and supporters of Bolshevism. The massacres were not, therefore, directed against Jews as such, but against Jews as Jewish-Bolsheviks.

The statements made on 13 January 1949 by Walter Blume, ex SS *Standartenführer* and head of *Sonderkommando 7a*, with regard to the conference in Pretzsch, to which I shall return later, disregarding the presumed extermination order for now, no doubt provide an accurate picture of the ideological framework of the National-Socialist leaders. He recalled that on that occasion, Heydrich

*“disclosed to us that the concentration of men and leaders occurred because now the Russian campaign lay immediately before us, and that we, in the context of this war, have the security-police task of securing the operations of the armed forces with regard to the security of the troops in the territory that they just rolled through. He spoke of the great spaces which remained unsecured, of the highways, and mentioned the partisans in particular which had to be expected, and in connection with unsafe elements, which could or would become a danger for the armed forces, he named Eastern Jewry in particular.*

[Question] *What did he say about Eastern Jewry in particular?*

[Answer] *I have used the wording that is somehow stuck in my memory, that eastern Jewry was the intellectual reservoir of world Bolshevism, and that for this reason, a military victory over Russia would not mean the end of Bolshevism as long as eastern Jewry still existed. This is why Eastern Jewry must be destroyed.*”<sup>128</sup>

This, as noted above, explains the otherwise inexplicable Holocaustian theory of the two-fold decision and two-fold order.

This is, by the way, the interpretation of Jewish historian Arno J. Mayer, who has written (Mayer, p. 270):

*“Ab origine and in the first place, the Wehrmacht and its associated armies were fighting to defeat the Red Army, to conquer Russian territories, to destroy the Soviet regime, and to extirpate Bolshevism. The Jews became the chosen civilian victims of this furious total war. Political and politicized soldiers of Barbarossa fell upon them because they considered the Jew the primary carrier of the Bolshevik system and ideology—and because they were more vulnerable than other real or imagined carriers. This crusade within the war became ever more vicious and systematic with the unanticipated blockage and soaring ferocity of the military campaign.*

*Even so, and notwithstanding the unparalleled magnitude of the Jewish suffering, the extermination of eastern Jewry never became the chief objective of Barbarossa. The fight for Lebensraum and against bolshevism was neither a pretext nor an expedient for the killing of Jews. Nor was it a mere smoke screen to disguise the Jewish massacres as reprisals against partisans. The assault on the Jews was unquestionably intertwined with the assault on bolshevism from the very outset. But*

<sup>128</sup> YVA, O.53-141, pp. 54f.

*this is not to say that it was the dominant strand in the hybrid 'Judeobolshevism' that Barbarossa targeted for destruction. In fact, the war against the Jews was a graft onto or a parasite upon the eastern campaign, which always remained its host, even or especially once it became mired deep in Russia.*

*When they set forth on their mission, the Einsatzgruppen and the RSHA were not given the extermination of Jews as their principal, let alone their only, assignment."*

The "Guidelines for the Military Securing and Maintenance of Law and Order in the East" dated 25 September 1941, which have as their subject "Jews in the newly occupied Eastern territories," clearly explain the National-Socialist position:<sup>129</sup>

*"The struggle against Bolshevism demands a ruthless and energetic crackdown first and foremost also on the Jews, the principal carriers of Bolshevism."*

This therefore required the avoidance of any "collaboration" between the Wehrmacht and the Jewish population and the use of Jews for important auxiliary tasks. They could only be used in "labor units" under German supervision.

"Judeo-Bolshevism" in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports is treated as a proven fact, a simple observation based on experience.

In the National-Socialist politico-ideological conception, "Judeo-Bolshevism" was, therefore, not just a pretext for the commission of genocide for racial motives. If the *Einsatzgruppen* had received such an order, there would have been no need constantly to stress the Jewish influence in the Soviet apparatus. On the other hand, it was not just a prejudice either, because in the areas in which such influence was scarce, the reports say so openly, as in the case of Borisov.<sup>130</sup>

*"Jews here were relatively without influence."*

Even in the most radical reports, such as that of *Einsatzgruppe C* in EM No. 86 dated 17 September 1941 (see Chapter 3), the priority of annihilating Bolshevism was repeated over and over again:<sup>131</sup>

*"Even if an immediate 100% elimination of Jewry were possible, the political danger would not be eliminated by this. The work of the Bolsheviks is supported by Jews, Russians, Georgians, Latvians, Ukrainians; the Bolshevik apparatus is in no way identical with the Jewish population. In this situation, the goal of political-police security would be missed if one were to place the main task of destroying the Communist apparatus in second or third place after the easier task of eliminating the Jews. Concentrating on Bolshevik officials moreover deprives Jewry of its most capable cadre, so that solving the Jewish problem increasingly becomes a purely organizational problem."*

*Einsatzgruppe C* therefore considered its "main task" to be the destruction of the Communist apparatus.

<sup>129</sup> YVA, O.53-132, p. 27.

<sup>130</sup> EM No. 31, dated 23 July 1941. *ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 478f.



## 2.7. The General Order to Exterminate the Jews before the Beginning of Operation Barbarossa

In the early 1980s, Holocaust historiography was divided into two currents regarding the genesis of the decision relating to the mass shootings of Eastern Jews. This division was summarized by Krausnick and Wilhelm as follows:

*“The different views on the genesis of National-Socialist Jewish extermination policy in 1941 consist largely in the fact that it is assumed, on the one hand, that a fundamental order on the general extermination of the Jews was issued weeks and months prior to the beginning of the campaign, while, on the other hand, an ‘improvised radicalization’ of the persecution of Jews right up to the final systematic killing is assumed.”* (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 634)

In their view, these two positions “can only partially stand up to an examination of the sources.” By the end of June 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* were aware “at least in part, of the existence of a general order to exterminate the Jews,” although it referred “only” to “Eastern Jewry”. The second prevailed and developed thanks, above all, to the contribution of Alfred Streim and Christian Streit. The first was in fact rather weak and was based on post-war statements which were dubious, to say the least. One of his most important supporters was Andreas Hillgruber (1984, pp. 224f.):

*“While it is disputed among researchers when Hitler committed himself during the preparatory stages of the military attack on the Soviet Union – which was planned in detail since the beginning of June/end of July 1940 – to exterminate systematically the Jews on the territory of conquered European Russia in the course of the intended racially-ideological war of annihilation, a good argument can be made that his instruction, issued orally to Himmler or Heydrich, to shoot all the Jews in Russia was orally conveyed by the Head of the Reich Security Main Office, as well as Head of the Security Police and Security Service (SD), Reinhard Heydrich, to the leaders of the so-called ‘Einsatzgruppen’ and ‘Einsatzkommandos’ at the end of May 1941, i.e., a few weeks before the beginning of the attack, at the Border Police School in Pretzsch (near Wittenberg).”*

The references adopted by Hillgruber (*ibid.*, fn 45, p. 225, quoting Höhne, pp. 328f., and Krausnick in Buchheim *et al.*, pp. 363f.) in turn rely on the testimonies by Otto Ohlendorf and Walter Blume. These two anecdotal sources nevertheless vacillated ambiguously between a primary position of the Jew as a member of the group of predestined victims and a secondary one, which subordinated their killing to the conditions of the war against the Soviet Union.

In the source indicated, Krausnick writes (Buchheim *et al.*, pp. 299f.):

*“That the tasks of the Einsatzgruppen would include shooting all the Jews was never mentioned in this order from Brauchitsch based on an agreement with Heydrich. [...] According to testimonies of participants, the secret order on shooting all the Jews was nevertheless transmitted orally to the Einsatzgruppen leaders personally, at the meeting of their formations in May 1941.”*

In a note, he refers to the Nuremberg Trial transcripts, Vol. IV, p. 350, and Vol. XXXI, p. 39, specifying: “Ohlendorf, 5. November 1945 und 3. Januar 1946,” in addition to Document NO-4145, “Dr. Walter Blume, 29. Juni 1947” (*ibid.*, fn 129, p. 300).

At the hearing of 3 January 1946, Ohlendorf was interrogated by Colonel Amen, who, among other things, asked him what other orders had been received by the *Einsatzgruppen* with regard to Jews and Communist commissars. Ohlendorf replied (IMT, Vol. 4, p. 316):

*“The instructions were that in the Russian operational areas of the Einsatzgruppen the Jews, as well as the Soviet political commissars, were to be liquidated.”*

At Pretzsch, “about 3 or 4 days” before the beginning of the Russian campaign, there “was a conference at which the *Einsatzgruppen* and the *Einsatzkommandos* were informed of their tasks and were given the necessary orders.” (*ibid.*, p. 317).

In his affidavit dated 5 November 1945, Ohlendorf declared (PS-2620. IMT, Vol. 31, p. 39):

*“Himmler declared that an important part of our mission consisted of the elimination of Jews –women, men and children – and Communist officials. I was informed of the attack on Russia about four weeks beforehand.”*

In his affidavit of 29 June 1947, Walter Blume also gave particular prominence to the alleged extermination order (NO-4145. TWC, Vol. IV, p. 140):

*“During the setting up of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos during the months of May-June 1941 I was at Dueben. During June, Heydrich, Chief of the Security Police and SD, and Streckenbach, head of office I of the Reich Security Main Office, held lectures on the duties of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos. At this time we were already being instructed about the tasks of exterminating the Jews. It was stated that eastern Jewry was the intellectual reservoir of bolshevism and, therefore, in the Fuehrer’s opinion, must be exterminated. This speech was made to a small, selected audience. Although I cannot remember the individuals present, I assume that many of the Einsatzgruppen chiefs and Einsatz- and Sonderkommandos chiefs were present. I heard another speech by Heydrich in the Prinz Albrecht Palace in Berlin, in the course of which he again emphasized these points.”*

Krausnick continues by also referring to Ohlendorf’s statements which describe the presumed order in the general context of the war against the Soviet Union:

*“According to Einsatzgruppenführer Ohlendorf’s testimony, the ‘Liquidation Order’ applied to, as he put it, the ‘killing of all captured racially and politically undesirable elements who had been designated a danger to security.’”*

This category included four main groups: “communist officials, so-called ‘racially inferior Asians,’ Gypsies and Jews” (Buchheim *et al.*, p. 300).

As regards the Gypsies, on 13 August 1942 the commander of the Regular Police at Cracow, Lieutenant General of Police Herbert Becker, transmitted the fol-

lowing teletype to the commanders of the Regular Police at Cracow, Warsaw, Radom, Lublin and Galicia:<sup>132</sup>

*“In the opinion of the RFSS, it is not permissible to intervene against Gypsies with police methods simply because they are ‘Gypsies.’ Of course, against Gypsies who commit crimes or join the bandits [partisans] or are active in aiding and abetting them, one must proceed as uncompromisingly as against all other law-breakers.”*

At the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, Ohlendorf, while questioned by his defense attorney Rudolf Aschenauer, described the problem of the presumed extermination order as follows (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 244):

*“Q. When was the order given for the liquidation of certain elements of the population in the U.S.S.R. and by whom was it handed over?”*

*A. As far as I recollect, this order was given at the same time when the area of operations was made known. In Pretzsch, the chiefs of offices I and IV, the then Lieutenant Colonels (Obersturmbannführer) Streckenbach and Mueller gave the order which had been issued by Himmler and Heydrich.*

*Q. What was the wording of this order?”*

*A. This special order, for such it is, read as follows: That in addition to our general task the Security Police and SD, the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos had the mission to protect the rear of the troops by killing the Jews, gypsies, Communist functionaries, active Communists, and all persons who would endanger the security.”*

In this context, however, Ohlendorf decisively denied that this order was directed against the Jews as such, *i.e.*, on a racial basis. He and the other participants protested, to which Streckenbach replied that he, too, had protested, but

*“that Himmler had rebuked him just as severely by stating that this was a Fuehrer order, which must be carried out, in order to achieve the war aim of destroying communism for all times, therefore, this order was to be accepted without hesitation.” (ibid., pp. 244f.)*

Aschenauer then asked his client whether he was aware of “plans or directives which had as their goal the extermination on racial and religious grounds.” Ohlendorf replied:

*“I expressly assure you that I neither knew of such plans nor was I called on to cooperate in any such plans,”*

and this applied to Slavs as well as Jews. He knew

*“that in the years of 1938, 1939 and 1940, no extermination plans existed, but on the contrary, with the aid of Heydrich and by cooperation with Jewish organizations, emigration programs from Germany and Austria were arranged; financial funds even were raised in order to help aid the poorer Jews to make this emigration possible.” (ibid., p. 245)*

<sup>132</sup> YVA, O.53-1, p. 141.

In 1941, he himself, Ohlendorf, intervened favorably in several individual emigration cases. He added (*ibid.*):

*“When Himmler was in Nikola[y]ev in 1941, he neither made any reproaches about this, nor did he give me any other directives. I am rather convinced that where such an extermination policy was later carried out, it was not carried out by the order of the central agencies, but it was the work of individual people.”*

In practice, the principal supporter of the Jewish extermination order explicitly denied that it was directed against the Jews as such.

Returning to Hillgruber, his reference to Heinz Höhne’s book is entirely superfluous, because the author, in mentioning the meeting at Pretzsch, used the same source as Krausnick, *i.e.*, Ohlendorf and Blume (Höhne, p. 329).

The proofs of the presumed order to exterminate the Jews before the start of the Eastern campaign were therefore entirely inconsistent.

In early May 1984, a famous congress was held at Stuttgart on the subject of “The Murder of the European Jews during the Second World War: Formation and Implementation of the Decision,” during which two speakers concerned themselves specifically with the subject under discussion. Krausnick, who spoke on “Hitler and the Orders to the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Summer of 1941,” reached the conclusion that “the ‘general order on the total elimination of Jewry’” was issued to the *Einsatzgruppen* “prior to June 22, 1941,” giving ample space to the post-war statements, not only Ohlendorf’s and Blume’s “canonical” statements, but also Karl Jäger’s statements of 1959 – which contradict those by Ohlendorf and Blume, as Krausnick himself noted (Jäckel/Rohwer, pp. 91f., 103). I will return to this in Chapter 4.

In the paper titled “On the Disclosure of the General Order to Exterminate the Jews” by Alfred Streim, at that time chief prosecutor at Germany’s Central Office for the Investigation of National-Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg (hereafter *Zentrale Stelle*), stated:

*“While there is no doubt as to the existence of the orally-issued ‘Führer Order’, despite systematic investigation into the crimes of the Einsatzgruppen, to date it has not been possible to determine who, at what time and at what place, transmitted the order to the heads of the Einsatzgruppen and to the commanders of the Einsatz- or Sonderkommandos to exterminate all Jews.”* (*ibid.*, p. 107)

Streim deserves credit for having undermined the credibility of Ohlendorf’s and Blume’s statements as mere procedural defense tactics, and therefore also the reliability of historiographical interpretations based on these statements:

*“Ohlendorf’s testimony and statements on the disclosure of the ‘Führer Order’ by Streckenbach a few days before marching off into the ‘Barbarossa’ territory during a working conference in Pretzsch are false. During the Einsatzgruppen Trial, the former head of Einsatzgruppe D was able to convince his fellow defendants to submit to a line of defense devised by himself with the observation that, if they claimed to have carried out the extermination of the Jews from the very outset*

based on a 'Führer Order,' they could expect a more lenient sentence." (*ibid.*, pp. 107f.)

In Streim's view, the order to exterminate the Jews "was probably issued only a few weeks after the beginning of the Russian campaign" (*ibid.*, p. 112).

Nevertheless, a few defendants, such as Walter Haensch, head of *Sonderkommando* 4b of *Einsatzgruppe C*, declared that he had no knowledge of the "Führerbefehl" (TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 318-320):

*"PRESIDING JUDGE MUSMANNO: Now, Witness, as I recollect what you stated, you were instructed by Stahlecker and later by Heydrich that you were to go into Russia and that you were to fight saboteurs, partisans, and obstructionists, and that you were also to offer protection to the German army. [...] What was said to you about Jews, gypsies, and Communist functionaries?"*

*A. Your Honor, Jews and gypsies Streckenbach and Heydrich never mentioned to me. These words never came up on this occasion. The details of the assignment were not given.*

*Q. What was said to you by Streckenbach and Heydrich regarding Jews, Communist functionaries, and gypsies?"*

*A. If I may repeat this, your Honor, Jews and gypsies were never mentioned. The word was never mentioned even.*

*Q. In this whole conversation with these two men the word 'Jews' was never mentioned?"*

*A. No. It was not mentioned.*

*Q. Did they not say that Jews were active Communists and in offering security to the army it was necessary to be on guard against the Jews?"*

*A. No, your Honor, this was never mentioned. If I may repeat, the individual persons or elements who might endanger the security of the troops were never mentioned at all by Streckenbach in any way, nor did Heydrich do so, but I was told that corresponding orders existed with the army, and that the mission of the Kommando was already fixed. That was during the second discussion with Streckenbach. [...]*

*Q. Was anything said to you about the Fuehrer Order which called for a liquidation..."*

*A. No.*

*Q. Well, I didn't finish the sentence, but you apparently know what I am referring to. What was the Fuehrer Order? You answered before I finished the question, so, therefore, you are familiar with it. Now, what was the Fuehrer Order? Tell me.*

*A. Well, your Honor, I want to say the following.*

*Q. Tell me what the Fuehrer Order was.*

*A. Well, the Fuehrer Order, as I heard of it here and got to know it here, says that Jews – I don't remember the exact wording now but it was mentioned here – that Jews, and gypsies, and dangerous elements were to be killed.*

*Q. And when did you first learn of the Fuehrer Order?*

*A. I heard about the Fuehrer Order – about the existence of the Fuehrer Order – for the first time here from Mr. Wartenberg [Member of prosecution staff who conducted interrogations in this case].*

*The question was never put to me whether I knew the Fuehrer Order, but Mr. Wartenberg told me the fact that the Fuehrer Order existed.*

*Q. And when was that?*

*A. That was during an interrogation. It must have been the last interrogation, I believe on 23 July.*

*Q. 1947?*

*A. 1947, yes.*

[...]

*Q. In your conversation with Thomas, was nothing said about the order to liquidate Jews?*

*A. No. Nothing was mentioned.*

*Q. How long were you in Russia?*

*A. I was in Russia actually 7 to 8 weeks altogether. From the middle of March until about the middle of July I was in Russia, but there were interruptions.*

*Q. And, during all this time, did you have conversations with your sub-Kommando leaders?*

*A. Your Honor, I can only say that not even once was I told anything about the existence of such a Fuehrer Order.”*

## 2.8. The General Order to Exterminate the Jews after the Beginning of Operation Barbarossa

### 2.8.1. The Start of the Executions

Wolfgang Curilla noted that (Curilla 2006, p. 86):

*“The question of whether the Einsatzgruppen received the order to kill all Soviet Jews before 22 June 1941 from the Security Police and SD is disputed.”*

A few historians reply in the affirmative, and this opinion is also shared by numerous verdicts of the pertinent trials, although the defendants of these trials made defensive declarations of a mere tactical nature. The majority of historians maintain, however, that the general order to exterminate the Jews was issued “several weeks after the beginning of the Russian campaign” (*ibid.*)

The most recent studies consider it established

*“that prior to their mission, the Einsatzgruppen received no general order to kill all Soviet Jews, but rather, Himmler himself on his tour of inspection in July/August 1941 personally ordered the HSSPF to expand the mass murder to include women and children, who then forwarded the order to the Einsatzgruppen,”*

but Curilla considers even this interpretation to be “doubtful” (*ibid.*, p. 88). Of the references he relies on, the trial verdicts and the testimonies are, by their very nature, the most fragile; his reference to documents appears more appropriate, but is still limited to the realm of mere clues, “without this providing an unambiguous proof” (*ibid.*, p. 107).

Those historians who claim that the presumed order to exterminate the Jews was issued *after* the beginning of the Russian campaign infer its existence from the first executions, in particular those involving women and children.

It is nevertheless certain that the initial mass executions of Jews took place due to local initiatives in the Memel Territory between 24 and 27 June 1941; orthodox Holocaust historiography attributes special importance to these particular executions, either because they were allegedly approved by Heydrich and Himmler, or because they constituted the beginning of the “Final Solution” in Lithuania (although the Memel area was German territory). Under the date 20 June 1941, Himmler’s *Dienstkalender* contains the following annotation (Witte *et al.*, p. 181):

“12:00 train ride with RF to Grodno by way of Lyck and Augustowo.

Return to train at 22:35”

The book editors limit themselves to stating that Himmler and Heydrich did not meet any member of the Security Police at Grodno (*ibid.*, fn 51); they add that

“in a report by the Tilsit State Police office active in Augustowo on a ‘punishment action’, i.e., mass murder in Augustowo, Himmler and Heydrich were said to ‘have been informed of the measures initiated by the State Police office in Tilsit and fully approved of them.’” (*ibid.*, fn 52)

Konrad Kwiet writes (Kwiet, p. 10):

“On June 30, Himmler and Heydrich arrived in Augustowo. They had already received telegraphic messages concerning the location and death toll of the first mass shootings, and after examining a detailed report, ‘they both approved unreservedly of the measures’ taken by EK Tilsit.”

The text of the document shows that there was no order and no policy of Jewish extermination at that time :

“In collaboration with the SD section in Tilsit, three large-scale cleansing operations were carried out, during which

201 persons (including 1 woman) were shot in Garsden on 24 June 1941

214 persons (including 1 woman) were shot in Krottingen on 25 June 1941

111 persons were shot in Polangen on 27 June.”

After setting forth the reasons for these reprisals, the report continues:

“In all three large-scale operations, the persons liquidated were mostly Jews. But they also included Bolshevik officials and snipers, some of whom had been handed over as such by the armed forces to the Security Police.”

Krottingen (Kretinga) was burnt down on 26 June, apparently by members of the remaining Jewish population, but

*“so far we have refrained from taking renewed action, since the only Jews left in Krottingen are women and children, who are currently still in the custody of the Lithuanian security service in Krottingen area.”*

This is followed by Heydrich and Himmler’s approval:

*“Further punitive action was taken by officials of the Suwalki Border Police Commissariat in Augustowo. Among other things, a children’s holiday home was secured there. The Reichsführer SS and the Gruppenführer, who were present there by chance, became informed of the measures introduced by the State Police Agency in Tilsit and fully approved of them. The Gruppenführer ordered the secured building to be kept solely for the Reichsführer SS, pending further instructions.”* (Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 14, pp. 143f.)

The initiative in the executions was taken by *Sturmbannführer* Böhme (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 79), which Kwiet commented as follows (Kwiet, p. 4):

*“Neither Hitler nor Stahlecker actually gave the first killing orders. They were issued instead in the East Prussian city of Tilsit by SS-Major Hans Joachim Bohme [sic], head of the Staatspolizeistelle (Stapo) Tilsit.”*

This document shows that until that time, Himmler and Heydrich had not issued any extermination order to the *Einsatzgruppen*. They limited themselves to approving reprisals for guerrilla activity, reprisals which did not involve women and children.

This was confirmed at Nuremberg by Wilhelm Ziebs, former case handler at Department III A (Legal matters, administration, general population issues) of the Security Service’s Central Office Königsberg, in an affidavit (SD-12. IMT, Vol. 42, p. 443):

*“For the SD Section Tilsit, the SD Central Office Königsberg was the responsible reporting agency in charge of the regional central offices of the party and the state in the district. The SD Central Office in Königsberg never issued an order to the SD Section in Tilsit to liquidate Jews and Communists. It would not have been authorized to do so. If such an order had been issued by the Organization of Office III, the SD Central Office in Königsberg would absolutely have had to be aware of it. Likewise, the SD Central Office in Königsberg would have become aware of the results of the implementation of such an order. The objectives, tasks and activities of the SD section in Tilsit are known to me in the most precise detail because of my activities with the SD Central Office in Königsberg. The execution of Jews and Communists did not form part of the tasks of the SD Section Tilsit.”*

EM No. 14 dated 6 July 1941 recorded the executions in the following manner (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 85):

*“[Einsatzgruppe A, Location Riga]. Starting from Tilsit, three large-scale cleansing operations were carried out. 201 persons were shot in Garsden, 214 persons in Krottingen, and 111 persons in Polangen. In Garsden, the Jewish population supported the Russian border guards in defending against German attacks. In*



*Krottingen, 1 officer and 2 billeting officers were treacherously shot by the population during the night following the occupation. In Polangen as well, 1 officer was shot from ambush by the population on the day after the occupation. In all large-scale interventions, mostly Jews were liquidated. The persons shot nevertheless included Bolshevik officials and snipers, some of whom were handed over to the Security Police by the armed forces.”*

These reprisals were undoubtedly disproportionate, and later opened the way to an even more merciless escalation.

A conspicuous example occurred at the beginning of July, as reported in EM No. 24 dated 16 July 1941 (*ibid.*, pp. 132f.):

*“After a total of 10 members of the German armed forces had been found on 2 July, a platoon of ordinary police and a platoon of infantry were called in, and 1,160 Jews were shot in retaliation for the murder of the German soldiers and Ukrainians.”*

### 2.8.2. The “Cleansing Operation” in the Pripyat Marshes

Initially, the circle of victims was rather limited. The order by the commander of the Police Regiment Center, Montua, to Police Battalions 307, 316 and 322 dated 11 July 1941 in this regard was very explicit (Hoppe/Glass, p. 160):

*“On the order of the Higher SS and Police leader for special duty before the commander of the rear army area center, male Jews aged 17-45 who have been proven to be looters are to be court-martialed and shot immediately.”*

The turnaround is said to have come about with the presumed Himmler order dated 1 August 1941, “all Jews must be shot. Drive Jewish women into the swamps” (*ibid.*, p. 94), which I will address now, and which Curilla commented as follows (*ibid.*, p. 105):

*“That the extermination of Jewish men and women was the declared objective, at least on 1 August 1941, can be gleaned unequivocally from Himmler’s order to the 1st SS Cavalry Brigade.”*

As Browning reports (Browning 2004, p. 281),

*“on July 31, after visiting Hinrich Lohse, the newly appointed Reichskommissar Ostland, and HSSPF Prützmann in Kaunas, Himmler flew on to Baranovichi, where he seems to have met Bach-Zelewski. One day later, the SS Cavalry Brigade passed on to its units the following communication: ‘Explicit order by RF-SS. All Jews must be shot. Drive the female Jews into the swamps.’ (Ausdrücklicher Befehl des RF-SS. Sämtliche Juden müssen erschossen werden. Judenweiber in die Sümpfe treiben).”*

As a preliminary remark, it should immediately be noted that the Stahlecker draft dated 6 August 1941 relating to the “Jewish reservation” in the East (see Subchapter 2.2.) is in obvious contradiction to Himmler’s presumed order to exterminate the Jews, which was allegedly issued only a few days earlier: can one believe that the head of *Einsatzgruppe A* knew nothing about it?

And can one believe that an order of this kind would have been issued to Prützmann, but not to the *Einsatzgruppen* at the same time? EM No. 40 dated 1 August 1941 treated this date as important solely for the following reason (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 213):

*“Based on Führer’s order, Galicia is withdrawn from the area of [military] operations as of 12 o’clock on 1 August 1941. It is now under civilian administration as part of the General Government.”*

On 30 July, Himmler visited Riga; the next day, his agenda bore the annotation: “trip through Riga”; in this city, he is said to have met Lohse and Prützmann (Witte *et al.*, pp. 188f.). But in EM No. 48 dated 10 August 1941, *Einsatzgruppe A* reported (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 273):

*“RFSS [Himmler], during a visit to Riga, mentioned that he intends to establish police formations of Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians, etc., and to deploy them outside their own home territory in each case.”*

There is no escaping the dilemma: either Himmler had not yet decided upon the mysterious extermination order, but he was thinking about it during the night of 31 July/1 August, or he had already decided upon it, but did not inform Stahlecker. It is hard to decide which of the two hypotheses is more nonsensical.

On 12 August, Franz Magill, commander of the mounted section of the 2nd SS Cavalry Regiment, sent Regiment Commander Heinrich Hierthes a “Report on the progression of the Pripjet Operation from 22 July to 11 August 1941.”<sup>133</sup> This is a long report which dwells on marginal aspects treated at great length in pertinent paragraphs: “Population,” “Soil Conditions” “Cultural Matters,” “Economy,” “Food Supply,” “Communication Lines,” “Condition of the Troops,” “Weapons, Equipment, Vehicles” “Condition of the Horses” and finally “Pacification.” But this paragraph only briefly mentions Jews:

*“A large number of Jewish emigrants from the Old Reich and Austria were found.”*

The report on the killing of Jews covers only a few lines:

*“Jewish looters were shot. Only a few craftsmen, who were employed in repair workshops of the armed forces, were spared. Driving the women and children into the swamps did not have the success it was meant to have, as the swamps were not deep enough for them to sink. In most cases, you hit hard bottom (probably sand) after a depth of 1 meter, so sinking was not possible.”*

Subsequently, even more laconically, it asserts the following:

*“The total number of looters etc. shot by the cavalry detachment amounts to: 6,526”*

The report concludes as follows:

*“In summary, it may be stated that the operation was successful.”*

<sup>133</sup> YVA, O.53-86, Ludwigsburg, USSR Collection, pp. 87-90.

The term “Jewish looters” points to a Himmler order transmitted by von dem Bach-Zelewski on 27 July 1941 to the 1st SS Cavalry Regiment, which stated:

*“For the most part, Jews are to be treated as looters.”*

The next day, SS *Brigadeführer* Kurt Knoblauch, commander of the *Kommandostab Reichsführer SS*, issued a special commando order (*Kommandosonderbefehl*) by Himmler titled “Guidelines for ranging over and combing through swampy areas by mounted units.” It contains no reference to Jews. The paragraph “Treatment of the population” noted that the villages of the swampy territories could become “strongholds” for both the Germans and their enemies. The former case was possible wherever the population was pro-German and hostile to the Russians and Poles. In this case the population would have to be controlled by means of mayors and men who could be trusted, installed by the Germans and supported with provisions, horses and armored cars, and in part even armed, so as to defend themselves against hostile attacks. The second case – strongholds for the enemy – is described this way (Baade, p. 222):<sup>134</sup>

*“If the population, viewed nationally, is hostile, racially and humanly inferior, or even, as is very often the case in swampy areas, composed of resettled criminals, then all those suspected of aiding the partisans are to be shot; women and children are to be deported. Cattle and food are to be confiscated and brought to safety. The villages are to be burnt to the ground”*

The inspiring principle of this policy was: “No enemy may find support or sustenance in this region” (*ibid.*, p. 223); it was, therefore, a sort of scorched-earth tactic.

Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, in his capacity as a member of the Higher SS leaders with the commander of the Rear Area Army Group Center, which operated behind the combat zone, was responsible for the related “cleansing” which is said to have concluded with “13,788 shot looters.” Nonetheless, the chief of the general staff of the Rear Area Army Group Center compiled a report (presumably “based on incomplete information”), in which he wrote (Krausnick/Wilhelm, pp. 222f.):

*“The SS Cavalry Brigade carried out its cleansing operation between Highway I and Pripyat. Non-locals in the area as well as Red Army members and Jewish commissars were arrested by the SS, and most of them were shot. The region may be considered pacified as the result of deployment of mayors and auxiliary police and the suppression of the Jews.”*

Gerlach reports that the cavalry unit commanded by Magill killed Jews “between 18 and 60 years of age” (Gerlach 1999, p. 560).

These were therefore military operations to “cleanse” elements considered dangerous in the area behind the front lines of the army.

The British intercepted many messages sent to Himmler in August 1941 by von dem Bach-Zelewski, some of which refer to this matter.

<sup>134</sup> Also YVA, O.53-3, p. 312.

The first is dated 4 August 1941:<sup>135</sup>

*“Rf SS Pers. Kdo., Stab Rf SS und Cher Orpo.*

*Situation report: Cavalry Bridge has reached the LUBIACZ-DOLSK-JANOW-MOTOL-KLETNA line. 90 Bolsheviks and Jews were shot south of Highway 1 along the Morrez River during cleansing operations in the villages of WIZNA, ROZAN, WIELKA.”*

Another message was sent on the same day:<sup>135</sup>

*“Rf SS Pers. Kdo., Stab Rf SS und Chef Ord. pol*

*Situation report: No significant changes at SS Cavalry Brigade yesterday’s location. North and northeastward of SPOROVSKOYE Lake Regiment 1 formed a pocket to fight reported partisan bands. SS Cavalry Brigade liquidated 3,274 partisans and Jewish Bolsheviks by the evening of 3 August 41. No losses our side. On the commander’s orders, an SS Sonderkommando found an ammunition convoy which had gotten lost and guided the transport safely to its destination. Only minor operations with police forces. Pol. Batl. 307 in the security section as yesterday. 260 partisans shot during a cleansing operation by Pol. Batl. 307. Russian cavalry north of Highway 1 encircled and in the process of being destroyed. Russian cavalry south of Highway 1, after several firefights with Wehrmacht and SS, apparently crossed PTSTSCH [=Pestsch?] in a southeasterly direction.”*

On 17 August, von dem Bach-Zelewski sent Himmler this account:<sup>136</sup>

*“To Rf SS Kdo.stab und Chef Orpo.*

*In the concerned section, the 252nd I.D. in collaboration with the Pol. Reg. Center smashed the Russian 112th I.D. which had broken through on 6 August 41 from the north southward via R I. Russian commander killed, commissars escaped. 1 colonel captured. Enemy suffered serious losses and lost its firearms. The rest, scattered in groups, has fled into the woods to the south and north of the R. No more serious resistance under unified leadership can be expected from the enemy. A few days rest for the SS cavalry after reaching the collection line. For the sake of maintenance on 14 August 41, the liberation operation continues eastward in the Pripyat marshes. Cavalry Regiment I is in the area of LYAKHOVICH, Cavalry Regiment II around LUNINETS, motorized SS in STARYE DOROGI and LYAKHOVICH. Losses of Pol. Reg. Center during these fights: 12 deaths, 11 wounded, no missing; SS cavalry brigade: 2 deaths, 15 wounded; Pol. Reg. Center brought in 200 prisoners thus far. Total result for SS Cavalry Brigade: 714 prisoners, 9 cannons, 11 anti-tank guns, 1 grenade, 29 machine guns, 517 carbines, 600 rounds artillery ammunition, 300,000 rounds Russian ammunition and 800 horses. At night still small skirmishes with scattered Russian troops. Russian 112 I.D. consisted of Reg. 575, 383, 503 and 227th artillery regiment. Prisoners testified that they had received no pay for 3 months and only surrendered out of hunger.”*

<sup>135</sup> TNA, HW 16/53, Teleprinter message, 4 August 1941.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August 1941.

These reports confirm that the two regiments of the SS cavalry brigade in the Pripyat marshes were conducting military operations, not a manhunt for Jews, as is attested to by the number of prisoners captured and the conspicuous amount of materiel and weapons captured.

Returning to the Magill report, the entire story is quite implausible. First of all, the presumed Himmler order did not mention children, so that following the order *literally* would have exempted them from execution anyway. In the second place, can one seriously believe that Himmler would have ordered such an absurdity? Drowning thousands of people in a swamp would have required enormous labor, pushing them into the water, drowning them, fishing them out, dragging them to dry land and burying the bodies. In the third place, the report limits itself to mentioning that women and children could not be drowned in the swamps because the water was too shallow, without ever indicating what was done with them in the end.

Any mention of a presumed Himmler murder order by drowning is also missing; but without it, the report appears fragmentary and incomprehensible. I have already stressed the fact that the report only mentions Jews in a few lines, and the conclusion is clearly illogical, since it claims “that the operation was successful,” while, on the contrary, the drowning of the women and children – who must have constituted the majority of the Jewish population – “did not have the success it was meant to have,” *i.e.*, it was an obvious failure. It is therefore probable that the document has been manipulated, to say the least. The document available to us is not the original, but a “copy of a copy.” Pohl and Weber, in commenting on their transcript of this document, moreover inform us that (Hoppe/Glass, p. 243):

*“A copy of the report was found by the Red Army in early 1942 and published in parts, while deleting most references indicating that the massacre was directed primarily against Jews; see L. Dubrovitsky, ‘Bukhgalteriya palachey,’ in Izvestia, 4 February 1942, p. 2.”*

This article, whose Russian headline “Bukhgalteriya palachey” translates as “The Executioners’ Bookkeeping,” refers to a document from the “SS von Megill.” The article claims to quote the following contentious passage from this document in Russian (*ibid.*):

*“We drove the women and children into the swamp, but this did not produce the desired result, since the swamp was not deep enough for them to drown. They can touch the bottom at a depth of 1 metre in the majority of cases... [illegible word].”*

The document could therefore be a Soviet forgery fobbed off onto their Western “allies,” and, as we shall soon see, there are good reasons for thinking so.

Karel C. Berkhoff has outlined the history of the document as follows:

*“The Soviet authorities found telling documents in the headquarters of the 1st SS Cavalry Brigade, including a report about a ‘Pripyat Action’ conducted between July 27 and August 11, 1941. Thousands of civilians died in that campaign of mass murder, the vast majority of them Jews. The report included this passage:*

*‘Driving women and children into the marshes did not have the required result, for the marshes were not deep enough to allow for drowning. At a depth of one meter in most cases one reached solid ground (probably sand), so that drowning was impossible.’ An article in Izvestia in February 1942 attributed to a battalion commissar quoted all of this without clarifying that the victims were Jews. The writer or his censor also omitted an explicit passage about ‘gathering the Jews’ and the comment ‘Jewish looters were shot. Only a few artisans, who had been put to work in repair shops of the Wehrmacht, were left aside.’ Yet the removal of Jews was inconsistent, for the article quoted accurately the following from another captured report, about the ‘pacification’ of the Belarusian townlet of Starobin: ‘It was ordered to shoot all Jewish males without exception, which was carried out... The auxiliary police carried out a number of executions and arrests.’ The German report was signed by one Magill, but Izvestia (and later Molotov) called him ‘von Magill.’” (Berkhoff 2012, p. 143)*

The order to kill “all Jewish males without exception,” obviously adults, cannot be reconciled with the drowning of women and children in swamps.

The sentence of the Braunschweig District Court of 20 April 1964, Ref. 2 Ks 1/63, in its trial of Franz Magill and four other defendants mentions a handout of the SS Cavalry Brigade dated 4 August 1941 referring to Regimental Order No. 42 dated 27 July 1941, which ordered the following with regard to the Jews:

*“Listing of all Jewish residents, during which all craftsmen should be listed separately. Compilation of the order for the establishment of a ghetto and the marking of the Jews in public by corresponding badges.”*

This means that there was no order to exterminate the Jews at all. Nevertheless, the court claimed that Regimental Order No. 42 of 27 July 1941 also included an order to exterminate the Jews, which was said to have been proven by post-war testimony, including, first of all, the Magill report! At this point, the court’s verdict supplies an important bit of information (Sagel-Grande *et al.*, pp. 43f.):

*“According to the testimony of the eyewitness W., these reports, drawn up for the brigade commander [on the Pripyat cleansing operation, including the Magill report], fell into the hands of the Red Army near Toropets together with additional documentation of the brigade staff. The contents of the reports were mentioned in the Note of then People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov, dated 27 April 1942.”*

The Soviets were therefore the sole depositories of the “original” document and the sole guarantors of its “authenticity.” The whole story is not only nonsensical, but in open contradiction to authentic documents.

Magill was found guilty of “continual aiding and abetting in murder in at least 5,254 cases” and for “attempted murder in at least 100 cases” and sentenced to the very harsh term of five years’ imprisonment! (*ibid.*, p. 27)

In conclusion, it is very probable that very many Jews fell victim to the “cleansing action” in the territory of the Pripyat Marshes, but two important points should be kept in mind:

1. the Jews were not killed as Jews, but in the context of a death struggle against the enemy, in which it was essential to deprive the enemy of any and all support;
2. in this context, there was no need to kill women and children, who were no doubt deported according to the directives of the *Kommandosonderbefehl* of 27 July 1941. These orders required the “shooting” of persons suspected of assisting the partisans and the “deportation” of women and children, so that this cannot have been a mere euphemism for shooting.

In his interrogation of 14-15 December 1945 by Major Tsvetayev, local commander of the 2nd Division of the NKVD, Friedrich Jeckeln, former Higher SS and Police leader in Riga, summarized the story of the drowning of the Jews in the swamps in a different context. According to him, Himmler had informed him that there were plans for many transports of Jews from the Reich and other countries to the Salaspils Camp, but:<sup>137</sup>

*“Himmler said that he had not yet decided how these people were to be exterminated; whether to shoot them in Salaspils, or to chase them someplace into the swamp.”*

This absurd statement was no doubt suggested to him by NKVD officials.

The circle of victims broadened in a big way compared to the initial practice: some *Einsatzkommandos* extended it to a few officials, and to some extent to mere members of the Communist party, members of the Jewish “intelligentsia,” Asians and the mentally ill, to women and children. But even in this, the *Einsatzgruppen* reports disagree, and the motivations for the executions sometimes reveal conflicting perspectives.

In conclusion, given that there is no evidence of a general order to exterminate the Soviet Jews, the executions were carried out by local commanders who decided upon the times and methods of their actions within the context of the struggle against “Judeo-Bolshevism” and in the frantic efforts to provide security for the armed forces; the increasing strength of the partisan movement hardened their attitude. It is possible that someone, driven by a particular hatred for the Jews in this tragic conflict, may have really used the struggle against Bolshevism and the partisans as a pretext for committing massacres which were militarily quite unjustified.

## 2.9. *Reichsminister* Rosenberg and the Extermination of the Jews

The policy toward the Jews as set forth in Chapter 2 finds confirmation in the documents regarding Alfred Rosenberg, who was appointed Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories on 17 July 1941. In contrast to this, Yitzhak Arad maintained in his 1979 paper that Rosenberg did not initially belong to the limited circle of unconditional Hitler loyalists “and was not familiar with the Füh-

<sup>137</sup> “Ausforschungsprotokoll des Verhafteten Friedrich Jeckeln, Riga, 14. Dezember 1945,” in: Christoforow *et al.*, p. 350.

rer's directive to Himmler and the SS regarding the total physical annihilation of the Jews of the USSR issued at the planning stage of the invasion" (Arad 1979, p. 285); in consequence, "his directives concerning the Jews," although they were fully in accord with the documented, official policy toward the Jews, allegedly "stemmed from ignorance of the Führer's intentions." When he later became aware of these alleged intentions and their implementation by the SS, "he also gave his unequivocal support to the policy of liquidating the Jews" (*ibid.*). Such a position is already undermined by the fact that orthodox Holocaust historiography, as I have shown earlier, no longer claims that Hitler issued directives for the total extermination of the Soviet Jews in March 1941.

On 2 April 1941, Rosenberg wrote a memorandum which expresses his thoughts on the future occupation of Soviet Russia. With reference to czarist Russia, the "core territory" of which was the background of Soviet strength and which had to be weakened, he stated that such weakening could be achieved in three ways (PS-1017. IMT, Vol. 26, p. 549):

*"1) through a complete destruction of the Bolshevik Jewish governmental administration, without encouraging the construction of a new governmental apparatus";*

2) with a very intense economic exploitation or 3) with the assignment of vast territories of this "core territory" to other administrative organizations to be created, such as Byelorussia or the Ukraine.

And here is Arad's malicious comment (Arad 1979, p. 266):

*"In this document Rosenberg wrote that the Jewish-Bolshevik state administration was to be totally destroyed (völlige Vernichtung)."*

Another Rosenberg memorandum, dated 29 April, contains the following brief reference to the Jews (PS-1024. IMT, Vol. 26, p. 561):

*"The Jewish question requires a general treatment, the temporary provisional solution of which must be determined (compulsory labor for Jews, ghettoization, etc.)"*

A similar mention is found in the "Instructions for a Reichskommissar in the Ukraine" dated 7 May 1941 (PS-1028; *ibid.*, p. 571):

*"The Jewish question, after their matter-of-course elimination from all public positions, will undergo a decisive solution through the establishing of ghettos or labor details. Compulsory labor is to be introduced."*

Arad (1979, p. 273) notes that

*"on August 16, 1941 Rosenberg issued the 'Decree concerning Forced Labor for Jews in the Occupied Territories in the East,' the first document referring to the Jews signed by him as Minister for the Eastern Territories. The decree obliged all Jews between 14 and 60 years of age, both men and women, to report for forced labor, those who evaded doing so being punishable by execution."*

On 18 November 1941, Rosenberg held a press conference in Berlin, the content of which was summarized by Georg Wilhelm Großkopf, who was part of De-



partment D IX of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He summarized Rosenberg's declarations on the Jewish question as follows:<sup>138</sup>

*"With regard to the Jewish question, Reichsminister Rosenberg remarked that the Eastern campaign will also solve this question for Europe; Jewry will be wiped out entirely on this side of the Urals, even while there were still millions of Jews in Europe."*

The original note handed out to the press by Rosenberg reads (Kempner, p. 87):

*"The East is at the same time called upon to solve a question facing the peoples of Europe: that is the Jewish question. Approximately six million Jews still live in the East, and this question can only be solved through a biological eradication of all of Jewry in Europe. The Jewish question will only be solved for Germany when the last Jew has left German territory, and for Europe, when there is not one single Jew left on the European continent, right out to the Urals.*

*That is the task with which fate has presented us. You can imagine men will only be called upon to carry out these measures if they understand the question as an historical task, who do not act due to personal hatred, but rather, as a result of this very sober political and historical insight. For us, the 9th of November 1918 was both a fateful day and a day of decision. Back then, Jewry showed us that it had decided on the destruction of Germany. That it did not succeed, is only thanks to the Führer and the strength of character of the German nation; we must therefore prevent some sentimental European race from accommodating the Jews again. And to this end, it is necessary to shove them over the Urals, or bring about their eradication in some other way."*

Rosenberg's press release fully reflected the idea which he had expressed a few months earlier in the article titled "The Jewish Question as a Global Problem" ("Die Judenfrage als Weltproblem"):<sup>139</sup>

*"For Europe, the Jewish problem will only be solved when the last Jew has left the European continent."*

On 31 October 1941, Leibbrandt sent Lohse a letter with the following tenor (PS-3663. IMT, Vol. 32, pp. 435f.):

*"The Reich Security Main Office complains that the Reich Commissar for the East has prohibited executions in Liepaja. I call for an immediate report on the matter concerned."*

On 15 November 1941 Lohse replied (*ibid.*, p. 436):

*"I have prohibited haphazard executions of Jews in Liepaja, because they were irresponsible the way they were carried out. Please inform me whether your inquiry of 31 Oct. is to be taken as an order to the effect that all Jews in the East*

<sup>138</sup> "Aufzeichnung. Betr.: Ausführungen des Reichsministers Alfred Rosenberg bei Berliner Presseempfang am 18.11.1941." PAAA, Pol. Abt. XIII, V.A.A. bei OKW, Vol. 25.

<sup>139</sup> PS-2665. IMT, Vol. 31, p. 67. The article appeared in the magazine *Weltkampf. Die Judenfrage in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, No. 1/2, April-September 1941. The text had already been published in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in Munich dated 29 March 1941 reporting on a conference held by Rosenberg the day before. PS-2889. IMT, Vol. 31, p. 256.

*are to be liquidated? Is this to occur without regard to age and sex or economic value (for example, skilled workers employed in armaments factories by the armed forces)? Naturally, cleansing the East of the Jews is an urgent task; but its solution must be brought into line with the necessities of the wartime economy. I have been unable to discern any such order from the directives on the Jewish question in the 'Brown Folder,' or from other decrees." (Emphasis added)*

This is the reply by Otto Bräutigam from Rosenberg's office dated 18 December (PS-3666. IMT, Vol. 32, p. 437):

*"Subject: Jewish Question*

*To the letter of 15 November 1941*

*By now, oral meetings ought to have brought about clarity as to the Jewish question. In general, economic concerns are not to be taken into account when dealing with the problem. It is moreover requested to settle any questions that arise directly with the Higher SS and Police leader."*

Essentially, Lohse asked whether he was supposed to kill "all the Jews in the East," which was something new to him, since none of the preceding directives ever provided for this possibility, starting with the "Brown Folder." In response, Bräutigam did not declare that the directives had changed, but limited himself to stating that economic concerns need not be taken into account in settling the matter. This did not necessarily refer to extermination, but rather to an exclusion of Jews from the economic life of the country. At that time, National-Socialist policy aimed at deporting the Jews from the Reich into the Eastern territories. During that precise period, on 13 November, Leibbrandt sent Lohse the telegram cited above, according to which the camps at Riga and Minsk were only provisional measures, because the Jews were to be sent "further East."

After describing the ghettoization measures and the use of forced labor adopted by the Security Police and the Security Service with regard to Byelorussian Jews, Report No. 9 of the "Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories," dated 26 June 1942, concludes:<sup>140</sup>

*"The measures taken by the Security Police and the SD have created fundamental changes with regard to the Jewish question also in Byelorussia. In order to bring the Jews under effective control, regardless of measures to be taken later, Jewish Councils of Elders were established who are responsible to the Security Police and the SD for the attitudes of their fellow Jews. In addition, the registration of the Jews and their confinement to ghettos has been initiated. Finally, the Jews have been marked by a yellow badge on the chest and back, similar to the Jewish star introduced in the territory of the Reich.*

*To exploit the labor potential of the Jews, they are enlisted in general to participate in closed labor deployments and for cleaning-up projects.*

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<sup>140</sup> RGVA, 500-1-775, p. 190.

*With these measures, the foundation has been laid also for the territory of Byelorussia regarding the final solution of the European Jewish question as planned for a later point in time.”*

This prospect is congruent with the program tentatively planned almost a year earlier as laid out in the so-called “Brown Folder.”

## 2.10. Wetzel’s Letter of 25 October 1941

In his attempt to show Rosenberg’s “support” “for the Policy of Total Liquidation,” Arad has recourse to a letter by Erhard Wetzel, an official from the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, dated 25 October 1941. This is presented as a “draft” (*Entwurf*) of a typewritten letter which, as far as is known, was never sent, and which bears, at the end, a single hand-written notation, which the analysts from Staff Evidence Analysis of the Office of US Chief Counsel interpreted as “Wet 25/10.” Above this, the letters “N.d.H.M.” are said to appear, faintly written in pencil, which is said to mean “*Nachschrift dem Herrn Minister*” – “copy for the Minister,”<sup>141</sup> but “*Nachschrift*” does not mean “copy” (in German *Abschrift*), but rather, “postscript.” In the German transcript of the document, the initials are “N.d.R.M.,” and the hand-written letters in the margin read “Wlt.”<sup>142</sup>

This “draft” has as its subject “Solution of the Jewish question” and is addressed to the “*Reichskommissar für das Ostland*” Lohse, with reference to a report written by himself, dated 4 October 1941, “Regarding the solution of the Jewish question.” On this, Arad writes (Arad 1979, p. 277):

*“On October 4, Lohse sent Rosenberg a report on ‘The Solution of the Jewish Problem.’ In the report he described the mass murders, apparently adding that death by firing squads had created problems and that it was necessary to find an alternative method of extermination.”*

This claim contains no reference to the source, and this is not surprising, since the report in question has never been found, so that the summary supplied by the Israeli historian is purely imaginary. This report is also mentioned in the cover letter accompanying the “draft,” which begins this way (NO-997):

*“I have no objection against your proposal for the solution to the Jewish question.”*

The letter in question, which is undated, is, in turn, yet another “draft.” According to the heading, it is supposed to have been written by Wetzel in his capacity as “case handler” from “Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories” Rosenberg, just like the letter dated 25 October. The content of Lohse’s report dated 4 October is not indicated.

This myth is obviously intended to create an antecedent to the letter of 25 October, upon which Arad dwells at great length (Arad 1979, pp. 277f.). The docu-

<sup>141</sup> Translation of document NO-365. Office of U.S. Chief Counsel. Staff Evidence Analysis, p. 2. NA-RA, Record Group No. 238, NO-365.

<sup>142</sup> Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, KV-Anklage, Umdrucke deutsch, NO-365.

ment should be examined in its historical-documentary context, starting, obviously, with an analysis of the text (NO-365):

*“Subject.: Solution of the Jewish Question.*

*1. To the Reich Commissar for the East*

*Re: Your report of 4 Oct. 1941 on the solution to the Jewish question*

*Referring to my letter of 18 Oct. 1941, you are informed that Oberdienstleiter Brack of the Chancellery of the Fuehrer has declared himself ready to collaborate in the manufacture of the necessary shelters, as well as the gassing devices. At the present time the devices in question are not on hand in the Reich in sufficient numbers; they will first have to be manufactured. Since in Brack's opinion the manufacture of the devices in the Reich will cause more difficulty than if manufactured on the spot, Brack deems it most expedient to send his people directly to Riga, especially his chemist Dr. Kallmeyer, who will have everything further done there. Oberdienstleiter Brack points out that the process in question is not without danger, so that special protective measures are necessary. Under these circumstances I beg you to turn to Oberdienstleiter Brack, in the Chancellery of the Fuehrer, through your Higher SS and Police leader and to request the dispatch of the chemist Dr. Kallmeyer as well as of further aides. I draw attention to the fact that Sturbannfuehrer Eichmann, the referent for Jewish questions in the RSHA, is in agreement with this process.*

*On information from Sturbannfuehrer Eichmann, camps for Jews to be set up in Riga and Minsk to which Jews from the old Reich territory may possibly be sent. At the present time, Jews being deported from the old Reich are to be sent to Litzmannstadt [Łódź], but also to other camps, to be later used as labor in the East so far as they are able to work.*

*As matters stand, there is no objection if those Jews who are unable to work are eliminated with Brack's means. In this manner, then, events will no longer be possible such as occurred during the shooting of the Jews in Vilnius according to a report which has been presented to me, and which can hardly be condoned of, also considering that the shootings were carried out in public. The able-bodied [Jews] on the other hand, will be shipped off East for labor deployment. That able-bodied men and women should be kept separately should be obvious.*

*Please report to me regarding any further measures.”*

Angrick and Klein then proceed to comment as follows (Angrick/Klein, p. 188):

*“This is the first open statement that Jews evacuated from the west to the Reich Commissariat Ostland could be killed with gas if they were not able to work. Nonetheless, for historians, this draft letter continues to raise more questions about the further course of action of the mass murders than it answers. It is a matter of fact that no gas chambers were ever built in the civil-administrated Reich Commissariat Ostland. Lohse and Brack testified after the war that they were unaware of the letter and its contents. The chemist Kallmeyer said he had never been to Riga. Eichmann's remarks regarding this document, which were made in Israeli custody, were different. He did not doubt the incident, but said that upon*

*receiving the inquiry from the RMbO, he had merely passed along the position of his boss Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller. During his trial, however, Eichmann claimed that he had discussed gas chambers with regard to Riga. Wetzel in turn said he had merely taken dictation from his boss, at the time Georg Leibbrandt."*

In fact, this document raises serious questions, not only historically and historiographically, but with regard to its authenticity as well.

The document implicates three individuals: Eichmann, Kallmeyer and Brack.

During the 98th hearing of his trial (17 July 1961), Eichmann questioned the document, raising a series of objections, the meaning of which was briefly summarized by the prosecutor as follows: "And you are claiming that it was forged?" Eichmann explicitly declared (State of Israel, Vol. IV, p. 1707):

*"I would never have spoken to Wetzel about gas, because I had nothing to do with the killing."*

During the U.S. proceedings brought against Karl Brandt and others (The Medical Case), the chemist Helmut Kallmeyer rendered an affidavit on 20 June 1947 with reference to Wetzel's letter, which had already been introduced into evidence. Kallmeyer declared in his affidavit:<sup>143</sup>

*"I was neither in Riga nor the Baltic in the Fall of 1941 or at any other time. Neither [did] Viktor Brack ever speak to me of sending me to Riga to co-operate in the production of the necessary quarters and the gas chambers (Vergasungsapparate) and to make all further arrangements."*

Finally, Brack, during his trials, asserted that he knew nothing of the letter in question (TWC, Vol. I, pp. 887-889):

*"Q. Did you receive a copy of this letter, Herr Brack?"*

*A. I did not receive a copy of it nor did I even see a copy of that letter, nor do I know this Amtsgerichtsrat Wetzel.*

*Q. Did you have a conference with Eichmann on this problem, on the solution of the Jewish question?"*

*A. I already said I cannot even remember the name Eichmann, nor can I remember the name Wetzel.*

*Q. Do you know anything about the matters discussed at this conference concerning the solution of the Jewish problem?"*

*A. No. I know nothing.*

*Q. You have no idea. You never made any suggestions as to what kind of treatment or what kind of gas chambers should be used for the solution of the Jewish problem? You never did that?"*

*A. I can remember nothing in this connection."*

After a reading of the letter, the trial prosecutor asked Brack:

<sup>143</sup> Brack and Handloser Supplement V. Document No. 62. Affidavit of Helmuth Kallmeyer. Kiel, 20 June 1947.

*“Herr Brack, are you still going to maintain what you said here in direct examination, namely, that you tried to protect the Jews and to save the Jews from their terrible fate and that you were never a champion of the extermination program?.”*

Brack replied:

*“I should even like to maintain that misuse, terrible misuse, was made of my name.”*

As for Wetzel, he appears to have passed unharmed through the procedural nets spread by the Allies and by West Germany. Hilberg describes him this way (Hilberg 2003, Vol. 3, p. 1193):

*“in Soviet captivity. Released, 1955. Ministerialrat in Lower Saxony. Retired, 1958. Subsequent West Germany investigation terminated without trial.”*

In Chapter 6, I shall show that the above-mentioned “gassing devices” are incompatible with the presumed “gas vans,” as claimed by some Holocaust historians. I wish to point out at this point that, since the “gassing devices” are associated with shelters (*“Unterkünfte”*), they could only have consisted of stationary gas chambers, either homicidal or for disinfestation. The term is usually used for devices turning a substance into a gas, such as the circulation devices (*Kreislaufgeräte*) inside the Degesch disinfestation chambers using HCN (Zyklon B), which were called “gassing” or “gasifier devices” (*“Vergaser-Geräte”*; see Peters 1933, p. 40). This system was tested at the Sachsenhausen Camp on 25 October 1940 by representatives of the camp’s health and hygiene department, of the Concentration Camp Inspectorate, the Hygiene Institute of the Waffen-SS and Degesch. The same day, the head of the construction department of the Main Office Budgeting and Construction sent an order to all concentration camps to use it for disinfestation purposes in the future (Morsch/Perz, p. 262).

This interpretation is confirmed by two messages intercepted by the British in November 1941:<sup>144</sup>

*“10. DQB de SPK SPK1 Nr 12 1107 3Tle 177 143 73 DSR 155SS Oberabschnitt North Sea, Hamburg 13.*

*Firm TESCH STABENOW, HAMBURG 1. regarding letter of 5 Nov. Please inform me immediately when Zyklon was shipped, and when partial shipment of Tegas, Ethylene o.[xi]D and Tritox can be expected, so that Dr. Tesch, who is training in Riga ... (corrupt groups)... all... are badly needed. Dr. TESCH requests that his mail be sent here [handwritten]. Head physician, Higher SS and Political Leaders, Riga.”*

The gases mentioned in a garbled manner are, precisely, “T-Gas,” Ethyleneoxide and Tritox.

The second intercept states:<sup>145</sup>

*“SPÖ de SPK1 Nr 35 2200 3 Tle 179 141 DTD 410*

*Dessau Works for Zyklon and Chemical Zyklon, DESSAU.*

<sup>144</sup> TNA, HW 16/32, German Police Decodes, No. 1 Traffic: 13 Nov. 41, No. 10.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 52.

*Pickup of provided 700 kg. DNO by plane only possible from KÖNIGSBERG. Have suggested to army intendant 16 to arrange for Zyklon transport to KÖNIGSBERG by truck. If this is not possible, send a telex and ask for an address in KÖNIGSBERG where the Zyklon can be shipped by express rail. Please report successful completion to:*

*Higher SS and Pol. leader East, RIGA”*

On 21 December 1941, the *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland* (a German-language newspaper circulated in the occupied territories of the East) published an article titled “*Hygiene im Ostland*” (“Hygiene in the Eastern Territories”) which referred to the recent introduction of hygienic measures in the Reich Commissariat (von Lilienfeld-Toal):

*“One of the most urgent tasks related to hygiene in the East is the improvement of bodily cleanliness of the population and the struggle against vermin, particularly lice [...]. By order of the Reich Commissar for the East dated 12 December 1941, all municipalities are to create and maintain facilities required to combat and prevent dangerous diseases. In this country, this most of all also includes delousing installations.”*

It therefore remains for us to examine Wetzel’s letter in its historical context. Arad writes (Arad 1979, p. 228):

*“Documents published by the Soviets and trials of war criminals conducted in the USSR and other countries have not proved that permanent gas installations, in which Jews and non-Jews were killed, were constructed and used in the Eastern territories. However, gas vans, in which Jews were killed, did operate in these areas. Apparently, Lohse did not accept Dr. Wetzel’s ‘advice’ and there were differences of opinion between Lohse and the SS concerning the Jewish question.”*

Apart from the conjured-up reference to “gas vans,” this is precisely the crux of the problem, as is further indicated by the fact that Wetzel’s letter was “a reply sent to Lohse in Rosenberg’s name” (*ibid.*, p. 227). Rosenberg’s role in this matter is too often forgotten. At the time, Rosenberg was still speaking of expelling the European Jews beyond the Urals, and little more than one month before, he had, together with Frank, discussed the eventuality of deporting Jews into the Eastern territories:<sup>146</sup>

*“The General Governor then began to speak of the possibility of deporting the Jewish population of the General Government into the Eastern territories. Reich Minister Rosenberg remarked that similar wishes on the part of the military administration in Paris had already come to his attention. For the moment, however, he cannot see any possibility to put such resettlement plans into action. In the future, however, he declared himself prepared to encourage Jewish emigration to the East, since the intention exists anyway of deporting the asocial elements within the territory of the old Reich into the thinly populated Eastern territory.”*

<sup>146</sup> Berenstein *et al.*, p. 252. The date of the talk indicated here was 13 October 1941.

Otto Bräutigam, in his letter dated 18 November, did not claim that these directives had been changed, but limited himself to stating that, according to the regulation in question, one did not need to concern oneself with economic interests. The meaning of this indication appears in the “Guidelines on the Treatment of the Jewish Question” (*“Richtlinien über die Behandlung der Judenfrage”*), which contained the necessary corrections consequent to the Führer decision to carry out the evacuation of the Jews to the East during the war, sent by Himmler to Rosenberg on 29 January 1942. This decision was reflected, first of all, in the first paragraph of the document (T/298; I underscored the changed words, while the words in the first version are placed in square brackets):

*“All measures relating to the Jewish question are to [must] be taken from the point of view that the Jewish question must [will] be solved [after the war]. In so doing, such measures in the eastern territories as are helpful in bringing about the final solution of the Jewish question and therefore the expulsion of Jewry, must in no way be hindered. Precisely in the Eastern territories, a rather speedy solution to the Jewish question must be striven for.”*

Another version, undated but dating back to the same period, of these “Guidelines” contains subsequent variations on the same text (PS-212. IMT, Vol. 25, p. 302):

*“All measures relating to the Jewish question in the occupied eastern territories must be taken based on the point of view that the Jewish question will be generally solved for all of Europe after the war at the latest. They are therefore to be devised as preparatory partial measures requiring coordination with the other decisions taken in this area. This applies most urgently to the creation of at least temporary housing possibilities for Jews from the territory of the old Reich.”*

Paragraph 2 (*Bevölkerungsstand*) of the text of 29 January 1942 also mentions the deportation of Reich Jews to the East, which at that time had already started two months earlier:

*“To these Jews come now the German Jews who are being transported out of the Reich into the occupied eastern territories and who lose their German citizenship with the relocation of their main residence into the occupied eastern territories according to § 2 of the 11th provision of the Reich Citizenship Law dated 25 Nov. 1941 – Reich Law Gazette, Part I, p. 722.”*

A distinction was maintained between the millions of Jews who had lived in Byelorussia and the Ukraine for generations on the one hand, and those who had spilled over into western Poland and the adjacent regions following the advance of the Red Army in 1939-1940 on the other hand. The next sentence says:

*“The still existing [instead of: the remaining residential] Jewish population must first be recorded by way of introducing compulsory registration. All Jews will be marked by visible badges (yellow star).”*

The phrase “still existing” implies that some of the Jews were no longer present, which can be explained by shootings, Soviet evacuations, or more or less coerced flight, as may be seen from the *Einsatzgruppen* reports. In the next chapter, we



will see that the executions also intended to encourage the flight of large numbers of Jews.

As regards economic activity, the “Guidelines” prescribed that “the measures intended to bring about the expulsion of Jewry are to be carried out without regard to economic considerations.” They did not order measures such as shooting; they simply excluded “Jewish activity in public professions [as public servants] and trade.” Apart from that, the Jews were to continue their labor activities (T/298):

*“The Jews are to be used under supervision for productive, largely physical, labor (road, railway and canal construction, agriculture, etc.). Jewish factory workers, craftsmen and home workers may continue to practice their trades; in so doing, efforts should be made, however, to pool them in purely Jewish enterprises under supervision by the civilian administration. Where Jewish agricultural undertakings (for example, collective farms) exist, they have to continue their work under close supervision.”*

In conclusion, Wetzel’s letter of 25 October 1941 is extremely dubious as to its authenticity and from a historiographical point of view inconsistent with the extant documentation, as well as with regard to Rosenberg’s involvement in the alleged extermination of the Jews, or even with his lack of awareness of a general extermination plan.

## 2.11. Himmler’s Orders in 1942

On 18 May 1942, SS *Gruppenführer* Heinrich Müller is said to have sent *Standartenführer* Jäger the following radio message:<sup>147</sup>

*“Riga, radio message No. 1533.*

*Secret.*

*To the commander of Security Police and Security Service, Lithuania,*

*SS Standartenführer Jaeger.*

*On behalf of the commander of the Security Police and Security Service I wish to inform you of the following telex:*

*Secret Reich Matter*

*Subject: Final Solution to the Jewish Question.*

*Following notification by the High Command of the Army, Jews employed at the Army Motor Pool 630 in Minsk as skilled craftsmen were recently subjected to special treatment despite promise to the contrary, thereby allegedly considerably impairing the potential performance of this agency. If that is the case, I request, in execution of a general order by the Reich Führer SS and German Police Leader, that able-bodied Jews and Jewesses aged 16 to 32 years be exempted from special*

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<sup>147</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25, p. 379.

*measures in the future, pending further instructions. These Jews are to be assigned to closed labor deployment. Concentration camp or labor camp.*

*Signed, Mueller, SS Gruppenfuehrer, by proxy."*

The sense of the document is that Himmler had recently issued an order exempting able-bodied Jews aged 16 to 32 from killing, in countermand of a preceding order of total Jewish extermination, which therefore included able-bodied Jews. But when was this order issued? Arad writes (Arad 2009, p. 119):

*"Forced labor, which was imposed on male as well as female Jews, was one of the worst nightmares in those days before the onset of the final, full-scale physical annihilation. The military administration ordered all Jewish males between 14 and 60 and all Jewish females between 16 and 50 to perform immediate forced labor. Rosenberg ordered on August 16, 1941, that all Jews, male and female ages 14 to 60, were subject to forced labor and that anyone who eluded labor would be imprisoned and in severe cases of evasion punished by death."*

The Wannsee Conference, as is well known, prescribed the labor deployment of able-bodied European Jews as follows (NG-2586-G, p. 7):

*"In the course of the final solution, the Jews are now to be deployed for labor in the East under appropriate supervision and in an appropriate manner."*

The "Guidelines" transmitted by Himmler to Rosenberg on 29 January 1942, as I have shown above, prescribed that "the measures intended to bring about the expulsion of Jewry are to be carried out without regard to economic considerations," and "until such measures were taken," "Jewish activity in public professions and trade" was prohibited. Apart from that, they were to continue their labor activities.

As early as 12 October 1941, *Sonderkommando* 1 of *Einsatzgruppe* A reported that it had issued the following orders in Estonia:<sup>148</sup>

- "1. Arrest of all male Jews over 16 years of age,*
- 2. Arrest of all Jewesses fit for labor 16 to 60 years of age, residing in Tallinn and surrounding area, who were put to work cutting peat,"*

The men, with the exception of physicians and the Jewish elders, were executed "by Estonian vigilantes under the supervision of the *Sonderkommando*."<sup>148</sup> The women were not harmed.

These orders were obviously in effect in January 1942.

A telex of Department IId (Labor Policies and Social Administration of the Reich Commissariat East) to the *Generalkommissar* in Minsk dated 17 January 1942 already contemplated the conservation of skilled Jewish manpower (Scheffler/Schulle, Vol. I, p. 6):

*"On order of the Economic Leadership Staff East, Jewish skilled workers from industry and crafts upon whose work especial value must be placed in individual cases in the interests of the war economy, must be preserved for labor deploy-*

<sup>148</sup> Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 672, EM No. 111 of 12 Oct. 1941.

*ment. This preservation must be secured through negotiations with local agencies of the Reich Führer SS."*

It is moreover known that one of the most important documents on the commencement of the so-called "Aktion Reinhardt," the letter by Fritz Reuter, advisor at the governor's office of the Lublin district, Department of Population Issues and Welfare, dated 17 March 1942, also provided for the selection of able-bodied Jews for labor and their utilization in a rational manner:

*"It would be expedient to divide the Jewish transports arriving in the Lublin district already at their railway station of departure into Jews fit and unfit for labor deployment. [...]*

*Hauptsturmführer Höfle is at work building a large camp in which the deployable Jews can be registered by profession in card files and can be requested from there."*

The letter furthermore states that "Piaski is being freed of Polish Jews and will become the collection point for Jews coming from the Reich." The non-deployable Jews, by contrast, were to be sent to Bełżec, "the outermost border station in Zamosc County," at a rate of four to five transports per day, at 1,000 persons each. Their fate is described as follows (Berenstein *et al.*, p. 269):

*"These Jews would cross the border and never return to the General Gouvernement."*

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, this last sentence is said to have meant that the Jews in question were murdered at Bełżec, but this interpretation is already refuted by the definition of the camp as "the outermost border station in Zamosc County," in addition to which it obviously extended "over the border," outside the General Government,<sup>149</sup> which would make no sense in reference to an "extermination camp."

Wolf Gruner informs us that "by April 20 [1942], the Lvov labor office had distributed 50,000 to 70,000 new identification documents for a total population of 86,000 Jews" (Gruner, p. 258).

Up to April 1942, it is therefore known that one National-Socialist policy consisted of the utilization of Jewish labor, which appears irreconcilable with the presumed Himmler order mentioned in the radio message of 18 May.

Peter Longerich hazards an explanation (Longerich 2004, p. 141):

*"At the end of April or the beginning of May [1942], the decision was seemingly taken to murder any Jews indiscriminately and with immediate effect. Apparently, at the end of April or in May 1942, the Nazi regime decided to extend the murder of the Jews of Lublin and Galicia to the entire General Government. At the same time, the decision must have been taken to murder en masse the Jews of Upper Silesia; in May and June, thousands were deported to Auschwitz and killed there immediately. The systematic mass murder of Jews in the General Government be-*

<sup>149</sup> The document considers the eastern borders of the General Government to coincide with the border of the district of Galicia, although Galicia had already formed part of the General Government since 1 August 1941.

*gan in June, but then was broken off for a few weeks because of the transport hold-up.”*

According to this, the decision to kill the Jews indiscriminately (therefore including those fit for labor) was taken at the end of April or the beginning of May 1942 (by whom?), yet only a few weeks after this Himmler is said to have exempted deployable Jews aged 16 to 32!

It goes without saying that the claimed order to indiscriminately mass murder the Jews is not supported by any document, and is furthermore refuted by the facts: after the beginning of May 1942, between 7th and 30th of June, four transports carrying 4,696 Jews arrived at Auschwitz from France and one from Slovakia. All these Jews were registered, hence not murdered at all (cf. the dates in Czech 1989). After that date, moreover, many Jewish transports from Slovakia, from Vienna, Theresienstadt, Prague and the Old Reich continued to arrive at localities in the district of Lublin, while only very small numbers were sent to the (alleged) extermination camp of Sobibór. Of the 41 transports rolling between 5 May and 15 July, only 11 were sent directly to this camp; the others were sent to various other localities, such as Lubartów, Chełm, Izbica, Dęblin, Rejowiec, Puławy, Ujazdów and others (Mattogno/Graf, pp. 243f.).

Longerich then invokes a presumed reconsideration on the part of the SS authorities of the “complex of Jewish forced labor in the General Government” with the result of a “control of the prisoners who had been first excluded from annihilation as being ‘capable of work’” (Longerich 2004, p. 142) that is, that even able-bodied Jews were to be killed, too, and adds:

*“At about the same time as this fundamental decision about the Jews of the General Government, and in any case before the middle of May, the major decisions on radicalising the entire murder programme must have been taken.” (Ibid.)*

In support of this conjecture, he cites the document in question here:

*“One significant indication of Himmler’s order in May 1942 to extend the murders has been obtained. In the middle of May 1942, Gestapo chief Müller told the commander of the security police in Riga, Jäger, that, in accordance with a ‘general order of the Reichsführer SS and chief of the German police,’ any ‘Jews and Jewesses fit for work aged between 16 and 32 are to be excluded from the ‘special measures’ until further notice. These Jews are to be assigned to use as closed labour. Concentration camp or labour camp.”*

*This exclusion rule contains an implicit indication of what treatment the older prisoners, the younger ones unfit for work, and children under 16 could normally expect within the concentration camp system: they were subjected to ‘special measures.’”*

It should be noted first of all that Longerich’s pretense of deducing the existence of a Himmler order for the general extermination of the Jews from the radio message of 18 May *relating to the General Government* and dating back to *the beginning of May* is quite dishonest: the most that one could deduce from all this is

the existence of a preceding, but chronologically indeterminate, total-extinction order.

Longerich also claims that the presumed Himmler order “is not available in its original form” (*ibid.*), but never stops to wonder why an order of such importance would never have produced the merest echo in contemporaneous German documents, except in an obscure radio message in which it was, moreover, mentioned only in passing.

From a formal point of view, the radio message in question exhibits peculiarities which must be stressed appropriately. It refers to an event having occurred at Minsk, in the General Commissariat of Byelorussia, but is addressed to SS *Standartenführer* Jäger, who was commander of the Security Police of the General Commissariat of Lithuania. That these persons would also have been informed of a possible Himmler order is obvious, but the form of the radio message is unusual, to say the least. As presented, the text should have been addressed to the commander of the Security Police of the General Commissariat of Byelorussia, SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eduard Strauch, inspired precisely by the event at Minsk. But why repeat this event in a radio message addressed to Jäger? The second part of the text would have been more than enough:

*“in execution of a general order by the Reich Fuehrer SS and German Police Leader, that able-bodied Jews and Jewesses aged 16 to 32 years be exempted from special measures in the future, pending further instructions. These Jews are to be assigned to closed labor deployment. Concentration camp or labor camp.”*

The reference to the killings at Minsk is all the more out of place since the able-bodied Jews remaining in Lithuania were housed in the ghettos at Kaunas, Vilnius and Siauliai. It would have made more sense to inform Jäger that those aged between 16 and 32 were not to be killed. But then, how does one justify these age limits? As we have seen above, Jews in good health were considered able to work if they were between the ages of 15 and 65.

Longerich’s comment on the “older prisoners” in the concentration camp is clearly mischievous: he is, in fact, pretending not to know that inmates under the age of 16 and much older than 32 were admitted in the concentration camps, although for those under 16 only in very small numbers. For example, the statistics in the Auschwitz *Stärkebuch* drawn up by Judge Jan Sehn shows that, between 19 January and 19 August 1942, of 20,696 registered inmates, 13,286, *i.e.*, 64.2%, were aged 32 or over (13,286 inmates aged 33 to 90) while 72 were under 16 (from 8 to 15).<sup>150</sup>

No matter how you look at it, Himmler’s presumed total-extinction order, with immediate exemption for able-bodied Jews aged 16 to 32, appears historically nonsensical. In the General Government, precisely within the framework of “Aktion Reinhardt,” still in March, and again, of course, on 20 April 1942, German National-Socialist policy was still based on the conservation and utilization of Jewish manpower, so that over a period of only a couple of weeks,

<sup>150</sup> Höss Trial, Vol. 10. NTN, 92, pp. 100-103.

Himmler is said to have issued his total-extermination order, and then, immediately afterwards, an order exempting all Jews able to work!

It is true that Himmler's phantom order was "confirmed" with the well-known statement by ex-SS *Hauptsturmführer* Dieter Wisliceny:<sup>151</sup>

*"The Führer had ordered the final solution of the Jewish question; the chief of the Security Police and the SD and the inspector of concentration camps were entrusted with carrying out this so-called final solution. All Jewish men and women who were able to work were to be temporarily exempted from the so-called final solution and used for work in the concentration camps. This letter was signed by Himmler himself. I could not possibly be mistaken since Himmler's signature was well known to me."*

Wisliceny stated that the order dated back to April 1942.<sup>152</sup> In reality, this is not a confirmation, but a contradiction, because Wisliceny was speaking of a presumed general Führer order of extermination relating to the "Final Solution" dating back to April 1942, from which able-bodied Jews were temporarily exempted, *without age limit*; Longerich, by contrast, is referring to a Himmler order from May 1942, which extended a general Hitler order to the General Government, but with temporary exemption for able-bodied Jews aged 16 to 32.

Current mainstream historiography, as we have seen, places the presumed Führer decision in December 1941 (Gerlach 1998, p. 760). It follows that, from the orthodox Holocaust point of view, the Hitler extermination order from the beginning of December 1941 provided, at least temporarily, for the exemption of able-bodied Jews from the "Final Solution," which concerned "the liquidation of all Jews living in Europe" (*ibid.*), hence including those from the General Government. Therefore, the presumed Himmler order of May 1942 makes no sense, because both the extermination order, and the order of exemption, were (allegedly) already issued by Hitler in December 1941 *for the General Government as well*. As regards Jews *unable to work*, the Himmler order presupposes a Hitler *total* Jewish-extermination order, able-bodied included, subsequent to that of December 1941 (which allegedly exempted able-bodied Jews from the extermination action), later modified by the *Reichsführer* SS in the sense of the exemption, specifically, of able-bodied Jews.

As regards able-bodied Jews, by contrast, the Himmler order implied a total-extermination order which was rapidly amended, in the sense of exempting able-bodied Jews between the ages of 16 and 32, in a time slot of a couple of weeks, between 21 April and the beginning of May 1942.

There is not the slightest documentary trace for any of this, so that, even for the radio message of 18 May 1942, one may truly say that it causes more problems than it solves.

<sup>151</sup> IMT. Vol. IV, p. 358.

<sup>152</sup> SNA, 36/48, p. 142, Wisliceny's statement dated 6 and 7 May 1946.

On 26 October 1942, Himmler intervened before the Main Office SS Court for the decision to punish Jews by shooting them without orders:<sup>153</sup>

*“For shootings of Jews without order and authority, motivation will be decisive in deciding whether or not a punishment should be inflicted, and if so, which punishment.”*

*1) In case of purely political motives, no punishment will be inflicted unless the maintenance of order requires it. [...]*

*2) In case of sadistic and/or sexual motives, legal punishment ensues, even for murder or manslaughter, as the case may be.”*

From the above, it may be concluded that individual shootings required an appropriate “order and authority,” in the absence of which killings may or may not have been permitted based on the motive of the subject. This applied in the eastern territories in the struggle against “Judeo-Bolshevism,” but even here the concrete applications of Himmler’s decision shows various interpretations. The verdict against SS *Untersturmführer* Max Täubner, section leader of the I SS Brigade, is a perfect example. The SS and Police Supreme Court of Munich sentenced him to 5 years’ imprisonment for the arbitrary killing of several hundred Jews, with the extenuating circumstance “that the defendant was motivated, not by pure sadism, but rather, by a real hatred of Jews” (Klee/Dreßen/Rieß 1988, p. 187). According to the court,

*“The defendant is not to be punished for the Jewish action as such. The Jews must be exterminated; none of the dead Jews is any great loss.” (ibid., p. 189)*

The Field Verdict of the Headquarters Court of the District of Proskurov dated 12 March 1943 against *Schachtmeister* (excavation specialist) Johann Meisslein, by contrast, takes a different tack. The defendant, who belonged to the Organization Todt’s outpost Proskurov and was employed in the construction of Thoroughfare IV, was accused of ordering the killing of two Jews from a Jewish camp and received a very lenient sentence: 3 months’ imprisonment for abuse of authority, because he was not authorized to issue such an order (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 246, pp. 586-590):

*“The shooting of Jews is, however, exclusively a police and SS matter. Under no circumstances are OT members authorized to make decisions in this regard.”*

These provisions did not apply to the concentration camps, starting with Auschwitz, where all inmates, Jews included, were subject to a different set of regulations:<sup>154</sup>

*“I am aware that only the Führer may decide upon the life and death of an enemy of the state. I may not physically harm or kill any opponent of the state (inmate). Any killing of an inmate in a concentration camp requires the personal authorization of the Reichsführer SS [Himmler].”*

<sup>153</sup> YVA, O.53-171, p. 7.

<sup>154</sup> GARF, 7021-107-11, p. 30. Cf. Mattogno 2016a, p. 24, and Doc. 3, p. 303.

A message dated 1 September 1942 intercepted and decrypted by the British fully confirms the above directive. This is an order from SS *Brigadeführer* Richard Glücks, Head of Office Group D of the SS WVHA (concentration camps) to the concentration camp commanders:<sup>155</sup>

*“Camp commanders:*

*Executions may only be carried out by order of the Reich Security Main Office.  
Signed GLUECKS, SS Brigadeführer and Major General of the Waffen SS.”*

Hence, the discussed alleged Himmler order has nothing to do with the presumed “Final Solution.”

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<sup>155</sup> TNA, German Police Decodes Nr. 3, Traffic: 1 Sept. 42. ZIP/GPDD 223b/16.8.42.



### 3. Jews in Incident Reports and Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories

Contrary to the staged U.S. trial paradigm, the *Einsatzgruppen* did not concern themselves exclusively with Jews, and when they did deal with Jews, it was not just to shoot them. As for the executions, most of the time, as I have mentioned, the reasons for the killings are set forth in detail, which would make no sense if a general order had been received to exterminate the Jews as such. It is however important to observe the general context in which the killings were carried out. This will permit us to explore the entire complex of the *Einsatzgruppen*'s anti-Jewish activities and to better understand the processes that led to the various executions.

In the reports, the various actions of the *Einsatzgruppen* are interwoven in an almost inextricable manner. It is therefore helpful to divide them into basic themes.

#### 3.1. The Great Flight

The first reports, up until the end of June 1941, speak of the flight of Jews before German troops:

##### EM No. 4 dated 25 June 1941:

*"The Polish population in the occupied Soviet Russian territory have partially welcomed German troops in a friendly manner. In contrast to that, large numbers of Soviet Russians and in particular Jews have fled."* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 49)

The theme of the flight of the Jewish population before the advance of the German troops recurs in many other reports. Here some examples:

##### EM No. 11 dated 3 July 1941, EG A:

*"Siauliai: 35,000 residents (12-15,000 Jews). Approximately 2,000 Jews still present. The others have taken flight. Prison empty. For now, the Wehrmacht cannot do without the still-remaining able-bodied Jews for the purpose of maintaining military enterprises and activities vital to the population."* (*ibid.*, p. 70)

##### EM No. 26 dated 18 July 1941, EG A:

*"The greater part of the Jews fled to Russia or the surrounding forests upon the [German] invasion of Russia."* (*ibid.*, p. 140)

*"The city of Zwiahel is almost completely empty due to the flight of Jews and communists."* (*ibid.*, p. 141)

EM No. 37 dated 29 July 1941, EG C:

*“In Zhitomir there were approximately 30,000 Jews, i.e., a bit more than 30% of the total population. The great majority of them fled prior to the occupation by German troops.” (ibid., p. 200)*

EM No. 73 dated 4 September 1941, EG B:

This report expressed satisfaction at the circulation of rumors that the Germans were exterminating all the Jews:

*“The rumor that all the Jews would be shot dead by the Germans is advantageous to us. This may be the primary reason that the Einsatzkommandos encounter fewer and fewer Jews. Thus, we now observe that 70-90% of the Jews originally present have fled. Contrary to what happened earlier, this does not just concern Jews who formerly occupied high offices.” (ibid., p. 441)*

EM No. 81 dated 12 September 1941, EG C:

The same satisfaction at the phenomenon of fleeing Jews was also expressed in this report:

*“While considerable numbers of Jews were present in the first few weeks, it was noted that in the territories of the central and eastern Ukraine in many cases 70-90% of the Jewish population, in some cases 100% had fled. This can be considered an indirect success of the Security Police’s work, since the no-cost deportation of hundreds of thousands of Jews – by all accounts in most cases beyond the Urals – is a considerable contribution to the solution of the Jewish question in Europe.” (ibid., p. 452)*

The attitude expressed above is obviously not one of a man who has received an order to exterminate all Eastern Jews; on the contrary, it coincides with all the National-Socialist declarations relating to a “final solution” of the Jewish question by evacuating the Jews east of the Urals.

This same context also includes other statements in the EM which appear to contradict those set forth above, which are very clear:

EM No. 31 dated 23 July 1941:

Browning cites this report as follows (Browning 2002, p. 139):

*“Nebe reported that one and a half million Jews resided in the Byelorussian area. ‘A solution of the Jewish question during the war seems impossible in this area because of the tremendous number of Jews. It could only be achieved through deportations.’*

*If expulsion of the Jews was still being considered as the long-term solution, as Burrin and Mayer argue, and the Einsatzgruppe leaders had not yet received any indication of the final goal of extermination, Nebe’s comment is puzzling. What was the intended solution made impossible by the large number of Byelorussian Jews? Why and to what [end] was deportation posed as the only possible alternative? The comment makes perfect sense, however, if Nebe knew he was ultimately responsible for killing these one and a half million Jews but despaired of achiev-*

*ing that goal with a meager force of 600–700 men scattered all over Byelorussia and including a Vorkommando that was expected to go all the way to Moscow.”*

To understand the significance of Nebe’s statement, we must first of all read the related text in full:

*“The Jewish liquidations undertaken by the Einsatzgruppe have brought about a rapid change in the outward situation in this regard. The Jew nevertheless remains a hostile element in this area, not without danger. Due to his education and tradition, he is quite able and in most cases also willing to act also as an active wrecker.*

*A solution to the Jewish question during the war does not appear feasible in this area, since it can only be achieved by means of resettlement in the overwhelming majority of cases.” (ibid., pp. 166f.)*

In the first part, Nebe notes that the shootings carried out up to that time had produced a “change” in the arrogant attitude of the “Soviet Jews” – as shown by the passage immediately preceding, which I cited in Chapter 2, but, notwithstanding that fact, Jews were continuing to act in an actively harmful manner. These considerations form part of a context aimed at the activities of Jews, not at their racial essence. If they were to be exterminated as Jews, their actions would always have been subordinated to their existence as Jews. Here, by contrast, expression is given to a contrary conception: their execution was determined primarily by their attitudes and their anti-German behavior as “Soviet Jews.”

EM No. 107 dated 7 October 1941:

In this regard we may add the case of Zhitomir to the cases just discussed:

*“In this regard, a conference with the field headquarters was therefore held on 18 Sept. 41, at which the decision was made to liquidate the Jews of Zhitomir once and for all, since all previous warnings and special measures had produced no perceptible relief.”*

As a result, 3,145 Jews were shot on 19 September (*ibid.*, p. 641).

The second part of Nebe’s text does not necessarily mean, as claimed by Browning, that the “solution to the Jewish question” consisted of the total extermination of the Russian Jews, but rather that this could not be effected during the war due to their enormous numbers, so that the only recourse was “resettlement”; the meaning could, on the contrary, be that the “solution to the Jewish Question” consisted precisely of “resettlement,” but this could not be effected “during the war” because of the enormous numbers of Jews. In the light of Stahlecker’s draft of provisional guidelines for the treatment of Jews dated 6 August 1941 (see Subchapter 2.2.), the phrase in question could only mean that it would not be possible to create temporary “Jewish reservations” and that the solution to the Jewish problem would have to wait until after the war, followed by a “relocation into a non-European Jewish reservation.”

The correctness of this interpretation is confirmed precisely by Nebe’s observation of 12 September 1941 cited above, where he expresses satisfaction that the

Jews were themselves contributing to this “resettlement” by deporting themselves beyond the Urals.

If we were to follow Browning’s logic, since Nebe was unable to kill all the Jews in Byelorussia due to their huge numbers, he should at least have issued orders to kill the greatest possible number of them. Instead, Nebe’s thoughts continue as follows:

*“But to create a tenable basis for the near future, the following measures were taken by Einsatzgruppe B wherever they have commenced their work: in every town, an acting president of a Jewish council was appointed and charged with the formation of an acting Jewish council consisting of three to ten persons. The Jewish council in its entirety is held responsible for the attitude of the Jewish population. They furthermore had to begin immediately with the registration of all Jews residing in the given town. In addition to this, the Jewish council has to form labor units out of all male Jews between 15 and 55 years of age, who have to perform clearing-up work and other tasks for the German authorities and the armed forces. A few labor units of women of the same age range are also to be formed.”*

All Jews over 10 years of age had to wear the yellow Jewish badge on the chest and back.

*“Housing them in the ghetto must be seen as urgent and particularly difficult due to the large numbers of Jews. The implementation of this task is underway; the city districts suitable for this have already been selected in collaboration with the field and town headquarters.”* (*ibid.*, p. 167)

EM No. 66 dated 28 August 1941:

The *Einsatzgruppen* not only expressed satisfaction when large masses of Jews took refuge in flight (that is, allegedly fleeing from execution), but also rejected masses of Jews expelled by the Romanians into German-controlled territory, as shown by EM No. 66 of 28 August 1941, where *Einsatzgruppe* for special deployment Lvov reports:

*“Members of the 10th Hungarian Infantry Battalion expelled over one thousand Hungarian Jews into Galicia across the Dniester River; they were promptly re-expelled by the E. Troop Tarnopol.”* (*ibid.*, pp. 364f.)

In Chapter 5.2. of Part Two, I shall discuss these re-expulsions in greater detail; they are obviously no indication of a policy of total extermination.

The already-mentioned EM No. 1, dated as early as 23 June 1941, noted in this regard:

*“1,000 Jewish refugees were shipped over the border at Jaroslaw from the Russian side through the German armed forces.”* (*ibid.*, p. 40)

EM No. 40 dated 1 August 1941, EG A:

The fallacy of Browning’s interpretation, according to which Nebe could not carry out the presumed extermination of all the Jews in Byelorussia due to their huge numbers, is categorically refuted in the case of Estonia.

EM No. 40 of 1 August 1941 contains a phrase from *Einsatzgruppe A* which contradicts Browning's assumptions:

*"Since there are relatively few Jews in Estonia, solving the Jewish problem here will be no problem."* (*ibid.*, p. 217)

It would therefore have been easy to exterminate them all, but this was not done:

EM No. 111 dated 12 October 1941, EG A:

With regard to *Einsatzgruppe A*, the already-mentioned EM No. 111 of 12 October 1941 reports:

*"After occupying the country, there may have been still some 2,000 Jews in the country. [...] From here, the following orders were issued:*

1. Arrest of all male Jews over 16 years of age,
2. Arrest of all Jewesses fit for labor 16 to 60 years of age, residing in Tallinn and surrounding area, who were put to work cutting peat,
3. Closed billeting of all Jewesses in Tartu and the surrounding area in the synagogue and a dwelling house in Tartu,
4. Arrest of all Jews and Jewesses fit for labor in Pärnu and surrounding area,
5. Registration of all Jews by age, sex and ability to work for the purpose of housing them in a camp now under preparation.

*The male Jews over the age of 16, with the exception of physicians and the appointed Jewish elders, were executed by Estonian vigilantes under the supervision of the Sonderkommando. [...] The total number of Jews shot in Estonia amounts to 440 so far. Following the conclusion of this measure, approximately 500 to 600 Jewesses and children will still be alive. The rural communities are free of Jews already now. A camp is currently being prepared for the Jews residing in Tallinn and surrounding areas in Harku (district of Tallinn), which is to be expanded following the accommodation of the Jews from Tallinn and which is to house all the Jews in Estonia. All Jewesses fit for labor are employed in agricultural work and peat cutting on the grounds of the nearby penitentiary, which also solves the issues of nourishment and financial support."* (*ibid.*, p. 672)

If we are to believe the execution figures in the Incident Reports, 2,000 persons could easily have been shot in a single day; instead, however, only 440 persons had been reported shot in Estonia by 12 October. The second Stahlecker Report confirms that, upon the entry of German troops into Estonia, there were approximately 2,000 Jews in the country, while by 31 January 1942 there was not a single Jew left in Eastonia, but the total number of Jews reported shot amounted to merely 963.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, not even here were all the Jews killed.

<sup>156</sup> RGVA, 550-4-93, pp. 57 and 184.

EM No. 86 dated 17 September 1941, EG C:

In favor of the existence of a presumed extermination order, a proposal by *Einsatzgruppe* C contained in this EM is often cited (I quoted the preceding passage of this report in Subchapter 2.6.):

*“In the western and central Ukraine, Jewry is almost identical with the urban workers, craftsmen, and trading class. If we are to refrain completely from using Jewish manpower, then the economic reconstruction of the Ukrainian and urban administrative centers will be almost impossible. There is only one possibility, which the German administration in the General Government has long failed to recognize: solution of the Jewish problem through comprehensive labor deployment of the Jews. This would result in a gradual liquidation of Jewry = a development corresponding to the economic circumstances of the country.” (Ibid., pp. 478f.)*

From the preceding passage, it may be seen very clearly that the “main task” of the *Einsatzgruppen* was “destroying the Communist apparatus”; the Jewish population was not identical to that apparatus, which was obvious, but, as *Einsatzgruppe* C wrote in the report dated 1 August 1941, the Jews were seen as the “main carriers” of that apparatus at any rate, and as such were subject to execution – in the majority of cases for membership in Bolshevik institutions or for specific pro-Bolshevik anti-German actions.

The last sentence of the document is commonly understood in the sense of what is called “extermination through work,” but that is not the only interpretation possible, and far from the most-coherent.

At that time, the common practice of the *Einsatzgruppen* consisted, apart from the executions carried out according to precisely defined criteria, of the creation of ghettos and using the labor of able-bodied Jews, but without any intention of “exterminating them through work” (see Chapter 5).

EM No. 32 dated 24 July 1941:

This practice appears clearly in the report titled “The Jewish Question in the Byelorussian Settlement Area” annexed to EM No. 32 of 24 July 1941, in which Nebel’s observations, set forth the day before, were repropounded in this form:

*“Summing up, it must be stated: at least one and a half million Jews live in the Byelorussian settlement area; their sociological structure in the former Polish and former Soviet areas is not uniform. Immediate measures were implemented to solve the Jewish problem through the appointment of Jewish councils, the marking of all Jews over the age of 10, the creation of labor units of all Jews aged from 15 to 55, and the creation of ghettos largely prepared and already partially carried out.” (Mallmann 2011 et al., p. 178)*

Here as well, we have a “Solution of the Jewish question” consisting essentially of “labor units” and “the creation of ghettos.” At that time, there was no precedent for “extermination through work”; the concept only appeared – indirectly – months later, at the Wannsee Conference, but here the “natural reduction” was

considered the eventual fate (not the principal objective to be pursued) of “a large part,” but not of all Jews (NG-2586-G, p. 7).

Angrick asserts that “extermination through work” presumably proven by the text quoted above was not immediately adopted in the central Ukraine, “however, Fritz Katzmann, the SS and Police leader in District Galicia, had been charged with applying the idea on the stretch of Thoroughfare IV (*Durchgangsstrasse* IV; DG IV) under his purview, starting in October 1941.” In Galicia, he adopted “the policy of using Jews for hard labor, thus complying in part with the strategy called for by *Einsatzgruppe C*.” For him, “killing his Jewish workers was more important than their work,” and he is said to have implemented this plan precisely through the construction of Thoroughfare IV. Angrick nevertheless records Katzmann’s statement that he had “only employed 20,000 Jews” in this project, with whose labor he had built 160 km of road. The number of Jews employed was therefore extremely small compared to the number of Jews present in Galicia; when the Germans entered the region, there were over 455,000 Jews;<sup>157</sup> starting on 15 October 1941, when work began in preparation for Thoroughfare IV, Katzmann first built seven labor camps with 4,000 Jews, then 15 with 20,000 Jews, who, as has already been stated, built 160 km of road.<sup>158</sup> Hence, Angrick’s conjecture does not hold water, and he himself proceeds to demolish it entirely by writing that “by spring 1942, there were 50,000 POWs, 50,000 civilians, and 10,000 Jews working on DG IV” (Angrick, pp. 194f., 201).

A more-careful reading of the Katzmann report shows that Angrick’s claims are mutually contradictory.

On 17 October 1942, Katzmann and the commander of the Armament Commando Lvov signed an agreement on the use of Jewish labor, whose guiding principle was expressed this way:

*“The SS and Police Leaders in Galicia and Armaments Commando Lvov agree that it is necessary to keep the Jewish workers fit to work, which absolutely requires proper housing, clothing and medical care.”*

The first point dealt with adequate housing, the second with “nourishment”:

*“Feeding of the Jewish workers is the responsibility of the factories. It has to take place exclusively in the factory. Apart from the main meal, breakfast and dinner are also to be provided. Full provisioning is to be ascertained even in case of sickness.”* (Emph. added)

Point 4 concerned clothing. Jewish workers were granted permission to bring “sufficient clothing, particularly winter clothing” with them to the camp (IMT, Vol. 37, pp. 398-400).

If we follow orthodox Holocaust historiography, “extermination through work” is said to have originated months later (Wagner, p. 720):

<sup>157</sup> Report of SS *Gruppenführer* Katzmann dated 30 June 1943. L-22. IMT, Vol. 37, p. 401.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

*“The concept of ‘extermination through work’ probably originated in the year 1942. In the sources known so far, the expression appears in two file memos from September of that year, reproducing talks between the only recently appointed Reich Minister of Justice Thierack with Goebbels and Himmler. According to this, the thought of ‘extermination through work’ originated with Goebbels, with whom Thierack discussed, on 14 September 1942, the transfer of prisoners from prison to the SS and their subsequent extermination.”*

It follows that the “gradual liquidation of Jewry” as a result of “labor deployment” could not signify physical liquidation, but rather the elimination of the role which Jewry had played so far, in exactly the same way as Hitler’s “prophecies” on “the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe”<sup>159</sup> consisted of the fact that “Jewry as a whole will have come to an end playing its role in Europe.”<sup>160</sup>

By way of ghettoization and consequent “labor deployment,” Eastern Jewry during the war (the essential context in which the statements of the *Einsatzgruppen* commanders were made should be kept in mind) would have come to an end playing its role in the East.

EM No. 52 date 14 August 1941, EG C:

A similar perspective is made obvious by a remark of *Einsatzgruppe* C contained in EM No. 52 dated 14 August 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 290; unless and until noted otherwise, all subsequent page numbers are from this):

*“Since the Ukrainians as a whole are to be regarded as more intelligent and more gifted than the Rumanians, the solution of the Jewish question is no doubt in worse hands with the Rumanians. Since the percentage of Jews is very high, it is a problem requiring the most careful examination, including from an economic point of view. Pending a final solution of the Jewish question for the entire continent, the problem can only be approached within a German-Ukrainian framework. The surplus Jewish masses can be used and used up splendidly, namely by cultivating the great Pripyat Swamps as well as the swamps on the northern Dnieper as well as the Volga.”*

The “final solution of the Jewish question for the entire continent” was to come after the war; until that time, the enormous Jewish masses could be employed in large-scale public irrigation projects.

The “Situation Report of Field Headquarters 240, Detachment VII. Reporting period: 15 Sept. 41 to 15 Oct. 41,” dated 19 October, refers to this matter as follows:<sup>161</sup>

*“The Jewish question can be considered solved, at least as far as the city of Dnepropetrovsk is concerned. At the beginning of the occupation, some 35,000 Jews were still present. Approximately 15,000 were affected by measures of the SD, approximately another 15,000 fled due to these measures, and approximately 5,000 are still present.”*

<sup>159</sup> Domarus, Vol. II, 1st half-volume, p. 1058. Speech before the Reichstag, 30 January 1939.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 2nd half-volume, p. 1663, speech of 30 January 1941.

<sup>161</sup> YVA, O.53-6, p. 15.



It is not possible to believe that 15,000 Jews fled without the consent of the Germans; after all, their flight, too, was a contribution to the “solution of the Jewish problem.”

EM No. 111 dated 12 October 1941, EG A:

The flight of many Jews was also observed at Kremenchug and Poltava according to this EM:

*“The city has approximately 89,000 residents, about 40% of them Jews. All persons of interest have fled, as usual, about 40% of them Jews. [...]*

*Also, in the region of Poltava, the Jews have mostly fled; a certain reflux of Jews and other persons of interest is expected only after a certain period of time.”* (p. 673)

EM No. 135 dated 19 November 1941

This EM states that there were 100,000 Jews at Dnepropetrovsk to start with, 70,000 of whom fled before the arrival of the Germans. Of the remaining 30,000, approximately 10,000 were shot on 13 October by a squad of the Higher SS and Police leader, after which another 1,000 were shot by *Einsatzkommando* 6. The others were left alive “because of the considerable lack of skilled workers of Jewish craftsmen” (p. 818).

Later reports often returned to the topic of the flight of Jews:

EM No. 90 dated 21 September 1941, EG B:

*“Particularly remarkable is the fact that in these cities, of which in particular Gomel and Chernigov previously had considerable Jewish populations – in Gomel, for example, of 100,000 inhabitants, 50% were Jews – hardly a Jew can be found. As could be established, during the evacuation that had begun weeks ago, the Jews were evacuated on a preferential basis, with Communist propaganda stressing that all Jews would be shot immediately after the occupation of the city by the Germans.”* (p. 517)

EM No. 92 dated 23 September 1941, EG B:

*“It’s the same story with the Jews, who were always evacuated in a timely manner. In particular the already-mentioned announcement of the Moscow radio broadcasting station that the Germans would shoot all Jews caused, according to credible sources, many Jews who intended to remain in the cities to follow the evacuation order and flee.”* (p. 541)

EM No. 94 dated 25 September 1941, EG A:

*“In the old Soviet areas only a few isolated Jews turned up in the cities. The vast majority of resident Jews has fled.”* (p. 555)

EM No. 111 dated 12 October 1941, EG A, Estland:

*“With the advance of German troops onto Estonian soil, approximately half the Jews made preparations to flee, and, since these Jews had cooperated with the*

*Soviet authorities, they left the country with them in an easterly direction.”* (p. 672)

EM No. 123 dated 24 October 1941, EG B:

*“The refugee movement and planned evacuation of the Jews to the East is obviously growing steadily in magnitude. Thus, the VKM, advancing towards Moscow, reported that all the localities occupied so far were free of Jews, because the Jews had all been evacuated by the Bolsheviks.”* (p. 727)

EM No. 133 dated 14 November 1941, EG B:

*“The refugee movement of the Jews to the East, as could be observed in this reporting period, continues unabated. Thus, EK 9 [Einsatzkommando 9], on its advance towards Moscow, reported that in the city of Yartsevo, where approximately 3,000 Jews used to live, not a single one was left. Similar at Vyazma, Gzhatsk, Moshaysk, Yukhnov and Bryansk.”* (p. 786)

EM No. 144 dated 10 December 1941, EG B:

*“The Jewish population has fled to the last man. The Jewish proportion of the population in these regions was very low anyway.”* (p. 868)

EM No. 146 dated 15 December 1941, EG B:

*“Jews: During the current reporting period as well, it could be seen that the refugee movement of the Jews to the East continues. For example, when our commandos arrived in the cities of Orel, Medyn and Maloyaroslavets, they were free of Jews.”* (p. 881)

EM No. 156 dated 16 January 1942, EG C:

*“While communist elements appear to be present in considerable numbers, we got the general impression that most of the Jews had fled before the arrival of the commando.”* (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 100)

In this context, one may well wonder whether the more-fanatical commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* and Police units may have invented executions of Jews who had already fled, or exaggerated the numbers of victims, in order to accelerate the Jews' fright and thus their flight.

### 3.2. Pogroms

Starting with the first few days of Operation Barbarossa, a number of pogroms were observed, some spontaneous, others instigated by the *Einsatzgruppen*. The spontaneous pogroms were a reaction against the sufferings inflicted upon the population by the Soviet system. The first anti-Jewish riots occurred only a few days after the German invasion under Operation Barbarossa:

EM No. 8 dated 30 June 1941, EG A, EK 1b:

Kaunas: *“At night, heavy shootout between Lithuanian partisans, Jews and irregulars... several thousand Jews already shot [by] Lithuanian partisan groups in the past 3 days.”* (p. 55)

EM No. 10 dated 2 July 1941, EG B:

*“AOK 17 [Army Supreme Command 17] has suggested, first to use the resident anti-Jewish and anti-Communist Poles for self-purging actions in the newly occupied territories. The leader of the Security Police and the SD gave the following order to all Einsatzgruppen on 1 July 41: ‘Order No. 2. Poles residing in the newly occupied territories, particularly in the former Polish territories, will be both anti-Communist and anti-Jewish due to their experiences. It goes without saying that the purging actions are to encompass primarily Bolsheviks and Jews.’”* (p. 64)

EM No. 13 dated 5 July 1941, EG C, EK 9, Grodno:

*“Pogroms initiated... Party officials have fled, leaders of Jewish intelligentsia (especially teachers, lawyers, Soviet officials) liquidated.”* (p. 83)

EM No. 15 dated 7 July 1941, EG A, Riga:

*“Apart from these auxiliary police troops, 2 other independent groups formed to carry out pogroms. All synagogues destroyed, so far 400 Jews liquidated.”* (p. 90)

EM No. 19 dated 11 July 1941:

*“The Higher SS and Police leader before the commander-in-chief of the Rear Army Area North, SS Gruppenführer... Prützmann reports: [...]*

*Following the withdrawal of the Red Army, the population in Kaunas rose in a spontaneous uprising. Another large number of Jews were shot by police auxiliary forces.*

*Einsatzgruppe A: Location Riga.*

*1) A total of 7,800 Jews have now been finished off in Kaunas, some by pogrom and some by shooting by Lithuanian commandos. All corpses have been disposed of. Further mass shootings are no longer possible; hence, a Jewish committee was summoned, and it was explained to them that so far we had had no reason to intervene in domestic conflicts between Lithuanians and Jews.”* (p. 103)

EM No. 24 dated 16 July 1941, EK 2, Riga:

*“600 Communists and 2,000 Jews are currently in prison. 400 Jews perished in Riga as a result of pogroms, while 2,300 were killed by Latvian auxiliary police and some by our own forces since the arrival of EK 2. The prisons will be completely cleared out in the next few days. Another 1,600 Jews were finished off by EK 2 in Latvia outside Riga.”* (pp. 129f.)

Einsatzgruppe C:

*“The Ukrainian population engaged in welcome anti-Jewish activity since the first hours after the withdrawal of the Soviets. Thus, in Dobromil, the synagogues were set on fire. In Sambor, 50 Jews were beaten to death by outraged mobs. In Lvov, the population drove approximately 1,000 Jews together while mistreating them and delivered them to the GPU prison, which is occupied by the German army.”* (p. 132)

EM No. 40 dated 1 August 1941, EG A:

*“In Lithuania, we very quickly succeeded in encouraging Lithuanian groups to a self-purge, resulting in the complete elimination of the Jews from public life. Pogroms occurred in every town.”*

## Latvia:

*“Even though Jews have been entirely eliminated from public life, they can still be seen on the streets of Latvian cities. The shamelessness of the Jews has contributed to increased self-purging activities, so that pogroms, the destruction of synagogues and the liquidation of Jews and Communists were step by step occurring in all towns. In Jelgava and the surrounding district, the 1,556 Jews still present there were done away with to the last man by the local populace. The self-purges in Latvia are currently still under way.”* (p. 216)

EM No. 43 dated 5 August 1941:

*“Staging pogroms against the Jews has been nearly impossible due to the passivity and political stupor of the Byelorussians.”* (p. 237)

EM No. 47 dated 9 August 1941, EG C, Zhitomir:

*“Former attempts carefully to inspire pogroms against Jews unfortunately did not show the desired success. Only in Tarnopol and Khorostkov did they succeed in finishing off 600 and 110 Jews, respectively. The lack of success might be attributed, first of all, to the fact that the Ukrainian population is still too much intimidated by the former power of the Jews and still fears a possible return of the Russians.”* (p. 264)

EM No. 124 dated 25 October 1941, EG B:

*“Two larger operations were carried out by the troops in Krupki and Kholopenichi. 912 Jews were liquidated in the first town and 822 in the second. The Krupki district can therefore be considered free of Jews. The complete liquidation of the Jews in the above-named towns was necessary to deprive the numerous partisans and paratroopers operating there of all support, since the Jews provided them with every kind of assistance imaginable.”* (p. 732)

### 3.3. Soviet Atrocities and Reprisals

Starting with EM No. 11 dated 3 July 1941, mention began to be made of atrocities by the fleeing Soviets against the populations previously occupied by them,

followed by acts of revenge by the local populations in the form of pogroms, and of German reprisals directed primarily against Communist-party officials and the Jewish intelligentsia:

EM No. 11 dated 3 July 1941, EG B, Lemberg:

*“According to reliable reports from Russians prior to their withdrawal, approximately 30,000 inhabitants were shot. The corpses piled up in GPU prisons exhibited terrible mutilations. Excitement among the population; 1,000 Jews have already been driven together. EK 6 reports the shooting of 133 Jews on 2 July 1941.”* (p. 70)

EM No. 13 dated 5 July 1941, EG B, Lvov:

*“EK 4a: Location Lutsk.... 2,000 shootings in reprisal for murder of Ukrainians... EK 4b: Location Tarnopol. 5,000 Ukrainians kidnapped, 2,000 murdered. As a counter-measure, campaign of arrests initiated against Jewish intelligentsia, who were co-responsible for the murders and also acted as informants for the NKVD. Number [of victims] estimated at some 1,000. On 5 July, approximately 70 Jews driven together by the Ukrainians and killed with satchel charges. Another 20 Jews slain in the streets by soldiers and Ukrainians, as a reaction for the murder of three soldiers who were found tied up in the prison with their tongues cut out and their eyes gouged out. Wehrmacht pleasantly good attitude towards the Jews.”* (p. 86)

EM No. 15 dated 7 July 1941, EG A:

*“In this context, it also turned out that one German soldier remaining unharmed after this execution was beaten to death by a Jew from Riga; hence, 100 Jews were shot on the same spot on 4 July 1941 by a squad from the Security Police and SD.”* (p. 90)

EM No. 19 dated 11 July 1941, EG C:

*“Einsatzgruppe C: location Rovno.*

*EK 4a still in Rovno, where there were 240 executions of Bolsheviks, most Jewish officials, agents, etc. [...]*

*EK 4b has ended its activity in Tarnopol. 127 executions. In addition, in the course of the persecution of the Jews inspired by the Einsatzkommando, liquidation of 600 Jews. In Zborov, 600 Jews liquidated by the Waffen-SS in reprisal for Soviet atrocities.”* (p. 104)

EM No. 20 dated 12 July 1941, EG B, Minsk:

*“The houses were apparently set on fire by Jews, because the Jews were supposed to vacate their houses for the benefit of returning Byelorussian refugees. The population is now in the mood for pogroms. Their rage against the Jews has triggered certain actions. A number of Jews were liquidated for this deed.”* (p. 109)

Einsatzgruppe C, Rovno:

*“On 5 July 41, 15 Jews were executed in Rudki in reprisal for the bestial murder of the Ukrainian nationalist leader Dr. Kirnyczny. The synagogue and Jewish houses were set on fire by the Ukrainian population. In Stryi, 150 Ukrainians were found murdered. Initiated investigations succeeded in the arrest of 12 Communists co-responsible for the murder of the Ukrainians. They consisted of 11 Jews and 1 Ukrainian, who were shot with the participation of the entire population of Stryi.”* (p. 109)

EM No. 24 dated 16 July 1941Einsatzgruppe A, Daugavpils:

This EM reports that Daugavpils was taken on 26 June; violent fires broke out over the 2-3 following days.

*“The Jews were significantly involved in the arson itself. 5 Jews were caught in the act the first 3 days, and immediately shot. The Latvians jailed 1,125 Jews, 32 political prisoners, 85 Russian workers and 2 criminal women by 7 July, most of them only during the last few days, however. [...] The actions against the Jews continue increasingly. Upon suggestion of the EK, all houses still standing are being cleared of Jews by the auxiliary police service, and the dwellings are assigned to the non-Jewish population. Jewish families are being driven out of the city by Latvians, while the men are being arrested. The food supply is difficult, since the supplies have been almost completely destroyed by fire. The arrested male Jews are being summarily shot and buried in already prepared graves. So far, 1,150 Jews have been shot in Daugavpils by EK 1b.”* (p. 129)

This report also contains a detailed description of Soviet atrocities in the region of Lvov, where approximately 20,000 Ukrainians disappeared, 80% of them from the intellectual class. The prisons were full of Ukrainian bodies, 3,000 to 4,000 according to a conservative estimate. 82 bodies were found in the prison of Dobromil, among them those of 4 Jewish informants. In the vicinity of the city, a salt mine was found, 80 metres deep, full of bodies. Nearby was a mass grave measuring 5 m × 15 m. The number of people murdered in the district of Dobromil was estimated at several hundred. At Sambor, the Soviets shot 400 Ukrainians. 120 persons were shot on 27 June.

*“During the murders, the Russians and Jews acted with extreme cruelty. Bestial mutilations were routine. Women’s breasts were cut off, men were castrated. Shootings were committed by a shot to the back of the neck. Hand grenades were often used to murder people, too. In Dobromil, women and men were killed by hitting them on the body with the bolt guns used to slaughter cattle. In very many cases, the prisoners must have been tortured to horrible extremes by breaking their bones, etc. In Sambor, the prisoners were gagged to prevent them from crying out during the torture. The Jews, who next to their economical predominance also occupied the public positions and made up the entire Bolshevik militia, were always involved in these atrocities.”* (pp. 131f.)

*Einsatzgruppe C:*

*“Approximately 7,000 Jews were driven together and shot by the Security Police in reprisal for the inhuman atrocities. [...] Primarily all Jews between the ages of 20 and 40 were arrested, while craftsmen and specialist workers were exempted as needed. In addition to these executions in Lvov, reprisals were carried out in other localities as well; among others, 132 Jews were shot in Dobromil. In Yavorov, 32 Ukrainians were murdered, and 15 Jews were shot in reprisal.”* (p. 132)

The city of Lutsk was largely destroyed by fires after the occupation:

*“according to information from the local commanders, only Jews could have been responsible for the arson. According to the testimony of 19 Ukrainians who had survived the butchery with injuries of varying seriousness, the Jews, once again, were predominantly responsible for the arrests and shootings.”* (p. 132)

Jewish and Communist arsonists and looters were shot.

The Soviets locked up 4,000 Ukrainians in the local prison and shot 2,800 of them before retreating; the Jews were “once again predominantly” involved in the arrests and shootings (p. 132).

On 30 June, 300 Jews responsible for arson and 20 looters were shot.

*“1,160 Jews were shot with the participation of a platoon of ordinary police and a platoon of infantry in reprisal for the murder of the German soldiers and Ukrainians following the discovery of the bodies of a total of 10 German Wehrmacht members on 2 July.”* (pp. 132f.)

At Zolochev, before retreating, the Soviets killed 700 Ukrainians, including all the intellectuals.

*“At the request of the Wehrmacht, the militia arrested several hundred Jews, who were shot in reprisal for this. Between three and five hundred Jews were liquidated.”* (p. 133)

EM No. 26 dated 18 July 1941, EG A:

*“The arsons in the city [of Rezekne] were mostly the work of the Jews. Approximately 60 leading Latvians were found horribly mutilated upon the arrival of the German troops. 80 Jews were liquidated as a result.”* (p. 140)

EM No. 28 dated 20 July 1941, EG A, Pskov:

*“The population is of the opinion that the Jews must be held primarily responsible for the atrocities committed everywhere. [...]*

*It is assumed that approximately 100 important Ukrainian personalities were murdered in the last days before the Russian withdrawal. In Kremenets, between 109 and 150 Ukrainians were murdered by the Russians. Some of these Ukrainians are said to have been thrown into a cauldron with boiling water; an indication that this is so is the fact that the bodies were found to be without their skin when exhumed. By way of self-justice, the Ukrainians slew 130 Jews with trun-*

cheons. In Dubno, where the actions are largely over, there were a total of 100 executions.” (p. 150)

“Before their withdrawal, the Russians carried out a horrid bloodbath in Dubno just the way they did in Lvov. In Tarnopol, a total of 127 executions were carried out. There as well, before their withdrawal, the Russians committed atrocities in the same manner as in Lvov and Dubno. A total of 10 bodies of German soldiers were found during the exhumations. Almost all of them had their hands tied behind their backs with wire, while the bodies showed signs of the most horrible mutilations; e.g., their eyes were put out, tongues cut out and limbs cut off from the torso. The number of Ukrainians killed by the Russians, among them also women and children, is ultimately estimated at approximately 600. Jews and Poles were spared by the Russians. The total number of their victims since the occupation of the Ukraine is estimated at 2,000 by the Ukrainians. The deliberate deportation and kidnapping of the Ukrainians began as early as 1939. There is hardly a family in Tarnopol in which one or more members of the family have not disappeared. In the city, which has approximately 40,000 residents, among them 12,000 Ukrainians, 18,000 Jews and 10,000 Poles, 10,000 Ukrainians are simply missing. [...] Torture chambers were discovered in the basement rooms of the courthouse building, just as was also the case in Lvov. Here as well, boiling-hot and ice-cold shower baths were evidently used for purposes of torture. Several corpses were found completely naked whose skin had burst and had torn off in many places. [...] Troops marching through the district who had an opportunity to view these horrible sights, particularly the corpses of murdered German soldiers, slew approximately 600 Jews and set their houses on fire.” (pp. 150f.)

This report has as Appendix II a “Report on the Soviet-Russian State Prison at Dubno and the Blood Bath of 24 and 25 June 1941” (pp. 154-158).

EM No. 127 dated 31 October 1941, EG C:

This report also deals with these Soviet atrocities:

“Over 10,000 interrogations were conducted by the Communists over the course of these four months, during which it always turned out that precisely the Jews worked for the Soviets, if not themselves in responsible positions, then at least as agents, collaborators or informants. The huge number of mass graves did not even in one single case contain the body of a Jew. It is a fact, however, that precisely the Jews are co-responsible for the slaughter of the Ukrainian population. For the Security Police, this resulted in the need for special measures against Jewry.” (p. 741)

In 1941, the German *Auswärtige Amt* (Foreign Office) published a sort of “Black Book” titled *Bolschewistische Verbrechen gegen Kriegsrecht und Menschlichkeit. Dokumente Zusammengestellt vom Auswärtigen Amt (Bolshevist Crimes against the Laws of War and Humaneness: Documents Compiled by the Foreign Office)* containing 159 documents. The principal criticism was that of waging war in violation of all international conventions (*Auswärtiges Amt*, p. 3):



*“On orders of the rulers in the Kremlin, the war is conducted with the greatest cruelty and in complete disregard of all the principles of international law.”*

The Soviets later turned these accusations around and deployed them against the Germans.

### 3.4. Executions of Party Officials, Intellectuals and Activists

Among the first victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* were Party officials and Jewish intellectuals, as well as Jews suspected of being arsonists, saboteurs, looters, spreaders of false news, etc. These categories of victims appear as early as 3 July 1941:

EM No. 11 dated 3 July 1941, EG C:

*“Komsomol officials and Jewish Communist Party officials liquidated.”* (p. 70)

EM No. 13 dated 5 July 1941, EG C, EK 9, Grodno:

*“Pogroms initiated. [...] Party officials have fled, leaders of the Jewish intelligentsia (especially teachers, lawyers, Soviet officials) liquidated.”* (p. 83)

EM No. 19 dated 11 July 1941:

*“Einsatzgruppe C: Location Rovno.*

*EK 4a still in Rovno, where 240 Bolsheviks were executed, mostly Jewish officials, agents, etc.”* (p. 104)

EM No. 20 dated 12 July 1941, EG B, Minsk:

See text already quoted on p. 172.

EM No. 21 dated 13 July 1941:

*“In Bialystok, 215 Jewish and Bolshevik officials were shot, in addition to 35 NKVD agents. [...] In Grodno and Lida, 96 Jews were initially executed during the first few days. I gave orders to intensify this considerably.”* (p. 115)

EM No. 22 dated 14 July, EG D:

This report describes one of the first shootings of Jewish intellectuals:

*“In Khotin, tasks accomplished by Xb. Leading intellectual personalities from the Soviet party and political life, Jewish agitators, teachers, lawyers, rabbis arrested and treated accordingly after a series of raids with the help of Ukrainian confidential informants. Jewish doctors were released to provide medical care for the residents”* (p. 118)

EM No. 24 dated 16 July 1941, EG A, Daugavpils:

As mentioned before (p. 173), fires broke out after this town had been taken, leading to massive reprisals, but in addition to that:

*“Finally, on 30 June, 183 Jewish Communists were arrested and liquidated with the help of reliable local Ukrainians.”* (p. 129)

EM No. 28 dated 20 July 1941, EG D:

*“In Rovno, all in all 240 executions have been carried out so far. The victims were mostly Jewish Bolshevik agents and NKVD informants.”* (p. 150)

EM No. 32 dated 24 July 1941, EG B:

*“Thus, in Baranovichi, another 381 persons were liquidated. These were mostly Jewish activists, officials and looters.”* (p. 171)

This report then returns to the killing of intellectuals:

*“In Minsk, the entire Jewish intelligentsia (teachers, professors, lawyers, etc., with the exception of physicians) has now been liquidated.”* (p. 172)

EM No. 37 dated 29 July 1941

This report, in part already quoted on p. 161, explains why the *Einsatzgruppen* considered Jewish intellectuals enemies to be killed:

*“In Zhitomir, there were approximately 30,000 Jews, that is, something over 30% of the total population. The great majority of them by far fled before the occupation by German troops. According to careful estimates, there are still 5,000 Jews (9% of the population) in Zhitomir. Many Jews, particularly the intellectual classes, are mostly active as informants for the NKVD. The Soviet agencies treated them quite preferentially. They employed them primarily as administrative officials, managers of warehouses, kolkhozes and sovkhoses (80% of the Soviet officials in the Zhitomir district were Jews). In the practice of their religion, the Soviet authorities hardly gave them any trouble. In contrast to the Orthodox churches, their synagogues were always available to them for the practice of their religious rituals. Among the Jews, the hope still prevails that the Bolsheviks will return very soon. Due to the behavior of the Jewish population under Bolshevik rule, the population, with a few exceptions, is overtly anti-Semitic.”* (p. 201)

EM No. 38 dated 30 July 1941:

The commander of the Security Police and SD in Cracow reports:

*“During the reporting period, another 416 persons, mostly Jews, were shot for Communist activities as political commissars in the Red Army, as murderers of nationalistic Ukrainians, or as NKVD agents.”* (p. 205)

EM No. 39 dated 31 July 1941:

With reference to the commander of the Security Police and the SD in Cracow, this report contains the following remark:

*“A more loyal attitude is shown toward Jewish scholars, unless they were sympathetic to Bolshevism and hostile to the Ukrainians during the Soviet period.”* (p. 210)

This indicates that one could well argue that the shooting of Jewish intellectuals mentioned in other reports was due to the fact that they were considered compromised by Bolshevism or its supporters.

EM No. 43 dated 5 August 1941, EG B, Grodno:

*“A large number of Jews who had worked for the NKVD under Soviet rule and who had stirred up the population to resist the German armed forces after the arrival of German troops were taken out.”* (p. 239)

## Vilnius:

*“The Latvian security force substantially participated in rendering harmless Jewish-Bolshevik officials and agents.”* (p. 240)

EM No. 47 dated 9 August 1941:

This report mentions many executions carried out by *Einsatzgruppe B*. 400 Jews were eliminated at Zhitomir in the past few days, “including mostly saboteurs and political officials” (p. 265).

*“In Korostyshev, 40 Jews were eliminated for sabotage, spying and looting, for it has also become known that returning Jews tyrannized the population and maintained very close contact with armed bands in the region around Korostyshev.”* (*ibid.*)

## At Berdichev:

*“148 Jews were executed for looting and Communist activity.”* (*ibid.*)

*“24 Jews shot in Miropol for refusing to work or for assisting the partisans.”* (*ibid.*)

*“In Vinnitsa, where 30 buried murdered victims were found, 146 Jews were dispatched.”* (*ibid.*)

## In the territory of Shepetovka-Rovno:

*“370 Russians and 1,643 Jews shot as instigators and accomplices”* (p. 266)

EM No. 73 dated 4 September 1941

Shootings of individual Jews or in small groups are also recorded in the paragraphs of this report dedicated to the anti-partisan struggle. For example, the persons shot included “a Jew who had destroyed German military cable installations near Minsk” (p. 403); a group of partisans in the district of Borisov who were “predominantly Jewish activists” (*ibid.*); 74 Jews “in reprisal for arsons committed by Jews in Nevel” (p. 404); another 20 were shot “for having been active in a communist sense” (*ibid.*); still others were shot for “anti-German whispering propaganda,” “as NKVD informants and political officials,” as saboteurs of Wehrmacht measures, for accomplices in the murder of three German soldiers at Vitebsk, or as arsonists and troublemakers in the Smolensk Ghetto (p. 405).

The paragraph “Combing through a Civilian Prison Camp” speaks of the liquidation of 733 civilians with this clarification:

*“In all cases, the persons shot were thoroughly inferior elements, with predominantly Asian elements.”*

Immediately afterwards, the text adds:

*“While combing through the civilian prison camp in Vitebsk, 397 Jews were handed over by the Wehrmacht who had committed sabotage and had caused raids against German troops.” (p. 406)*

It therefore appears that the criterion of elimination on racial grounds applied to Asian “inferior elements” rather than to the Jews. Shortly afterwards, the report returns to a discussion of these same “elements”:

*“Formation of labor units, Jewish councils, ghettos, etc.: In Nevel as well, as in the other cities so far, Jews picked up on routine patrols were pressed into labor units deployed to clean the city. A Jewish council was formed from the more intelligent ones. As their first job they were ordered to register all Jews of both sexes as well as to mark them with a yellow circle.” (ibid.)*

The reasons for the killing of mental patients are not explained; one may well imagine a mix of theories relating to euthanasia combined with the theory of “useless eaters,” which must have seemed particularly urgent in the Eastern territories due to the food shortage, aggravated by looting and fires caused by the fleeing Soviets. But perhaps the Germans were also taking account of the hazards constituted by these persons, since EM No. 94 dated 25 September 1941 and No. 108 dated 9 October mentions lunatics armed by the Soviets (pp. 554, 663).

EM No. 80 dated 11 September 1941:

This report deals with Jews supporting the partisans:

*“As already reported, Jews play an important role in supplying these residual groups with provisions and in conveying information.” (p. 440)*

EM No. 88 dated 19 September 1941, EG C:

This report mentions a shooting motivated by a sort of euthanasia combined with health concerns:

*“On 6 Sept. 41, Commando 4a carried out a Jewish operation in Radomyshl. Jews had come together there from all over the region. All Jewish dwellings were therefore overcrowded. 15 persons in one room. The sanitary conditions had become intolerable as a result. Several Jewish corpses had to be removed from the houses every day. Feeding the Jews, including their children, was not possible. The result was an increasingly great danger of epidemics. To eliminate these conditions, 1,107 adult Jews were shot by Commando 4a, and 561 youthful Jews were shot by the Ukrainian militia.” (p. 496)*

The same *Einsatzgruppe C* report describes an absurdly disproportionate reprisal:

*“Inflammatory pamphlets and leaflets were distributed in Berdichev on 1 and 2 Sept. 41. Since the guilty parties could not be established, 1,303 Jews, including 876 Jewesses over the age of 12, were executed by a Commando of the Higher SS and Police leader.” (ibid.)*

EM No. 94 dated 25 September 1941, EG A:

Shootings for health reasons are also mentioned in this report:

*“As already mentioned, the actions taken against the Jews must differ depending on their population density in the individual sections. Particularly in the northern section of Einsatzgruppe C, very large numbers of fleeing Jews have shown up again in the villages, and are now a heavy burden on the food supply. The population does neither feed nor house them. They live partly in earth burrows or crammed together in old huts. This greatly increases the danger of epidemics, thus already for this reason necessitating the total cleansing of the localities concerned.”* (p. 558)

This report also “explains” the reasons for the execution of Jews in Lithuania:

*“Increased pro-Bolshevik propaganda activity by the Jewish population was observed at several villages by Einsatzkommandos 2 and 3 in the area of the civilian administration. Where such propaganda appears, the toughest measures are implemented, and all such villages are completely purged of Jews insofar as possible. Since this Jewish propaganda activity occurred especially in Lithuania, the number of persons liquidated in the area of EK 2 has risen to some 75,000.”* (p. 554)

Communists were not necessarily doomed to die; rather, the position occupied by each person was carefully examined. Thus, EM No. 155 dated 14 January 1942, *Einsatzgruppe A* reported that up to 15,500 Communists had been arrested in Estonia so far, 1,000 of whom were shut, while 6,377 were held in detention and 3,785 were released because the accusations against them were considered to be relatively trivial (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 75).

#### EM No. 51 dated 13 August 1941:

The “extermination battalions” subordinated to the NKVD constituted a separate case. EM No. 51 dated 13 August 1941 says in this regard (*ibid.*, p. 283):

*“It is indicative that there are many Jews among the members of the extermination battalions. [...] Just as everywhere else in the Soviet Union, the Jews play an important role here as well.”*

The Germans stumbled across these Soviet units starting in July 1941. A file memo of an SS *Oberscharführer* (the signature is illegible) dated 28 July 1941 bearing the subject “Extermination battalions in the Latvian and Estonian SSR”<sup>162</sup> says that the Wehrmacht captured 260 members of one of these units in the district of Kallaste on 26-27 July. The interrogator’s description of the event is as follows:

*“The Battalions were for the most part formed immediately after the outbreak of the war. The members of these ‘extermination battalions’ are recruited mainly from former members of the militia, workers’ guards, volunteers from the working class and conscripts. The conscripts were selected from previously prepared lists and for the most part assigned to labor battalions. The conscripts were, however, 90% members of Communist organizations, since they had to be particularly trustworthy persons. Tellingly, there are many Jews among the members of the*

<sup>162</sup> SSR = Socialist Soviet Republic

*extermination battalions. [...] Most of the commissars were Jews. During interrogation, the Jews naturally claimed to have been merely nurses, bakers, typists or something of the like. By way of cross-examination and mutual snitching, however, the opposite could be established. [...] The extermination battalions' task was the same everywhere. Their job was to destroy everything which the Red Army had been unable to destroy due to the lack of time."*

There were at least four of these extermination battalions operating in Riga, one in Jelgava and another five in Liepaja and Ventspils. Their strength was approximately 300 persons. In Estonia there were at least eight such battalions, with altogether 2,900 men.<sup>163</sup>

In the light of this information, the shootings of Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen* for sabotage, considered by many to be a mere pretext, are explicable in quite a different sense.

### 3.5. Ghettoization

In parallel with the executions, the *Einsatzgruppen* undertook the task of creating ghettos and concentration camps at Kaunas starting at the end of July 1941.

#### EM No. 14 dated 6 July 1941, EK 1b, Kaunas:

*"Two companies of them were subordinated to the Einsatzkommando. One of these companies guards the Jewish concentration camp established in the meantime at Kaunas Fort 7, and carries out the executions. [...] Fort VII in Kaunas is being set up as a Jewish concentration camp with 2 divisions: 1) male Jews; 2) female Jews and children. Approximately 1,500 Jews are being housed in the fort at the present time. The watch is carried out by Lithuanian guards. The Central Prison houses the following inmates at the present time: 1,869 Jews, 214 Lithuanians, 134 Russians, 1 Latvian, 16 Poles. There are plans for the construction of another concentration camp for Jews in Fort IX in Kaunas."* (p. 86)

#### EM No. 19 dated 11 July 1941:

This report describes the "Prerequisites for a New Order" as follows:

*"The construction of a Jewish ghetto, the marking of all Jews by a yellow Star of David measuring 8 x 10 cm in diameter on the left side of the chest, and the housing of women and children by a Jewish aid committee in the new ghetto, in case they are released by the Lithuanians on our orders. The city of Viliampole has been selected to serve as the ghetto. The resettlement must be completed in 4 weeks. The prisons are now being combed once again; Jews, insofar as special reasons exist, are being arrested and shot. We are speaking of executions of smaller numbers in these cases, from 50 to 100 people. To prevent a backflow of Jews to Kaunas, an agreement was made with the Higher SS and Police leader that the ordinary police set up a guard belt around Kaunas and refuse entry to any Jew."* (pp. 103f.)

<sup>163</sup> ERA, R 819-1-17, pp. 2f.

EM No. 21, 13 July 1941, EG B:

At Minsk, executions and the creation of ghettos proceeded at the same pace:

*“First, 1,050 Jews were liquidated. Others were executed on a daily basis. With regard to the non-Jews still remaining in the camp, the liquidation of the criminals, functionaries, Asiatics, and so on was initiated. Moreover, a Jewish council was also formed, a ghetto was created, and the marking of all Jews was arranged for.”* (pp. 113f.)

EM No. 32 dated 24 July 1941:

This report supplies additional information as to Minsk:

*“A Jewish security service was formed to maintain order in the newly formed Jewish residential district. The Jewish security service is at the disposal of the council of Jewish elders to support the implementation of directives issued by the German agencies and the city administration of Minsk. To prevent the outbreak of epidemics, a Jewish health office was formed, subordinate to the city’s health authority”* (p. 172)

The same report also contains some information on *Einsatzgruppe B* in Orsha:

*“Together with the field and local headquarters, the creation of Jewish councils, the registration and residential concentration of the Jews as well as the recompilation of residential registration lists were carried out.”* (p. 171)

EM No. 34 dated 26 July 1941, EG B:

This report also mentions its activity at Vitebsk:

*“The established Jewish council has registered approximately 3,000 Jews so far. Jewish marking introduced. Currently they are deployed in clearance operations. As a deterrent, 27 Jews publicly shot in the streets of the city for failure to show up for work. Approval from Byelorussian population. Comprehensive executions of Jews follows subsequently.”* (p. 188)

EM No. 36 dated 28 July 1941, EG B:

This report also refers to its activity at Shklov:

*“First measures have already been taken: 1) Evacuation of Jews from inhabited houses and resettlement in a ghetto (cases of leprosy among Jews discovered in the process)”* (p. 197)

EM No. 43 dated 5 August 1941:

*Einsatzgruppe B* continued the task of ghettoization while advancing into Byelorussia as well.

*“In general, the population has feelings of hatred and rage towards the Jews and approves the German measures (construction of ghettos, formation of labor units, security-police measures, etc.) but is unable to take the initiative in handling the Jews themselves.”* (p. 233)

*“With the approval of the responsible local and field headquarters, ghettos were established, Jewish councils of elders were formed, the external marking of the*

*Jews was carried out, labor units were formed, etc., wherever necessary and possible. To maintain order in the newly established residential districts, Jewish security services were formed. To prevent the outbreak of epidemics, it was necessary to create Jewish health offices in the Jewish residential districts.”* (p. 237)

EM No. 54 dated 16 August 1941:

In the meantime; *Einsatzgruppe* A was proceeding in the same manner at Kaunas.

*“The ghettoization of the approximately 25,000 Kaunas Jews is proceeding rapidly. A total of nearly 10,000 Jews have been resettled so far. Under German supervision, the address office (official office of the Lithuanian security police) has completed a card index comprising all the Jews in Kaunas.”* (p. 307)

A similar activity was also being carried out by *Einsatzgruppe* C.

EM No. 63 dated 25 August 1941, Novoukrainka:

*“The solution to the Jewish question, as one of the most important problems, is already being tackled, too, even if hesitatingly. In Kishinev there were approximately 60-80,000 Jews before the war. A large proportion of them moved out with the withdrawal of the Russians. When the city was occupied, only some 4,000 Jews were present, whose numbers were increased by influx. At the initiative of the Einsatzkommando, the Rumanian town major created a Jewish ghetto in the old city. The ghetto currently contains about 9,000 Jews. The Jews are being grouped into labor units and are being made available to the various German and Rumanian agencies for clearance work and other jobs.”* (p. 350)

*Einsatzgruppe* C was proceeding in the same direction.

EM No. 64 dated 26 August 1941:

*“Situation in the Khotin-Mogilev region. 1. Jewish question. In the city of Mogilev there are currently some 4,000 Jews who are residents of the city. In the immediate vicinity of M. there are some 7,000 Jews, who had been deported to the region by the time the Rumanians took over official business. A Jewish transport with a strength of some 6,000 persons was deported into the far side of the Dniester region despite considerable objections by the Rumanian bridge commandant. As a result of backward migration into the city, the number of Jewish residents is increasing daily. It is intended to concentrate the Jewish residents in one Jewish district. The Jews deported here by the Rumanians are concentrated in 3 collection camps. Jews fit for labor have been deployed at clearance work in the city as well as during the harvest.”* (p. 356)

Ghettoization activity is commonly described in many other reports, as for instance in EM No. 73 as quoted on p. 178, as well as:

EM No. 91 dated 22 September 1941:

This report outlines the plan to make Pruzhany a completely Jewish city:

*“Locking up the Jews of Bialystok has been carried out. The preparations for locking them up in the other city is to be considered completed. According to an*



*agreement between the district presidents of Bialystok, the Einsatzkommandos, the Security Police and the Police presidents, it is planned to resettle the Jews of Bialystok to Pruzhany, except for 3,000 of them, who are needed as craftsmen. The resettlement of 20,000 Jews is to begin already this month. The intention is to turn Pruzhany into a purely Jewish city.” (p. 524)*

EM No. 122 dated 23 October 1941:

This report returns to the question in these terms:

*“The evacuation of the Jews out of Bialystok to Pruzhany is progressing. Due to transport problems, only 9,000 Jews could be hauled away so far. According to a talk with the district president, an improvement of the transport possibilities is to be expected in the near future.” (p. 722)*

The intention of the Germans was to make Pruzhany a “*Judenstadt*” – “Jewish city,” filling it in part with the 40,000 Jews from Białystok, which in this manner would have become “free of Jews.” The project proved unfeasible and was abandoned at the end of October/beginning of December 1941 (Gerlach 1999, p. 535).

EM No. 93 dated 24 September 1941:

This report presents a recap of the activities of *Einsatzgruppe A* in the East:

*“The Jewish question in the Eastern territories: The initial measures against the Jews in the Reich Commissariat of the East were carried out by the Security Police, also on the level of police administration. Following the takeover by the civilian administration, the Einsatzkommandos transferred the police administrative measures against Jews to the agencies of the civilian administration. The creation of ghettos had been prepared for throughout and is being carried on by the civilian administration. Only in Vilnius, which was later taken over by Einsatzgruppe A, no preparations had been made to house the 60,000 Jews present there in a ghetto. EK 3 has now suggested the formation of a ghetto, and will now simultaneously carry out pacification measures still required to combat Jewish political activity. In Riga, even before the takeover by the civilian administration, the so-called Moscow district had already been put aside as a ghetto, and Jewish council of elders had been formed. The relocation of the Jews in the ghetto is progressing. The Jews in the cities are being used as a source of free labor by all German agencies. [...] In the old Soviet areas, Jews have been encountered only in singular cases in the cities. The majority of the Jews formerly residing there have fled.” (p. 555)*

EM No. 107 dated 8 October 1941, EG D, Nikolayev:

This report describes “the first steps towards the solution of the Jewish question” as follows:

*“The first part of the Jewish question has already been solved. As early as 23 Aug. 41, the Jews were ordered by proclamation to wear the Jewish star and to register. By order of the Kommando, the registration was carried out by the council of elders, which had been set up for this purpose. Following the initial marking and a survey of the Jews, they were herded together in several streets for easier*

*supervision, and those streets were cordoned off. Due to the registration, the armed forces' need for Jewish labor units could be met from the 2nd day onward. Jewish labor units of all types were made available on a daily basis; their strength increased from 120 at the start to three thousand in the last few days.*" (pp. 652f.)

EM No. 125 dated 26 October 1941. EG B:

This report returned to the topic of ghettoization at Mogilev:

*"EK 8 has finished setting up the Mogilev Ghetto. For its support, the Jewish council was required to set up a Jewish security force inside the ghetto with a strength of 15 men. It was furthermore ordered to fence off the ghetto from the rest of the district with barbed wire. The number of Jews still remaining in the ghetto amounts to barely 1,000 persons, including women and children."* (p. 733)

### 3.6. Judeo-Bolshevism and German Propaganda

In addition to those already mentioned above, other reports dwell on the close relationship between Judaism and Bolshevism.

EM No. 52 dated 14 August 1941, EG C:

*"The Bolshevik apparatus rests upon the Jews and certain classes of officials and employees in the city; in the countryside, Bolshevik rule was propped up by a relatively small number of political operatives by means of the harshest terror methods."* (p. 287)

EM No. 78 dated 9 September 1941:

This report contains, among other things, a long evaluation by *Einsatzgruppe B* on the "Soviet school system" and the "Position of the Jews within the Soviet Regime." The analysis it contains is not in complete conformity with the related National-Socialist propaganda:

*"Following the outbreak of the Revolution, almost all important offices and positions were systematically filled with Jews under Lenin. Under Stalin, a struggle against Jewish preponderance set in. As a result, the Jews began to camouflage themselves and to partly withdraw from key positions."* (p. 427)

The Jews nonetheless maintained an excess of power in the Soviet apparatus, the report continues. In economic life, they held 90% of all powerful positions. For example, at Mogilev, of 120 warehouses of foodstuffs and basic necessities, 108 were directed by Jews; another 50 different types of warehouses were directed by Jews, and all the factories were directed by Jews. The proportion of Jews in the Party exceeded 50%, and at Minsk reached 90%. In the NKVD, the Jews held an average of 70-80% of all positions. In scientific research, they held 50-60% of all positions, while in medicine, they amounted to 75-80%. 35% of all personnel in opera and the theater were Jewish, and Jews held 65-75% of all positions in the orchestras. Against a background of a general closure of churches, the syna-

gogues were also closed, but the Jews were permitted to continue their religious life with certain restrictions. In contrast to Orthodox Christians, the rabbis were not persecuted (pp. 428f.).

EM No. 85 dated 16 September 1941, EG C:

This report deals with agriculture in great detail as well as with the harvest in German-occupied Ukraine, agricultural conditions under the Soviet regime, and the settlements of ethnic Germans in the area around Krivoy Rog (pp. 464-469). The following comments are made in this regard:

*“The Jews have imposed a regime of outright terror, exploiting the working strength of the [ethnic] German peasantry to the utmost. Anti-Jewish hatred is correspondingly massive here.”* (pp. 468f.)

EM No. 80 & 81 dated 11 & 12 September 1941:

Even with regard to the ethnic Germans, the *Einsatzgruppen* demonstrated a certain independence of action. For example, contrary to the propaganda dictates, it is asserted “that perceptions present in Germany relating to the extermination or decimation of the ethnic German population were exaggerated” (p. 454; EM No. 81), and drastic measures against some ethnic Germans are also mentioned:

*“Popular trust in the work of the EKs is further reinforced by the fact that, if need be, the severest measures are taken against ethnic Germans as well. Thus, in 2 cases, ethnic Germans proven to be vicious Bolshevik agitators were shot.”* (p. 444; EM No. 80)

This should indicate the need for greater caution in the interpretation of claims of Jewish power in Russia as pure propaganda, such as the following:

*“Experience to date confirms the earlier allegation that the Soviet state was a Jewish state through and through.”* (p. 451; EM No. 81)

EM No. 133 dated 14 November 1941, EG B:

Even when the reports speak of the “total extirpation of the Jews,” the context is always that of the struggle against Bolshevism. Thus, in this report we read:

*“That Communist machinations were most warmly supported by the Jews need not be stressed particularly. Under the prevailing circumstances, the only way of putting an end to the machinations of the Jews in Volhynia and thus to deprive Bolshevism of its most fertile breeding ground is through the complete extirpation of the Jews, who are certainly less of a boon as workers than they are a bane as ‘germ carriers’ of Communism.”* (p. 792)

EM No. 129 dated 5 November 1941, EG C:

Although in less detail, this report deals with the “Influence of Jewry on the Soviet-Russian living sphere” (pp. 750-753):

*“a) General: Einsatzgruppe C found the role of Jewry in the USSR, in politics, the economy and culture to be even more dominant than assumed. There may be no other country that is so much subjected to the absolute rule of an ethnically for-*

*eign class of oppressors and exploiters than the Soviet Union. The rule of the Jews in the USSR extends to all areas of life without exception. There is nothing that is not influenced or controlled by the Jews. In politics, economics, art and spiritual life, insofar as there can be any talk of spiritual life at all, even in the private lives of Soviet citizens, relationships to Judaism and its influences played, not just a role, but were of decisive significance. [...]*

*b) The Jews in the Communist Party and other Communist organizations.*

*It is well-known that the actual leadership of the Soviet Union is Jewish. It has turned out that the citizens of the USSR not only accept this fact with Slavic stoicism, but rather, that rejection of the Jews has increased to a definite but unorganized anti-Semitism, which is universally perceptible. (This anti-Semitism is by no means race-based, but is, rather, the result of Jewish economic advantages on the one hand, and the obviously Jewish leadership of Bolshevism, with its resulting oppression and terrorism). Therefore, it was necessary to litter the Party and its organs with Jews – not just in order to keep governmental power in Jewish hands, but to shore up Jewish dominion as such.”*

The report then says that “at least 80% of all leading Party positions and their related bodies, as well as the various commissariats (NKVD) were occupied by Jews” and that “already [mentioning] the word ‘Jew’ was considered anti-Semitism and punished by lengthy terms of imprisonment.”

Under point c), “The Jew in Economics,” the report notes that, among 400 “Employees in the Upper Salary Ranks,” 90% of them were Jews.

*“Commodity speculation was, however, prohibited and strictly punished – when committed by non-Jews. For Jews, there was no danger, since all the supervisory officials were Jews. The judges were Jews and, in quite critical cases, the members of the highest responsible Party offices were Jews. [...]*

*d) The Jew in arts and sciences.*

*In the Soviet Union, arts and sciences exclusively serve Bolshevik ideology. Art is a vehicle of propaganda. Science has practically only one single task: to shore up the ‘discoveries’ of Marxism and Leninism. It is no accident that Soviet artists, insofar as they have a [famous] name, are all Party members. It is also no accident that allegedly 90% of them were Jews. [...] Jewish influence is very strong in philosophy, law, history, and partly even in medicine, particularly where university teachers are concerned. The influence in theater and film is perceptible not only through Jewish actors and actresses, but rather through its almost exclusively Jewish-Bolshevik bias.”*

Point e), “The Jew in Popular and Youth Education,” says that the principal Bolshevik organizations involved in youth education and training, the Komsomol (Leninist Young Communist League) and schooling “were both, for the most part, in the hands of Jews and members of the Communist Party.” While the churches of other religions were closed and destroyed, “the majority of synagogues were spared, and the rabbis could continue to preach undisturbed.” Finally, as regards the press, it was “also directed approximately 90% by Jews.”

EM No. 141 dated 3 December 1941:

Regarding churches and synagogues, this report states:

*“17 churches existed in the Taganrog district. Of the 12 Greek Orthodox churches, 9 were closed in the years 1922-1938, some destroyed, and some converted into grain warehouses. [...] The Soviet administrative authorities converted the Jewish synagogue into a technical school for aviation.”* (p. 853)

EM No. 134 dated 17 November 1941, EG D:

The same theme can be found in this report:

*“In the Ukraine (probably also in the rest of Russia) the People’s Commissariats for Culture were predominantly staffed by Jews. This explains why, although the synagogues were burdened by heavy taxes and closed as well, no rabbi was arrested or deported. Furthermore, in every city, there were normally 1-2 synagogues which were not closed.”* (p. 808)

EM No. 144 dated 20 December 1941, EG A:

This report notes the resurgence of a typhus epidemic in Minsk and other localities. Among the population, the suspicion arose that this was the result of Soviet bacteriological warfare against German troops. This would have been a very nice propaganda topic to use against the enemy, but the *Einsatzgruppe* reports:

*“Investigations in this regard carried out by the Einsatzgruppen since then have failed to produce any lead in support of this suspicion.”* (pp. 864f.)

EM No. 141 dated 3 December 1941, EG D:

Another example of observations contrary to National-Socialist propaganda dictates appears in this report, in which *Einsatzgruppe* D admits the irrelevance of the Jewish presence in the scholastic and journalistic apparatus of the district of Mariupol:

*“It is striking that only a very small percentage of the teaching staff and only 2 directors were Jewish. [...]*

*The editorial staff of the city newspaper consisted of 1 director, 1 sub-director and 6 editors; especially remarkable is the fact that there was not a single Jew among them. Even among factory newspapers, the number of Jews involved was very low.”* (p. 851)

EM No. 31 dated 23 July 1941, EG A:

Even before the above, *Einsatzgruppe* A had already noted the following with reference to Borisov:

*“Jews were relatively without influence here.”* (p. 165)

No. 3 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories,” dated 15 May 1942, contains a report titled “General Situation and Atmosphere on the Crimean Peninsula” which deals with the ethnic groups of the Crimea (Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans, Jews, Krymchaks, Greeks, Bulgarians and Armenians)

from 1897 to 1939, discussing each ethnic group in detail. After explaining the difference between the Karaites (a Jewish sect that rejects the Talmud and was also distinguished by other aspects of Judaism, and that sided with the Byelorussians during the Revolution) and the Krymchaks (who were considered, and who considered themselves, genuine Jews), the report deals with the Jews:<sup>164</sup>

*“The settlement of Jews on the Crimean Peninsula was strongly supported by the Bolsheviks. Here, as well, though, it proved impossible to turn the Jews into a people of peasants. In 1939, of the 65,000 Jews in Crimea (5.8% [of the population]), 44,000 lived in the 6 largest cities. As everywhere else in the Soviet Union, the Jews in the Soviet Union occupied the most important positions in economy, cultural life and the Party and governmental administrations. The following list is indicative of the influence exerted by the Jews in the governmental administrations of Crimea:*

*Supreme Soviet of Crimea: 50% Jews*

*People’s Commissariat of Crimea: 40% Jews*

“	”	for Education for Crimea:	80% Jews
“	”	“ Health “ “ :	80% Jews
“	”	“ the Economy “ “ :	80% Jews
“	”	“ Trade “ “ :	60% Jews
“	”	“ Finance “ “ :	25% Jews
“	”	“ Justice “ “ :	30% Jews
“	”	“ NKVD “ “ :	ca. 45% Jews”

#### EM No. 4 dated 22 May 1942:

This report supplies further information:<sup>165</sup>

##### “Jewry in Crimea

*The first noteworthy Jewish settlements in Crimea date back to the end of the 18th century, when the Crimea, with the exception of Sevastopol and the imperial summer residence of Yalta, was assigned to the Jews as a settlement zone.*

*When Jewry attempted to set up the Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan in Asiatic Russia, an attempt was simultaneously made, with large-scale financial support from American Jewish organizations, to create a contiguous region of settlement for Jewry in the European part of the USSR as well, in Crimea. It was characteristic of the overall influence of the Jews in the USSR already at that time that the so-called ‘Kosed,’ a sub-section of the NKVD specifically created by the Reds as a supervisory organization, came to be ruled completely by Jews within a very short time. Jewish settlement to Crimea, which began chiefly at the same time as the collectivization of that period was increased (mainly around 1928), occurred almost entirely at the expense of the ethnic Germans and Tatars. In the westerly and central part of the steppe, entire German villages had to be vacated*

<sup>164</sup> NARA, T-175/235, pp. 10f./2724401-02.

<sup>165</sup> NARA, T-175/235, pp. 5f./2724414-15.

*and left for the Jews. But the attempt to turn Jews into a peasant people failed in Crimea, just as it had in Birobidzhan. As early as 1939, of the 65,000 Jews in Crimea, 44,000 (that is, almost 70%) lived only in the cities of Simferopol, Sevastopol, Kerch, Yevpatoria, Yalta and Feodosia. In the countryside, they were mainly active as managers of large warehouses and distribution points, where they continued their usurious transactions through the purchase and sale of scarce or essential commodities.*

*Starting with the cities, all habitable parts of Crimea were soon completely controlled by the Jews. If ever the chairmen of the individual commissariats were not themselves Jews, then the deputies or first secretaries were.*

*Of the Krymchaks (about 6,000 of them), generally considered to be Jews, a good half of them lived predominantly in Simferopol (2,500) and Karasubazar. Their eradication, together with the Jews as such and the Gypsies of Crimea, occurred largely before the beginning of December 1941. Including the Krymchaks and Gypsies in the fate of the Jews did not stir much of an interest among the general population.”*

To the above-mentioned executive tasks must be added all the organizational, administrative and informational responsibilities which I have discussed above. The general picture which results is this: one cannot seriously believe that Himmler ordered a group of 3,000 soldiers, as an exclusive task or even as a solely primary task, to exterminate millions of Jews over an area extending approximately 1,500 km in latitude and approximately 1,300 km in longitude, even if they were to be assisted by other SS or Police units, whose principal responsibility, incidentally, was to ensure the security of the Wehrmacht and carry out the struggle against the partisans.

## 4. The Jäger Report and the Executions at Kaunas and Riga

### 4.1. The Jäger Report

#### 4.1.1. History of the Document

The history of this document is rather singular. Wolfram Wette informs us that the document

*“had not yet been presented before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals, which tried German war criminals in the years 1945 to 1949. A copy of the report, namely the fourth of a total of five copies, fell into the hands of the Soviet Union already during the war, during the reconquest of Lithuania by the Red Army in 1944, but they maintained silence about it for some time. Only in the year 1963 did the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs deliver this unique document to an authority of the Federal Republic of Germany, namely the Central Office [Zentrale Stelle] of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National-Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg. There, the document was thoroughly examined and declared genuine.”* (Wette, p. 16)

Wette not only does not explain why the Soviets behaved in this rather strange manner, he does not even raise the question. Someone else hazarded a quite bizarre explanation, or rather a guess: that the Soviets never produced the document because, as it referred for the most part to Jews, it was said to infringe a presumed Party directive against subdividing the dead by nationality or religion. It is not difficult to refute this assumption. As early as December 1942, the Soviets issued a report, later presented at Nuremberg, titled, in its German translation, *“Wie die Nazis die Juden ausrotten!”* – “How the Nazis Are Exterminating the Jews!” The text reads as follows, among other things:<sup>166</sup>

*“The cannibalistic plan devised by Hitler at the beginning of this current year provides for the concentration of approximately four million Jews by the end of 1942, principally on Polish soil, with the objective of murdering them.”*

The report concerned itself specifically with Jews – including those from France, Finland and Norway – mentioned the Warsaw Ghetto among others (“Entire ghettos destroyed”), spoke of the killing of Jews in the Baltic countries (“The Death Island near Riga”) as well as of “Soviet Jews.”

Even at Nuremberg, in the hearings of 18 February 1946, the Soviet prosecutors explicitly referred to the extermination of the Jews. I shall cite a few significant examples:

*“My American colleague has already quoted Hitler’s statement of 24 February 1942, that ‘the Jews will be annihilated.’ In a speech by the Defendant Frank, published in the Kraków Gazette on 18 August 1942, it is stated:*

<sup>166</sup> USSR-44. Offizieller Bericht, herausgegeben vom Informations-Büro des Volks-Kommissariats für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der U.S.S.R. am 19. Dezember 1942.



*'Anyone who passes through Kraków, Lvov, Warsaw, Radom, or Lublin today must in all fairness admit that the efforts of the German administration have been crowned with real success, as one now sees hardly any Jews.'*

*The bestial annihilation of the Jewish population took place in the Ukraine, in Bielorrussia, and in the Baltic States. In the town of Riga some 80,000 Jews lived before the German occupation. At the moment of the liberation of Riga by the Red Army there were 140 Jews left there.*" (IMT, Vol. 7, pp. 192f.)

*"Terrible massacres and pogroms were carried out by the German invaders in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. In the course of a few days the German bandits tortured and murdered 52,000 men and women, aged people and children, ruthlessly doing to death all Ukrainians, Russians, and Jews who in any way displayed their loyalty to the power of the Soviet. Soviet citizens who succeeded in escaping from Kiev give a shattering picture of one of these mass executions: A large number of Jews, including women and children of all ages, were assembled in the Jewish cemetery. Before shooting them the Germans stripped them naked and then beat them. The first group marked for execution was forced to lie, face downwards at the bottom of a ditch, where the Jews were shot with automatic rifles. The Germans then lightly sprinkled some earth over the dead bodies, made the next batch lie down in a row over the first and shot them in the same way."* (ibid., p. 458)

*"This fascist specialist on legal questions [Hans Frank] annihilated 3 million Jews in the territory under his jurisdiction which fell only temporarily into the hands of the fascist invaders."* (ibid., p. 470)

It is certainly true that in various Soviet documents, the victims of the Germans are generically defined as "peaceful Soviet civilians," but in the light of the examples cited above, it is inconceivable that the Soviet would have refrained from presenting the "Jäger Report" at Nuremberg in order to conceal that which they had already openly proclaimed on 19 December 1942 and which they reaffirmed repeatedly during the trial.

#### 4.1.2. Jäger's Arrest and Interrogation

At the end of the war, Jäger did not flee abroad, like many SS officers, nor did he conceal himself under a false name, but lived "unrecognized in Allied-occupied Germany, or, more exactly, in the American Zone, in the vicinity of the old university city of Heidelberg." The only act by means of which he attempted to evade capture was filling out a "registration form" on 16 May 1946 with false data, but signed under his real name, in which he denied ever having been part of any SS organization. He lived undisturbed until his arrest on 10 April 1959. After his arrest, he was interrogated for approximately 23 hours in total, signing type-written statements consisting of 29 sheets. During the night of 21-22 June 1959, he was found hanged in his cell.

Jäger could not, therefore, be interrogated as to his report, since the Soviets, who were no doubt aware of his arrest, only made the document available to the

German authorities four years after his death. The investigatory report drawn up on Jäger was utilized to prosecute his successor as commander of the Security Police and SD in Kaunas, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Heinrich Schmitz, who was arrested in October 1959, but died of a stroke on 21 August 1963. During the so-called “*Einsatzkommando 3* Trial,” 17 other defendants were put on trial, who were all acquitted, because they could not be proven guilty of having committed any specific crimes (cf. Wette, pp. 120-134).

As to the reasons why the Soviet authorities delivered the report to the Germans precisely in 1963, there has been speculation that it was closely related to Babi Yar. There is undoubtedly a chronological coincidence at this point, but there is no evidence of any causal connection. In this regard, Erhard Roy Wiehn notes:

*“During the so-called ‘Anticosmopolitan Campaign’ of 1948/49, official attempts were made to suppress the memory of Babi Yar. Yet a group of people gathered each year to commemorate the anniversary of the massacre. In October 1959, Viktor Nekrassov, opposing a newly envisaged plan to build a sports stadium on the location of Babi Yar, protested against the ordained silence and called for a monument to be erected there instead. A poem by the famous Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko titled ‘Babi Yar’, published on 19 September 1961, drew renewed attention to the massacre: [...]. The poem was set to music by Dimitri Shostakovich in his magnificent choral 13th Symphony. It was first performed in December 1962. Whereupon Nikita Khrushchev, then leader of the Soviet Union, publicly and harshly and ominously criticized Yevtushenko on 8 March 1963 for his poem.”* (Wiehn, p. 75)

Therefore, all those who demanded a memorial to the extermination of the Jews were accused of “cosmopolitanism” by the Party leadership. In this context, it would be self-contradictory for the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs to have yielded to “cosmopolitan” flattery by providing West Germany with the “Jäger Report.”

It can also be objected that the Soviet attitude regarding the “Jäger Report” and the examination by the *Zentrale Stelle* which ascertained the document’s authenticity would rule out the hypothesis that the document may have been manipulated.

From the purely theoretical point of view, the Soviet attitude appears, on the contrary, rather suspect. As for the *Zentrale Stelle*, their opinion on the authenticity of the report must be taken with a grain of salt, if they don’t produce their expert opinion. Anyway, while the question of the authenticity of the report is important, that of its truthfulness is no less so.

Jäger was interrogated by a special commission from the State Office for Criminal Investigations (*Landeskriminalamt*) of Baden-Württemberg between 16 and 19 June 1959. He declared that “a few weeks before the beginning of the Russian campaign,” he was summoned to a “Leadership meeting at the RSHA in Berlin,” during which “Heydrich, in one speech, declared that, in the event of a

war with Russia, the Jews in the East would all have to be shot.” He did not quite remember whether Heydrich was referring to “all Jews” or “the Jews.”<sup>167</sup>

Later, 8-14 days before the start of the war against the Soviet Union, he attended the infamous Pretzsch meeting. Jäger recalled with certainty,

*“that nothing was said about shootings of Jews. Heydrich’s address in Berlin, in which he declared that the Jews were to be shot in the event of a war with Russia, was not repeated. Nor was it said that a strict order had been given to shoot the Jews in the East. I consider it completely out of the question that a written order would have arrived from any agency to shoot Jews. I myself have certainly never seen such an order, not even later in Kaunas.”* (p. 3)

Since “the Einsatzkommandos were assembled in Pretzsch” (p. 4), the obvious conclusion is that they received no order to shoot the Jews. During this meeting, Jäger was appointed Commander of the Security Police and SD of Lithuania, headquartered in Kaunas. When he reached that city, the shootings were already underway and were carried out by Lithuanian auxiliary police. Jäger did not know who had ordered the shootings, but did not prohibit them, because, strangely, he considered Heydrich’s statement at the meeting in Berlin as binding that the Jews of the East would have to be shot. He added:

*“Apart from this speech by Heydrich, I had, as of this time, received a more detailed oral or written order neither from the RSHA nor from any other agency. I considered this statement by Heydrich a binding order to the effect that, upon commencing my activity in the East, the Jews were to be shot. I therefore took no action to prevent these shootings.”* (p. 10)

It is unclear how a simple statement by Heydrich at Berlin, never confirmed at Pretzsch, could be considered a “binding order.”

Jäger considered it atrocious “that men were, or should be, killed simply for their religion and their race,” and never ordered anyone “to shoot a certain number, or any Jews at all” (pp. 10f.).

At a meeting, Stahlecker allegedly explained the necessity for the shootings to Jäger as follows:

*“the Jews are the carriers of Communism. They furthermore orchestrate acts of sabotage and thereby endanger the front. In order to protect the front, the rear areas and the homeland, they must be annihilated.”* (p. 11)

No doubt this motivation, which is political and military in nature, is better suited to the context of an absence of verbal or written extermination orders than a racial motivation would be.

<sup>167</sup> *Vermnehmungsniederschrift* (Record of interrogation) of K. Jäger titled “z.Zt. Hohenasperg, den 15.6.1959.” ZStL, 5 AR-Z 14/58, Vol. IV, p. 2. The document consists of 29 typewritten pages sequentially numbered from 1 to 29, with one non-numbered page. The margins are also hand-numbered, sequentially, from 1883 to 1941; p. 2 is indicated as 1887 (instead of 1884); from p. 2 to p. 16 the numbering contains only odd numbers proceeding in twos (1887, 1889, etc.), with other confusions. For this reason and unless stated otherwise, subsequent page numbers are the typewritten page numbers of the document.

Jäger also made important statements as to the drawing up of the reports relating to the shootings, with regard to which he received regular reports:

*“These were then reported in the incident reports, with other general situation reports, which were signed by me and transmitted to the RSHA through Stahlecker. The incident reports were compiled based on individual reports from the various divisions through my office – Sarge Porst – and presented to me for signature.”* (p. 14)

*“As already mentioned in my previous interrogations, so-called incident reports were drawn up about our overall activity, including the shootings carried out. These reports were issued by myself under the designation incident report of Einsatzgruppe [sic; meaning -kommando] 3 – Arabic numeral 3 – to the Einsatzgruppe in Riga. Every Einsatzkommando reported independently to the group.”* (p. 17)

If Jäger regularly sent Stahlecker reports on executions performed by *Einsatzkommando* 3, it is hard to see why the Incident Reports only mention absurdly small numbers of such shootings.

Jäger added that he had never issued “execution orders”; the shootings were carried out by his subordinate Hamann, apparently on his own initiative, with the assistance of a Lithuanian “execution squad” consisting of 50-100 persons (p. 11).

On shootings properly speaking, he reports that 3,000 Jews were shot by the Lithuanians in the days immediately before and after his arrival at Kaunas (p. 18). As regards the places of execution used by Hamann, Jäger only recalled Raseiniai, Olita, Aglona, Siauliai, Mariampol, Ukmerge, Daugavpils and Vilnius (p. 24). Jäger personally visited the Aglona execution site, which was “an insane asylum with about 200 mental patients.” Arriving on the spot, he found “only one single doctor and one nurse left with a remnant of some 20 to 30 mental patients,” who were still curable, as they were not seriously ill. He saw a mass grave measuring 4 meters × 4 meters and 2 to 3 meters deep, containing 20-30 bodies (pp. 24f.). It is not clear where the bodies of the other executed mental patients were buried.

Jäger strongly maintained that he had not hidden after the war to escape justice, but lived openly under his own name, adding:

*“I say this because I would like to say with this that I am [crossed out and replaced by “feel”] not guilty because of the executions carried out in Lithuania.”* (p. 23)

Jäger’s statements contain various contradictions compared to the text of the “Jäger Report,” making it all the more frustrating that he could not be interrogated on the text of that same report.

There is a preliminary draft of the “Jäger Report” titled “Complete List of Executions Carried Out to Date in the Region of E.K. 3,” dated 10 September 1941, which lists executions for a total of 76,355 victims. The actual “Jäger Report” lists 62,986 victims by this same date. Here, the following dates are missing:<sup>168</sup>

<sup>168</sup> YVA, O.53-3, pp. 82-85.

- approximately 4,000 Jews killed by Lithuanian partisans prior to the arrival of *Einsatzkommando* 3;
- 5. Sept. 1941: Ukmerge: 4,709, including “1,123 Jews, 1,849 Jewesses, 1,737 [Jewish] children”;
- 25 Aug. – 6 Sept. 1941: Georgenburg: 41 “Jews, Jewesses, Jewish children.”

The last item of the Jäger Report states: “[6 Sept. 1941] in Georgenburg all [Jews, Jewesses, Jewish children] 412”

The total figure appearing in the Jäger Report is 137,346.<sup>169</sup> In response to a telegram from the Commander of the Security Police and SD in Kaunas dated 6 February 1942,<sup>170</sup> the leader of EK 3 communicated the following figures:

A: Jews 136,421

B: Communists 1,064

C: Partisans 56

D: Mental patients 653

E: Poles 44, Russian POWs 28, Gypsies 5, Armenians 1.

The total number of victims was therefore 138,272, including 55,556 women and 34,464 children.<sup>171</sup>

The abstract of the executions contained in “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942” of *Einsatzgruppe* A titled “Numbers of Executions Carried out by *Einsatzgruppe* A up to 1 Feb. 1942,” lists precisely 136,421 Jews for Lithuania,<sup>172</sup> therefore, this enormous extermination was perpetrated by EK 3. In this regard, Jäger provides the following clarification:<sup>173</sup>

*“According to the list of a raiding squad led by SS Obersturmbannführer Hamann and 8 – 10 seasoned men from E.K. 3, the following operations were carried out in collaboration with the Lithuanian partisans.”*

The massacre is therefore said to have been committed by 10-11 men from EK 3, with or without the assistance of 50 or 100 Lithuanian partisans.

<sup>169</sup> There are two errors in the sums contained in the report. The total relating to the executions carried out on 13 August 1941 (Alytus) is given as 718 instead of 719; that relating to the executions carried out on 19 August (Ukmerge) is given as 643 instead of 645. The final total should therefore be 137,343.

<sup>170</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 169.

<sup>171</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 170.

<sup>172</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 184.

<sup>173</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 149.

## 4.1.3. The Executions of the “Jäger Report”

The following table, prepared by myself, lists the executions listed in the “Jäger Report”:

DATE	LOCATION	VICTIMS
4 July	Kaunas – Fort VII	463
6 July	Kaunas – Fort VII	2514
7 July	Mariampole	32
8 July	Mariampole	19
	Girkalnis (Girkalinei)	6
9 July	Vandziogala (Wendziogala)	38
	Kaunas – Fort VII	24
14 July	Mariampole	31
17 July	Babtei (Babtai)	8
18 July	Mariampole	53
19 July	Kaunas – Fort VII	28
21 July	Panevezys	103
22 July	Panevezys	1
23 July	Kedainiai	125
25 July	Mariampole	103
28 July	Panevezys	288
29 July	Raseiniai (Rasainiai)	257
30 July	Ariogala (Agriogala)	38
31 July	Utena	256
11-31 July	Vandziogala	15
1 Aug.	Ukmerge	300
2 Aug.	Kaunas – Fort VII	209
4 Aug.	Panevezys	422
5 Aug.	Raseiniai	279
7 Aug.	Uteba	571
8 Aug.	Ukmerge	702
9 Aug.	Kaunas – Fort [sic]	534
11 Aug.	Panevezys	500
13 Aug.	Alytus	719
14 Aug.	Jonava	552
15-16 Aug.	Rokiskis	3207
9-16 Aug.	Raseiniai	298
27 June – 14 Aug.	Rokiskis	981
18 Aug.	Kaunas – Fort IV	1812
19 Aug.	Ukmerge	645
22 Aug.	Daugavpils	21
22 Aug.	Aglona	544
23 Aug.	Oanevezys	7523
18-22 Aug.	Rasainiai (Raseiniai) District	1926
25 Aug.	Obeliai	1160

DATE	LOCATION	VICTIMS
25-26 Aug.	Seduva	664
26 Aug.	Zarasai	2569
	Pasyalis	1349
	Kaisiadorys	1911
27 Aug.	Prienai	1078
	Dagda and Kraslawa	216
	Joniskis	355
28 Aug.	Wilkia	402
	Kedainiai	2076
29 Aug.	Rumsiskes and Ziezmariiai	784
	Utena and Moletai	3782
13-31 Aug.	Alytus and Umgebung	233
1 Sep.	Mariampole	5090
28 Aug. – 2 Sep.	Darsuniskis	99
	Carliava	247
	Jonava	1556
	Petrasiunai	125
	Jesuas	144
	Ariogala	662
	Jasvainai	282
	Babtei (Babtai)	83
	Vandziogala	252
	Krakes	1125
4 Sep.	Pravenischkis	253
	Cekiake	146
	Seredsius	193
	Velinona	159
	Zapiskis	178
5 Sep.	Ukmerge	4709
25 Aug. – 6 Sep.	Säuberung in Rasainiai (Raseiniai)	843
	Georgenburg	412
9 Sep.	Alytus	1279
	Butrimonys	740
10 Sep.	Herkine	854
	Varena	831
11 Sep.	Leipalingis	155
	Seirijai	953
12 Sep.	Simnas	414
11-12 Sep.	Uzunalis	43
26 Sep.	Kaunas – Fort IV	1608
2 Oct.	Zagare	2236
4 Oct.	Kaunas – Fort IX	1845
29 Oct.	Kaunas – Fort IX	9200
3 Nov.	Lazdijai	1535
15 Nov.	Wilkowski	115
25 Nov.	Kaunas – Fort IX	2934

DATE	LOCATION	VICTIMS
29 Nov.	Kaunas – Fort IX	2000
	Kaunas – Fort IX	34
Partial Unit of EK. 3 in Daugavpils, 13 July-21 Aug.	Daugavpils	9585
Partial Unit of EK. 3 in Vilnius, 12 Aug. – 1 Sep.	Vilnius	461
2 Sep.	Vilnius	3700
12 Sep.	Vilnius	3334
17 Sep.	Vilnius	1271
20 Sep.	Nemencing	403
22 Sep.	Novo-Vileyka	1159
24 Sep.	Rieza	1767
25 Sep.	Jahiu nai	575
27 Sep.	Eysisky	3446
30 Sep.	Trakai	1446
4 Oct.	Vilnius	1983
6 Oct.	Semeliskes	962
9 Oct.	Svenciany	3726
16 Oct.	Vilnius	1146
21 Oct.	Vilnius	2367
25 Oct.	Vilnius	2578
27 Oct.	Vilnius	1203
30 Oct.	Vilnius	1533
6 Nov.	Vilnius	1341
19 Nov.	Vilnius	171
	Vilnius	14
20 Nov.	Vilnius	3
25 Nov.	Vilnius	64
Partial Unit of EK 3 in Minsk, 28 Sep. – 17 Oct.	Pleschnitza, Bicholin, Scak, Bober, Uzda	3050
Prior to takeover	Pogrom	4000

#### 4.1.4. Wolfram Wette's Analysis

How reliable are these data? This is a rather difficult question to answer, because, except for a very few cases, no other document exists to corroborate it with.

Wolfram Wette has attempted to validate the data, but his procedure is, for the most part, rather questionable.

For the executions carried out on 4 and 6 July 1941 at Fort VII in Kaunas (2,977 victims) he has recourse to Jäger's statements during his interrogation in 1959 (Wette, p. 67).

In the following cases:

- 18 August 1941, Kaunas, Fort IV, 1,812 victims,
- 4 October 1941, Kaunas. Fort IX, 1,845 victims,
- 29 October 1941, Kaunas, Fort IX, 9,200 victims,



he refers to the statements of a self-proclaimed eyewitness, rendered before the Public Prosecutor's Office of Munich in 1959 (*ibid.*, pp. 71-74, 88, 91). For the executions at Rokiskis between 27 June and 14 August (981 victims) and 15-16 August 1941, he simply refers to the "Jäger Report" itself (*ibid.*, p. 77). The same applies to the executions at Kedainiai on 28 August 1941 (2,076 victims; *ibid.*, p. 84). Wette's "proof" of the executions at Georgenburg on 6 September 1941 (412 victims) is truly extraordinary: the Krelitz family died therein! (*ibid.*). Wette's "proof" of the executions at Fort IV at Kaunas on 26 September 1941 (1,608 victims) is based on the "Jäger Report" (*ibid.*, p. 87), as is his "proof" of the executions at Mariampole on 1 September 1941 (5,090 victims; *ibid.*, p. 90).

On the presumed execution of Jews from Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Vienna and Breslau at Fort IX at Kaunas, Wette adds nothing new to our knowledge and is unable to prove anything. In two cases, he refers to Incident Reports: the executions at Zagare on 2 October (2,236 victims; *ibid.*, p. 84) and those at Aglona on 22 August (*ibid.*, p. 90).

The first is described as follows in EM No. 155 dated 1 January 1942 (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, pp. 76f.):

*"One particular activity was characteristic of the Jews of Zagare. On 2 Oct. 41, 50 Jews broke out of the sealed-off ghetto there. The majority could be captured and shot by way of an instantly conducted large-scale manhunt. During subsequent preparation for the execution of the entire Jewish population of Zagare, the Jews, at a given signal, physically attacked the guards and members of the security police deployment squads during the transport to the place of execution. Several Jews, who had not been searched sufficiently thoroughly by the Lithuanian guards, drew knives and pistols and attacked the police men shouting slogans such as 'Long Live Stalin!' and 'Down with Hitler!' 7 policemen were wounded. Resistance was immediately broken. After 150 Jews had been shot on the spot, deportation of the remaining Jews proceeded smoothly to the place of execution."*

The total number of victims, however, is not mentioned here. The "Jäger Report" contains the following summary of this affair:<sup>174</sup>

*"while escorting these Jews away, a mutiny occurred that was instantly crushed. 150 Jews were immediately shot during this. 7 partisans [sic] were wounded."*

The executions at Aglona are mentioned in EM No. 88 dated 19 September 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 494):

*"On 22 Aug., a total of 544 mental patients, selected from among the inmates of the mental hospital at Aglona, were liquidated with the support of the Latvian militia. 10 men, considered to have been cured but still defective, will be released by the head of the institution, Dr. Borg, following their sterilization that has yet to be conducted. As a result of this measure, the mental hospital no longer exists."*

These two incidents, rather than shoring up the reliability of the "Jäger Report," actually increase one's perplexity as to the near-total absence from the Incident

<sup>174</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 113a.

Reports of specific data as to the executions listed in this document. In effect, of 94 executions with more than 100 victims listed in the report, including 42 executions with more than 1,000 victims, the Incident Reports mention only 10 executions, with 1,841 victims.

Overall, apart from these two cases, Wette's evidence is therefore entirely inconclusive.

#### 4.1.5. Critical Analysis of the "Jäger Report"

A critical analysis of the document yields results which are disconcerting to say the least. I shall begin with a few observations of a general nature.

The document is a carbon copy of an original which has never been found, more precisely, the "4th copy" of the claimed five copies in total. On page 1, in the upper-left margin, the words – probably a stamp – "*Der Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD*" appear, followed, immediately below, by the type-written words "*Einsatzkommando 3.*" To the right is the date "*Kauen [Kaunas], am 1. Dezember 1941.*" This post was occupied by the leader of *Einsatzgruppe A*, Stahlecker. As Jäger explained in his interrogation in 1959, he was supposed to send Stahlecker the execution reports relating to *Einsatzkommando 3*, which Jäger commanded. Stahlecker should therefore have been the addressee of the report, but there is no mention of its author on page 1. Only on the last page does a round stamp appear – it is not very clear – probably containing the text "*Der Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD*"; next to it, "*SS Standartenführer,*" doubtlessly another stamp; above this is the handwritten signature "Jäger."

According to German standard bureaucratic practice, the author of the document should appear on page one, at the upper left, and the addressee ("*An den...*") should appear underneath, while the date should appear on the right. At the bottom is the rank and signature, with or without stamp. I merely point to this anomaly without drawing any particular conclusion from it.

The "Jäger Report" is presented as the meticulous implementation of a plan to exterminate the Jews based on a specific order, if not expressly, then at least as an "objective." From this point of view, giving any other justification for the executions makes no sense, although this is exactly what we find in several cases:

On 18 August 1941, at Fort IV, Kaunas, "711 Jewish intellectuals from the ghetto [were shot] in reprisal for an act of sabotage";<sup>175</sup> the execution on 26 September of 1,608 Jews, also in Fort IV, concerned "sick persons and persons suspected of carrying epidemics" (p. 113); the execution on 4 October of 1,845 Jews at Fort IX was a "punishment operation for shooting at a German policeman in the ghetto" (p. 113a); the execution of 9,200 Jews carried out at the same location on 29 October was a "cleansing of the ghetto of superfluous Jews" (*ibid.*). On 2 September, the killing at Vilnius of 3,700 Jews was justified as a "special action, because Jews had shot at German soldiers" (*ibid.*).

<sup>175</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 111. Subsequent page numbers from there, unless stated otherwise.

Nor is there any shortage of meticulous justifications for the execution of very small numbers of victims. Thus, on 29 November, at Fort IX, “17 Jews and 1 Jewess” were shot “for violating the laws of the ghetto, 1 Reich German for converting to Judaism and visiting a rabbinical school [!]” (*ibid.*).

Jäger writes that the carrying out of the executions was “primarily an organizational issue” (p. 115). This is precisely the most dubious aspect of the entire report. If we check the position of the locations mentioned in the “Jäger Report” on a map, we see that the route followed by SS *Obersturmführer* Hamann’s raiding squad – consisting, I repeat, of a mere eight to ten SS men plus 50 or 100 Lithuanian volunteers – was rather convoluted, jumping from one district to another, moving back and forth frenetically several times.

32 persons were shot at Mariampole on 7 July, and another 19 the next day. On the same day, they shot 6 persons at Girkalnis, which is located approximately 130 km north of Mariampole (distances by road). On 8 July, they shifted position to Vandziogala, which is approximately 40 km southeast of Girkalinei, to kill 38 persons. On the same day, they also appeared at Fort VII, Kaunas (approximately 30 km south of Vandziogala), where they shot 24 persons. On the 14th, they traveled to Mariampole (approximately 60 km southeast of Kaunas), where they killed 31 people, then, on the 17th, they appeared at Babtei (Babtai, approximately 80 km northeast of Mariampole), where they killed 8 persons, before returning to Mariampole on the 18th to shoot another 53 people. On 19 July, the Hamman squad traveled to Kaunas (approximately 60 km northeast Mariampole) and killed 26 people at Fort VII; two days later, they moved to Panevezys (approximately 105 km north-northeast of Kaunas), where they shot 103 persons. The next day, in this same locality, they killed one Jew, and on the 23rd they appeared at Kedainiai (approximately 65 km southeast of Panevezys), where they claimed 125 victims. On the 25th, they returned to Mariampole (approximately 105 km southeast of Kedainiai), where they killed 103 people, then, on the 28th, they again traveled to Panevezys (approximately 150 km north-northeast of Mariampole), where they shot 288 people. At this point the raiding squad started playing a sort of ring-around-the-rosie by covering the route Panevezys – Raseiniai – Utena – Ukmerge – Kaunas twice. By this time, they had traveled almost 1,100 km by road to kill 857 people!

From Panevezys, on the 29th, they traveled to Raseiniai (approximately 110 km southeast from Panevezys), where they shot 257 persons; on the 30th they killed 38 people at Ariogala (approximately 30 km southeast of Raseiniai); the next day, they shot 256 people at Utena (approximately 165 km northeast of Ariogala). Between July 11 and 31 (sic!), they killed 15 (sic!) persons at Vandziogala. Chronologically, this entry makes no sense, since the raiding squad only reached this location on 9 July. At any rate, on 31 July, they found themselves at either Utena or at Vandziogala, a locality approximately 110 km away.

On 1 August, the raiding squad was at Ukmerge (approximately 65 km southeast of Utena), where it killed 300 people; the next day, it returned to Fort VII,

Kaunas (approximately 70 km southeast of Ukmerge), where it shot 209 people. It then began circling around again. On 14 August, it traveled to Panevezys (approximately 105 km north-northeast of Kaunas), where it killed 422 persons; on 5 September it traveled to Raseiniai (approximately 110 km from Panevezys: 279 victims), then, on 7 September, it traveled to Utena (approximately 195 km east of Raseiniai), where it killed 571 people. On 8 September it returned to Ukmerge (approximately 65 km southeast of Utena: 702 victims) and on 9 September it returned to Kaunas (approximately 70 km southeast of Ukmerge), where it killed 534 people.

From Kaunas, on September 11th, it traveled to Panevezys (approximately 105 km north-northeast from Kaunas), where it shot 500 people, whence it traveled to Alytus on the 13th (approximately 170 km south of Panevezys), where it killed 719 persons; the next day it traveled to Jonava (approximately 100 km north-north east of Alytus), to kill 552 people; on the 15th and 16th, it shot 3,207 people at Rokiskis (approximately 140 km north-northeast of Jonava), and from the 9th to the 16th it shot 298 at Raseiniai (approximately 200 km southeast of Rokiskis).

Between the 27th of June and the 14th of August, the raiding squad killed 981 people at Rokiskis – another chronologically nonsensical annotation, because it openly contradicts the calendar of the killings. Starting on the 7th of July, the raiding squad had only visited Rokiskis on 15-16 August, and it is impossible to understand when they had been there before, and why the possible preceding visits were not recorded. On the other hand, on 27 June, the raiding squad did not even exist yet.

On 16 August, it found itself in Raseiniai and Rokiskis at the same time (*i.e.*, in localities which are approximately 200 km apart). On 18 August, it killed 1,812 people at Fort VII, Kaunas (approximately 175 km southeast of Rokiskis and approximately 85 km southeast of Raseiniai); the next day, it traveled to Ukmerge (approximately 70 km northeast of Kaunas), where it killed 645 people. On the 22nd, it visited Daugavpils (approximately 140 km northeast of Ukmerge), where it shot 21 people. On the same day, the raiding squad was also at Aglona (approximately 50 km northeast of Daugavpils), where it killed 544 mental patients; the next day, it traveled to Panevezys (approximately 210 km southeast of Aglona), where it killed 7,523 persons.

Between the 18th and 22nd of August, it was operating in the Raseiniai district, where it killed 1,926 persons. But on the 18th, it was at Kaunas; on the 19th it was at Ukmerge, on the 22nd at Daugavpils and Aglona; therefore, it could only have found itself in the above-mentioned district on the 20th and 21st, but it is, of course, not possible to say that it was actually in this district to begin with; Raseiniai in fact is approximately 135 km east-southeast of Ukmerge, approximately 275 km east-north east of Daugavpils and approximately 320 km east-northeast of Aglona.

On 25 August, the raiding squad traveled to Obeliai, a town located approximately 210 km southeast from Aglona, where it killed 1,160 persons. On the 25th and 26th, it shot 664 persons at Seduva (approximately 145 km northeast of Raseiniai); on the 26th, it was also in Zarasai (approximately 155 km east of Seduva: 2,569 victims), at Pasvalys (1,349 victims) and Kaisiadorys (1,911 victims). Seduva is located approximately 185 km from Zarasai, which is approximately 150 km from Pasvalys, which is approximately 185 km from Kaisiadorys. Therefore, on 26 August, SS *Obersturmführer* Hamann's raiding squad traveled approximately 520 km and killed 5,829 persons, plus at least some of the 664 people shot dead on 25 and 26 August!

On 27 August, the raiding squad reached Prienai, where it killed another 1,078 persons; on the same day, it shot 216 persons at Dagda and Kraslava. On the very same day, once again, it was also at Joniskis, where it killed 355 victims. The distances between these localities by road are:

- Prienai – Kraslava: approximately 300 km
- Kraslava – Dagda: approximately 35 km
- Dagda – Joniskis: approximately 310 km.

Therefore, on 27 August, Hamann traveled 645 km but also had time to shoot 1,649 people.

If we suppose that Hamann's raiding squad was sub-divided into smaller units, this might no doubt explain its presence in different localities hundreds of kilometers apart on the same day, but it would not explain the chaotic organization of the executions, carried out at random, here, there and everywhere, and it would certainly not reduce the total mileage by one jot. Moreover, since the larger executions were obviously impossible even for the entire raiding squad over the stated period of time, as we shall see below, they would be no less impossible, in fact even less so, for smaller units.

According to the report, a partial unit of *Einsatzkommando* 3 at Vilnius killed 21,169 people between 12 August and 25 November, including 21,142 Jews.

Arad maintains that *Einsatzkommando* 9 shot 5,000 Jews from Vilnius at Ponar between 8 and 20 July (Arad 1982, p. 77). This would have been the first massacre of Jews in this city, but the *Einsatzgruppen* reports do not mention it. The Germans created two ghettos at Vilnius, into which the Jews from the city were transferred at the beginning of September 1941. 29,000-30,000 Jews were housed in Ghetto No. 1, 9,000-10,000 in Ghetto No. 2, and another 6,000 were interned in the prison of Lukiszki, whence many of them were transferred to Ponar and shot. The residents of Ghetto No. 1 were killed between 4 and 21 October (6,942 persons according to the Jäger Report), while part of Ghetto No. 2 was eliminated between 22 October and 22 December (6,881 according to the Jäger Report; *ibid.*, pp. 139-148). The extermination concerned primarily Jews without work-passes (*ibid.*, p. 143), therefore, principally, adults unfit for labor and children. Nevertheless, only the palest traces of these enormous exterminations at Vilnius are reflected in the Incident Reports:

- EM No. 21 dated 13 July 1941, EG A: 321 Jews killed by EK 9 by 8 July (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 114)
- EM No. 36 dated 28 July 1941, EG B: 193 Jews killed (*ibid.*, p. 195)
- EM No. 152 dated 7 January 1942, EG A: 385 Jews killed.<sup>176</sup>

A few of the figures relating to the numbers of persons shot in a single day, according to the “Jäger Report,” are no doubt greatly exaggerated. If it is true, as Arad asserts, that the “new organizational method enabled the killing of 100 men per hour” (Arad 1982, p. 76), and if it is true, as Jäger claims, that “the path of approach from the collection point to the mass graves amounted to an average distance of 4 to 5 km” and that “the Jews were transported to the execution ground in groups of 500, at distances of at least 2 km,” then it is difficult to believe that Hamann’s raiding squad could kill 9,200 persons on 29 October 1941, or 7,523 persons on 23 August, or 5,090 on 1 September, or even 3,782 on 29 August.

EM No. 88 dated 19 September 1941 reports (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 494):

*“Operations in the counties of Raseiniai, Rokiskis, Sarasai, Perzai, Prienai were carried out by the Sonderkommando of Einsatzkommando 3, together with Lithuanian squad. All counties are now free of Jews. With these executions, the number of persons liquidated by Einsatzkommando 3 together with Lithuanian partisans increase to 46,692.”*

As I noted above, the “Jäger Report” (EK 3) reports 78,305 persons shot by this date. It also claims that there were no more Jews in Lithuania on 1 December 1941, except for the following “labor Jews and their families”:

- at Siauliai: approximately 4,500
- at Kaunas: approximately 15,000
- at Vilnius: approximately 15,000.<sup>177</sup>

These figures are repeated identically in Stahlecker’s “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942,”<sup>178</sup> and once again in No. 8 dated 19 June 1942 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories,”<sup>179</sup>

As I have already noted in another study (Mattogno/Graf, pp. 212f.), according to a census carried out at the end of May 1942, 14,545 Jews were living in Vilnius whose names (together with date of birth, occupation, and address) have been published by the Jewish Museum of Vilnius. It emerges from these documents that no fewer than 3,693 of these 14,545 Jews were children 15 years of age or younger. The number of children per age group is shown in the following table:

<sup>176</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 9/2723516.

<sup>177</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 115.

<sup>178</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 61.

<sup>179</sup> RGVA, 500-1-775, p. 164.

Year of Birth	Age	No. of Children
1927	15	567
1928	14	346
1929	13	265
1930	12	291
1931	11	279
1932	10	216
1933	9	226
1934	8	195
1935	7	227
1936	6	229
1937	5	182
1938	4	188
1939	3	181
1940	2	117
1941	1	172
1942	a few months	12
Total:		3,693

Furthermore, among the Jews registered by the census there were also 59 persons 65 years of age or older. The eldest was the 90-year-old Chana Stamleriene, born in 1852.

The children lived with their families in the ghetto. For example, the Michalowski family, which lived in Dysnos House 5-10, consisted of Nachman, born 1905, Fruma, born 1907, Pesia, born 1928, Niusia, born 1932, Sonia, born 1935, Mane, born 1904, Sonia, born 1903, Motel, born 1930 and Chana, born 1933 (*ibid.*, p. 85). The Kacew family, residence at Ligonines House 11-8, included the following members: Chaim, born 1909, Chava, born 1921, and Sloma, born 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 150). The Schimelevitsch family, living at Rudninku House 7-12, consisted of Abram, born 1896, Chawa, born 1909, Sora, born 1938, and Riva, born 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 213). Finally, the Cukerman family, residence at Stasuno House 12, had the following members: Kosel, born 1916, Sima, born 1912, Kusia, born 1932, Malka, born 1934, Abram, born 1904, Syfra, born 1909, and Bluma, born 1930 (*ibid.*, p. 329).

Since the 3,693 children were living with their families, it is clear that the number of those unfit for work and those who could not be employed (mothers who had to care for their children) was even higher.

The survival of these 3,693 children is in open contradiction to the policy reflected in the "Jäger Report," according to which, as I mentioned above, EK 3 had killed 34,464 Jewish children by 31 November 1941.

Jäger asserts that these Jews were spared due to the intervention of the civilian administration and the Wehrmacht, but this does not explain why these 3,693 "useless eaters" were permitted to survive as well.

How little the threat of death was hovering over these children can be gathered from the following description of the school system in the ghetto of Vilnius, as furnished by Abraham Foxman (Foxman, pp. 90f.):

*“Some days after the establishment of the ghetto, in 1941, a group of teachers founded a ‘Farein,’ [Verein = association/club] which later organized the educational system of the ghetto. At the first enrollment for the school, 3,000 children were registered. In the beginning, participation in classes was voluntary. In April 1943, it then became obligatory:*

*‘Directive No. 3, issued by the ghetto deputies on April 28, 1943, announces the attendance at the ghetto schools to be obligatory. All children from five to thirteen must attend the ghetto schools, which are free of cost.*

*[...] The block chief is responsible for seeing that all children of obligatory school age take part in classes.’ In the first year of the ghetto, more than twenty educational units were founded, which comprised over 80% of the school-age children of the ghetto. Schools as well as H.K.P. – work institutions – were also founded in Kauen [Kaunas]. Gens<sup>180</sup> received permission from the Germans to fence-in an area in the woods outside of the ghetto. The teachers walked with groups of 100 to 150 children into the woods four times a week. Due to the outbreak of a scarlet-fever epidemic, there was a delay in opening the schools in 1942. In October they resumed operation, and 1,500 to 1,800 children took part in classes. Apparently there were 60 teachers who gave 42 hours each week. The remaining 18 hours were devoted to work in the kitchen, visiting students and parents in their homes, the repair of books and notebooks, as well as the conducting of various assemblies.”*

Arad informs us that, starting on 26 March and ending on 2 April 1943, 1,250 Jews were transferred from the ghettos of Oshmyany, Mikhailishki and Swieciany to the Vilnius Ghetto, and another 1,459 from Oshmyany to the labor camps at Zaslai, Ziezmariai, Kena and Novo-Vileyka (Arad 1982, p. 359). Another 4,000 Jews from the ghettos at Swieciany and Oshmyany were shot at Ponar at the beginning of April (*ibid.*, pp. 362f.). The Germans also liquidated these ghettos because they wanted to secure the border between Lithuania and Byelorussia, since the Jews maintained relations with the partisans.

Approximately 2,500 Jews housed in labor camps, such as Sorok-Tatar, Rzesza and Biala-Vaka, were killed between the end of June and the beginning of July 1943 (*ibid.*, pp. 367-369). If we follow the “Jäger Report,” these 9,000 Jews or more should not have existed anymore, as they should have been killed much earlier.

With regard to the conference convened by Rosenberg in Berlin on 13 July 1943, in which *Gauleiter* Meyer announced “the resettlement of 22,000 Jews and the concentration of 50,000 Jews in concentration camps in the Eastern Territories,”<sup>181</sup> Arad asserts that, of these 72,000 Jews present in the East, 20,000 resid-

<sup>180</sup> Jacob Gens, Chief of the Jewish Council of Vilnius.

<sup>181</sup> NO-1831. TWC, Vol. XIII, p. 1021.



ed at Vilnius, 17,000 at Kaunas and 5,000 at Siauliai (Arad 1982, p. 402), for a total of 42,000, 7,500 more than those left alive by Jäger. Adding the above-mentioned 9,000 Jews, we arrive at 16,500 living Jews considered dead by the “Jäger Report.”

The most important test of the reliability of this document is obviously that relating to the bodies: is there any documentary or physical proof of the burial of more than 137,000 bodies in the locations mentioned in the report?

That question will be examined in Part Two of the present study.

#### 4.2. The Execution at Kaunas of “Resettlers” from the Reich and the Protectorate

The massacre at Kaunas arouses additional perplexity. The “Jäger Report” states that 2,934 “resettlers from Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt upon Main” were killed in Fort IX, Kaunas, on 25 November 1941, and “2,000 resettlers from Vienna and Breslau” on the 29th.<sup>182</sup>

The incidents involved transports from Munich (15 November), Berlin (17 November), Frankfurt upon Main (22 November), Vienna (23 November) and from Breslau (25 November), for a total of 4,934 persons. These transports were announced in advance by SS *Sturmabführer* Rudolf Lange, commander of the Security Police and the SD for the General District of Latvia, in a letter sent to *Reichskommissar* Lohse on 8 November 1941 (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, pp. 232f.):

*“Subject: Jewish transports out of the Reich to the East*

*According to a communication from the Reich Security Main Office Berlin, the transport of 50,000 Jews to the East is being carried out. As reported, 25,000 of them will be sent to Riga and another 25,000 to Byelorussia. Transports are coming from all of the major cities in the area of the Reich and the Protectorate. The 1st transport of 1,000 Jews will arrive in Minsk on 10 Nov. 41. By 16 Dec. 1941, another transport will be sent to Minsk every other day. The remaining transports will be set in motion in the period between 10 and 20 Jan. 1942. The transports to Riga will begin on 17 Nov. 41. The first transport will get here on 19 Nov. By 17 Dec., another transport of 1,000 Jews will arrive here every day. The remaining transports will be sent during the period between 11 and 29 Jan. 1942. It is planned to accommodate the first five transports intended for Riga in the ghetto at Kaunas. It is not yet clear whether the train schedules will permit to direct these first 5 transports to Kaunas, or whether it will only be possible to branch off 5 transports to Kaunas starting with later transports. I will keep you informed in this regard. The construction of barracks in the vicinity of Salaspils will continue at the quickest pace. Since the barracks will not yet be entirely completed by the time the first transports arrive due to the many problems involved in procuring the materials and the shortage of skilled workers, the plans are to create housing*

<sup>182</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 113a.

*possibilities for the first transports in the former military barracks in Jungfernhof (to the right of the road Riga-Daugavpils, between Riga and Salaspils). [...]*"

This document provides not a single hint at any exterminatory intention with regard to the five Jewish transports slated to arrive at Kaunas. Lange informs us that these five transports did not necessarily have to have been the first five, since provision was made for the possibility of directing five transports to Kaunas from among subsequent trains. Hence, whether they were sent to Kaunas or not was neither linked to the availability of housing at Riga (as provision was explicitly made to house them "in the former military barracks in the Jungfernhof" if need be), nor to any policy of extermination, but to mere logistical considerations of fitting those trains into the existing train schedules.

On 20 November, Lange, with reference to the letter quoted above, informed Lohse on these five transports (*ibid.*, p. 238):

*"The Jewish transports are continually arriving in Minsk as planned. Of the 25 transports originally intended for Riga, the first 5 are diverted to Kaunas."*

On 17 November 1941, the State Police Office Berlin, IV D 1, sent the following message to the "Commander, Security Police, Dr. LANGE, Riga":<sup>183</sup>

*"Regarding evacuation of Jews. 17 Nov. 41 at around 1825 hours, transport train No. D O 26 departed BERLIN direction KAUNAS with 944 Jews. Transport accompanied by 2 state policemen and 15 police officials. Transport manager and chief criminal assessor EXNER, who has duplicate transport list with him. Provisioning added to transport: 3,000 kg bread, 2,700 kg. flour, 200 kg. peas, 200 kg. processed foodstuffs, 300 kg. yeast flakes, 18 bottles soup spices... 52.5 kg. soup paste, 100 packets... corrupt groups... 50 kg. salt, 1... corrupt groups... 1... corrupt groups... and 47,200 RM. in Reich certificates of deposit."*

To this must be added the fact that the *Einsatzgruppen* reports contain not the slightest mention of this presumed massacre. In the "Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942" we find the following remark in a paragraph titled "The Jews from the Reich":<sup>184</sup>

*"Jewish transports have been arriving from the Reich at short intervals since December 1940 [recte: 1941]. 20,000 of these Jews were sent to Riga and 7,000 to Minsk. The first 10,000 Jews evacuated to Riga were housed partly in a provisionally extended collection camp, partly in a newly-erected camp of huts in the vicinity of Riga. The other transports were sent to a separate part of the Riga Ghetto at first. Deploying all Jews fit for labor, construction of the camp of huts is being carried out in such a way that by spring it will be possible to house all evacuated Jews in this camp who survive the winter. Only a small percentage of the Jews from the Reich are fit for work. Approximately 70-80% are women and children as well as elderly people unable to work. The mortality rate is constantly rising, also due to the extraordinarily hard winter."*

<sup>183</sup> TNA, German Police Decodes: No. 1 Traffic: 17.11.41. ZIP/G.P.D.515/25.12.41, n. 35-36.

<sup>184</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, pp. 63f.

*The performance of the few able-bodied Jews from the Reich is satisfactory. As a work force, they are more valuable than Russian Jews due to the fact that they speak German language and are relatively cleaner.*

*The Jews have a remarkable ability to adapt, trying to change the way they live to fit the circumstances.*

*The crowding of the Jews into the smallest space, which occurs in all ghettos, necessarily leads to a greater danger of epidemics, which we are attempting to prevent through the use of Jewish doctors, insofar as possible. In individual cases, infected, contagious Jews were separated on the pretext of taking them to an old peoples home or a hospital, and executed.”*

EM No. 151 dated 5 January 1942 supplies further information on the transports in question.<sup>185</sup>

*“The first five transports that came to Riga were diverted to Kaunas. The Riga Camp, which is to house approximately 25,000 Jews, is still being built and will be finished in a very short time.*

*In the meantime, the Higher SS and Police leader in Riga, SS Obergruppenführer Jeckeln, has initiated a shooting operation, and approximately 4,000 Jews from the Riga Ghetto and an evacuation transport from the Reich were eliminated on Sunday, 30 Oct. 41. Originally, the operation was to be carried out using the Higher SS and Police leader’s own forces, but after several hours, 20 men from EK 2 commandeered for securing the perimeter were deployed in the operation.”*

Here, therefore, the document speaks of the shooting at Riga of an evacuation transport from the Reich, without any mention of the five transports sent to Kaunas.

Finally, Report No. 10 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” dated 3 July 1942 states in the paragraph “Evacuation of Jews from the Reich”:<sup>186</sup>

*“In the period between 17 Nov. 41 and 6 Feb. 1942, 25,103 Jews were evacuated to Riga from the state police districts of Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt upon Main, Breslau, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Leipzig, Dresden, Dortmund, Prague, Hamburg, Kiel, Danzig, Cologne, Kassel, Düsseldorf, Karlsruhe, Aachen, Münster and Hannover in 25 transports and housed in camps or ghettos there.*

*The persons concerned are currently being covered by the general anti-Jewish measures in effect in the East.”*

Not even this report confirms the presumed shooting at Kaunas of the five transports at the end of 1941. Yet the reports contain much less-important information on the fate of the Jews deported to Lithuania, such as the escape of 2 Jews from the Salaspils Camp (see next subchapter).

Apart from the fact that they are not confirmed by other sources, the presumed shootings at Kaunas are entirely unmotivated.

Gerlach maintains that

<sup>185</sup> EM No. 151 of 5.1.1942. NARA, T 175/234/ 2723503 (p. 14 of the report).

<sup>186</sup> RGVA, 500-1-775, p. 233.

*“Just three days before the first massacre, Dr. Peter Kleist, the section chief for the Ostland in the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Territories in the East (Ostministerium), met with Karl Jäger, the head of Einsatzkommando 3 in Kaunas, and expressed his satisfaction with the executions of Lithuanian Jews. We are thus justified in concluding that the Ministry for the East, which had been informed about the transports, was in agreement with the plan to execute the German Jews who were expected to arrive in Kaunas.”* (Gerlach 1998, pp. 767f.)

It is unclear how “satisfaction with the executions of Lithuanian Jews” can prove the existence of a “plan to execute the German Jews.” Kleist could just as easily have been satisfied because the executions of Lithuanian Jews created enough room to house the transports of Jews from the Reich in the Kaunas Ghetto according to the Berlin plan.

Wolfram Wette holds another theory which is just as inconsistent. He asserts that

*“the local commander of EK 3, SS Standartenführer Karl Jäger, had – as far as is known – received no instructions from Berlin or from his direct superior Stahlecker as to what to do with the new arrivals. Jäger therefore found himself faced with the necessity to decide this matter for himself. It is to be assumed that he ordered on his own initiative to shoot the German and Austrian Jews as quickly as possible.”* (Wette, p. 96)

Considering that Jäger was commander of the Security Police and the SD in Lithuania, one cannot seriously believe that the decision to divert the five transports to Kaunas, which had already been taken on 8 November 1941 and was repeated on the 20th, was not communicated to the superior concerned.

On the other hand, if it is true that, on 29 October, Jäger himself had already ordered the killing of 9,200 local Jews in Fort IX, Kaunas, to achieve the “cleansing of the ghetto of superfluous Jews,” as quoted earlier,<sup>187</sup> this served precisely to make room for the five transports in question. He was therefore fully aware of the fact that the Jews on the five transports in question were not to be shot.

The question should be examined in greater depth.

Himmler’s *Dienstkalender* contains the following entry for 30 November 1941 (Witte *et al.*, p. 278):

*“From the Bunker [Wolfsschanze]  
[T:] 13.30 SS O. Gr. F. Heydrich Prague Arrest Dr. Jekelius  
Alleged Son Molotov  
Jewish transport from Berlin,  
no liquidation.”*

Two messages intercepted by the British on 1 December 1941 supply further useful information required for a correct interpretation of this entry. The first message says:<sup>188</sup>

<sup>187</sup> RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 113a; see here p. 201.

<sup>188</sup> TNA, HW 16/32, German Police Decodes, No. 2 Traffic 1.12.41, p. 3, No. 24.

“OEJ de DSQ SSD DSQ Nr 3 1930 2 Tle 175 71 SPK1 3742.

SS Obergruppenführer JECKELN Higher SS and Pol. Leader East, RIGA. The Rf SS requests you to visit him for a talk on 4 Dec. 41. Please indicate when you get here or what form of transportation you will be using (re. pick-up).

Gez. GROTHMANN, SS Hauptsturmführer and Adjutant.”

The second is more important:<sup>189</sup>

“OEJ de DSQ DSAQ Nr 4 1930 2 Tle 177 75 DSPK1 3742

To the Higher SS and Pol. Leader East, Riga.

The Jews resettled in the Eastern territory are only to be dealt with according to the guidelines issued by myself and/or by the Reich Security Main Office on my behalf. Arbitrary acts and violations will be punished by myself personally.

Signed H. HIMMLER”

The entry in Himmler’s *Dienstkalender* is commonly interpreted in the sense that “no liquidation” refers to the “Jewish transport from Berlin.” In reality, however, this is a mere supposition. The original entry’s text has a period after “Berlin” and “No” begins with a capital letter. It is most probable that this entry briefly summarizes four distinct themes dealt with during the phone call between Himmler and Heydrich; since there is no connection between “Arrest Dr. Jekelius” and “alleged son Molotov,” there is therefore also no connection between “Jewish transport from Berlin” and “No liquidation.”

Since the contents of the phone call are unknown, and the entry in the *Dienstkalender* only served as a reminder of the content of the phone call, and since a few brief phrases were enough for that purpose, there is no way of knowing what the phrase “No liquidation” really referred to.

As has been suggested on the CODOH Forum, this expression could have referred to the domestic policy of the Protectorate, or the fact that the autonomy of Bohemia and Moravia was not to be liquidated, as was desired by some Party officials who wished to see the Protectorate incorporated into the Reich as a new Gau. But the phone call between Himmler and Heydrich suggests rather a more specific problem, falling directly within Himmler’s scope of authority, without intervention by Hitler. In fact, according to the *Dienstkalender*, Himmler met the Führer after Heydrich’s phone call. This meeting lasted from 2:30 in the afternoon until 4 o’clock (“lunch with the Führer”; Witte *et al.*, p. 278).

Arthur Butz’s interpretation is no doubt original, but is based on the hypothetical assumption that “No liquidation” is linked to “Jewish transport from Berlin.” He notes that

*“in the Fall of 1941, as the deportations started, Riga was not prepared to receive the transports so they were diverted to Kovno (Kaunas) in Lithuania. The first five transports destined for Riga departed the Reich Nov. 15-23 and were diverted to Kovno. Thus in late November there must have been controversy over the wisdom of these transports, and calls for their suspension or cancellation. The transport*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 25.

*of Nov. 27 from Berlin was the first destined for Riga that actually went there, and that is why 'no liquidation' of this transport could have been worth specific discussion between Himmler and Heydrich.*" (Butz 2008)

However, there is no reason to believe that the transport of 27 November was ever cancelled (or that there was any intention to do so), in such a way as to require Himmler's intervention not to "liquidate" (cancel) the transport. The transport in question, in the event of reception difficulties at Riga, could have been diverted to Kaunas like the previous five, with no need for cancellation.

It is also possible to believe that the expression "No liquidation" referred, as I mentioned above, to a very particular problem falling within the fields of competence of Himmler and Heydrich. Robert Gerwarth supplies a useful starting point for a solution when he writes (Gerwarth, p. 230):

*"In late October 1941, however, the first wave of terror officially subsided for 'optical reasons.' In order to give the outward impression of the Protectorate's complete pacification, the summary courts temporarily ceased to impose death penalties, although the SS secretly continued to carry out executions at Mauthausen concentration camp. On 29 November Heydrich went further in his propagandistic policy of 'positive gestures' by suspending the state of emergency in all regional districts of the Protectorate with the exception of Prague and Brünn."*

These problems had probably already been discussed by Himmler and Heydrich during their meetings on 13 – 14 October 1941. The *Dienstkalender* entry for the 13th reads "15.40 Heydrich Berlin situation Czechia" (Witte *et al.*, p. 233); the next day "18 h-23 h SS Ogruf. Heydrich"; during the conversations, the word "*Exekutionen*" was also used (*ibid.*, p. 234). As noted by the editors of the work, "With the executions, Heydrich was pursuing a calculated policy of deterrence" (*ibid.*). It might be objected that the entry of 30 November does not mention the term "*Exekutionen*," but rather, "*Liquidierung*": the words no doubt differ, but the concept is the same to such a degree that orthodox Holocaust historiography considers "*Liquidierung*" as synonymous with "*Exekution*" of the Jewish transport from Berlin. The objection obviously has some value, even inversely: the entry of 30 November uses precisely the term "*Liquidierung*," not "*Exekution*."

In reference to the message of 17 November 1941 intercepted by the British (relating to the Jewish transport from Berlin to Kaunas), Stephen Tyas draws once again attention to the entry in Himmler's *Dienstkalender* of the same date, which records a meeting between Himmler and Heydrich from 12.15 to 12.30 h. The topics under discussion were: "Discussion with Rosenberg, conditions in the General Gov., removal of the Jews, legal experts only as advisors" (*ibid.*, p. 265). Tyas comments:

*"earlier in the day Himmler had conferred with Heydrich between 12:15 and 12:30 about the 'elimination of the Jews' (Beseitigung d. Juden)<sup>190</sup> following dif-*

<sup>190</sup> In reality, the topics dealt with in 15 minutes by Himmler and Heydrich were four in number; it is difficult to believe that the presumed decision to kill the deportees on 5 transports was taken in just a few minutes between one topic and another.

*difficulties and obstacles raised in Riga about the deportation program for German Jews. A decision was possibly made between Himmler and Heydrich about the killing of these Berlin Jews, and the train was directed to Kaunas rather than Riga, as previously intended.*" (Tyas, pp. 218f.)

This, and the four subsequent transports (from Munich, Frankfurt upon Main, Vienna and Breslau), continues Tyas, were all directed to Kaunas, and all the deportees, 4,934 persons, were shot between 25 and 29 November in Fort IX by *Einsatzkommando 3* led by Karl Jäger.

He then adds that, on 20 November 1941, the Bremen Gestapo transmitted, also to Riga, a radio message announcing the departure, on 18 November, of a train carrying 971 Jews from Bremen to Minsk. He notes that "all the Reich Jews arriving in Minsk in 1941 were not killed on arrival and instead housed in the Minsk Ghetto during winter" (*ibid.*, pp. 219f.).

Therefore, the "*Beseitigung d[er] Juden*" – "elimination/removal of the Jews" – did not mean the extermination of the Jews. Tyas' interpretation is inconsistent due to the fact that it limits this general note, without proof, to the specific case of the Jews deported to Kaunas; in particular, it does not take account of the fact that as early as 8 November 1941 – as shown by Lange's letter to Lohse cited above – the plan was "to accommodate the first five transports intended for Riga in the ghetto at Kaunas." It therefore makes no sense for Himmler and Heydrich to agree nine days later to divert these five transports from Riga to Kaunas for the purpose of extermination.

Regarding the "removal of the Jews," the *Dienstkalender's* editors summarize Tyas' hypothesis as follows in a footnote (Witte *et al.*, fn 58, p. 265):

*"It is unclear whether this point in the discussion refers to the General Government. The note may possibly have referred to Heydrich talking to Hitler about the difficulties and obstacles during the deportation of Jews from the Reich, about which he also informed Goebbels the same day (see Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels, Part II, vol. 2, p. 309 [18 Nov. 1941])"*

This reference to Goebbels's annotation is quite misleading, however, because it says (Fröhlich, p. 309):

*"Heydrich reported to me concerning his intentions relating to the deportation of the Jews out of the territory of the Reich. The problem turns out to be more difficult than we had initially assumed. 15,000 Jews have to stay in Berlin in any case, since they are engaged in dangerous and important work required for the war effort. Also, a number of elderly Jews can no longer be deported to the East; a ghetto is supposed to be built for them in a small city in the Protectorate. During the third installment, which is due at the beginning of next year, the procedure suggested by me is to be used, namely, to evacuate them city by city, so that, when the evacuation begins in a city, it is also over as soon as possible, and the strain caused by it on public opinion doesn't last too long and doesn't do too much harm. Heydrich is moving ahead consistently in this matter as well. He is really clever politically, generally speaking, which I really didn't know before. His or-*

*ders in the Protectorate are well-thought out. They don't just depend on power, but on reason, and that is always something of great value."*

The sentence "The problem turns out to be more difficult than we had initially assumed" obviously has no connection to the difficulties of housing the transports at Riga, and only a twisted fantasy could connect it to them. The obvious sense is that Goebbels supported a radical solution to the "Jewish Question," *i.e.*, he advocated the deportation of all Jews to the East; but he now realized that doing so would be "more difficult," since Heydrich had notified him that Jews employed in vital areas of the German economy would have to remain in Berlin, and that elderly Jews would be deported to the ghetto at Theresienstadt. Two days earlier, on 16 November 1941, an article by Goebbels appeared in the periodical *Das Reich*, in which he clearly explained his thoughts regarding the Jews:

*"The historical guilt of world Jewry for the outbreak and expansion of the war has been so fully substantiated that we need not waste any more time talking about it. The Jews wanted the war, and now they have it. But the Führer's prophecy also proves to be true, delivered in the German Reichstag on 30 January 1939, that, if world Jewry succeeded in pushing the peoples into another world war, the result would not be the Bolshevization of the earth and therefore the victory of Jewry, but rather the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe.*

*We are now experiencing the fulfillment of that prophecy, and with this, Jewry suffers a fate that, although hard, is more than deserved. Compassion or even regret in this regard is entirely uncalled-for. World Jewry, in provoking this war, entirely misjudged the forces available to it, and it is now suffering a process of gradual annihilation, which it had intended for us, and which they would also unhesitatingly carry out against us, if they had the power to do so."*

The "annihilation" mentioned here cannot be understood in a physical sense or even with a view to a future "Holocaust," because Hitler is only said to have taken his elusive "decision" in this regard at the beginning of December 1941 (Gerlach, 1998, p. 784). The term "annihilation" referred therefore to the deportation of the Jews to the East, mentioned by Rosenberg on 14 December 1941 as the "extermination of Jewry."<sup>191</sup> The "removal of the Jews" discussed here has the same meaning.

Angrick and Klein reconstruct the course of events which, in their view, led to the telephone call between Heydrich and Himmler. Here is their narrative in a nutshell:

On 30 November, when the Jewish transport which departed Berlin on the 27th arrived at Riga, Friedrich Jeckeln, the Higher SS and Police leader North and East Russia, had it shot, extending to the Jews of the Reich Himmler's order to kill the Lithuanian Jews. Lange attempted to prevent the shootings, since Jeckeln was in violation of the RSHA guidelines and had moreover arbitrarily interpreted Himmler's order to annihilate the Riga Ghetto. Lange turned to the RSHA, consulting SS *Sturmabführer* Emil Finnberg, an official of the Commander of

<sup>191</sup> PS-1517. IMT, Vol. 17, p. 270. See in this regard Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 255-257.



the Security Police and the SD East, who succeeded in putting him into contact with the RSHA. Here the matter was considered so important that it was decided to ask Heydrich directly. Heydrich was in Prague. He informed Himmler by phone at 13.30, who issued the order reading: "Transport of Jews from Berlin. no [sic, lower case] liquidation." But it was now too late: the Jews from Berlin had already been shot (Angrick/Klein, pp. 146-148).

The sentence from the Riga Trial dated 23 February 1973 reads (Fleming, p. 92):

*"The shooting of the 'resettled' Jews from the Riga Ghetto began at 9.00 in the morning and was still going on in the large pit at dusk. Before this operation began, between 8.15 and 9.00 AM, a transport with 1,000 Reich Jews from Berlin, who had just arrived in Riga some time earlier, had already been liquidated."*

This description implies that the shooting of the transport from Berlin and the liquidation of the Riga Ghetto occurred on the same day, *i.e.*, 30 November 1941. But in his "Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942," Stahlecker writes that 27,800 Jews were shot "in early December 1941 during an operation ordered and carried out in Riga by the Higher SS and Police leader."<sup>192</sup> I will return to this matter in the next subchapter.

The exact date is important because the shooting of the Jewish transport early in the morning depended precisely on the large number of persons who were to be killed during the day. This has its logic, but if 45 minutes (from 8:15 to 9:00 AM) was time enough to kill 1,000 persons (according to the verdict in the Riga Trial), then why did it require more than seven hours to kill 4,000 people? At Riga, in fact, the sun only came up at 8:34 AM on 30 November, and it set at 3:50 PM.<sup>193</sup>

The timing, moreover, does not appear to confirm the reconstruction by Angrick and Klein. These two writers claim that

*"the Berlin transport did not end at Skirotava Station, where Lange, representing the Security Police, initially expected it that morning and received the escort papers. The members of the Berlin Schutzpolizei who had accompanied the transport as guards stayed put at Skirotava and handed over the deportees to the waiting members of KdS Latvia. The transport was then routed to a siding at Rumbula station."* (Angrick/Klein, p. 146)

The train continued onwards to the execution site on Jeckeln's order, and the shooting started early the next morning, well before 8:15 AM. Due to the difference in time zones, Riga was one hour ahead of Berlin and Prague; therefore, when the 1:30 PM phone call occurred between Heydrich and Himmler, it was 2:30 PM at Riga. Since Lange was supposed to receive the transport, seeing it continue on its way to Rumbula, he immediately took action to find out what was going on, and we can be certain that at 9:00 AM he already knew that his

<sup>192</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 59.

<sup>193</sup> <http://dateandtime.info/de/citysunrisesunset.php?id=456172&month=11&year=1991>; the date refers to 1991.

transport was being shot. But can one seriously believe that the communication of such an important piece of information to the RSHA and to Heydrich required over six hours?

In this context, Himmler's diary entry is quite illogical, precisely because, on a question relating to the timetable, Lange could not have communicated anything else to Berlin but the very fact that the transport had been completely liquidated. But if that is so, what sense does it make for Himmler to order "No liquidation" more than six hours after the fact, *i.e.*, that the completed shooting, which he knew had already happened, was not to take place? This order would only make sense if Lange had communicated to Berlin Jeckeln's mere *intention* to shoot the Jews on the transport, but, as I have explained above, Jeckeln, due to his position, could not have known about the execution.

Therefore, even examining the matter from the orthodox point of view, the expression "No liquidation" cannot relate to "Jewish transport from Berlin."

Having ascertained this fact, any subsequent discussion from an orthodox point of view becomes pointless.

Browning, for example, observes that

*"the evidence is confusing. If the Kaunas killings represented a point at which Himmler had ordered the killing of all subsequent transports, but he then suddenly changed his mind again on November 30, why was he angry at Jeckeln for faithfully carrying out orders that had not yet been rescinded? If the Kaunas killings represented a special case and Jeckeln had no orders to destroy the Berlin transport, how did it even occur to Himmler and Heydrich on November 30 to discuss 'no liquidation' of this particular transport?"* (Browning 2004, pp. 396f.)

The presumed Himmler order also appears illogical in the context of the killing at Fort IX, Kaunas, of the five transports of "resettlers" referred to in the "Jäger Report." Even this killing was a blatant violation of the directive from Himmler and the RSHA regarding the "resettlers" intended for the East. Therefore, as Himmler did with Jeckeln, the SS should also have summoned Jäger for a reprimand, since the first three transports from the Reich, including one from Berlin, would have been shot even earlier, on 25 November, and Himmler should have sent a "No liquidation" order to Jäger as well.

It is also true that Jeckeln, as Higher SS and Police leader, was one of Jäger's superiors. Jäger was commander of the Security Police for Lithuania through SS and Police leader for Lithuania SS *Brigadeführer* Lucian Damianus Wysocki, and, as such, was also responsible for the presumed massacre at Kaunas. But Himmler sent Jeckeln the order to treat the Jews deported to the East according to his directives, that is, as "resettlers," by radio message only on 1 December, which leads one to believe that the massacre of 30 November was the first (presumed) massacre of Jews from the Reich.

### 4.3. Jeckeln and the Order to Exterminate the Ghetto at Riga

Three of the *Einsatzgruppen* reports mention executions of Jews at Riga.

– EM No. 151 dated 5 January 1942 days (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 41):

*“Meanwhile, the Higher SS and Police leader in Riga, SS Obergruppenführer Jeckeln, has taken on a shooting operation, and on Sunday, 30 Nov. 41, eliminated some 4,000 Jews from the Riga Ghetto and from an evacuation transport from the Reich.”*

Since the transport which was “eliminated” on 29 November 1941 was carrying 820 persons (Benz, p. 47), the total number of persons shot was 4,820.

– EM No. 155, dated 14 January 1942 says (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 76):

*“The number of the Jews remaining in Riga – 29,500 – was reduced to 2,500 by an operation carried out by the Higher SS and Police leader East.”*

There were therefore 27,000 victims of this operation.

– EM No. 156, dated 16 January 1942 says (*ibid.*, pp. 90f.):

*“10,600 Jews were shot in Riga on 30 Nov. 41. The operation was supervised by the Higher SS and Police leader. Einsatzkommando 2 participated in the operation with 1/20.”*

Finally, the “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942” claims that 27,800 Jews were shot “in early December 1941 during an operation ordered and carried out in Riga by the Higher SS and Police leader.”

To sum up, there were 29,500 Jews in the Riga Ghetto, and 4,000 of them were shot on 30 November 1941, along with 10,600 at the same time; the total number of victims was 27,000, or 27,800, but now comes another problem. When were the remaining 23,000 or 16,400 or 23,800 or 17,200 Jews shot? The orthodox account of this execution is rather garbled.

Arad claims that “on November 30 and December 8-9, 1941, 25,000–28,000 Jews were removed from the large ghetto and taken 8 kilometers out of town to the Rumbula forest, where they were shot” (Arad 2009, p. 148); but he supplies no reference for the second execution.

Raul Hilberg, asserted in the 1985 edition of his opus magnum:

*“Then, in the middle of labor allocations and the taking of inventory, Higher SS and Police Leader Jeckeln assembled his forces and struck without warning in two waves – on November 29-December 1 and December 8-9, killing 27,800 Jews. Space had now been created for transports from Germany inside the ghetto itself.”* (Hilberg 1985, Vol. I, pp. 353f.)

In a footnote he explains:

*“The figure is given in an undated report of Einsatzgruppe A, PS-2273. See also Max Kaufmann, Die Vernichtung der Juden in Lettland (Munich, 1947), and Gertrude Schneider, Journey into Terror (New York, 1979).”*

I will return to Document PS-2273 below. Hilberg evidently considered this text unsatisfactory, because in the 2003 edition he changed it as follows:

*“Then, in the middle of labor allocations and the taking of inventory, Higher SS and Police Leader Jeckeln assembled his forces and struck without warning to kill all but a remnant of Riga’s Jews. Space had now been created for transports from Germany inside the ghetto itself.”* (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 365)

Moving backwards in time of orthodox Holocaust literature, the first historian who ever mentioned the execution of 8-9 December was no doubt Gerald Reitlinger. According to him, the first execution occurred on 30 November 1941 and involved 10,600 victims, a figure mentioned in EM No. 156 dated 16 January 1942. He then adds that “this was the notorious ‘Bloody Sunday,’ but the second Riga action on December 8th was almost on the same scale.” Moreover, “a third action, also on December 8th, took place not at Rumbula, but at Bikernek, the ‘little birch wood,’ which was destined to become the permanent execution place for the Riga Ghetto.” Reitlinger does not indicate the number of victims of these two executions, but claims that the total number was at least 24,000 persons, and refers to Stahlecker’s figure of 27,800. As a source, he refers to Max Kaufmann, *Churbn Lettland. Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettland*. Munich, 1947 (Reitlinger 1968, p. 231).

This memoir of a self-proclaimed eye-witness is, it seems, the origin of the story of the shootings on 8 December 1941. In it, the author claims that “the bloodbath was ended on Sunday, 30 November” and cost the lives of “more than 15,000 men, women and children”; the second execution occurred “on Monday, 8 December 1941” and involved 11,500 victims; the third took place “on Tuesday, 9 December 1941,” on which day they killed 500 Jews, so that “during the bloody ten days we lost more than 27,000 people – men, women and children!” (Kaufmann 2010, pp. 63f., 68, 70f.)

Document PS-2273, to which Reitlinger also refers, is the so-called second Stahlecker Report, the “Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942.” Reitlinger affirms that this document was stolen by the Russians at Riga, is identical with Document USSR-357a, bears no date or letterhead, and begins on page 56 (Reitlinger 1968, fn on p. 612).

At Nuremberg, a truncated version of it was introduced into evidence as an “Undated secret report on the mass murders of Jews systematically carried out by Einsatz Group A in Western and White Russia and in the Baltic States, with figures showing the numbers killed” (IMT, Vol. 30, pp. 71-80, here p. 71). In practice, only Chapter III of the report (“*Juden*”), which goes from p. 56 to p. 64, was published, plus a document in an appendix, evidently to make the reader believe that the *Einsatzgruppen* activities consisted solely of exterminating Jews. In Chapter 1, I showed that this document, which is 147 pages long with 19 annexes, concerns itself with a vast range of topics.

To conclude, it remains yet to be explained why the presumed execution of 12,000 Jews at Riga on 8-9 December 1941 has no basis in documentary fact.

The second Stahlecker Report states that there were still approximately 2,500 Jews in the Riga Ghetto,<sup>194</sup> adding up, together with the 27,800 persons presumed shot, to a total of 30,300 persons living in the ghetto before the executions.

The statistics compiled by “The District Commissar in Riga” categorically refute this figure. The “Report No. 1a. Registration of Labor Force: Men:” dated 26 February 1942 contains a column titled “Available deployable Jews,” listing 4,795 Jews, of whom 600 were “brought in from Germany.”<sup>195</sup>

The statistics for women (“Report No. 1a. Registration of Labor Force: Women”) lists a total of 1,224 deployable Jewesses, including 700 “brought in from Germany.”<sup>196</sup> The total number of deployable Latvian Jews living in the Riga Ghetto was therefore 4,719, plus another 1,300 from Germany. The statistics in question therefore referred only to Jews fit for labor. The “Monthly Report on the Establishing of Ghettos in Jewish Work Camps, Labor Deployment and Treatment of Jews,” sent by the *Generalkommissar* in Riga to the *Reichskommissar für das Ostland* on 20 November 1941, contains a paragraph on the “Labor deployment of Riga Jews,” which supplies the statistics already mentioned earlier:<sup>197</sup>

“a) children up to 14 years of age		
boys	2,794	
girls	2,858	5,652
b) fit for work from 14 to 65 years		
men	6,143	
women	9,507	15,650
c) men unfit for labor		
women	2,069	
	6,231	8,300
	together:	<u>29,602</u> ”

Jews fit for labor therefore made up a little less than 53% of the total. If, as we may assume, this proportion also applied at the end of February 1942, the ghetto contained more than 8,900 Latvian Jews, including 4,719 Latvian Jews fit for work, while the rest were “non-deployable Jews” (children up to age 14 and those unable to work). In any case, Stahlecker’s figure of 2,500 Jews in the ghetto is way too low.

Angrick and Klein sought to calculate the number of Jews living in the Riga Ghetto at the beginning of February 1942, after the first great wave of deportations from Germany. On 16 February, there were 4,717 Latvian and Lithuanian Jews in the ghetto; 15,073 deportees had already arrived by that time: 9,864 from the Reich, 3,207 from Vienna and 2,002 from Theresienstadt. Their theoretical number was therefore 19,790; but approximately 500 Jews were sent to Salaspils; 900, taken off the transports from Theresienstadt, “were – with great probability – shot the day they arrived (19 January) as were about 500 persons, either from Vienna or Berlin (30 or 31 January).” Approximately 800 Jews from the ghetto

<sup>194</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 59.

<sup>195</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-18, p. 113.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>197</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-19, p. 22.

were shot on 5 February; there were therefore approximately 12,400 Western Jews left after that date (Angrick/Klein, pp. 219, 225). Since  $19,790 - (500 + 900 + 500 + 800) = 17,590$ , it is unclear how they arrived at this total.

The fact is that, of the 9,864 Jews deported from the Reich, 3,984 were sent to the Jungfernhof Camp, so that, assuming the losses accepted by Angrick and Klein (2,700 persons), the Riga Ghetto should have contained  $(19,790 - 3,984 - 2,700 =)$  13,106 persons. But precisely these two historians inform us that a “Report on an inspection of the Jewish ghetto in Riga on 3 Feb. 1942” explicitly states that “at present, the ghetto is occupied by 16,000 mostly German Jews” (*ibid.*, p. 314).

The execution of the persons mentioned is not attested to by documents. In particular, the authors make the following claim (*ibid.*, p. 225):

*“On 5 February, an operation aimed at the ‘overaged’ inhabitants of the ghetto’s Berlin St. cost another 800 persons their lives.”*

In support of these presumed executions, the writers cite not one single source, which makes it very difficult to take the claim seriously.

Assuming 4,719 Jews in the ghetto on 26 February 1942 and adding the 15,073 deportees from Germany, Austria and the Protectorate, minus the 3,984 sent to Jungfernhof, we arrive at 15,808. If the Riga Ghetto housed 16,000 on 3 February 1942, the loss in manpower amounted to approximately 200 persons. With this in mind, the executions mentioned by Angrick and Klein must be considered unfounded.

If, by contrast, we base ourselves on the “Registrations of Labor Force” mentioned earlier, meaning that there were approximately 8,900 Latvian Jews in this ghetto, approximately 4,700 of them employed in labor and approximately 3,900 unable to work, these would have to be added to the 15,808 calculated above, the shortfall, in rounded numbers, would be  $(15,800 + 3,900 - 16,000 =)$  3,700 persons.

The conclusion is that there were approximately 4,700 Latvian Jews in the Riga Ghetto in February 1942, in which case the figure accepted by Stahlecker (2,500) is erroneous, and the executions described by Angrick and Klein are unfounded; or, in addition to the approximately 4,700 Jews mentioned above, there were another 3,900 Jews unable to work, and in this case the executions accepted by the two historians are arithmetically compatible, but the number of Latvian Jews housed in the ghetto (8,900) is even more incompatible with the figure given by Stahlecker.

Orthodox Holocaust historiography asserts that the Latvian Jews from the Riga Ghetto were shot on Himmler’s orders to make room for the Jews deported from the Great Reich. This presumed order is not attested to by any document, but is based on a statement by Jeckeln (*ibid.*, p. 131). On 14 December 1945, during an interrogation by Major Tsvetayev of the NKVD, Jeckeln stated that he was summoned to Berlin by Himmler on the 10th or 11th of November 1941, and added (Christoforow *et al.*, p. 348):

*“Himmler told me, the Jewish question in the East has come to an end. Only the un-liquidated ghetto in Riga is left, and I was supposed to carry out this liquidation. Himmler said, my predecessor [Hans-]Adolf Priitzmann, SS and Police leader in the East before me, had said that Lohse was opposed to the liquidation of the ghetto. Himmler said, I should talk to Lohse about it, and that the Riga Ghetto was to be liquidated whether Lohse was against it or not. Tell Lohse, it is my order, which is also the Führer’s wish.”*

This meeting is rather implausible, since Himmler was in Munich on 9 – 11 November 1941, and visited Gmund on the 12th (Witte *et al.*, pp. 609-611). Jeckeln went on, telling his story as follows:

*“Several days after my arrival in Riga, I was at Reich Commissar Lohse’s, and said that Himmler was demanding the liquidation of the Riga Ghetto. Do you agree with it? Lohse answered that he has no objections and that I could take it as an order. After a bit of time, I gave the order to liquidate all Jews from the Riga Ghetto.”*

In response to being asked as to the number of Jews in the ghetto, Jeckeln answered (*ibid.*, p. 348):

*“Upon my arrival in Riga in November 1941, there were 20–25 thousand Jews in the ghetto. Apart from the Jews from the East, there were also Jews who arrived on transports from the Reich.”*

As to the number of victims of the executions, he asserted “that all Jews from the ghetto were annihilated, apart from a few who worked in various workshops” (*ibid.*). Under pressure from the Soviet interrogator, Jeckeln stated (*ibid.*, p. 349):

*“I believe they were no fewer than 20-25 thousand men. [...] Only this number is known to me from the Reich Commissar for the East: 20-25 thousand who were annihilated from the Riga Ghetto on my order.”*

He then explained:

*“I issued the order to annihilate the Jews from the Riga Ghetto to Major General Stahlecker, commander of the Security Service and the Gestapo, and to Knecht, commander of the ordinary police in Latvia. This was at the end of November 1941.”*

The shootings took place under the leadership of SS *Standartenführer* Rudolf Lange, commander of the Security Police and the SD in Latvia. The actual executioners were “10 or 12 German SD soldiers” (*ibid.*, pp. 349f.)

Jeckeln then described how, when he went to see Himmler at Lötzen in East Prussia at the end of January 1942, the *Reichsführer* SS told him that the Salaspils Concentration Camp would have to receive “several transports with Jews from the Reich and other countries,” who were destined for extermination. Here “is where Jews were brought from Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and other occupied countries.” These Jews were all exterminated. (*ibid.*, pp. 350f.)

In reality, Jeckeln was summoned by Himmler on 4 December 1941 and, after dinner, at 21.30 hours, discussed the “Jewish question” with him, among other things (Witte *et al.*, p. 284). As revealed by the editors of the *Dienstkalender*, we may assume that Himmler again verbally expressed his disapproval of the shooting of a transport of Jews from the Reich, for which he had, after all, previously threatened consequences (*ibid.*). Himmler therefore *prohibited* Jeckeln from carrying out any further executions of Jews from the Reich, precisely the opposite of what Jeckeln asserted during his interrogation.

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, the Salaspils Camp, in its initial phase from mid-December 1941 until the spring of 1942, was a “death camp for male Jews from the Reich,” but no document exists in this regard. The camp is said to have contained “an estimated” 5,000 inmates, but it is not stated how many of them are said to have been killed (Verstermanis, p. 478). Regarding killings in this camp – as mentioned in the previous subchapter – the following event is mentioned in EM No. 152 dated 7 January 1942 (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 46):

*“on 30 Dec. [1941], 2 Jews escaped from the hut camp under construction near Salaspi[is] in which 1,000 Jews from the Reich are employed as laborers at the present time.”*

EM No. 154 dated 12 January returns to the problem in the following terms:

*“The Jews who escaped from the Salaspi[is] hut camp near Riga were arrested at a post office counter in Riga. Execution carried out on camp terrain in front of 1,000 Jews from the Reich housed in the camp.” (ibid., p. 69)*

Angrick and Klein cite a “file memo” dated 20 October 1941 according to which the Salaspils Camp was intended to house 25,000 inmates (Angrick/Klein, p. 200). This, together with the fact that the 1,000 Jews who were housed there on 30 December 1942 were “employed as laborers,” is more than sufficient to demonstrate the phantasmagorical nature of the Salaspils “Death Camp” epithet.

Jeckeln’s claim regarding the total extermination of the Jews in the camp was therefore a craven concession to Soviet theorizing, worded with such exaggeration as to make it completely untenable (Christoforow *et al.*, p. 352):

*“The first transports of Jews to Salaspils arrived already in November 1941. In the first half of 1942, transports arrived one after the other at regular intervals. I don’t believe that more than 3 transports arrived in November 1941, but in the next 7 months from December 1941 and June 1942, 8-12 Jewish transports arrived every month. So the result is that at least 55 and at most 87 Jewish transports arrived at the camp in these 8 months. When considering that each transport contained thousand people, then that means that 55 to 87 thousand Jews from the Reich and other countries were killed.”*

The reference to the arrival in Latvia in 1941-1942 of Jews from “France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and other occupied countries” is not confirmed by orthodox Holocaust historiography, except for Czechoslovakia (Theresienstadt). It is nevertheless noteworthy that it is attested to by various testimonies collected by the Soviets. An undated report makes claims about transports of



Jews which allegedly arrived at the Šķīrotava Railway Station in Riga. According to a certain N.S. Heimanson, between 10 December 1941 and 16 October 1943, there were 36 Jewish transports, carrying a total of 220,500 persons. This stands in stark contrast to the documented 25,103 Jews transported to Riga from Germany (see p. 210). The countries of origin given by Heimanson are Germany, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium, France, Austria, Hungary and Romania. The figures are obviously absurd, and the dates of the transports are anachronistic:<sup>198</sup>

15 December 1941: Kaunas (Lithuania)	15 May 1942: Lithuania (Kaunas)
20 January 1942: France	15 May 1942: France
25 January 1942: Holland	20 May 1942: Holland
30 January 1942: Belgium	2 June 1942: France
5 March 1942: France	15 June 1942: France
6 March 1942: Belgium	5 April 1943: Hungary and Romania
10 March 1942: France	16 October 1943: Vilnius

Unless the witness, N.S. Heimanson, was a shameless liar and was lying for some unknown purpose, it is incomprehensible why he mentioned the transports from France, Belgium and Holland, unless he had also seen French, Belgian and Dutch Jews arrive at Riga, on various dates and in various numbers.

Thomas Kues has drawn attention to the February 1943 edition of the magazine *Contemporary Jewish Record*, which mentioned the presence of Dutch and Belgian Jews at Riga:

*“Systematic deportation of all Jews who remained in Latvia, including those brought from Germany, Holland and Belgium, was reported Nov. 19. The first step in the policy of extermination was taken Nov. 28, 1941, according to the Manbodyer Guardian (Oct. 30), when the Nazis established an ‘inner ghetto’ in Riga, and began to use the main ghetto as a transit camp for Jews from Central Europe.”* (Kues 2012)

But as early as 20 November 1942, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency’s *Daily News Bulletin*, citing the *Manbodyer Guardian*, had written:

*“Jewish relief organizations here today received information that all Jews living in the ghetto in Riga, Latvia, are being deported to Nazi-held Russian territory and that the Nazi administration has decided to make Latvia ‘judenrein’ within the next few weeks.*

*Jews from Holland, Belgium and Germany who were deported to the Riga ghetto are among those being sent further east. Neutral non-Jews who visited the Baltic States recently attempted to ascertain to where the Jews from the Riga ghetto were being exiled, but no information could be secured from the local non-Jewish population which is afraid to furnish any information about the fate of their former Jewish neighbors. Letters sent to Jews in the Riga ghetto from neutral countries have been returned recently stamped with a notice from the postal authorities that the recipient has ‘left for the East.’”* (ibid.)

<sup>198</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-35, pp. 10f.

Returning to Jeckeln, he continued his “confession” in the classical style of Soviet show trials. Even Göring was guilty for the extermination of the Jews:

*“In the first half of February 1942, I received a letter from Heydrich. In this letter he wrote that Reich Marshal Göring had intruded himself into the Jewish question, and that Jews could now only be sent for extermination to the East with Göring’s permission.”* (Christoforow *et al.*, p. 351)

But this was only a distortion of Heydrich’s letter of 25 January 1942 which I discussed in Subchapter 2.2.

Angrick and Klein assert that the extermination of the Jews from the Riga Ghetto was perpetrated without any regard for economic considerations, so much so that they killed 15,600 Jews fit for labor (Angrick/Klein, pp. 271).

Although it is quite true that Otto Bräutigam, to Lohse’s related inquiry of 15 December 1941, replied on 18 December that “economic concerns are not be taken into account when dealing with the problem” (see Subchapter 2.9.), nevertheless the question cannot be resolved that simply.

As mentioned earlier, Jeckeln claimed that Himmler ordered him to shoot the Jews from the Riga Ghetto on 10 or 11 November 1941, but the “Monthly Report on the Establishing of Ghettos in Jewish Work Camps, Labor Deployment and Treatment of Jews” drawn up on 20 November and cited earlier, testifies to the organization of the ghettos of Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils based on labor deployment. As regards Riga, the document presents detailed statistics relating to the Jews in the ghetto, including a “breakdown according to occupational groups,” and practical instructions for the use of labor; the object is described as follows:<sup>199</sup>

*“A special labor-deployment office for Jews has been created at the regional commissar in Riga City, Department of Employment, to handle Jewish labor more systematically, i.e., to deploy the Jews in such a way that their labor is exploited exhaustively for German purposes, yet at the same time without constituting competition for Germans or Latvians.”*

Can one seriously believe that the *Generalkommissar* in Riga, who issued these orders, had never heard of Himmler’s alleged extermination order?

At that time, the ghetto housed 29,602 Jews, 15,650 of them, as noted earlier, were “fit for work.” There were still 4,719 “deployable” Latvian Jews in the ghetto after the claimed executions on 26 February 1942, so that the Germans allegedly killed 10,931 Jews who were perfectly capable to work, resulting in a shortfall of 51,000 laborers at that time (Angrick/Klein, p. 273). At this point we may be permitted to ask why these 4,719 deployable Jews were spared, if it is true that the Jewish problem in Latvia was to be solved by annihilation without regard to economic considerations.

As for the shootings, Jeckeln declared that they were carried out by 10 or 12 soldiers. The method is said to have consisted of so-called “*Sardinienpackung*”

<sup>199</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-19, p. 23.

(“sardine packing”). Thomas Kues cites the related description from the Latvian-American historian Andrew Ezergailis in his book *The Holocaust in Latvia 1941–1944*:

“ [...] 7) the victims were be driven [sic] directly into the pits, saving the labor of moving the bodies; 8) Russian submachine guns were used, because the clip had fifty bullets and could be set on single shots; 9) the victims lay face-down in layers, after which the marksman would kill them with a bullet in the back of the head. This method has been referred to as *Sardinienpackung* (‘sardine packing’), and even some of the EG operatives were horrified by its cruelty.” (Kues 2012; Ezergailis, p. 241)

Kues then reproduces the explanation offered by Ezergailis in another study (Ezergailis/Otto/Augusts, pp. 110f.):

*“The killing was done by a twelve-man team that Jeckeln personally selected from his retinue, drivers, and bodyguards. While six men rested, the other six worked both sides of the pits. The killing was done with Russian (according to some witnesses Finnish) submachine guns set to fire single shots. [...]”*

*The killing started at 8:00 in the morning and lasted until 7:00 at night, three hours after nightfall. Remarkably, the twelve-man killing unit managed to murder 12,000 people per day. The Jeckeln method of killing even surpassed the killing rates in the death-camp factories. To kill 25,000 people in two 10-hour days, it meant that 1,250 were killed per hour; or 21 per minute, or one person every three seconds. Each marksman killed more than 2,000 people during the two days. In comparison, using the *Stahlecker* method [of Einsatzgruppe A] in *Liepāja*, it took three days, from 13–17 December, to kill 2,749 people. At *Rumbula* more people were killed every three hours.”*

At the end, Kues comments:

*“Most remarkable indeed. Not only must each of the twelve marksmen have been a virtual killer robot, able to murder men, women and children for hours on end, at least 200 victims per hour or 3.3 victims per minute or 1 victim every 18 seconds (assuming that each marksman rested for half of the ‘working day’), reloading his gun after every fifty shots, rarely or never missing a shot, and apparently remaining unaffected by the noise from the weapons and screams of the victims as well as the recoils from his weapon, but the victims must have acted like a uniform mass of drugged sheep, not putting up any resistance in the face of death, or even behaving in a panicky manner. Can the scenario painted by Ezergailis really be believed?” (ibid.)*

The question is obviously rhetorical in nature.

Angrick and Klein add further details from the trial sources (indictments and statements made by Germans in the 1960s and 1970s; Angrick/Klein, p. 145):

*“Three pits were in operation at any one time. Several of them were smaller. In each of these, Jeckeln had posted one marksman, while three ‘shooters’ – the word used in the files and statements – worked in the larger pits. [...] The ‘technical procedure’ of the mass shooting itself took place exactly as the HSSPF had*

*envisioned it. Having been led into the pit, the Jews lay down on the ground in rows 'like sardines.' At the smaller pit, the marksman fired into the pit from above, because he could not move about freely down below. In the large pits, the murderers walked over the people or past them and fired shots into the base of their necks. The victims who followed had to lie down between or on top of the warm bodies of those who had just been murdered."*

That such a "method" would really permit the killing of one person every 3 seconds, or, more concretely, that each of the 12 "shooters" would take 36 seconds, working without letup for 10 hours a day, is utterly unbelievable. After the bottom of the ditch was covered by the first layer of bodies, the following group would have to walk over this layer of soft, pillowy bodies and lie down on top of them; the "shooters," in turn, also had to walk over these living bodies and shoot every person in the back of the head. The ground would have become increasingly unstable and each move slower and more difficult with every successive layer, particularly in the larger ditches.

One last consideration on the method of "*Sardinenpackung*": the technique is normally attributed to Jeckeln. However, in his interrogation of 14 December 1945, he described the shootings as follows:

*"Question: How was the order carried out in practical terms?"*

*Answer: All Jews from the Riga Ghetto went to the execution ground on foot. On the ground not far from the ditches, they had to lay their clothing, which was sent to Germany after cleaning and sorting. The Jews, men, women and children, went through a German police cordon to the ditches where they were shot by German soldiers.*

*Question: What was done with the bodies?"*

*Answer: Before the shootings, big ditches were dug by the German and Latvian police, and the bodies were buried in these ditches."* (Christoforow *et al.*, p. 350)

Jeckeln made not the slightest mention of the "sardine method," which is evidently a perverse fantasy. Richard Rhodes cites "a minor bureaucrat named August Meier" (probably SS *Obersturmbannführer* August Meier, leader of *Einsatzkommando* 5 of *Einsatzgruppe* C since late September 1941), who was allegedly present at the shootings at Shepetovka, and quotes a statement allegedly made by Meier, without giving source, but no doubt a trial document (Rhodes, p. 114):

*"Jeckeln had ongoing permission to shoot Jews, one can say, at almost every location. As a result, he personally organized the executions of many thousand of Jews. I still particularly recall an Aktion in Shepetovka which stands out in my mind as extraordinarily gruesome. It involved about a hundred people. Women and children were among those shot. Jeckeln said: 'Today, we'll stack them like sardines.' The Jews had to lie layer upon layer in an open grave and were then killed with neck shots from machine pistols, pistols and rifles. That meant they had to lie face down on those previously shot [whereas] in other executions they were shot standing up and fell into the grave or were dragged. During the execution in Shepetovka I stood for some time beside Jeckeln and then managed some-*

*how to slink away. I did not do any shooting myself. I don't know if Jeckeln did any shooting, but I don't believe so."*

In EM No. 47 dated 9 August 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C* reported as follows regarding Shepetovka (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 266):

*"The police regiment deployed in the area around Shepetovka and Rovno has ended its operation. The Higher SS and Police leader has sent the following radio message to the Army Group South: 'Finished combing the area around Shepetovka-Rovno. 370 Russians and 1,643 Jews shot as instigators and accomplices.'"*

It was not an isolated execution, therefore, but rather the final stage of the "combing" operation. Using the most charitable interpretative approach possible, *i.e.*, assuming the truthfulness of Meier's account, it appears that Jeckeln, on a single occasion, carried out a shooting for unknown reasons, during which he ordered the victims to lie down in a ditch "like sardines," facilitated, under the circumstances of this one single case, by the small number of persons involved: "about a hundred people." But how and why did this practice, if it existed, become transformed into a "method"? And what proves that it was applied at Riga?

The fundamental question of whether or not the Soviets ever found the remains of the 27,800 Jews claimed to have been shot at Riga remains unanswered. I shall concern myself with this question in Subchapter 7.2. of Part Two.

#### 4.4. The Liquidation of the Ghettos in the Baltic Countries

Arad writes:

*"Liquidation of the Ostland ghettos according to Himmler's June 21, 1943, orders commenced in Generalkommissariat Lithuania, which had in Ostland the largest remaining concentration of Jews – some 40,000. In early summer 1943, the Jews were concentrated in three ghettos: Vilnius, Kaunas, and Siauliai. The first to be liquidated was the Vilnius ghetto, which housed between 18,000 and 19,000 Jews."* (Arad 2009, p. 317)

This is how he describes the variations in manpower in the Vilnius Ghetto. On 6 August 1943,

*"about 1,000 Jews were caught and loaded onto a train, but before the train set off, Gens came and promised that the people were being taken to work in Estonia. [...] A second shipment of Jews left for Estonia on August 24, 1943, not with the required quota but with only 1,400 to 1,500 men, women, and children on board. [...] Between September 2 and 4, Gens and the ghetto's police succeeded by force and by persuasion to gather together some 5,000 men and women, and on September 5, they were sent to Estonia and Latvia. [...] Some 12,000 Jews remained in the ghetto.<sup>[200]</sup> Within a fortnight, about 2,200 people were taken out of the ghetto. Workers and their families employed in the military vehicle workshop, in the military hospital, and in the Kailis fur factory (all serving the German army)*

<sup>200</sup> In an older study, Arad claimed that 7,130 Jews were transferred from the Vilnius Ghetto to Estonia between 6 August and 5 September 1943, leaving 11,000-12,000. Arad 1982, p. 420.

*were sent to camps in the vicinity of their workplaces. [...] The Vilnius ghetto, which still housed some 10,000 Jews, was liquidated on September 23 and 24. [...] About 2,000 Jews remained in hiding, and 8,000 were assembled at Rossa Square, where the men were separated from the women and children; between 1,600 and 2,000 men were then sent to Estonia. On the following day, 1,400 to 1,700 of the younger women, some of whom had been torn forcibly from their children, were sent to the Kaiserwald camp (known in Latvian as Mezapark[s]), in a suburb of the Latvian city of Riga. Between 4,000 and 4,500 women and children were sent to the Sobibor extermination camp in the General Government, and several old people were shot in Paner[i]ai.” (Arad 2009, pp. 318f.)*

Adding up all the highest figures, and then all the lowest ones, we see that between 2,100 and 2,400 Jews remained, respectively; if, therefore, the phrase “about 2,000 Jews remained in hiding” should be understood in the sense that these Jews were not captured, the persons presumed shot at Paneriai would have amounted to 100 persons in the first case, and 400 in the second; if, on the other hand, all the Jews from the ghetto were captured, the number of Jews presumed shot (2,100 or 2,400) would still amount to almost half the presumed extermination victims (4,000 or 4,500). Arad does not explain the difference in their fates: why weren’t the Jews all shot at Paneriai or all “gassed” at Sobibor?

On the other hand, the presumed deportation of 4,000-4,500 Jews to Sobibór is in no way documented. In his study on the “Aktion Reinhardt” camps, Arad writes that 5,000 Jews arrived at Sobibór from Vilnius on 23-24 September 1943 (Arad 1987, p. 398). For this transport, Jules Schelvis takes recourse to two witnesses: Leon Feldhendler (in a 1946 statement) and Arkadij Wajspapir (in a 1984 statement; Schelvis, p. 276). Feldhendler’s testimony is dealt with in the Dutch translation of a statement given in 1946 before the General Jewish Committee for the History of the Central Polish Jewish Committee of Lodz; here, the witnesses speak of transports from Minsk and Vilnius which arrived at Sobibór during the winter, “in snow over a meter high” (Rijksinstituut, p. 8).

It is obvious that this mention, which refers to the winter of 1942-1943, cannot refer to September 1943.

Arad does not even attempt to document the alleged shootings at Paneriai, so that he presupposes, without proof, that 6,400 or 6,600 Jews from the Vilnius Ghetto were shot. He then writes that

*“Kaunas and the nearby camps still had a Jewish population of between 7,000 and 8,000 on the eve of the arrival of Soviet troops in the region. The man responsible for the camps in which Jews were held was one Sturmabführer Wilhelm Gecke. In early July 1944 he summoned the chairman of the Jewish council, Dr. Elkes, and informed him that the Germans were about to liquidate the camps and that its inhabitants would be sent to work in East Prussia.” (Arad 2009, p. 330)*

He then adds:

*“From Kaunas between 5,000 and 6,000 Jews were transferred to East Prussia and to Stutthof, where some were put to death and others were deported to various camps in Germany.” (ibid., p. 330)*

Therefore, of the presumed 7,000-8,000 Jews in the ghetto, 5,000-6,000 were evacuated, and the remaining 2,000 were killed, although Arad does not explicitly say so. The Israeli historian also claims that

*“Between 12,000 and 13,000 remained in Generalkommissariat Latvia in early summer 1943. About 5,000 to 5,500 were local Jews concentrated in three ghettos: Riga, Daugavpils, and Liepaja, and the remaining 7,000 to 7,500 were Reich Jews.” (ibid., p. 321)*

He explains that

*“Some 2,000 of the ghetto inhabitants, together with people who had been returned from Kaiserwald because they were no longer fit for work, were deported to Auschwitz on November 2. [...] By mid-1943, some 800 Jews remained in Liepaja, and on October 8 these were transferred to Kaiserwald. Some 400 Jews remained in Daugavpils; during the last week of October, they were transferred to Kaiserwald. In Liepaja and Daugavpils there remained only a handful of artisans who were held there until spring 1944, when they, too, were transferred to Kaiserwald. In late September 1943 a transport arrived in Kaiserwald with between 1,400 and 1,700 women from Vilnius; they were registered and sent straight to various camps. In May and June 1944, several months before the Soviet army liberated the region, several transports of Jewish women from Hungary (from the regions of Transcarpathian Ukraine and north Transylvania) were brought to camps in Latvia. At least 3,000 women came on these transports, all of them young.” (ibid., p. 322)*

This is how he goes on to describe the liquidation of the Kaiserwald Camp:

*“Prior to the evacuation of Jews from the Latvian camps in early August, all the Jews from camps in the vicinity of Riga were concentrated in the Kaiserwald camp. Evacuation from Latvia was carried out by sea, either from the port at Riga or from Liepaja. The first ship to set off with a cargo of Jewish prisoners was the Bremerhaven, which left Riga on August 6, 1944. According to Gertrude Schneider, who was on this ship, ‘We were almost 2,000 people (prisoners) — 1,100 men and 900 women. There were also more than 3,000 Jewish women from Hungary... Also, more than 3,000 Russian prisoners of war were on the ship.’ The Bremenhaven arrived in Danzig (Gdansk) on August 8, and the Jewish prisoners were transferred from there to Stutthof. Further transports set off by sea on September 25 and 29, and the last transport set off in early October. By the time the Soviet army liberated Riga and Kaiserwald in mid-October 1944, there were no longer any Jews there. In some of the camps hundreds and perhaps even thousands of prisoners were murdered in August and September, before the Germans withdrew from the region.” (ibid., pp. 330f.)*

In reality, we do know for certain that 16 Jewish transports carrying 25,043 Jews from the concentration camps in the Baltic, precisely 10,458 from Kaunas and

14,585 from Riga, arrived at Stutthof between 12 July and 14 October 1944, as shown in the following table:

DATE	ORIGIN	NUMBER OF DEPORTEES
12 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	282
13 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	3,098
13 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	233
16 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	1,172
17 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	1,208
19 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	1,097
19 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	1,072
25 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	182
25 July 1944	Sipo Kaunas	1,321
4 Aug. 1944	Sipo Kaunas	793
9 Aug. 1944	Sipo Riga	6,382
9 Aug. 1944	Sipo Riga	450
23 Aug. 1944	Sipo Riga	2,079
23 Aug. 1944	Sipo Riga	2,329
1 Oct. 1944	Sipo Riga	3,155
14 Oct. 1944	Sipo Riga	190
Total		25,043

Source: AMS, I-IIB-8, p. 1; cf. Graf/Mattogno, p. 97

These transports, fragmentary lists of which survived with names, carried several Lithuanian Jews (but not only Lithuanian) under 15 years of age, indicated in the above-mentioned lists under the heading “Boy” and “Girl.” The transport from Kaunas on 13 July 1944 carried 3,098 deportees; the names of 510 of them have been preserved, including 80 children in this category. On the list covering the transport of 19 July of 1,097 deportees, also from Kaunas – with 1,095 known names – there were 88 children. The following table groups the number of children by age:

AGE	1944 TRANSPORT OF		AGE	1944 TRANSPORT OF	
	13 JULY	19 JULY		13 JULY	19 JULY
15	3	–	7	5	7
14	7	4	6	9	8
13	4	28	5	7	–
12	8	13	4	8	3
11	2	6	3	8	2
10	4	9	2	1	–
9	10	2	Total	80	88
8	4	6			

On 26 July 1944, 1,893 inmates, most of them Lithuanian, were transferred to Auschwitz from Stutthof, consisting of 546 “girls,” 546 “boys” and 801 “wom-



en,<sup>201</sup> who were the children's mothers. A fairly large proportion of the name list relating to this transport has survived. Among the 1,488 inmates whose personal records have survived, there were 850 children, distributed among the following age groups:

**Table 11**

BIRTH YEAR	AGE	CHILDREN	BIRTH YEAR	AGE	CHILDREN
1929	15	31	1937	7	44
1930	14	117	1938	6	61
1931	13	146	1939	5	54
1932	12	94	1940	4	60
1933	11	36	1941	3	52
1934	10	61	1942	2	8
1935	9	26	1943	1	2
1936	8	58	Total		850

Source: AMS, I-IIC-3, transport name list dated 26 July 1944

This list includes 24 of the 80 children on the transport on 13 July and 84 of the 88 children on the transport on 19 July listed above.

The transport sent from Stutthof to Auschwitz on 10 September, whose name list has been in part reconstructed based on its related "*Einlieferungsbuch*" (registration book), was carrying at least 345 mostly Lithuanian children and boys aged 12 to 17 years of age, distributed as follows:

**Table 12**

BIRTH YEAR	AGE	CHILDREN	BIRTH YEAR	AGE	CHILDREN
1927	17 <sup>202</sup>	56	1931	13	6
1928	16	136	1932	12	2
1929	15	119	Total		345
1930	14	26	Source: AMS, <i>Transportliste</i> , microfilm 262		

Since the transport lists are fragmentary, the number of "boys" and "girls" transferred from Kaunas to Riga in 1944 is undoubtedly greater than the documented figure of 1,250 boys and girls.

To summarize, for Kaunas, Arad presumes there were 7,800-8,000 Jews in the ghetto, but of these, 10,458 were deported to Stutthof. He attributes 12,000-13,000 Jews to the *Generalkommissariat* for Latvia, most of them transferred to the Kaiserwald Camp. To these must be added the 1,400-1,700 Jews from Vilnius and 3,000 from Hungary via Auschwitz, the camp to which 2,000 Jews from the Riga Ghetto were sent. There were, therefore, (12,000 + 1,400 + 3,000 - 2,000 =) 14,400 to (13,000 + 1,700 + 3,000 - 2,000 =) 15,700 Jews at Kaiserwald at the time of the evacuation; since 14,585 of them reached Stutthof, we may conclude

<sup>201</sup> Teletype from the commandant of the Stutthof Camp, SS *Sturmabführer* Hoppe, to the commandant of the Auschwitz Camp dated 26 July 1944. AMS, I-IIC-4, p. 94. "Übernahmeverhandlung" ("take-over negotiations") of the transport of 26-27 July 1944. AMS, I-IIC-3, p. 43.

<sup>202</sup> The boys' age when *Einsatzgruppe* A entered Lithuania was 14.

that all the Jews in the Kaiserwald Camp were transferred there, so that Arad's claim that "in some of the camps hundreds and perhaps even thousands of prisoners were murdered in August and September, before the Germans withdrew from the region," is entirely unfounded.

As for the Siauliai Ghetto, Arad makes the following claim:

*"Some 4,500 Jews lived in the Siauliai ghetto on the eve of its conversion into a concentration camp. During the last week of September 1943 some 1,500 men and women were removed from the ghetto and transferred to small camps in the region. On November 5, after Jewish men and women left on their way to work, the SS together with Ukrainians and Lithuanian police entered the ghetto and removed 574 children, 191 old people, and a few dozen cripples and invalids from the ghetto and shot them. In the central camp there remained only 227 children whose parents had succeeded in hiding them."* (Arad 2009, p. 319)

There are two rather surprising things to be noted here. First of all, the figure of 4,500 is the same as that appearing in Stahlecker's "Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942," which therefore remained unchanged until the summer of 1943. The second is that, among these 4,500 Jews, many, *i.e.*, (574 + 227 =) 801, or 17.8 % of the total, were children; adding the 191 elderly and "a few dozen cripples and invalids," the percentage of persons unable to work rises to 23%. Yet according to Stahlecker, the three ghettos of Kaunas, Vilnius and Siauliai had been set up for the exclusive purpose of exploiting Jewish manpower.<sup>203</sup>

*"Since the total liquidation of the Jews could not to be carried out on the grounds of labor deployment, ghettos were created, which are currently staffed as follows:"*

This is followed by a list with the following figures: ca. 15,000 Jews at Kaunas, ca. 15,000 at Vilnius, and ca. 4,500 at Siauliai.

*"These Jews were largely used for war-related work."*

This, in principle, excluded the presence of persons unable to work. A few pages later, Arad returns to discussing Siauliai:

*"Some 2,000 Jews remained in the main camp in Siauliai, and between July 11 and 14, more than 1,500 Jews were returned from neighboring camps and 3,000 Jews from the camp at Panevezys. During those days, Soviet planes bombed Siauliai and dozens of Jews were killed. All the Jews of Siauliai were brought to Stutthof to face a fate similar to that of the Jews of Kaunas. On July 27, 1943, five days after the departure of the last transport, Siauliai was liberated."* (Arad 2009, p. 330)

It is not clear whether the total figure was 6,500 or 4,500; however, since "all the Jews of Siauliai were brought to Stutthof," this means that the only victims of the camp were the "dozens of Jews" killed in Soviet bombardments.

The transport lists which have survived in part show that at least 1,097 German, 10 Austrian and 64 Jews from the Protectorate were deported to Stutthof

<sup>203</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, pp. 60f.

from Latvia and Lithuania during the second half of 1944, broken down as follows:

**Table 13**

DATE	TOTAL	REICH	AUSTRIA	<i>PROTEKTORAT</i>
17 July	9	9	0	0
20 July	42	35	7	0
26 July	6	6	0	0
4 August	68	55	3	10
9 August	553	538	0	15
15 August	9	9	0	0
23 August	10	10	0	0
1 October	474	435	0	39
Totals	1,171	1,097	10	64

Source: AMS, I-IIB-10

Since the name lists are not complete, one must assume that the number of survivors was much higher.

## 5. The Death Toll

### 5.1. The Statistics

#### 5.1.1. Hilberg, Krausnick/Wilhelm, Arad, Curilla

Hilberg dedicates a great deal of space to compiling a death toll of the *Einsatzgruppen*'s activities. He writes (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 295):

*“When the Einsatzgruppen crossed the border into the USSR, five million Jews were living under the Soviet flag. The majority of the Soviet Jews were concentrated in the western parts of the country. Four million were living in territories later overrun by the German army.”*

These Jews, according to him, were distributed as follows:

Buffer Territories:

Baltic area	260,000
Polish territory	1,350,000
Bukovina and Bessarabia up to	300,000
	<hr/>
	up to 1,910,000

Old Territories:

Ukraine (pre-1939 borders)	1,533,000
Byelorussia (pre-1939 borders)	375,000

RSFSR

Crimea	50,000
Other areas seized by Germans ca.	200,000
	<hr/>
	ca. 2,160,000,

In Total: 4,070,000

He adds that “about one and half million Jews living in the affected territories fled before the Germans arrived.”

As regards the massacres, Hilberg claims, first of all, with reference to the “first sweep” of executions, that “a half million people were shot by the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Tilsit Gestapo, the *Einsatzkommandos* dispatched by the BdS of the General Government, and the formations commanded by the SS and Police leaders, during the first six months of the mobile killing operations” (*ibid.*, pp. 304f.). He then clarifies (*ibid.*, p. 353):

*“Of 4,000,000 Jews in the area of operations, about 1,500,000 had fled. Five hundred thousand had been killed, and at least 2,000,000 were still alive. To the Einsatzgruppen the masses of bypassed Jews presented a crushing burden.”*

These were therefore destined for extermination in the “second sweep.” However, in the final statistics, he asserts (*ibid.*, p. 408):

*“These partial figures, aggregating more than 900,000, account for only about two-thirds of the total number of Jewish victims in mobile operations. The remainder died in additional shootings by Einsatzgruppen, Higher SS and Police*

*Leaders, Bandenkampfverbände, and the German army, as results of Romanian operations in Odessa-Dalnik and the Golta camp complex, and in the course of privation in ghettos, camps, and the open woods and fields.*”

In a summary statement listing the number of victims, under the heading “open-air shootings,” Hilberg supplies a figure of over 1,400,000, which includes a bit of everything (*ibid.*, p. 1320):

*“Einsatzgruppen, Higher SS and Police Leaders, Romanian and German armies in mobile operations; shootings in Galicia during deportations; killings of prisoners of war; and shootings in Serbia and elsewhere.”*

But if 500,000 Jews had been killed in the “first sweep,” and 2,000,000 Jews remained, and a total of 1,400,000 Jews had been exterminated by the end of the operations (including those killed in Serbia), then the victims of the “second wave” must have amounted to (1,400,000 – 500,000 =) 900,000, but then, what happened to the remaining (2,000,000 – 900,000 =) 1,100,000 Jews who are not listed, either among the dead, or among the survivors?

Hilberg supplies the following general picture of the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* (*ibid.*, p. 407):

Ostland and Army Group Rear Areas North and Center (January 1942):

Estonia:	963
Latvia:	35,238
Lithuania:	136,421
Byelorussia:	41,828
Russia:	3,600
Total:	218,050

*Einsatzgruppe B* (up to 15 December 1942):

SK 7a:	6,788
SK 7b:	3,816
SK 7c:	4,460
SK 8:	74,740
SK 9:	41,340
<i>Trupp Smolensk:</i>	2,954
Total:	134,098

Ukraine, Białystok, Army Group Rear Area South, and Rear Area Eleventh Army:

<i>Einsatzgruppe C</i> (SK 4a and 5):	95,000 as of early December 1941
<i>Einsatzgruppe D:</i>	91,678 as of 8 April 1942
Total:	538,826

To this figure Hilberg adds the data contained in Himmler’s report to Hitler on 29 December 1942, which reports the following shootings of Jews in the Ukraine, southern Russia and Białystok:

August:	31,246
September:	165,282
October:	95,735
November:	70,948
<u>Total:</u>	<u>363,211</u>

Therefore, the total figure for the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and related units is said to have amounted to over 900,000, or, for purposes of exactitude, at least 902,037 (*ibid.*, p. 408).

Krausnick and Wilhelm write that the Germans killed “a total of over 2.2 million” of the 4.7 million Jews found in Soviet territory in the summer of 1942 (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 621).

Arad presents very detailed statistics on the victims, broken down by territory (Arad 2009, pp. 521, 524f.):

	under German occupation	victims
East Byelorussia:	230,000–240,000	224,000–233,000
East Ukraine:	680,000–710,000	667,000–693,000
Russia:	60,000–70,000	55,000–70,000
Total:	970,000–1,025,000	946,000–996,000
Byelorussia and Ukraine:	1,200,000–1,135,000	1,115,000–1,175,000
Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia):	280,000–285,000	270,000–274,000
Bessarabia and North Bukovina:	227,000–232,000	176,000–179,000
<u>Total:</u>	<u>1,642,000–1,717,000</u>	<u>1,561,000–1,628,000</u>

Victims in the Occupied Soviet Republics under German occupation:

	under German occupation	victims
Byelorussia	570,000–600,000	556,000–582,000
Ukraine	1,475,000–1,550,000	1,452,000–1,518,000
Russia	60,000–75,000	55,000–70,000
Moldavia	227,000–232,000	176,000–179,000
Lithuania	205,000–210,000	196,000–200,000
Latvia	74,000–75,000	73,000–74,000
Estonia	1,000–1,500	1,000–1,500
<u>Total:</u>	<u>2,612,000–2,743,500</u>	<u>2,509,000–2,624,500.</u>

It is not very clear how these figures can be reconciled with those cited by Hilberg.

In Chapter 48 of his voluminous book, titled “An Attempt at Quantification” (of the number of victims), Curilla sets forth detailed statistics for each region and each SS or Police unit having carried out executions in Soviet territory (Curilla 2006, pp. 825-836). The total number of victims, according to him, was

2,100,000, 975,997 of whom are said to have been attested to in his statistics (*ibid.*, p. 836). He reports the following victim figures:

– Baltic:	92,361
– Byelorussia:	277,625
– Eastern Galicia:	94,724
– Russia:	17,153
– Poland:	179,370
– Southern Soviet Union:	303,764
– Total:	964,997

To this figure, he claims, must be added another 566,944 Jews deported to the “extermination camps,” which are not, however, included among the group of victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and other SS and Police units (*ibid.*, pp. 832f.).

The statistics were compiled utilizing not only documents, but above all court findings and testimonies.

### 5.1.2. The Korherr Report

In his report of 23 March 1943, Richard Korherr, the *Reichsführer* SS’s Inspector of Statistics, writes (NO-5194, p. 10):

*“6. According to information from the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, to this it has to be added the evacuation of... 633,300 Jews in the Russian territories, including the former Baltic countries, since the beginning of the Eastern campaign.*

*The above figures do not include the occupants of the ghettos and concentration camps. The evacuations from Slovakia and Croatia have been initiated by these countries.”*

Starting in 1953, Gerald Reitlinger called attention to this figure, considering it to refer to victims of the *Einsatzgruppen*, which he estimated at 700,000-750,000 (Reitlinger 1953, p. 499). Later, with the advent of a tendency to exaggerate the number of victims greatly, this figure from the Korherr Report became embarrassing for orthodox Holocaust historiography, so it was completely ignored, for example by Krausnick and Wilhelm in their study of the *Einsatzgruppen*, or it was “redimensioned.” The principal architect of the latter attempt was Raul Hilberg (Hilberg 2003, Vol. III, pp. 1315f.):

*“Korherr’s report contains a single reference to the ‘evacuation’ of 633,300 Jews in the ‘Russian areas, including the former Baltic countries, from the beginning of the Eastern campaign.’ The figure, according to the report, was furnished by the RSHA, and in a postwar interrogation, Korherr called it a ‘house number’ in the jargon of the German statisticians for seeming exactness devoid of known meaning. There is a [sic] little question, however, that the RSHA meant to convey an overall toll of the Einsatzgruppen, and that a distant observer, working with available documents, might calculate a similar result. Korherr specifically states in the concluding paragraphs of his report that he was able to record ‘death of the Soviet Russian Jews in the eastern territories’ only in part. He did not have*

*the statistics for killings organized by the Higher SS and Police Leaders, who reported to Himmler directly, and he did not attempt to estimate the ghetto dead.”*

Further along in his document, Korherr explains (NO-5194, pp. 15f.):

*“From 1937 until early 1943, the number of Jews in Europe was probably reduced by an estimated 4 million, partly through emigration, partly by an excess of deaths over births of the Jews in Central and Western Europe, and partly through evacuation particularly in the ethnically stronger Eastern territories, who are calculated here as deductions. In doing so, it should not be overlooked that only a fraction of the fatalities of Soviet-Russian Jews in the occupied eastern territories have been recorded, while those in the rest of European Russia and at the front are not included. To this has to be added the migration stream of Jews within Russia towards the Asiatic regions.”*

According to Hilberg, the figure of 633,300 constituted only part of the deaths in Russia. Korherr distinguished between “Reich territory,” “occupied Eastern territories” and “European Russia.” The “Reich territory” included the occupied and incorporated Polish territories (General Government and Wartheland), also called the “Eastern provinces,” from which 1,449,692 Jews had been evacuated “to the Russian East” by 31 December 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 9). This figure was comprised of 1,274,166 Jews who had been “passed through the camps in the General Government” and 145,301 “through the camps in the Warthegau” (*ibid.*).

As shown by a telegram from SS *Hauptsturmführer* Hermann Höfle dated 11 January 1943, intercepted and decoded by the British, the first figure referred to the camps of Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka and Lublin-Majdanek (Witte/Tyas, p. 469), while the second, notoriously, referred to the Chełmo Camp. The “occupied Eastern territories” were the Russian territories under civil administration, that is, the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* and the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. The part of Russia under military administration was referred to as “European Russia,” and the expression “toward the Russian East” also referred to this area.

In another study, I provided a detailed discussion of the significance of these evacuations (Graf/Kues/Mattogno, pp. 311-330). This is confirmed by the explanations provided by Korherr himself in a letter to Gerald Reitlinger dated 28 September 1955:<sup>204</sup>

*“As I told you orally, I had one, or perhaps two, phone conversations with the department of the Reich Security Main Office which had compiled the statistics – despite my best efforts, I can no longer remember the name of the person I talked to. I inquired what the term ‘special treatment’ was supposed to mean. I was told that the expression was used for the evacuation of those Jews (Eastern Jews) who were deported to the Lublin district, where a kind of Jewish homestead was to be created in the region bordering Russia and Asia. The Jews evacuated to the district of Lublin, that is, to the border area with Asia (Russia), were no longer considered to form part of the European population, and I was orally ordered not to*

<sup>204</sup> TNA, Documents 054, Roll 9/46, p. 5 of the letter.



*include them in my list on the development of European Jewry.*" (Emphases in original)

The fact that these Jews were no longer to be included in the final balance of Europe is confirmed by the phrase "are calculated here as deductions."

Having said this, however, to understand the significance of the phrase "fatalities of Soviet-Russian Jews in the occupied eastern territories," one must take recourse to the second, amended Korherr Report dated 28 April 1943 (NO-5193). In this document, the "Eastern territories (with Bialystok)" are listed with ca. 790,000 Jews in 1939, 233,210 of whom were still there on 31 December 1942. This figure can be traced back to the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*.

The table "Emigration, Excess of Deaths over Births, and Evacuation" under the heading "Eastern territories (with Bialystok)" provides a cumulative total of 334,673 Jews having emigrated or died more than were born, and 222,117 evacuees (*ibid.*, pp. 3f.). Since this is the only place in the whole Korherr Report (both versions of it) where there is any mention of mortality (except for the table "Jews in the Concentration Camps," which also contains the heading "fatalities"; NO-5194, p. 12), one must conclude that the phrase in question refers to the "excess of deaths over births" in the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, which is not even a static object in the Korherr Report; it is implicitly included under the heading "Soviet Russia" in the table relating to the number of Jews in the European countries, which records 4,600,000 persons, essentially European Jews plus eastern Poland (*ibid.*, p. 15).

But, as may be objected, if the figure of 633,300 does not refer to deaths, why does Korherr speak of "evacuation" "in the Russian territories"? This expression referred to all the Soviet territories, with the exception of the three Baltic General Districts (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), which constituted the "Eastern Territories" (without the Bialystok district), *i.e.*, the General District of Byelorussia, the Reich Commissariat Ukraine, and the part of Russia under military administration; it is obvious that evacuations within these territories could not take place "in the Russian territories."

But the reference to the former Baltic states merely complicates the matter: does the figure of 633,300 Jews include the Jews killed in these countries by *Einsatzgruppe A*?

In his letter to Gerald Reitlinger, Korherr commented as follows on the figure in question:<sup>205</sup>

*"In reality, Himmler had the Reich Security Main Office convey this figure to me for the sake of including it in my report, together with the related written remark, 'exclusive of those who still remained in camps and ghettos.'*"

This demolishes Hilberg's claim that the figure of 633,300 did not include "statistics for killings organized by the Higher SS and Police leaders, who reported to Himmler directly," which would not make a great deal of sense from the ortho-

<sup>205</sup> TNA, Documents 054, Roll 9/46, p. 7 of the letter.

dox point of view, because it was Himmler personally who entrusted Korherr with the task of drafting the report.

Equally fallacious is Hilberg's interpretation that Korherr "did not attempt to estimate the ghetto dead." The term used in the report is "the occupants of the ghettos," which obviously referred to living persons. The ghettos in question were in fact those of the two Reich Commissariats, because the section of the report titled "The Jews in Ghettos" only refers to Theresienstadt, Lodz and the General Government (NO-5194, pp. 10f.). Korherr only reported the number of Jews who were interned there at the end of 1942/beginning of 1943, a total of 472,287.

Vice versa, if the figure of 633,300 included the 218,050 Jews killed by the *Einsatzgruppe* by 1 February 1942 according to the "Summary Report of 16 October – 31 January 1942," then the entire figure would refer to murdered Jews – otherwise the result would be a senseless statistical mishmash of living and dead persons. But the documented figure of executions perpetrated by the end of 1942 is 902,237 (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. 408): why, then, did the RSHA provide Korherr with a figure of killed Jews which was almost 269,000 lower than the real figure? But there is also another problem.

The term "Eastern territories" in the Korherr Report refers to the General Districts of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, *i.e.*, the "former Baltic states," but 222,117 Jews were evacuated from these territories and from the General District of Bialystok, as I mentioned above. My analysis, see above, shows that 46,591 Jews were deported from the latter territory, including 8,500 to Auschwitz and 38,091 to the East (Graf/Kues/Mattogno, p. 318), while the number of the evacuees from the "Eastern territories" amounted to  $(222,117 - 46,591 =) 175,526$ . If the term "evacuation" were synonymous with "killing" here, then the Korherr Report would show 175,526 persons shot by *Einsatzgruppe* A in the three above-mentioned General Districts – a figure very close, after all, to that which appears in the "Summary Report" of *Einsatzgruppe* A for the period from 16 October 1941-31 to January 1942: 172,622<sup>206</sup> – but since the figure of 633,300 also includes the "former Baltic states," this same figure would therefore represent the persons presumed shot from the "Eastern territories" after counting them twice, and the figure relating to the "Russian territories" would amount to  $(633,300 - 175,526 =) 457,774$ .

The dilemma, therefore, arises here: either we consider all the "evacuations" to have been true and veritable "evacuations," in which case the Korherr Report could not be said to contain any mention of killings by the *Einsatzgruppen*; or we consider all the evacuations to have been "killings," in which case, apart from the above-mentioned incongruities, all the other "evacuations" mentioned above would have to be considered "killings" as well, starting with all the real "evacuations" which are not considered to have been anything else, such as those "from Baden and the Pfalz to France," while the evacuations to Lodz and Theresienstadt

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<sup>206</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 184.

would also become “exterminations,” and the 159,518 Jews deported to Auschwitz would all have to be considered “killed,” even the 54,759 who were regularly registered! (Graf/Kues/Mattogno, p. 320)

## 5.2. The Himmler Report of 29 December 1942

As noted above (p. 236), approximately 40% of the documented victims, or 363,211 out of 902,237, are derived from “Meldung No. 51,” relating to “Russia South, Ukraine, Bialystok,” from the series “Reports to the Führer on fighting partisans.” The report, dated 29 December 1942, concerns “Successes in fighting partisans, 1 Sept. to 1 Dec. 1942,” but it also includes the month of August.<sup>207</sup>

For the year 1941, Alexander Kruglov supplies a detailed account of the numbers of Jews shot, the locations and dates of the executions, and the units which carried them out. He reaches a total of 509,140 victims. He then summarized his data as follows:

*“About 300,000 of the victims died at the hands of Police Regiment South, Police Battalions 304 and 320, and the 1st SS Infantry Brigade. Einsatzgruppe C shot more than 95,000 Jews, while Einsatzgruppe D killed at least 75,000. Some 100,000 Ukrainian Jews died as a result of killing operations and pogroms organized by Romanian forces.”* (Kruglov 2008, p. 280)

He then notes that there were still 1,100,000 Jews in the Ukraine (according to its present borders) at the beginning of 1942, most of them in the Western regions: approximately 475,000 in Galicia, 170,000 in Volhynia, 175,000 in the regions of Khmelnytsky and Vinnytsia, 100,000 in Transcarpathia. The Rumanians had also expelled over 25,000 Jews into Transnistria from Southern Bucovina, 9,000 from the Dorohoi Region, 20,000-25,000 from Bessarabia, and 50,000-55,000 from Northern Bucovina (*ibid.*).

Notwithstanding these demographic premises, Kruglov’s treatment of the victims in 1942 is rather superficial. In a table summarizing “Jewish Losses in 1942,” he provides the following data (*ibid.*, p. 281):

- General Government: 338,000 victims
- Reichskommissariat Ukraine: 362,700 victims, distributed as follows:
 

Volhynia	101,000	Zhytomyr	4,000
Rivne	70,000	Kiev	10,500
Vinnytsia	90,000	Kirovohrad	3,500
Proskuriv	75,000	Mikolaiv	8,700
- Wehrmacht Administration: 48,000 victims, distributed as follows:
 

Chernihiv	1,500	Kharkiv	10,500
Sumy	1,000	Voroshilovhrad	2,000
Poltava	2,500	Stalino	6,000
Dnepropetrovsk	10,000	Crimea	8,000
Zaporizhzhia	6,500		

<sup>207</sup> NO-1128 /NO-511. For an abridged version of it see TWC, Vol. XIII, pp. 269f.

– Romanian Occupation: Northern Bukovina and Transnistria: 25,000 victims. In a note, Kruglov explains (*ibid.*, pp. 289f.):

“Scholars differ over how to break down the total number of murdered Jews mentioned in this document. Most, for example, believe that of the 363,211 victims, the 292,263 Jews killed before November 1 were almost exclusively from Reichskommissariat Ukraine. Subtracting from this figure an estimated 70,000 Jews from those Belarusian lands attached to RKU leaves 222,263 Jews from within the borders of present-day Ukraine. The majority of the 70,948 Jews mentioned killed during November in Himmler’s report are in turn thought to be from Bialystok Region (Bezirk Bialystok), a part of interwar Poland subordinated to East Prussia. The concentration of this region’s Jews into larger ghettos for deportation to the death camps Treblinka and Auschwitz started on November 2, 1942, the very day after the Pinsk massacre in the RKU. HSSF Ukraine Hans-Adolf Prützmann was simultaneously HSSPF for East Prussia and as such responsible for the Bialystok Region.”

In the 1941 treatment, Kruglov supplies various concrete examples of executions (*ibid.*, pp. 276f.):

- The Police Regiment South shot 4,414 Jews at Ostroh and Polonne on 2 September, 1,548 at Ruzhyn on 10 September, 1,255 at Koziatyn on 11 September;
- The Police Battalion 304 killed 2,200 Jews at Vinnytsia on 5 September, 486 at Lodyzhyn on 13 September, 1,438 at Haisyn on 16 September, 4,200 at Kirovohrad on 30 September;
- the 1st SS Infantry Brigade eliminated 5,397 Jews between 10 September and 10 November;
- “the brigade’s maintenance platoon under SS *Untersturmführer* Max Täubner shot 969 people: 319 Jews in Novohrad-Volynsky (Zhytomyr Oblast), 191 Jews in Sholokhove (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), and 459 Jews in Oleksandriia (Kirovohrad Oblast)”;
- the Police Battalion 304 killed 305 Jews at Oleksandriia on 4 October, 6,000 at Uman on 8 October and 47 near Zniamianka on 14 October;
- a detachment of *Einsatzkommando* 5 shot 5,300 Jews at Proskuriv on 4 November, the Police Battalions 315 and 320 and a company from the 33rd Police Battalion killed 15,000 Jews at Rivne on 6 and 7 November.

This abundance of detail is in blatant contrast to the nebulous vagueness relating to the 363,211 presumed victims mentioned above. Hilberg claims that “there is little doubt that the large majority of these victims had lived in the Volhynian portion of the General District Volhynia-Podolia” (Hilberg 2003, Vol. III, p. 1312).

Arad asserts that at the end of 1941 there were still 270,000–290,000 Jews in Volhynia and Polesia and another 20,000 in Podolia (Arad 2009, p. 263). The *Generalkommissariat* Volhynia-Podolia, which formed part of the *Reichskommis-*

sariat Ukraine, included Volhynia, ex-Polish Polesia and the region of Kamenets-Podolsky.

Alexander Kruglov estimates at 101,000 the number of victims at Volhynia for all of 1942 (Kruglov 2008, p. 281). He also believes that those at Podolia could not exceed 20,000 in number, for a total of 121,000, which certainly does not amount to “the large majority” of 363,211.

Shmuel Spektor states that, on the eve of the war against the Soviet Union, there were approximately 250,000 Jews in Volhynia, 12,000-13,000 of whom fled before the arrival of the German troops (Spektor 1990a, p. 55). In a detailed statistical table, which refers to 68 locations in Volhynia that later became ghetto sites, he reports the demographic data relating to the 1931 census, to June 1941 and 1942. The respective figures are ca. 177,500, ca. 113,000 and ca. 154,700. It is not clear how these data are to be interpreted. From 1931 to 1941, 64,500 persons are missing: as for the increase of 41,700 from 1941 to 1942, we may imagine transports from Western Europe and/or fugitives who then returned to their home city. At any rate, since, according to Spektor, there were only 2,838 surviving Jews in these localities (*ibid.*, p. 358), the number of victims at Volhynia, in 1942, could not have exceeded 151,900, and, adding another 20,000 possible victims from Podolia, we would arrive at a total of 171,900, still very far from the figure of 363,211.

Complicating the question is EM No. 193 of 17 April 1942, in which *Einsatzgruppe C* reports as follows (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 287):

*“In the general district of Volhynia/Podolia – in the localities where they had not yet been resettled – the Jews form the most enterprising and active segment of the population as before. Not just trade, but the handwork trades are in their hands as well.*

*In Volhynia/Podolia, approximately 40,000 Jews have been resettled so far. Today, the Jews are concentrated in the so-called Jewish districts in the cities, which are, however, not sealed off against outsiders. In the Jewish districts, therefore, there was a lively black-market trade, in which peasants visiting the city exchange agricultural products for clothes and everyday objects, which they badly needed. These nuisances were eliminated by strict state-police measures. The Jews are obsequious and solicitous in their dealings with German agencies. They are very largely indispensable as skilled workers and tradesmen.”*

However one may wish to interpret the term “resettled,” either literally or as a “euphemism” for death by shooting, the fact remains that 40,000 Jews are said to have disappeared from Volhynia as early as April 1942, and cannot therefore be included in the figure 363,211, which applies starting in August. It follows that this figure probably includes only (151,900 – 40,000 + 20,000 =) 131,900 Jews.

In this context, it should be noted that Report No. 5 dated 29 May 1942 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” supplies data contradicting the statements made above (*ibid.*, pp. 351f.):

*“Today, the total population of the general district of Volhynia and Podolia amounts to about 4,630,000, including 465,000 Poles and 326,000 Jews. In the cities, Jews and Poles make up the majority. Thus, the cities of Rovno, Dubno, Vladimir-Dolinsk [Volynsky], Lutsk, Kovel, Kostopol, Odolbunov, Brest-Litovsk, Pinsk and Kobrin have a total of 243,000 residents, including 71,300 Poles (some 35%) and 103,000 Jews.”* (Emphasis added)

Report No. 12, dated 17 July 1942, states that a partisan group had planned to liberate 8,000 Soviet officer POWs in the county of Vladimir-Volynsky, and that “the action was to be carried out with the help of the ghetto (approximately 15,000 Jews) and several Bolshevik agents living in the city” (*ibid.*, p. 385). Orthodox Holocaust historiography claims that these Jews were all killed, but no documentary proof is adduced in this regard.

Dieter Pohl asserts that “the massacre in Volodymyr-Volynsky in early September claimed an especially high number of victims, some 13,500 of the 15,000 Jews living there as of July 1942,” but in a footnote he refers to the above-mentioned report, and to the heading “Wladimir Wolynski” in the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* (Pohl 2008, pp. 50, 71). In that encyclopedia, it is claimed that the ghetto was established in April 1942 and contained approximately 22,000 Jews. The massacres began in August, involving 2,400 persons at first, then 13,500. Of the 4,000 survivors, approximately 2,500 were killed in November 1942, while the remaining 1,500 were killed on 13 December 1943 (Gutman *et al.*, Vol. III, pp. 1610f.). In practice, though, 19,900 are said to have been killed after July 1942, when the ghetto had only some 15,000 occupants. As far as one can tell, no one cares about such contradictions.

Regarding the claimed extermination orders, Arad adds (2009, p. 263):

*“The Volhynia-Podolia Gebietskommissars met in Lutsk to discuss the extermination of the Jews. The office of the Generalkommissar issued a letter on August 31, 1942, according to which ‘the Aktionen in this region... would be completed within five weeks... The director general of the Reichskommissariat government, Paul Dargel, told those present that the Reichskommissar [Koch] himself had expressed his personal and ardent wish that the cleanup must be 100 percent thorough. The Gebietskommissars are to act accordingly.’*

*This letter referred to the total annihilation of Jews in the Generalbezirk.”*

Christian Gerlach reproduces the German text of the document in question:

*“The actions are to be accelerated in such a manner as to be completed within 5 weeks also in that area. At the meeting of regional commissars in Lutsk 19.-31 Aug. 1942, it was generally declared that complete solutions are to be carried out as a matter of principle. The regional commissars were also informed by the attending representative of the Reich commissar – District President Dargel – that such complete cleansing operations also represent the express personal wish of the Reich commissar.”*

As a source, Gerlach cites the following (Gerlach 1999, p. 714):

*“The general commissar for Volhynia and Podolia [in reality, commander of the Security Police Volhynia-Podolia], Ref.: Jewish actions to the KdS branch offices in Brest, Pinsk, Starokonstantinov, Kamenets-Podolsky (signed Lütz [i.e. Pütz]) dated 31 Aug. 1942 (copy), AGK, Collection of Fragments [Aktensplittern] from SS and police units, Vol. 77 (The originals are located in the PVAP Voivodeship Archives Poznan).”*

Martin Dean informs us that this archival source was found by Shmuel Spektor and contains a series of document which “appear to be Polish transcripts of German originals, which may have been partially destroyed or even smuggled out by the underground. Efforts to trace the original documents have proved unsuccessful” (Dean 2000, fn 111, p. 195).

Leaving aside the dubious origins of the document (a Polish transcript of an unknown German original; the accuracy of the “transcript” is thus impossible to assess), simply assuming *a priori* that the “*Aktionen*” referred to the mass extermination of these same Jews, then one could with equal justice pretend that the “complete solutions” or “cleansing operations” also referred to massacres of Jews. The alternative would mean that these Jews were evacuated from the region or from certain parts of the same, as suggested by the following news item from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency of 28 April 1942, approximately one year before the alleged extermination of the Jews from the Volhynia Ghetto:<sup>208</sup>

*“The Jews in the Wolhynian [Volhynian] district of Nazi-occupied Poland will soon be sent to forced labor in the Pripyat Marshes, in the Pinsk region, it is announced in the pro-Nazi Ukrainian newspaper Krakiwski Visti, reaching here today from Cracow.*

*The paper reports that there are still many Jews living in the city of Rovno and other Wolhynian [Volhynian] cities which were formerly a part of Poland. They are required to wear a yellow circle on their backs in order to be distinguished from Jews in Nazi-held Galicia who wear a yellow Star of David. Some of them are employed at manual labor, but plans are being made to send all of them to do drainage work in the Pinsk swamps.”*

Therefore, the presumed order to exterminate the Jews of Volhynia is dubious, to say the least.

Arad diligently lists all the executions, real and presumed, which are said to have taken place in Volhynia in 1942; those falling into the period August-November are as follows (I’ll give the highest number of victims; Arad 2009, pp. 263-271):

<sup>208</sup> “Jews in Occupied Wolhynia Will Be Sent to Work in Pinsk Swamps, Nazi Paper Reports,” in: *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, 28 April 1942.

LOCATION	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	MONTH
Dubno	4,500	October
Kovel	8,000	August
Kremenets	9,000	August
Lutsk	16,000	August
Lutsk	2,000	September
Poleska camp	15,000	August
Vladimir-Volynsky	18,000	September
Kobrin	5,000	October
Brest-Litovsk*	19,000	October
Pinsk*	16,200	October-November
Dunaevtsy*	5,000	Autumn
Shepetovka*	6,000	September
Kamenets-Podolsky	5,000	August
Proskurov	6,000	End 1942
Total	134,700	

As we see, even if we take these statistics seriously, we still need approximately 228,500 victims to arrive at the figure of 363,211. What is more, of these 134,700 victims, those (partially) attested to by documents only amount to 46,200 (the figures corresponding to the localities with asterisks).

Among the few documented massacres listed in the table reproduced above is that of the Pinsk Ghetto, which, according to Arad, was home to 12,000-15,000 Jews (*ibid.*, p. 267). An “Experience Report” written in November 1942 by *Hauptmann der Schutzpolizei und Kompanie-Chef* Helmut Saur, commandant of Company 10a of Police Battalion 310, reported that the action began on 29 October with the shooting of approximately 10,000 Jews; over the next three days, on 30 and 31 October and 1 November, the total number of victims amounted to 15,000, in addition to 1,200 in the ghetto.<sup>209</sup>

There is also a related Himmler order:<sup>210</sup>

*“The Wehrmacht High Command informed me that the railway line Brest-Gomel was increasingly suffering from partisan attacks, thus jeopardizing supplies for the fighting troops.*

*Based on the reports available to me, the Pinsk Ghetto is to be considered the center of the whole partisan movement in the Pripjat swamps.*

*I hereby order you, therefore, to raid and annihilate the Pinsk Ghetto, despite the existence of economic objections. 1,000 male laborers are to be secured and transferred to the Wehrmacht for the manufacture of wooden huts, insofar as the operation permits it. The work of these 1,000 laborers may be performed only in a sealed, heavily guarded camp. If sufficient guard personnel cannot be guaranteed, these 1,000 are also to be destroyed.”*

Himmler’s order shows that the destruction of the ghetto was dictated by contingent factors, not by a policy of exterminating Jews as such, and that, therefore, no

<sup>209</sup> YVA, O.53-13.1, p. 417.

<sup>210</sup> Facsimile of the original document in Eisenbach 1961, documentary appendix outside of the text.



general order to exterminate the Jews existed, because in that case the occupants of the Pinsk Ghetto, like all the other ghettos which existed until 1944, are said to have been killed first, and without specific motivation. Hence, when Himmler spoke about exterminations in case of necessity, he did so without “camouflage language” or “euphemisms,” as also happened frequently in many *Einsatzgruppen* reports.

Notwithstanding Curilla’s vast documentation, with its wide-ranging trial evidence and eyewitness testimony, he has not succeeded in accounting for the Himmler report of 29 December 1942, with regard to which he limits himself to writing:

*“Already in 1942, the Jews were almost completely annihilated in the Ukraine. On 26 Dec. 1942, Prützmann reported 363,211 murdered Jews in his district, which also included the district of Bialystok, in addition to the 1,337 partisans killed in battle, and 14,257 executed suspected partisans. 271,017 of them were killed in September and October 1942 alone, most of them in Volhynia and Podolia. At least 80,000 of them were killed in the Byelorussian part of the General Commissariats Volhynia and Podolia.”* (Curilla 2006, p. 878)

As his source, Curilla refers to Gerlach, who asserts precisely that the majority of the presumed 271,017 victims of the months of September and October were killed in Volhynia and Podolia. In support of this conjecture, he mentions the fact that “Police Battalion 310 alone accounted for 41,837 murdered Jews in the districts Brest, Kobrin and Pinsk.” (Gerlach 1999, p. 722).

Gerlach cites two books written in Russian and an article by Gert Robel. The latter, with reference to a Russian text of 1945, writes that “the compilation of the 15th Police Regiment for the fall of 1942” mentions a figure of “41,848 Jews, Jewesses and Jewish children” murdered in the northwestern Ukraine (Robel, in: Benz, p. 548).

The “War Journal No. 1 Police Battalion 310 – former Police Training Battalion Oranienburg (as of 1 August 1941: III/Police Regiment 15)” runs from 1 October 1940 to 24 November 1942.<sup>211</sup> In October and November 1942, it was committed to fighting “bandits” and Jews in the region of Kobrin. As regards the latter, the journal contains the following entries:

- 15 October: “During the deployment in Brest, a total of 16,000 Jews were evacuated. There were no incidents.” (p. 385) Here, the word “evacuation” must be understood literally, because the Jews in Brest were allegedly transported to Bronnaya Gora and shot there, so that these presumed 16,000 victims cannot be ascribed to Police Battalion 310.
- 16-18 October (exact date illegible): “One Jew was shot in Podlesye” (p. 385).
- 16-18 October (exact date illegible): 3 Jews shot at “Milolajewo,” meaning Nikolayevo; “2 Jews shot by patrols in the area of the 10th Company” (p. 386).

<sup>211</sup> YVA, O.53-12.2; subsequent page numbers from there, unless stated otherwise.

- 19 October: “Jewish vagabonds shot near Belsk and in Korchitsy”; “5 Jews shot on the Atechina State Farm (on the road Brest-Kobrin)” (p. 386).
- 20 October: “10 fugitive Jews from Kobrin shot in Chobowicze (Khabovichi)” (p. 387).
- 21 October: at Lyakhchitsy “5 Jews are being shot. The 10th Company shoots 401 Jews in a camp on the Brest-Kobrin road” (p. 387).
- 22 October: 43 Jews shot near Franopol (p. 388).
- 23 October: “6 Jews shot near Antonovo”; “The 11th Company shoots 21 Jews in Kamenitsa-Zhirovetskaya” (p. 389).
- 24 October: “3 Jewish vagabonds shot near Khodynichi (5 km north of Novosyolki). [...] One Jew shot in Podlesye” (p. 390).
- 25 October: “One detachment executes 8 Jews in Bloty-Wlk. [Bloty Vel’ki] and shoots 2 Jewesses in Khabovichi” (p. 390); “4 Jews from Brest are executed in Chernyany. [...] 81 persons (Jews) from the road construction camp executed in Velikorita” (p. 392).
- 26 October: One Jew shot at Antonovo; “9 Jews are executed in Kamenitsa (8 km southwest of Brest) and 1 Jew at Pozhezhin” (p. 392).
- 28 October: “The 10th Company is reconnoitering the area northeast of Podlesye (15 km east of Brest) and shoots 6 Jewish vagabonds while trying to flee” (p. 393).
- 29 October: “2 Jews are arrested and handed over the SD in Kobrin. 3 Jews are arrested in Gr.-Korchitsy and executed after interrogation”; “The 10th Company is moves out to a special operation in Pinsk”; “1 Jew shot in a fire fight with a Jewish gang of partisans near Yazvin” (p. 394).
- 30 October: “10th Company deployed in Pinsk to get rid of Jews” (p. 394).
- 31 October: “The 9th company is moving out towards Samary (24 km east of Mokransy) to rid the town of Jews. 3 Jews arrested and executed near Bloty-Wlk. [?] and Zakalnechye (11 km southwest of Kobrin) [...] 2 Jews captured on the Khabovichi-Kobrin road and handed over to the SD” “10th Company continues ridding Pinsk of Jews” (p. 395).
- 1 November: “The 9th Company ends operation to rid Samary of Jews. 80 persons are executed. The 10th Company continues Jew-removal in Pinsk. The 3rd Platoon of the 11th Company arrests 2 Jews escaped from Brest and executes them” (p. 395).
- 2 November: “The 10th Company finishes up the Jewish operation in Pinsk without incident and returns to its bases” (p. 395).
- 9 November: “8 Jews escaped from Ratno are executed” (p. 409).
- 19 November: “1 Jewish bandit shot while attempting to escape, and 1 Jewish bandit arrested near Drochevo” (p. 412).

Even if Police Battalion 310 had been assigned to carry out the execution of the Jews from Brest on an exclusive basis (when in fact other units of the Wehrmacht, the Gendarmerie and II 2nd Brigade Mounted Police also participated, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography), the number of victims could not

have exceeded 41,000, both because the war diary contains no victim figure with reference to Brest, and because adding up all the other executions mentioned in the diary only yields 700 victims, or slightly fewer.

The report from Police Battalion 310 attesting to the execution of 41,837 or 41,848 Jews, the original of which has never been found,<sup>212</sup> is therefore unreliable, and in no way corroborates Himmler's report dated 29 December.

According to Kruglov, the 70,948 executed persons mentioned in the Himmler report, with reference to November 1942, concerned the district of Białystok. Arad, in his discussion of the matter, mentions two Jewish transports carrying 4,000 and 5,000 persons from the Grodno Ghetto to Auschwitz on 15 and 21 November 1942. Moreover, between 10 November and 15 December, 16,300 Jews were transported from the ghettos in the area of Volkovysk to Treblinka and 2,000 to Auschwitz (Kruglov 2008, pp. 289f.).

Danuta Czech, in her *Auschwitz Chronicle*, records the following Jewish transports from the ghettos of the Białystok district (Czech, pp. 336-343):

8 November 1942:	1,000, none registered;
9 November 1942:	1,000, 294 registered;
14 November 1942:	1,500, 661 registered;
18 November 1942:	1,500 from Grodno, 230 registered;
25 November 1942:	2,000 from Grodno, 433 registered.

None of these transports is documented, *i.e.*, D. Czech produces not a single source for any of them.

As regards the 16,300 Jews deported to Treblinka, there is only a single list compiled by Arad, but on what basis he compiled it is unknown; there is certainly no documentary basis (Arad 1987, p. 397).

But even supposing that it is all true, the deportees would only have amounted to 25,300 victims, and there would still be a deficit of 45,700 victims to reach the total of 70,948 mentioned in the Himmler report.

At any rate, trying to fit the Jews deported from the Białystok district into "Meldung No. 51," which refers to "Successes in fighting partisans," is even more nonsensical. Point 2 of the report regards "partisans supporters and suspected partisans" and is subdivided into three headings: "a) arrested," "b) executed," "c) Jews executed": it is obvious that these refer to Jews shot. Lumping the Jews "deported" from the Białystok district together with the Jews "executed" would therefore require considering the "deported" Jews as having been killed, regardless of whether or not they were killed immediately upon arrival, which is obviously absurd, all the more so since, according to Czech, at least 1,618 of these presumed "executed Jews" were regularly registered at Auschwitz!

As if that were not enough, from the orthodox point of view, the Jews deported to Auschwitz and Treblinka in November 1942 from the Białystok district are

<sup>212</sup> The document to which G. Robel refers is in Russian.

counted twice in the statistics: as victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and associated units, and as victims of Auschwitz and Treblinka.

The figures reported in the report dated 28 December 1942 are, therefore, for the most part, greatly exaggerated.

### 5.3. Executions in the Incident Reports

Orthodox Holocaust historians, as shown by Hilberg's exposition, usually limit themselves to listing statements contained in the Incident Reports relating to the total number of executions for every *Einsatzgruppe*, up until the date upon which they draw the general total.

As far as one can tell, no one has thought to analyze these statements individually and in detail.

The data relating to the *Einsatzgruppen* are annotated by generically indicating the letter distinguishing each unit, *i.e.*, "A," "B," "C" and "D," sometimes with a mention of the specific *Sonderkommando* or *Einsatzkommando*.

#### 5.3.1. General Summary of *Einsatzgruppen* Executions

The following tables show the essential data from the Incident Reports for each *Einsatzgruppe*.

**Table 14: *Einsatzgruppe* A**

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
8	30/06/41	EK 1b	28/06/41	Kaunas	Thousands
12	04/07/41	Stapo Tilsit			200
14	06/07/41	Tilsit		Gargzdai	201
14	06/07/41	Tilsit		Kretinga	214
14	06/07/41	Tilsit		Palanga	11
15	07/07/41	EK 1a, 2		Riga	400
15	07/07/41		04/07/41	Riga	100
17	09/07/41		04/07/41	Vilnius	54
17	09/07/41		05/07/41	Vilnius	93
19	11/07/41	Pogrom, Lithuania		Kaunas	7800
21	13/07/41	(EK 9)	Until 08/07	Vilnius	321
24	16/07/41			Riga	50
24	16/07/41	EK 1b		Daugavpils	1150
24	16/07/41	Pogrom		Riga	400
24	16/07/41	EK 2		Riga	2300
24	16/07/41	EK 2			1600
26	18/07/41	Polizeipräsident Matsch			80
36	28/07/41			Minsk	200 ?
36	28/07/41				58

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
36	28/07/41				12
40	01/08/41	Pogrom		Jelgava	1556
40	01/08/41	Pogrom		Lithuania Latvia Estonia	20000
48	10/08/41		<b>Total</b>	Kaunas, Riga	<b>29000</b>
54	16/08/41		22/07/41	Pagiriai	1
54	16/08/41		23/07/41	Kedainiai	125 including 93 J
54	16/08/41		25/07/41	Mariampole	103
54	16/08/41		28/07/41	Panevezys	288 including 249 J
54	16/08/41		29/07/41	Raseiniai	257 including 254 J
54	16/08/41		30/07/41	Ariogala	38 including 27 J
54	16/08/41		30/07/41	Vandziogala	15; 2 murderers
54	16/08/41		31/07/41	Utena	256 including 251 J
54	16/08/41		01/08/41	Ukmerge	300 including 296 J
54	16/08/41		02/08/41	Kaunas	209 including 205 J
54	16/08/41		22/07-03/08		1592
88	19/09/41	EK 3 and Lithuanians	<b>Total</b>		<b>46692</b>
88	19/09/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>85000</b>
88	19/09/41		22/08/41	Aglona	544 G
88	19/09/41			Tartu	405 including 50 J
94	25/09/41	EK 3	<b>Total</b>		<b>75000</b>
94	25/09/41			Plyussa	7
94	25/09/41			Mogutovo	87 G. 11 including 6 J
96	27/09/41		30/08-05/09/41	Riga	186
96	27/09/41			Siauliai	44
96	27/09/41			Liepaja	38
96	27/09/41			Liepaja district	191; Total 459, including 237 JG
96	27/09/41	EK 2	<b>Total</b>		<b>29246</b>
111	12/10/41		<b>Total</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>440</b>
111	12/10/41	SK 4b	07/09-05/10/41		207 F; 9 S; 125 J
111	12/10/41	EK 6	14-27/09/41		13 F, P; 32 S; 26 J
111	12/10/41			Kiev	1
111	12/10/41			Kiev	3
131	10/11/41		18-25/10/41	Riga	6
131	10/11/41		18-25/10/41	Riga	115 K
131	10/11/41		18-25/10/41	Valmiera	15
131	10/11/41		18-25/10/41	Valmiera	56 K
131	10/11/41		18-25/10/41	Liepaja	18
131	10/11/41		18-25/10/41	Liepaja	12 K
131	10/11/41	EK 2	<b>Total</b>		<b>31598</b>
131	10/11/41		23/10/41	Venden	3 + 9 K
131	10/11/41		23/10/41	Valmiera	10 + 12 K

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	Ex. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
131	10/11/41			Valka	10 + 15 K
131	10/11/41			Smiltene	7 K
131	10/11/41			Aluksne (Marienburg)	12 K
136	21/11/41		24/10-05/11/41		118
140	01/12/41		06-20/11/41		67
140	01/12/41		20/11/41		855
140	01/12/41	SK 1b	07-11/11/41	Minsk	6624
150	02/01/42			Leningrad area	93
152	07/01/42		28/12/41	Minsk	3
154	12/01/42			Novgorod	14
154	12/01/42		29/11/41	Kaunas	19
154	12/01/42		30/12/41	Salaspils	2
154	12/01/42		22/12/41	Vilnius	402 including 385 J
154	12/01/42		03/01/42	Vilkaviskis	50
155	14/01/42				1000 K
155	14/01/42			Riga	27800
155	14/01/42		02/10/41	Zagare	250
155	14/01/42		02/10/41	Zagare	Ghetto
155	14/01/42		<b>Total</b>	<b>Byelorussia</b>	<b>33210</b>
155	14/01/42		02/01/42	Audrinu	391 civilians
156	16/01/42			Liepaja	20 K; 1J
156	16/01/42			Madona	28 K
156	16/01/42			Jekabpils	1 K
156	16/01/42	EK 2	<b>Total</b>		<b>33970</b>
156	16/01/42	HSSPF N; EK 2	30/11/41	Riga	10600
163	02/02/42				8
163	02/02/42	EK 2	<b>Total</b>		<b>34193</b>
165	06/02/42		01/02/42	Loknya	38 J and Z
168	13/02/42		04/02/42	Bakov	100
172	23/02/42				111 including 40 J
175	2/3/42			Baranovichi	1
178	9/3/42		02-03/03/42	Minsk	3412
				Vileyka	302
				Baranovichi	2007
181	16/3/42			Loknya	38 J; 1 Z
182	18/3/42		28/02/42	Daugavpils	21 J; 12 G
183	20/3/42		05-28/02/42		47 including 29 J
184	23/3/42		17/03/42	Ilya	520
186	27/3/42			Cherven	15000
191	10/04/42			Kaunas	106 including 24 J
				Vilnius	137 including 73 J
193	17/04/42			Kaunas	22 including 14 J
195	24/04/42				1272 incl. 997 J

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
195	24/04/42			Minsk	9

The data in italics are the only data identical with those contained in the “Jäger Report.”

**Table 15: Einsatzgruppe B**

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
11	03/07/41	EK 6	02/07/41		133
14	06/07/41	EK 4a		Lutsk	2000
14	06/07/41	Ukrainians	05/07/41		70
20	12/07/41	Belarusians			?
21	13/07/41			Minsk	1050
21	13/07/41			Vilnius	500
21	13/07/41			Bialystok	215 B
21	13/07/41			Grodno	96
31	23/07/41	EK 9	19/07/41		3386
31	23/07/41	EK 9	14/07/41		4234
32	24/07/41			Baranovichi	381
32	24/07/41	EK 9 OrPo		Slonim	1075
32	24/07/41	EK 9		Slonim	84
32	24/07/41	OrPo		Brest-Litovsk	4435 including 408 Russians
36	28/07/41			Vilnius	193
43	05/08/41		<b>Σ 31/7/41</b>		<b>11084</b>
50	12/08/41			Stolpce (Stolbtsy)	76
50	12/08/41			Vileyka	?
50	12/08/41			Oszmiana (Oshmyany)	527
50	12/08/41			Vitebsk	332
50	12/08/41			Vitebsk	97
50	12/08/41			Shklov	84
67	29/08/41			Monastyrshchina	26
67	29/08/41				74
67	29/08/41			Mogilev	80
67	29/08/41			Orsha	43
67	29/08/41			Szuchari [Sukhari] Yasna	11
67	29/08/41			Chausy	31
67	29/08/41			Bobruisk	?
67	29/08/41			Voroshilov	8
67	29/08/41			Velizh	1
67	29/08/41			Nowe Swieciany (Svencioneliai)	169

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
67	29/08/41			Vilnius	612
67	29/08/41			Vitebsk	1
67	29/08/41			Minsk	11
73	04/09/41				1
73	04/09/41			Borisov	118
73	04/09/41	SK 7a		Nevel	74
73	04/09/41				20
73	04/09/41			Bresk [?] Horsov [?]	?
73	04/09/41			Slutsk	1
73	04/09/41			Komarovka	115
73	04/09/41	EK 8		Minsk	214
73	04/09/41	EK 9		Yanovichi	149
73	04/09/41			Vitebsk	19
73	04/09/41	Vorkomm. Moskau			46 including 38 J
73	04/09/41	SK 7a		Minsk	2
73	04/09/41			Minsk	733 Asiatics
73	04/09/41			Minsk	397
92	23/09/41	VK Moscow		Monastyrshchina and Khislavichi	20 + ?
92	23/09/41	SK 7b			21
92	23/09/41	SK 7b		Zhlobin	31
92	23/09/41			Gomel	10
92	23/09/41			Novozybkov	1
92	23/09/41			Zlynka	27
92	23/09/41			Klimov	27
92	23/09/41			Minsk	2 and 11 Asiatics
92	23/09/41			Minsk	10
92	23/09/41	EK 8		Minsk	?
92	23/09/41			Logoyok	9
92	23/09/41	EK 9			3 + 1 half-Jews
92	23/09/41			Iviniec (Ivenets)	50
92	23/09/41	EK 8		Bobruisk	407
92	23/09/41			Borisov	176
92	23/09/41	EK 8 and 1 Kommando Div. SS Das Reich		Logoyok	920
92	23/09/41	EK 9			3
92	23/09/41	EK 9		Nevel	640
92	23/09/41	EK 9		Yanovichi	1025
92	23/09/41	EG B and OrPo Feldgendarmarie	in 3 days	Minsk	2278
92	23/09/41	EK 8			11*



EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
92	23/09/41	EK 8			23 Z
92	23/09/41			Minsk	377 M
92	23/09/41		<b>Σ 13/09/41</b>		<b>23084</b>
92	23/09/41	VK Moscow	<b>Σ 13/09/41</b>		<b>312</b>
92	23/09/41	SK 7a	<b>Σ 13/09/41</b>		<b>1011</b>
92	23/09/41	SK 7b	<b>Σ 13/09/41</b>		<b>1153</b>
92	23/09/41	EK 8	<b>Σ 13/09/41</b>		<b>11354</b>
92	23/09/41	EK 9	<b>Σ 13/09/41</b>		<b>9974</b>
108	09/10/41				1
108	09/10/41	VK Moscow		Khislavichi	114
108	09/10/41	SK 7b		Gorodnia	21
108	09/10/41			Lizny [?]	83
108	09/10/41			Lizny [?]	82
108	09/10/41			Chernigov	19
108	09/10/41			Berezna	8
108	09/10/41			Gomel	41
108	09/10/41			Rechitsa	216
108	09/10/41			Krugloye	31
108	09/10/41			Mogilev	80
108	09/10/41			Mogilev	552
108	09/10/41			Borisov	321
108	09/10/41			Smolevichi	1401
108	09/10/41			Borisov	118
108	09/10/41			Bobruisk	1380
108	09/10/41			Chernigov	21 G
108	09/10/41			Minsk	632 G
108	09/10/41			Mogilev	836
108	09/10/41		<b>Σ 28/09/41</b>		<b>30094</b>
108	09/10/41	VK Moscow	<b>Σ 28/09/41</b>		<b>2029</b>
108	09/10/41	SK 7a	<b>Σ 28/09/41</b>		<b>1252</b>
108	09/10/41	SK 7b	<b>Σ 28/09/41</b>		<b>1544</b>
108	09/10/41	EK 8	<b>Σ 28/09/41</b>		<b>15000</b>
108	09/10/41	EK 9	<b>Σ 28/09/41</b>		<b>10269</b>
123	24/10/41	EK 9		Ostrava	3
124	25/10/41	Gruppenstab and VK Moscow		Tatarsk	? + 3
124	25/10/41	SK 4a		Belovshchina	2726
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Mogilev	113
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Shidov [?]	627
124	25/10/41	EK 8			812 M
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Kuyashiche [?]	32
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Mogilev	2
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Mogilev	10
124	25/10/41	EK 8			4

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
124	25/10/41	EK 8			23
124	25/10/41	EK 8	03/10/41		42
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Talka	222
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Maryina Gorka	996
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Borisov	83
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Krupki	912
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Kholopenichi	822
124	25/10/41	EK 8		Bobruisk	418
124	25/10/41	EK 9		Vitebsk	4
124	25/10/41	EK 9	08/10/41	Vitebsk	~3000
124	25/10/41	EK 9		Borovlyany	5
124	25/10/41	EK 9		Ostrovno	169
124	25/10/41	EK 9	01/10/41	Gorodok	52
125	26/10/41	VK Moscow			<b>2457</b>
125	26/10/41	SK 7a			<b>1344</b>
125	26/10/41	SK 7b			<b>1822</b>
125	26/10/41	EK 8			<b>20108</b>
125	26/10/41	EK 9			<b>11449</b>
125	26/10/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>37180</b>
133	14/11/41			Mogilev	55 including 22 J
133	14/11/41		16/10/41		2 (with names)
133	14/11/41		18/10/41		8 names
133	14/11/41		20/10/41		3 (with names)
133	14/11/41	EK 9	14/10/41		1 (with name)
133	14/11/41		17/10/41		1 (with name)
133	14/11/41		21/10/41		1 (with name)
133	14/11/41		17/10/41		1 (with name)
133	14/11/41		21/10/41		2
133	14/11/41		15/10/41	Mogilev	83 M
133	14/11/41		09/19/41		81
133	14/11/41			Gorki	2200
133	14/11/41			Mistislav [?]	900
133	14/11/41	Pol.Reg. Mitte	19/10/41	Mogilev	3726
133	14/11/41		23/10/41	Mogilev	279
133	14/11/41	SK 7a			173
133	14/11/41	VK Moscow	<b>Total</b>		<b>2457</b>
133	14/11/41	SK 7a	<b>Total</b>		<b>1517</b>
133	14/11/41	SK 7b	<b>Total</b>		<b>1822</b>
133	14/11/41	EK 8	<b>Total</b>		<b>28219</b>
133	14/11/41	EK 9	<b>Total</b>		<b>11452</b>
133	14/11/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>45467</b>
146	15/12/41				2 (with names)
146	15/12/41				7
147	17/12/41				8 + 62+ 9 + 1 + 5

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
					(with names)
148	19/12/41				2
148	19/12/41				12
148	19/12/41			Mogilev	160
148	19/12/41			Mogilev	135
148	19/12/41			Mogilev	127
148	19/12/41			Mogilev	196
148	19/12/41			Bobruisk	5281
148	19/12/41			Patichi [?]	1013
148	19/12/41			Rudnya	835
148	19/12/41			Gomel	52
148	19/12/41			Gomel Rogachev Korma	2365
148	19/12/41			Klimovichi Cherikov	786
148	19/12/41			Lyubavichi	492
148	19/12/41			Borisov	146
148	19/12/41			Krichev	1213
148	19/12/41			Roslavl Shumyachi	510
148	19/12/41			Shumyachi	16 G
148	19/12/41			Vitebsk Ghetto	4090
149	22/12/41			Vitebsk CC	207
149	22/12/41			Sloboda Polotsk Bychikha Bislatovo [?]	286
149	22/12/41			Gorodok	394
149	22/12/41			Vyazma CC	117
194	21/04/42	SK 7a	06-30/03/42		1657 including 1585 J
194	21/04/42	SK 7b	06-30/03/42		82 including 27 J
194	21/04/42	SK M	06-30/03/42		52 including 7 J
194	21/04/42	EK 8	06-30/03/42		1609 including 1551
194	21/04/42	EK 9	06-30/03/42		273 including 170 J
194	21/04/42	<i>Trupp</i> Smolensk	06-30/03/42		60 including 18 J

**Table 16: Einsatzgruppe C**

EM	EM DATA dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
19	11/07/41	EK 4a		Rovno	240 F
19	11/07/41	EK 4b		Tarnopol	127
19	11/07/41	EK 4b		Tarnopol	600
19	11/07/41	Waffen SS		Zborov	600
19	11/07/41	EK 6	08/07/41	Zolochev	3
20	12/07/41		05/07/41	Rudki	15
20	12/07/41			Stryi	11
24	16/07/41	Pogrom		Sambor	50
24	16/07/41			Lvov	7000
24	16/07/41			Dobromil	132
24	16/07/41			Yavorov	15
24	16/07/41		30/06/41	Sokal	183 K
24	16/07/41		30/06/41	Lutsk	300
24	16/07/41		02/07/41		1160
24	16/07/41	EK 4a		Tarnopol	2
24	16/07/41				180
24	16/07/41				300-500
28	20/07/41			Rovno	240
28	20/07/41			Kremenets	130
28	20/07/41			Dubno	100
28	20/07/41			Tarnopol	127
28	20/07/41	Wehrmacht		Tarnopol	600
30	22/07/41			Zhitomir	187 S J
37	29/07/41	EK 4a		Zhitomir	400
37	29/07/41	EK 4a	<b>Total</b>		<b>2531</b>
37	29/07/41	Rumanians		Beltsy (Balti)	45
38	30/07/41				180
38	30/07/41			Proskurov	146
38	30/07/41			Vinnitsa	146
38	30/07/41			Berdichev	148
38	30/07/41			Shepetovka	17
38	30/07/41			Zhitomir	41
38	30/07/41			Khorostov	50
38	30/07/41	Pogrom		Khorostov	110
47	09/08/41			Tarnopol	600
47	09/08/41			Khorostkov	110
47	09/08/41			Zhitomir	400
47	09/08/41			Troyanov	22
47	09/08/41			Korostyshev	40
47	09/08/41			Chernyakhov	110 + 2
47	09/08/41	EK 4a	<b>Repetition</b>	Berdichev	148
47	09/08/41	EK 5		Berdichev	74
47	09/08/41			Miropol	24

EM	EM DATA dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
47	09/08/41			Vinnitsa	146
47	09/08/41			Makarov	14
47	09/08/41	HSSPF S		Shepetovka- Rovno	1643
58	20/08/41			Berdichev CC	1
58	20/08/41				13
58	20/08/41			Radomyshl	113
58	20/08/41			Chernyakov	31
58	20/08/41			Rudnya	26
58	20/08/41			Zhitomir	2
58	20/08/41	EK 4a		Zhitomir	402
58	20/08/41		<b>Total</b>		8000 K and J
58	20/08/41	EK 4a	<b>Total</b>		<b>4335</b>
59	21/08/41			Korosten	53
59	21/08/41			Starokonstan- tinov	439
59	21/08/41			Radomyshl	276
60	22/08/41			Chernyakov	13
60	22/08/41			Kozyatin Wezerajce [?]	22
60	22/08/41	EK 5			161
74	05/09/41				1
80	11/09/41	Ukrainians		Korosten	238
80	11/09/41			Fastov	50
80	11/09/41	SK 4a		Fastov	262
80	11/09/41	SK 4a	<b>Σ 24/08</b>		<b>7152</b>
86	17/09/41			Zhitomir	266
86	17/09/41			Korosten	160
86	17/09/41			Belaya Tserkov	68
86	17/09/41			Tarashcha	109
86	17/09/41	SK 4a	<b>Total</b>		<b>6584</b>
86	17/09/41			Chmielnik	229
86	17/09/41	EK 5	14 days		506
86	17/09/41	EK 6		Vinnitsa	600
86	17/09/41			Krivoy Rog	105
88	19/09/41	SK 4a		Radomyshl	1107
88	19/09/41	Ukrainians		Radomyshl	561
88	19/09/41	SK 4a	<b>Σ 06/09/41</b>		<b>11328</b>
88	19/09/41	<i>Vorkommando</i> 4b	23/08-05/09/41		519 including 435 J
94	25/09/41	SK 4a	<b>Total</b>		<b>15000</b>
94	25/09/41	SK 4b	06-12/09/41		13 + 290 J
94	25/09/41	EK 6	01-13/09/41		60
94	25/09/41	<i>Gruppenstab</i>			4 + 6 Z + 55 J
94	25/09/41	EK 5	31/08-06/09/41		90 + 72 + 161 J

EM	EM DATA dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
101	02/10/41	SK 4a <i>Gruppenstab 2</i> K.Pol. Reg.	29-30/09/41	Kiev	33771
106	07/10/41		29-30/09/41	Kiev	35000
106	07/10/41		29-30/09/41	Kiev	33771
111	12/10/41	SK 4a	<b>Total</b>		<b>51000</b>
111	12/10/41	EK 5	07/09-05/10/41		207 F P; 112 S; 8800 J
119	20/10/41	EK 5	22-23/09/41	Uman	1412
119	20/10/41	EK 5	19/09/41	Yustungrad [?]	35; 13 K
119	20/10/41			Shuealivka [?]	16
119	20/10/41		25/09/41	Tsybulovv [?]	78
119	20/10/41	SK 4a	04/10/41	Pereyeslav	537
119	20/10/41	SK 4a	08/10/41	Yagotin	125
119	20/10/41	SK 4a	19/09/41	Ivankov	166
119	20/10/41	SK 4a	21/09/41	Ivankov	29
119	20/10/41	SK 4a		Korosten	177
119	20/10/41	EK 5	15/09/41	Boguslav	322 + 13 K
119	20/10/41			Kiev	1 J; 1 Pol.; 13 RA.
119	31/45/07				1
128	03/11/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>ca. 80000</b>
128	03/11/41	<b>Repetition</b>		Kiev	30000
128	03/11/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>75000</b>
132	12/11/41	SK 4a	<b>Total</b>		<b>55432</b>
132	12/11/41	SK 4a	14/10/41		752
132	12/11/41	SK 4a	18/10/41		357 JK
132	12/11/41	SK 4a		Lubny	1865
132	12/11/41	SK 4b	14-10/10/41		161
132	12/11/41	EK 5	<b>Σ 20/10/41</b>		<b>15110</b>
132	12/11/41	EK 5	13-19/10/41		1047
132	12/11/41	EK 5	18/10/41		300 JG
132	12/11/41	EK 5	28/09-04/10/41	Krivoy Rog	179
135	19/11/41	SK 4a		Kozelets	125
135	19/11/41	SK 4a	23/10/41		116
135	19/11/41	SK 4a	24/10/41		144
135	19/11/41	SK 4a	28/10/41	Chernigov	49
135	19/11/41	SK 4a	24/10/41	Chernigov	270 G
135	19/11/41	SK 4a	29/10/41	Oster	215
135	19/11/41	SK 4a	11-24/10/41		205 including 181 J
135	19/11/41	SK 4b	25-30/10/41		381
135	19/11/41				565 G
135	19/11/41	EK 5	<b>Σ 02/11/41</b>		<b>21258</b>
135	19/11/41	EK 5	20-26/10/41		4372
135	19/11/41	EK5	26/10-01/11/41		2658
143	08/12/41	SK 4a	Up to 09/11/41		<b>57243</b>

EM	EM DATA dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
143	08/12/41	SK 4a	07/11/41	Gornostaiopol	385
143	08/12/41	SK 4a	07/11/41	Dymer	120
143	08/12/41	SK 4a	07/11/41	Oster	22
143	08/12/41	SK 4b	31/10-05/11/41		740 including 137 J; 599 G.
143	08/12/41	EK 5	<b>Σ 10/11/41</b>		<b>29644</b>
143	08/12/41	EK 5	02-08/11/41		10650 + 414 hostages
143	08/12/41	EK 5	09-15/11/41		1509, including 1422 J
143	08/12/41	EK 6	26/10- 02/11/41		43
143	08/12/41	HSSPF, EK 5,	06-07/11/41	Rovno	15000
143	08/12/41	EK 6	03-09/11/41		113
143	08/12/41	EK 6	19-16/11/41		47
143	08/12/41	EK 6	17-25/11		105 including 61 J
156	16/01/42	SK 4a, 4b	23/11/41	Poltava	1538
156	16/01/42	SK 4a	18/10/41	Lubny	34 K; 73 J
156	16/01/42	SK 4a	<b>Σ 30/11/41</b>		<b>59018</b>
156	16/01/42	EK 5	<b>Σ 07/12/41</b>		<b>36147</b>
156	16/01/42	EK 5a	23-30/11/41		64 F; 46 S
156	16/01/42	EK 5a	23-30/11/41		2615 J
156	16/01/42	EK 5a	01-07/12/41		60 F; 47 S
156	16/01/42	EK 5a	01-07/12/41		1471 J
156	16/01/42	EK 5			24 J
156	16/01/42	EK 5			20 K; 9 F; 3 Politricks
156	16/01/42	EK 6	24-30/11/41		226
156	16/01/42	EK 6	24-30/11/41		19 F; 29 S
156	16/01/42	EK 6	<b>Σ 12/11/41</b>		<b>6800 incl. 1160 G from Igren</b>
173	25/02/42	SK 4b	14/1-12/02/42		861 including 139 J
173	25/02/42	EK 5	12-24/01/42		104 F; 75 S, P; 8000 J
173	25/02/42	EK 6			173 pol. Funkt.; 56 Sab. Plünd.; 149 J
173	25/02/42		10/01- 06/02/42	Dnepropetrovsk	17 Berufverbrecher; 105 komm. Funkt.; 16 Partisanen; 350 J
173	25/02/42			Igren	400 G
173	25/02/42			Vasilkov	320 G
177	6/3/42	SK 4b			1317 including 1224 J
177	6/3/42	EK 5			1880 including 1580 J
177	6/3/42	EK 6		Stalino (Dontesk)	493 including 369 J

EM	EM DATA dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
187	06/03/42				193 agitators
189	03/04/42		28-31/03/42		434 including 352 J

**Table 17: Einsatzgruppe D**

EM	EM Date dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONER	EX/ DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
22	14/07/41				?
25	17/07/41	Rumanians			hundreds
25	17/07/41	Rumanians	10/07/41		400
25	17/07/41	Rumanians			15
40	01/08/41	with Rumanians		Chernovitsy	682
40	01/08/41			Khotin	150
45	07/08/41	EK 10a		Kodyma	97
45	07/08/41	EK 10a		Yampol	9
45	07/08/41	EK 11a	Until now	Kishinev	551
45	07/08/41	EK 11 b		Tighina	155
58	20/08/41	EK z.b. V	12-15/08		4988
58	20/08/41	EK z.b. V	12-15/08	Pinsk	4500
61	23/08/41			Babchintsy	94
66	28/08/41	<i>Einsatzgruppe z.b.V</i>			2117 (Lvov: 1154 Brest-Litovsk: 769 Bialystok: 194)
67	29/08/41	<i>Einsatzgruppe z.b.V</i>			2739
67	29/08/41			Stanitsa [?] Mogilev- Podolsky	1265
89	20/09/41		19/08- 25/09/41 <sup>213</sup>		8890
89	20/09/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>17315</b>
95	26/09/41	repetition 89	19/08-15/09/41		8890
95	26/09/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>13315</b>
101	02/10/41		16/09-30/09/41	Nikolayev Kherson	22467
101	02/10/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>35782</b>
106	07/10/41			Zhitomir	3145
107	08/10/41				400
107	08/10/41				10
107	08/10/41				17
107	08/10/41				11 criminals
117	18/10/41		01-15/10/41		4891 J; 46 K
117	18/10/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>40699</b>
125	26/10/41	Rumanians		<b>Odessa</b>	<b>10000</b>

<sup>213</sup> The exact date should be 15 Sep. 1941. See EM No. 95 and 101.



EM	EM Date dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONER	EX/ DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
129	05/11/41				11037 + 31 K
129	05/11/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>31767</b>
145	12/12/41				2910 + 19 K
145	12/12/41		<b>Total</b>		<b>54696</b>
150	02/01/42		16/11-15/12/42		17645
150	02/01/42		16/11-15/12/42		2504 Krymchaks
150	02/01/42		16/11-15/12/42		824 Z
150	02/01/42		16/11-15/12/42		212 K
150	02/01/42		<b>Total</b>		<b>75881</b>
153	09/01/42				3176
153	09/01/42				85 Pa; 12 P; 122 K
153	09/01/42		<b>Total</b>		<b>79276</b>
156	16/01/42		23/11/41	Buyuk Lambat and Alushta	30
157	19/01/42		01-15/01/42		685 J; 1639 K, Pa
157	19/01/42		<b>Total</b>		<b>80160</b>
164	04/02/42		14-16/12/41	Kharkov	305
165	06/02/42		15-31/01/42		3601 including 3286 J
165	06/02/42		<b>Total</b>		<b>85201</b>
170	18/02/42		09/01-15/02/42	Simferopol	300
170	18/02/42			Simferopol	<b>10000</b>
170	18/02/42				100-200
170	18/02/42		01-15/02/42		1451 including 920 J
170	18/02/42		<b>Total</b>		<b>86652</b>
178	9/3/42		16-28/02/42		271 Komm.
178	9/3/42				199 Partisanen
178	9/3/42		16-28/02/42		1515 including 729 J
184	23/3/42				800 Z
184	23/3/42				2010 including 678 J
184	23/3/42			Orel	?
190	08/04/42		first half of March		1501 including 588 J
190	08/04/42		<b>total</b>		<b>91678</b>
193	17/04/42			Feodosia	16 J; 18

**Table 18: Other SS units** (data not included in the tables above)

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
47	09/08/41	BdS GG		Bialystok	296
47	09/08/41	BdS GG		Brest-Litovsk	510
43	05/08/41	BdS Cracow	21-31/07		3947
78	09/09/41	BdS GG			1308
38	30/07/41	BdS Cracow			416
190	08/04/42	BdS Ukraine	01/03-03/04/42		1315 (no Jew)
95	26/09/41	<i>H. Gruppe Mitte</i>			80
19	11/07/41	HSSPF N,		Kaunas	2500

EM	EM DATE dd/mm/yy	EXECUTIONERS	EX. DATE dd/mm/yy	LOCATION	VICTIMS
		Lithuanians			
80	11/09/41	HSSPF S		Kamenets-Podolsky	23600
88	19/09/41	HSSPF S	01-02/09/41	Berdichev	1303
94	25/09/41	HSSPF S	August		44125
135	19/11/41	HSSPF S	13/10/41	Dnepropetrovsk	10000
143	08/12/41	HSSPF S and EK 5	06-07/11/41	Rovno	~15000
151	05/01/42	HSSPF Riga, Jeckeln		Riga	1 transport from Reich (820)
151	05/01/42	HSSPF Riga, Jeckeln	30/11/41	Riga Ghetto	4000
91	22/09/41	Stapostelle Allenstein	25/08-09/09/41		595
26	18/07/41	Stapoleitstelle Tilsit			<b>3302</b>

### Abbreviations

CC = Concentration Camp

F = *politische Funktionäre*/Political officials

G = *Geistesranke*/Mentally ill

J = *Juden*/Jews

JG = *Juden, geisteskrank*/Jewish mental patients

JK = *Juden, Kriegsgefangene*/Jewish POWs

K = *Kommunisten*/Communists

M = *Minderwertige*/Inferior elements

P = *Plünderer*/Looters

Pa = *Partisanen*/Partisans

RA = *Rotarmisten*/Red Army men

S = *Saboteure*/Saboteurs

Σ = Total as of [Date]

Z = *Zigeuner*/Gypsies

## 5.3.2. Analysis of the Data

### I. Einsatzgruppe A

The reports from *Einsatzgruppe A* show a total of 88,857 victims. This figure results from the sum of the individual figures, without considering the totals.

EM No. 88 dated 19 September 1941 supplies a grand total of 85,000 victims, but the individual figures only attest to 10,281 victims by that time.

For EK 2 the following totals are given (Table 14):

- 29,246 victims by 27 September 1941
- 31,598 " " 10 November 1941
- 33,970 " " 16 January 1942
- 34,193 " " 2 February 1942

But only two executions are specifically mentioned in EMs (with date/location): 400 victims on 7 July 1941, and 3,900 on 16 July. The origin of the above figures is unknown.

By 19 September 1941, EK 3 had shot 46,692 persons, but until that date, the “Jäger Report” (EK 3) mentions 78,305 persons shot. On 25 September, the

number of executions was 75,000, but the origin of these figures is unknown:  $75,000 - 46,692 = 28,308$  persons shot in a single week!

The Summary Report covering 16 Oct. 1941 through 31 Jan. 1942 supplies the following statistics as of 1 February 1942 (I am citing the total figures):<sup>214</sup>

Lithuania:	143,774 (including 136,421 Jews)
Latvia:	39,212 (including 35,238 Jews)
Estonia:	5,463 (including 963 Jews)
Byelorussia:	42,861 (including 41,828 Jews)
Former Soviet Territories:	3,600 (all Jews)
Total:	240,410

Summarizing the records of the Incident Reports, we obtain a figure of 55,826 victims, leaving a deficit of  $(240,410 - 89,036 =) 151,374$  victims.

Of the 137,346 victims listed in the “Jäger Report,” the Incident Reports inexplicably mention only 1,841. This means a deficit of  $(137,346 - 1,591 =) 135,755$  victims.

Moreover, the above-mentioned Summary Report asserts that 27,800 Jews were shot at Riga by the Higher SS and Police leader Russia North in early December 1941; the Incident Reports only mention 10,600 victims, however, leaving a deficit of  $(27,800 - 10,600 =) 17,200$ .

The Summary Report attributes 42,861 victims to Byelorussia; the only datum relating to this region appears in EM No. 155 dated 14 January 1942, where 33,210 victims are mentioned. These are mere numbers without any justification or explanation: when, where, and by whom were the 33,210 victims shot?

The same questions might be asked for the remaining  $(42,861 - 33,210 =) 9,651$  victims, who are not mentioned in the Incident Reports at all.

The Summary Report claims that the pogrom in Lithuania and Latvia claimed 5,500 victims, while the Incident Reports speak of 20,000 victims.

## II. Einsatzgruppe B

There are at least six “Activity and Situation Reports” starting at the second half of 1942 indicating the number of victims claimed by this unit:

- I) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 18-31 Aug. 1942;”
- II) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 1 Sep.-15 Sep. 1942;”
- III) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 16 Sep.-30 Sep. 1942;”
- IV) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 15 Nov.-15 Dec. 1942;”
- V) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 16-31 January 1943”
- VI) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 1-28 Feb. 1943;”
- VII) “Activity and Situation Report for the period of 1-31 March 1943.”

As we can see, Reports I-III are consecutive, and so are reports V-VII. Report IV contains no data on killings. Those from the other reports (“*Gesamtzahl der Sonderbehandelten*”) are summarized in the following table:

<sup>214</sup> RGVA, 500-1-775, p. 184.

**Table 19**

	I	II	III		V		VI		VII	
page:	404	423	499		521		544		574	
SK 7a	6281	89	160	<i>6788</i>	64	<i>7009</i>	2212	<i>9221</i>	69	<i>12436</i>
SK 7b	3473	762	86	<i>3816</i>	92	<i>4066</i>	30	<i>4096</i>	58	<i>4154</i>
SK 7c	3268	219	530	<i>4460</i>	124	<i>5030</i>	150	<i>5180</i>	234	<i>5414</i>
EK 8	71446	111	376	<i>74740</i>	125	<i>75019</i>	801	<i>75820</i>	221	<i>76031</i>
EK 9	39297	100	1167	<i>41340</i>	353	<i>42263</i>	289	<i>42552</i>	1772	<i>44324</i>
TS*	2430	156	108	<i>2954</i>	30	<i>3089</i>	57	<i>3146</i>	0	
Totals	126195	1437	2427	<i>134098</i>	788	<i>136476</i>	3539	<i>140015</i>	2354	<i>142359</i>

\* *Trupp* Smolensk; page numbers refer to Angrick *et al.*; numbers in italics are totals listed in the document; they do *not* result from the individual summands.

Hilberg, in his statistics, refers to the report for the period 15 November through 15 December 1942.

The number of EG B's victims according to the Incident Reports is given as only 76,365. According to them, SK 7a carried out 1,011 executions as of 13 September 1941, while SK 7b carried out 1,153; SK 7a carried out 76 victims as of that date, while SK 7b carried out 52.

SK 7c is not even mentioned, so that it is impossible to tell where the figure of 4460 executions by 15 December 1942 comes from.

EK 8 is listed with the following totals:

- 13 September 1941: 11,354
- 28 September 1941: 15,000
- 26 October 1941 [EM]: 20,108
- 14 November 1941 [EM]: 28,219

Nevertheless, only one single execution, producing 214 victims, is even mentioned in the Incident Reports by 13 September. Summarizing all the executions carried out by EK 8 according to the Incident Reports, we arrive at only 6,941 victims.

The following figures apply for EK 9:

- 13 September 1941: 9,974
- 28 September 1941: 10,269
- 26 October 1941 [EM]: 11,449
- 14 November 1941 [EM]: 11,452

This means 8,928 victims by 13 September 1941; EM No. 92 dated 23 September mentions the execution of 1,672 persons, which results in a total of (8,928 + 1,672 =) 10,600 victims by 28 September. From 29 September until 25 October, EK 9 is said to have shot 3,230 persons, but the total on 26 October is only 11,449 (instead of [10,600 + 3,230 =] 13,830). The *Meldungen* supply no new data, which means a documentary deficit of (74,740 – 28,219 =) 46,521 victims for EK 8 and a total of (41,340 – 11,452 =) 29,880 victims for a 13-month period.

The total for executions carried out by the *Kommando Trupp* Smolensk was 2,954 on 15 December 1942, but the only action by this detachment mentioned in

the Incident Reports is the killing of 60 persons over the period of 6-30 March 1942.

The total number of persons declared killed was 11,084 by 31 July 1941, but the sum of the individual executions brings it up to 17,970.

A total figure of 23,084 persons killed is given as of 13 September; until that date, the total for individual executions amounted to 10,155, a figure which, added to the declared figure, gives us a figure of 21,239, added to the effective figure, 28,125. The latter total is for 14 November 1941 and stands at 45,467; another 23,815 executions were recorded after that date, so the total should be (45,467 + 23,815 =) 69,282, but the attested total is 76,626.

The last entries from the Incident Reports regard the period from 6-30 March 1942; the total number of victims as of 31 August 1942 was 126,195; a total of (126,195 – 76,626 =) 49,569 persons were therefore killed during the months of April-August, of whom, however, we know nothing. From September 1942 until March 1943, the total number of persons killed increased from 126,195 to 142,359, with an increase of 16,164, but the number partially indicated is 10,545. It is true that the reports for the period between 1 October 1941 and 14 November 1941 are missing, along with those for the period between 16 December 1941 and 14 January 1942, but it is still true that the partial figures given do not confirm these totals.

The partial figures have little historical importance, because neither the execution dates nor locations are indicated, meaning that the figures cannot be verified. The data consist of generic lists, such as (Angrick *et al.*, p. 423):

*“Specially treated were:*

*Special Unit 7a: 54 Gypsies, 21 bandits, 10 Communists, 3 criminals, 1 mental patient,*

*Special Unit 7b: 46 Gypsies, 3 Communists, 13 mental patients,*

*Special Unit 7c: 90 Gypsies, 101 bandits, 19 Communists, 9 asocials and mental patients,*

*Mobile Task Force 8: 3 Gypsies, 70 bandits, 25 Communists, 8 criminals, 5 mental patients,*

*Mobile Task Force 9: 10 Gypsies and asocials, 79 bandits, 1 Communists, 10 criminals,*

*Trupp Smolensk: 98 Gypsies, 43 bandits, 3 Communists, 12 asocials and criminals”*

In practice, of the 140,015 executions carried out by *Einsatzgruppe B*, a good (140,015 – 76,626 =) 63,389 are vague and unverifiable.

This problem, as we will see further along, is also true of the Incident Reports themselves.

### III. Einsatzgruppe C

The total number of executions registered by the Incident Reports is 112,894. These reports contain many partial totals relating to the squads of these *Einsatzgruppen*; I have summarized them in the following table:

**Table 20**

EM	Date (dd/mm/yy)	EK 4a/SK 4a	EK 5	EK 6	EG C
37	29/07/41	2,531			
58	20/08/41	4,335			8,000
80	up to 24/08/41	7,152			
86	17/09/41	6,584			
88	up to 06/09/41	11,328			
94	25/09/41	15,000			
111	12/10/41	51,000			
128	03/11/41				80,000 75,000
132	12/11/41	55,432			
132	up to 20/10/41		15,110		
135	up to 02/11/41		21,258		
143	up to 09/11/41	57,243			
143	up to 10/11/41		29,644		
156	up to 30/11/41	59,018			
156	up to 07/12/41		36,147		
156	up to 12/11/41			6,800	

EM No. 80 dated 11 September 1941 supplies 7,152 as the total number of victims for SK 4a by 24 August; EM No. 86 dated 17 September inexplicably indicates a total of 6,584. EM No. 128, reports two different totals only a few lines apart: 80,000 for “Personen,” and 75,000 for “Juden.” With regard to the first figure, the text says: “...approximately 80,000 persons have thus been liquidated by the *Einsatzgruppen* squads so far” (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 744). The number refers to the date of the related EM (3 November 1941). But the number of persons shot as of that date is given as 66,833.

Adding up the executions of the individual *Kommandos* mentioned supplies the following picture:

SQUAD	EFFECTIVE TOTAL	DECLARED TOTAL
EK 4a/SK 4a:	43,636	59,018
EK 4b:	4,148	
EK 5:	35,860	36,147
EK 5a:	4,303	
EK 6:	1,738	
Total:	89,685	

The sum of the declared totals in the reports is  $59,018 + 36,147 + 6,800 = 101,965$ , as against 112,894.

The *Meldungen* for 1942 contain extensive summaries of past activities, but statements relating to new executions are few and far between, and regarding all of *Einsatzgruppe C* we have the following data:

M. No.	Date	Victims	Category
M. No. 6	5 June 1941	727	Partisans
M. No. 12	17 July 1942	76	Jewish-Bolshevik officers
		340	Jews and Communists
		14	Jews/Jewesses
M. No. 24	9 October 1942	158 + 40	Bandits
Total:		1,355	

The total number of victims of *Einsatzgruppe C* by 31 December 1942 therefore amounts to (102,772 + 1,355 =) 104,127, approximately 9,000 more than the figure assumed by Hilberg.

#### IV. Einsatzgruppe D

The Incident Reports from time to time supply many totals relating to the overall activity of *Einsatzgruppe D*; I have summarized them in the following table:

EM	DATE DD/MM/YY	VICTIMS
89	20/09/41	17,315
95	26/09/41	13,315
101	02/10/41	35,782
117	18/10/41	40,699
129	05/11/41	31,767
145	12/12/41	54,696
150	02/01/42	75,881
153	09/01/42	79,276
157	19/01/42	80,160 [recte: 81,600]
165	06/02/42	85,201
170	18/02/42	86,652
190	08/04/42	91,678

The total for EM No. 95 is obviously the result of an error and should read 17,315 instead of 13,315. EM No. 129 also contains an obvious error, where the figure 31,767 should no doubt read 51,767.

In the case of *Einsatzgruppe D*, there is a conspicuous discrepancy between the declared total and the sum of the individual figures, which is 120,203, exceeding the declared total of 91,678 by approximately 28,500.

The analysis of the individual data shows that congruity with the totals only occurs in a few cases. The first total is 17,315 while the sum of the partial data is 17,347; the calculation does not include the execution of 8,890 persons carried out between 19 August and 15 September 1941, which upsets the totals whether it is included or excluded from the count. In the first case the total would obviously be (17,347 + 8,890 =) 26,237; in the second case, the next total of [sic] 35,782, which is already incongruous due to the execution of 22,467 persons (17,315 +

22,467 = 39,782), it would become even more incongruous (39,782 + 8,890 = 48,672).

There is, however, perfect congruity for the partial data, which range from the total of 54,696 to that of 75,881; the sum of the partial data is in fact (54,696 + 17,645 + 2,504 + 824 + 212 =) 75,881. The congruity is maintained until the next total: (75,881 + 3,176 + 85 + 12 + 125 =) 79,279, a figure which is almost identical to the declared total of 79,276. To this total the figures of 685 and 1,639 must be added, yielding a sum of 81,600, not 80,160. Starting with 81,600, the next total, commando the 3,601 executions, in fact yields a total of 85,201.

This analysis shows that the *Einsatzgruppen* reports contain chaotic and disordered numerical data which almost never coincide with the declared totals, the general reliability of which is therefore dubious to say the least.

### V. Other SS Units

The executions registered in the Incident Reports were not perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen* alone, but by various other units, which I list in the following table:

**Table 23**

	Date dd/mm/yy	EFFECTIVE TOTAL	DECLARED TOTAL
Pogrom	01/08/41	9,756 (+ 160)	20,000
Stapo Tilsit	18/07/41	626	3,302
<i>Polizeipräsident Matsch</i>		80	
<i>Ordnungspolizei (OrPo)</i>		4,435	
<i>Polizei Regiment Mitte</i>	19/10/41	3,726	
<i>Gruppenstab</i>		65	
<i>Stapostelle Allenstein</i>	25/08-09/09/41	595	
<i>Heeresgruppe Mitte</i>		80	
Wehrmacht	July 1941	600	
<i>Waffen SS</i>		600	
BdS GG		806	
BdS Cracow		4,363	
BdS Ukraine		2,623	
HSSPF N		17,920 (820)	
HSSPF S	August 1941	1,643	44,125
	Sept. 1941	24,902	
	October 1941	10,000	
	Nov. 1941	15,000	
Ukrainians		889	
Rumanians		10,460	
	Total:	109,329	

For the Stapo Tilsit, EM No. 26 dated 18 July 1941 supplies a total of 3,302 victims until that time, only 626 of whom are accounted for in the reports, so that the circumstances under which the remaining 2,676 were killed are unknown.



Such a discrepancy is even more extraordinary in relation to the activity of the Higher SS and Police leader Russia South, for which EM No. 94 dated 25 September 1941 gives a victims figure of 44,125 as of August 1941, but only 1,643 of these were registered with date/locality.

Already in these two cases, therefore, 45,158 people were presumably shot, of whom nothing is adduced.

### 5.3.3. Unverifiable Data

The Incident Reports contain very many entries without any indication of the day or place of execution, generally introduced by expressions such as this one: “X Jews and Y Communists etc. were executed during the period covered by the report.”

These unverifiable executions are given as accounting for 7,150 victims for *Einsatzgruppe A*, approximately 12,800 for *Einsatzgruppe B*, approximately 45,000 for *Einsatzgruppe C*, and approximately 80,300 for *Einsatzgruppe D*, in total approximately 145,250 victims. Adding the numerical data relating to the principal executions of which we know nothing, as noted above, we have a total of (145,250 + 42,861 + 63,389 + 45,158 =) 296,658 victims.

Summarizing, the individual data show the following executions:

– <i>Einsatzgruppe A</i> :	240,410
– <i>Einsatzgruppe B</i> :	142,359
– <i>Einsatzgruppe C</i> :	104,127
– <i>Einsatzgruppe D</i> :	131,021
– Subtotal:	617,917
– Other SS units:	109,329
– Overall Total:	727,246

The unverifiable data therefore amount to 40.7% of the total figure!

To these problems, problems of exaggeration must be added, because in the event that the executions are reported with date and precise location, in the great majority of cases there is no certainty that the figures indicated are exact.

A specific case of unverifiable data is the report by an armaments inspector in the Ukraine to General Thomas, in which the following statement appears:

*“In total, some 150,000 to 200,000 Jews may [have been] executed so far in the part of the Ukraine belonging to the Reich Commissariat, taking no consideration for these economic concerns.”* (PS-3257. IMT, Vol. 32, p. 74)

By 3 November 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C*, as I have shown above, declared that 75,000 Jews had been killed, while *Einsatzgruppe D* declared that 54,700 Jews had been killed by 12 December 1941; the total, 129,700, is obviously compatible with the minimum figure contained in the above-mentioned report, *i.e.*, 150,000. But orthodox Holocaust historiography, in its statistics, ignores this document.

Mario Wenzel writes that, at the beginning of 1942, after the massacres committed by *Einsatzgruppen C* and *D*, by the Police Battalions, and by the 1st SS

Brigade in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine, some 325,000 remained of the original 650,000 Jewish natives. These survivors were for the most part concentrated in the General Commissariats of Volhynia-Podolia and Zhitomir. By the start of 1942, therefore, some 325,000 Jews had been killed (Wenzel, p. 138).

Dieter Pohl adopts a similar figure: by the start of 1942, the Germans had killed approximately 300,000 Jews and approximately 20,000 had fallen victim to pogroms (Pohl 2008, p. 57). Further along, he adds the figure of 300,000 victims, but this time, in a note, he attempts to justify this figure: *Einsatzgruppe C* had killed 108,000, *Einsatzgruppe D* 75,000-80,000; in addition to which “there were the massacres carried out by the Orpo [regular police] but not mentioned in the Reports on Events in the USSR, at least 6,000 victims of the 1st SS Brigade, and the murders committed by the Secret Field Police and other army units” (*ibid.*, pp. 43, 68). But with this, we arrive at 194,000, which means that 106,000 victims, a third of the total, are absolutely unspecified and unverifiable.

The surprising fact is that, on the next page, Pohl cites the report of General Thomas without any comment whatsoever (*ibid.*, p. 44).

To sum up, the only way to evaluate the reliability of the figures in the Incident Reports remains the examination of bodies and/or their destruction within the framework of the so-called “Aktion 1005,” which will be the subject of Part Two of the present study.

#### 5.4. Daniel Goldhagen and the Police Battalions

Goldhagen asserts that at least 38 battalions of police contributed to the perpetration of the Holocaust and states that

*“of these thirty-eight battalions, at least thirty perpetrated large-scale slaughters or deportations. The following table contains only some of the major killing operations (over one thousand victims) of these thirty battalions. They and other police battalions carried out an enormous number of other killing operations, large and small, that are not listed.”* (Goldhagen, p. 271)

This is followed by a 4-column table (“Police Battalion,” “Location,” “Date” and “Number of Victims”) which numbers Battalions 3, 9, 11, 13, 22, 32, 41, 45, 53, 64, 65, 67, 96, 101, 133, 251, 255, 256, 303, 306, 307, 314, 316, 320, 322, in addition to the “Mounted Police Third Squadron,” the “Motorized Gendarme Battalion,” the “Police Guard Battalion I (Posen)” and the “Police Reserve Company Cologne” (*ibid.*, pp. 271-273). The total number of the victims, ignoring the repetitions,<sup>215</sup> is 636,700, but the author declares that “the number is certainly over

<sup>215</sup> Battalions 251, 255 and 256 are all three considered responsible for 25,000-30,000 victims at Bialystok; Battalions 41 and 101, the “Mounted Police Third Squadron” and the “Motorized Gendarme Battalion” all appear, in different ways, as the executioners of 30,000 Jews at Majdanek and Poniatowa; Battalions 45 and 303 are mentioned separately for the 33,000 victims at Babi Yar, as are Battalions 316 and 322 for execution at Bialystok on 12-13 July 1941, Battalions 96 and 320 for the shootings at Rovno on 7-8 November 1941, and Battalions 41 and 53 for the killings in the Warsaw Ghetto in early 1943.

one million” (*ibid.*, p. 202). The table lists shootings, without indication, confirmed or presumed, as well as deportations. Although the author explicitly declares that this contains executions “perpetrated” by the police battalions, he also considers indirect participation, for example for purposes of surveillance during the executions. The table is therefore designed in such a way as to give the impression that it lists a series of executions committed by the police battalions, which should be added to those committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* and the *Kommandostab Reichsführer SS* and the three Higher SS and Police leaders (North, Center and South, each of which had three police battalions in its employ), while the respective actions very largely overlapped each other.

This, as we shall soon see, is the case in particular with Battalions 3 and 9, to which Goldhagen attributes 200,000 victims in the Soviet Union between June and December 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 271).

In the pages that follow, I will examine a few of the more extraordinary assumptions adopted by Goldhagen.

#### 5.4.1. Soviet Union in General

Battalions 3 and 9 are each considered responsible for 100,000 deaths in the Soviet Union, Battalion 9 from June to December 1941, and Battalion 3 from December onwards. At the end of June, the four companies of Battalion 9 were assigned to each of the four *Einsatzgruppen* and participated in their activity. At the end of the year, Battalion 9 was transferred first to Poland and then to Norway, and was replaced by Battalion 3: the 1st Company was assigned to EG B, the 2nd Company to EG C, the 3rd Company to EG D and the 4th Company to EG A. Therefore, the killings perpetrated by these two battalions overlap with those of the *Einsatzgruppen* and should not be counted separately.

Goldhagen attributes the execution of 25,000 Jews at Riga between November and December 1941 to Battalion 22 (*ibid.*, p. 272). I have already discussed the matter earlier. At this point I only wish to point out that Battalion 22 is not even mentioned in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports: the executions were carried out by units of the Higher SS and Police leader (who had Battalions 53, 319 and 321 in his employ) and by *Einsatzkommando 2* of *Einsatzgruppe A*.

Angrick and Klein assert that Jeckeln requested the 2nd and 3rd Companies of the Reserve Police Battalion as “additional reinforcements for guard duty” on 22 November, and on 29 November the 2nd Company moved from Jelgava to Riga. These companies were limited to surveillance tasks for which their assistance had been requested (Angrick/Klein, pp. 140-141, 144):

*“There were even more policemen deployed around the actual killing site. Members of the 2nd and 3rd companies of Reserve Police Battalion 22 formed a dense cordon in the field in front of the woods to prevent access to unauthorized personnel and to make escape from the pits impossible.”*

It therefore makes no sense to hold the 22nd Battalion directly responsible for the killing of 25,000 persons.

### 5.4.2. Rovno

Battalions 96 and 320 are said to have shot 21,000 persons at Rovno on 7 and 8 November 1941. EM No. 143 dated 8 December 1941 says in this regard:

*“On 6 and 7 November 1941, the long-planned Jewish operation in Rovno was carried out, in which roughly 15,000 Jews could be shot. The Organization lay in the hands of the ordinary police force by order of the Higher SS and Police leader.”* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 860f.)

With reference to the crimes of Battalion 320, Curilla writes (Curilla 2006, p. 619):

*“Shooting of 18,000 to 21,000 Jews by the exterior units Rovno of EK 5, Police Battalion 320, the 1st Company of Reserve Police Battalion 33, Police Battalion 315 and Ukrainian militia on 6 and 7 Nov. 1941 in Rovno.”*

The source consists of trial evidence only. The figure of the number of victims, as far as it exceeds 15,000, is based, in the last analysis, on trial testimony,<sup>216</sup> indicating that Curilla considered it more reliable than the documents.

For the discovery of bodies at Rovno, please refer to Subchapter 5.4. of Part Two.

### 5.4.3. Stanisławów (Stanislavov, Stanislav; today: Ivano-Frankivsk)

Goldhagen imputes the murder of 12,000 persons at Stanisławów on 12 October 1941 to Battalion 133. The execution is entirely undocumented. Hilberg asserts laconically in this regard that “in Stanisławow, about 10,000 Jews had been gathered at a cemetery and shot on October 12, 1941” (Hilberg 2003, Vol. II, p. 517). His source is a little bit ridiculous, to say the least:

*“See the statement by Alois Mund (Viennese agricultural specialist stationed in Stanisławow), December 5, 1947, and the statements by survivors and Order Police personel of Stanisławow, 1947 and 1948, in the collection of T. Friedmann on Stanislawow, Haifa, October 1957, 90 pp.”* (*ibid.*, footnote 61)

Arad also concerns himself with the executions and writes:

*“The first large massacre was planned for the first half of October 1941, and reinforcements were brought to the town the night before from Police Battalion 133 and the Ukrainian police. Some 20,000 Jews were removed from their homes on October 12, 1941, and taken to the Jewish cemetery. Between 10,000 and 12,000 Jews were shot that day. At dusk, the remaining thousands were sent back to their homes from the cemetery. Throughout the day, while Jews were being murdered, the local rabble hunted for any Jews in hiding and looted the homes of those who had been taken to the cemetery. The Stanislav ghetto, which accommodated between 23,000 and 26,000 Jews, had been established during the first half of December 1941. [...] Groups of Jews continued to be brought to the cemetery and murdered there.”* (Arad 2009, pp. 224f.)

<sup>216</sup> Curilla 2006, fn 9, p. 619, cites the other authors who adduce estimates of between 21,000 and 22,000 victims.

The source is given as “Pinkas Hakehillot: Eastern Galicia, 370–73; Pohl [2004], ‘Hans Krüger,’ 190–91” (*ibid.*, fn 7, p. 577).

The account is quite implausible. The SS are said to have brought 20,000 Jews to the cemetery to shoot them, but only shot 10,000-12,000 and sent the remaining 8,000-10,000 witnesses to the massacre back home?

Omer Bartov dedicates an extensive paragraph to “Ivano-Frankivsk/Stanyslaviv/Staniśławów/Stanislav,” but concerning the alleged massacre, he merely states (Bartov, p. 328):

*“An initial execution of several hundred members of the Jewish ‘intelligentsia’ (professionals considered by the Germans to be potential leaders) was followed in October by the mass murder of about 10,000 Jews in a single day at the New Cemetery.”*

The author asserts that his exposition “is based primarily on Dąbrowska, Pinkas Hakehillot, pp. 359-376,” a work to which he refers by citing an English translation on the web (*ibid.*, fn 47, p. 349). This is the same source as that used by Arad. The English translation describes the alleged event in minute detail:<sup>217</sup>

*“At dawn on October 12, 1941, the day of Hoshana Rabba 5702, the houses of the Jews in the center of the city were surrounded by German police, Ukrainians, and members of the ‘Bahnschutz’ armed with machine guns and police clubs. [...] At the cemetery, the guards assembled the Jews near the wall, and commanded them to give over their valuables, and hid them in that place. [...] The slaughter terminated at sunset. From among the more than 10,000 Jews who were brought to the cemetery, there were still a few thousand who had not been shot; these were sent back home. Another tumult arose at the gates, and some others were killed. The communal grave was not covered over that night. Some of those shot who had remained alive, managed to crawl out from among the corpses. Some reached their houses, and others died on the way. About 10,000 people were murdered that day. The action did not include the distant neighborhoods such as Gorka and Meizle. Some of the Jews who resided in the center of the city had managed to hide. The local riffraff chased after those who attempted to hide during the action, giving them over [to] the Germans, and pillaging the deserted homes. The next day, the grave was filled with dirt, and those who filled the grave were shot as well. According to one version, the Jewish firefighters covered over the grave.”*

The story is apparently based on eyewitness accounts, several different versions of which seem to exist.

Bartov, who visited the location in 2003, described a Soviet monument with a stone reading as follows in Ukrainian:

*“At this site in 1941-1944, the German-Fascists executed over 100,000 Soviet citizens and prisoners of other lands.”*

He also mentions the English text of the only post-Soviet monument still in existence (Bartov, p. 329):

<sup>217</sup> Online at [www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas\\_poland/pol2\\_00368.html#part4](http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol2_00368.html#part4) (31 August 2018).

*“In memory of 120,000 Jews victims of the Holocaust 1941-1944”*

This inflation of the death toll is further confirmation of the incredible lack of sense and proportion – both among Soviets and post-Soviets.

Dieter Pohl dedicates a detailed paragraph to the matter, titled “The Stanislaw Blood Sunday,” in which he writes:

*“The grisly climax of Krüger’s operations was ‘the Stanislaw Blood Sunday’ on 12 October 1941. The date was probably chosen because of the Jewish holiday Hoshana Raba. This horrible crime has been elucidated in detail by the post-war investigations of the state prosecutor’s office in Dortmund. Although only one contemporary document on the ‘Blood Sunday’ has appeared to date, the number of eyewitnesses from among the Jewish community, the perpetrators and non-participating third parties is nevertheless considerable.”* (Pohl 1997, p. 144)

The only presumed “contemporary document” bears this reference: “IfZ Fb 101/01, Bl. 246, KTB Pol.bat. 310, 12. 10. 1941” (*ibid.*, fn 26). This is a “war diary” of Police Battalion 310. In the place indicated we read the following:<sup>218</sup>

*“Lvov, 2nd Company, accommodation barracks. 12 Oct. 41. Looting of Jewish dwellings occurred during a Jewish operation in Stanislaw. To restore order, one platoon of ordinary police from the 2nd Company Battalion 310 was assigned to the ordinary police command in the strength of 1/30.”*

Hence, the only thing which has been documented is that some “Jewish operation” took place on 12 October at Stanisławów, and that it triggered some looting of Jewish property, which the Germans stopped.

Pohl reconstructs the matter based on trial maps prepared twenty and more years later. For the victims, “two big ditches” were dug (Pohl 1997, p. 145), or, rather, according to one witness, “2 or 3 ditches 20-25 meters long and about 6-8 meters wide” (*ibid.*, p. 147). Pohl also cites the account of the Jews released from the execution ground:

*“The termination of the massacre temporarily saved the lives of thousands of Jews who had already been crammed into the cemetery. Completely paralyzed, but alive, they returned to their district in the city.”* (*ibid.*, p. 146)

Pohl also dwells on the question of the number of victims:

*“Today, the number of victims can no longer be determined exactly. Probably some 20,000 persons, hence two thirds of the Jewish community, had to take the path to the execution ground. According to determinations by the Jewish Council after the mass murder, roughly 12,000 persons were killed, among them 1,000 Jews from the Carpatho-Ukraine. A comparison with the few surviving population statistics points to a figure of roughly 10,000 victims, while the District Court of Münster assumed a judicially ascertained minimum figure of 6,000 victims, declared established on legal grounds, but which is too low from a historiographical point of view.”* (*ibid.*, p. 147)

<sup>218</sup> YVA, O.53-12.2, p. 246.

Thus, it is all a matter of the purest conjecture. In this context, Pohl also supplies one bit of important information:

*“The two mass graves were opened by the Soviet authorities in 1944, but no body count could be made in that case either, since some of the bodies had been burnt in early 1944. The figure of 10,000 – 12,000 victims seems realistic.” (ibid.)*

Unfortunately he fails to indicate the source for this Soviet “discovery.” His 1998 article on Stanisławów is not helpful either, since it adds nothing to the discussion contained in his book and does not even mention the discovery of the mass graves by the Soviets (Pohl 1998).

The alleged presence of cremation residues of “a part” (!) of the bodies from the two mass graves raises another problem for orthodox Holocaust historiography, because it contradicts their narrative:

Hoffmann asserts that, after the shooting by the *Sonderkommando* from which the witness Leon Weliczker had fled, a new “1005 squad” was formed “still before Christmas 1943,” after which he adds:

*“in March 1944, the workers from the 2nd squad were transported to the city of Stanislav (Polish: Stanisławów, Ukrainian: Ivano-Frankivsk), located about 100 km south of Lvov, in order to level the mass graves in the Jewish cemetery, in which the victims of the executions had been buried,”*

referring to the alleged 10,000 Jews shot on 12 October 1941. Hoffmann then says that,

*“when the Red Army surprisingly reached the city of Kolomea (Ukrainian: Kolyomyia), some 50 km south of Stanislav, on 29 March 1944, [unit leader] Schallock terminated the leveling of the mass graves in the Jewish cemetery and had the workers shot.” (Hoffmann, p. 104)*

Hoffmann refers to Thomas Sandkühler, who explicitly asserts that the new “Squad 1005” was formed in order to carry out the “disinterment” at Stanislav. After long preparations, the squad’s activity began as late as March 1944, with 25 Jews in its employ (Sandkühler, p. 279):

*“Due to the weather, work progressed only very slowly; furthermore, Krüger’s successor Brandt no longer knew the exact location of the mass graves. Since the Red Army occupied Kolomea already at the end of the month, the Jews were shot by Schallock or on his directive, by order of the commander of the Security Police, before the exhumations had even properly begun. There was only one survivor.”*

Hence, since “Squad 1005” performed almost no exhumations, let alone any cremations (as the latter would have required the former), how is it possible that the Soviets found cremation residues in the two mass graves?

#### 5.4.4. Białystok

According to Goldhagen, Battalions 251, 255 and 256 scored 25,000-30,000 victims at Białystok between 16 and 20 August 1942. However, this does not refer to

executions but rather to deportations. What is more, as I have shown earlier, the 24,000 Jews deported from this city over the period indicated cannot be directly counted among victims of the Holocaust, because, although the transports were scheduled to travel directly to Treblinka, in fact they continued to Majdanek (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 533f.).

#### 5.4.5. Zhitomir (Zhytomyr)

For Goldhagen, Battalion 303 was responsible for the killing of 18,000 persons at Zhitomir in September 1941 (Goldhagen, p. 272). The Incident Reports mention various executions at Zhitomir committed by *Einsatzgruppe C*:

- EM No. 30 dated 22 July 1941: “187 Soviet Russians and Jews” were shot;<sup>219</sup>
- EM No. 37 dated 29 July 1941:
 

*“In Zhitomir itself a total of some 400 Jews, Communists and supporters of the NKVD have been shot so far, in collaboration with Group Staff and Advance Unit 4a.”* (p. 201)
- EM No. 38 dated 30 July 1941: “180 Communists and Jews” were shot (p. 207);
- EM No. 47 dated 9 August 1941:
 

*“In Zhitomir some 400 Jews, among them mostly saboteurs and political officials, were finished off in the past few days.”* (p. 265)

This is evidently a repetition of the data contained in EM No. 37.
- EM No. 58 dated 20 August 1941: 2 Jews were hanged and 402 were shot (pp. 320f.).
- EM No. 86 dated 17 September 1941:
 

*“In Zhitomir, 266 Jews were liquidated in reprisal for the rebelliousness of the Jews, who even sabotaged the nighttime blackout regulations and illuminated their windows during Russian air raids.”* (p. 477)

The largest execution is described in EM No. 106 dated 7 October 1941, which reports that on 19 September 1941 “a total of 315 Jews were registered and executed” (p. 643). The total number of victims was therefore 4,582.

If we follow Goldhagen, Police Battalion 322 supposedly killed 3,000 Jews at Białystok on 12 and 13 July 1941, 3,700 at Mogilev on 19 October 1941, in addition to 19,000 Jews at Minsk in November 1941, and 9,000 on 28–30 July 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 273), for a total of 34,700 persons; nevertheless, as I explained in Subchapter 1.5, the battalion’s war diary contains not even one mention of these killings.

In early July 1941, Battalion 307 is said to have shot between 6,000 and 10,000 Jews at Brest-Litovsk (*ibid.*, p. 272). The presence of this battalion at Brest is documented, as I will show in Subchapter 8.6 of Part Two, and it may have participated in an execution, which, according to EM No. 32 dated 24 July

<sup>219</sup> Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 163; subsequent page numbers from there, unless stated otherwise.



1941, claimed 4,435 victims, including 408 non-Jews. In the calculation of Goldhagen's total victim count of the Police Battalions – 683,700 – the case of Brest-Litovsk would tally with 10,000 victims, according to my understanding of his figures.

#### 5.4.6. Tarnów and Nowy Sącz

Police Battalion 322 is also held responsible for another 34,000 victims: 16,000 at Tarnów in June 1942 and 18,000 at Nowy Sącz (German: Neu Sandez) in August of the same year (*ibid.*). Both cases did not involve shootings but rather deportations to Bełżec. The most reliable mainstream source for this camp is Robert Kuwałek. He mentions three transports from Tarnów to Bełżec on 10, 11 and 12 June 1942. The number of deportees is said to have been 9,000-10,000, plus "several thousand" Jews "unfit to travel" who are said to have been shot near Tarnów. The only source mentioned by Kuwałek is a "report from Leon Leser," the date of which he doesn't even indicate (Kuwałek, pp. 340f.). As far as one can tell, no documents exist as to the supposed mass shooting.

The author moreover asserts that, between 24 and 28 August, 16,000 Jews were transported from Nowy Sącz to Bełżec. In this case as well, the source is of an utterly unknown value: a "report by Mojżesz Ginter" (*ibid.*, p. 346).

In this regard, Curilla writes (Curilla 2006, p. 580):

*"The first resettlement of the approximately 40,000 Jews in Tarnow occurred on 11, 15 and 18 June 1942. On that occasion, some 10,000 Jews were transported to the Belzec Extermination Camp, another approximately 10,000 Jews unable to work, sick and feeble were shot in the marketplace, the Jewish cemetery and on some wooded terrain outside the city by members of the SD and a company of Waffen-SS from the military training area at Debica."*

All of which is based solely on trial verdicts. The involvement of Battalion 307 is *per se* assumed, because starting in May 1942, its Company 3a was stationed partly at Tarnów and partly at Neu Sandez (*ibid.*).

#### 5.4.7. Kharkov

Battalion 307 is said to have shot 10,000-20,000 persons at Kharkov in January 1942, but the Incident Reports only attest to the killing of 305 Jews. See Subchapter 8.4. of Part Two.

#### 5.4.8. Minsk

Battalion 322 is implicated in the killing of 19,000 persons at Minsk in November 1941. The only execution in this location and month mentioned in documents is found in EM No. 140 dated 1 December 1941:

*"A total of 6,624 Jews were shot in Minsk in the period from 7 to 11 Nov. 41 by Skdo. 1b."* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 845)

Gerlach asserts that, since the Germans at Minsk were awaiting the arrival of 25,000 German, Czech and Austrian Jews, the German authorities decided to kill 12,000 Jews from the local ghetto. After referring to EM No. 140, Gerlach states that, because the prescribed number of 12,000 victims had not been reached, another 5,000 Jews were killed on 20 November and another 2,000 on 10 and 11 December 1941. Incredibly, the sources given by Gerlach are the Soviet *Black Book* and trial verdicts (Gerlach 1999, p. 625 and fn 685).

In the long paragraph titled “The History of the Minsk Ghetto,” the *Black Book* claims that the execution, carried out on 7 November 1941, involved “about twelve or thirteen thousands Jews,” and that “seven thousand Jews perished on November 20” (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, pp. 152, 155). This confirms that, for the Soviets, the figures were simple propagandistic embellishments. But the most surprising thing is that this account completely ignores the presumed shootings of 10-11 December 1941!

It is worth stressing that Miriam Novitch, in her detailed 1962 article titled “To Resist the Murders – In the Ghetto of Minsk,” wrote:<sup>220</sup>

*“On 7th November the streets and squares were surrounded, and those who were not killed on the spot were taken to nearby Totckinka [sic; Putschino] where open graves awaited the victims. 12,000 were killed on that one day. The second massacre took place on the 2nd March, 1942. The streets were literally coloured by blood and in spite of open resistance 5,000 were killed.”*

The story of the 10-11 December shootings is therefore extremely dubious.

#### 5.4.9. Kielce

The “Police Reserve Company Cologne” is said to have racked up 20,000 victims at Kielce between 20 and 24 August 1942. This does not concern shootings but presumed deportation to Treblinka, for which there is no documentary proof. Everything that is known about it is based on “eyewitness testimony.” One of the first accounts appeared in 1946, in an article signed “J. Szmulewicz,” which mentioned the deportation to Treblinka of 19,000 Jews in three transports, including 6,000 Jews on 20 August 1942 (Szmulewicz, p. 3). Based on eyewitness testimonies, Krzysztof Urbański asserts that the deportation was carried out in three steps: the initial transport departed on 20 August 1942 and carried 6,000 persons; the second departed on 22 August with 6,000-7,000 persons; the third left Kielce on 24 August, carrying an unspecified but very large number of deportees, since the total number of deportees was 20,000-21,000. The deportees were allowed to take 20 kg of baggage each (Urbański, pp. 118-135).

Returning to Goldhagen, it is not even certain that “Police Reserve Company Cologne” was even involved in the deportation. Curilla attributes the operations in the Kielce Ghetto (“the cordoning off of the ghetto” and related operations) to the Reserve Police Battalion 65 (Curilla 2006, p. 188).

<sup>220</sup> GFHA, Cat. No. 136, Registry No. 08145R”M, Appendix to p. 4.

The examples cited above show that the table compiled by Goldhagen is very unreliable compared to the real activity of the police battalions, and even less so with regard to the reality and number of victims of the executions listed in the table.

Nina Stein asserts that

*“mass shootings of Jews are known to have occurred in connection with some 42 police battalions. The total number of Jewish victims with the participation of ordinary German police is estimated at 520,373.”* (N. Stein, p. 4)

Here, the writer at least uses the noun “participation.” The statistics which follow (*ibid.*, pp. 4f.) are structured in such a way that a verification of the numerically most important data is practically impossible.

In this context, we might mention Büchler’s estimate relating to the *Kommandostab Reichsführer SS* (Büchler, p. 20):

*“The documentary information on the SS First Brigade is also not clear regarding numbers of Jews killed. However, since it was largely responsible for the 44,000 killed reported by Jeckeln for August, as well as helping the Einsatzgruppen murder many thousands more in the later months of 1941, it probably killed at least as many Jews as did the Cavalry Brigade. When considering the above estimates, in addition to the unknown numbers of Jews killed by the Second Brigade, it seems that the units operating in the framework of the Kommandostab in 1941 killed at least 100,000 Jews.”*

The reference to 44,000 persons killed may be found in EM No. 94 dated 25 September 1941 and is rather laconic (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 557):

*“A total of 44,125 persons, mostly Jews, were shot in the month of August by units of the Higher SS and Police leader.”*

The source and reliability of this entry remains unknown. Since 23,600 are said to have been shot at Kamenets-Podolsky between 27 and 30 August, all the other executions put together would have produced 20,525 victims.

## 6. The Genesis of the “Gas Vans” and Their Use by the *Einsatzgruppen*

### 6.1. Preamble

Alfred Streim briefly summarizes the position of orthodox Holocaust historiography with regard to the presumed “gas vans” with these words:

*“Next to shooting potential enemies, another method of mass murder came into use among the Einsatzgruppen around the turn of the year 1941/42: killing with the use of gas vans, the so-called S-vans (special vans). The reason for the use of these vans was, first, to accelerate the mass killings, and second, to release the members of the Einsatzgruppen from the steadily increasing psychological stress caused by the many executions.”* (Streim 1971, p. 75)

The importance of the matter in question is made obvious by the fact that enormous numbers of victims are attributed to the *Einsatzgruppen*’s “gas vans.” Thus, referring to the related article in the *Encyklopädie des Holocaust*,<sup>221</sup> Achim Trunk declared that “half of the estimated 500,000 gas-van victims – that is, 250,000” perished “in these mobile murder chambers in the Soviet Union” (Trunk, fn 4, p. 24).

If assuming an average of 75 victims per gassing batch,<sup>222</sup> this means that some 3,333 gassings are proposed to have been carried out in the Soviet Union using these vehicles. If this is so, the allegation should have found abundant confirmation in the extremely rich surviving documentation relating to the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*. Precisely this documentation will be examined in this regard in the present chapter. But first it is necessary to delineate the genesis and development of the “gas vans” according to orthodox Holocaust historiography.

### 6.2. Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski and Himmler’s Visit to Minsk: Historiographical Interpretations

Holocaust historiography, as is well known, dates the genesis of the “gas vans,” although with a few dissenting voices, back to an order issued by Himmler to SS *Brigadeführer* Arthur Nebe, commandant of *Einsatzgruppe* B, during Himmler’s visit to Minsk on 15 August 1941. Before examining the interpretations and positions of the most prestigious historians who have concerned themselves with this problem, it would be best to note the only facts that can be attested to by documents, that is, the related entry in Himmler’s *Dienstkalender*. According to this

<sup>221</sup> “Insgesamt wurden vermutlich über 500 000 Menschen in Gaswagen ermordet, wobei die eine Hälfte in den besetzten Gebieten der Sowjetunion, die andere Hälfte im Vernichtungslager Chelmnö getötet wurde.” Gutman *et al.*, Vol. I, entry “Gaswagen,” p. 507.

<sup>222</sup> According to Mathias Beer, the largest model “gas van” could hold 100 persons, the smallest, 50. For the purposes of the calculation, he assumed an average value of 75. Beer 2011, p. 162.

source, the *Reichsführer SS* – i.e., Himmler – was at Baranovichi on the afternoon of 14 August 1941 and departed by truck in the direction of Minsk, via Slutsk. This is followed by the entry: “dinner and overnight stay in the Lenin House in Minsk” (Witte *et al.*, p. 193). This is the entry for the next day (*ibid.*, p. 195):

*“Friday, 15. August 1941*

*Morning presence at an execution of partisans and Jews near Minsk.*

*Tour of a prisoner transit camp.*

*14.00 lunch, Lenin House*

*15.00 drive through the Minsk Ghetto – tour of the insane asylum*

*Subsequently, drive to Sofiose [sic] (managed by the SS)*

*towards evening return to Minsk*

*Dinner and overnight stay at the Lenin House.”*

This is a rather neutral text from which no conclusions might be drawn, historiographically speaking, without recourse to eyewitness testimony. I will therefore discuss the most important eyewitness testimonies in this regard: that of SS *Obergruppenführer* Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, Higher SS and Police leader of *Heeresgruppe Mitte* (Army Group Center).

Raul Hilberg dwells on this well-known anecdote at great length. Given the great importance of the matter in present orthodox Holocaust historiography, and Hilberg’s privileged position in this regard, a particularly in-depth examination of his two assertions is essential. First of all, I report Hilberg’s long account (Hilberg 2003, Vol. 1, pp. 343f.):

*“On August 15, 1941, Himmler himself visited Minsk. He asked Einsatzgruppe B Commander Nebe to shoot a batch of hundred people, so that he could see what one of these ‘liquidations’ really looked like. Nebe obliged. All except two of the victims were men. Himmler spotted in the group a youth of about twenty who had blue eyes and blond hair. Just before the firing was to begin, Himmler walked up to the doomed man and put a few questions to him.*

*Are you a Jew?*

*Yes.*

*Are both of your parents Jews?*

*Yes.*

*Do you have any ancestors who were not Jews?*

*No.*

*Then I can’t help you!*

*As the firing started, Himmler was even more nervous. During every volley he looked to the ground. When the two women could not die, Himmler yelled to the police sergeant not to torture them.*

*When the shooting was over, Himmler and the fellow spectator engaged in conversation. The other witness was Obergruppenführer von dem Bach-Zelewski, the same man who was later delivered to a hospital. Von dem Bach addressed Himmler:*

*Reichsführer, those were only a hundred.*

*What do you mean by that?*

*Look at the eyes of the men in this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished (fertig) for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!*

*Himmler was visibly moved and decided to make a speech to all who were assembled here. He pointed out that the Einsatzgruppe were called upon to fulfill a repulsive (widerliche) duty. He would not like it if Germans did such a thing gladly. But their conscience was in no way impaired, for they were soldiers who had to carry out every order unconditionally. He alone had responsibility before God and Hitler for everything that was happening. They had undoubtedly noticed that he hated this bloody business (dass ihm das blutige Handwerk zuwider wäre) and that he had been aroused to the depth of his soul. But he too was obeying the highest law by doing his duty, and he was acting from a deep understanding of the necessity for this operation.*

*Himmler told the men to look at nature. There was combat everywhere, not only among men but also in the world of animals and plants. Whoever was too tired to fight must go under (zugrunde gehen). The most primitive man says that the horse is good and the bedbug is bad, or wheat is good and the thistle is bad. The human being consequently designates what is useful to him as good and what is harmful as bad. Didn't bedbugs and rats have a life purpose also? Yes, but this has never meant that man could not defend himself against vermin.*

*After the speech Himmler, Nebe, von dem Bach, and the chief of Himmler's Personal Staff, Wolff, inspected an insane asylum. Himmler ordered Nebe to end the suffering of these people as soon as possible. At the same time, Himmler asked Nebe 'to turn over in his mind' various other killing methods more humane than shooting. Nebe asked for permission to try out dynamite on the mentally ill people. Von dem Bach and Wolff protested that the sick people were not guinea pigs, but Himmler decided in favor of the attempt. Much later, Nebe confided to von dem Bach that the dynamite had been tried on the inmates with woeful results."*

Hilberg refers to the following sources (*ibid.*, p. 344, fn 210):

*"The story of the Himmler visit, as told by von dem Bach, was printed in Aufbau (New York), August 23, 1946, pp. 1-2"*

I therefore report the text published by the magazine *Aufbau*, omitting, however, Himmler's long speech, which has been capably paraphrased by Hilberg:

*"During my days in Minsk, I received a visit from Himmler, who had also ordered Gruppenführer Nebe from Smolensk to Minsk. Himmler lodged in the Lenin House in Minsk. In the presence of Gruppenführer Wolff and myself, Himmler asked Nebe, how many prisoners for liquidation he had in prison at that time. Ne-*

be named a figure around a hundred. The Reichsführer SS went on to ask whether it would be any 'particular trouble' to have these hundred executed the next morning. He wanted to watch such a liquidation to get an idea of what it looked like. He asked me to accompany him with Gruppenführer Wolff. The shooting took place the next morning in a forest close to Minsk, north of the Minsk-Borisov highway. The criminals were all partisans and their supporters, up to a third or half of whom were Jews. There were also two women among them. The shooting was carried out in a correct military manner. The condemned people were calm and met their deaths stoically, which made a visible impression on all spectators. Two incidents left me with indelible memories. Among the Jews there was a young man perhaps 20 years old, blond and blue-eyed. He was standing right in front of the rifle barrels, when Himmler intervened. The rifle barrels were lowered. Himmler came up to the young man and asked him a question. 'Are you a Jew?' – 'Yes.' – 'Are both your parents Jews?' – 'Yes.' – 'Do you have any ancestors who were not Jews?' – 'No.' – The Reichsführer stamped his feet and said: 'Then I cannot help you', and had the sentence carried out.

The firing squad lost their nerve during the shooting of the two women. Neither of the women had been killed outright. The Reichsführer himself jumped among them and called out to the officer in charge: 'Don't you torture the women, come on, fast, shoot!' I was watching Himmler the whole time, because I wanted to see his real face; I was hoping he would change his mind after this shocking experience. Himmler was extremely nervous; he didn't stand still for a moment; his face was as white as chalk, his eyes were wandering around, but when the salvo was fired, he always looked at the ground. While we were still on the execution ground, I approached Himmler about it. I told him, 'Reichsführer, that was only a hundred!' – 'What do you mean by that?' I answered: 'Look straight in the eyes of the squad's men, how deeply shocked they are! These men are done for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we rearing with this? Either nervous wrecks and ruffians!' Himmler was visibly moved, quite impulsively, he called all those present to gather around and gave a long speech. [...]

Afterwards, a small insane asylum near Minsk was visited with the worst kinds of mental patients. Himmler ordered Nebe to 'deliver' them as quickly as possible. In this context, Himmler and Nebe discussed the gentlest kind of death. Himmler said that today's experience had convinced him that shooting was not the most humane method after all. Nebe was to mull it over and submit a report based on experiences gathered. Nebe answered that he thought dynamite was a better way. He asked to be permitted to kill the mental patients that way for the first time. Wolff and I objected that the mental patients were not guinea pigs. Himmler decided that Nebe was permitted to try it.

I talked to Nebe about this again only in 1943 in Berlin. He admitted that I was right when I objected back then, since the experiment failed miserably, because the mental patients weren't killed immediately. A much more 'humane' method was being used now. He didn't want to tell me any more. When rumors emerged later ever more frequently about gassing establishments, I assumed that this was the method that Nebe had been talking about."

It should be noted that the historiographic value attributed to this anecdote has changed considerably over the past decades. In the early 1950s, the first mainstream Holocaust historian who mentioned it still considered it, according to the text, a sort of antecedent to the presumed stationary gas chambers (Reitlinger 1961, p. 188):

*“This general [von dem Bach-Zelewski] was present at an execution near Minsk, where Himmler ordered Nebe to devise a new method for mass killings, and it is at least curious that the only film showing the working of a gas chamber should be found in Nebe’s former Berlin flat. Even Gisevius admits Nebe’s complicity in this matter. The gas-chamber plans were discussed at daily luncheons at RSHA headquarters between Ohlendorf, Mueller, Schellenberg, and Nebe.”*

The need to find a credible point of departure for the nebulous story of the “gas vans” then led orthodox Holocaust historians to distort the text published by the magazine *Aufbau*, adducing it as a reason for their presumed construction. In the early 1980s, the new interpretation was now ready and no longer required the reference to the above-mentioned magazine:

*“With the attack on the Soviet Union, the number of ‘opponents’ of the National Socialists to be destroyed increased many times over. The mass shootings of Jews, Gypsies and other Soviet citizens, however, led to a considerable psychic stress on the Einsatzgruppen carrying out these executions behind the fighting troops. Hence, they changed over to gassings.”*

Here, “gassings” refers to “gas vans,” as shown by the title of the contribution from which this quotation was drawn, which reads: “Killings in the Gas Vans behind the Front” (Spektor 1993, p. 52). In 1987, the German expert on “gas vans,” Mathias Beer, constructed the imaginative story of the origins of these presumed homicidal vehicles based on the Himmler anecdote, spiced up with subsequent testimonies accommodately created based on this anecdote, starting with that of Albert Widmann (Beer 1987, p. 407). Great historiographical importance is still accorded this story (Beer 2011, pp. 158f.), which I will examine below.

But is von dem Bach-Zelewski’s statement as quoted by *Aufbau* authentic? Since 1953, when Reitlinger mentioned it in a historiographical context for the first time, no orthodox Holocaust historian has ever bothered to verify it.

The statement, as I said, was published in the *Aufbau* magazine under the title “*Leben eines SS-Generals. Aus den Nürnberger Geständnisse des Generals der Waffen-SS Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski*” (“The Life of an SS General. From the Nuremberg Confessions of the General of the Waffen SS Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski”). The editors introduced it as “an initial extract from the written testimony of the SS General,” given to the Allied prosecutors at the Nuremberg Trial (“Leben...,” p. 1; see Document I.6.1.).

Von dem Bach-Zelewski’s statements made before the U.S. officials who interrogated him several times between October 1945 and March 1946 with a view



to the Nuremberg Trial may be found in the National Archives in Washington.<sup>223</sup> Among those documents is, in fact, a handwritten note by von dem Bach-Zelewski which mentions Himmler's visit to Minsk. This is titled "*Die Judenverfolgung*" ("The Persecution of the Jews") and consists of six pages.<sup>224</sup> On the fifth page, under Point 6, we may read the following (see Document I.6.2.):

*"Himmler comes to Minsk for 24 hours. Orders Nebe and myself to appear in his presence, accompanied by Himmler's Gruppenführer Wolff. Himmler is present at the execution of ca. 100 partisans, among them also Jews and 2 women, whom Nebe was ordered to present so that Himmler could get an idea.*

*Himmler gives a rather long speech after the execution.*

*Followed by a visit to a small lunatic asylum near Minsk. Himmler orders Nebe to 'deliver' the mental patients from their sufferings.*

*Nebe is to employ a humane method of killing. Nebe suggests a dynamite explosion. Himmler orders him to proceed."*

In Point 7, von dem Bach-Zelewski recalls that in 1943, during one of his inspections in Mogilev, he was informed that a commission of civilians (perhaps from a company in Hamburg), equipped with a written authorization from Himmler, wished to appropriate his factory installation (*Fabrikanlage*) in Mogilev to install a "gassing establishment" (*Vergasungsanstalt*), but that he refused to deliver it.

In the nine interrogations to which he was subjected, von dem Bach-Zelewski made no further mention of Himmler's visit to Minsk. The above-mentioned handwritten note is the only document that speaks of it. It should therefore be obvious that the Jewish editors of *Aufbau* falsified the original document, shamelessly interpolating and adding entire paragraphs. Among the most important imaginary elements invented by the editors are the following:

- the heroic comportment of the victims, such as to arouse the sympathy of the bystanders;
- the two "incidents," *i.e.*, Himmler's dialogue with the blond boy with blue eyes and the story of the two wounded women;
- Himmler's reaction to these incidents;
- the contents of Himmler's long speech.

The episode of the mental hospital also seems highly interpolated and embellished. The magazine's editorial staff took themes from von dem Bach-Zelewski's note as their point of departure and developed them in narrations of pure fantasy (among others, the blond-haired boy). Thus, for example, from the mere mention of "2 women," among the victims, the *Aufbau* editorial staff introduced the story of their delayed killing and Himmler's disturbed reaction. The short phrase "after the execution, Himmler gave a very long speech (*eine längere Ansprache*)," was transformed into "Himmler was visibly upset, impulsively called

<sup>223</sup> NARA, RG 238, M1270, OCCPAC. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg 1945-1947, von dem Bach-Zelewski.

<sup>224</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 37-42.

all those present to gather around and gave a very long speech (*eine längere Ansprache*),” and then the editors invented Himmler’s speech as summarized by Hilberg.

This procedure was also applied to the subject of the gassings. Von dem Bach-Zelewski wrote that, in 1943, when *Einsatzgruppen* activities were at an end, a commission of civilians had attempted to set up a “gassing establishment” at Minsk. The mention of a “company from Hamburg” is a clear reference to Tesch & Stabenow, making it obvious that the object discussed here was a disinfestation gas chamber.

A message intercepted by the British on 12 December 1942 permits us to reproduce von dem Bach-Zelewski’s declaration in its true context:<sup>225</sup>

“OMX de OMQ

*Radio message 157 to Higher SS and Police leader, Russia Center, Division IV, MOGILEV.*

*15 crates of ‘Zyklon,’ stored here until now, with another 2 boxes with devices of the AUER Company, ORANIENBURG,<sup>[226]</sup> were loaded onto railroad car DRRU 327289, destination SS hospital MINSK. No reply received so far to radio message of 8.9.42. Regarding collection from MINSK, you are requested to get in touch with the SS hospital. The Director of the Waffen SS Medical Camp, Warsaw. Signed, Dr. Herzog, SS Hauptsturmführer.”*

In his interrogation of 23 March 1946, von dem Bach-Zelewski stressed that, in German, “*Vergasungsanstalt*” (gassing establishment) could also mean “delousing plant,” but, in his opinion, there was no reason to install such a plant at Mogilev, to which he was told that the representatives of the Hamburg company intended to set up “a different kind of gas plant. This plant is for the extermination of people, and not for delousing.”<sup>227</sup>

The *Aufbau* editorial staff created the above statement mentioning a fictitious meeting between Nebe and von dem Bach-Zelewski at Berlin in 1943, transforming the intention to build obviously fictitious “gassing establishments” (*Vergasungsanstalten*), and forcibly linking it to Himmler’s visit.

For precisely this reason, Reitlinger linked this visit to the stationary gas chambers. From the text published by *Aufbau*, one may in fact reach only one conclusion, so that – from the orthodox Holocaust point of view – the claim that Himmler’s visit resulted in the introduction of “gas vans” as a “more humane” method of execution is seen to be unfounded. Von dem Bach-Zelewski’s note also renders Reitlinger’s interpretation unfounded.

Let us return to Hilberg. Hilberg began to study the subject of the Holocaust at the end of 1948. For an entire year, between 1951 and 1952, he was employed at the *Federal Records Center* at Alexandria, Virginia, where he studied the German documents seized by the Americans and safeguarded there at Alexandria (In

<sup>225</sup> TNA, German Police Decodes Nr 3 Traffic: 12.12.42. ZIP/GPDD 325a/17.12.42.

<sup>226</sup> The Auer Company produced gas masks and filters, among other things.

<sup>227</sup> NARA, RG 238, M1270/R 1/296, *op. cit.* (note 223), pp. 3f.

the District Court..., Vol. IV, p. 682). In the preamble to his book, Hilberg stated (Hilberg 2003, Vol. I, p. XII):

*“My early probing had been concentrated principally on Nuremberg evidence and on stores of captured German records located in the United States at the time.”*

From the very start of his career, therefore, he found himself in the most favorable position to track down the pre-trial interrogations of von dem Bach-Zelewski and his hand-written note; why, then, in a matter of such importance, did he content himself with the published text from *Aufbau*?

The matter becomes all the more mysterious when we learn that a sworn statement from von dem Bach-Zelewski, then a prisoner at Nuremberg-Fürth, dated 25 May 1961, was presented at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. Regarding Himmler’s visit to Minsk, von dem Bach-Zelewski declared:

*“The people captured by the Nebe Operations Unit were brought before a field court-martial. Himmler himself was present at the executions. Obergruppenführer Wolff and I were also present. He had accompanied Himmler from Baranovich to Minsk. Himmler was very pale during the executions. I think that watching it made him feel sick. The executions were carried out by shooting with carbines.”* (State of Israel..., Vol. V, p. 1963)

If Hilberg may justifiably be accused, at the very least, of contenting himself with a summary of von dem Bach-Zelewski’s statement as published in a magazine without bothering to search for the original, which was readily available to him, Richard David Breitman, by contrast, searched for the document and found it. In his study of Himmler, he writes, in fact, that the *Reichsführer* SS

*“flew on to Baranovich, where Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski had established his headquarters.”* (Breitman 1991, p. 191)

In a footnote, he provides the following reference, among others: “Interrogation of Bach-Zelewski NA RG 238, M-1270/R 1/296” (*ibid.*, fn 20, p. 295), which refers to the pre-trial interrogations mentioned above. He then puts forth a long, rather imaginative historical reconstruction, the essential points of which are as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 194f.):

*“Himmler’s pursuit of execution sites and techniques continued in August. In Minsk he had a meeting with Criminal Police Chief Arthur Nebe. [...]*

*Minsk, like Riga, was soon to become a dumping ground and killing center for German Jews, and Himmler probably wanted to see whether the facilities and the authorities were capable of handling the additional people.”*

He then summarily mentions the anecdotes invented by *Aufbau* on Himmler’s stay in the “Lenin House” at Minsk and the story of the blond Jewish boy with blue eyes (*ibid.*, p. 195, and fn 39f. on pp. 296f.). In this context, he introduces a comical note demonstrating the degree of scrupulousness of these historians (*ibid.*, p. 195):

*“So Nebe picked out at least one hundred alleged partisans from the city’s large jail; all but two were men. (By one account, Himmler told Nebe to seduce the two women before shooting them – in order to get information on what the partisans were planning.)”*

But this “one account” is just the U.S. translation of von dem Bach-Zelewski’s hand-written note, mentioned above. In the phrase “*Himmler wohnt einer Exekution von ck.100 Partisanen, darunter auch Juden und 2 Frauen bei, die Nebe vorführen soll, weil Himmler sich ein Bild machen will,*” the translator mistakenly read “*verführen,*” to seduce, instead of “*vorführen,*” to introduce or present, resulting in the following, which is incomprehensible:<sup>228</sup>

*“Himmler attends the execution of about 100 partisans, among them also Jews and two women, who are supposed to be seduced by Nebe, because Himmler wants to have a picture of what is going on,”*

while the correct translation is:

*“Himmler is present at the execution of ca. 100 partisans, among them also Jews and 2 women, whom Nebe was ordered to present so that Himmler could get an idea.”*

Therefore, Breitman, instead of checking this senseless translation of von dem Bach-Zelewski’s handwritten note, endorsed it and falsified it, adding a fantastic story about the reasons for this presumed “seduction.”

In making a fleeting mention of the “mobile gas vans” (Breitman 1991, p. 197), Breitman links the Himmler anecdote to the “extermination camps in the East” (*ibid.*, pp. 198f.). He then mentions Nebe’s presumed “experiment” involving the annihilation of mental patients at Minsk using explosives, and then mentions “gas vans” again, but as unrelated events, which are also unrelated to the anecdote in question (*ibid.*, pp. 201f.).

It should be noted that, according to the article published in *Aufbau*, von dem Bach-Zelewski (or the *Aufbau* editors; it makes little difference) asserted that the extermination of the Jews “was deliberately planned by Heinrich Himmler already before the war” and that “Himmler consistently worked towards the war in order to carry out his plans” (“Leben...,” p. 1). These are senseless assertions to which not even the most obtuse “intentionalists” would subscribe. Then follows the description of the shootings without even giving the year! (*ibid.*, p. 2)

Connecting the genesis of the “gas vans” or the presumed stationary gas chambers to this anecdote of Himmler’s visit to Minsk is therefore a simple fictional narrative which has nothing to do with the writing of history.

### 6.3. Mathias Beer and the Origins of the “Gas Vans”

In his article cited earlier, Beer summarizes the presumed origins of the “gas vans” as follows (Beer 1987, p. 417):

<sup>228</sup> NARA, RG 238, M1270/R 1/296, *op. cit.* (note 223), p. 36.

*“1. Within four months, on Himmler’s orders, a new killing procedure, the gas van, has been developed, in the following temporal sequence:*

- 15/16 Aug. 1941 Himmler’s order*
- 16/18 Sep. Experiments in Minsk and Mogilev*
- Beginning of October commission to Office II D 3 a*
- 3 Nov. experimental gassing in Sachsenhausen*
- End of November and December, deployment of the first vans.”*

It is best to examine these various phases individually. Beer honestly admits that the documents referring to the presumed “gas vans” only date back to 1942; therefore, nothing is known of their origins in 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 404):

*“With the help of written sources, therefore, one can hardly say anything about the time period during which the gas vans must have been developed. The decision-making procedure leading to the construction and deployment of these vehicles is therefore cloaked in obscurity.”*

As post-war trial testimonies go, they may be valid historical sources if confirmed by critically verified documentary sources, but since the latter do not exist, “not every question can be satisfactorily answered in this manner either” (*ibid.*). This means that the entire reconstruction of the origins of the “gas vans” outlined by Beer is necessarily conjectural.

Beer inevitably traces the technical development of the “gas vans” to euthanasia, through the intermediary phase of the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen (*ibid.*, pp. 404f.):

*“There are eyewitness accounts that report about the use of a hermetically sealed trailer during the evacuation of mental hospitals in Poland in 1939/40, with the words ‘Kaisers Coffee Company’ painted on it, attached to a tractor unit. Patients are said to have been killed inside the trailer by means of pure carbon monoxide (CO) pumped in from steel bottles. The origins of these vehicles cannot be clarified, precisely because of the lack of documents. There are, however, some indications of an answer to the question of whether there is any connection between ‘Kaiser’s Coffee’ vans and the gas vans. For this reason, we will first discuss the few accounts that refer to the ‘Kaiser’s Coffee’ vans before discussing the development of the gas vans.”*

In reality, the story of the “gas vans” is unfounded from the very start. “*Kaiser’s Kaffee Geschäft AG*” was a commercial company founded by Josef Kaiser, who introduced coffee roasting into the family’s colonial commodities business (*Kolonialwarengeschäft*) managed by his parents, first in hand roasters and later in increasingly larger drums, creating coffee blends which he distributed in his own vehicles. The company, which took on the name “*Kaiser’s Kaffee Geschäft AG*,” in 1899, had over 1,600 subsidiaries in 1939.<sup>229</sup> He owned truck trailers painted with the words “*Kaiser’s Kaffee Geschäft*,” but there is no connection between these vehicles – or painted signs – and the presumed “gas vans”; the only reason-

<sup>229</sup> Entry “Kaiser, Josef” in: Historische Kommission..., Vol. 11, p. 43.

able explanation is that the name in question was a distortion of “*LC-Koffer*.” Gerlach supplies one valuable piece of information in this regard:

*“In the autumn of 1941, the Gaubschat Company from Berlin-Neukölln, later commissioned to build the gas vans, supplied a special vehicle for the Waffen-SS, the so-called ‘LC-Koffer,’ evidently for military purposes. [...] The 2nd SS Infantry Brigade had received two ‘Opel Blitz’ vehicles converted into ‘LC-Koffer.’ Such vehicles were still being converted into so-called first-generation gas vans in 1941.”*

As references, Gerlach cites (Gerlach 1999, p. 648, fn 789):

*“M. Beer, p. 414; exchange of correspondence between the Gaubschat Company with the RSHA II D 3 from 1942.”*

But neither of these two sources concerns “*LC-Koffer*” vehicles, so that these could only be transformed into “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen for propaganda purposes through the assonance between “*Koffer*” and “*Kaffee*.”

The “*LC-Koffer*” vehicle was put into production in 1940 and was described as “a light-weight, rather large closed-panel truck” – a multi-purpose vehicle:

*“The vehicles were used to some extent as workshop vehicles at the extensive airports near the front, and on some of the vehicles the cargo box was equipped with special devices for the widest variety of purposes of military intelligence for the army and air force. They were of very light-weight panel construction. For this, a light-weight wooden framework with so-called alveolate panels was fashioned clad on both side with fiberboard.”* (Ehrmann, p. 201)

A message intercepted by the British on 4 March 1942 mentions the *LC-Koffer* in relation with the Gaubschat Company:<sup>230</sup>

*“OMV de C*

*Communicate in which inventory list the L C Koffer converted by the GAUBSCHAT Company was entered. Please return inventory entry note by the fastest means of communication possible. Chassis No. 1921 motor No. 1850 chassis No. 1947 motor No. 1878 chassis No. 1944 motor No. 1878. SCHIEVELE VF LTFR II.”*

These vehicles, which were also used to transport the wounded, were already equipped with a cargo box, so that they were in no way related to either the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen (a trailer hitched to a tractor unit), or the vehicles ordered by the RSHA from the Gaubschat Company (chassis upon which cargo boxes were mounted).<sup>231</sup>

Gerlach moreover claims to demonstrate that the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen really existed and cites two documents, which were still unknown when Beer wrote his article in 1987 (Gerlach 1999, p. 648):

<sup>230</sup> TNA, HW 16/17. German Police Decodes Nr 3 Traffic: 4.3.42. ZIP/GPDD 28/6.5.42.

<sup>231</sup> The head of the Sicherheitspolizei und SD II D 3 a (9) B.Nr. 668/42 to the Fahrzeugewerke Gaubschat dated 23 June 1942. NARA, T-175/254, 2747512.

*“But two recently discovered radio messages show that Bach-Zelewski, only one and three days, respectively, before Himmler’s visit to Minsk, requested the [services of the] specialist on murder methods using gas, SS Sturmbannführer Lange, from the HSSPF in the Wartheland, Wilhlem Koppe, since he wanted to have ‘the procedure demonstrated by Lange personally’ as soon as Lange ‘was free.’ Such a demonstration by Lange does not seem to have materialised, because Lange was not available. Perhaps the KTI murder experts were consulted only then, and perhaps Himmler did not assign Nebe with the task of experimenting with new murder methods in the Novinki mental hospital at all, but rather Bach-Zelewski. That Nebe accepted the assignment, has been attested to by several witnesses; that Himmler gave Nebe the assignment directly, only Bach-Zelewski seems to have claimed, who was perhaps attempting to exonerate himself.”*

In practice, therefore, von dem Bach-Zelewski is said to have asked Koppe to have Lange carry out a “demonstration” of the presumed “*Kaisers-Kaffee*” van. In reality, however, the alleged importance of the documents mentioned by Gerlach is based on a simple subterfuge aimed at presenting Lange as a “specialist on murder methods using gas” precisely by virtue of the imaginary “*Kaisers-Kaffee*” vans.

The two radio messages in question Gerlach quotes as “Radio messages Bach-Zelewski to Koppe of 16 and 18 Aug. 1941” (*ibid.*, fn 791, p. 648). The first of them states:<sup>232</sup>

*“DQH de SQF No. 17 1035 104 SQP 6900.*

*Higher SS and Police leader POSEN.*

*Request immediate departure of Hauptsturmführer LANGE, etc., to BARANOVICHI.*

*Higher SS and Police leader Center”*

The radio message of 18 August 1941 presents this generic request:<sup>233</sup>

*“5. DHQ de SQF Nr 2 0930 150 SQP 155*

*Higher SS and Police leader POSEN.*

*Request LANGE be made temporarily available to me once available. I would like the procedure to be demonstrated to me by Lange personally.*

*Higher SS and Police leader Center [von dem Bach-Zelewski].”*

The “procedure” in question could be anything, but was certainly not a “*Kaisers-Kaffee*” van, because in that case von dem Bach-Zelewski would have requested the vehicle itself.

Gerlach’s embarrassment with regard to the request by von dem Bach-Zelewski instead of Nebe is obvious, because he is compelled to suppose that Himmler directly entrusted the phantasmagorical mission of finding “more humane killing methods” to Zelewski instead of Nebe. But in this case, he introduces a discordance within the most-commonly credited version of the Holocaust, since Nebe

<sup>232</sup> TNA, HW 16/32. German Police Decodes: 16.8.41, n. 20.

<sup>233</sup> TNA, HW 16/32. German Police Decodes: 18.8.41, n. 5.

was not only the leader of *Einsatzgruppe B*, but also headed Office V (*Reichskriminalpolizei*) of the RSHA, to which the *Kriminaltechnisches Institut* (KTI, Institute for Criminological Techniques) of the Security Police Sipo was subordinate as Office V D.

It should furthermore be noted that, in the context of Himmler's visit to Minsk, the radio message of 16 August appears incomprehensible from the orthodox point of view. According to von dem Bach-Zelewski's order, in fact, Lange, with his presumed "*Kaisers-Kaffee*" van, had to present himself at Baranovichi, but Himmler had left this location on the afternoon of 14 August; on 15 August, von dem Bach-Zelewski was at Minsk, together with the *Reichsführer SS*, who, the next morning, visited a museum in this city and then flew to Rastenburg, the Führer's general headquarters (Witte *et al.*, p. 196). Why then did von dem Bach-Zelewski order Lange on 16 August to travel to Baranovichi?

In this context, Holocaust historiography adduces another document which Longerich presents this way (Longerich 2010, p. 290):

*"At around the same time, presumably still in October 1941, the mass murder of indigenous Jews began in the district of Konin in the southern Warthegau. In late November, in an 'action' lasting several days, 700 Jews were murdered in gas vans in the Bornhagen (Kozminek) camp in the district of Kalisch. The unit deployed was the 'Sonderkommando' Lange under HSSPF Warthegau Koppe, which had already murdered thousands of inmates of institutions for the mentally ill in the annexed Polish territories in 1939/40 and again in June/July 1941.*

*In October 1941 Lange's unit had been summoned to Novgorod by Himmler to murder patients in mental institutions there."*

The related reference is "PRO, HW 16/32, 4 Oct. 1941." For the person cited (Lange) and the dating, Himmler's request should relate to the "*Kaisers-Kaffee*" van. Nevertheless, the referred-to decryption by the British simply states the following:<sup>234</sup>

*"20. DHQ de DPJ SQM Nr.7 1345 113 SQP 155. An Höheren SS und Pol.führer POSEN, Gruppenführer GOPPE [sic].*

*The Sonderkommando is to be sent instantly. The request is to be granted.*

*Signed H. HIMMLER"*

There is no mention of *Sonderkommando Lange*, or gas vans, or Novgorod, or mental patients to be killed!

The use of the "*Kaisers-Kaffee*"-Wagen appears decidedly nonsensical, because the distance from Soldau (present-day Działdowo) to Novgorod is over 900 km as the crow flies; obviously, the distance by road is even longer: who could seriously believe that Himmler would have ordered a similar trip to visit the temporary location of the presumed primitive "gas van" disguised as "*Kaiser's Kaffee Geschäft*" to "gas" 100 persons who could easily have been shot by a firing squad?

<sup>234</sup> TNA, HW 16/32. German Police Decodes: 4.10.41.



Returning to Mathias Beer, in his reconstruction of the origins of the “gas vans,” he sets forth the orthodox Holocaust theory on euthanasia, which, in the present context, is only important due to the alleged criminal function of the *Kriminaltechnisches Institut* (Beer 1987, p. 405):

*“By letter dated 1 September 1939, Hitler authorized his attending physician Dr. Karl Brandt and Reichsleiter Philipp Bouhler from the ‘Führer’s Chancellery’ to carry out the ‘euthanasia.’ The Institute for Criminological Techniques (KTI) in the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) was entrusted with testing appropriate killing procedures; it came to the conclusion that the most suitable was killing with CO. After an experimental gassing with CO was conducted in the former penitentiary at Brandenburg/Havel in early January – mental patients were killed with pure CO in a hermetically sealed room – this procedure also came into use in all other ‘euthanasia’ institutions. The Führer’s Chancellery obtained the necessary CO based on a conversation between department heads Brack and Widmann, Head of Department V D 2 (Chemistry and Biology), disguised through the KTI. SS Untersturmführer Becker picked up the steel bottles from IG-Farben in Ludwigshafen on orders of Nebe – head of Office V (Combatting Crime) within the RSHA – and delivered it to the individual institutions. SS Sturmbannführer Heess, head of the KTI, was also aware of the close relationship between the Chancellery and the KTI.”*

This reconstruction, as far as the use of steel cylinders of carbon monoxide for homicidal purposes is concerned, is based *exclusively* on testimonies, which were rather late in coming, it should be noted.<sup>235</sup> But as correctly noted by Beer, justice and historiography pursue different ends; and given the total absence of documents, these judicial testimonies are of a questionable historiographical value. Beer next returns to the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen (*ibid.*, pp. 405f.):

*“The ‘Kaisers-Kaffee’-Wagen worked on the same principle as the gas chambers in the euthanasia institutions. CO from a steel cylinder mounted on the tractor unit was introduced into the trailer through pipes. Hence, it was a gas chamber on wheels. Eyewitnesses testified that mental patients were killed in such vans by the Sonderkommando Lange starting in December 1939 in mental hospitals in Pomerania, East Prussia and Poland. The name of the Kommando was derived from that of its leader, SS Obersturmführer and Kriminalrat Herbert Lange. The letter from the Higher SS and Police leader Koppe to SS Gruppenführer Sporrenberg illuminates the deployment of this Kommando in Soldau: ‘The so-called Sonderkommando Lange, subordinate to me for special tasks, was commandeered to Soldau in East Prussia during the period between 21 May and 8 June 1940 according to the agreement with the Reich Security Main Office, and evacuated 1,558 sick people from the Soldau Transit Camp during this time.’*

*Lange either brought one such van with him from the RSHA (this is indicated by the testimonies of Gustav Sorge and the major role of Group II D, Technical Is-*

<sup>235</sup> Beer 1987, fn 14-18, p. 405. The sources are statements made by German defendants between 1959 and 1960 within the context of investigations by the *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen* at Ludwigsburg.

*sues, within the RSHA, in the subsequent development of the gas vans), or he himself had it built in collaboration with the RSHA.”*

Beer then expresses his suspicion that Lange had been assigned the task of “conducting practical tests on these vehicles” and added that “*Sonderkommando Lange* was sent off on leave soon after its deployment in Soldau. No information is available as to the deployment of such vans from that time onward” (*ibid.*, p. 406). Beer concludes this discussion with the following observation (*ibid.*):

*“The exchange of correspondence relating to outstanding payments in connection with the Sonderkommando Lange, which extends to February 1941, shows that Himmler was also aware of the whole matter. In Koppe’s letter of 22 February 1941 to Karl Wolff, head of the Reichsführer SS’s personal staff, it states ‘that the decision relating to the payment of transport costs would be taken by you [Wolff] by order of the Reichsführer SS.’”*

The first document cited by Beer is a letter sent on 18 October 1940 by SS *Obergruppenführer* Wilhelm Koppe, Higher SS and Police leader of the Warthegau, to SS *Gruppenführer* Jakob Sporrenberg, Higher SS and Police leader Northeast. The question of payment, as discussed in the letter dated 22 February 1941, regarded the fact that Koppe had agreed, at the time, with SS *Gruppenführer* Wilhelm Rediess, whom Sporrenberg had succeeded in June 1940, on the payment of 10 RM for the evacuation of each patient, resulting in a total sum of 15,580 RM (NO-2908).

On 7 November 1940, Rediess wrote to Wolff (NO-2909):

*“The letter of SS Gruppenführer Koppe deals with the evacuation of 1,558 mental institution inmates of the provincial institutions of East Prussia. To these must be added, to my knowledge, about 250 to 300 insane persons (Poles) from the area of Zichenau, which has been annexed to East Prussia.*

*At the time in question, on the occasion of an information visit to SS Gruppenführer Koppe, I had, after first obtaining the consent of the Reichsführer SS, asked to have the Lange detachment put at my disposal.”*

This is the context surrounding Koppe’s letter to Wolff dated 22 February 1941 as cited by Beer. That letter states, *i.a.* (NO-2911):

*“In July 1940, I accepted 1558 bothersome persons from the Higher SS and Police leader Northeast for the purposes of accommodation elsewhere. To carry out this agreement with Gruppenführer Rediess, it was necessary for a squad from my office to spend 17 days in East Prussia. My Inspector of the Security Police and the SD, SS Standartenführer Damzog, agreed with the Inspector of the Security Police and the SD in Königsberg, SS Brigadeführer Rasch, [upon the sum of] RM 10 for transport costs and other expenses for every person to be transported away.”*

This is followed by a discussion of who was to pay the total sum, which I omit here. Beer presupposes, therefore, even if he does not explicitly say so, that this correspondence is based on a presumed “camouflage language” in which “evacuation” is a “euphemism” for killing (in the specific case, by means of “*Kaisers-*

*Kaffee*”-Wagen); otherwise, his reference to it would make no sense. Nevertheless, the letter mentioned above explicitly speaks of “accommodation elsewhere” and “transport costs,” terms which evidently refer to a real transfer.

This is confirmed by a report titled “The Head of the Security Police and the SD” written in Berlin in February 1943. The day is not indicated, but the protocol stamp reads the 13th. It was addressed “To the SS Judge at the *Reichsführer* SS and Chief of the German Police,” while the subject was “Events in the Soldau Transit Camp.” The report, written on Himmler’s orders (“*auf Weisung des Reichsführers-SS*”), states that on 20 and 23 November 1942 respectively, SS *Unterscharführer* Robert Holdack and SS *Hauptsturmführer* Hans Krause had been arrested. The officers arrested were essentially accused that “under their leadership, the most serious mistreatments and indiscriminate shootings were carried out in the Soldau Transit Camp,” in addition to having caused a typhus epidemic through their negligence of sanitary measures, thus claiming 2 SS victims and 4 members of the police. Holdack was accused of participation in acts of mistreatment and shootings, while we read the following about Krause:<sup>236</sup>

*“SS Hauptsturmführer Krause was head of the Soldau Transit Camp from 2 Feb. 1940 until 29 Sep. 1941, in which the inmates were chiefly Poles and Jews. Lithuanians as well as Polish and Jewish resettlers were also transited through the camp.”*

That this particular camp was not in the grip of homicidal fury is evident from a letter from the Zichenau/Schröttersburg Office of the Gestapo dated October 1941 (the day is not indicated) reading:<sup>237</sup>

*“Boruch and Lusek Krziwanowski were shot in the transit camp of the Inspector of the Security Police and the SD in Soldau by order of the Reichsführer SS dated 14 Sep. 41. The dead men’s next of kin will be notified that the inmates had died.”*

There is also the known case of the Pole named Dzienkelewski, who was arrested on 5 April 1940 and sent to Soldau Transit Camp, whence he was transferred to the Dachau Camp on 18 April.<sup>238</sup>

A teletype from the Resettler’s Central Agency (*Umwandererzentralstelle*) at Lodz dated 17 December 1940 states that Train No. 3143 had arrived the day before “with 1,000 Jews,” who received “provisions” “from Soldau”; it then stated that “Train No. 3143, which departed for Biala-Bodlaska (sic) from this station, carried no Poles, but rather Jews (underlined) from Soldau.”<sup>239</sup>

The teletype from the “Resettler’s Central Agency Poland; Lodz Branch” dated 17 December 1940 mentions the arrival of Train No. 3145 “with 957 Jews”

<sup>236</sup> The first two pages of the document have been reproduced in facsimile by Datner/Gumkowski/Leszczynski, Doc. 23, pp. 288f.

<sup>237</sup> YVA, O.53-59, p. 85.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98

<sup>239</sup> YVA, O.53-66, p. 247.

which had also received “provisions” “from Soldau.”<sup>240</sup> Another teletype from the same office, sent on 6 December 1940, stated:<sup>241</sup>

*“According to information from the leader on today’s train, Kriminalsekretär Escher from Soldau, the last trains from Soldau should be carrying Jews.”*

A “List of transport trains having departed carrying resettled Poles and Jews into the General Government within the framework of the Lithuanian Operation,” undated but dating back to a little after 17 December 1940, lists 19 transports between 5 and 17 December, containing 6,687 Poles and 3,259 Jews. These Jews were all evacuated on the last four transports, Trains Nos. 3139, 3141, 3143 and 3145,<sup>242</sup> so that one may reasonably presume that they all passed through the Soldau “transit camp” (that is, probably also including the first two not mentioned in the teletypes just quoted).

Therefore, the transit camp was real, just as the evacuations were real, and they fit into a real historical context.

According to the orthodox Holocaust narrative, as laid out by Beer, the presumed transmogrification of “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen into “gas vans” is traced back to Himmler’s visit to Minsk (Beer 1987, p. 407):

*“On 15 and 16 August 1941, Himmler was in Baranovichi and Minsk and observed a shooting operation in the area assigned to Einsatzgruppe B. The Higher SS and Police leader Russia Center present, von dem Bach-Zelewski, reported later that Himmler had been visibly moved. After that, Himmler visited a mental hospital and subsequently instructed the head of Einsatzgruppe B, Nebe, to look for ways to end these people’s sufferings as quickly as possible, since after his experiences with shootings he had come to the conclusion ‘that shooting was not the most humane method of killing.’ Nebe was to submit a ‘report’ on it. Himmler turned to Nebe, since the KTI, which was subordinate to Office V, had already distinguished itself in experimenting with killing procedures within the framework of the ‘euthanasia,’ so that it was now possible to have recourse to their experience.”*

Apart from being unfounded from the very start, as I have noted earlier, this interpretation, as regards the reasons for Himmler’s request, that is, the search for more-humane killing methods to protect the German perpetrators from suffering “emotional stress,” is in contradiction to the directives of a secret order from the *Reichsführer SS* dated 12 December 1941:

*“It is the holy duty of senior leaders and commanders personally to ensure that none of our men who have to fulfill this heavy duty should suffer emotional or personal damage thereby. This task is to be fulfilled through the strictest discipline in the execution of official duties, through comradely gatherings at the end of the days which have included such difficult tasks. The comradely gathering must on no account, however, end in the abuse of alcohol. It should be an evening*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280

*in which they sit and eat at a table, as far as possible in the best German domestic style, with music, lectures and an introduction to the beauties of German intellectual and emotional life to occupy the hour.”* (Kwiet, p. 20; *emph. added*)

If Himmler had already issued the order to Nebe or von dem Bach-Zelewski in August 1941 to search for a more humane killing system than shooting so that no soldier “should suffer emotional or personal damage,” why did he then repeat it almost four months later? Perhaps the presumed “gas vans,” allegedly deployed since October or November 1941 and of which he – according to the orthodox point of view – must necessarily have been aware, were not suited to this purpose? But then why not mention that fact?

The above-mentioned interpretation moreover exhibits another obvious discrepancy, since the only “humane” killing method practicable in the East at that time, from the orthodox point of view, was the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen. Since Rediess had requested Koppe to make the *Sonderkommando* Lange available to him after asking Himmler’s permission, “the whole matter” must have been known to the *Reichsführer* SS as well, as Beer correctly observed. But then how does one explain why Himmler, in his orders to Nebe, did not mention the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen, and it is even harder to explain why Himmler gave Nebe permission to perform a killing experiment on mental patients using dynamite, which presupposes that he, too, considered the possibility that “dynamite was a better way”.

But what lunatic could seriously think that blowing up people with explosives was a more-humane method of killing than shooting? This story, quite without any objective confirmation, was picked up and embellished in the subsequent years for pseudo-legal and propagandistic purposes. The judiciary was, in effect, placed in the position of filling in the gaps left by historiography. In this context, particular importance was accorded to the narrative version created by Albert Widmann, a chemist at the KTI, whom Beer uses as an important primary source. Using poetic license, this witness very freely developed the approved themes relating to the presumed orders issued by Himmler over the course of his visit to Minsk, to such an extent, in fact, that its general framework was already in conflict with the above-mentioned themes. Nebe’s presumed assignment did not in fact consist of finding a more humane killing system for Jews and partisans, but exclusively for mental patients:<sup>243</sup>

*“When Nebe was in Russia at the beginning of the Russian campaign,<sup>[244]</sup> he called Berlin one day. He must have spoken with his deputy, Werner. Back then,*

<sup>243</sup> Interrogation of A. Widmann at Düsseldorf on 11 January 1960. ZStL, 202- AR-Z 152/59, Vol. I, p. 45; subsequent page numbers from there, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>244</sup> This is the only chronological reference in the interrogation. It contains a whole sequence of events in entirely indeterminate chronological succession: “*eines Tages*” “one day” Nebe phoned Berlin; “*damals*” “at that time” Widmann met Werner; “*am Tage danach*” “the day after” he spoke with Hees; it was “*dann*” “then” decided to purchase explosives; another indeterminate day Widmann went to Minsk; here, “*an demselben Abend*” “the same evening” he met Nebe; “*am nächsten Tage*” “the next day” Widmann visited a lunatic asylum in Minsk with Nebe; “*am Nachmittage dieses Tage*” “on the afternoon of this day” he experimented with explosives; “*am nächsten Tag*” “on the next day,” Wid-

*Werner asked me to come to him and informed me of Nebe's call. He said I ought to come to Russia immediately on Nebe's orders. Nebe didn't know what to do with some mental patients present in his area. He couldn't ask his men to shoot these incurable mental patients. Nebe spoke of killing the mentally ill with explosives and gas."*

The story of the explosives is so nonsensical that Beer does not dare repeat it, limiting himself to fleeting reference:

*"Nebe was also head of Office V within the RSHA. In this capacity, he ordered Widmann to come to Minsk with explosives and two metal pipes in early September."* (Beer 1987, pp. 407f.)

*"When blowing up a bunker in which the mental patients were confined failed to produce the desired results ...,"* (*ibid.*, p. 408)

Widmann in fact recalled (p. 45):

*"Werner also mentioned that I should take explosives along to Russia. He also indicated the quantity, namely 250 kg. Werner had the quantity 250 kg from Nebe. Werner also talked about Nebe getting in touch with the air force, so as to find out what quantity would be needed to achieve a corresponding effect using explosives."*

The story turns out to have been fantastic from the beginning, so that Nebe still didn't know with how many persons and under which circumstances he was to conduct the experiment with explosives, so that he still could not know what was needed "to achieve a corresponding effect using explosives."

Widmann then traveled to the company Westfälisch-Anhaltische Sprengstoff AG and purchased (sic!) not 250, but 400 kg of explosive, just to be prepared in case the first test turned out to be a failure (p. 46). Arriving at Minsk with the explosive, Nebe took him to visit an insane asylum:

*"On the afternoon of this day, we drove into a forest near Minsk. There was a free area with two dugouts. These dugouts were each an estimated 2 x 6 m in sizes. When we got there, the dugouts were still empty."* (p. 47)

After describing the preparations for the explosion, Widmann claims that in Minsk he "had found a use for 250 kg [explosives] as planned by Nebe" (p. 48), and that the victims had amounted to "at most 18 mental patients" (p. 51), so that 13.9 kg of explosive had been used for every single person! And this, what is more, was in compliance with Nebe's plan!

The result of the experiment was described as follows by Widmann (p. 51):

*"During the discussion with Nebe, we came to the conclusion that, although killing by explosives 'proceeds backward,' it was impractical due to the extensive preparation required, not to mention the intensive work in connection with filling in the explosion craters."*

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mann left for Mogilev; "*am anderen Morgen*" "the other morning" Widmann and Nebe visited a lunatic asylum; "*am Nachmittag dieses Tages*" "on the afternoon of this day" preparations were made for the gassing; "*am nächsten Morgen*" "*the next morning*" the experimental gassing took place. Widmann does not even indicate the month of any of these events in a long sequence!

But does this banal conclusion really require the performance of an experiment? And was there really any need to travel to Minsk for the experiment?

Without even counting the fact that Widmann completely forgot the main point, which was whether killing by explosives was more humane than shooting – apart from another subordinate, but not irrelevant questions, such as disposing of the body parts scattered over a wide area by this immense explosion.

A story as senseless as that, without any semblance of credibility, also throws discredit on the story of the experimental gassings at the lunatic asylum at Mogilev, which is just as senseless. Widmann explains that “the facility consisted of several individual buildings,” but that one of them was chosen because it contained a “laboratory” and a “treatment room,” without “patient halls or rooms.” The most suitable area for the experiment was considered to be the “laboratory.” Widmann then describes the preparations for the gassing:

*“On the afternoon of this day, Nebe had the window bricked up and two openings for the gas pipe prepared.”*

Widmann continues (pp. 49f.):

*“The operation was then carried out the next morning. [...] When we arrive, first, one of the hoses that I had with me in the car was attached. It was connected to a car. [...] There were stubs of pipes in the holes in the wall, to which the hoses could easily be connected. There were initially no patients in the laboratory. They were carted in shortly afterwards using a horse-drawn cart. I can only remember one such horse-drawn vehicle; there may have been room for about 5 or at most 6 patients who were brought into the laboratory. When the patients were in the laboratory, the vehicles to which the hoses were connected were kept running on Nebe’s order. Nebe went into the building where one could see into the laboratory through a glass window in the door. After 5 minutes Nebe came out again and said that there was no effect that could be determined. Even after 8 minutes he was unable to see any effect, and he asked what should happen now. Nebe and I came to the conclusion that the vehicle was too weak. Nebe subsequently had another hose connected to a personnel van belonging to the ordinary police. Then it only took another few minutes until the people were unconscious. Then the two vehicles were kept running for another 10 minutes.”*

The presumed gassing appears crudely improvised. Widmann’s tale is rather evasive: into which room did the door with the window open? What were the laboratory’s dimensions? What type of engine did the car and the van have? What was their cubic capacity? At which revolutions did they run? What was the engine’s load, what was their fuel/air ratio? How were the two “metal tubes” connected to the vehicle’s exhaust pipes? All this elementary data is required to draw at least an approximately justified conclusion relating to such an experiment which was, after all, conducted by a scientist from a prestigious national institute. Widmann must have been experienced on how to conduct, record and describe many types of experiments. But the way he describes this one gives the impression that he

was either utterly ignorant of how to conduct experiments, or else he had no actual knowledge of what he was describing.

The choice of the location does not seem a lucky one, because the mental patients could easily have broken the “glass windows” in the laboratory door, a possibility which should have been foreseen. And why would Nebe have expected any effect from the exhaust gas of an ordinary automobile after just five minutes, when in the euthanasia centers the presumed gassing with *pure* carbon monoxide in possibly much smaller rooms required 10-15 minutes?<sup>245</sup>

As Widmann describes it, Nebe cannot have had any knowledge of the presumed technique of gassing mental patients in the German euthanasia centers. It is absolutely incredible that he would not have informed himself in this regard before undertaking a gassing experiment using motor-exhaust gases.

In this context, however, we are particularly interested in the general framing of the presumed matter. In this regard, Widmann declared (p. 46):

*“He also talked with Heess<sup>[246]</sup> about the use of gas for the killing of mental patients, particularly about the fact that transporting CO bottles to Russia was impossible. I assume that Heess had already spoken with Nebe about this earlier. It must have been around the time when Nebe – as Heess informed me at that time – had fallen asleep in the garage in his car with its engine running and had almost died, if one were to believe his tales. Since transporting gas bottles to Russia was not possible, it was discussed with Heess that the killing of mental patients was to be carried out with exhaust gas. Two metal hoses were then purchased, which I then also took with me on my journey.”*

Since this is about mental patients, the most obvious killing system, from the orthodox point of view, would have been the one allegedly used in German euthanasia centers, that is, gassing by means of bottled CO in stationary chambers or by way of “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen. Widmann, however, was linked to canonical Holocaust themes, one of which was precisely the experimentation with gassings (Gerlach notes that “the operations in Minsk and Mogilev are often confounded and merged into one”; Gerlach 1999, p. 649), although it was quite nonsensical in such a context, therefore, to save himself, Widmann took recourse to an equally banal subterfuge: he peremptorily declared, at least twice, that the transport of CO cylinders to Russia was “impossible” (or “not possible”). This assertion has no technical or logistical justification.<sup>247</sup> Its sole purpose was to exclude the possibility of using “gas chambers” at Minsk identical to those at the euthanasia institutes or in particular the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen. It should be noted that, re-

<sup>245</sup> Morsch/Perz, p. 105, Grafenek, 15 minutes; p. 123, Hartheim, 10-15 minutes; p. 146, Hadamar, 10 minutes.

<sup>246</sup> Walter Heeß, director of the KTI.

<sup>247</sup> Beer reports that Widmann, in his interrogation on 27 January 1959, mentioned “the great distances in the Soviet Union as an obstacle to the transport of CO bottles” (Beer 1987, fn 42, p. 409), but this also applied to both Nebe’s very experiments, incomprehensibly conducted at Minsk instead of in the Reich, and to the “gas vans,” which had to travel immense distances. As we have seen above, the “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen are said to have been sent, according to Longerich, from Soldau to Novgorod, over 900 km as the crow flies.



garding this vehicle, which was mobile by definition, the above-mentioned logistical impossibility sounds even more absurd.

But how can the introduction of the “innovation” of exhaust gas from a motor as a method of killing be explained, which subsequently assumes an essential importance in the economy of the “extermination camps” of the Aktion Reinhardt? Widmann’s answer is banal, if not ridiculous: Nebe had fallen asleep in his garage, in his car, with the motor running, risking death by asphyxiation, and this is what gave him the idea of the new killing system! In this way, Widmann was compelled to depict Nebe as a phenomenal imbecile, but at least he supplied orthodox Holocaust historiography or at least judiciary “historiography” with the fundamental element it needed: the missing link between the bottled-CO “gas chambers” of the euthanasia institutes and the engine-exhaust “gas chambers” of the camps at Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka.

But even this account exhibits a basic incongruity: since the experimental killing system for mental patients “by exhaust gas” was decided upon from the very beginning within the context of the KTI (so much so that Widmann took “two metal hoses” with him to Minsk), how can one believe the anecdote about the garage? From this point of view, in fact, the first such gassing experiment would have been planned and carried out by the KTI in Berlin or in another locality of the Reich.

Turning back to Beer, he draws this conclusion from the tall tales told by Widmann (Beer 1987, pp. 408f.):

*“The two experiments made it clear to Nebe that only the idea of killing with the help of exhaust gas – an idea very probably originating with him – was practicable. But the Einsatzgruppen, for which the new, ‘more-humane’ killing procedure was to be devised, could not use a stationary gas chamber, in which men could be killed with exhaust gas. In order to be able to carry out their mission, they had to be mobile. Based on these considerations and previous experience the plan evolved within the KTI of building gas vans. Nebe and Heess submitted such a proposal to their superior, Heydrich, head of the Security Police and the SD.”*

As I have mentioned above, the presumed explosives experiment, even in its absurdity, was without doubt much more inhumane than shooting, but then why did Nebe carry it out, and what’s more, even with Himmler’s consent? On the other hand, seen from the orthodoxy’s point of view, the most-humane killing method requested by Himmler had to be mobile, since it concerned Jews and partisans who had to be killed by the *Einsatzgruppen*. But then what was the purpose of the stationary gassing experiment in the mental hospital at Mogilev?

Beer tries to resolve the discrepancy between the orthodox Holocaust narrative on one hand, which I have laid out earlier and which concerns the circle of presumed victims of Himmler’s order: partisans and Jews according to von dem Bach-Zelewski, a line followed by all orthodox historians (but the *Aufbau* text reads: “partisans and their supporters, up to a third or half of whom were Jews”), yet on the other hand the mentally ill according to Widmann. It is evident that the

first group of victims required a mobile “gas chamber,” while the second required a stationary “gas chamber,” modeled after the euthanasia institutes, which are said to have been developed right there in Galicia.

Thomas Sandkühler mentions a correspondence between district physician Dr. Wilhelm Dopheide and Undersecretary Herbert Linden over the period of 28 November-17 December 1941, which is said to contain a request for “Personnel for a killing operation” for 1,200 mental patients from the psychiatric hospital at Lvov-Kulparków. Over the same period, according to him, “preparations were apparently made for another extermination center in a hospital or mental asylum, Novinki, in Byelorussian Mogilev” (Sandkühler, p. 159 and fn 136, p. 499).

It is worth pointing out in passing that the necessity for stationary extermination centers for mentally ill people is not clear, since the *Einsatzgruppen* regularly shot mentally ill people – for example, 632 at Minsk in early October 1941 according to EM No. 108 dated 9 Oct. 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 663).

Returning to Beer, since he sticks to the first prospect, his recourse to Widmann’s story is inconsistent, because, faced with the problem of how to experiment with a *mobile* gas chamber, Nebe experimented with a *fixed* gas chamber. In this context, the only Holocaustically consistent solution would have been the use of a “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-Wagen at Minsk. There are other incongruities, in particular relating to the location of the experiments: what need was there to travel the 1,150 kilometers from Berlin to Minsk with 400 kg of explosives and various pipes in tow in order to conduct experiments that could have been performed right there on the territory of the Reich at any gun range or euthanasia center or concentration camp?

Beer claims that, in October 1941, Heydrich turned to SS *Obersturmführer* Walter Rauff, head of Group II D 3, Technical Issues, whose department (*Referat*) II D 3a Motor Transportation of the Security Police was directed by SS *Hauptsturmführer* Friedrich Pradel, who

“gave [Harry] Wentrutt [head of the repair office at Referat II D 3 a] the order to verify whether it was possible to introduce exhaust gas into the closed cargo box of a vehicle. After Wentrutt had answered this question in the affirmative, Pradel forwarded the positive answer to Rauff, and received the order to get into contact with Heess. The latter explained to him how such a vehicle was to be modified and how it should function. On Rauff’s order, Pradel and Wentrutt then visited the Gaubschat Company in Berlin-Neukölln, which specialized in the manufacture of cargo boxes, where they pretended that they needed vehicles for the transport of bodies of victims of typhus epidemics.” (Beer 1987, p. 410)

There is no documentation on the relations between the RSHA and the Gaubschat Company in 1941. The first accessible document is a letter dated 27 April 1942 headed “*Reichssicherheitshauptamt II D 3 a (9) No. 668/42-121*” which has as its subject “Fast-unloading device for the special vehicles.”<sup>248</sup> The letter, headed

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<sup>248</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747517.

“*Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD II D 3 a (9) B. No. 668/42*” and dated 23 June 1942, explicitly mentions the original letter from the RSHA:<sup>249</sup>

*“Acc. to case II D 3 a –1737/41– 30 special coachworks for the delivered chasses have been ordered from the Gaubschat Company. 20 vehicles have already been completed and delivered.*

*The last 10 chasses have now been delivered and are to be equipped with coachworks.”*

Thus, documentation for 1941 also existed, but has not been produced: perhaps it was lost, but perhaps it contained information on the true nature of the “special vehicles,” therefore it may have been conveniently made to disappear.

Hardly was the first truck ready – continues Beer, always basing himself on simple testimonies during court proceedings – was it brought to the office of *Referat II D 3 a*, where it was converted into a “gas van” by connecting the exhaust pipe to a pipe entering the vehicle’s cargo box. This “gas van” was then brought to the KTI, where samples of exhaust gas taken from the vehicle’s cargo box were analyzed.

*“A short time afterwards, a test gassing was carried out in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp (where the KTI had a workshop), at which, apart from Heess and the two chemists Leiding and Hoffmann, also a few SS Officers participated. Widmann did not participate.”* (Beer 1987, p. 411)

Thus was constructed and accepted the prototype of the “gas vans,” if we follow Beer’s narrative. As for the use of these vehicles, he claims (*ibid.*, p. 412):

*“If we assume the period of time elapsing from the date of the test gassing in Sachsenhausen, plus the necessary vehicle conversion time of approximately eight to fourteen days, as well as the time required to bring the vehicle to the deployment location, the result is that the first gas vans could not have been in use any earlier than late November or early December 1941. The first use of a gas van has been proven to have occurred in the area of operation of Einsatzgruppe C involving Sonderkommando 4 a in Poltava. According to eyewitnesses, a gas van was used there in the killing of Jews in November 1941.”*

Nothing in this reconstruction is documented: the experimental gassing at Mogilev, the conversion of a truck into a “gas van,” the experimental gassing at Sachsenhausen, the first use of gas vans, all this is “proven” by means of simple “eyewitness testimony.”

As for the first presumed use of a “gas van” at Poltava, Beer’s claim is rather pretentious, since absolutely none of all this can be proven: as always, everything is a matter of post-war testimony. The documents, however, clearly refute these unfounded claims.

In EM No. 156, dated 16 January 1942, *Einsatzgruppe A* provides a detailed summary of the events at Poltava (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 98):

<sup>249</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747512.

*“Activity of Partial Unit SK 4a in Poltava: The Partial Squad Poltava of the SK 4a took over the processing of the cases left behind by the SK 4b on 17 Nov. 1941. Together with the militia established in Poltava, future collaboration with the SD, the Secret Military Police, the Field Gendarmerie, Security Police and Headquarters East was discussed at a conference. The so-called political division with the Ukrainian militia in Poltava was dissolved in this connection. During the period leading up to 20 Nov. 41, a whole series of transferred Communists were interrogated, most of whom were shot. A large-scale Jewish operation occurred on 23 Nov. 41, after the Jewish population was called upon to register in a bill-posting action the day before. During that operation, a total of 1,538 Jews were shot. The accumulated items of clothing were given to the mayor of Poltava, who gave particular consideration to the ethnic Germans in distributing the clothing.”* (Emph. added)

Therefore, regarding the first alleged use of a “gas van,” SK 4a not only made *no* reference to this extraordinary event at all, but explicitly stated that all the victims were “shot,” not “gassed”!

In conclusion, orthodox Holocaust historiography has absolutely nothing to say about the origins of the “gas vans” in documentary terms.

The presumed “experimental gassing” at Sachsenhausen is another fictitious event artificially created in this imaginary chain of events; over the course of the trial of this camp’s former commandant, Anton Kaindl, and another 15 defendants, held in communist East Berlin in 1947, there was talk of two “gas vans,” which were said to have been used as early as October 1941 for the presumed mass extermination of Soviet prisoners of war (Sigl, pp. 30f., 121f.; cf. Mattogno 2016b, pp. 162f). These were considered a common practice as early as October 1941, and no one knew of the presumed “experimental gassing,” which is therefore a mere pseudo-historiographical expedient.

As noted by Friedrich Paul Berg, gas-generating devices fueling vehicles with so-called “producer gas” were in common use in many European countries in the years between the two world wars and in particular during World War II. In Germany, these vehicles were called “*Generatorgaswagen*” or simply “*Gaswagen*,” which back then was an innocuous term that is today almost exclusively used to describe homicidal gas vans. Although producer gas, whether created from wood or coal, produces an extremely toxic gaseous mixture very rich in CO – from 18 to 35%, while the CO emitted by a gasoline engine reaches 12% at most – strangely, it does not appear from the eyewitness testimonies that the KTI ever thought of using these vehicles for homicidal purposes (Berg, pp. 459f.).

#### 6.4. Number and Distribution of the “Gas Vans”

As I mentioned above, there seems to be no documentation on the relations between the RHSA and the Gaubschat Company in 1941. The only document produced relates to 1942 and forms part of File R 58/871 f°1 from the German Fed-

eral Archives in Koblenz, already stored in the U.S. National Archives in Washington.

As mentioned earlier, the first document in the series is a letter dated 27 April 1942 headed “*Reichssicherheitshauptamt II D 3 a (9) No. 668/42-121*” with the subject “Fast-unloading device for the special vehicles.”<sup>248</sup>

The letter, dated 30 April, which bears the same heading, concerns “Delivered 10 Saurer Chassis” and contains the following order:<sup>250</sup>

*“As already discussed, a change of the floor grate of the above-mentioned vehicles is to be implemented.”*

The answer from the Gaubschat Company dated 14 May, states:<sup>251</sup>

*“We confirm receipt of your letter of the 30 of the previous month with which you inform us about a change to the 10 yet to be delivered vehicles of the above order.”*

The already-mentioned letter headed “*Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD II D 3 a (9) B. No. 668/42*” and dated 23 June 1942 explicitly refers to the original letter from the RSHA:<sup>249</sup>

*“Acc. to case II D 3 a –1737/41– 30 special coachworks for the delivered chassis have been ordered from the Gaubschat Company. 20 vehicles have already been completed and delivered.*

*The last 10 chassis have now been delivered and are to be equipped with coachworks.”*

The response from the company, received very late (18 September 1942), confirms acceptance of the order:<sup>252</sup>

*“We confirm receipt of your letter of the 23rd of the current month with which you refer to the negotiation between your technical Senior Secretary a. Pr. Sukkel and our Mr. Ernst and Krieger.*

*As an exception we are now prepared to engineer the remaining 10 vehicles while taking into account the seven points listed in your letter of the 23rd of this month.”*

The estimated cost was 4,051.85 RM per vehicle.

On 24 September, the Gaubschat Company informed RSHA:<sup>253</sup>

*“We now intend to take into manufacture the remaining vehicles from the above order.”*

Three certain facts may be deduced from this correspondence:

1. The original order from the RSHA to the Gaubschat Company of 1941 provided for the construction of 30 special vehicles.
2. By 23 June 1942, 20 special vehicles had already been built and consigned by the company.

<sup>250</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747524.

<sup>251</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747526.

<sup>252</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747515.

<sup>253</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747516.

3. The remaining 10 vehicles, on 24 September 1942, had not yet been placed in production.

It is not known whether or not these 10 vehicles were ever built and consigned to the RSHA and, it appears, no orthodox Holocaust historian has ever even bothered to raise the question.

As reported by Beer, the 6 “gas vans” from the first series (trademark name “Diamond” [*Diamond*] and Opel-Blitz) were presumably distributed at the end of 1941: one to *Einsatzgruppe C*, one to *Einsatzgruppe D*, two to Chełmno; as regards the remaining two, it is not known to whom they were assigned (Beer 1987, pp. 413f.). The whole story is once more based on mere trial declarations.

For 1942, from the very few documents adduced by orthodox Holocaust historiography, PS-501 and the Activity and Situation Report of *Einsatzgruppe B* for the time period 16 to 28 February 1942, dated 1 March 1942, supposing that they are authentic and have been interpreted correctly, the following distribution may be deduced:

- 2 Saurer vehicles to *Einsatzgruppe B* between 16 and 28 February 1942.
- 2 Diamond vehicles and 1 Saurer vehicle to *Einsatzgruppe B* before 15 June 1942.
- 1 Saurer vehicle promised to *Einsatzgruppe B* for mid-July 1942.
- 1 Saurer vehicle assigned to *Einsatzgruppe B* on 13 July 1942,<sup>254</sup> which is probably that mentioned in the previous point.

In the best of cases, the documents attest to 2 Diamond “gas vans” and 4 Saurer: 6 “gas vans” out of at least 26. There is no information at all about the remaining 20 vehicles. The question greatly concerns orthodox Holocaust historians, who make aggressive use of trial testimony without any objective confirmation in attempts to supply even the semblance of an answer.

The “gas vans” are said to have been developed essentially in order to facilitate the massacre activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*, to whom they had been delivered precisely for this purpose. According to Beer, of the six presumed “gas vans” from the “first series” (Diamond trademark) built in 1941, one was assigned to *Einsatzgruppe C*, one to *Einsatzgruppe D*, and two to Chełmno (Beer 1987, p. 413); in addition to which another thirty “gas vans” from the “second series” (Saurer trademark) are said to have been assigned in 1942, twenty of which are said to have been consigned in April (*ibid.*, p. 415), one at Chełmno, and the remainder evidently to the *Einsatzgruppen*. It should be noted that the *Einsatzgruppen* have left an enormous quantity of documents on their activities. The “*Ereignismeldungen UdSSR*” amount to “more than 2,900 typewritten pages” (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 333). To these should be added the other hundreds of pages of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” and the “Activity and Situation Reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police and the SD in the USSR.” In addition to these three series, there are extremely numerous indi-

<sup>254</sup> As may be deduced from the license-plate number, it belonged to the series sent to *Einsatzgruppe B* in February 1942.

vidual documents. Notwithstanding all this, in this documentation, the “gas vans” are never even mentioned (with the sole exception mentioned earlier), and not one single victim ever appears to have been killed with a “gas van.” As far as one can tell, no one has ever tried to address and solve this enormous contradiction.

Richard Headland eliminates this problem with a futile subterfuge which explains nothing (Headland, p. 58):

*“The gas vans were not specified in the Operational Situation Reports or the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories as a means of killing people. The numbers killed by this method were thus part of the summary figures for this period in the reports.”*

He returns to this question later, clearly showing that this subterfuge serves no purpose (*ibid.*, p. 102):

*“Gas vans were also not mentioned in the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories, nor is it possible to ascertain to what extent these numbers may or may not have been subsumed in the fragmentary later figures available.”*

Shmuel Spektor’s 1983 contribution “*Tötungen in Gaswagen hinter der Front*” (“Killings in the Gas Vans behind the Front” in the 1993 English edition), although a bit dated, is still very important for orthodox Holocaust historiography concerning the question of the use of “gas vans” by the *Einsatzgruppen*. I shall therefore begin my discussion of this aspect of the matter with Spektor.

## 6.5. The Use of “Gas Vans” in the *Einsatzgruppen* Operational Zones

### 6.5.1. The *Reichskommissariat Ostland*

#### 6.5.1.1. Jewish Deportations from the Reich to Byelorussia in 1942

*Einsatzgruppen* A and B were active in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* subject to the authority of the commander of the Security Police and the SD (*Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*, BdS) of the East, with headquarters at Riga.

Spektor begins by asserting:

*“In the middle of December 1941, three gas vans were brought from Berlin to Riga and put at the disposal of the BdS of the Eastern Territories. There were two small Diamond vans and one large Saurer van.”* (Spektor 1993, p. 57)

He documents this statement with recourse to two testimonies, rendered at the end of the 1950s/early 1960s, by two alleged drivers, Karl Gebl and Erich Gnewuch (*ibid.*):

*“At the beginning of 1942 they were dispatched with two gas vans to the commander of the BdS regional office for Byelorussia, located in Minsk and known, like the other regional offices, by the initials KdS.”*

I have explained at length elsewhere that post-war sworn statements entirely without documentary or physical confirmation, even if produced for trial purposes, have no value from the historiographic point of view (Mattoigno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 62-83). Recourse to such “proof” is therefore entirely unsubstantial.

Spektor next relies on a teletype dated 15 June 1942, with a temporal hop of one half year. This teletype was included by the Americans assigned to select German documents for trial purposes in the series of documents classified as PS-501. Alvarez, who has analyzed it, considers it a probable forgery (Alvarez/Marais, pp. 58f.). I shall give the original text and the official American translation:

*“Betrifft S. – Wagen. –*

*– Beim Kommandeur der Sipo u.d. SD Weissruthenien trifft wöchentlich ein Judentransport ein, der einer Sonderbehandlung zu unterziehen ist.*

*Die 3 dort vorhandenen S-Wagen reichen für diesen Zweck nicht aus. Ich bitte um Zuweisung eines weiteren S-Wagen ( 5 Tonnen). Gleichzeitig wird gebeten, für die vorhandenen S- Wagen ( 2 Diamond, 1 Saurer) noch 20 Abgasschläuche mitzusenden, da die vorhandenen bereits undicht sind. = = ”<sup>255</sup>*

*“Subject: S-Vans*

*A transport of Jews, which has to be treated in a special way, arrives weekly at the office of the commandant of the Security Police and the Security Service of Byelorussia.*

*The 3 S-vans there are not sufficient for that purpose. I request assignment of another S-van (5-tons). At the same time I request the shipment of 20 gas-hoses for the three S-vans on hand (2 Daimond, 1 Saurer), since the ones on hand are leaky already. ”<sup>256</sup>*

The signer was SS *Hauptsturmführer* Hans Trühe, head of the supplies department at the BdS at Riga. If the document is authentic and if it refers to “gas vans,” the text is incorrect and makes no sense.

It should first of all be noted that the reference to the “transport of Jews” arriving “weekly” refers to transports which at that time arrived in Minsk, Byelorussia, from the Reich. In 1942, until 25 September, the transports were as follows:

<sup>255</sup> PS-501. IMG. Vol. XXVI, pp. 106f. Facsimile of the document in: Alvarez/Marais, pp. 291f.

<sup>256</sup> NCA, Vol. III, p. 420.



**Table 24**

TRAIN	DEPARTURE	DEPORTEES	ARRIVAL/ DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	KILLED AT LEAST
Da 201	Vienna	1000	11/5/1942	Minsk	900
<i>Da 202</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>12/5/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 203	Vienna	1000	26/5/1942	Minsk	900
?	<i>Reich</i>	998	26/5/1942	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 204	Vienna	998	1/6/1942	Minsk	900
Da 205	Vienna	999	5/-9/6/1942	Minsk	900
Da 206	Vienna	1,000	15/6/1942	Minsk	900
<i>Da 207</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>16/6/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
<i>Da 208</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>23/6/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 40	Königsberg	465	26/6/1942	Minsk	400
<i>Da 209</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>30/6/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
<i>Da 210</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>7/7/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
<i>Da 211</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>14/7/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 220	Theresienstadt	1000	18/7/1942	Minsk	900
<i>Da 212</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>21/7/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 219	Cologne	1,000	24/7/1942	Minsk	900
<i>Da 213</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>28/7/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
<i>Da 221</i>	<i>Theresienstadt</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>28/7/1942</i>	<i>Baranovichi</i>	
Da 222	Theresienstadt	993	10/8/1942	Trostenets	900
<i>Da 215</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>11/8/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 216	Vienna	1,003	17/8/1942	Minsk	
Da 223	Vienna	1,000	21/8/1942	Trostenets	900
<i>Da 217</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>25/8/1942</i>	<i>Minsk</i>	
Da 224	Theresienstadt	1,000	28/8/1942	Trostenets	900
<i>Da 218</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1/9/1942</i>		
Da 225	Vienna	1,000	4/9/1942	Trostenets	900
Da 226	Theresienstadt	1,000	12/9/1942	Trostenets	900
Da 227	Vienna	1,000	18/9/1942	Trostenets	900
Da 228	Theresienstadt	1,000	25/9/1942	Trostenets	900

The normal numbers are taken from the verdict of the Koblenz District Court of 21 May 1963; Sagel-Grande 1978, p. 195, while those in italics are from Mattogno/Graf, pp. 200f.

According to the teletype in question, these transports were allegedly intended for “special treatment.” Was this a “euphemism” intended to conceal killing operations? Various documents from the period permit us to answer the question with certainty.

The letter from Wilhelm Kube, *Generalkommissar* for Byelorussia, to Hinrich Lohse, *Reichskommissar* for the East, dated 31 July 1942, according to which, among other things, the Germans in Byelorussia had shot 55,000 Jews in the 10 past weeks (that is, around mid-May; the letter makes no mention of the presumed “gas vans”), explicitly mentions the policy of resettlement in effect at the time, exceeding the capacities of the local administrations (PS-3428):

*“In addition to this clear attitude towards Jewry comes the difficult task for the SD in Byelorussia of over and over again taking new Jewish transports from the Reich to their destination. This constitutes an excessive material and emotional strain on the men of the SD and removes them from their tasks, which lie in the region of Byelorussia itself.*

*I would be grateful if the Reichskommissar could enable a halt to further Jewish transports to Minsk at least until the partisan danger has been finally vanquished. I need the SD one hundred percent against the partisans and the Polish resistance movement, which both fully occupy the SD units, most of which are not strong.*

*Following the completion of the Jewish Operation in Minsk, SS Obersturmbannführer Dr. Strauch reported to me this night, with justified indignation, that, without notification from the Reichsführer SS and without any communication to the Generalkommissar, a transport of 1,000 Jews from Warsaw destined for the local airport had arrived.”*

Kube requested that transports not authorized by Himmler be stopped, even threatening said transports with “liquidation”:

*“I am in complete agreement with the commander of the SD in Byelorussia that we should liquidate every Jewish transport which has not been ordered or announced by the authorities superior to us in order to prevent further cases of unrest in Byelorussia.”*

On 11 August 1942, Kube transmitted to the Reich minister for the occupied eastern territories, Rosenberg, a protest from the territorial commissar for Baranovichi concerning the arrival of “400 Jews from the Reich as Manpower.” In the letter, which had as its subject “New Influx of Jews from the Reich,” Kube expressed his support for the protest and concluded:<sup>257</sup>

*“I therefore ask that the corresponding measures be taken so that further Jewish transports from the Reich are essentially ceased and also request an instruction [to be communicated] that such transports are not to be admitted into my General District.”*

On 17 August, Kube requested instructions from the *Reichskommissar* for the East, Lohse,<sup>258</sup> who answered as follows on 24 August:<sup>259</sup>

*“In his report from 31 July of this year, the general commissar of Byelorussia stood categorically opposed to further Jewish transports from the Reich to Byelorussia, as these [transports] significantly increase the danger posed by partisans, and the local Security Police is [already] fully utilized in the fight against partisans. The Reichskommissar has prohibited any remonstrances against the [situation regarding the] Jewish transports from the Reich. So long as I do not receive any instruction [to the contrary], I assume that the Jewish transports carried out on the directive of the Reichsführer SS [Himmler] and the [Reich] Main Security Office are to be accepted without any further protest. On the other hand, I believe*

<sup>257</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 84.

<sup>258</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 85.

<sup>259</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 86.

*it justified to object to the military commander against Jewish transports into the East which are carried out on grounds of labor deployment, as only a central agency may handle and decide upon the import of further Jews into the East.”*

An internal memo from Lohse dated 21 September, addressed to the “Abteilung II Verwaltung” “Division II Administration” of the *Reichskommissariat*, informed all and sundry of the decision that “no protest was to be raised against the Jewish transports.”<sup>260</sup> This decision was communicated to Kube on 30 September.<sup>261</sup>

*“As personally decided by the Reichskommissar, he will abstain from voicing any objections against further Jewish transports to the East. This matter is exclusively the responsibility of the Security Police. It must be left to the commander of the Security Police in Byelorussia, through his official channels, to raise objections to transports which are carried out without the approval of the responsible agencies of the Security Police.”*

At the time, therefore, two types of Jewish transports were arriving in Byelorussia:

1. “Jewish transports occurring on orders of the Reichsführer SS and/or the Security Main Office,” which were “regular” and allowed of no objections,
2. and those requested for manpower purposes by individual local authorities without the preliminary approval of the general commissar (Kube) or the competent SS and Police Leader (SS *Oberführer* Karl Schäfer<sup>262</sup>) – such as the transport of 1,000 Jews from Warsaw on 21 July 1942<sup>263</sup> and that of 400 Jews arriving at Baranovichi from the Reich “as manpower” on 11 August 1942, referred to in Kube’s letter, mentioned above – which were “irregular.”

Yet still, the commander of the Security Police in Byelorussia *could* only prevent such irregular transport by complaints filed using the regular hierarchical channels.

It follows that the first kind of transports had to be accepted without protest, while the second kind admitted the possibility of protest, in the absence of which they had to be treated like the first.

If Kube threatened to “liquidate” the second, it is obvious that he was not authorized, hence could not liquidate the first kind, which were precisely the transports to which reference was made in the teletype of 15 June 1942, and it is even more obvious that none of the Jewish transports arriving in Byelorussia was destined to be “liquidated,” because it makes no sense to threaten people with death when they are already destined to die anyway.

<sup>260</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 89.

<sup>261</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 90.

<sup>262</sup> From May to July 1942, replaced in the month of July by SS *Brigadeführer* Curt von Gottberg.

<sup>263</sup> The transport is mentioned in the teletype sent the same day by Kube to Lohse (GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 80) and in Reichskommissar’s answer dated 5 August 1942 (GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 81), as well as in the letter dated 17 August, cited earlier.

This situation was reiterated in a letter addressed on 23 November 1942 by the *Reichskommissar* for the East to the Reich Ministry of the Occupied Territories with the subject “Jewish Question.” After noting that the Jewish population in the General District Minsk had diminished by 30,000 persons during the first year of civilian administration and that the Jewish ghettos were only located in a certain number of larger cities, the letter states:<sup>264</sup>

*“I have always rejected several attempts to make new Jews become residents of Byelorussia by means of Jewish transports from the Reich. I must point out in this regard that the Reich Commissar refuses to object against further Jewish transports to the East, since these matters lie within the exclusive competence of the Security Police. Since the commander of the Security Police and the SD lays claim to exclusive authority in all Jewish matters also in Byelorussia, I am restricted, in my handling of the Jewish question, to acting on suggestions from the Security Police.”*

The activity reports of an SS *Unterscharführer* Arlt, commander of the “2nd Platoon Waffen SS” of the “1st Comp./Batl. of Waffen SS f.s.d.” (for special deployment) are in open contradiction to the above-mentioned directives and create a problem which orthodox Holocaust historiography has hardly even noticed. These reports mention the digging of pits at an estate near Minsk, and that Jews arriving at Minsk were brought to these pits or to this estate, thus suggesting, without expressly stating so, that these Jews were killed and buried there.

The four known reports – sent to unknown addressees and covering the period from 4 May to 25 September 1942<sup>265</sup> – record the arrival at Minsk of nine Jewish transports, the dates of which are set forth in Table 25 (Baade *et al.*, pp. 246-257):

**Table 25**

ARRIVAL DATE	ORIGIN	DEPORTEES	DESTINATION	FATE OF DEPORTEES
11/05/1942	Vienna	1,000	Minsk	“deployed directly at the pit”
20/05/1942	Reich	1,000	Minsk	“brought to the... pit”
01/06/1942	?	?	?	?
26/06/1942	Reich	?	?	?
17/07/1942	?	?	?	“brought to the estate ”
24/07/1942	Reich	1,000	Minsk	?
1st half of August	?	2 transports	?	?
25/09/1942	?	?	?	?

The reports do not explain the reasons for the presumed killings, nor do they state on whose order the killings were carried out. It is, however, clear that the executions are believed to have been carried out arbitrarily and contrary to orders. But who would have dared to violate an order given by Himmler? Considering that

<sup>264</sup> YVA, O.53-49, p. 1.

<sup>265</sup> The reports are dated 17 May, 25 June, 3 August and 25 September. From an examination of the dates mentioned therein, we may conclude that we are missing the report for the period 4-22 August 1942. The date 4 May is the first indicated in the report of 17 May.

four Jewish transports arrived at Minsk during the period which is not covered by any of the four reports (4-22 August), the reports mention the arrival of nine transports out of 25. The question this raises is: what happened to the remaining 16 transports?

Thomas Kues, who has examined these reports in depth in terms of both form and content, has reached the conclusion that their probative value is “questionable” (Kues 2011, Chapter 3), as they are very probably fabrications or contain interpolations. The reports form part of the same documentation which contains the report by Franz Magill dated 12 August 1942, which, as I have shown in Subchapter 2.8., is equally “questionable.”

It is nevertheless a fact – to return to the theme of the present chapter – that the reports by SS *Unterscharführer* Arlt do not contain one single reference to any presumed “gas van.”

On the other hand, after all these presumed exterminations, a list of 878 Jews from the Minsk Ghetto in 1943 (the month is not specified) includes 225 children and babies distributed by age as follows:

Birth Year	Age	# children	Birth Year	Age	# children
1928	15	45	1936	7	11
1929	14	28	1937	6	17
1930	13	28	1938	5	12
1931	12	17	1939	4	17
1932	11	23	1940	3	4
1933	10	10	1941	2	2
1934	9	4		Total	227
1935	8	9			

The list also contains about ten elderly people, the oldest of whom was born in 1857 and was 86 years old (Chernoglazova 1999, pp. 289-310). It is therefore historically senseless to suppose that the commander of the Security Police and the SD, SS *Brigadeführer* and Major General of the Police Heinz Jost, who issued the teletype dated 15 June 1942, would have requested “gas vans” for the “regular” deported Jews whom they could not exterminate; thus, since his local subordinate, the commander of the Security Police and the SD Byelorussia, SS *Obersturmbannführer* Eduard Strauch, did not formally protest against the “irregular” transports until 30 September, he could not even “liquidate” these.

If, therefore, the teletype dated 15 June 1942 is authentic, it possesses quite a different meaning: that the “special treatment” which it mentions was a form of favorable treatment, that is, that the Jewish transports sent by Himmler’s order were not to be exterminated at all, as otherwise occurred with local Jews according to Kube’s letter dated 31 July 1942.

This is confirmed by the analysis of Kube’s statistics relating to the Jews who had been shot: 16,000 at Lida, 8,000 at Slonim, 10,000 in the Area behind the front, 10,000 at Minsk on 28-29 July, including 6,500 Russians and the remaining 3,500 who arrived from the Reich in November 1941 (at least six transports with

another 6,000 persons; Mattogno/Graf, p. 200), in addition to “several thousand” in the territory of Slutsk, Novogrudok and Vileyka.

Doing the math, hence arriving at a total of 55,000 victims, one would have to have killed 11,000 Jews in this location. But 18 transports carrying over 17,000 Jews reached Minsk between 6 May and 28 July 1942. Kube asserts that “2,600 Jews from Germany remained in the city of Minsk,” with an obvious reference to the transports from November 1941 (6,100 in total, including 3,500 who were shot and 2,600 survivors). It follows that the over 17,000 new arrivals were not counted by Kube – neither among the persons shot nor among the survivors – so that the only possibility is that they were no longer in Byelorussia and had been transferred further east. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the executions in the Minsk Ghetto were carried out in very large measure by the firing squad commanded by SS *Unterscharführer* Arlt, who wrote as follows in the report dated 3 August 1942 (Baade *et al.*, p. 252):

“28.7: Large-scale operation in Russian ghetto at Minsk. 6,000 Jews brought to the ditch. 29.7: 3,000 German Jews brought to the ditch.”

Kube, who was obviously aware of these executions (in the letter dated 31 July, as we have seen earlier, he spoke of 10,000 executions), would not have been able to tolerate the execution of the above-mentioned 17,000 Jews by Arlt’s firing squad, because it was in violation of superior orders, which is additional proof of the fact that Arlt’s Activity Reports, insofar as they regard the Jewish transports, are not reliable.

Kube’s execution statistics render the 15 June 1942 teletype even more nonsensical: if approximately 55,000 Jews were *shot* in the ten weeks prior to 31 July 1942, what would have prevented the shooting of another 1,000 per week? Why would gas vans have been needed? Taking Arlt’s Activity Reports seriously would be very naïve.

As shown by my remarks above, and by the text of Kube’s letter of 31 July 1942, the killing of Jews did not form part of a general plan of Jewish extermination, but rather a context of brutal anti-partisan fighting (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 308f.).

If reference is moreover made to the so-called “Just Memo” from the orthodox point of view, then, three “gas vans” are supposed to have eliminated 97,000 people in six months,<sup>266</sup> an average of over 4,000 per week, or approximately 2,700 per week in two “gas vans”; but then, how is it possible that the three “*S-Wagen*” parked in Byelorussia were not enough to gas 1,000 persons per week, and that a fourth was required for this purpose?

The absurdity of the request is indirectly illuminated by Gerlach. After declaring that, according to a witness, “between 350 and 400 persons could be murdered per day in one van,” he states that “also for the killing of transports with Jewish deportees, which could hold 1,000 people – a principal function of the gas

<sup>266</sup> That document forms part of ref. R 58/871 f°1 of the German Federal Archives; reproduced in Alvarez/Marais, pp. 318-322.

vans in the General District of Byelorussia – three vans still appeared insufficient, so that another one was requested” (Gerlach 1999, p. 767). In his footnote 1448, he refers precisely to the teletype of 15 June 1942, but neglects the relevant fact here that the request for a fourth “gas van” is in relation to a “Jewish transport” which arrived “weekly,” but in one week the “gas vans” presumably already in existence could have “gassed” at least ( $3 \times 350 \times 7 =$ ) 7,350 persons, so that, in this context, it is senseless to suppose that this would not have sufficed for the “special treatment.”

But even that’s not enough. Alvarez notes, among other things, that the document in question mentions 2 Diamond “S-Wagen” (the document misspells it “Daimond”), an American company, and stresses that Germany could not have obtained spare parts for these vehicles after the American entry into the war (Alvarez/Marais, p. 59). In a memo (*Vermerk*) dated “Berlin, 29 January 1942,” reference is made to a “truck manufactured by the Nash Company,” stating:

*“The car is of original American manufacture... It furthermore has to be considered that obtaining replacement parts for this van will be entirely out of the question.”*

obviously due to American entry into the war the month before. The note in question bears the abbreviation II D 3a, Department II D 3a “Motor Transportation of the Security Police” of the RSHA and hand-signed by Rauff, head of “Group II D 3,”<sup>267</sup> who, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, is said to have built the prototype “gas van.” How can one seriously believe that Rauff would later have authorized the conversion of Diamond vehicles – American trucks – into “gas vans”?

Otto Ohlendorf, leader of *Einsatzgruppe D* until June 1942, under interrogation after the war concerning the above-mentioned teletype, replied as follows:<sup>268</sup>

*“Q. In the first telegram, attached to the principal communication, this being dated 15 June 1942, reference is made to a transport of Jews, which has to be treated in a special way. What does that mean?”*

*A. The special treatment was the camouflaged expression for execution.”*

Ohlendorf’s answer resembles that of a Holocaust historian *ante litteram*, and his answer is completely false, as I showed earlier, because the “special treatment” in question meant exactly the opposite: keeping members of the transport alive.

Shortly afterwards, Col. Brookhart took up the same line of argument:<sup>269</sup>

*“Q. The communication of 15 June, to which I have referred earlier, speaks of three vans as not being sufficient for the particular assignment in Byelorussia. How large an operation would be indicated to you as assumed by that comment?”*

<sup>267</sup> NARA, T 175/254/2747313-14.

<sup>268</sup> Interrogation of O. Ohlendorf on 25 October 1945 by Col. Smith W. Brookhart; NARA, M1270 R 13, p. 12

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12f.

*A. I don't think this refers to any particular action, but to the distance of up to 300 kilometers between the various commandos, and the difficulties arising from the repeated repairs which had to be carried out on these vans.*

*Q. How were these vans used? That is, were the vans driven into the ghettos, or were the victims brought out to the vans?*

*A. As I said before, when I arrived, the large executions had been completed and in my case people were obtained from prisons.*

*Q. To what prisons do you refer?*

*A. For instance, the prison at Simferopol, which was the only place where I saw this type of action."*

These incoherent replies were entirely irrelevant to the document in question, which explicitly spoke of weekly, *i.e.*, regular, "Jewish transports," which therefore originated from the Reich, and show that Ohlendorf in reality knew nothing about these presumed "gas vans."

Spektor prefers to rely on the trial declarations of Hans Trühe:

*"He remembered that the gas vans – six in all – had been sent by the Reich Security Main Office from Berlin to Riga. He apparently did not know to which of the regional services they had been attached. The KdS in Riga was supposed to have received one or two of them."* (Spektor 1993, p. 57)

Here, as well, these are simple assertions without any documentary confirmation. After referring to testimony by Dr. August Becker, to which I shall return below, Spektor adduces another witness, the Jew Mendel Vulfowitsch of Riga, who signed a sworn statement before a Soviet War Crimes Commission on 9 December 1944 (*ibid.*):

*"In February 1942, I saw with my own eyes, how 2,000 elderly Jews from Germany, men and women, were loaded into special gas vans. These vans were painted field grey and had a large sealed cargo box with doors that could be hermetically sealed. All those inside were killed by gas."*

Such declarations are clearly false. Since approximately 6,100 Jews arrived at Minsk from the Reich in November 1941, 3,500 of whom were shot on 28 and 29 July, and since 2,600 were still left on 31 July 1942, it is not possible for 2,000 of them to have been "gassed" in February 1942.

Spektor adds that we may suppose "that gas vans were also used in the *Einsatzgruppe A* sector, in Estonia, Latvia, and the region of Leningrad" (*ibid.*), and appeals to another teletype, dated 22 June 1942, included in Document PS-501.<sup>270</sup>

<sup>270</sup> PS-501. IMT, Vol. 26, p. 105. Facsimile of the document in: Alvarez/Marais, p. 289.



*“To the Commandant of the Security Police  
and Security Service Ostland  
Riga*

*Subject: S-Van*

*The delivery of a 5-ton Saurer can be expected in the middle of next month. The vehicle has been at the Reich Security Main Office for repairs and minor alterations up to this time. 100 meters of hose will be supplied.”*<sup>271</sup>

Finally, he cites a “memo” dated 13 July 1942 which states:<sup>272</sup>

*“The S van Pol 71463 is ready and is to be sent to Riga with the driver.”*

I shall return to this document in the following Subsection. Spektor concludes that there were five or six “gas vans” in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*,” distributed as follows: 1 or 2 at the disposal of *Einsatzgruppe A* (Riga and territory between Latvia and Leningrad) and four at Minsk, three of which were assigned to *Einsatzkommandos 7b, 8 and 9*, while the fourth was stationed at the city of Minsk. All this is based merely on statements made by Trühe, however (Spektor 1993, pp. 57f.).

He then cites other trial testimonies and asserts that, “[a]ccording to Schlechte’s estimates, about five thousand to six thousand people had been killed in *Einsatzkommando 8*’s gas vans by the autumn of 1942.” (*ibid.*, p. 58), out of respect for what I have elsewhere referred to as the superstition that testimony *creates* facts.

It is worthwhile dwelling on the statements of driver Erich Gnewuch on the “gas vans” of *Einsatzgruppe B*:

*“I was detailed with the gas van to about twelve convoys of arriving Jews. It was in 1942. There were about a thousand Jews in each convoy. With each arrival I made five or six trips with my van. Some of the Jews were shot. I myself never shot a single Jew; I only gassed them.”* (*ibid.*)

The phrase “twelve convoys of arriving Jews” here refers to twelve of the 18 Jewish transports which arrived in Byelorussia from the Reich between 6 May and 28 July 1942. Hence, some 12,000 of them are said to have been “gassed” or shot, if we follow Gnewuch. Even this extermination, in the light of what I explained above, turns out to be without foundation, first of all because the transports in question were accepted, and the deportees had to remain alive by Himmler’s order, so why did they not appear at all in the statistics of murdered Jews drawn up by Kube on 31 July 1942?

Spektor then dwells upon the transport of 1,000 Jews which arrived at Minsk from Theresienstadt on 31 July 1942. Based on mere trial declarations, he asserts that between 500 and 700 persons were killed in “gas vans” (*ibid.*, p. 59). Yehuda Bauer writes in this regard (Bauer, p. 120):

<sup>271</sup> NCA, Vol. III, p. 421.

<sup>272</sup> PS-501. IMT, Vol. 26, p. 110. The translation in NCA, Vol. III, p. 422, is incomplete: “The S-truck Pol 71463 is ready.”

*“We now have fairly precise information about this train: its number was Da 221, and it left Theresienstadt on July 28, 1942, with 999 persons on board. There is German documentation of the use of two gas vans in this killing. The Jews from Theresienstadt were murdered in Baranovichi because the day they arrived in the region, July 31, was the last day of the Aktion in Minsk, and the Germans did not want the train to continue there.”*

The “German documentation” is said to consist of the sources indicated in two footnotes: the first refers to a “judicial investigation” against various German defendants and Gerlach’s book; the second says (*ibid.*, fn 64f., p. 120):

*“See YVS, M.41/2229, a letter from Obersturmbannführer Dr. Heuser of the Minsk Sipo to the management of the railways in ‘White Ruthenia,’ July 31, 1942: ‘Aus technischen Gründen (wurde Ustrmführer [sic]) Amelung angewiesen bereits in Baranowitsche auszuladen.’ [for technical reasons (Usturmführer) Amelung had been instructed to unload already in Baranovichi.] Around this time 100 Jews on another train (it is not clear which one) arrived at the Koldyczewo camp from Theresienstadt.”*

The text of the document is as follows:<sup>273</sup>

*“Regarding: Jewish transport Da 221 (Theresienstadt)*

*Reference: none.*

*For technical reasons, I have instructed my field office Baranovichi, SS Untersturmführer Amelung, to unload the above-mentioned Jewish transport already in Baranovichi. I request to issue the corresponding orders to the transport management of Baranovichi Rail Station. The other Jewish transports will then be taken over by myself again here in Minsk.”*

The verdict of the Koblenz District Court dated 21 May 1963 in the trial of Georg Albert Wilhelm Heuser and ten other defendants dealt with this matter in these terms (Sagel-Grande 1978 *et al.*, pp. 213f.):

*“The prosecution is of the opinion that the Jews transported by Da 221 were killed in Baranovichi immediately after their arrival. It holds the defendant Heuser guilty of participation for having ordered the killings. However, the fate of the train passengers remains unknown. From Heusers’s letter to the Main Railway Administration Center, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted due to the conspicuous spelling mistake also contained in original documents (Der Kommandeur Der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD), does not indicate that the arriving persons were to be unloaded in Baranovichi for the purpose of a subsequent execution. Other certain leads don’t exist either. According to a report by the General Commissar for Byelorussia to the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories dated 11 August 1942, the Regional Commissar for Baranovichi received 400 Jews at that time from the Reich as manpower. Due to this temporal correlation, they could have been the same persons from transport Da 221. Although this transport carried 1,000 persons, the figure of 400 evidently related on-*

<sup>273</sup> YVA, O.53-1, p. 133. Dr. Georg Heuser, who wrote “on behalf” of the commander of the Security Police and the SD Byelorussia, was an SS *Obersturmführer*.

*ly to workers, so that Jews unfit for labor may not have been mentioned. Perhaps they were not killed immediately either, but were first quartered in the existing Baranovich Ghetto.”*

The extermination of this transport is not, therefore, a certain fact, not even for the judges handling the case. This extermination claim is based solely on testimonies and statements by Polish and Russian war crimes commissions; what is more, there is not even any unanimity as to the method of the presumed killings. Bauer notes (Bauer, p. 119).<sup>274</sup>

*“The Jews were forced to strip and then were killed on the spot in gas vans (or by Belorussian or Lithuanian policemen, according to Lewinbok).”*

According to Gerlach, Transport Da 221 was diverted to Baranovich, “because the train arrived on the last day of the large-scale ghetto murder operation in Minsk” (Gerlach 1999, fn 1393, p. 759), but in what way could this transport have hindered this operation? If they could shoot 10,000 people in two days, they easily could have included a thousand more in that massacre. From the orthodox point of view, it would make more sense to unload and later shoot the 600 presumably unfit Jews at Minsk Station; instead, the entire transport was diverted to Baranovich, but only exceptionally, because, as the above-mentioned document says, “The other Jewish transports will then be taken over by myself again here in Minsk.” This means that the diversion of the transport was indubitably related to the executions which were then underway, but exactly opposite to what orthodox Holocaust historians claim: the transport, which arrived on Himmler’s order and which could not be touched, was diverted to Baranovich precisely to avoid its being involved in the execution.

Spektor moreover pretends that at the end of October 1943, “gas vans” were used “in Minsk for the liquidation of the ghetto there” (Spektor 1993, p. 59), but in this case as well, he is unable to adduce anything but trial testimony devoid of any objective confirmation.

The only special vehicles which appear in the documents were assigned to disinfestation/disinfection. For example, on 26 March 1942, the Sanitation Department of Daugavpils possessed a “mobile steam disinfection chamber” suitable for clothing and objects.<sup>275</sup> A letter from the Acting City Council of Riga dated 17 May 1943, with the subject “overhauling the disinfection vehicle,” mentions a “Desinfektionswagen” “disinfection van.”<sup>276</sup>

#### 6.5.1.2. Activity and Situation Report of *Einsatzgruppe B*, 1 March 1942

A Polish book on Auschwitz published in 1946 cites a message from the camp resistance dated 21 September 1944<sup>277</sup> which said (Friedman/Hołuj, pp. 81f.):

<sup>274</sup> Dr. Zelig Lewinbok was camp physician at Koldyczewo from 1 September 1942; Bauer, p. 127.

<sup>275</sup> LVVA, P-1023-1-4, p. 426.

<sup>276</sup> LVVA, P-1494-1-255, p. 17.

<sup>277</sup> The text reads erroneously “1943”; the exact year, 1944, is mentioned two lines earlier.

*“The sandy terrain around Maczkami is currently home to the so-called Sonderkommando Ryryk, consisting of a gassing truck and motorized plough [plugu motorowego]. This vehicle, bearing the Saurer trademark, painted yellow-green (license plate number Pol.71-462, and driven by Oberwachmeister Arndt) is built in such a way as to possess an interior cargo box 4 meters long and 2.5 wide, clad in sheet metal, a door without handles and a hatch in the floor and a shuttered opening with a grid in the right-hand corner for ventilation. In the rear, the vehicle has a pipe connected, in the present case, to a flexible hose leading from the exhaust pipe. When the motor is started at full throttle, it asphyxiates the victims in the cargo box by means of the combustion gases emitted by the engine, after which the victims are buried using the Kommando’s motorized plough, destroying all trace of the victims. This Kommando was created in Russia for the rapid liquidation of dangerous elements behind the front line. It then came from Lithuania and was deployed in the area around Auschwitz in carrying out executions as ordered by the police court martial. There are witnesses to such an execution in the area around Auschwitz, who saw the driver, Arndt, pacing alongside the truck, with the engine revved up at full throttle yet staying put, where he said with a smile that in the meantime ‘the little birds inside are being smoked.’”*

A few years later, the message was published on an Internet site, repeated by Robert Jan van Pelt, thus rendering “official” the story of the “gas vans” said to have been in operation at Auschwitz (van Pelt, pp. 215f.). In the meantime, a document was found – the only one – which seems to validate the theory of the Auschwitz “gas vans.” This is an “Activity and Situation Report of *Einsatzgruppe* B for the time period 16 through 28 February 1942” dated 1 March 1942. We read there:<sup>278</sup>

*“The gas vans which arrived at Smolensk on 23 Feb. 42 were distributed as follows:*

*EK 8: Saurer Truck Pol 71462*

*EK 9: Saurer Truck Pol 71457*

*Both vehicles arrived at Smolensk in defective condition and were assigned to the Einsatzkommandos after eliminating the defects.*

*The two smaller gas vans will be transferred to SK 7a and SK 7b after finalization of their deployment at EK 8.”*

The most surprising thing is that this document, out of the enormous quantity of documents which have been found, is the only one that mentions gas vans, although, as noted above, 250,000 persons are supposed to have been killed in these mobile gas chambers in approximately 3,300 separate gassing operations in Russia alone, according to Achim Trunk. But this term, which looks like a solution, constitutes, in reality, the principal problem: what was a “gas van” for the author of the report? It is known, for example, that the term in Germany was already in

<sup>278</sup> *Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Sicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ZUV 9, Vol. 31, p. 159. The document has been published by Alvarez/Marais, p. 343. Transcript in: Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 114, p. 293.

use at the beginning of the 20th century, when this German term “Gaswagen” included “in general all automobiles with internal combustion engines [...] regardless of whether they are fueled by gasoline, methylated spirits, benzol or any other liquid fuel” (Kuester, p. 36).

The question must therefore be rephrased as follows: *when* did the term “gas van” become a term denoting a murder weapon as it is in today’s Holocaust terminology?

Mathias Beer, the expert on this topic, asserts in fact that “in contemporary terminology, the mobile gas chambers were referred to as ‘special vehicles’ ‘special trucks’ and ‘S vans’” (Beer 2011, p. 154). When did “gas van” become synonymous with “special vehicles” “special trucks” and “S vans”? And in what documents is this transition of the terms’ meaning attested to?

In fact, this change in meaning, in which an already-existing word acquired the sense of “mobile homicidal gas chamber,” was coined only after the end of the Second World War. It is known that the Soviets called the presumed gas vans “*dushegubki*”<sup>279</sup> and even Jeckeln, as late as December 1945, spoke of “*Gasautomaschinen*” (see Subsection 6.5.2.1.).

First, “gas van” was, as is well known, the abbreviation for “*Holzgaswagen*,” producer-gas vehicle. One of these vehicles was also allocated to the motor pool of the Central Construction Office at Auschwitz. This motor pool’s report for the month of July 1942 states that this particular vehicle had been driven for 1,435 kilometers with “wood gas,” that is, producer gas (“*1435 Kilometer mit Holzgas*”).<sup>280</sup> The report moreover mentions the repair of a “wood-gas tractor” unit (“*Zugmaschine Holzgas*”).<sup>281</sup> A document dated 22 September 1942 lists the vehicles from the Central Construction Office based on the type of fuel: gasoline, Diesel, gaseous fuel (“*Treibgas*”) and “wood gas” (“*Holzgas*”). This category included only one single vehicle, obviously the just-mentioned tractor unit.<sup>282</sup> The kilometers traveled with wood gas amounted to 662 in the month of October,<sup>283</sup> 470 in the month of November,<sup>284</sup> and the same again in the month of December.<sup>285</sup>

On 22 October 1942, the scarcity of fuel compelled Minister Albert Speer to launch an appeal to vehicle owners to convert their vehicles to function “with generator gas” on their own initiative (Kroll, pp. 14f.). Gas-generating propulsion systems for vehicles spread to the point where it is mentioned even in the *Einsatz-*

<sup>279</sup> The term is made up of the noun “*dusha*” (soul) and the verb “*gubit*” (to destroy), so that it almost corresponds to the German term “*Entwesung*” (disinfestation), which indicates precisely the destruction (ent-) of a form of life (*Wesen*).

<sup>280</sup> Tätigkeitsbericht der Fahrbereitschaft der Zentral-Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz für den Monat Juli 1942. RGVA, 502-1-181, p. 275.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>282</sup> Aufstellung der im Dienste der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei in Auschwitz stehenden Transportfahrzeuge und Baumaschinen. RGVA, 502-1-181, p. 80.

<sup>283</sup> Tätigkeitsbericht der Fahrbereitschaft vom 1. bis 31. Oktober 1942. RGVA, 502-1-181, p. 246.

<sup>284</sup> Tätigkeitsbericht der Fahrbereitschaft vom 1. bis 30. November 1942. RGVA, 502-1-181, 235.

<sup>285</sup> Tätigkeitsbericht der Fahrbereitschaft der Zentral-Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O/S für den Monat Dezember 1942. RGVA, 502-1-181, p. 227.

*gruppen* reports. In EM No. 182 dated 18 March 1942, *Einsatzgruppe A* reported.<sup>286</sup>

*“With regard to the fuel situation, a certain improvement seems to have set in since the beginning of January. Although not often, motor vehicles can be seen again, but predominantly trucks fueled by wood gas.”*

EM No. 189 dated 3 April 1942 states:<sup>287</sup>

*“The Headquarters of Economics keeps pushing with high pressure the conversion of tractors to wood gas generator propulsion. 92 Russian and 65 Latvian skilled workers were deployed at the MTS. The retraining of many workers and tractor drivers to wood-gas propulsion is underway.”*

The administration of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp was interested in such vehicles from the very start, as attested to by a message intercepted by the British on 18 March 1943:<sup>288</sup>

*“To the SS FHA [Leadership Main Office].*

*Subject: Conversion of trucks to wood-gas propulsion, SLT HKP 557. CC Auschwitz recalled today a local truck for conversion to wood-gas propulsion. According to past local experience, conversion to charcoal-gas propulsion should be carried out on a system of our own. For this reason, we request a decision as to whether this conversion should take place at the army’s motor pool. Conversion to wood gas is not desired due to operating difficulties.*

*Commander SS Military Training Area HEIDELAGER, VOSS, SS Brigadeführer and Major General of the Waffen SS”*

On 6 September 1944, the head of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office, SS *Obersturmführer* Werner Jothann, sent a letter to the district councillor from the office of economy at Bielitz to inform him that he had been assigned a gas-generator vehicle by the authorities in Breslau:<sup>289</sup>

*“The truck in question is a generator vehicle. In view of the current difficult situation with liquid fuel, it is irresponsible for generator vehicles to be out of operation for lack of tires to the detriment of gasoline and Diesel vehicles.”*

In this context, there is no reason why the alleged homicidal “gas vans” could not have been precisely this type of vehicle.

That the same vehicle was a “mobile gas chamber” is in fact only claimed by a message from the resistance at Auschwitz, but the document says only that the author had seen a truck bearing the license plate POL 71462.

The witness Bronisław Falborski mistook the innocuous truck parked in the courtyard of the Ostrowski Factory in 1945 for a “gas van” (Mattogno 2011, pp. 36f.). A gas-generator truck, with an unusual superstructure compared to normal vehicles, was more-easily so mistaken, particularly due to the pipes which carried

<sup>286</sup> NARA, T-175/235/2724013.

<sup>287</sup> NARA, T-175/235/2724133-4.

<sup>288</sup> TNA, German Police Decodes. No. 3, Traffic: 18.3.43. ZIP/GPDD 421a/14.4.43.

<sup>289</sup> RGVA, 502-1-190, p. 416.

the producer gas from the gas generator to the engine inside the vehicle. Gas-generator vehicles were also built in Italy starting in 1934 (de Capitani 1940).

As for the specific case, it is tragically comical that the SS should have sent a mobile “gas chamber” to an “extermination camp” equipped with all the killing methods claimed by the orthodoxy (gas chambers, phenol injections into the heart, bullets in the back of the head).

In this context it is important to stress that the license number of the vehicle mentioned in the “memo” dated 13 July 1942 (“The S van Pol 71463 is ready and is to be sent to Riga with driver”<sup>272</sup>) no doubt belonged to the series of “gas vans” mentioned in the Activity and Situation Report of *Einsatzgruppe B* for the time period 16 to 28 February 1942 dated 1 March 1942: Pol 71462 and Pol 71457 were therefore in all probability just *Generatortgaswagen*.

Returning to the document in question, the simple presence of the term “gas van” proves nothing about the nature and purposes of these vehicles. How were they used?

Gerlach understands that “the two ‘smaller gas vans’ mentioned there had already been delivered before the delivery of two new ones on 23 Feb., and were also quite evidently present before the beginning of the reporting period on 16 Feb.” (Gerlach 1999, fn 1435, p. 765). Therefore, EK 8 already had two small “gas vans” and, if these could only be assigned to SK 7a and 7b “after finalization of their deployment,” this means that EK 8 at the time used them in a very intensive manner, so much so that another two, larger, “gas vans” were needed.

The Activity and Situation Report of 1 March 1942 should therefore have taken account of this intensive use. In reality, those who adduce this document as proof of the real existence and deployment of homicidal “gas vans” always forget that the report also mentions the executions carried out by *Einsatzkommandos 8* and 9, but they do not contain the slightest reference to “gas vans.”

Given the importance of the topic, it is advisable to discuss it in greater detail. Hence, here is a longer excerpt from that Activity and Situation Report (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 114, pp. 295f.):

*“EK reports: From the area south of the road Mogilev-Berezino comes a report that 35 partisans on snow shoes had attacked the house of a member of the security services in the town of Utno. When he defended himself, he and his two children were shot, along with another member of the security services from a neighboring village, who was staying with him. His wife, seriously wounded, was able to flee. In the area of the Troop Borisov, the area north of the highway is considered particularly endangered, where troops with a strength of 4 to 50 men appear attacking and plundering the villages. In Sachistye, a member of the security services was shot and the municipal savings bank robbed. A partisan group of a strength of 60 to 70 men, well armed, is causing unrest in the area west of the road Borisov-Lepel. This group has its stronghold in the vicinity of Lake Palik, about 40 km north-northwest of Borisov.*

*EK 9 reports: Partisans have been reported from the areas around Surazh, Usvyaty and Liozno. The armed forces agencies have introduced the necessary*

*measures. According to a report from EK 9, the security situation in the city of Vitebsk, although garrison defenses mode is still in effect, must be considered satisfactory. Since signal lights were observed during the heavy air raids on Vitebsk, the arrest of all males aged 15 to 60 was ordered by the city commandant. Armed forces, field police, secret field police and the Einsatzkommando participated in this operation. The population was made aware of the reason for the arrests by loudspeaker vehicles and bills posted on walls, and it was at once announced that 100 of the arrested persons would be shot immediately, if any more signal lights were observed.”*

This is followed by several accounts of the executions:

*“EK 8: 471 persons, among them 15 for supporting partisans, 3 Russians for stubbornly refusing to work, and 403 Jews. EK 9: 3,128 persons, among them 28 for membership in partisan groups or for supporting partisans, 17 Russians or Jews for making inflammatory statements, 1 Russian for theft, and 3,073 Jews.”*

Why is it that the reports contain not one single mention of “gas vans” for homicidal purposes? Secrecy cannot be the reason, because in that case the arrival of the “gas vans” would not have been mentioned at all; not counting the fact that there would be no reason not to declare that a certain number of Jews had been “gassed” instead of “shot,” as both would be evidence of killing. On the contrary, from the orthodox point of view, it would have been more logical for EK 7 and 8 to express an opinion on how the “gas vans” were functioning.

We need to keep in mind that, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, apart from the one large and the two small “gas vans” mentioned in the report dated 1 March 1942, *Einsatzgruppe B* is said to have received another two Diamond vehicles and one Saurer vehicle prior to 15 June 1942, and at least one more Saurer vehicle on 13 July. By mid-July, it therefore is said they had at least eight of them at its disposal.

We also need to keep in mind that the series of reports known as “Activity and Situation Reports” by *Einsatzgruppe 3* continues after the report dated 1 March 1942. In Chapter 5, I already mentioned seven later reports covering the periods from 18-31 August, 1-15 September, 16-30 September, 15 November-15 December 1942, 16 December 1942-31 January 1943, 1-28 February and 1-31 March 1943. All these reports provide detailed reports on the activities of the various units of *Einsatzgruppe B*, but without any reference to the use of “gas vans.”

In particular, the “Activity and Situation Reports of *Einsatzgruppe B* for the time period 16 to 31 January 1943,” which speaks at rather great length of “motor transportation,” does not contain the slightest mention of “gas vans” (*ibid.*, Doc. 174, p. 508); the “Activity and Situation Report” of the same unit for the period from 1 to 31 March 1943 informs us in an even more-detailed manner as to the vehicles assigned to them, but again without any reference to “gas vans” (*ibid.*, Doc. 180, pp. 552f.).

Another major problem which has been completely ignored by orthodox Holocaust historiography may be summed up in two simple questions: for what rea-



son, and for which victims, were the homicidal-gassing trucks said to have been assigned to *Einsatzgruppe B*?

As I demonstrated in Chapter 5, the Incident Reports show that, from 14 November 1941 – hence before the presumed arrival of the homicidal “gas vans” – EK 8 had killed 28,219 persons and EK 9 11,452. The figures in the report dated 1 March 1942 are 60,811 and 23,509, respectively, and from the orthodox point of view, the great majority of these persons were shot without any complaint of resulting psychological stress suffered by the members of the execution squads.

Why, then, were two supposedly homicidal Saurer “gas vans” assigned to *Einsatzgruppe B* at the end of February 1942? And for which victims were they required? Which victims could not simply be shot, like the tens of thousands of others, but required, on the contrary, the employment of homicidal “gas vans”?

All this confirms that the simple presentation of the report dated 1 March 1942 provides nothing as to the existence of *homicidal* “gas vans.” There is, moreover, the fact that no document attests to the *use* of a “gas van” for homicidal purposes. In other words, no document affirms that even one single person was ever killed in a “gas van.”

#### 6.5.1.3. “Gas Chamber” or “Gas Van”? Von Thadden’s Letter of 15 May 1943

At last, Spektor adduces a document which he introduces in the following manner (Spektor 1993, p. 60):

*“On 15 May 1943 representatives of the Italian Fascist party visited Minsk. The general commissioner for Byelorussia, whose name was Kube, showed them a church that was being used as a warehouse. A diplomat named von Thadden, who held the rank of legation counselor, first class, and was then stationed at the Foreign Office in Berlin, heard about this visit from another legation counselor, von Rademacher, and made the following note in his diary on 15 May 1943:”*

I have reproduced the full text of the document below; here, it is important to note only that Kube is said to have shown the Italians “a gas chamber.”

Spektor reproduces the quote as is, without comment, and this is perfectly understandable: for an intelligent re-entry into a discussion of the “gas van,” in fact, the document should make precise reference to a “gas van,” but the term “*Gas-kammer*” can only refer to a stationary “gas chamber,” which, however, never existed at Minsk.

His colleagues reproduce the document without bothering to examine the question in greater depth, giving the document fleeting mention. Browning, after summarizing the document, comments (Browning 1978, p. 150):

*“Since taking his post as Generalkommissar in Minsk, Kube had been openly critical of Nazi Jewish policy. Many Jews were killed in the Minsk area by firing squad, but there is no record that the Germans actually erected gas chambers there. Kube must have known about the gas chambers elsewhere and used the Italian inquiry about the piles of Jewish baggage to present the Italians with a graphic, complete, and convincing information about the killing of Jews as he could. Whatever the veracity of the incident in Minsk, it is clear that rumors of the*

*gas chambers circulated unofficially through the German bureaucracy and that Rademacher was privy to such rumors.”*

Gerlach writes as follows in this regard: “Contrary to several statements, a stationary gas chamber has never existed in the area around Minsk,” and in a note, precisely in relation to the Spektor quote, he states: “It was probably a gas van” (Gerlach 1999, p. 768). An Italian historian, Liliana Picciotto, adds the following concept (Picciotto, fn 13, p. 94):

*“The gas vans functioned at Minsk at least until the summer of 1943. To this end, in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there exists a document according to which a group of fascist experts visiting Italian workers at the front, stopped at Minsk. During the visit, General Commissar Wilhelm Kube, Gauleiter for Byelorussia, showed the Italians a desecrated church. When the Italians asked about the packages and suitcases piled up inside, Kube explained that they were all that remained of the Jews deported to Minsk. Kube then showed the Italians the gas chamber in which the Jews had died.”*

Notwithstanding the fact that interpreting the term “gas chamber” as meaning “gas vans” is an obvious distortion, it is worthwhile taking a quick look at the document in question, the full text of which reads as follows:

*“Note.*

*Herr Legation Councilor Rademacher informed me that Gauleiter Kube, on the occasion of a visit by fascist representatives in Minsk, was also shown a church used for worldly purposes by the Communists. In reply to a question by the Italians as to the meaning of the small packages and suitcases piled up inside, Kube declared that these objects were all that remained of the Jews deported to Minsk. Kube subsequently showed the Italians a gas chamber in which the Jews would allegedly be killed. The fascists were said to have profoundly shocked.*

*Herr Rademacher learned of this event through Herr Köppen, Adjutant of Reichsleiter Rosenberg. In his opinion, General Consul Windecker in Riga was said to be aware of the event as well, because as far as he, Rademacher, could recall, the event occurred when fascist representatives were sent to the East in order to see to the welfare of Italian workers.*

*Berlin, 15 May 1943” (T/341)*

As for the authenticity of the document, it should be noted that the “Geheim” stamp and those indicating the registration numbers “K206919,” “H322193” and “E421193” are doubtlessly authentic, that is, genuine stamps then in use at the Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as shown by other letters by Eberhard von Thadden, such as those published by Randolph L. Braham.<sup>290</sup> What is rather dubious, on the other hand, is the authenticity of the signature. Von Thadden usually signed his letters with the initials “vTh” (followed by the date, day and month),

<sup>290</sup> Braham 1981, Vol. 2, e.g. on pp. 364, 367, 369, 370, 380.

while the signature of the note in question is by a different hand and is a rather clumsy attempted imitation – or reconstruction of von Thadden’s signature.<sup>291</sup>

What Thomas Kues has said about this document (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 603-608) should be supplemented by the fact that there is no trace of it in the documentation published by the archives of the German Foreign Office (cf. Rothfels 1978 and 1979), whence the document in question should have originated,<sup>292</sup> just as there is no trace of any record of the presumed visit to Minsk itself by any Italian fascist delegation, a visit which, if it had ever occurred, would have required negotiations for the issuance of the permits required, and the establishment of an itinerary for the visit. If the visit had really occurred, it would have left a marked imprint, not only in the Italian archives in the memories of Italian *fron-dist*i like Luca Pietromarchi and Giuseppe Bastianini, true collectors and propagators of anti-German rumors to undermine Italian-German relations. In his documented book *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust 1941-43*, Jonathan Steinberg, who makes extensive use of Pietromarchi’s journal, is completely ignorant of the document in question and the related matter while according considerable importance to quite an insignificant document, although it is the only one that mentions the killing of Jews by gas: a “note” of 4 November 1942, which states:

*“General Pièche reports that it seems to him that the Croatian Jews from the German occupation zone deported to the Eastern territories have been ‘eliminated’ through the use of toxic gas in the trains in which they were sealed up.”*

Steinberg attributes such importance to this rumor-mongering that he reproduces the original document (Steinberg, p. 73).

Not even the well-informed Vatican knew anything about the presumed visit by the fascist delegates, who are said to have been so shocked by the story of the “gas chamber.” Barely 10 days before the note in question, on 5 May 1943, the Vatican’s Secretariat of State summarized “the terrible situation of the Jews in Poland” in a note on the propaganda bandied about at the time, complaining, among other things, of the following (Holy See, p. 274):

*“Special death camps near Lublin (Treblinka)<sup>[293]</sup> and Brest-Litovsk.<sup>[294]</sup> It is said that they are sealed up, several hundreds at a time, in chambers, where they are said to succumb to the effects of gas.<sup>[295]</sup> Transported in cattle cars, hermetically sealed, with quicklime on the floor.”*

<sup>291</sup> Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2014, “Remarks on von Thadden’s note dated 15 May 1943,” pp. 538-543 (not included in the English edition Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013).

<sup>292</sup> Browning (1978, fn 21, p. 249) indicates precisely the following archive reference: “PA [= Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes]. Inland II g 169 a, Thadden memorandum, 15 May 1943. T 120/K781/K209619.”

<sup>293</sup> Treblinka is not near Lublin, but between Warsaw and Białystok.

<sup>294</sup> A phantasmagorical “death camp.”

<sup>295</sup> Here the editor specifies that “even in August 1943, there were still no certain proofs [of exterminations by gas]; see the communication dated 30 August from the Secretary of State of the United States: ‘...there are insufficient proofs to justify the declaration relating to executions in gas chambers,’

No mention of the “delegation,” not even during the following period. If the visit to Minsk had really taken place as described in the presumed note from von Thadden, the Vatican, with its innumerable channels of information, would have known about it immediately, particularly in Italy.

#### 6.5.1.4. The “Gassing” with “Lorpicrin”

The only “gassing” in the German-occupied eastern territories which appears in a document is mentioned in the Situation Report of the Commander of the Police Ukraine for the months of February and March 1942, signed by a certain Müller-Brunckhorst (Hoppe, Doc. 79, pp. 235f.):

*“General District Nikolayev.*

*On 2 Feb. 1942, 202 men, women and children from the ghetto of the town of Zlatopol (approximately 1.5 km north of Novomirgorod) were eliminated by the militia by gassing them with Lorpicrin on order of the district commissar. It was possible to eliminate the Jews without any disturbances and without causing a stir.”*

The term “Lorpicrin” is meaningless, being an obvious distortion of “Chlorpicrin,” chloropicrine (trichloronitromethane). This did not prevent an historian like Dieter Pohl from quoting the above text with its “Lorpicrin,” without any explanation (Pohl 2009a, p. 181).

Chloropicrin was used as an aggressive irritant gas during the First World War. Later it was used as an insecticide, fungicide, herbicide or pesticide, used in the control of grain weevils, fleas, flies, bedbugs and even mice. The substance has a density of 5.66 compared to that of air (hydrocyanic acid is 0.93) and a boiling point of 112°C (hydrogen cyanide – HCN – boils at 25.7°C; cf. Flury/Zernik, pp. 418f., 540f.; Peters 1942, pp. 81, 88). It is known that, during the Second World War, chloropicrin no longer formed part of the disinfectants more-commonly used and therefore more-easily detected, which were: *Zyklon B*, *T-Gas* (a mixture of ethylene oxide and carbonic acid), *Tritox* (trichloroacetonitrile), *Ventox* (nitrile), *Cartox* (a mixture, in varying proportions, of ethylene oxide and carbonic acid), *Nitril*, *Calcid* (a substance with a high percentage of calciocyanamide) and *Cyanogas* (a substance with a low percentage of calciocyanamide). All these disinfectants were regularly distributed by the Degesch Company (NI-9098).

Having said that, there is a need to explain how a mere “district commissar” was able to procure chloropicrin in a small town in the Ukraine, located approximately 80 km northeast of Kirovohrad, near Kiev; how he supposedly used it for the alleged “gassing,” since the substance boils at 112°C, and how the operation could have proceeded “without any disturbance.” In 1942, the Health Institute of the Regia University of Padua performed experiments to prove the effectiveness of various disinfectants, including chloropicrin, with regard to which it was noted that (Mondini, p. 26):

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FRUS [= Franklin/Perkins, *Foreign Relations of the United States*] 1943, Vol. I, p. 416.” Holy See, fn 2, p. 274.

*“Chlorpicrin moreover presents disadvantages: it is difficult to handle, given its lacrymogenous action, even if strongly diluted (1:200,000,000) and is highly toxic. [...] Upon completion of the operation, the area must be ventilated for two or three days, because the lacrymogenous effect persists for an equal period of time.”* (Emphasis in original)

#### 6.5.1.5. Christian Gerlach and the “Gas Vans” in Byelorussia

Gerlach dedicates two chapters to the topic of interest to us here. The first is titled “Further Plans: Murder by Gas, Deportation of Central European Jews and Planned Extermination Centers.” It starts by asserting that Byelorussia was of particular importance for the presumed extermination of the Jews for two reasons (Gerlach 1999, p. 646):

*“as a testing ground for new extermination techniques and as destination for the deportation and murder of West and Central European Jews. The corresponding plans became more numerous in the fall of 1941.”*

Nevertheless, continues Gerlach, there is a need to distinguish plans from reality:

*“Actually, no more than an estimated quarter of Byelorussian Jews were killed with gas, far fewer Jews were deported from the West to Byelorussia than planned, and no extermination camps existed there functioning internationally, apart maybe from the Maly Trostenets Camp near Minsk in 1942.”* (*ibid.*)

But these presumed exterminations with gas do not belong to the realm of reality, so that it is permissible to doubt that any plans actually existed in this sense.

Gerlach then sets forth his critical re-examination of the anecdote relating to Himmler’s visit to Minsk (*ibid.*, pp. 646f.):

*“According to the findings of past investigations, Himmler assigned Nebe in Minsk, on 15 August 1941, with the mission of participating in the development of other murder methods, since shooting was endangering the emotional well-being of his men. If that is so, he did this because the Institute for Criminological Techniques (KTI), which was subordinate to Nebe within the Reich Criminal Police Office, was already for some time participating in the development of the technique of killing mental patients in Germany and occupied Poland with gas. So-called ‘gas vans’ were already in use there, in which the victims were poisoned with carbon monoxide from gas bottles, and Nebe’s idea, or that of the KTI, to do this by introducing exhaust gas into the vehicle’s interior, likewise originated from the time before the attack on the Soviet Union.*

*Of course, the 15th of August 1941 was not the point of departure for all considerations relating to the murder of European Jews with gas. Already on 8 August 1941, there were rumors in Liepaja (Libava), Latvia, that the Germans wanted to kill Jewish women with gas.”*

With regard to these rumors, Gerlach refers to a work by Götz Aly (*ibid.*, fn 785, p. 647), who wrote (Aly, pp. 333f.):

*“As indubitable as Himmler’s order is, it cannot be interpreted as an isolated, authoritative act. For as early as 8 August, an official in the Economic Preparations*

*Office [Wirtschaftsausrüstungsamt] learned the following during an inspection tour in the Baltics: 'In Liepaja, several thousand Jews have already been 'liquidated'. (...) So far, Jewish women have not been shot. There was talk about eliminating them later with gas.' Himmler had evidently not just ordered the expansion of the genocide on 15 August, but rather, it had already been discussed and requested by officers and members of the murder squads and to some extent even been put into practice. The rapid radicalization of anti-Jewish policies in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union is, looking back on it, already part of the Holocaust. [...] To this extent, the 15th of August 1941, as shown by the following documents, cannot be interpreted as the date of an all-encompassing general extermination decision.'*

Gerlach's and Aly's positions require a comment. Both writers reject the interpretation according to which Himmler's visit to Minsk coincides with the decision of the *Reichsführer SS*, which constituted the point of departure for the presumed extermination of the Jews of the Soviet Union using gas, but in the sense that the "gassings" had already been discussed and put into practice. For this purpose, both writers adduce the rumors mentioned in the above-mentioned report of 8 August. The quote from Aly, conveniently truncated, in fact gives the impression that there already existed a consolidated practice of Jewish extermination by the Germans, in which "gassing" was or could be a simple option. This idea is, however, refuted by the text of the document in question and by its historical context. The document states (Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 56, p. 240):

*"The Jewish question in Riga had hardly even been tackled yet. The Jews wear a yellow star for identification and are put to work clearing rubble and building roads, etc. In Liepaja, on the other hand, several thousand Jews have already been 'liquidated,' some by the German authorities, but mostly by the Latvians, who accuse the Jews of having collaborated with the Bolsheviks at the expense of the Latvians during the Russian time [of rule]. Jewish women have not been shot yet. There was talk of eliminating them later by way of gassing."*

Therefore, at Liepaja, the Jews were being "liquidated," but only in small part by the German authorities, and in large part by the Latvians themselves. This is confirmed by *Ereignismeldung* No. 96 dated 27 September 1941, in which the city of Liepaja is mentioned for the first time in relation to executions (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 587):

*"Executions: In the period between 30 Aug. and 5 Sept. 1941, the following persons were executed: [...] 38 persons in the district of the Liepaja field office, and 191 persons in the rest of the province, for a total of 459 persons."*

The report then states: "All Jews in Liepaja are currently being registered" (*ibid.*, p. 588). Aly informs us as follows in a footnote (Aly, fn 22, p. 334):

*"The mass executions in Liepaja were carried out by the Sonderkommando 1a, led by Martin Sandberger – whose main occupation is head of the Central Office for Immigrants."*

But there is no documentation in this regard. So, what is the value of the rumors mentioned in the report of 8 August 1941 about a future “gassing” of Jewish women? How can such crass propaganda stories be taken seriously?

From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, an even greater problem still remains: for whom were the future gas vans intended? For the mass extermination of the Russian Jews?

Another attempt, although much milder, to introduce a practice of homicidal gassing into this early context is offered by Browning, who mentions another document, also dated 8 August 1941 (Browning 2004, fn 329, p. 513):

*“A file kept by Nebe’s aide, SS-Obersturmbannführer Engelmann, confirms post-war statements that already in early August a chemist of the RSHA’s Criminal Technical Institute was ordered to Smolensk by Einsatzgruppe B Commander Nebe.”*

For obvious chronological reasons, this cannot have anything to do with the presumed Himmler order, which was issued a week later than this, so that the relevance of this document from the orthodox point of view is unclear.

Gerlach’s short chapter on the use of “gas vans” in Byelorussia begins with two observations in this regard:

*“On the one hand, there were more vans in use than previously known, on the other hand, their significance as a murder tool was numerically less prevalent than assumed.”*

Gerlach then complains about the lack of sources:

*“Due to the lack of sources, it remains unclear when the first gas vans arrived in Byelorussia. The value of post-war testimonies, for instance, is unclear, according to which they were first placed in service in Mogilev in October or November 1941, and in Minsk in December 1941.”*

He then adds that (all Gerlach 1999, p. 764):

*“the very first proven use of gas vans is said to have occurred in Poltava in November 1941. The first use supported by sources relates to the Chelmno Extermination Camp on 8 December 1941.”*

The use of “gas vans” at Poltava is “documented” by Gerlach with three references (*ibid.*, fn 1433). The first points to Beer’s essay, which I will examine below; the second is an article by Gert Robel, who writes the following in this regard:

*“The first few of these vans, of whose existence and functioning the world was first informed through the Krasnodar Trial, were already in service at the end of 1941; their number was increased in the early summer of 1942.”* (Benz, p. 540)

In footnote 263, he adds:

*“In addition to Minsk and Krasnodar, the use of gas vans has been proven for Kharkov (Krausnick, Einsatzgruppen, p. 193).*

*Mathias Beer (Die Entwicklung der Gaswagen beim Mord an den Juden, in: VjZ 35 [1987] p. 403-417) cites, as their first use on Soviet territory, the use by SK 4a*

*in November 1941 near Poltava; he thus confirms this place of use which Krausnick (Einsatzgruppen) mentioned as probable.”*

On the page indicated, Krausnick limits himself to saying (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 193):

*“Just as evidently in Poltava, gas vans were also used in Kharkov for this and for other ‘liquidations.’”*

so that it appears that the presumed fact is “evident,” and therefore requires no proof!

Gerlach’s third reference is the report of a Soviet War Crimes Commission on Kiev (USSR -243). As can be seen, the presumed use of “gas vans” at Poltava in November 1941 is based on incestuous sources and Soviet propaganda.

Beer, on the other hand, refers to a nonsensical statement by Paul Blobel dated 6 June 1947, which, what is more, does not even mention this locality (NO-3824):

*“Sonderkommando 4 A also shot women and children. In September or October 1941, I received a gas van from Einsatzgruppe C under Dr. Dr. Rasch, and an installation was set up using the gas van.”*

Longerich, by contrast, speaks in this context also of Poltava, but not of any “gas vans” (Longerich 2010, p. 241):

*“All the commandos of Einsatzgruppe C can also be shown to have murdered the sick. In September 1941, at the request of the local commander’s office in Vasilkov, Sonderkommando 4a shot 200 Jews but also a number of mentally ill women; a sub-commando of the same unit shot 270 mentally ill patients on 24 October in Chernigov, Sonderkommando 4b shot 599 inmates from the Poltava asylum at the beginning of November, and Einsatzkommando 5 murdered 300 mentally ill Jews on 18 October in Kiev. The incident reports say of Einsatzkommando 6 that ‘by 12 November 1941’ it had shot ‘800 of a total of 1,160’ mentally disordered inmates of the asylum of Igrin [sic; Igren] near Dnepropetrovsk. Murders of asylum inmates by Einsatzgruppe D during 1942 are widely documented.”*

As for Chelmno, the use of “gas vans” in this camp starting on 8 December 1941 is so solidly “proven by sources” that even the opening date of the camp is a mere conjecture not even supported by “eyewitness testimony”! (Mattogno 2011, p. 29)

Gerlach then continues his exposition (Gerlach 1999, pp. 764f.):

*“According to most known testimonies, the first two gas vans were brought to Minsk in early 1942.”*

Gerlach’s reference (*ibid.*, fn 1434, p. 765) is to p. 88 of Spektor’s 1983 German contribution mentioned earlier, which contains nothing, however, to support such an assertion; it appears, in fact, on the previous page, in which the Israeli historian, as we have seen above, calls upon the testimony of a driver, Erich Gnewuch.

Gerlach seems concerned by the lack of documents, judging by the manner in which he deals with one of the very few which actually exists, the one – already



examined earlier – which mentions the term “gas vans”; on the same page, in fact, Gerlach quotes it three times in very different contexts (*ibid.*, p. 765):

- 1) *“It is certain that the two ‘smaller gas vans,’ that is, those from the first production series, were delivered to Einsatzgruppe B before 16. February 1942.”*
- 2) *“Similar to these vans of the so-called first generation (presumably trademark ‘Diamond’) was the situation with the Saurer vans that arrived in Smolensk somewhat later, on 23 February 1942, which first had to be made operational due to defects.”*
- 3) *“Three of the four gas vans were deployed on 1 March at EK 8, one Saurer at EK 9; the smaller ones were to be allocated to SK 7a and 7b ‘following finalization of the deployment at EK 8.’ Einsatzgruppe B does not seem to have obtained additional vans.”*

In all three quotations, Gerlach adduces the same reference as his source: “EGr B, Tätigkeits- und Lagebericht für 16. bis 28. Februar v. 1.3.1942, BStU ZUV 9, Bd. 31, Bl. 159” (*ibid.*, fn 1435, 1437, 1438, p. 765). In footnote 1437, Gerlach writes:

*“Also the memo [RSHA] II D3a (9) No. 214/42g.Rs., Subject: Technical modifications to the special vehicles deployed in service and in the process of construction (IMT, Vol. 26, pp. 102ff) assumed the possibility of repairing the vehicle at the deployment location.”*

The subject line of the cited document is that of the so-called “Just Memo,”<sup>266</sup> but Gerlach’s reference is to Becker’s letter to Rauff dated 15 May 1942, which constitutes the principal element of PS-501. In it, Becker in fact writes of minor repairs to the “gas vans” to be performed on the spot, since transport to Berlin was too costly (PS-501. IMT, Vol. 26, p. 104). The reference moreover is irrelevant, because Gerlach introduces it in this context (Gerlach 1999, p. 765):

*“There can hardly be any doubt that some gas vans were actually assembled and manufactured on the spot, as already suggested in the draft letter from the racial advisor in the Ministry for the East, Wetzel, to Lohse, dated 25 October 1941. A German Jew deported to Minsk who worked in the KdS Building, gave detailed descriptions during his interrogation of the relevant construction elements which the German Jews had to fabricate in the KdS workshop in Minsk.”*

It is in fact clear that vehicle “repair” is one thing, while vehicle “construction” is something quite different, so that Gerlach cannot cite a document which mentions only “repair” in support of his theory of “construction.” In the light of the documentation on the topic at hand, which is no doubt authentic – the correspondence between the RSHA and the Gaubschat Company – Gerlach’s theory appears entirely baseless.

Wetzel’s letter to Lohse has already been discussed at length in Subchapter 2.10. In the present context, Gerlach’s reference to Wetzel’s letter appears rather forced. I remind the reader that the letter mentions “gassing devices,” while another passage of the letter refers to “Brack’s means”: can one seriously believe

that this is a reference to “gas vans”? In the affirmative case, it would also be necessary to believe:

- a. that the “gas vans” were already in use before 25 October 1941, although not “in sufficient numbers,” while Beer’s historical “reconstruction” claims that the first “experimental gassing” at Sachsenhausen took place on 2 November 1941 and that “the first gas vans can only have been put into service at the end of November and the beginning of December 1941” (Beer 1987, p. 412);
- b. that Brack held a top-ranking position in designing the “gas van,” while Beer, in his long article, does not even mention him in this context;<sup>296</sup>
- c. that it was easier to construct “gas vans” at Riga rather than in the Reich, a supposition which the correspondence between the RSHA and the Gaubschat Company renders absolutely inconsistent;
- d. that for the construction of “gas vans” at Riga it was sufficient simply to send a chemist to that city, which is an obvious absurdity.

If, therefore, Gerlach seriously believes all these incongruities, his critical sense is deficient. All this is the result of accepting the authenticity of all the documents adduced in relation to “gas vans” without the slightest formal or material criticism.

It is a very weak excuse that other experts in the field commit the same infraction, such as Dieter Pohl and Hartmut Weber, who have presented the transcript of Wetzel’s letter with the heading “The Racial Advisor from the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories suggests on 25 October 1941 that Jews unfit for labor should be murdered in gas vans in the East”! (Hoppe/Glass, p. 564)

Arad, by contrast, introduces the “gas vans” almost as “compensation” for the absence of stationary “gas chambers” (Arad 1979, p. 278):

*“Documents published by the Soviets and trials of war criminals conducted in the USSR and other countries have not proved that permanent gas installations, in which Jews and non-Jews were killed, were constructed and used in the Eastern territories. However, gas vans, in which Jews were killed, did operate in these areas.”*

Gerlach then turns to PS-501, which he initially uses in a ridiculous way in order to document that (Gerlach 1999, p. 765):

*“two gassing vehicles of the ‘Diamond’ trademark first came to Minsk in 1942, followed separately by a third of the ‘Saurer’ trademark in spring. In June 1942, according to a report from the BdS, there were three gas vans in Minsk; another had been applied for, since the others were overloaded, and was promised by Rauff (RSHA) for mid-July.”*

The first claim is said to be proved by the teletype dated 15 June 1942 (PS-501), but it makes no sense to mention this for the purpose of documenting what happened in early 1942; this is in fact based on a trial statement by driver Erich

<sup>296</sup> Beer mentions Brack only to inform us that Becker “came to the RSHA in December 1941 due to an exchange between Brack and Himmler.” Beer 1987, p. 413.

Gnewuch, cited by Gerlach in the same note (*ibid.*, fn 1439). In this regard, Spektor declares:

*“In the middle of December 1941, three gas vans were brought from Berlin to Riga and put at the disposal of the BdS of the Eastern Territories. There were two small Diamond vans and one large Saurer van. Two drivers, Karl Gebl and Erich Gnewuch, arrived from Berlin before Christmas 1941”* (Spektor 1993, p. 57)

Mathias Beer, on the contrary, affirms (Beer 1987, p. 413):

*“Already before Christmas of 1941, two smaller gas vans were brought to Riga from Berlin. Both vehicles were small ‘Diamond trucks’, referred to in SS Hauptsturmführer Trühe’s letter to Rauff dated 15 July 1942.”*

Yet Beer backs this up with a reference to the statement of “K. Gebl” (sic; *ibid.*, fn 69, p. 413). Did these “gas vans” end up in Riga or in Minsk? In late 1941 or in early 1942? Were there two or three of them? In this regard, the above-mentioned historians show an obvious lack of clarity and consistency.

At this point it is necessary to open a brief parenthesis. In Subchapter 4.3. I cited the “Monthly Report on the Establishing of Ghettos in Jewish Work Camps, Labor Deployment and Treatment of Jews,” which indicates that as late as 20 November 1941, the Germans were still working on organizing the ghettos of Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils as labor resources, but also with regard to those who were unable to work, starting with children. In this context, the gossip about an intention to gas women and children at Liepaja (8 August 1941), and interpreting Wetzels’s “gassing devices” at Riga (25 October 1941) as homicidal in nature makes no sense.

In the second place, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, 27,800 Jews from the Riga Ghetto were shot between 30 November and 9 December 1941; why, then, did the RSHA feel the need to send 2 or 3 “gas vans” to Riga towards mid-December, that is, after the deed?

The chief prosecutor’s indictment before the Hamburg District Court in the Riga case, dated 30 September 1949, does not contain any reference to “gas vans,”<sup>297</sup> and Angrick and Klein do not even discuss them in their document collection.<sup>298</sup> But then, what were the 2 or 3 “gas vans” doing at Riga? Going on a vacation trip?

Summing up, Gerlach speaks of the deployment by the KdS of Minsk of “five or six gas vans” on the basis of “two important witnesses”; one of these vans was allegedly used at Baranovichi (the sources are a Polish investigatory commission and Spektor’s article). In conclusion, in his words (Gerlach 1999, p. 766):

*“it is proven by sources that, in the summer of 1942 not only four (according to the literature) but, rather, at least eight gas vans were in operation in Byelorussia.”*

<sup>297</sup> TNA, FO 1060-598, pp. 11-23.

<sup>298</sup> The only reference to a “gas van,” relegated to a footnote, regards a single testimony: “The lady was taken away and shot. A version of this episode involving a gas van is in Spielmann’s statement, which sounds credible as well.” (Angrick/Klein, fn 14, p. 428).

There were actually nine so alleged, because “another one was added to this later.” In this regard, Gerlach writes:

*“Because at the end of 1943, the head of Group 570 of the Secret Field Police, Heinz Riedel, had the idea of having a gas van built by his subordinates.”*

This vehicle is said to have been used to “gas” inmates between late 1943 and early 1944 and in June 1944. Thus, “the Wehrmacht had its own gas van at their disposal, so to say” (*ibid.*).

I can only repeat that, in considering the correspondence between the Gaub-schat Company and the RSHA, it requires a very poor critical sense to take seriously the story of the home-made “gas vans.” The epilogue of the matter is almost comical:

*“In 1947, the Kiel District Court managed to acquit Riedel, since the killings had not been committed in a cruel way.”* (*ibid.*)

It is also conceivable that the judges did not take the story of the home-made “gas vans” too seriously.

Gerlach finds himself in a tight spot, caught between the need to provide excessive amounts of documentation for the existence of the “gas vans” to consolidate orthodox Holocaust historiography and the difficulties arising from the extraordinary scarcity of sources, since more “gas vans” ought to mean more documents. He then adopts a strategy which could be defined as “reductionist”: he seeks to reduce, as much as he can, the presumed use of the “gas vans,” and consequently the number of related victims.

He claims that, according to one alleged perpetrator, a certain Karl Buchner – who was even “controller of extermination by gas vans at the commander of the Security Police in Minsk, Department IV B” – the victims “controlled” by him at Minsk during the period of his activity amounted to 20,000–30,000. Nevertheless, Gerlach claims that “the great majority of Jews and other victim groups were not murdered by gas, but by shooting.” The capacity of the “gas vans” was too low: one vehicle could kill 350–400 persons per day, but the majority of Jews from Byelorussia perished in massacres killing up to 10,000 victims in one or two days, so that “this would not have been feasible with three or four gas vans.” The “gas vans” were “likewise not suitable” for extermination actions in the ghettos of the small cities “due to the great risk of a breakdown on the bad roads and due to possible partisan interference.” Finally, there were “also other reasons against the deployment of the gas vans,” such as the high fuel consumption and the problem of cleaning them (*ibid.*, p. 767). Since these problems were easily foreseeable, orthodox Holocaust historians should ask themselves why the SS authorities would have equipped the *Einsatzgruppen* with “gas vans” in the first place.

For Gerlach, the use of these presumed killing vehicles was limited to two cases: the evacuation of the prisons, based on absurd sources,<sup>299</sup> and the “exter-

<sup>299</sup> Here, for example, Gerlach mentions the gassing of 3,000 persons from the Polotsk area at Trostenets in February 1943; on pp. 1015f., he returns to the alleged massacre, asserting: “Between 17 and 26 February 1943, officials of the KdS Minsk murdered 3,000 people with gas vans, after transporting

mination of the Jewish transports arriving from Central Europe in the year 1942,” which has no basis in historical fact, as I have shown earlier.

## 6.5.2. The Reich Commissariat Ukraine and Crimea

### 6.5.2.1. The Founding Myth of Soviet Propaganda

We return to the analysis of Spektor’s exposition on the “gas vans.” Regarding the Ukraine, he claims with respect to the territory controlled by *Einsatzgruppe C*:

“At least five gas vans operated in their areas – two with *Sonderkommando 4a*, two with *Einsatzkommando 6*, and one in the area under the control of the commander of the Security Police in Kiev (where *Einsatzkommando 5* worked).”

He then supposes the presence of a sixth homicidal “gas vans” “in *Sonderkommando 4b*, which was in service south of the region where *Sonderkommando 4a* operated.” (Spektor 1993, p. 60). Here, however, there is no trace of any document: this is all dependent on post-war testimony, starting with Blobel’s sworn declaration dated 6 June 1947 relating to the use of “gas vans” at Poltava which I have already discussed. The related treatment is therefore a simple hodgepodge of statements without any objective basis, and therefore entirely conjectural and inconclusive, which therefore is not worth dwelling upon. The only important point is Spektor’s reference to the Kharkov show trial held by the Soviets, in which the Germans were accused of committing a mass extermination of Soviet civilians “using gas vans and other means” (*ibid.*, p. 62). This, together with other Soviet trials or investigations, clearly prepared the way for the subsequent “confessions” of the presumed German perpetrators (see Subchapter 8.4. of Part Two for more). The “Judgement of the Smolensk Trial of Ten Germans” from 15 to 19 December 1945 explicitly mentioned “suffocation by carbon monoxide in the gas vans.”<sup>300</sup> It is not by chance that Spektor closes the chapter with a reference to Vasily Grossman’s and Ilya Ehrenburg’s well-known propaganda volume *The Black Book* (Spektor 1993, p. 64, and fn 45, p. 261).

The close link between Soviet propaganda and the “confessions” of German defendants is clear from the interrogation of the former Higher SS and Police leader East and Russia North Friedrich Jeckeln by the NKVD (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) on 21 December 1945.

The interrogator was not familiar with the term “gas vans” and always spoke of “soul murderers,” which is the literal translation of the Russian term “*dushegubka*,” a compound term made up of “*dusha*” (“soul”) and the verb “*gubit*” (“to destroy”). Jeckeln, the person under interrogation, was not familiar with the term “gas vans” either, and used a term translated from Russian, “*Gasautomaschinen*” (“gas auto machines”; Christoforov *et al.*, pp. 356f.):

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them from the Polotsk region to the camp at the Shirokaya Street.” The sources are the interrogation of a Russian dated 18 July 1944, hence effected by a Soviet Commission, and Document USSR-38.

<sup>300</sup> USSR-87. German translation in: GARF, 7445-2-101, pp. 250f. The Russian text always uses the term: “*dushegubka*.” Lebedeva/Raginsky, pp. 166-168; Document USSR-87, p. 168.

“[Question:] *From whom did you receive the order to use the soul destroyers in the Eastern territories?*

[Answer:] *These orders were issued by Heydrich or Kaltenbrunner to the SD and Gestapo leaders subordinate to me, Jost or [Achamer-]Pifradner or also Panzinger (at the moment I can't quite remember exactly). But I do remember that I was informed by all these persons of the use of these gas auto machines during the extermination of the Jews in the East. Besides, in December 1941 in Lötzen, when I reported orally to Himmler the execution of his order relating to the shooting of the Jews in the Riga Ghetto, Himmler told me that shooting was too complicated an operation. To shoot people, he said, you need people who can shoot, and that this had a very bad effect on these people. Therefore, Himmler continued, it would be best to liquidate people using gas auto machines, which were manufactured in Germany according to his instructions, and that with the use of these gas auto machines all inconveniences connected to shooting disappear. I can no longer remember the exact words of Himmler's statements in this regard, but it gave the impression that the thought of using the gas auto machines originated from Himmler himself.*

[Question:] *Where and when were the gas auto machines used in the East?*

[Answer:] *I was informed by the above-mentioned leaders of the SD and Gestapo in the East that gas auto machines, at a quantity of 3–5 units, were used for the annihilation of Jews in Salaspils and Riga in the second half of 1942. At the end of 1942 and beginning of 1943, the leader of the SD in Latvia, Dr. Lange, during a conversation, told me about the use of gas auto machines and explained to me their design. He also invited me to drive to it for an inspection, which I declined. He also told me that the people inside the machine begin to scream loudly, knock at the walls of the machine with their fists after they had been inside for about 5 minutes, then lose consciousness, and finally die.*

[Question:] *How many people were annihilated by you in this manner?*

[Answer:] *I cannot tell the number of Jews killed in this way, but I can tell that the number was not large, relatively speaking, since the SD and Gestapo preferred to shoot the Jews rather than to suffocate them in the gas auto machines. I can no longer exactly remember whether it was Lange or Fuchs who reported to me that the gas auto machines cannot be used on a large scale for the annihilation of the Jews due to a lack of fuel and their insignificant rate of use [capacity]. They said that the people killed in the machine suffered from serious nausea, and that cleaning the machine and unloading the bodies after every death trip was therefore a very unpleasant and dirty job, which also took a long time. In view of such inconveniences, Lange and Fuchs preferred shooting, since that would be a much easier and faster way of exterminating living people.”*

Jeckeln therefore claimed to have been informed on the use of the “gas auto machines” by many superior officers in the SS, but strangely, as I have already noted, the numerous reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* and other police and SS units operating in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* do not contain the slightest mention of this use.

In his view, therefore, Himmler was practically the inventor of the “gas auto machines,” yet not in order for the victims to die more humanely, but rather in order to prevent “all inconveniences connected to shooting.”

It does not seem very plausible that the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* would have been assigned 3 or 4 “gas vans” more than a week after Himmler’s order dated December 1941, a time at which these vehicles were presumably already “manufactured.”

In response to the question as to the number of victims of the “gas auto machines,” Jeckeln answered in the only manner possible, just as Otto Ohlendorf had already answered the month before when interrogated by the Soviet colonel Tupikov (to which I will return below), that is, by reducing the use of the “gas vans” to an irrelevant level, to do away with the need to provide details which he could not know.

Thus, the “gas vans,” which were presumably designed as a more humane method of killing, thus reducing the stress for the killers – more convenient than shooting anyway – revealed themselves to be even more inhumane and more inconvenient!

As I have shown above, this “reductionist” strategy was taken up by Gerlach with an explicit reference to this interrogation.

As regards Crimea and the Caucasus, where *Einsatzgruppe D* was in operation under Otto Ohlendorf’s command, Spektor makes rather vague assertions, based exclusively on witness statements before post-war trial, first of all those by Ohlendorf himself. According to the Israeli historian, therefore:

*“At the beginning of 1942 the staff of EG D was in Simferopol. Three gas vans were also there at this time two large Saurers and one small Diamond.”* (Spektor 1993, p. 64)

In support of these assertions, he takes recourse to a verdict handed down on 17 September 1975, 33 years after the presumed events! What I mentioned above as to the “propaedeutic” value of Soviet investigations applies as well to these testimonies, which is fully confirmed by Spektor himself:

*“This was not the first time, however, that Christmann’s name had been mentioned in a war-crimes trial. It had already been brought up between 14 and 17 July 1943, after Krasnodar had been retaken by Red Army troops and a group of his ‘Caucasian’ auxiliaries were being tried by a Soviet court. Two of them, named Tishchenko and Pushkarev, had been given the rank of noncommissioned officer and been assigned to loading the gas vans used by Einsatzkommando 10a. They described these vehicles in close detail, and their statements coincide with the evidence presented to the Munich court thirty-seven years later. The trial of these Caucasian auxiliaries of EK 10a provided the first opportunity for the public in the Soviet Union and the Western Allied countries to learn the facts about the existence of the gas vans.”* (Spektor 1993, p. 67)

The purely propagandistic nature of this trial is obvious from what Spektor pompously presents as “the most important proof” presented during the trial, the testimony of a survivor of “gas van,” a certain Kotov, and adds:

*“So far as we know, he is the only survivor of this operation.” (ibid.)*

In a report regarding “The Mass Gassings” in Krasnodar, a Soviet commission asserted that, in this city, 6,700 Soviet citizens had been “murdered with carbon-monoxide poison gas in the cruellest manner,” and that a medical examination of the bodies showed “that all the victims had been killed with carbon monoxide.” The manner in which the witness succeeded in surviving is a rather ingenious load of rubbish. “I tore off my shirt, wet it with urine, and pressed it to my mouth and nose” (*ibid.*).<sup>301</sup> A home-made gas mask of zero effectiveness when it comes to carbon monoxide!

The Soviet War Crimes Commission which investigated Rovno even claimed to have found bodies in a mass grave, which, notwithstanding several months of interment and decomposition, still miraculously exhibited skin “of a bright pink color” (see Part Two, Section 8.4.3.). Since it is known that such a discoloration of the victims’ skin is indeed a sign of carbon-monoxide poisoning (Trunk, p. 40: “pink coloration”), it is therefore considered that this propaganda trick physically “proves” the existence of the “gas vans.”

In this context, note should be taken of Stefan Ivanovich Pilunov’s description of a “dushegubka” (Beluga, pp. 170f.):

*“We spent the night near the cemetery in the ‘dushegubka,’ a three-axle automobile approximately 10 m long, 4 m wide and 3,5 m high.<sup>[302]</sup> The driver’s cabin was very short and wide, with acoustically sealed doors and separated from the chassis by a sheet metal partition. The motor was constructed to correspond to the structure of the cabin, hence breadthwise.*

*The vehicle exterior was clad with black-varnished sheet metal, while the interior had it in blue color. The ‘dushegubka’ was entered from the rear through double folding doors, similar in thickness to the walls of the chassis, about 6 cm thick. At the height of an average-sized person, the right folding door has a peephole, shaped like a slit, protected by a glass pane, and 4 x 6 cm in size. Under the door is a wooden step. The ‘dushegubka’ has no windows. The floor consists of metal, with a wooden grid on top. On both the compartment side walls, equidistant from the cabin and the doors, is a metal box about 40 x 40 cm in size, starting from beneath the floor and extending to the height of the grid. The side walls of these boxes have a series of apertures between the floor and the upper part, about 3 to 4 mm in size, through which the gas is conducted into the chamber of the ‘dushegubka.’*

*Two ordinary automobile headlights are mounted on the front wall of the chamber at the same height as the peephole. They can be turned on from the cabin by*

<sup>301</sup> Taken from USSR-42. German translation in: GARF, 7445-2-97, p. 233.

<sup>302</sup> Since the maximum permissible width of road vehicles in Germany is 2.55 m, no road vehicle 4 m wide would ever have been manufactured.



*the driver. Apart from the features mentioned, the interior of the chamber contains nothing. But on the exterior, to the right and left of the cabin, rubber hoses of about 10 cm in diameter are mounted in the floor of the chamber leading from the engine into the metal box, which are equipped with a valve each to regulate the through-flow of the poisonous gases.”*

In his description of the “gassing victims,” Pilunov even mentions the color of the corpses (*ibid.*, p. 172):

*“The skin on the bodies was a deep red, as it occurs after a prolonged stay in a sauna.”*

The description of the vehicle is very detailed, but so is the description of his presumed activity in an exhumation/cremation squad, which is a bit imaginative and does not increase the witness’s credibility (see Part Two, Chapter 7).

The Soviet and Allied investigators and the German prisoners to be interrogated had, therefore, propaganda themes upon which to meditate.

Finally, Spektor concludes as follows:

*“From all we have been able to learn so far, a total of fifteen gas vans operated in the territories of the Soviet Union occupied by the German army.”* (Spektor 1993, p. 71)

In reality, from the documentary point of view, Spektor bases his statements solely on PS-501, according to which (if the associated documents are to be considered authentic and if they are interpreted according to the orthodox Holocaust point of view), as I have already noted, no more than 6 “gas vans” were assigned to the *Einsatzgruppen*.

#### 6.5.2.2. Otto Ohlendorf and the “Gas Vans”

In his pre-trial interrogations, ex-SS *Brigadeführer* Otto Ohlendorf, former commander of *Einsatzgruppe* D until June 1942, made several statements regarding the “gas vans.” In his interrogation dated 24 October 1945, conducted by Colonel Smith W. Brookhart, he declared:<sup>303</sup>

*“Q. Was there any difference in the treatment of men, women, and children [in the executions]?”*

*A. No, only later, shortly before I left, it was decided that women and children – shortly before I left the RSHA delivered from two to three gas vans under our jurisdiction to the commandoes.*

*Q. What department of the RSHA furnished you with those vans?”*

*A. I don’t think it was handled by any department, but the gas van was developed by individuals who invented and developed them, and the wagons were then sent directly from Heydrich to the commandoes, because another department had nothing to do with such technical questions.*

<sup>303</sup> Interrogation of O. Ohlendorf dated 24 October 1945 by Colonel Smith W. Brookhart, pp. 16f. NA-RA, M1270 R 13; subsequent page numbers from there unless stated otherwise.

*Q. It is shown that department II had a motor transport section; was that also the procurement agency for the gas vans?*

*A. I can not say that, because as I said before as this gas van was developed I already had left for more than six months."*

The interrogator returned to this question later (pp. 20-22):

*"Were there any other methods used by action group [= Einsatzgruppe] D in the execution of persons in the territory in which it operated?*

*A. Only the gas vans, as I told you, at the end, and only the gas vans which arrived after the last executions. And furthermore, the commandoes did not like to use the gas vans.*

*Q. Who was in command of action group D when the gas vans were first introduced?*

*A. It was an obersturmfuehrer. I don't recall his name, but I know that he had red hair. But he himself invented the contraption.*

*Q. Let me be sure that I understand the last two answers. My question was: Who commanded action group D after you left and when the gas vans were first introduced, and I understand you to say that you didn't recall his name, but that he was red headed and he was the man who had invented the gas van; is that correct?*

*A. No.*

*Q. My question...*

*A. Bierkamp.*

*Q. And were the gas vans used under his direction?*

*A. I can not say that. I don't know. I can't say that whether or not the gas vans were still in an operating condition.*

*Q. At what time were they first used?*

*A. In the spring of 1942. I can't tell you exactly when.*

*Q. You were still in command of group D at that time?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. Did you use gas vans in group D?*

*A. Yes. If you express it that way then they were used the spring of 1942 while I was still in command of einsatz group D.*

*Q. How many vans of this character did you have assigned to your group?*

*A. Two to three.*

*Q. Two to three for the whole group or for each company?*

*A. For the whole group*

*Q. How did you determine who should operate those and to what extent were they used?*

*A. As I told before, the gas vans were not a part of our motor pool, but they were left separately under the direction of this obersturmfuehrer who also brought with*

*him his own drivers: and the commandoes then requisitioned these vans from this particular unit, and they were then allocated depending on the demand.*

*Q. What kind of inspection or supervision did you exercise over yours?*

*A. Only a general supervision, and I had a doctor to look after the results of the gas vans and see what results they had.*

*Q. What was his name?*

*A. Doctor Schnopflager.*

*Q. What was the usual procedure in preparing for and executing the victims with gas vans?*

*A. There was nothing. According to the testimony of the doctor the victims involved did not feel anything, and consequently they were not told that they were to be executed, but that they were to be transported in these vans: and during the transportation they were then killed."*

Ohlendorf also supplied an estimate of the number of victims of the "gas vans" presumably used by himself, and spoke of the psychological implications of the presumed killings (p. 23):

*"Q. In your figure in which you estimate 90,000 were killed within one year by group D, does that include the deaths by gas vans?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. What proportion of that number you would say were killed by shooting and what proportion by gas vans?*

*A. I will say that it was only several hundred, maybe not even several hundred – several hundred – between two and four hundred. But I like to repeat that the commandoes did not like to use the gas vans.*

*Q. Did you find that to be an efficient means of execution?*

*A. Yes, for the ones that had to be executed, yes.*

*Q. Preferable to execution by shooting?*

*A. I can only state that according to the testimony of the doctor the people to be killed felt nothing when death came over them. But for the people who carried out the execution it was more nerve-racking to operate with gas vans rather than shooting them.*

*Q. Why do you say that?*

*A. They are the experiences, therefore they did not like to operate the gas vans."*

As for the orders and the chain of command, Ohlendorf said (p. 27):

*"In the spring of 1942 an order of Himmler arrived according to which women and children were to be liquidated in the future only in gas cars. For the carrying out of this order, the Einsatz Gruppe D had assigned to it two or three gas cars by the RSHA."*

Use of the “gas vans” was decided upon by Himmler or Heydrich; the vehicles were then sent directly to the operational unit, which distributed them to the *Kommandos* “who had to gas women and children only in the gas vans” (p. 24).

The interrogation also dwelled at length upon the appearance of the “gas vans” (p. 29):

*“Q. Can you describe these gas wagons?”*

*A. Only from the exterior. It was a type of truck which had a hermetically sealed box, and it was constructed in such a way that the exhaust gases, whether through a filter or immediately, could be led into the interior of this box.*

*Q. Was it camouflaged in any way?”*

*A. One could not recognize for what purpose the car had been constructed.*

*Q. What did it appear to be?”*

*A. It had the appearance of a closed box truck.*

*Q. How many such wagons were there?”*

*A. I cannot say.*

*Q. How many assigned to your group?”*

*A. Two or three.*

*Q. Do you know that similar wagons were assigned to other groups?”*

*A. I merely learned it from this one letter, a letter from the man who cared for these wagons with me, and he wrote to the responsible director and complained of defects in these vehicles.”*

In the interrogation of 25 October 1945, Colonel Brookhart returned to the same topic:<sup>304</sup>

*“Q. What was the capacity of the individual gas vans?”*

*A. It can be gathered from the document that there were two different sizes. I believe their capacity was between 15 and 25 people, approximately.*

*Q. How long did it take to execute a load of from 15 to 25 people?”*

*A. I can't say exactly, but I think the putting to sleep<sup>[305]</sup> took between 10 and 14 minutes.”*

On 14 November 1945, Ohlendorf was interrogated by the Soviet Colonel Tupikov, who took up the theme of the “gas vans”:<sup>306</sup>

*“Q. Was the shooting the only means of execution?”*

*A. In the spring of 1942 Himmler sent two or three gas vans to us and issued an order that from now on women and children should not be shot, but should be killed in these gas vans.*

<sup>304</sup> Interrogation of O. Ohlendorf dated 25 October 1945 by Colonel Smith W. Brookhart, p. 12. NARA, M1270 R 13.

<sup>305</sup> This assertion is taken from Becker's letter dated 16 May 1942, with which I shall concern myself below.

<sup>306</sup> Interrogation of O. Ohlendorf of 14 November 1945 by Colonel Tupikov, pp. 4-6. NARA, M1270 R 13.

*Q. Could you give us the approximate number of the Soviet citizens who were killed in gas vans?*

*A. Compared to the total, this number was rather small.*

*Q. What would be the approximate number?*

*A. I could not give you this figure, partly because these gas vans used to undergo frequent repairs, and also because just at the time when they were in use I spent some time in Germany. However, I assume that the number didn't amount to more than a few hundred. This was after the mass executions had taken place. And at this time the only people who were being executed were individuals who were picked up singly. An additional reason was that the Einsatz Kommandos didn't like using those gas vans.*

*Q. In other words, you do not deny that in compliance with a personal order from Himmler, you used gas vans in killing of Soviet citizens.*

*A. The gas vans were not assigned to my Einsatz Kommandos. They were sent as special units, and we had orders to turn over women and children to them for execution.*

*Q. However you made use of these gas vans?*

*A. The gas vans were assigned to the Einsatzgruppen at the head of which I was.*

*Q. That means that they were assigned to you.*

*A. That is right, but I had no choice in the matter, I had not asked for them. They were assigned to me and I had no say about it.*

*Q. That is not quite clear to me. You were the chief of the Gruppe, and the vans that were used were assigned to this Gruppe; in other words, the gas vans which were assigned to the Gruppe were assigned to you.*

*A. I still had no choice in view of the fact that there were orders from Himmler that women and children had to be killed in those gas vans.*

*Q. Through whom was this order transmitted and who received it?*

*A. I am not sure just now. The inventor of the gas vans arrived together with them and was in charge of the operation. At the same time we had the order from Himmler that the women and children should be killed in that manner. I would not know now whether we received the order separately or whether the order was transmitted by this person who brought the gas vans. [...]*

*Q. What is the name of the inventor of the gas vans?*

*A. His name was Becker."*

Ohlendorf's declarations clearly show that he had no real and direct knowledge of the presumed "gas van," but was, rather, attempting to embroider as best he could the information deduced from PS-501, which had been shown to him. Like Jeckeln, he asserted that, for the SS executioners, shooting was far preferable to using the "gas van," which – from the orthodox point of view – undermines both Himmler's presumed order of 15 August 1941, and the effort of designing and building these vehicles. In his desire to please his interrogators, Ohlendorf over-

played his hand, among other things by inventing the story about Himmler's order of spring 1942, while the rare usage of the "gas vans" was a simple loophole justifying his obvious ignorance, which went so far as to identify Becker as the inventor of the "gas vans."

In a sworn statement dated 30 October 1945, Erich Isselhorst, commandant of *Einsatzkommando* 1b between 30 June and October 1943, mentioned the "gas vans" in these terms:<sup>307</sup>

*"I know that our group possessed 3 gas vans which were made available to the various Einsatzkommandos as needed to carry out executions. During my days, an order came to clear the Smolensk Ghetto of the Jews. There were about 1,200 Jews in it. The healthier ones were sorted out and sent to Lublin; more than 400 [others] were gassed with the help of these 3 gas vans."*

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, the liquidation of the Smolensk Ghetto occurred in mid-July 1942 (Dean 2012, p. 1823):

*"Throughout the day until the evening of July 15, 1942, the Jews were transported in groups to a prepared ditch in a wood near the village of Magalenshchina. According to the statements of local residents taken by officials of the military counterintelligence section (SMERSH), after the liberation of the city on September 25, 1943, some of the Jews were poisoned in three gas vans that transported them on four successive trips, and some were shot at the ditch."*

Nevertheless, the Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories contain no mention of this, and no other known document mentions it either.

These few words show that Isselhorst, like Ohlendorf, had no first-hand knowledge of the "gas vans."

### 6.5.2.3. Becker's Letter to Rauff of 16 May 1942 in its Context

The above exposition permits a more-accurate contextual analysis of the letter written by SS *Untersturmführer* August Becker to Rauff dated 16 May 1942, which constitutes the central element of Document PS-501. I shall first of all reproduce the text of the document according to the official translation into English:<sup>308</sup>

<sup>307</sup> YVA, O.53-136, pp. 60f.

<sup>308</sup> PS-501, in: NCA, Vol. III, pp. 418f.; this text is riddled with faulty translations which gloss over the at times absurd contents of the German original. A more-accurate translation can be found in Alvarez/Marais, pp. 43-46.

“Field Post Office  
No 32704  
B Nr 40/42

Kiev, 16 May 1942

TOP SECRET

To: SS Obersturmbannfuehrer Rauff  
Berlin, Prinz-Albrecht-Str. 8

[Handwritten:]  
pers.  
R/29/5 Pradel n.R  
b/R

[Handwritten :] Sinkkel [?] b.R, p 16/6

The overhauling of vans by groups D and C is finished. While the vans of the first series can also be put into action if the weather is not too bad, the vans of the second series (Saurer) stop completely in rainy weather. If it has rained for instance for only one half hour, the van cannot be used because it simply skids away. It can only be used in absolutely dry weather. It is only a question now whether the van can only be used standing at the place of execution. First the van has to be brought to that place, which is possible only in good weather. The place of execution is usually 10-15 km away from the highways and is difficult to access because of its location; in damp or wet weather it is not accessible at all. If the persons to be executed are driven or led to that place, then they realize immediately what is going on and get restless, which is to be avoided as far as possible. There is only one way left; to load them at the collecting point and to drive them to the spot.

I ordered the vans of group D to be camouflaged as house-trailers by putting one set of window shutters on each side of the small van and two on each side of the larger vans, such as one often sees on farm-houses in the country. The vans became so well-known, that not only the authorities, but also the civilian population called the van ‘death van,’ as soon as one of these vehicles appeared. It is my opinion, the van cannot be kept secret for any length of time, not even camouflaged.

The Saurer-van which I transported from Simferopol to Taganrog suffered damage to the brakes on the way. The Security Command [SK] in Mariupol found the cuff of the combined oil-air brake broken at several points. By persuading and bribing the H.K.P. [?] we managed to have a form machined, on which the cuffs were cast. When I came to Stalino and Gorlowka a few days later, the drivers of the vans complained about the same faults. After having talked to the commandants of those commands I went once more to Mariupol to have some more cuffs made for those cars too. As agreed two cuffs will be made for each car, six cuffs will stay in Mariupol as replacements for group D and six cuffs will be sent to SS Untersturmfuehrer Ernst in Kiev for the cars of group C. The cuffs for the groups B and A could be made available from Berlin, because transport from Mariupol to the north would be too complicated and would take too long. Smaller damages on the cars will be repaired by experts of the commands, that is of the groups in their own shops.

Because of the rough terrain and the indescribable road and highway conditions the caulking and rivets loosen in the course of time. I was asked if in such cases

*the vans should be brought to Berlin for repair. Transportation to Berlin would be much too expensive and would demand too much fuel. In order to save those expenses I ordered them to have smaller leaks soldered and if that should no longer be possible, to notify Berlin immediately by radio, that Pol. Nr..... is out of order. Besides that I ordered that during application of gas all the men were to be kept as far away from the vans as possible, so they should not suffer damage to their health by the gas which eventually would escape. I should like to take this opportunity to bring the following to your attention: several commands have had the unloading after the application of gas done by their own men. I brought to the attention of the commanders of those S.K. concerned the immense psychological injuries and damages to their health which that work can have for those men, even if not immediately, at least later on. The men complained to me about headaches which appeared after each unloading. Nevertheless they don't want to change the orders, because they are afraid prisoners called for that work, could use an opportune moment to flee. To protect the men from these damages, I request orders be issued accordingly.*

*The application of gas usually is not undertaken correctly. In order to come to an end as fast as possible, the driver presses the accelerator to the fullest extent. By doing that the persons to be executed suffer death from suffocation and not death by dozing off as was planned. My directions now have proved that by correct adjustment of the levers death comes faster and the prisoners fall asleep peacefully. Distorted faces and excretions, such as could be seen before, are no longer noticed.*

*Today I shall continue my journey to group B, where I can be reached with further news.*

*Signed: Dr. Becker  
SS Untersturmfuehrer."*

This letter was recognized as authentic by its addressee, Walter Rauff, in an affidavit dated 19 October 1945, in which he otherwise showed that he had no knowledge of the presumed "gas vans";<sup>309</sup> notwithstanding this fact, the authenticity of the document is very dubious. To the observations already set forth by Alvarez (Alvarez/Marais, pp. 40-55), one more should be added. The letter says that due to an erroneous maneuver, the victims died of asphyxiation (*Erstickungstod*) instead of death by "falling asleep peacefully" (*Einschläferungstod*) as intended. Such an assertion makes no sense, because death by "falling asleep peacefully" is a mere fairy tale:

*"The clinical symptoms of CO poisoning vary depending on the percentage of hemoglobin saturated by the CO. The symptoms begin with increasingly severe headaches followed by tachycardia and tachypnea, with accompanying drowsiness progressing to true and proper coma." (Giusti, p. 501)*

<sup>309</sup> PS-2348. IMT, Vol. 30, pp. 256-258. Strangely, Rauff was not subjected to any pre-trial interrogation.



In practice, however, the presumed victims would have died of asphyxia while suffering tremendously, which categorically excludes death by “falling asleep peacefully.”

Below, I shall examine the document in question in relation to Becker’s testimony dated 26 March 1960 and the “Just Memo.”

In the present context, Becker’s testimony is very important. I reproduce an extended excerpt from the salient part of it:<sup>310</sup>

*“When in December 1941 I was transferred to Rauff’s department he explained the situation to me, saying that the psychological and moral stress on the firing squads was no longer bearable and that therefore the gassing programme had been started. He said that gas-vans with drivers were already on their way to or had indeed reached the individual Einsatzgruppen. My professional brief was to inspect the work of the individual Einsatzgruppen in the East in connection with gas-vans. This meant that I had to ensure that the mass killings carried out in the lorries proceeded properly. I was to pay particular attention to the mechanical functioning of these vans. I would like to mention that there were two types of gas-vans in operation: the Opel-Blitz, weighing 3.5 tonnes, and the large Saurerwagen, which as far as I know, weighed 7 tonnes. In the middle of December 1941, on Rauff’s instructions, I left for the East to catch up with Einsatzgruppe A (Riga)... to inspect their Einsatzwagen [special vehicles] or gas-vans. [...]*

*On 4 or 5 January 1942 I received a message from Rauff asking me to report to him. On reporting to him I was instructed to depart immediately. This time I was to travel directly to Einsatzgruppe D in the south (Otto Ohlendorf) in Simferopol. I was originally to have traveled by aeroplane but this did not work out because of icy weather conditions. I thus left by train on 5 or 6 January 1942 traveling via Cracow and Fastov to Nikolayew. From there I flew in the Reichsführer’s plane to Simferopol in the Crimea. The journey took me about three weeks and I reported to the head of Einsatzgruppe D. Otto Ohlendorf, sometime in January. I remained with this group until the beginning of April 1942 and then visited each Einsatzgruppe until I reached Group A in Riga.*

*In Riga I learned from Standartenführer Potzelt, Deputy Commander of the Security Police and SD in Riga, that the Einsatzkommando operating in Minsk needed some additional gas-vans as it could not manage with the three existing vans it had. At the same time I also learned from Potzelt that there was a Jewish-extermination camp in Minsk. I flew to Minsk by helicopter, correction, in a Fieseler Storch [light aircraft] belonging to the Einsatzgruppe. Travelling with me was the Hauptsturmführer Rühl, the head of the extermination camp at Minsk, with whom I had discussed business in Riga. During the journey Rühl proposed to me that I provide additional vans since they could not keep up with exterminations. As I was not responsible for the ordering of gas-vans I suggested Rühl approach Rauff’s office. When I saw what was going on in Minsk – that people of both sexes were being exterminated in their masses, that was it – I could not take any more*

<sup>310</sup> Declaration of A. Becker dated 26 March 1960, in: Klee/Dressen/Riess 1991, pp. 69-71.

and three days later, it must have been September 1942, I traveled back by lorry via Warsaw to Berlin.

I had intended to report to Rauff at his office in Berlin. However, he was not there. Instead I was received by his deputy, Pradel, who had [in the] meantime been promoted to Major... In a private conversation lasting about an hour I described to Pradel the working method of the gas-vans and voiced criticism about the fact that the offenders had not been gassed but had been suffocated because the operators had set the engine incorrectly. I told him that people had vomited and defecated.

Pradel listened to me without saying a word. At the end of our interview he simply told me to write a detailed report on the matter.”

Summarizing, Becker left for *Einsatzgruppe* D on 4 or 5 January 1942, reached Simferopol at the end of January, where he met Ohlendorf, and remained with him until the beginning of April. He later visited two other *Einsatzgruppen*, C and B, and reached *Einsatzgruppe* A at Riga on an unstated date; here he learned that at Minsk there was “a Jewish-extermiation camp” commanded by a “*Hauptsturmführer* Rühl.” Becker traveled from Riga to Minsk in the company of Rühl and visited the “extermiation camp.” He returned to Berlin three days later, in September 1942.

Who was *Hauptsturmführer* Rühl? The only known SS *Hauptsturmführer* Rühl was named Felix. This Felix Rühl was one of the defendants in the U.S. *Einsatzgruppen* trial,<sup>311</sup> but he was a member of *Sonderkommando* 10b of *Einsatzgruppe* D, while the Rühl mentioned by Becker should have belonged to *Einsatzgruppe* A. Some writers have therefore theorized a reference to Adolf Rube, who was Kriminalsekretär at the KdS of Minsk, but who bore the rank of SS *Hauptscharführer* and was certainly not the commander of an “extermiation camp.” He is cited twice in the records of the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, but only as the author of an affidavit on Strauch,<sup>312</sup> that is, as a figure of secondary rank. Becker’s reference to *Hauptsturmführer* Rühl is therefore unfounded in any case.

The “extermiation camp,” of which Rühl was presumably the commandant, must have been intended for Jews, and must, therefore, have been identical with Maly Trostenets, in which, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, the Jewish transports arriving from Vienna and Theresienstadt were exterminated. The transports arriving in this camp during the period between August and September 1942, according to the verdict of the Koblenz District Court of 21 May 1963, 9 Ks 2/62, were seven in number and carried 6,993 deportees (see Table 24, p. 312).

Becker’s narration turns out to be quite nonsensical. First of all, as I have noted above, these deportees were protected by Himmler’s explicit order, and no one could “liquidate them.” In the second place, from Becker’s narrative we deduce that the presumed visit to the “extermiation camp” at Minsk took place in Sep-

<sup>311</sup> He is named for the first time on p. VI, Vol. IV of TWC.

<sup>312</sup> TWC, Vol. IV, pp. 448, 564. The affidavit bears the date 23 October 1947 (NO-5498).

tember 1942, and therefore refers to the presumed extermination of the four Jewish transports listed in the table. It follows that the three presumed “gas vans” present at Minsk, since “they could not keep up with exterminations,” did not succeed in gassing 3,600 persons in 21 days, which is in contradiction to the claims made by Gerlach; if in fact each “gas van” could kill 350-400 persons per day, the three “gas vans” in use would have taken one day to exterminate one transport, four days to exterminate them all, but 21 days went by between the date of the first and the last transport. This means that, at least theoretically, assuming the minimum capacity, in this interval of time the three “gas vans” could have gassed ( $3 \times 21 \times 350 =$ ) 22,050 persons; also including the transports from the month of August (46 days), the total would have been ( $3 \times 46 \times 350 =$ ) 48,300 compared to 6,300 newly arriving Jews. In practice, the “extermination camp” was superequipped compared to its needs, therefore it is absurd that Rühl would have requested Becker to “provide additional vans.”

In the third place, from the orthodox point of view: Based on what logic did the SS send entire transports of deportees from the Reich and the Protectorate to Minsk/Trostenets, in order to select only 10% of them for labor purposes and kill the remaining 90%? As I have stressed elsewhere, the trains which arrived at Minsk from western Europe, depending on the rail lines they took, traveled right past Treblinka, which was only 4 km or 80 km away, or 100 km from Auschwitz, or 140 km from Sobibór (Graf/Kues/Mattogno, p. 307). On the other hand, it is known that, precisely during this same period, on 17 August 1942, the RSHA, in the person of SS *Obersturmbannführer* Rudolf Siegert, had proposed the institution of a “collection camp in Western Germany” to reduce the costs of transporting Jews from France to Auschwitz (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 682-684). It therefore made no sense to transport deportees unable to work as far as Minsk who could easily have been killed in the above-mentioned “extermination camps.”

The alternative would be that the deportees from these transports were killed on a local initiative in violation of Himmler’s order: but on whose initiative? That of an SS *Unterscharführer* (sergeant)?

According to Becker’s narrative, he traveled to Berlin in September 1942 in order to report to Rauff on his inspection of the *Einsatzgruppen*’s “gas vans”; but Rauff was not there, and his deputy, Pradel, advised him to write a detailed report. This report should have been Becker’s letter to Rauff dated 15 May 1942. But the first problem is the date, which is in obvious contradiction to Becker’s entire narrative. The letter in question moreover refers to the period spent by Becker with *Einsatzgruppen* D and C, because the first sentence says: “The overhauling of vans by groups D and C is finished,” while the last sentence states: “Today I shall continue my journey to group B, where I can be reached with further news.” Becker is therefore supposed to have stopped there from mid-May until the month of September with *Einsatzgruppen* B and A, but this is said to

have required another report to Rauff, which does not exist, and which Becker does not even mention.

Although Becker, according to himself, remained with Ohlendorf for a little over two months, Ohlendorf, for his part, knew practically nothing about it, so much so as to attribute to Becker the capacity of inventor of the “gas vans.”

While Becker, Rauff and Ohlendorf should have explained the letter of 15 May 1942, it happens on the contrary that it is this letter which explains their declarations, that is, they presuppose it from the very outset as their inspiring and informative principle, without which they would not have known what to say about the “gas vans.”

Finally, we will examine Becker’s letter of 15 May 1942 in relation to the so-called “Just Memo.” As we have seen earlier, Becker’s specific task at the *Einsatzgruppen* was “to inspect the work of the individual *Einsatzgruppen* in the East in connection with gas-vans. This meant that I had to ensure that the mass killings carried out in the lorries proceeded properly. I was to pay particular attention to the mechanical functioning of these vans.”

The “Just Memo” is dated 5 June 1942 with the file reference number “II D 3a (9) No. 214/42 g.RS.” and the subject line “Technical modifications to the special vehicles deployed in service and in the process of construction.”<sup>313</sup> This proposed seven technical modifications to be made to the “special vehicles” based on the “other experiences made so far.”<sup>313</sup> if we consider that this memo is dated a little over two weeks after Becker’s letter, we must conclude that the above-mentioned modifications were proposed precisely on the basis of the “experiences” gathered by Becker; in the contrary case, his mission to the East would have been in vain and would have made no sense. The “Just Memo” sets forth seven proposed modifications:

1. installation of slits in the rear part of the body
2. shortening of the body by 1 meter
3. connection of the gas inflow pipe to the body from above
4. installation of an outlet for liquids exiting the floor of the body
5. elimination of the peephole
6. protection for the lights
7. movable grid for unloading bodies.

Becker’s letter does not mention any of the technical problems which had led to the proposal of these modifications, but indicates others, which, however, are ignored by the “Just Memo”:

1. inability of the Saurer vehicles to drive on wet roads;
2. cracking of the “cuff of the combined oil-air brake”;
3. loosening of “caulkings and rivets.”

On the other hand, the “Just Memo” begins with the following words:<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747507.

*“For example 97,000 were processed since December 1941 with 3 deployed vehicles without any defects in the vehicles becoming apparent. The known explosion at Kulmhof [=Chełmno] has to be assessed as a single case.”*

If – as orthodox Holocaust historians insist – this is a reference to the Chełmno Camp, the proposed technical modifications contained in the document are inexplicable, since the 3 “gas vans” in this camp had functioned “without any defects [...] becoming apparent.” What is more, one of these “gas vans” was of the Saurer make (Montague, p. 204), which should therefore have presented the same defects as indicated by Becker for this series of vehicles:

*“While the vans of the first series can also be put into action if the weather is not too bad, the vans of the second series (Saurer) stop completely in rainy weather. If it has rained for instance for only one half hour, the van cannot be used because it simply skids away. It can only be used in absolutely dry weather.”*

The “Just Memo,” by contrast, does not even mention this serious defect, but limits itself to reporting:<sup>314</sup>

*“The vans’ load usually amounts to 9 to 10 per m<sup>2</sup>. Although no overloading occurs thereby for the spacious Saurer special vehicles, utilization in that form is not possible, because their off-road capability is highly reduced by this. A reduction of the load area appears to be necessary. This will be achieved by shortening the body by approximately 1 m.”*

Here, the reduction in the vehicle capacity for movement does not depend on the road surface, but on the body structure, so that the problem was also observed on dry roads as well. Why doesn’t the document mention the serious problem of the wet roads raised by Becker’s letter?

Alvarez has already stressed the absurdity of this observation in the context of the catastrophic condition of Russian roads in autumn and winter (Alvarez/Marais, p. 47). This fact is fully confirmed by a report from *Einsatzgruppe C* dated 17 September 1941.<sup>315</sup>

*“Apart from the areas of Zhitomir, Vinnitsa and Kamenets-Podolsky, the road network in the eastern Ukraine is so wide-meshed that even large cities cannot be reached during inclement weather. Half an hour of rain is enough to make the unpaved roads Uman-Odessa, Pervomaysk-Kirovograd etc. impassible. East of the Kiev-Odessa line, roads which can still be traveled on after a rain are almost non-existent. In the fall and winter almost all ‘roads’ (shosseyne dorogi (highway roads), gruntovye dorogi (earth roads) or planer[?]) in the black-earth region, that is, the greater part of the Ukraine, are impassible by motor vehicles.”*

*Einsatzgruppe B* also complained of the difficulties caused “by the roads and trails having become bottomless as a result of the bad and wet weather of the past weeks,”<sup>316</sup> as well as the impossibility of using motor vehicles after bad weather

<sup>314</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747508.

<sup>315</sup> EM No. 86 dated 17 September 1941; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 478.

<sup>316</sup> EM No. 108 dated 9 October 1941; *ibid.*, p. 656.

“on the long, bottomless and clogged roads” in the region around Smolensk.<sup>317</sup> In the area of Mogilev, the *kolkhozes* were almost inaccessible “during bad weather.”<sup>318</sup> *Sonderkommando* 4a of *Einsatzgruppe* C had to abandon the idea of traveling to Nezhin three times because “it was impossible to reach the town on the rain-softened roads, which were impassible for motor vehicles.”<sup>319</sup>

The “Summary” of British intercepts “Covering the period 16 December 1941 – 15th January 1942” dedicates a paragraph to the transports, in which it speaks as follows about the roads:<sup>320</sup>

*“The badness of the roads is the Leitmotiv of these decodes. It has been heard often enough already in this summary not to need further stressing.”*

The following summary, which refers to the period 16 January to 15 February 1942, is even more explicit on this topic:<sup>321</sup>

*“Even greater difficulties were caused by the heavy snow-falls which dislocated all transport through the month. Snow drifts blocked nearly all roads in the Ukraine interrupting rail and courier services through the whole region [...] and preventing the cipher key for February from being delivered until very late. The Volksdeutschemittelstelle in Nikolajew was completely cut off for a long time and a series of messages to hand tells of frustrated attempts to restore communications with the outside world. ‘Road to Dnjepropetrowsk completely blocked’ (30.1.42). ‘In spite of repeated attempts passage impossible for some time to come’ (1.2.42). ‘Further efforts to reach DNJEPROPETROWSK with 3 lorries have failed and all other roads are similarly snowbound’ (4.2.42). [...] ‘To Regional Commissar PROSKUROW. Roads in the general frontier region are completely snowbound. Courier service interrupted. Local population must be ruthlessly pressed into service to help ease the situation. General Commissar BREST.’”*

But there is another serious incongruity which is no less serious. The memo dated 27 April 1942 headed “Reichssicherheitshauptamt II D 3 a (9) No. 668/42-121,” which has as its subject “Fast-unloading device for the special vehicles,”<sup>322</sup> examines three plans to facilitate unloading the vehicle: “a) Tilting mechanism for coachwork,” “b) Making floor grate tiltable” and “c) Extractable and retractable grate (suggestion).” The first two projects were discarded because they were technically cumbersome and costly. The third, however, was considered feasible and was set forth in minute detail. The “Just Memo,” as I have explained before, suggests *seven* modifications, however, the last of which, the one proposed precisely in the above-mentioned memo, is described as follows:<sup>323</sup>

<sup>317</sup> EM No. 133 dated 14 November 1941; *ibid.*, p. 785.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 786.

<sup>319</sup> EM No. 135 dated 19 Nov. 1941; *ibid.*, p. 816.

<sup>320</sup> TNA, HW 16-6, ZIP/MSGP 32/14.2.42.

<sup>321</sup> TNA, HW 16-6, ZIP/MSGP 33/17.3.42.

<sup>322</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747517.

<sup>323</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747510.

*“In order to achieve a faster and easier unloading of the vehicle, a retractable grate is to be installed. It is to be guided on small wheels in U-shaped iron rails. The extraction and retraction has to happen by means of a cable winch mounted below the vehicle.”*

Since in the *Vermerk* of 27 April 1942 this design modification is described in 83 lines in this draft, the reference to this document would have been obvious and even inevitable. Why, then, does it not appear? But that is not enough: the memo dated 23 June 1942, which follows the “Just Memo” by little more than two weeks, completely abandons the idea of the retractable grid,<sup>324</sup> which this last document presents, by contrast, as a directive to be implemented, which is a contradiction.

This means that Becker’s letter dated 15 May 1942 and the “Just Memo” have neither any reciprocal relation to each other, nor to the correspondence between the RSHA and the Gaubschat Company, which is certainly authentic. Apart from the memo dated 27 April 1942, which refers to another, preceding letter which has not been preserved, all the other documents are in fact explicitly correlated (see p. 308 for sources and translated excerpts from these documents):

- The letter from the RSHA (“*Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD II D 3 a (9) No. 668/42-121*”) to the Gaubschat Company dated 30 April 1942, which regards “Delivered 10 Saurer chassis” requesting a “change of the floor grate” as proposed in the memo dated 27 April 1942.
- The response by the Gaubschat Company, dated 14 May 1942, confirming receipt of the change request.
- The letter from the RSHA (“*Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD II D 3 a (9) B. No. 668/42*”) dated 23 June 1942 explicitly refers to the letter mentioned above: “Letter sales Wa/Ka. of 14 May [19]42.” This document explicitly recalls the original letter from the RSHA, stating that 20 vehicles have already been delivered and that ten more are to be equipped with the changed coachworks.
- The answer by the Gaubschat Company dated 18 September 1942 confirms acceptance of the order.
- The letter by the Gaubschat Company dated 24 September 1942, linked to the RSHA letter of the 23rd, informs about the company’s intention “to take into production the remaining vehicles.”

The two documents in question are therefore quite extraneous to the authentic documentation,<sup>325</sup> which amounts to further proof that these documents are fabrications, as documented, by the way, by Alvarez and Marais.

<sup>324</sup> NARA, T-175/254, 2747513, Point 3.

<sup>325</sup> This also applies to Rauff’s letter dated 26 March 1942, see Mattogno 2016b, pp. 145-148.

## 6.6. “Gas Vans” in the British Intercepts

The enormous mass of British intercepts of German messages contains not a single mention of “gas vans,” although several types of vehicles are mentioned. For example, a message dated 20 October 1941 mentions “2 HORCH ambulances” arriving at Zwickau, probably at the office of the Higher SS and Police leader von dem Bach-Zelewski for the SS *Kavallerie Brigade*.<sup>326</sup>

Another message, dated 23 October, speaks of a “motor ambulance.”<sup>327</sup> On 7 November, the British intercepted the following message:<sup>328</sup>

*“DSO4 de SQF SQF Nr 34 2010 2 Tle 125 89 SRJ 3742*

*To: Security Police WARSAW, forward to Obersturmführer MEPCE.*

*The Obergruppenführer wishes to be immediately informed when the vehicle departs (MANDORCNY Truppenwirt XL. X.) or arrives here – special vans to be here until... 1*

*Higher SS and Police leader Russia Center.”*

Of particular importance is the intercept of 4 March 1942 cited in Subchapter 6.3., which mentions truck bodies in relation with the Gaubschat Company, but without reference to the presumed “Gaswagen.”

Vehicles functioning with wood-gas generators are also mentioned, as in the message dated 7 May 1943:<sup>329</sup>

*“To N. Headquarters, BOBRUISK.*

*Wood gas generators 135016 for 1½ to. are available in the SS FHA in any quantity. In case of need, please indicate quantity. Send 2 men for transport SS Oberscharführer KRAFT to BERLIN. Report to SS Obersturmbannführer RADDATZ.*

*KRAFT, SS Oberscharführer”*

Since the British intercepts contain multiple references to shootings of Jews in the East, it is impossible to believe that the absence of any mention of “gas vans” is attributable to secrecy.

## 6.7. “Gas Vans” in Allied Propaganda

Starting in 1940, the British Political Warfare Executive (PWE) organized a vast “Rumors and Whispers Campaign” based on the creation of false so-called “sibs,” from the Latin “sibilare,” “to hiss,” which were then spread through agents scattered in cities in neutral countries, such as Lisbon, Stockholm, Istanbul and Zürich. The Joint Intelligence Committee, at appropriate meetings, selected the “sibs” which had been submitted to it by the Political Intelligence Department; those “approved for dissemination” were listed in special “most secret” lists.

<sup>326</sup> TNA, German Police Decodes: 20.10.41. ZIP/G.P.D.428/5.11.41.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*: 23.10.41. ZIP/G.P.D.424/4.11.41.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*: Nr. 1. Traffic: 7.11.41. ZIP/G.P.D.483/11.12.41.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*: Nr. 3. Traffic: 7.5.43. ZIP/GPDD.472d/11.5.43.



Among the “sibs approved at the meeting held on 31.12.43,” number C/119, is this one:<sup>330</sup>

*“A certain number of German gas-vans have been apportioned to Rumania and are waiting for the Russians to get nearer to the Roumanian frontiers before they are used against Roumanian citizens.”*

This was just one aspect of Allied propaganda. “General Information No. 2 (Part 2)” of 16 February 1942 carried the following message:<sup>330</sup>

*“A TASS report from Geneva, dated February 13th (published in the Moscow papers for February 14th), says that a Swede, who arrived in Berlin late in January, related that there is much talk in Berlin about the fact that severely wounded German soldiers are being killed in special gas chambers, which are provided in almost every German field-ambulance. German doctors and officers, friends of this Swede, have confirmed this fact.”*

A secret telegram sent on 14 October 1941 by a “Delegate of the Government for the Cracow District,” presumably to the Polish government in exile at London, stated that death was looming over 156,000 inmates at Auschwitz plus 12,400 deportees from Warsaw (these figures are quite imaginative), stating:<sup>331</sup>

*“Mobile gas chambers installed on lorries so-called ‘sonderkammer’ /luryk/ already transport prisoners in the direction of Maczki.”*

The direction taken by these transports is rather curious, since Maczki is an unknown village located 5 km north of Jaworzno, a locality approximately 20 km north of Auschwitz. The term “luryk” does not exist in Polish.

## 6.8. British “Gas Vans”

The most paradoxical thing about the story of the presumed mobile gas chambers is that the British, starting in 1936, built and used at least 36 gas vans for police and civilian anti-gas training purposes. The related documentation may be found in Brochure HO 45/18170 of The National Archives in London.<sup>332</sup> The decision to build gas vans was taken at the beginning of 1936, as deduced from the circular letter of The Under Secretary of State, Home Office (Air Raid Precautions Dept.), Horseferry House, dated 17 December 1936, which states:

*“With reference to the Home Office circulars of the 24th February and 31st August, 1936, on the subject of local anti-gas training, I am directed by the Secretary of State to communicate the following information regarding the availability of the Home Office gas vans – i.e. mobile gas chambers in which those under instruction can wear respirators in gas.”*

The anticipated gas for training purposes was “the tear gas known as C.A.P., capsules of which are supplied by the Home office.” According to this circular letter,

<sup>330</sup> TNA, FO 898/69.

<sup>331</sup> TNA, FO 371/39454.

<sup>332</sup> Subsequent quotations are taken from this brochure; the pages are not numbered progressively; therefore, only the headings of the relevant sections are given here.

apart from the gas vans, there also existed “fixed gas chambers” to which I will return later. The letter states that,

*“where fixed gas chambers are available, they should be used in preference to a gas van, to avoid unnecessary journeys by the latter.”*

“Appendix I” refers to the “Distribution of Home Office Gas Vans” and mentions the 26 cities in which the gas vans were located. “Appendix II” contains the “Instructions to Chief Constables in charge of Home Office Gas Vans as to control of the van and its programme of use.” “Appendix III” reports the “Rules for instructors as to admission of trainees into gas,” which, among other things, required:

*“(c) Not more than 10 persons may be in the gas chamber at the same time: preferably not more than 8.*

*(d) To conserve the concentration in the chamber, the door of the van should not be open while persons are entering or leaving the other end of the canopy.*

*(e) The normal time in the chamber for each group should be 3 to 5 minutes.”*

“Appendix IV” regards the “Instruction to drivers of Home Office Gas Vans,” which deserve to be quoted at length:

*“Special Equipment Carried.*

*1. The following are to be kept in the locked cupboard over the driving seat:—*

- Tin of gas capsules.*
- Box of smelling samples.*
- A small bottle with olive oil.*
- Driver’s respirator, and spare respirators if required.*
- A copy of these Instructions.*

*This cupboard will always be kept locked, the key being in the charge of the drivers.*

*Preparation of Van for Use.*

*2. On arrival at the place where the van is to be used, the driver will report to the Instructor in charge of the trainees for whom the van is required, and consult him as to placing the van.*

*3. The van should be placed with the front pointing towards the wind, and 20 yards clear of any occupied building or public street or place in the down-wind direction, and where possible, in all directions.*

*4. Having settled with the Instructor the position of the van, the driver will fit the ramp and erect the canopy, and see that the window of the chamber is closed.*

*Putting up Gas Cloud.*

*5. The gas cloud may be put up by the driver, unless the Instructor wishes to put it up himself.*

*6. One capsule is sufficient to fill the van, but the concentration may be reinforced with further capsules, one at a time, as required. The concentration created by*

*one capsule should, in normal circumstances, be sufficient for two groups of trainees to pass through the chamber.*

*7. The capsule should be heated on a tin lid or tray over a small spirit lamp on the shelf provided. The capsule should first be pierced with a pin or knife. The capsule must not be allowed to catch fire: if it does, the lachrymatory effect of the gas will be lost.*

*8. When heating the capsule the driver or Instructor will always wear his respirator. In the event of any of the solid contents of the capsule coming in contact with the skin, the part should be immediately washed with soap and hot water, and smeared with olive oil.*

*Admission of Trainees into Chamber.*

*9. The Instructor and not the driver will be responsible for the admission of trainees into the chamber. The driver will stand at the foot of the ramp to give assistance to persons in the chamber, or leaving it hurriedly, as required.*

*10. The driver will draw the attention of the Instructor to the rules given at the end of these Instructions.*

*Clearing the Chamber.*

*11. Except in abnormal circumstances the clearing of the gas from the chamber will be effected before the van is moved. The decision will rest with the Instructor.*

*12. The process will not be done quickly unless the van is in a very large open space. The canopy will be kept in position and the window and door of the chamber, and the curtain at the back of the canopy, opened slightly. After 5 minutes or so the canopy may be removed and the window and door opened fully. The whole process should occupy 10 to 15 minutes.*

*13. In exceptional circumstances, the Instructor may require the van to be driven a short distance to a more open position before being cleared. If so, he will send a man with the van to guide and assist the driver. The van will return, after being cleared, to pick up the ramp and canopy.*

*14. While the van is being moved with gas in the chamber, the window and door must be kept shut. Special care must be taken in driving.*

*Box of Smelling Samples.*

*15. The box of smelling samples will not be used except under the direct supervision of the Instructor, who will return it to the driver before the van departs. The box when not in use must be kept locked, the key being in charge of the driver. [...]*

*Records.*

*16. The driver will keep a record book in which he will enter the following particulars on every occasion on which the van is used:—*

*(i) Date and exact place where van is used: time of arrival at and departure from the place.*

*(ii) Name of Instructor in charge of trainees, and the authority or organization to which he belongs.*

(iii) Total number of persons admitted into chamber when filled with gas.

(iv) Number of capsules used.

(v) Whether or not the Instructor obtained the use of the box of smelling samples.

When on the Road.

17. When the van is on the road, the window and door of the chamber will be kept shut.

18. One passenger only may be carried in the driving compartment, and no person may be carried in the chamber of the van.

In case of Fire.

19. In case of fire, every endeavour should be made to remove the tin of capsules as quickly as possible.

Cleansing the Chamber.

20. The ceiling, walls, and floor of the chamber will be thoroughly washed with soap and warm water at least once a week when the van is in use."

A form entitled "Home Office Gas Vans Nos. 1-32. Record of use and mileage" summarizes the utilization data for the second half of 1936. The periods under consideration are "up to 30 September," "October," "November" and "December." The last column reports the sum of the data for the four items up to 31 December:

- No. of occasions on which van was used: 1,765
- Total number of persons who have passed through chamber: 34,625
- Total mileage run: 38,240.5
- Estimated drivers' time (in hours): 7,491.75.

There were also "naval gas chambers"<sup>333</sup> and "military gas chambers."<sup>334</sup> On 16 May 1936, the Chief Constable's Office, West Hill, Winchester, asked Assistant Adjutant General, Command Headquarters, Aldershot, if he could make the "Military Gas Chamber at Willems barracks, Aldershot" available for "Anti-Gas Training for Police." The commanders at Aldershot agreed to do so.<sup>335</sup> A circular letter dated 11 November 1939 also regulated the construction of "Fixed Gas Chambers,"<sup>336</sup> establishing the following "Instructions relating to Fixed Gas Chambers":

*"(i) The cubic capacity should not be less than 500 cubic feet (as one C.A.P. capsule is sufficient to fill a chamber of this capacity) or greater than 1,000 cubic feet.*

*(ii) An air lock, external to the chamber itself, should be provided.*

<sup>333</sup> TNA, HO 45/18170, Plan Division, Naval Staff, Admiralty, S.W.1, 17 February 1937.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, The War Office, 1 March 1937.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, Headquarters, Aldershot Command, Aldershot, 2 June 1936.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, Ministry of Home Security, Air Raid Precautions Dept., Horseferry House, 11 November, 1939. A.R.P. Department Circular No. 303/1939. Fixed Gas Chambers.

(iii) Adequate ventilation (e.g. through draught from door and window) should be provided in order to clear the chamber of C.A.P. after use.

(iv) The gas chamber should not be sited within a distance of 60 feet from the nearest occupied building, public street or place, in any direction.”

The paragraph “Specification for a Fixed Gas Chamber” supplied detailed information on the construction design of the floor, walls, roof, doors, borrowed light and window. Brochure HO 45/18170 also contains two plant diagrams very similar to a “Fixed Gas Chamber,” dated “July 1939” and “October 1939.”

In the early 1950s, the English built a much-more-sophisticated gas van. Its history, described in a document titled “Adaptation of Home Office Gas Van to the Exposure of Human Subjects to GB [= Sarin] Vapour” drawn up by G.A. Kirkham and D. Thorp, was introduced as follows:

*“A mobile gas chamber was obtained on loan from the Home Office with a view to its use for the exposure of human subjects to controlled concentrations of GB vapour. Certain modifications were required, including the provision of vaporising and dispersing apparatus for the GB, in order to make the chamber suitable for the purpose in hand, and the present report embodies a description of the modifications made and the trials which were carried out to ensure that the characteristics of the chamber were satisfactory.”*

There followed a “Description of the original gas van”:<sup>337</sup>

*“The Gas Van as received consisted of a closed chamber provided with an air-lock entry, the whole being mounted on a Ford Thames chassis. The sides and roof were double-skinned with a 2" cavity, being made of aluminium on a wooden framework. The interior was white enamelled and there was a small window on either side, only one of which could be opened. The only method of clearing the chamber was to open the air-lock doors and one window, and allow the concentration to diffuse out.*

*The dimensions of the chamber were as follows:*

– Exposure chamber: 320 cm long × 210 cm wide × 195 cm high = 13 m<sup>3</sup>.

– Air lock: 95 cm long × 210 cm wide × 195 cm high = 3.9 m<sup>3</sup>.”

A photograph showed the gas van after the modifications (see Document I.6.3.<sup>337</sup>)

From the above, we may deduce important information on the presumed National-Socialist “gas vans.” If they had really existed, knowing the proverbial German meticulousness, they would have been monitored at least as much as the British gas vans. There would have been general instructions on the use of the vehicle (use, maintenance, cleaning, safety standards, etc.), in addition to a vehicle log book in which the driver would have had to note all the data relating to its use: distance traveled, with stops, mileage, fuel consumption, number of persons “passed through chamber” from time to time and day by day, as well as monthly statistical summaries. Only in this way would the RSHA have been able to evaluate the efficiency and appropriateness of using the “gas vans.”

<sup>337</sup> TNA, WO 88/2693.

One could, of course, take recourse to the usual loophole used by orthodox historians: “all these documents were destroyed.” The insuperable problem is, however, that such allegedly destroyed documents were never mentioned by any of the post-war witnesses, not even by the men who are said to have driven the vans.

One might add that in the British intercepts of German radio messages there is no trace, not only of any homicidal “gas van,” but of anything similar.

In conclusion, the “gas vans” are not a matter of history, but fall within the realm of Holocaust fairy tales.



PART TWO:  
“AKTION 1005”

THE PRESUMED CREMATION  
OF MILLIONS OF BODIES  
IN THE GERMAN-OCCUPIED  
EASTERN TERRITORIES



## 1. Mass Graves

### 1.1. Mass Graves in Soviet War-Crimes Reports

Orthodox Holocaust historiography treats the topic of mass graves by constantly pointing out, with extremely rare exceptions which will be examined later, the findings of the investigations of the various Soviet investigation commissions which operated in the formerly German-occupied, then reconquered territories. The decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 2 November 1942 ordered the formation of the “Extraordinary State Commission on establishing and investigating the crimes of the German fascist invaders and their accomplices” and the gathering of the related documentary material (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 45f.). Some of these reports were then presented by the Soviets at Nuremberg, thus becoming indisputable “truth,” because Article 21 of the London Statutes defining the IMT’s legal framework mandated this (IMT, Vol. 1, p. 15):

*“The Tribunal shall not require proof of facts of common knowledge but shall take judicial notice thereof. It shall also take judicial notice of official governmental documents and reports of the United Nations, including the acts and documents of the committees set up in the various Allied countries for the investigation of war crimes, and the records and findings of military or other Tribunals of any of the United Nations.”*

The Soviet reports, being “official governmental documents” and “documents of the committees set up in the various Allied countries for the investigation of war crimes,” could not be disputed legally during the IMT. But are they reliable?

Arad declared that, “from late summer 1943 until the end of their occupation, the Germans removed and cremated hundreds of thousands of corpses from mass graves throughout the occupied Soviet territories” (Arad 2009, p. 347). He stresses that

*“Soviet sources, particularly those of the Special State Commission for Determining and Investigating the War Crimes Committed by the Fascist-German Occupiers in the Temporarily Occupied Soviet Territories (Chrezvychainaia Gosudarstvennaia Kommissia po Ustanovleniu i Rassledovaniiu Zlodeianii Sovershennykh Nemetsko-Fashistskimi Zakhvatchikami, henceforth ‘special commission’) provide an estimate of the number of people murdered in various places. The local committees of inquiry that acted as branches of the special commission used a system by which mass graves were exhumed, corpses were counted in the topmost layer, and the number was multiplied by the number of layers of corpses; thus they were able to estimate the number of dead in any particular pit. This was hardly an accurate system, and often the local committees reported exaggerated numbers. Nonetheless and notwithstanding their inaccuracy, these documents al-*

*so served in estimating the number of Jewish dead in certain places.” (ibid., pp. 517f.)*

The Israeli historian asserts that the Jewish victims in the Occupied Soviet Republics numbered between 2,500,000 and 2,600,000 (see Part One, Chapter 5). This obviously presupposes that this many bodies were buried in mass graves. When the Soviets reconquered the temporarily German-occupied territories, they found many mass graves. Arad accurately refers to these discoveries, which he summarizes as follows:

### Artemovsk

According to a Soviet committee of inquiry formed on 3 October 1943, 3,000 bodies were found in “an elliptical cave about 20 meters long and 30 meters wide and 3 or 4 meters high” (*ibid.*, pp. 194f.). Based on this, Arad states that, when the Germans entered the city on 29 October 1941, there were approximately 3,000 Jews at Artemovsk, all of whom were shot on 9 January 1942. He nevertheless points out that EM No. 177 dated 6 March 1942 reports the execution of 1,317 persons, including 1,224 Jews (*ibid.*, p. 195), which is the only mention of this location in relation to executions, so that the Soviets found more than twice the documented number of victims.

According to another author, there were 4,300 Jews at Artemovsk: 100 were shot in December 1941, and the remaining 4,200 at the end of January 1942. The source for this presumed massacre is, however, a mere statement made in the 1960s (Oldenburg, pp. 252, 255). The fact appears implausible, because the above-mentioned EM states (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 195):

*“1,317 persons (among them 63 political activists, 30 saboteurs and 1,224 Jews) were executed by Sonderkommando 4b. As a result of this measure, the town of Artemovsk became Jew-free as well.”*

### Novozybkov

*“According to a Soviet report, several pits containing 2,860 corpses were discovered in the Karkhovsk forest near the town’s railway station.” (Arad 2009, p. 200)*

### Yevpatoria

*“According to the report of a Soviet committee that investigated Nazi war crimes in that district [...], the bodies of 97 old people, women, and children were found in a grave in Shumiana kolkhoz.” (ibid., pp. 209f.)*

### Dunaevtsy

According to a Soviet committee of inquiry:

*“The entire mine, as far as could be seen, was full of corpses.” (ibid., p. 270)*

### Satanov

240 persons walled up alive in a basement:

*“On June 19, 1944, the cellar was dug open and the tortured people were revealed.” (ibid., p. 271)*

### Derzhinsk

*“According to a Soviet committee of inquiry, a pit was found in the municipal cemetery in the Derzhinsk quarter containing the bodies of 516 men, women, and children. Another pit was discovered in the ‘May 8’ park near the regional German Ortskommandantur containing the bodies of 31 people, including children.” (ibid., p. 290)*

### Stavropol

*“In February 1943, after liberation, the pit was opened to reveal the bodies of 483 Jews.” (ibid., p. 292)*

In the related document, USSR-1, we read (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 539):

*“During the inspection of a ravine in the vicinity of Koltso Hill and a distance of 250 meters from the high road... [...] a washed-out grave was discovered, 10 meters in depth, from which protruded separate parts of human bodies. As from 26 to 29 July 1943, excavations were carried out at this spot and, as a result, 130 corpses were exhumed.”*

### Nalchik

*“According to a Soviet committee of inquiry into German war crimes in Nalchik, a grave was found containing the bodies of 600 local inhabitants, and the names of the murdered included those of Jews.” (Arad 2009, p. 297)*

### Janowska (Camp)

*“About 7,000 Jews were taken to Janowska, and some 3,000 corpses were later found among the camp’s ruins.” (ibid., p. 336; see Chapter 3 below)*

### Kerch

*“In the Crimean town of Kerch, which was liberated on December 30, 1941, Soviet forces found the graves of about 7,000 Jews, murdered in late November and early December 1941. Descriptions of the murders and photographs of the victims were published in the Soviet press.” (ibid., p. 347; see Section 8.3.1.)*

The total figure adds up to not quite 18,000. The list is obviously incomplete. Two discoveries are particularly important regarding the packing density of the mass graves. First, the “Report of the medico-legal examination of the mass grave in the vicinity of the town of Žagarė” in Lithuania and the “Report of medico-legal visual examination of the site of the mass grave in the vicinity of Žagarė,” drawn up by Soviets on 24 September 1944 (Yakovlev, pp. 50-54), mention three mass graves containing the bodies of Jews shot by the Germans, the largest of which measured 122 m × 4 m × 2 m and contained 2,402 bodies; of these, 20 were subjected to autopsy, while the remaining 2,382 were subjected to visual medico-legal examination; this group consisted of the bodies of 1,213 women, 524 men, 622 children up to 15 years of age and 23 infants. Since the layer of

earth covering the grave was 30 centimeters thick, the effective volume of the grave was  $(122 \text{ m} \times 4 \text{ m} \times 1.7 \text{ m} =) 829.6 \text{ m}^3$ , so that the density of the bodies in the grave was  $(2,402 \div 829.6 =) 2.9$  per cubic meter. The bodies in the grave were placed “without order.” Women made up 51% of the visually examined bodies, while men made up hardly 22% and the children and boys up to age 15, including the infants, made up 27%.

Gerlach mentions the discovery of a mass grave measuring  $1,092 \text{ m}^3$  at Drogichin containing 3,816 bodies (895 men, 1083 women and 1,838 children), on average 3.5 bodies per cubic meter (Gerlach 1999, fn 1173, p. 718).

Other data may be found in Volume 7 of the IMT:

#### Maly Trostenets (USSR-38)

*“The legal-medical experts discovered that there were bullet wounds in the necks of these bodies. In the barn and on the stacks of logs the Germans shot and burned 6,500 persons”* (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 568; see Section 6.6.1. below)

#### Smolensk (USSR-87)

*“... which says that in 80 graves alone, which were opened up and examined by legal-medical experts in the town of Smolensk and in the district of Smolensk, over 135,000 corpses of Soviet citizens – women, children, and men of various ages – were discovered.”* (*ibid.*, p. 465)

#### Smolensk (USSR-56), PoWs

*“A report of a medico-legal examination is appended, Your Honors, to the statement of the Extraordinary State Commission which I have just quoted. Experts such as Academician Burdenko, member of the Extraordinary Commission, Dr. Prosorovsky, chief medico-forensic expert of the People’s Commissariat for the Care of Public Health in the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Smolianov, Professor of Forensic Medicine at the Second Moscow Medical Institute, and other specialists, conducted – from 1 to 16 October 1943 – numerous exhumations and medico-legal autopsies on the corpses in Smolensk and the vicinity of Smolensk. A great many mass graves were opened which contained the corpses of such persons who had been killed during the German fascist occupation. The number of corpses which were found in these graves was between 500 and 4,500 at each place where such mass executions took place. [...] ‘The autopsies performed on corpses taken from graves in the area of the large and small concentration camps at Plant 35, of the former German hospital for prisoners of war, of a sawmill, and of concentration camps near the villages of Becherskaya and Rakytna, revealed that, according to the data of the autopsies, death in an overwhelming majority of cases could be ascribed to hunger, starvation, and acute infectious diseases. [...] The considerable number of burial-pits opened (87), filled with masses of corpses, together with the estimated differences in the time of burial, differences ranging from the second half of 1941, 1942, and 1943, testify, to the systematic extermination of Soviet citizens.’”* (*ibid.*, pp. 371-373)

On Smolensk, Laurie R. Cohen reports (Cohen, p. 100):

*“Very soon after the German forces had left – over the course of the first two weeks of October 1943, that is – investigations by Soviet medical teams, under the auspices of the Extraordinary State Commission, exhumed the corpses they found in and around Smolensk. Many of the grave sites also included the remains of dogs and horses. They determined that during the occupation, approximately 100,000 Soviet prisoners of war had died in captivity and another 35,000 non-combatants perished as well. It is unclear from this report, however, how that total, 135,000, was calculated, since ‘only’ 110,000 can be accounted for from the list. (This excludes the estimated 230,000 Red Army soldiers who died on the surrounding battle fields.) Another commission report, prepared this time by the NKGB (the Soviet secret police force, existing from 1943 to 1946), lists additional sites, and puts the number of dead at 139,798 (although the numbers here actually add up to 139,780). The inclusion of places in the outskirts, such as Aleksandrovskoe (where 176 Roma were massacred) and Magalenshchina (where the close to two thousand Jews who had until then resided in the Smolensk ghetto were buried), might account for why this report has somewhat higher death tolls. The main cause of death given in Smolensk and its surroundings (including in Gedeonovka, Magalenshchina, Readovka, Red Army House, Lager 126, the area of the train station, Upper Iasennaia, Ianivo, and Krasny Bor), the report said, was hunger, infection, or illness. These figures were published in the Soviet daily Izvestiia six weeks after the German forces had left Smolensk.”*

As far as is known, these bodies were fictitious and were never shown in film or photographs. Further along, the same author explains:

*“The Extraordinary State Commission collected numerous and at times slightly contradictory statements regarding the massacre of the Jews in occupied Smolensk (I have located no German reports describing this massacre). A typical report, signed three days after the city was retaken by the Red Army, stated: ‘Especially atrocious was the killing of the Jewish population – all living at Sadki, in the ghetto. On July 16, 1942, ... about fifteen hundred Jews – men, women, the elderly, and children – were killed.’ Statements differ in the numbers of Jews killed (from several hundred to three thousand) and on the date (from June to August 1942). Most witnesses recalled it happening in the early hours of the morning of July 15, the one-year anniversary of German forces entering the town.”* (Cohen, p. 122; *emph. added*)

*Einsatzgruppe B* was garrisoned at Smolensk for all of 1942; nevertheless neither the Incident Reports (Nos. 150-194, 2 January through 24 April), nor the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” (Nos. 1-35, 1 May through 23 December), although they mention Smolensk repeatedly, contain the slightest mention of executions of this city’s Jews.

Rovno (USSR-45)

*“I quote the results of the examination by legal-medical experts concerning the bodies of peaceful Soviet citizens murdered by the Germans and subsequently exhumed:*

*‘1. In all investigated burial places in the city of Rovno and its surroundings, over 102,000 corpses of peaceful citizens and prisoners of war, shot or murdered by other methods, were discovered. Out of this figure:*

*a) In the city of Rovno, near the timber yard on Belaya Street, 49,000 corpses were discovered.*

*b) In the city of Rovno, on Belaya Street, in the vegetable gardens, 32,500.*

*c) In the village of Sossenki, 17,500.*

*d) In the stone quarries near the village of Vydumka, 3,000.*

*e) In the area surrounding Rovno prison, 500.’” (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 529)*

The “Act on Devastation, Plunder and Mass Killings of Soviet Citizens by the Nazi Invaders and Their Collaborators in the City of Rovno and Rovno Region” dated 11 March 1944 reports an “Act of Forensic Medical Examination Carried Out during the Investigation of Nazi Atrocities in the City of Rovno” which supplies further information (Denisov/Changuli, p. 130):

*“1. In the gardens near the Belaya Street there are 26 burial pits of square and rectangular shape, 3 x 3 and 4.5 x 6 meters. The burial mounds are 30 centimeters high.*

*2. At the firewood storage near the Belaya Street there are 65 graves, mostly of rectangular shape, from 3 x 4 meters to 4 x 6 meters. The mounds are 10 to 20 centimeters high.*

*3. In the north-western suburb of the village of Sosenki, 4 kilometers from Rovno in the direction of the town Korets, 50 meters from the highway, there is one grave 100 m long and 5 m wide with earth partitions, half-meter thick, built in every 4 meters. The soil over the graves [is] depressed by 20 to 25 centimeters.*

*4. In the village of Vydumka, in sand pits, 2 kilometers from Rovno in the direction of the town of Korets, 1.5 kilometers from the highway, there is a burial pit over a ravine, 4 x 5 meters covered with earth with [sic] depressed by 30 centimeters. Besides that, the commission discovered 3 spots of land, 4 x 5 meters, covered with 6 iron slabs, 4 rails running along their edges. [...]*

*5. In the south-eastern part of Rovno prison, near the fence, there are 3 graves 5 x 3 meters. The grave located closest to the fence was not fully covered with earth and human corpses could be seen in it.”*

And here are the results of the examination of the mass graves and the bodies:

*“1. Graves on the Belaya St. are 5 meters deep. The upper layer of soil is impregnated with chloride of lime. Each grave has 500 to 2,000 corpses. The corpses in the graves lie naked, face down, in different postures. Male corpses prevailed in most graves.*

*Corpses of mostly young and medium age women and children of both sexes at the ages of 1 year and older were found in the grave containing 1,500 corpses. The corpses lie naked, chaotically on one another in eight layers altogether.*

*During the examination of corpses, including children's ones, and during the post mortem, it was established that in most cases the victims had bullet injuries of the skull with an inlet opening on the back of the head or in the neck. [...]*

*Over 2,000 corpses were found in an open grave 2 meters to the south of a brick structure to the left from the gardens near the Belaya Street. 1,800 of them were men's corpses, the rest – bodies of women aged from 20 to 45. The corpses lay naked in disorder with their faces down. The skin of all corpses was of bright pink color. [...]*

*II. In the village of Sosenki, in the north-western vicinity of the village, the commission found a grave (ditch) containing 17,500 corpses of both sexes, different ages, including children's ones bearing traces of bullet injuries in different parts of the body, most frequently in the head. The corpses were covered with mould and showed signs of decomposition and decay.*

*III. In the village of Vydumka, a large number of charred and half-charred bones were found during the examination of places where the victims had been burnt in the sand pits. A comparative anatomic study proved that those were human bones.*

*According to incomplete data and judging by the remains of bones, no less than 3,000 corpses had been burnt there. A 4-meter iron hook was found in a quarry near this place. It was used for dragging corpses to the cremation site (the hook was given to the local museum).*

*IV. Over 500 dead bodies were found in a grave on the territory of the prison. All corpses were dressed in clothes which preserved well and not worn much before. [...] The corpses' age varied from 20 to 30. The corpses were in the initial stage of decomposition. All had bullet injuries of the skull with an inlet opening on the back of the head and an outlet on the face. Inlet openings were 6 to 8 millimeters in diameter, the outlets were of different form and size. Many corpses had bruises.*

*The earth over the grave was impregnated with chloride of lime. Many used caliber 0.9 cartridge cases with a punch DNH...Goze 41-2 were found in the grave." (ibid., pp. 130-132)*

This is followed by the conclusions of the Soviet experts cited at Nuremberg ("over 100,000 shot") and their interpretation of the presumed findings. The victims at Sosenki were shot and buried "in the second half of 1941" (*ibid.*, p. 132), but then it is not possible that the bodies, in March 1944, would exhibit merely "signs of decomposition and decay." The presumed discovery of the bodies with the pink skin was intended to constitute clear proof of the gassings in the "gas van," as claimed, with one crude error:

*"d) killings of people with CO<sub>2</sub> in gas chambers and the posterior cremation of corpses in the village of Vydumka, in the quarries, date back to the second half of 1943." (ibid., p. 133)*

Leaving aside the fact that the poisoning was supposed to have been committed with CO, carbon monoxide,<sup>338</sup> and not CO<sub>2</sub>, carbon dioxide, can one seriously believe, even in this case, that the bodies, after several months of interment and hence decomposition, should still be intact enough to exhibit the “pink” skin color which could indicate a death by carbon-monoxide poisoning?

The presumed cremation of 3,000 bodies is in contradiction to the story of “Aktion 1005”: who is supposed to have cremated these 3,000 bodies, and when?

The discovery of 102,500 bodies “in the city of Rovno and its surroundings” is evidently at least a blatant exaggeration. According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, 21,000 Jews were shot in this location on 7 and 8 November 1941, and another 5,000 on 13 July 1942 (Gutman *et al.*, Vol. II, entry “Rowno,” pp. 1246f.). Nevertheless, EM No. 143 dated 8 December 1941 supplies the following report (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 860f.):

*“On 6 and 7 November 1941, the long-planned Jewish operation in Rovno was carried out, during which some 15,000 Jews could be shot. Organization lay in the hands of the police by order of the Higher SS and Police leader. The Rovno exterior squad of Einsatzkommandos 5 participated essentially in the shootings.”*

The subsequent shooting of the remaining 5,000 Jews in the ghetto is based exclusively on a mere declaration, the affidavit of Hermann Friedrich Gräbe dated 10 November 1945 (PS-2992. IMT, Vol. 31, pp. 441-445). The witness, who according to his own statement was a manager and head engineer of a branch office of the Josef Jung Construction Company, stated (*ibid.*, p. 441):

*“In the night of 13-14 July 1942, all residents of the ghetto in Rovno, which still had about 5,000 Jewish residents, were liquidated.”*

Appended to the affidavit was published a secret order from the District Commissar in Rovno to the Jung Company of Rovno dated 13 July 1942 which states (*ibid.*, pp. 445f.):

*“The Jewish workers employed at your company are not affected by the operation. You have until Wednesday, 15 July 1942 to resettle them at a new workplace.”*

Gräbe, from whom the document presumably originated, asserted that he had known about the “*Judenaktion*” and wished to save the approximately 100 Jews lodged in the Rovno Ghetto who worked for the Jung Company. He met with the representative of the District Commissar, Head of Staff *Ordensjunker* Beck, who promised him that the Jews from the Jung Company would not be included in the operation (*ibid.*, pp. 442f.).

Since there are no other known documents, one could even imagine a story embroidered by Gräbe based on the document in question to make him look like a hero and escape the accusation of using Jewish slave labor. At any rate, these 100

<sup>338</sup> This would correctly apply to the “gas vans” model “*Kaisers-Kaffee*”-*Wagen*, which allegedly used a cylinder of CO, not to the models allegedly sent into Soviet territory, in which the lethal agent consisted of motor-exhaust gas, strictly speaking, whose major lethal component was also CO.



Jews were not shot, so that the total number of victims should have amounted to 19,900, compared to the 102,000 bodies presumably found by the Soviets.

Arad states that

*“in Rovno, where some 18,000 Jews had been murdered during the second half of 1941, about 5,000 remained in the ghetto. These were transported on July 13, 1942, by train to a forest near Kostopol and shot,”*

but refers the reader to a work by Spektor and to the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (Arad 2009, p. 264, and fn 6, p. 584).

According to another testimony, the shooting took place on 12 July, mostly in the Jewish quarter. The Jews captured alive were shut up in cattle cars and left for two days with nothing to eat or drink.

*“A rather large group of people was put together and led away. [...] We learned that the people taken away by rail were taken in the direction of Kostopol, but the exact destination is unknown.”* (Angrick et al., Doc. 131, p. 323)

Pohl states that the presumed execution took place on 13-14 July, but refers to a book by Spektor (Pohl 2008, p. 48, and fn 164, p. 70). We read there that,

*“on June 14-15, 5,000 Rovno Jews were liquidated. They were assembled, marched to the train station, transported 30 kilometers north and murdered in the woods near Kostopol.”* (Spektor 1990a, p. 185)

No source is given for this. The alleged shooting, 30 km from Rovno, is moreover in contradiction to the presumed Soviet findings, since the mass graves further away were only 4 km from the city. The motivation for the presumed shooting is unknown.

On 15 January 1942, the Council of Jews compiled a list containing 5,355 names of persons inhabiting the ghetto.<sup>339</sup> On 23 February, the mayor of Rovno wrote to the city's District Commissar concerning the “resettlement” of the Jews “to the ghetto,” according to an order dated 30 January, which had to be concluded by 15 February; until that date, some Jews had permission to reside in non-Jewish districts. The mayor asked whether these permits had expired and whether as a result one could proceed with “the resettlement of all Jews to the ghetto.”<sup>340</sup>

On 5 May, the above-mentioned mayor turned to the service department of the police in Rovno to report the following case:

*“The Jew Jakob Grabina with wife has not yet resettled to the ghetto, despite having been requested to do so repeatedly.”*

He had given Grabina one last deadline for the transfer, the 6th, at 12 noon; if he failed to comply, he would be arrested immediately and held for 24 hours without anything to eat or drink (Hoppe, Doc. 97, p. 263). This sort of threat does not seem to accord with the alleged executions of thousands of Jews.

A document dated 8 May 1942, sent from the German mayor of the city of Rovno to the chairman of the Jews, Dr. Bergmann, reports the compulsory-labor

<sup>339</sup> YVA, M.52-579, pp. 7-148.

<sup>340</sup> DARO Rivne, R-22-1-17, p. 1.

order for the Jews of the ghetto over age 14, issued by the above-mentioned mayor. It states:

*“Jews over 65 years old and the chronically ill are excluded from this.”*

Only “compulsory-labor tasks” were to be performed on Sundays, between 7 AM and 1 PM. There were 5,200 people in the Jewish quarter at the time, 3,000 of them over the age of 14.<sup>341</sup> The same day, in response to an order, the president of the Council of Jews, Dr. Bergmann, confirmed that there were 5,200 people in the ghetto, distributed as follows: “employed (men and women)”: 3,747; “unable to work”: 271; “children up the age of 14”: 1,182 (Hoppe, Doc. 100, p. 268).

Why would these 5,200 Jews have been shot a couple of months later?

### Rostov

Another emblematic case is that of Rostov. As Arad reports, “on February 21, 1943, one week after the liberation of Rostov on the Don, Radio Moscow announced the discovery of a mass grave containing the bodies of 20,000 murdered people” (Arad 2009, p. 348); he also states that “according to a Soviet committee of inquiry, ‘Preliminary findings show that the number of Jews murdered in Rostov between July 23, 1942, and February 13, 1943, was in the range of 15,000 to 18,000.’” (*ibid.*, p. 289)

The *Enzyklopädia des Holocaust* reports that Rostov was captured by the Germans on 21 November 1941 and retaken by the Soviets eight days later. On 27 July 1942, it fell back into the hands of the Germans and was reconquered by the Soviets on 14 February 1943. There were 2,000 presumed victims, in addition to which “several dozens of Jews were captured later and murdered in gas vans.” But the source for this massacre is nothing other than the *Black Book* – a volume of Soviet propaganda!<sup>342</sup>

No known document mentions executions at Rostov. A “Protocol on German War Crimes in the City of Rostov on the Don” dated 30 November 1941 and signed by five Russians speaks generally of mistreatment and killings of Jews, without supplying any precise figures. The editors of the book which presents the document offer the following comment (Hoppe/Glass *et al.*, p. 387, Doc. 123):

*“The Jews were shot by members of the main commando of Sk 10a, which had moved into the city together with the Wehrmacht. No concrete information as to the number of victims is available, but the number is estimated at around 1,000.”*

The conjecture is highly random, since there is not the slightest documentary evidence in this regard.

On the other hand, EM No. 16 dated 14 August 1942 contains a lengthy discussion of Rostov, with a report from *Einsatzgruppe D*. The most important passages are reproduced below:<sup>343</sup>

<sup>341</sup> DARO Rivne, R-22-1-17, p. 13.

<sup>342</sup> Gutman *et al.*, Vol. II, entry “Rostow am Don,” pp. 1242f.

<sup>343</sup> NARA, T-175/236, p. 10/2724711.

*“Until November 1941, the number of Jews in Rostov supposedly still amounted to 50,000. They occupied all trading professions. There was a high percentage of them among physicians, pharmacists and the legal professions. More than half of all judges in Rostov were Jews.*

*On 1 Aug. 42, a Jewish council of elders was set up by the Sonderkommando deployed in Rostov, and 2,000 Jews have been registered so far. The other necessary measures are also being undertaken.*

*The danger of epidemics for Rostov is being combatted effectively by the Sonderkommando’s intervention. 350 doctors have already been registered and put to work in their profession in close cooperation with the Wehrmacht.”*

Notwithstanding the gaps, the figures adopted by Arad are obviously significant for their order of magnitude, which corresponds to 0.7% of the total number of bodies. No orthodox Holocaust historian would adduce 7,000 executions (0.7% of the total number of the approximately 976,000 victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and other SS and police units) as an indication of the extermination campaign’s dimensions. Adding the other exhumations mentioned at Nuremberg (excluding those relating to prisoners of war and those which are obviously false) we arrive at 51,000. For this reason, the overwhelming majority of the bodies had to have been destroyed, hence the necessity of “Aktion 1005” for orthodox Holocaust historiography.

If we are to believe Dieter Pohl, the common graves should have been nearly intact, at least in the Ukraine, because he asserts that (Pohl 2008, p. 54):

*“despite their efforts, the Germans never came close to opening but a small fraction of the mass graves in Ukraine, let alone burning the bodies and crushing the bones. After the Red Army’s return, Soviet investigators were able to find almost all of the mass graves and to examine them.”*

From the above, it is obvious that the Soviet reports are a mixture of a small amount of truth and a great deal of propaganda, and it would be very foolish to elevate them to the status of incontrovertible historical documents. A more detailed examination of the Soviet reports will provide further confirmation.

## 1.2. Mass Graves in the Ukraine According to Soviet Experts

### Voroshilovgrad

“Act on Excavation of the Burial Place of Victims of the Nazi Terrorism in an Anti-Tank Ditch in the Area of Ostraya Mogyla in the Town of Voroshilovgrad” dated 24 April 1943 (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 54f.):

*“The commission discovered a heap of corpses of the tortured and shot victims buried (sic) under such a thin layer of earth that parts of human bodies, that is, arms, legs and heads could be seen on the surface. The commission counted the bodies of 1800 persons – men, women, children and old people.”*

More bodies were found in other graves, so that the total number of victims amounted to 1,901.

*“The commission believes it ascertained that the aforementioned corpses were the result of the massacre over civilians executed between 12 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Sunday, November 1, 1942 and on January 21, 1943.”*

Arad affirms that “on the eve of the German invasion, 11,000 Jews lived in Voroshilovgrad (Lugansk). The town fell on July 17, 1942, and on November 1 its remaining 2,000 to 3,000 Jews were led to a nearby antitank trench – at a place known as Ostraiia-Mogila and Ivanishchev – and murdered; some were killed in gas vans” (Arad 2009, pp. 287f.). Nevertheless, according to Dieter Pohl, in August 1942, there were only 1,038 Jews in Voroshilovgrad (Pohl 2008, p. 39).

### Sumy

“From the Act of the Regional Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishing and Investigating the Crimes Committed by German-Fascist Invaders in the City of Sumy,” 26 September 1943 (Denisov/Changuli, p. 82):

*“On the whole, 15 pits were found where the shot and tortured Soviet citizens were buried. The total number of the exterminated Soviet citizens amounts to 5 thousand, including one thousand Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality who were shot near brick-yards Nos. 2 and 4.”*

Six graves were opened and the bodies were examined. One contained “the remains of 650 bodies of citizens who had been burn alive”! (*ibid.*)

Arad affirms that Sumy was captured by the Germans on 10 October 1941 and that the number of Jews shot amounted to 350 (Arad 2009, p. 190).

### Strelechnoye

“Act on the Atrocities and Crimes Perpetrated by the Nazi Invaders in the Psychiatric Hospital in the Village of Strelechnoye, Lipty District, Kharkov Region,” 20 October 1943 (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 94-101). On 21 and 22 November 1941, the Germans shot all 435 patients in a local hospital. The fact is unknown to Holocaust historiography, and the material evidence is rather peculiar. The Soviets found a grave upon which there “stands a cone-shaped monument made of sheet iron and painted steel-blue with a red star on top. There is an inscription on the monument’s pedestal reading ‘Here lie 235 patients from the Strelechnoye psychiatric hospital brutally shot by the German murderers on November 21-22, 1941.’” Another grave bore the inscription: “Here lie 200 patients from the Strelechnoye psychiatric hospital brutally shot by the German murderers on November 21-22, 1941” (*ibid.*, p. 100). Thus, we do have 435 victims. But the zealous Soviet investigators did not content themselves with these discoveries and located two mass graves in the area, from which they exhumed a good 17 bodies (12 from the first and 5 from the second); thus the murder of 435 persons is confirmed by physical evidence consisting of two inscriptions and 17 bodies.

### Romny

The “Act of the District Commission on the Investigation of Crimes Perpetrated by Nazi Invaders and Their Collaborators in the Town of Romny and Romny District” dated 1 October-6 November 1943 says that the Germans occupied the territory in question from 10 September 1941 to 1 September 1943. All the local Jews, approximately 3,000, were crammed into shacks. On 10 November 1941, they were taken out 2 km from the city and shot in “three big precipices” [sic], which the Soviets inspected meticulously (*ibid.*, pp. 102-105):

*“After the examination of the precipices and exhumation of corpses it has been established that the first precipice 100 meters long and 40 meters wide, the second one –100 meters long and 1 [sic] meter wide and the third one – 100 meters long, 20 meters wide and 10 meters deep were heaped with corpses up to the height of 6 meters. [...] Some 1,000 victims were buried in the precipices. Judging by the structure and form of bones, those were men, women and children.”* (p. 105)

If we are to take these data literally, the total surface area of the “three big precipices” was 7,000 square meters (the width of the second is an obvious error and should read 10 instead of 1); if the bodies formed a mass 6 meters high, the total volume was 42,000 cubic meters, and if every meter contained 3.5 bodies, the total number was 147,000!

The presumed massacre at Romny is unknown to Holocaust historiography. In his essay “The Murder of Ukraine’s Jews under German Military Administration and in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine,” Dieter Pohl refers in a note to “Nazi Crimes in Ukraine 1941-1944”! (Pohl 2008, fn 219, p. 74)

### Vasilkov

“Act on the Atrocities Perpetrated by the Nazi Invaders in the Town of Vasilkov, Kiev Region,” 28 November 1943.

*“During the entire period of the Nazi occupation of Vasilkov the Germans shot nearly 1,000 Soviet citizens besides Red Army POWs.”*

*“In the locality of Kovalevka there is one big pit 7 meters long, 5 meters wide and 6 meters deep. Witnesses told that 106 bodies of executed Soviet people had been buried there,”*

therefore the grave was not opened.

*“In the gully ‘Kruglik’ there are three pits where over 50 corpses were buried.”*

More than 200 mental patients were killed and “buried in two pits” (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 110f.).

Of 1,000 presumed victims, 356 bodies were mentioned, only 50 of which (perhaps) were exhumed.

The presumed massacre at Vasilkov is unknown to Holocaust historiography.

Kremenchuk (Kremenchug)

“From the Act on Mass Executions and Massacre of Soviet Prisoners of War in the City of Kremenchuk, Poltava Region,” 29 November 1943:

*“In the territory of Pishchanaya Hill in the northeastern suburb of the city of Kremenchuk where 36 graves with the total number of 20,000 corpses were found. Most of the victims were civilians. There were also 5,000 bodies of POWs.”*

The report adds that “736 corps[es] were examined in the course of excavations and it was established that the Nazis had killed 60,000 Soviet citizens in the camps near the city of Kremenchuk.” Near Camp 346 A were 11 graves with the bodies of 30,000 Soviet prisoners of war; 4 graves containing 2,000 bodies were found near Camp 346 B (*ibid.*, pp. 116f.).

Arad states that, when the Germans took Kremenchuk on 8 September 1941, approximately 7,000 Jews were still in the city, but a census of the population on 26 September registered 3,500 persons as Jews and another 100 living in mixed marriages. There is no proof that there were really 7,000 Jews, just as there is no proof of the shooting of more than 3,000 Jews on 28 October 1941 and even less proof of further shootings until 7 November. Arad cites a single document, a report by *Feldkommandantur* 239 responsible for the Kremenchug region referring to the period between October 15 and November 15, 1941 which says “Kremenchug is almost purged of Jews” (Arad 2009, p. 177). If the Jews of the city were all killed, there were 3,500 victims, but the Soviets claimed to have found 20,000 bodies, most of them civilians, that is, Jews.

Starokonstantinov

“Act on the Mass Extermination of Civilians and Soviet Prisoners of War in the Town of Starokonstantinov,” 24 March 1944 (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 135-138):

*“According to statistics, 20 thousand innocent Soviet civilians had been killed in Starokonstantinov. Numerous graves in the town and on its outskirts are terrible proofs of the crimes perpetrated by the Hitlerites. The commission examined the spots where the victims were killed and found that there were four such places in the town and the vicinity. The first was located 1 kilometer west of Starokonstantinov. There are 9 large graves and 20 ones of smaller size. According the evidence presented by I.I. Shokot, Te. O. Bartels, Dobrotvorsky and other people living near the station, Gestapo men shot close to 6,500 civilians here. [...]*

*3 big and 5 smaller graves were found at the distance of 2 kilometers from the town near the forest, to the right from the highway Shepetovka. As testified by residents of the village of Nove Misto, Starokonstantinov District, Y. Korovsky, M. Kostyuk, V. Ordynat and other people, more than 4,800 children, men and women had been shot here.”* (*ibid.*, pp. 135f.)

D. Sandratsky, Chairman of Voroshilov Collective Farm, told Soviet investigators that the Germans had shot 300 civilians and hanged six persons in August 1941, then: “On December 29, 1942 the Germans assembled 4,000 men, women

and children, old people and cripples” and shot them (*ibid.*, p. 136). A third site had an imprecise number of mass graves; according to local residents, “the graves contained 155 bodies of the shot people, mostly children between the ages of 1 to 12 years from the invalids’ home” (*ibid.*, p. 137).

Therefore, at least 11,455 civilians were killed at Starokonstantinov, of whom at least 4,155 were certainly Jews (men, women and children), but the Soviets did not open any mass grave.

Pohl writes that 4,000 Jews were killed in this locality on 29 December 1942 (Pohl 2008, p. 50), but his source is precisely the Soviet report in question (*ibid.*, fn 176, p. 71). The only documented shooting in this locality is mentioned in EM No. 59 dated 21 August 1941. It is best quoted in context (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 327):

*“In Starokonstantinov, the current headquarters of the Higher SS and Police leader and commander of the Rear Army Area, the Jews were made to clean the barracks after the arrival of the German troops. Since the Jews had recently quit showing up for work, the military agencies proceeded to rounding up their workers at daybreak. The Jews were very impudent and flat-out refused to work. Of approximately 1,000 Jews enlisted for work in the fields, only 70 showed up the next day. Acts of sabotage against harvesting equipment were moreover discovered. In the end, the Jewish council of elders even spread the rumor that the Russians were coming back, which immediately caused the Jews to threaten and insult the Ukrainians publicly. Finally, it was discovered that the Jews were engaged in lively trade with stolen livestock and goods. In reprisal, the 1st SS Brigade carried out an operation against the Jews, in the course of which 300 male and 139 female Jews were shot.”*

Everything can be said *except* that this shooting was a “pretext” to kill Jews for racial reasons. Thus, the documented victims are 439 of the presumed 11,455.

### Novaya Odessa

According to the “Act of the Atrocities Committed by the Nazi Invaders Against Civilians in Novaya Odessa, Nikolayev Region,” dated 3 April 1944, the Germans shot 104 persons in the village of Andreyevka on 14 March (the year is not given but should be 1942; Denisov/Changuli, p. 139):

*“When the graves with the shot and tortured citizens of Novaya Odessa had been unearthed, the medical commission established that the majority of them were buried alive. [...] The examination of corpses established that close to 70 percent of Soviet civilians got half-lethal wounds of legs, arms, the back and the body. Thus, the medical commission found that the victims has been buried in the pits alive.”*

The report, however, does not even indicate the number of mass graves and tells us nothing about the exhumations. Official historiography is completely ignorant of this presumed massacre.

Zaporozhie (Zaporozhye)

“From the Act of the Extraordinary Commission on Establishing and Investigating Destruction, Pillage and Killings Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices in the City of Zaporozhie,” 20 April 1944 (*ibid.*, pp. 142-145).

On 14 October 1941, the Germans announced the registration of all the Jews in Zaporozhie, who were then compelled to wear an armband with a six-pointed star. On 24 March 1942, the German authorities gathered the entire Jewish population together under the pretext of transferring them to Melitopol.

*“Having assembled thousands of Jews including old people, women and children, they marched them out of town to the Stalin State Farm, where they were shot on the same day.” (ibid., p. 142)*

There were 3,700 victims.

The forensic medical-legal commission established that the number of victims amounted to 43,000, broken down as follows (*ibid.*, p. 144):

1. 6,600 – at the stadium
2. 400 – at an old cemetery near the POW camp
3. 27,000 – to the north of the Stalin State Farm near Zaporozhie
4. 7,200 – in quarry No. 1 to the north-east of the Stalin State Farm
5. 1,800 – in quarry No. 2 to the north-east of the Stalin State Farm.”

Only 66 bodies were exhumed from the 8 mass graves. Since there were only 3,700 Jews, and the prisoners of war probably amounted to 400 men, one must wonder who the remaining 38,900 victims were. It is also worthy of note that, out of 43,000 bodies, the Soviets only exhumed 66!

Pohl mentions the shooting of 3,700 Jews at Zaporozhie on the 21st or 24th of March 1942 (Pohl 2008, p. 38), but bases his statement entirely on this Soviet report (*ibid.*, fn 91, p. 66). This means that orthodox Holocaust historiography has no knowledge of this presumed massacre.

Vinnitsa (Mental Hospital)

“From the Act on the Execution of Patients of the Vinnitsa Mental Hospital by the German Invaders,” 29 April 1944 (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 146-148).

The Germans killed approximately 2,000 mental patients from the city “in the spring of 1941” (sic) by shooting, and by lethal injection in the winter-spring of 1942.

*“The commission has examined the places where the murdered patients had been buried and established that a sand pit on the bank of Vyshenka River contained close to 800 corpses of mental patients, shot by the Germans. [...]*

*The poisoned patients had been buried on the hospital cemetery where the commission found 18 graves 3 to 4 meters long, 2 to 3 meters wide and 5 meters deep.” (ibid., p. 146)*



The bodies were arranged in superimposed layers, but, due to their condition “it was impossible to establish the number of layers,” nevertheless: “According to the materials of investigation and the excavation of graves, the commission established that the number of the Nazi-poisoned mental patients buried in the hospital’s cemetery is more than 700” (*ibid.*, p. 147).

This crime, as well, is unknown to orthodox Holocaust historiography.

### Vinnitsa

“Act of the City Commission on the Investigation of the Crimes Perpetrated by German-Fascist Invaders in the City of Vinnitsa,” 18 May 1944 (*ibid.*, pp. 149f.).

The report mentions the following executions carried out by the Germans:

1. 29 July 1941: 25 hostages
2. mid-August 1941: 350 people
3. 13 September 1941: 1,200 people
4. 19 September 1941: “15,000 residents of the city of Vinnitsa were brutally tortured to death in the Pyatnichanskiy Forest”
5. “*On April 16, 1942 by the order of Stadtkommissar Marinfeld, 10,000 civilians were gathered at Vinnitsa stadium and then herded to the Pyatnichanskiy Forest where old people, women, and children were shot, while the able-bodied population (1,000) were imprisoned. From the prison 500 persons were sent for labour in the Vinnitsa concentration camp and 500 others – to a concentration camp in Zhytomir.*” (all *ibid.*, p. 149)

Of these 1,000 persons, 500 were shot on 25 August 1942 and the remaining 500 in September 1942 and 1943. The Germans also killed over 12,00 Soviet prisoners of war and 250 patriots, so that the total number of victims amounted to 41,620 (although the figures only add up to 39,825). Oddly, the report makes no mention of mass graves (*ibid.*, pp. 149f.). The murdered Jews were those indicated in Points 4) and 5), a total of 23,000 persons.

Arad writes with regard to this locality (Arad 2009, p. 170):

*“Over September 19 and 20, a large murder operation took place in the Piatnichansk forest; about 10,000 Jews, mainly women, children, and the old people, were murdered. This action was carried out by Reserve Police battalion 45 and Police battalion 314, aided by the local police. A ghetto was established in Vinnitsa in late September 1941; some 5,000 Jewish artisans and physically fit working Jews moved in.”*

Nevertheless, for the killings, the author does not refer us to any document, but rather to three publications, among them a 2000 paper by Pohl, the English translation of which I have cited frequently (Pohl 2008). In both editions, Pohl claims that a “*Restkommando*” of *Einsatzkommando* 6, together with Police Battalion 45 and 314 “probably” (“around” in the English text) killed 15,000 Jews on 19-20 September 1941. He notes that the massacre is not mentioned in the Incident Reports and refers to Denisov/Changuli’s *Nazi Crimes in the Ukraine 1941–1944*<sup>344</sup>

<sup>344</sup> The German article was republished, to which I refer: Pohl 2009a, p. 170; cf. Pohl 2008, fn 86, p. 66.

Zolotonosha

“From the Act on the Extermination of Soviet Citizens by the Nazis in the City of Zolotonosha,” 18 May 1945 (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 151-155). On 22 November 1941, 3,500 Jews from the city were taken to a “deep ravine” 3 km from the city and shot by the Germans:

*“Through the investigation, the commission discovered the graves of the shot people 3 kilometers from Zolotonosha in a ravine. The graves were 49 meters in perimeters and 12 meters deep.” (ibid., p. 153)*

No indication of the number of graves nor any exhumations. This locality is unknown to orthodox Holocaust historiography as the site of a massacre.

Poltava

“Extract from the Report of the Poltava Regional Commission on Establishing and Investigating the Crimes Committed by the German-Fascist Invaders and Their Collaborators and on the Damage They Caused to Citizens, Collective Farms, State Enterprises and Institutions of Regional Subordination,” late 1944.

*“Over the two years of their rule, the Germans shot, burnt, buried alive or tortured to death 221,895 Soviet people in the region, among them 152,279 men, 58,369 women and 11,256 children.” (ibid., p. 166)*

No mention of mass graves.

Chernigov

“From the Report of the State Regional Commission on Establishing and Investigating the Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders in the Territory of Chernigov Region from September, 1941 to September, 1943,” 16 March 1945 (*ibid.*, pp. 167-171):

*“The occupation of Chernigov Region by German-fascist invaders was accompanied by savage tortures and extermination of the population. During the occupation the Germans killed and tortured to death 127,778 people and deported 41,578 people to Germany for slave labor. The city of Chernigov was one of the places where mass extermination of civilians took place. A considerable part of Soviet citizens had passed through the city prison. Out of the total number of victims 52,453 died in Chernigov.” (ibid., p. 167)*

The report mentions Jews in these terms:

*“Shortly after the occupation of Chernigov in 1941, the Nazis carried out mass shootings of Jews. Prior to executions, the Jewish population was registered and proposed to assemble at the square for further deportation. All those who arrived were encircled by armed guards, marched to a certain place and shot there. Those who had not arrived for some reason were later arrested in their apartments, imprisoned and later shot.” (ibid., pp. 167f.)*

Other exterminations allegedly targeted mental patients and Gypsies:

*“In January, 1942 a mass execution of patients of the local mental hospital was staged. Part of patients was shot, and the rest gassed in truck-mounted gas chambers.*

*In the spring of 1942 the Nazis organized a registration of Gypsies and after registration all Gypsies were shot.” (ibid., p. 168)*

The report makes no mention of mass graves or the exhumation of graves. The number of victims attributed to Chernigov is quite implausible, if not downright absurd, because it is higher than the number of inhabitants which the Germans found in the city: 40,000.

This location appears in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports in connection with execution only in EM No. 135 dated 19 November 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 816):

*“On 23 Oct. 41, a partial unit of Sonderkommando 4a visited the city of Chernigov, which had 70,000 residents before the war, only 40,000 of whom remained. Of more than 1,000 Jews, not more than 260 remained. The city itself had been almost completely destroyed. The inner city is said to have been set on fire by the Jews before the arrival of German troops. Next to 8 Communists and partisans, who had been handed over by the town commandant, the commando shot 116 Jews on 23 Oct. 41 and 144 Jews the next day. When the same commando entered the city again on 28 Oct. 41, 49 Jews could be arrested who had thought the danger was over after the operation of 24 Oct. 41, and who had shown up again after their flight. On the same day, a request by the director of the local lunatic asylum in Chernigov was also granted to liquidate 270 incurably ill mental patients.”*

The victims at Chernigov therefore numbered 587, including 309 Jews.

### Ukraine

In 1945, the “Ukrainian Republican Commission,” which assisted the Soviet “Extraordinary State Commission,” established that the “German-fascist invaders”

*“have exterminated and tortured to death 4,496,574 Soviet citizens, including 3,178,084 civilians, among them men, women and children, and 1,318,463 Soviet prisoners-of-war; 2,023,112 Soviet citizens were driven into German slavery.”*

The report does not say how many bodies were found, or where (Denisov/Changuli, p. 172).

Among the crimes committed by the Germans in the Ukraine were the shooting of more than 100,000 people at Babi Yar, 175,000 at Rovno (city and region), 200,000 in the Yanov Camp at Lvov, and 133,000 Jews in the Lvov Ghetto (*ibid.*, pp. 176f.).

### Kramatorsk

A “Report of the Extraordinary State Commission” dated 23 December 1944 relating to the Stalino region mentions the exhumation of 812 bodies in three mass graves “in the old caolin and chalk quarry in the northern suburb of Kramatorsk”

on 25 September 1943. The graves contained the bodies of 740 men, 50 women and 22 children, only 126 of whom could be identified.

*“The inquest has determined that 761 bodies have penetrating bullet wounds in the skull, 40 bodies have penetrating bullet wounds of cervical vertebra. In all the 812 cases death was the result of shots from hand firearms in the back of the head at close range, almost point blank.” (ibid., p. 192)*

In EM No. 156 dated 16 January 1942, SK 4b of *Einsatzgruppe C* reported “that the Jews had mostly fled prior to the arrival of the commando at the city,” adding (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 100):

*“The number of Jews present in the cities occupied by SK 4b in the region around Kramatorsk is estimated at no more than 1,500.”*

The Activity Report of the counter-intelligence officer at Department Ic dated 26 February 1942 reports: “SD carries out large-scale cleansing in Kramatorsk” (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 273), but there were still 340 Jews in the city in February 1943 (Oldenburg, p. 252). The aforementioned 1,500 Jews lived in various towns around Kramatorsk, however, which means that the discovery of 812 corpses in this city presupposes that the Jews had been brought there from nearby towns to be killed there. But no document mentions this transfer nor the number of people shot.

### 1.3. Conclusions of the Soviet Expert Reports

The basic problem is that the institution of the Soviet war crimes commissions was strictly propagandistic in intent, to the extent that they were intended to demonstrate the horrifying crimes of the “monsters,” “hangmen,” “cannibals,” “German-Fascist invaders,” etc. whose primary aim was to massacre the “peaceful,” “Soviet citizens,” who were “brutally tortured to death” or “burnt alive,” “buried alive,” or “gassed,” “for no reason at all.” The aim formed part of an ideological mission in which there was no place for the truth.

The case of Katyn is typical in this regard. Number 51 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” dated 23 April 1943 describes the Soviet reaction to the discovery of the mass graves (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 803):

*“The German publication on the murder of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest was very inconvenient for the Soviets. In a TASS disclaimer, the German reports are dismissed as vile lies. These crimes were said to have been committed by the Germans themselves. According to this, the former POWs were doing construction work in the area west of Smolensk, and fell into German hands with the retreat of the Red Army. Soviet propaganda attempts to make these murders supposedly committed by the Germans more credible by harping on the other atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Soviet population.”*

The same propaganda line was also followed during later cases. After recapturing the territory around Smolensk, the Soviets instituted a special commission to investigate the murders (the so-called Burdenko Commission), which performed its

tasks between the 16th and 23rd of January 1944, releasing a long report on the 24th, which was later introduced into evidence at Nuremberg as Document USSR USSR-054 (IMT, Vol. 39, pp. 290-332). “From statements by witnesses it clearly resulted,” so the report claimed, that Katyn was a German “provocation” (*ibid.*, p. 292):

*“In the winter of 1942-43, the general military situation changed fundamentally, and not in favour of the Germans. The military power of the Soviet Union was constantly increasing, and the alliance between the Soviet Union and the Allies consolidated. The Germans decided to initiate the provocation by taking the atrocities which they had committed in the forest of Katyn and putting the blame for them on Soviet authorities. They thus intended to divide the Russians and the Poles and obliterate the trace of their crime.”* (*ibid.*, p. 304)

The Commission invited 20 foreign journalists, most of them British or American, including “John Melby, the Third Secretary of the American Embassy, and Kathleen Harriman, the 25-year-old daughter of the millionaire William Averell Harriman, who was US ambassador to the USSR at the time” (Sanford, p. 139), who were no doubt shown all or a part of the 925 bodies which the Soviets declared they had exhumed (IMT, Vol. 39, p. 324). Over the course of the debates at the Nuremberg Trial, at the hearing of 14 February 1946, Colonel Y.V. Pokrovsky read a summary of the Soviet forensic medical findings:

*“According to the estimates of medico-legal experts, the total number of bodies amounts to over 11,000. The medico-legal experts carried out a thorough examination of the bodies exhumed, and of the documents and material evidence found on the bodies and in the graves. During the exhumation and examination of the corpses, the commission questioned many witnesses among the local inhabitants. Their testimony permitted the determination of the exact time and circumstances of the crimes committed by the German invaders.”* (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 426)

In their audacity, the Soviets dared to link Katyn to “Aktion 1005.” At Nuremberg, Soviet prosecutor L.N. Smirnov asserted (*ibid.*, pp. 592f.):

*“I terminate the quotation with the conclusion of the medical-legal experts. I quote the last paragraph on Page 340 of the text:*

*‘Thus the Hitlerite murderers adopted in the territory of the Lvov region the same methods for concealing their crimes which they employed earlier in connection with the murder of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest.*

*‘The expert commission ascertained full similarity of method in camouflaging the graves in Lissenitzach Forest with those used to camouflage the graves of the Polish officers killed by the Germans at Katyn.*

*‘To extend the experiments in exterminating people, cremating corpses, and camouflaging the crimes, the Germans set up in Lvov, in the Yanov Camp, a special school for the preparation of qualified cadre. The commandants of the camps of Lublin, Warsaw, Kraków, and other cities attended this school. The chief of the Sonderkommando Number 1005, Scherlack [Schallock?], taught the commandants on the spot how to organize the exhumation of the corpses from*

*the graves, how to pile them on stacks, burn them, how to scatter the ashes, to crush the bones, to fill up the ditches, and how to plant trees and brush wood on the graves as camouflage.”*

Since the Germans reburied the bodies of the Poles whom they had exhumed in the mass graves, so much so that the Soviets were able to exhume them another time, it makes no sense to speak of “camouflage” of the mass graves or of “cremating corpses.”

Referring to the mass graves of Ulla (Byelorussia), Katyn and Vinnitsa, all of which contain victims of the Soviet NKVD, Derek Congram notes:

*“Despite the age of the documentation (in and around 1943) and the overtly political motivation of the [German] exhumations, they represent among the best publicly available data on mass grave excavations to date.”* (Congram, p. 258)

In practice, in the field of exhumations and legal-medical expert reports, no other report comes even close to the quality of the expert reports compiled by the Germans in the cases of Katyn and Vinnitsa (Reichsministerium 1943 & 1944).

The Soviet manipulations are well illustrated by the case of Ozarichi. On 12 March 1944, the commander of the 35th Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht, *Generalleutnant* Richter, ordered the Byelorussian civilian population to be collected in two camps of the administrative district near Ozarichi. The camps were without infrastructure, and the inmates were left under the open sky until 18 March, when the Soviet troops arrived and liberated 33,480 people, including 15,960 children below the age of 13.<sup>345</sup> Hans-Heinrich Nolte reports that

*“the camps were taken up by Soviet propaganda; several newspaper articles report. The ‘Extraordinary State Commission’ for the Investigation of the Crimes of the ‘German-Fascist Invaders’ send a group of investigators”* (p. 272),

including military correspondents who took numerous photographs during the liberation of the camps (p. 14). It should be borne in mind that the bodies all lay under an open sky:

*“The dead were not buried; those still alive lacked the strength for this. First, the soldiers on watch forced [the inmates] to throw or stack the dead into special ditches dug for this near the fence. But there were more bodies with every day, and they were left lying among the living.”* (p. 8)

The fatality figures adopted by the Soviet reports are very discordant and range from 8,000 to 49,000:

– “Protocol on the Investigation of the Civilian Camp near the Dert settlement by the Military Commission,” 18 March 1944:

*“More than 8,000 people were tormented to death, shot or starved to death in these camps.”* (p. 36)

– “Protocol of the Commission of Military Physicians on the Crimes of the Wehrmacht in the Ozarichi Camps,” 18 March 1944:

<sup>345</sup> Knatko, p. 10; subsequent page numbers and photos from there, unless stated otherwise.

*“The victims of the Hitler fascists amount to hundreds of thousands. In the ditch at Camp No. 1, which is 100 meters long and 1.5 to 2 meters wide, lies a lot of bodies, thrown together by the Germans. According to the accounts of the prisoners and from the number of exhumed burials and the bodies found on the grounds of the camp, it is evident that over the course of the seven days of the camp’s existence, and on the way to the camp, the Germans annihilated at least 9,000 Soviet citizens.”* (p. 34)

- “Protocol of the Extraordinary Regional Commission on the Established Crimes of the Wehrmacht in the Ozarichi Camps,” April 1944:

*“Out of a total of 52,000 people, 40% perished; they were thrown into the excavated ditches.”* (p. 146)

The number of victims therefore amounted to 20,800.

- From the “Protocol of the Extraordinary Regional Commission on the Determination of Crimes of the Fascists in the Ozarichi Camps,” 18 March 1944: Camp No. 1 held 45,689 people; No. 2 held 25,271 people, and a total of 33,434 people were liberated on 18 March, so that there were 37,526 victims among the 70,960 internees (53% death rate; p. 38).
- “Protocol of the Extraordinary Regional Commission on the Established Crimes of the Wehrmacht in the Ozarichi Camps,” April 1944:

*“Following their arrival in the camp, there were approximately 70,000 people there. [...] At the time of the liberation, i.e., until the 18th of March of the same year, no fewer than 70% of the peaceful Soviet citizens held in the concentration camp died.”* (pp. 148-150; emph. added)

The deaths therefore amounted to at least 49,000.

The information on the actual discovery of bodies is scarce and vague. According to a “Telegram of the 65th Army’s War Council” dated 29 March 1944, “according to preliminary information, up to 600 bodies of persons were discovered right on the camp grounds who had died of starvation and disease or in isolated cases had been killed by the Germans or Vlasov’s followers” (p. 50).

The “Protocol of the Commission of Military Physicians on the Crimes of the Wehrmacht in the Ozarichi Camps” dated 18 March 1944 reports, as we have just seen, on the discovery of a mass grave 100 meters long and 1.5 to 2 meters wide in Camp No. 1, containing “a lot of bodies.” Finally, the “Protocol of the Investigation of the Ozarichi Camp by the Commission of Military Physicians” states that the Germans forced the prisoners “to dig a gigantic ditch measuring 6 x 3 x 2 m, into which the bodies of 15 already shot inmates were thrown” (p. 44).

Therefore, the corpses were not destroyed or concealed and were visible to everyone. When the military photographers reached the spot, they found a horrifying spectacle, but obviously it was not enough. The most distressing scene which presented itself before their eyes was a group of seven bodies – four children and three adults – lying on the ground a short distance away from the others. It was an excellent propaganda topic, but the number of bodies was too small. So the photographers resorted to a little trick: they photographed the tiny group of

corpses from nine different angles, and the resulting photographs were made to look like they depicted dozens of bodies.<sup>346</sup> In addition to the perspective, they also changed the caption: “Overview of the camp. Foreground: bodies of women and children who died of starvation and disease”; “Children’s bodies”; “Bodies of women and children.”

An isolated body lying a little way off appeared in four photographs (#8-11). Another four photographs show seven bodies not far apart from the others (#12-15). In practice, the first 15 photographs, which show the most horrible scenes witnessed by the photographers, show 15 bodies. Another horrifying scene shows a mass grave, the end of which is visible, with its bottom for the most part empty, and 7-8 bodies in the foreground (photo #22). The image corresponds to the grave measuring 6 m × 3 m × 2 m with the 15 bodies mentioned. Another 14 photographs show a total of 16 bodies.<sup>347</sup>

Undoubtedly, the photographic documentation was a bit scarce when it comes to materially documenting the deaths of 8,000-49,000 people, or even just the presence of 600 bodies on the ground!

There is another aspect of the matter which is worthy of note. None of the multiplicitous reports examined by myself ever mentions the discovery of mass graves containing Soviet soldiers killed in battle. But already as early as the beginning of August 1941, we find the following among the Administrative Regulations of the German Commanders of the Rear Army Center:<sup>348</sup>

*“Burial of bodies and animal cadavers. The bodies of Russian soldiers and animals are still lying around near certain roads. For sanitary reasons, it is absolutely necessary to bury all corpses and animal cadavers immediately. The local commandants can draft Jews for this work.”*

Yet the Soviets found only the bodies of “peaceful Soviet citizens” and POWs in the mass graves.

#### 1.4. Patrick Desbois and the Mass Graves in the Ukraine

In this context, one immediately thinks of the research spearheaded by Father Patrick Desbois, performed in the Ukraine between 2002 and 2007. The results were summarized as follows in a folder from the temporary exhibition *Les Fusillades Massives en Ukraine (1941-1944): La Shoah par Balles*, which was held at Paris from 20 June until 30 November 2007:

*“Since 2004, Father Patrick Desbois and the Yahad-In Unum research team found numerous Ukrainian witnesses having seen the massacres or having been*

<sup>346</sup> Photos 1-8 and 11 of the unpaginated insert titled “Photodocuments.”

<sup>347</sup> Photos #16-21, 22-26, 28, 31f. #18, “Body of an unknown girl,” shows a body lying on straw with the face in an advanced state of putrefaction; in the background, we see two beams from a wooden shack. This photo has nothing to do with Ozarichi, partly because a body cannot putrify within a week in the Byelorussian winter (the snow is visible in almost all the photos), and because there were no shacks in either of the two camps.

<sup>348</sup> LVVA, P 70-5-23, p. 25.



*requisitioned during the executions of the Jews. The witness testimonies compiled by Yahad, systematically compared with information from written documents permitted the finding of more than 500 mass graves until then forgotten, and the gathering of material elements of the genocide (weapons, shells, bullets). It became possible at last to preserve and respect the burial places of the victims.”*

In 2007, Desbois published the book *Porteur de mémoires: sur les traces de la Shoah par balles*, which aroused lively criticism by orthodox Holocaust scholars. Worthy of note is the review by Christian Ingrao and Jean Solchany, who focus primarily, as implied by the title of their paper, on the mediatic exposition of Desbois's research, in particular the fact that the executions by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other units in the Ukraine were presented by the media as “the very recent discovery of just one man almost all by himself,” ignoring “the fact – which is fundamental – that the material reality of the mass shootings was established a very long time ago, thanks to multiple sources” (Ingrao/Solchany, p. 7). Desbois felt himself flattered by so many undeserved praises and acted like the discoverer of “an essential dimension of the Shoah which had been ignored so far,” a sort of “avenger of memory” (*ibid.*, p. 8)

Desbois and his editor remedied these criticisms, but only in part, in the English edition of the book, published in 2008 under the title *The Holocaust by Bullets*; the subtitle in fact presents the author in this manner: *A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*. From a historiographical point of view, the most important criticism concerns the victim counts and the locations of the mass graves. In this regard, Ingrao and Solchany noted:

*“What has not yet been explained very clearly is the manner in which he proceeded with his victim count. Anxious to respect the Halakha, the Jewish law specifying that the bodies should be moved in no case, Father Desbois' team was unable to proceed with an exact count. At Lisinichi, near Lvov, the team identified one of the biggest extermination sites in the Ukraine, estimating the number of victims at ninety thousand. Nothing is said about the manner in which this figure was established. Concerning the total number of victims of the mass shootings, no figure has been advanced.”*

I have thoroughly reviewed Desbois's book in question elsewhere (Mattogno 2015a). Here, I will briefly focus on the issue of mass graves.

First of all, Desbois's claim of having located more than 500 mass graves has no basis in fact, with one single exception. He has merely located areas of meadow, woods or agricultural land where he *assumes* that there are mass graves, and this is based on mere testimonies sixty years after the alleged events, the reliability of which is more than dubious. The exception concerns 15 mass graves at Busk, a city located approximately 45 km east of Lvov. Before examining Desbois's local archeological research, we must dwell upon the rabbinical legislation relating to Jewish bodies. Desbois reports that on 5 October 2006 he went to London to meet Rabbi Schlesinger, with whom he had a conversation which he summarizes as follows:

*“The Rabbi sat down slowly, silent and serious, and started to study the several handwritten documents in Yiddish on yellow and white paper that had been previously placed on the table. They were Rabbinical Court decisions that came from various Orthodox courts throughout the world regarding the laws and rules applicable to the bodies of Jews killed during the Holocaust. Picking up a yellow paper, Rabbi Schlesinger raised his eyes and explained to me in English that it had been ruled that the Jews assassinated by the Third Reich were tsadiqim, ‘saints,’ and that the plenitude of eternal life had been granted them. Because of this, their burial places, wherever situated – under a motorway or in a garden – should be left intact so as not to disturb their rest.”* (Desbois 2008, pp. 129f.)

When Desbois decided in August 2006 to perform archeological excavations at Busk, he realized that he needed “the presence of an orthodox rabbi so that the excavations would not contravene Jewish law.” He then turned to “the son of Rabbi Meshi Zahav, the founder of Zaka,” who “accepted to come from Jerusalem in person to oversee the work in its entirety” (*ibid.*, p. 176).

Desbois stresses the difficulty which the observation of rabbinical law imposes upon scientific research (*ibid.*):

*“The challenge was doubly complex. On the one hand we had to respect Jewish laws and on the other we wanted to obtain scientific results as precise as possible in terms of the identity of the victims, their number, and the cause of death. The Jewish law, the Halakha, specifies that bodies must not be moved under any circumstance, particularly the victims of the Holocaust. According to Orthodox Jewish tradition, these victims are resting in the fullness of God, and any movement of their bodies would disturb that peace. Hence the archaeologist could only uncover the first layer of bodies, taking care not to move any bones. In addition, the bodies had to be covered up again as soon as the archaeologist finished working.”*

With these precautions, the mass graves were opened, and the first layer of skeletons was brought to light. According to Desbois, the graves originally contained 1,750 bodies (*ibid.*). Further along, he writes (*ibid.*, p. 178):

*“Thanks to this means of transport, we were able to measure the extent of the massacre: 17 graves next to the Jewish cemetery, which seemed very small in comparison to them.”*

Strangely, Desbois never published a single photograph of the mass graves at Busk, although his book contains a 16-page insert with 29 color photographs (between pp. 120 & 121). But 14 photographs are dedicated to the witnesses, four to the cartridge casings found here and there, while two show a forest, one shows a hen house, another shows “the school yard where the Jews were assembled before being taken to the pit”; yet another shows “The track along which the victims went to the pit,” one shows a meadow with a number of geese and a small canal with water in it, while the last shows a meadow with trees in the background behind a fence.

An aerial photograph of the Busk site which is accessible for consultation on the web, however, shows 14 graves (see Documents II.1.1. & 2. in the Appendix), and it is difficult to believe that the fifteenth shows a little hole located to the left of Mass Grave No. 3. The bottom of nearly all the graves is covered, wholly or in part, by white cloth, presumably a sheet, no doubt to protect the bones, but Grave No. 6 is entirely uncovered, and one can see that it contains only skeletons.

From the aerial photograph, we estimate that the 14 graves (comparing the dimensions of the graves to those of a person), are rather small, and had a total surface area of approximately 300 square meters.

Another image (Document II.1.3), taken from the ground, shows bones in one grave.<sup>349</sup> This is an even bigger grave, with an estimated surface area of approximately 40 square meters. Another photograph depicts Desbois on the edge of the same grave.<sup>350</sup> From a comparison with the aerial photograph we see that the grave in question can only be No. 10, the biggest. There are no more than about 30 visible, recognizable skulls, indicating an order of magnitude of dozens rather than hundreds of skeletons. In any case, since Desbois could not move the bones, his archeologists could not even know what lay beneath the layer of bones they were looking at. Hence, in this case they had no way of establishing the figure of 1,750 skeletons.

By a singular paradox, the only mass-grave location containing human bones found by Desbois was located precisely in the locality of Busk, with regard to which nothing is known from the Holocaust point of view. He presumes that the skeletons in question belonged to Jews shot by Germans, but nothing is known of any such shootings. Busk is not mentioned in the Incident Reports or in the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories,” and is unknown to Krausnick and Wilhelm, as well as to Arad, and the various contributing authors of the work *The Shoah in Ukraine* (Brandon/Lower), starting with Kruglov and Pohl. In his documented study on the district of Galicia, of which Busk formed part at the time, Sandkühler mentions this town only once, and not in connection with a massacre (Sandkühler, p. 197).

Hence, Desbois’s finds are not a “confirmation” of former research, but rather a new “discovery.” It remains to be established what he really discovered there. Since rabbinical law does not permit a legal-medical examination of the remains of dead Jews, it was not only impossible to ascertain how many people there were in the graves, when they died, and the cause of death, it wasn’t even possible to establish who they were. The tacit presupposition that any mass grave in the Ukraine would necessarily contain the remains of Jews is obviously unfounded, since the history of the last century is rich in mass graves and bodies, caused not even primarily by the Germans, but by the Soviets. Katyn and Vinnitsa are only the most striking examples.

<sup>349</sup> “Les fusillades massives des juifs en Ukraine 1941-1944. La Shoah par balles,” in: [www.memorialdelashoah.org/upload/minisites/ukraine/exposition5-desbois.htm](http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/upload/minisites/ukraine/exposition5-desbois.htm)

<sup>350</sup> 2007 Annual Report of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., in: [www.ushmm.org/museum/press/annualreport/2007/report.pdf](http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/annualreport/2007/report.pdf)

In the same book by Desbois, a witness, Marfa Lichnitski, declares that “the [Ukrainian parliament] Rada recognized the genocide of the Ukrainian people during the famine of 1932–1933” (Desbois 2008, p. 143), the so-called *Holodomor*, in which millions of Ukrainians died, including children, whose bodies were buried in mass graves. And it is clear that, based on such a presupposition, any human remains, even if of non-Jews, will remain untouchable on principle and will be exempt from any scientific examination. This can only favor the orthodox Holocaust myth surrounding these mass graves.

### 1.5. Rabbinical Legislation on Jewish Bodies and Post-War Exhumations

Without wishing to enter into Jewish questions of faith, we cannot help noting that *current* rabbinical legislation was not in effect during the immediate post-war period, because there have been many documented cases of Jews exhumed from mass graves and transported for proper burial in Jewish cemeteries.

In this regard, I supplied various references in another study (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 1088-1090), to which I add several more here, all taken from the *Ghetto Fighters House Archives*:

- “Bodies exhumed from a mass grave, to be taken for proper burial.”<sup>351</sup>
- “The exhumation of the remains of Jews from a mass grave in Mława, for proper burial in coffins.”<sup>352</sup>
- “The bones of Jews exhumed from a mass grave at Utena (Utian), Lithuania.”<sup>353</sup>
- “The excavation of mass graves in Czeszochowa after the war, to exhume the bodies and give them a proper Jewish burial.”<sup>354</sup>
- “The bodies of 54 Jews from Kurenets who were murdered during the Nazi occupation, exhumed to be transferred to the town’s cemetery for reburial.”<sup>355</sup>
- “The bodies of Jews exhumed from a mass grave, to be given proper burial.”<sup>356</sup>
- “A funeral in Lublin for Jews whose bodies were exhumed from mass graves.”<sup>357</sup>
- “Description of exhumation of victims’ remains from a mass grave in Sandomierz, to be taken for proper Jewish burial.”<sup>358</sup>
- “An exhumation in Plock of the remains of Jews who had been murdered by the Nazis and their henchmen.”<sup>359</sup>

<sup>351</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 17217, Registry No. 03992p.

<sup>352</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 31025, Registry No. 46683p.

<sup>353</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8037, Registry No. 37052p.

<sup>354</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 10854, Registry No. 04848p.

<sup>355</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 16737, Registry No. 29426p.

<sup>356</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 17197, Registry No. 03970p.

<sup>357</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 29170, Registry No. 50295p.

<sup>358</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 38885, Registry No. 46685p.

<sup>359</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 41030, Registry No. 53210p.

- *“Members of the Holocaust survivor community from Biala, Poland, photographed beside bodies exhumed from a mass grave in order to be taken for proper burial.”*<sup>360</sup>
- *“Members of the Holocaust survivor community from Hrubieszow, who exhumed bodies from a mass grave in order to be taken for proper burial.”*<sup>361</sup>
- *“Members of the Holocaust survivor community from Lowicz exhuming the bodies of Jews from a mass grave, to be taken for proper burial.”*<sup>362</sup>
- *“Exhumation of the remains of Jews murdered by the Nazis and their henchmen in the area of Piotrkow Trybunalski.”*<sup>363</sup>
- *“The exhumation of the bodies of Jews killed in Koziencice (Kozhnits).”*<sup>364</sup>
- *“Exhumation of the remains of 20 Jews from Strzemieszyce Wielkie.”*<sup>365</sup>

These examples, to which one could add many others, show that Jewish post-war authorities raised no objections against the exhumation of the bodies of their fellow Jews; on the contrary, they considered it a pious duty to give them a proper burial.

Gabriel N. Finder explains that these activities were part of a much wider general project, that of the “yizkor books” or “books of communal memory, which recorded the disinterment and reinterment of fellow Jews for posterity.” These were compiled on the initiative of survivors of various Polish Jewish communities; 600 of them were published. On their origins, Finder writes:

*“However, regardless of whether Polish Jewish survivors of the Holocaust stayed in Poland or left it, they took pains to afford the Jewish dead a proper burial, exhuming their corpses and then reburying them with dignity in accordance with Jewish ritual in, if possible, a Jewish cemetery, which itself generally required extensive restoration. Even Jews who harboured no intentions of remaining in post-war Poland returned to their home towns with this sole purpose in mind. Some returning Jews took snapshots of the exhumation and reburial of their relatives and friends, thereby etching the final resting place of their loved ones in their personal memories and for posterity. Others recorded the disinterment and reinterment of fellow Jews for posterity in communal memorial books or ‘yizkor books.’*

*[...] Indeed, one theme in particular from the exhumation and reburial of Polish Jewish victims of the Holocaust throughout Poland in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust runs like a thread through scores of yizkor books: the single-minded effort of one man to give the Jewish dead a dignified burial in accordance with Jewish tradition. Such was the case in a large number of mid-size and small towns, in which one returning survivor seized the initiative to exhume and rebury the Jewish dead with honour in a Jewish cemetery, almost always restored after*

<sup>360</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 43519, Registry No. 04192.

<sup>361</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 43524, Registry No. 40791.

<sup>362</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 43545, Registry No. 09431.

<sup>363</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 43810, Registry No. 20539.

<sup>364</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 43841, Registry No. 25002.

<sup>365</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 43902, Registry No. 13150.

*its desecration, and indefatigably pursued this objective. This fact is reflected in myriad yizkor books.*" (Finder, pp. 35f.)

In many cases, continues the author, these were the acts of Jews who acted out of a sense of piety without previously consulting the rabbinical authorities, but he describes as follows the case of the exhumations at the town of Skierniewice, sponsored by Chaim Frenkel:

*"Several Jewish dignitaries from Warsaw and Łódź attended the ceremony, which was led by Rabbi David Kahane, the chief rabbi of the Polish armed forces, in the presence of the Polish mayor of Skierniewice, who received the honour of unveiling the monument."* (ibid., p. 41)

Finder stresses that

*"Jewish law ordinarily forbids exhumation (except for reburial in Israel) and the transfer of corpses and human remains from one grave to another. Rabbinical authorities do recognize certain exceptions to the rule prohibiting exhumation and reburial. These exceptions include the reburial of a person to a grave close to his family and relatives and to a safer site should the grave be threatened by desecration."* (ibid., pp. 47f.)

The most important advocate of these exceptions was Rabbi Ephraim Oshry:

*"As rabbi of the surviving remnant of the Kovno Jewish community after the Russians' liberation of the city in August 1944, he led the search for Jewish bodies and human remains, which he and his helpers discovered scattered throughout Kovno. He supervised the reburial of approximately 3,000 corpses and bones and limbs. He had clearly recognizable bodies buried individually, but because it could not be determined which bones and limbs belonged to particular individuals, he buried them together in a collective grave. He also had the bones of Jews executed and buried hastily in a non-Jewish cemetery removed to a Jewish cemetery for burial. Clearly, the ubiquitous presence of mass graves and the scattering of human remains demanded a departure from regular Jewish law and practice. [...] But there was a deeper level to his ruling permitting the exhumation and reburial of Jewish corpses even when Jewish tradition normally prohibits disinterment and requires an unclaimed, unburied corpse to be buried where it is found: a demand for divine justice and an appeal to memory."* (ibid., p. 49)

These facts lead one to suspect that the current rabbinical standard on the un-touchability of Jewish bodies in mass graves is not motivated by exclusively religious feelings.

## 1.6. Mass Grave at Serniki

The Serniki case is a little different, but not by much. Richard Wright writes:

*"The challenge and importance of the work pulled me into forensic archaeology – into practice that answers the question 'where are the bodies?' In January 1990 the Special Investigations Unit (the SIU) of the Australian Attorney General's Department was looking into the cases of three men in Adelaide. It was alleged*

*that they had killed some hundreds of Jews in Ukraine in 1942, after Nazi occupation of the area. The SIU wanted to know if there was material evidence in the ground for one of these killings. Was there a mass grave at a place called Serniki in northwestern Ukraine? If so, what were its properties?"* (Wright, p. 98)

One witness, 16 years old at the time, claimed to have been compelled to help fill in a mass grave measuring approximately 50 m × 5 m × 2-3 m, containing approximately 800 bodies. In the capacity of forensic archaeologist, Wright was assigned to locate this mass grave. He found it, and established that it was 40 meters long and contained "some 550 bodies" (*ibid.*, p. 99).

Wright did not add any other information. But on p. 100, he published a photograph, reproduced in Document II.1.4., with the following caption

*"The whole length of the mass grave at Serniki in Ukraine, the murders dating from 1942 and excavated in 1991. (Photo by Richard Wright)."*

This strange photograph, in black and white, with a very dark background, shows a ditch which may well be 40 meters long. It contains only one layer of more or less dismembered skeletons scattered about higgledy-piggledy, but the order of magnitude of the victims found may well be compatible with the grave's surface. Other publications supply more detailed data on this mass grave (Congram, p. 260):

*"The grave had a ramp, which according to a witness was used by victims to walk into the grave before being shot. [...] The position of the bodies contrasted at the two different ends of the Serniki grave: at the end farthest from the ramp, victims were found lying parallel to one another, face down and in rows where they had been shot in the backs of their heads. [...]"*

*Bevan (...) reports 410 of 553 (74%) victims with gunshot trauma to the head, 10 (1.8%) with depressed skull fractures, and 133 (24%) with undetermined cause of death. It is important to note that full exhumations and autopsies were not performed on these bodies; only skulls were examined and in situ. Bevan also mentions that many appeared to have been shot with German 9 mm (hand gun) ammunition. The two different body deposition types in the grave and the prevalence of cranial trauma at the base of the ramp indicate a diachronic change in the killings. [...] Bevan (...) also notes that based on examinations of the skulls at Serniki, 407 of the bodies were estimated to be female, 98 male, and 48 undetermined."*

In a letter published by the NIZKOR website, Richard Wright supplied other important details:<sup>366</sup>

*"After cleaning up some of the corroded machine pistol cartridge cases, and examining them with a lens, my colleagues found that the killers had used German ammunition stamped with the place and date of manufacture. The cases dated from the years 1939, 1940 and 1941. These cases were like coins found in conven-*

<sup>366</sup> "Shofar FTP Archive File: places/ukraine/serniki-excavations," in: [www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi?places/ukraine/serniki-excavations](http://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi?places/ukraine/serniki-excavations)

*tional excavations. Thereby the team had a date of 1941, later than which the killings must have taken place.”*

In this case as well, it is not known with certainty whether or not the victims were Jews and whether the killers were or were not Germans. The presence of German shell casings is not definitive proof, because it is known that the Germans were in possession of Russian weapons and the Soviets were in possession of German weapons, and it is also known that the retreating Soviets perpetrated multiple massacres of Ukrainians, as reported at length in several *Einsatzgruppen* reports. But even if assuming that the mass grave at Serniki contains the bodies of Jews, this would prove little in the light of the present study.

Since it is not disputed that the *Einsatzgruppen* and other German units carried out executions of Jews in the territory of the former Soviet Union, the general question is whether the mass graves confirm the order of magnitude of the figures indicated in the documents. There is also the more specific question, which can be summarized in this question: does the number of bodies found in one given mass grave correspond to the number declared in the documents?

The Busk and Serniki graves could be used for such a juxtaposition, were it not for the fact that, just as for Busk, there is a complete documentary vacuum regarding Serniki.<sup>367</sup> Hence, no comparison between the documented numbers of victims and those found on the spot can be made.<sup>368</sup>

## 1.7. Mass Graves in the Ukraine and in the Baltic Countries According to Jewish Institutions

In 2005, the “United States Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad” published a long list of “Mass-Grave Sites” presented as follows (U.S. Commission, pp. 133-142):

*“Information in this table has been derived from survey forms completed between 1995 and 2000 by the Jewish Preservation Committee of Ukraine. This is the most complete list of Jewish mass burial sites in Ukraine ever compiled; however, we know that there may be other unidentified mass graves in the country.”*

The list, in four columns, reports: “Commission Survey Number,” “Oblast (Region),” “Town” and “Date of Survey”; the dates are almost all between 1995 and 1998.

In the following table, I summarize the data by Oblast, comparing data from Patrick Desbois with data according to another source (Bruttman, pp. 16f.).

<sup>367</sup> The only reference to Serniki which I have found in Holocaust literature is by Gerlach in a footnote referring to the Australian legal case mentioned above. Gerlach 1999, fn 1177, p. 719.

<sup>368</sup> For this reason, I do not take into consideration the finding of a mass grave at Ustinovka, another locality unknown to Holocaust historiography, also because the archaeological work was much more superficial. The grave contained the skeletons of 19 children and 100-150 (sic!) adults; Congram, p. 260.



**Table 26**

OBLAST	SITES	DESBOIS	OBLAST	SITES	DESBOIS
Cherkaska	27		Mykolaiivska	16	44
Chernihivska	15		Odeska	32	24 (Crimea)
Chernivetska	8		Poltavska	12	
Dnepropetrovska	4		Rivnenska	32	23
Ivano-Frankivska	7	12	Sumska	22	
Kharkivska	9		Ternopil'ska	9	21
Khersonska	10	7	Vinnitska	84	
Khmelnytska	29	49	Volynska	29	28
Kirovohradska	17		Zakarpat'ska	1	
Kyivska	17		Zaporizka	12	11
Lvivska	17	60	Zhytomyrska	70	25

The total is 479 sites (325 according to Desbois), which would correspond to approximately 1,200 mass graves (*ibid.*, p. 15).

The localities mentioned are 375, but some are unknown to Holocaust historiography, such as Bohuslav, Chudniv, Korets, Marynivka, Melnytsia, Nikopol, Ovruch, Radomyshl, Shumsk, Vapniarka. Other localities were the headquarters of labor camps associated with Thoroughfare IV, the road over 2,000 km long which joined Berlin to the Caucasus, passing through Galicia and through the Ukraine, such as Bratislava, Haisyn, Krasnopilka, Ladyzhyn, Letychiv, Lityn, Mykhailivka, Nemyriv, Pechera, Tarasivka and Teplyk.

These mass graves fall into six categories (*ibid.*, pp. 6f.):

1. graves containing victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and other units
2. graves containing victims of ghettos and other places of detention
3. mass graves “in the killing centers”
4. mass graves containing victims of concentration camps
5. mass graves containing victims of evacuation marches
6. mass graves containing victims of massacres

The above-mentioned list no doubt also reports large graves in Categories 2, 4 and 6.

Several sites have no relevance to the Holocaust. For example, Nikopol is supposed to be the site of mass graves. The “Act on the Atrocities of German-Fascist Invaders in the Village of Nikopol, Barvenkovo District, Kharkov Region” dated 3 October 1943 reports on the discovery of mass graves in this locality. At “20 kilometres east of the village of Nikopol [...] 22 corpses were dug up from 10 pits”; in another “3 pits 0.5 meter deep” there were “3 corpses including 2 bodies of Red Army war prisoners,” moreover, 7 bodies, consisting of 2 women and 5 Russian POWs, were exhumed “in a ravine 2 kilometers away from the village.” “The total of 33 corpses were dug up out of 16 pits” (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 90f.).

A few cases blatantly contradict orthodox Holocaust historiography, if the expression “mass-grave site” means a site at which the remains of human corpses were really found. One typical case is that of Lviv, an Oblast in which 17 to 60 sites were said to exist, notwithstanding the presumed cleanup performed by the local “*Sonderkommando 1005*” (see below, Chapter 3).

The basic problem is precisely the following: are the “mass graves” merely symbolic or are they real? Or rather, do they contain the physical remains of real human beings? Jewish law renders this problem almost insoluble, as confirmed by another report on the Jewish graves in Lithuania (Chipczynska, p. 7):

*“Known variously by the Hebrew bet kevarot (house of tombs), bet olam (house of eternity), bet chayyim (house of the living) and bet shalom (house of peace), Jewish burial grounds are sacred sites which, according to Jewish tradition, must remain undisturbed in perpetuity. As such, the term ‘former Jewish cemetery’ is erroneous. This is of the utmost importance for the Lo Tishkach project, meaning that all Jewish burial grounds, visible or otherwise, fall under its remit. Showing proper respect for the dead (kevod ha-met) is intrinsic to Jewish law. The connection between the soul and the human body after death is an essential aspect of Jewish belief in the eternity of the soul. This manifests itself in prohibitions against autopsy, disinterring the dead (pinui met v’atzamot), deriving benefit (issur hana’ah) from a corpse or grave, or performing various practices thought to ‘ridicule the helpless’ (l’oeg l’rosh).”*

This problem, which is practically insoluble, leads directly to another: if it is impossible to verify the contents of the “mass graves,” on what basis are certain sites declared to be “mass graves”? The location may be derived solely from Soviet war-crimes reports and/or from eyewitness testimony. The first source, as I have shown above, consists of propaganda exaggerated to ridiculous extremes, while the second, without objective confirmation, that is, without excavations, is worthless.

The problem, in practice, as in the case with Desbois’s research, is that there is no proof of the existence of mass graves: rather, the existence of mass graves is simply asserted.

With this in mind, the information relating to the presence of mass graves in other countries is not a very weighty assertion. For example, it is claimed that

*“there are also around 200 WWII mass graves in the Republic of Lithuania, located mostly in forests and rural areas as well as inside the sites of Jewish cemeteries where deep ditches were dug for murdered Jews.” (ibid., p. 9)*

But the same is true for the 39 mass graves in Latgale, the southeastern region of Latvia, accurately described and photographed, but obviously only on the surface (Binding), as well as the 8 graves in Estonia (Bruttmann, p. 15) and all the other “mass graves.”

These sites have an undoubted value as memorials, but under present conditions have only little historical or historiographical relevance, if any.

## 1.8. Photographic Documentation

If these extraordinary Soviet discoveries, of which I have used those relating to the Ukraine as an example, were authentic, they should be confirmed by hundreds of photographs of mass graves and of exhumations taken by the various war-crimes commissions, and showing hundreds of thousands of bodies. However, photographs of this type are incredibly scarce. This is also true for the most prestigious among Holocaust archives, such as those at *Yad Vashem*, the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* and the *Ghetto Fighter House*. In fact, their photographic material is not only scarce, but often relates to sites which are not relevant in Holocaust terms:

### Iwje (Ivye)

Byelorussia, approximately 30 km east of Lida.

- Mass grave with about thirty bodies scattered over the bottom.<sup>369</sup>
- Same grave, far end, with about twenty bodies<sup>370</sup>
- Same grave, taken from the right-hand corner.<sup>371</sup>
- Same grave, near end, with 5-6 bodies and a group of onlookers.<sup>372</sup>

One of the very few authors who mention this locality is Spektor, who writes (Spektor 2001, Vol. II, p. 735):

*“In fall 1941 they [the Germans] expelled all the Jews [from Lipniszki] to the Ivye ghetto. Most were murdered in the Aktion there on 12 May 1942. The rest were murdered after being transferred to Borisov around the end of the year.”*

### Keidan (Kédainiai)

Lithuania, approximately 40 km north of Kaunas.

- “Postwar. A mass grave in a field.”<sup>373</sup> We are shown only a field.

### Kaunas (Kovno), Lithuania

- “Jews who were murdered by Lithuanian nationalists in the Lietukis Garage on 27/06/1941.”<sup>374</sup> About thirty bodies in front of a garage.
- “Bodies of Jews who were murdered by Lithuanian nationalists in Lietukis Garage on 27/06/1941.”<sup>375</sup> In the image, we see 20-30 bodies.
- “German soldiers and Lithuanians looking at the bodies of the Jews murdered by Lithuanian nationalists in Lietukis Garage on 27/06/1941.”<sup>376</sup> Image similar to the last, with a man standing head-bowed among the bodies. There were between 52 and 60 victims at Lietukis Garage, according to Christoph Dieck-

<sup>369</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6738, Registry No. 02339P.

<sup>370</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8412, Registry No. 35568Z.

<sup>371</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 23309, Registry No. 46083p.

<sup>372</sup> GHFA, Catalogue No. 6739, Registry No. 02340P.

<sup>373</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 75AO6.

<sup>374</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4360/48.

<sup>375</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4360/49.

<sup>376</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4360/50.

mann (Dieckmann, p. 360), therefore, the photograph does not correspond to the Holocaust estimates, even for very small numbers.

- “Bodies of Jews burned alive in the ghetto.”<sup>377</sup> The photograph shows four bodies with burns, but they are not charred.
- “Jewish children’s corpses in the ghetto 30/08/1944.”<sup>378</sup> The image shows 3 or 4 bodies.
- “Lithuania, 1941, Bodies of Jews murdered next to the Seventh Fort.”<sup>379</sup> In the foreground we see about twenty bodies, and perhaps another twenty a bit further away (the image is not very clear).

The “Jäger Report” lists 3,238 executions at Fort VII, Kaunas.

### Kozin (Kozyn)

Ukraine, approximately 25 km southwest of Dubno.

- Mass grave containing about twenty bodies, with onlookers.<sup>380</sup>
- Same grave, 3-4 meters in length, taken from the right side, showing 5-10 bodies and four people digging.<sup>381</sup>

Spektor claims that

*“the Germans took the town on 25 June 1941, murdering a number of Jews and burning down the synagogue. Another 372 (half the J. pop.) was taken from the ghetto and executed on 30 May 1942; the rest on 6 Oct.”* (Spektor 2001, p. 668)

The mass grave should therefore contain over 700 victims, or 653, the Jewish population of the city in June 1941 (Spektor 1990a, p. 362).

### Lenin

Polesye Region, Byelorussia, approximately 100 km east of Pinsk.

- “A mass grave of Lenin Jewry (in the Polesye region, on the Russo-Polish border)”<sup>382</sup> The photograph shows a mass grave a couple of meters long and about 3 meters deep, with a pile of bodies; four soldiers can be seen standing on the bottom of the ditch, in the foreground, which is clear of bodies; the pile reaches to between the belt and shoulders of these soldiers; correcting for perspective, one might calculate a height of approximately 2 meters. The length of the pile may be estimated at about 4-5 meters. The pile therefore contains approximately  $(2 \times 3 \times 5 \times 3.5 =) 100$  bodies.

Practically nothing is known of this locality. Based on the 1921 census, Lenin had a population of 928 resident Jews (Yad Vashem, p. 148).

<sup>377</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 1564/2.

<sup>378</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 3497/8.

<sup>379</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 2725/5.

<sup>380</sup> GHFA, Catalogue No. 7349, Registry No. 04530p.

<sup>381</sup> GHFA, Catalogue No. 7348, Registry No. 04529p.

<sup>382</sup> GHFA, Catalogue No. 6889, Registry No. 25238p.

Mizocz (Mizoch)

Ukraine, approximately 30 km east of Dubno.

- “Mizocz, Poland [sic], women and children from the village getting undressed before they were murdered by German policemen and Ukrainian collaborators, 14/10/1942”<sup>383</sup> Small gorge showing about fifty people. This photograph is also attributed to Vinnitsa: “Jews from Vinnitsa in the Ukraine disrobing at the extermination site before they were killed.”<sup>384</sup>
- “Mizocz, Poland, dead bodies of women and children from the village who were murdered by German policemen and Ukrainian collaborators, October 1942”<sup>385</sup> Same gorge with a group of about thirty naked bodies on the right and a group of about twenty bodies on the left. This photograph is also attributed to Vinnitsa: “German soldiers standing amid the bodies lying in the mass grave in Vinnitsa, Ukraine.”<sup>386</sup>

There is no Holocaust-related information on this city, but it had a population of 1,048 Jews in June 1941, and 2,000 in 1942 (Spektor 1990a, p. 363), so that the orthodox would assume some 2,000 bodies.

Rostov, Russia

- Red Army soldiers and civilians participating in a funeral service for Soviet citizens killed by the Germans. Approximately 35 coffins are shown lined up around a circular mass grave, in the foreground is a crowd standing in front of perhaps another 15-20 coffins.<sup>387</sup> The coffins testify to the presence of 60-65 bodies. This is the only known photograph of exhumations or burials in this city.

As mentioned earlier, the Soviets claim to have discovered a mass grave at Rostov with 20,000 bodies in it, a figure later lowered to 15,000-18,000.

Rovno, Ukraine

- “A mass grave.” The photograph shows only the sloping hillside with some loose dirt.<sup>388</sup> There are no other known photographs of mass graves.

The Soviets claimed to have discovered 102,500 bodies at Rovno and in the surrounding area.

Rudnya

Ukraine, approximately 60 km west of Smolensk.

- Mass grave measuring an estimated 3-4 × 6-7 meters, with a depth of 2-3 meters, partially filled, with a jumbled mass of bodies. Six men may be seen on

<sup>383</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4613/32.

<sup>384</sup> GHFA, Catalogue No. 8380, Registry No. 29631.

<sup>385</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4613/35.

<sup>386</sup> GHFA, Catalogue No. 8379, Registry No. 07831.

<sup>387</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 22996, Registry No. 19573p.

<sup>388</sup> YVA, Item ID 33001, Archival Signature 1869/470.

the edge of the pit, two of them with shovels. The number of bodies may be estimated at approximately 200.<sup>389</sup>

Arad states that 1,000 Jews were shot at Rudnya on 21 October 1941, and another 200 on 24 November (Arad 2009, p. 198).

### Smolensk, Ukraine

- One photograph, captioned with the words “Smolensk Camp,” handwritten in ink, showing 6-7 bodies.<sup>390</sup>
- In another photograph, we see a single body on a stretcher.<sup>391</sup>

### Taganrog

Russia, on the Black Sea, approximately 60 km west of Rostov.

- “Bodies taken from a mass grave in Taganrog, Russia.”<sup>392</sup> Here we see a small mass grave containing about ten bodies; in the background, we see diggers with shovels.

Arad writes that 1,800 Jews were shot in this city on 26 October 1941 (Arad 2009, p. 200), but adds that moreover “3,000 civilians” were killed on 27 October 1941” (*ibid.*, p. 537).

### Trakai

Lithuania, approximately 20 km west of Vilnius.

- “A mass grave for 1800 dead in a cemetery.”<sup>393</sup> The photograph shows a group of persons in front of a low embankment about fifty meters long; no trace of bodies.
- “A memorial service for 1800 dead at a mass grave.”<sup>394</sup> The image shows the same group of persons, in the same zone, standing around in front of four wooden poles driven into the earth.

The “Jäger Report” claims that 1,446 people were killed at Trakai on 30 September 1941.

### Utena

Lithuania, approximately 90 km north of Vilnius. There are several different photographs relating to this locality.

- “The exhumation of Jews’ remains in Utena (Utian), Lithuania”<sup>395</sup> The image shows four men looking at four bodies lying on the bottom of a pit.

<sup>389</sup> Maximum volume  $84 \text{ m}^3 \times 3.5$  (bodies per cubic meter  $\times$  filling coefficient of approximately  $2/3$ ).

<sup>390</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 23E01.

<sup>391</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 23E02.

<sup>392</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 22991, Registry No. 19568p.

<sup>393</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 1925/2.

<sup>394</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 1925/1.

<sup>395</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8026, Registry No. 25958Z.

- The same photograph is also featured with a different caption: “Resse, Lithuania, November 1944. The exhumation of corpses of Jews murdered at the site.”<sup>396</sup>
- Same caption as the one before. One man looking at body parts from three bodies<sup>397</sup>
- “The remains of Jewish victims from Utena (Utian), Lithuania, being exhumed from a mass grave after the liberation.”<sup>398</sup> There is a small mound of bones in the foreground in which it is possible to distinguish 13 crania.
- “Residents of Lithuania beside the bones of Jews found in a mass grave at Utena (Utian), Lithuania.”<sup>399</sup> A group of twenty-six persons (including a child) are shown posing in front of a pile of bones; the proportions of these persons permit us to estimate that the pile of bones is no more than one meter high and two meters long.
- “Women and men beside the bones of Jewish victims exhumed from a mass grave at Utena (Utian), Lithuania. Similar Items.”<sup>400</sup> This image is similar to the last one, taken a short time before or afterwards. In the foreground we see a pile of bones, and behind the pile we see about fifteen people, most of whom also appeared in the last photo, including the child.
- “Lithuanians and a Soviet officer stand among the remains of twenty Jewish atrocity victims, who were exhumed from a mass grave in the woods near Utena.”<sup>401</sup> The photograph shows two rows of 20-30 bodies, wearing clothes, scattered over the ground, along with a third, shorter, row of bodies. The total number of bodies may amount to 70-80.

According to the “Jäger Report,” 256 persons were killed at Utena on 31 July 1941, another 3,782 at Utena and Moletai on 29 August (see Part One, Chapter 4).

### Vilijampole

Lithuania, approximately 5 km west of Kaunas.

- “Burnt bodies of murder victims in the ghetto, 18/12/1944.”<sup>402</sup> The photograph shows about ten bodies scattered on the ground.

Christoph Dieckmann writes that a pogrom at Vilijampole on 25 and 26 June 1941 claimed the lives of 1,000 Jews (Dieckmann, p. 360).

### Vinnitsa, Ukraine

- “An SS man shooting a man’s head over a mass grave, probably 1941.” This very well-known photograph shows a soldier pointing a pistol at the head of a

<sup>396</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4085/1.

<sup>397</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8036, Registry No. 37051Z.

<sup>398</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 7959, Registry No. 21532.

<sup>399</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8027, Registry No. 27978Z.

<sup>400</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8038, Registry No. 37053Z.

<sup>401</sup> USHMM, Photograph Collection, 26951.

<sup>402</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 3150/147.

- man kneeling at the corner of a mass grave in which a few bodies are visible. This same image is archived several times with different references.<sup>403</sup>
- “German soldiers shooting Jews who are still alive in a mass grave in Vinnitsa, USSR.”<sup>404</sup> Two soldiers, armed with rifles, are shown standing among 60-70 naked bodies.
  - “Two uniformed men beside a vast mass grave containing the bodies of Jews killed in Vinnitsa, Ukraine.”<sup>405</sup> Hundreds of naked bodies in the bottom of a ditch. Another two photographs from this series are attributed to Mizocz (see p. 404).
  - “Exhumation performed by a Soviet investigation committee.”<sup>406</sup> The image shows two workers exhuming a body.
  - “Members of the Soviet Extraordinary Commission that was involved in exhumation at the site.”<sup>407</sup> A large crowd of Soviet soldiers (two wearing white shirts) and civilians are seen posing with two exhumed bodies.
  - The same photograph is also attributed to a different locality: “Civilians standing beside a mass grave of Jews in Zhmerinka, Ukraine.”<sup>408</sup>

Zhmerinka is located approximately 35 km southwest of Vinnitsa. The Soviets, as I have pointed out, claimed that the Germans shot 41,620 people at Vinnitsa, plus 1,500 patients from the psychiatric hospital, and buried the victims in a mass grave which the Soviets claimed to have examined.

The photographs of the exhumations do not quite measure up to the allegations of the persons killed, so that one must wonder whether or not they really were taken at the same locality.

### Zarasai

Lithuania, approximately 50 km northeast of Utena.

- “A mass grave where Jews from the following towns were massacred: Zarasai, Dusetos, Antaliepte, and Salakas.”<sup>409</sup> The image shows a large, deep ditch, approximately 3 meters wide and 10-15 meters long, on the bottom of which only 20-30 bodies are visible.

According to the “Jäger Report,” 2,569 persons were killed at Zarasai on 26 August 1941.

### Zbaraz (Zbarazh)

Ukraine, approximately 20 km northeast of Tarnopol (Ternopil).

<sup>403</sup> YVA, Archival Signatures 2626/4, 81DO3, 85BO8.

<sup>404</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8378, Registry No. 07830Z.

<sup>405</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8376, Registry No. 04043Z.

<sup>406</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 1064/1; also 1051/1.

<sup>407</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 1051/2; also 1064/2.

<sup>408</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 8396, Registry No. 05701Z.

<sup>409</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 44426, Registry No. 28165Z.



- “Exhumation of the bodies of victims of the Nazis in Zbaraz.”<sup>410</sup> The photograph shows the excavation of two graves. The dimensions of the grave nearest the camera may be estimated at approximately 3 × 4 meters, in the midst of which we see seven workmen. The edge of the pit is just below shoulder height. The second grave is much smaller and shows two workmen in the midst of the pit. Five onlookers are standing along the edge of the pit.
- “The bodies of victims of the Nazis in Zbaraz, exhumed from mass graves after the liberation.”<sup>411</sup> The image shows eight bodies lying on the ground. It is impossible to tell whether the site is the same as in the last photograph.
- “The remains of victims of the Nazis in Zbaraz, uncovered when mass graves were excavated after the liberation.”<sup>412</sup> In the background, we see four skulls, two long bones and a few ribs.

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, 76 Jews were killed on 6 September 1941, 600 on 31 August and 1 September 1942, and over 1,000 on 7 April 1943 at Zbaraz (Spektor 2001, Vol. III, p. 1495). There are no known documents confirming these assertions. The State Archive of the Russian Federation has about a dozen documents relating to Zbaraz, the most important of which is the “Labor-Deployment Report” from the local council of Jewish elders relating to 10 July 1942. At that time, there were 1,220 “men aged 16 to 60”, 1,157 of whom were “fit for labor,” and 663 “women aged 16 to 35 Jahren,” 640 of them “fit for labor.” The Jews were broken down into 60 working categories (labor camps, office workers, laborers, physicians, etc.<sup>413</sup>). We do not know why these workers were allegedly shot nine months later.

### Ziezmariai

Lithuania, approximately 55 km a West of Vilnius.

- “A mass grave a few kilometers from the city, where 2200 men were killed.”<sup>414</sup> The caption is specious, since the photograph shows only a tombstone.

### Zloczow (Zolochev)

Ukraine, approximately 60 km east of Lvov.

- “Jews of the Zolochev (Zloczow) ghetto being brought to the mass killing site beside the village of Jelichowice [Yelikhovich].”<sup>415</sup> In the foreground, we see about twenty bodies lying on the ground. In the background is a long line of persons standing in line, seemingly prisoners of war.

<sup>410</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6682, Registry No. 05995p.

<sup>411</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6683, Registry No. 05996p.

<sup>412</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6684, Registry No. 05997p.

<sup>413</sup> GARF, 7445-2-108, pp. 56-59.

<sup>414</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 7159/127.

<sup>415</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6695, Registry No. 19140p.

- “The bodies of Jews from the Zolochew (Zloczow) ghetto, in a mass grave.”<sup>416</sup> The photograph shows about fifty bodies lying on the ground.
- “Soviets exhume a mass grave in Zolochew shortly after the liberation.”<sup>417</sup> About ten bodies are shown being examined by two men in white lab coats, with a small group of civilian onlookers.
- “The bodies of Jews from the Zolochew (Zloczow) ghetto, exhumed from a mass grave after the liberation.”<sup>418</sup> The photograph shows 9-10 bodies scattered on the ground.
- “The bodies of Jews from the Zolochew (Zloczow) ghetto, exhumed from a mass grave after the liberation.”<sup>419</sup> We see 20-30 exhumed bodies scattered in disorder on the ground.
- “A man and woman viewing the body of a child from the Zolochew (Zloczow) ghetto, disinterred from a mass grave after the liberation.”<sup>420</sup> The photograph shows exactly one body.

The *Pinkas Hakehillot Polin* (List of Communities in Poland) says that the ghetto of Zolochew was liquidated on 2 April 1943, and that “in all, about 6,000 were killed” (Dabrowska/Wein/Weiss, entry “Zloczow,” pp. 217-224).

#### Zolotonom (Zolotonosha)

Ukraine, approximately 140 km southeast of Kiev:

- “Zolotonom, Ukraine, 1944. An exhumation.”<sup>421</sup> Exhumed bodies laid out in a row on the ground. There are eight bodies in the foreground. The second row, partially obscured by onlookers, consists of at least twice as many. Further along, other bodies are visible but indistinctly so, being partially obscured by other persons. The total number may amount to approximately fifty.

According to Soviet experts, as we have seen earlier, the Germans allegedly killed 3,500 Jews on 22 November 1941 in a “deep ravine” 3 km from the city. The Soviets claimed to have examined the mass grave and/or ravine.

The same Soviets drew up a list of citizens of Zolotonosha murdered between 20 September 1941 and 20 September 1943. The list consists of 181 names, from No. 564 to No. 744.<sup>422</sup>

The above is a sample of photographs showing mass graves and exhumations. The list is not exhaustive, of course; but it is significant, nonetheless. Many other photographs exist, but the vast majority of them show merely a few dozen bodies or less, and therefore possess a quite marginal significance in the context of the present study.

<sup>416</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6696, Registry No. 19141p.

<sup>417</sup> USHMM, Photograph Collection, 86588.

<sup>418</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6697, Registry No. 19142p.

<sup>419</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6698, Registry No. 19143p.

<sup>420</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 6699, Registry No. 19144p.

<sup>421</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 4147/54.

<sup>422</sup> YVA, M.33- JM/19972, pp. 12, 12a, 13, 13a.

Other photographs of more well-known places, such as Babi Yar, Maly Trostenets, etc., will be examined in the related discussions in later chapters.

From this point forward, we hold that the existing photographic material does not confirm the order of magnitude of the killings mentioned in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports – not even remotely; nor do the real and alleged mass graves discovered by the Soviets; nor do the bodies really or allegedly exhumed therefrom.

## 2. “Aktion 1005”

### 2.1. The Sources

The much-improved German edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, explains in its entry “Aktion 1005” (Gutman *et al.*, Vol. I, p. 10):

*“Cover name for an undertaking intended to wipe away the traces of the murder of millions of people in occupied Europe.”*

The primary and essential source in this regard in Holocaust literature is a book by Jens Hoffmann whose German title translates to “*This Cannot Be Told: “Aktion 1005” – How the Nazis Wiped out the Traces of Their Mass Murders in Eastern Europe*, which is very ambitious, since it dedicates ample space even to the presumed “extermination camps” at Kulmhof (Chełmno), Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka and Auschwitz.

The author nevertheless notes that all previous writers have dealt with the matter in a very vague and superficial manner (Hoffmann, p. 8):

*“In contrast to the extensive literature on the Shoah, ‘Aktion 1005’ has so far only rarely been the subject of historical research. In comprehensive presentations – such as the works by Gerald Reitlinger, Raul Hilberg, Leni Yahil, Peter Longerich or Saul Friedländer – the eradication of murder traces by the German perpetrators is described either not at all or only briefly.”*

This means that, prior to the publication of Hoffmann’s book, no comprehensive study of “Aktion 1005” has ever existed. For this very reason, one could not even realistically affirm its historical reality, except through a Holocaust-related act of faith.

Hoffmann then explains the sources which inspired him (*ibid.*, pp. 9f.):

*“What set the precedent for the concept of ‘This Cannot Be Told’ was the article ‘Aktion 1005 – Effacing the Murder of Millions’ by Israeli historian Shmuel Spektor. References to most of the sources I used were found in Spektor’s text. I found further impetus to the clarification of conceptual problems in the paper ‘L’opération 1005’: Des techniques et des hommes au service de l’effacement des traces de la Shoah by Father Patrick Desbois and Levana Frenk.”*

But the reference to these two sources cannot be any grounds for pride, because one is spurious, and the other is insubstantial.

In his brochure *Opération 1005*, Desbois and Frenk do not, in fact, have anything to say about “Aktion 1005,” because they limit themselves to outlining Paul Blobel’s biography. In fact, the aim of their brochure seems to be to establish a correlation between the above-mentioned operation and “negationism”:

*“The operation of erasing the traces and eliminating the bodies has direct implications on the development of negationism, on the one hand, and the phenomenon of memory on the other. Eliminating the traces was to deny the victims the right to*

*burial and doom them to oblivion. Without graves to gather around, the task of mourning became impossible.*

*On the other hand, negationism was already implemented in the process of ‘Vernichtung’, of reducing to a nullity and annihilating the traces of the dead, without precedent in the history of genocides.” (Desbois/Frenk, p. 5)*

A 1990 article by Shmuel Spektor sticks much closer to the topic, but what are the sources for the article? In his conclusion, the author summarizes them as follows (Spektor 1990b, p. 171):

*“Operation 1005 in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, Poland and Yugoslavia was the final stage of the enormous Nazi crime – the murder of millions. This stage was designated to efface the crime, to hide it from the eyes of the world. The documentation on this operation is scarce, because of the secrecy involved. The verdict of the International Military Tribunal [at Nuremberg] contains little information about it. The American Military Tribunal in case 9 (Einsatzgruppen case), where Paul Blobel was put on trial, tried him only as the commander of Einsatzkommando 4a. His interrogation and depositions devote only a few lines to Operation 1005 and hence missed the opportunity to interrogate the commander of Operation 1005. The same situation emerged in the Soviet trial of Jeckeln in Riga, and of Macholl, before a Polish court in Bialystok. Operation 1005 was dealt with separately in West Germany trials, in the cases of Sohns and Zietlow, commanders of the Sonderkommandos 1005 in Ukraine, and of Krahnert, commander of the Sonderkommando-Mitte. The interrogators and the judges tried to expand on the details of the operation, but with little success due to the scarcity of documentation.”*

A few lines further along, the author adds (*ibid.*):

*“The Nazis were not successful in removing the signs of the murder because of the vast numbers, the wide distribution of the mass graves, and because of the swift advance of the Soviet army. Moreover, desperate acts of escape by Jewish prisoners enabled survivors to tell the story. Knowing that they would be killed, they decided to escape at any cost and to tell of what they had seen. Those who remained alive, described Operation 1005 – the Nazis’ effort to erase [the trace of] their crimes.”*

The principal sources for “Aktion 1005” are therefore the post-war testimonies of former SS men and self-proclaimed “survivors,” to which scanty documentary evidence was added, and this picture is true for Hoffmann’s book as well.

Since Spektor presents a more extensive and organic exposition of the presumed events, I shall stick principally to his article. But first we need a very clear idea of the order of magnitude of which we are speaking. In this regard, Hoffmann states (Hoffmann, p. 23):

*“On their way through the Soviet Union, the Einsatzgruppen and other supporting units murdered at least 1.2 million Jews, most of them civilians, by the end of the war, without any particularly great losses themselves.”*

Arad, however, speaks of 2.5-2.6 million as pointed out earlier.

## 2.2. Documentary Evidence

Spektor adduces two documents on “Aktion 1005.” The first is an exchange of correspondence dating back to February 1942 (Spektor 1990b, p. 158):

*“At the beginning of 1942, Martin Luther of the German Foreign Office transmitted a letter to Heinrich Müller – the head of the Gestapo, in which an anonymous German from the Warthegau district complained about Jewish corpses appearing in public places. On 28 February 1942 Müller responded to Luther: ‘The anonymous letter sent to the Foreign Office concerning the apparent solution of the Jewish question in the Warthegau district, which was submitted by you to me on 6 February 1942, I immediately transmitted for proper treatment. The results will be forthcoming in due course. In a place where wood is chopped splinters must fall; and there is no avoiding this...’ The letter had in the left upper corner, under the heading ‘Head of the Security Police and SD’ the inscription: IV B 4 43/42 gRs (1005). The first four letters are the number of Eichmann’s department in the Gestapo, which dealt with ‘The Final Solution of the Jewish Question’, 43/42 is the number and year of the letter, gRs means ‘Geheime Reichssache’ – secret matter, [of] the Reich. The number 1005 was used later as the code name for the operation of erasing the mass murders.”*

Before going any further, we need to quote the original text of the letter, dated 28 February 1942:

*“Dear Comrade Luther!*

*The anonymous letter addressed to the Foreign Office on alleged events relating to the solution of the Jewish Question in the Warthegau, which you forwarded to me with your letter of 6 Feb. 1942, I have instantly forwarded for appropriate processing. The investigations are currently going on.*

*It is inevitable that, if you want to make an omelette, you have to break a few eggs. And it is evident that the enemy will always attempt to exaggerate, where expedient, the measures taken against him with the goal to arouse sympathy, hoping that the measures will be remedied. Ever since I took on the job of forcing this enemy out of the way, the Jews in particular have continuously tried to evade their deserved fate by sending anonymous letters to almost all agencies of the Reich.”*

This document was introduced and accepted into evidence at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem under the number T-245. The letter from the anonymous German, like that of 6 February 1942 with which Luther forwarded it to Müller, is unknown. No clarification in this regard was ever forthcoming during the trial. The document was only mentioned in the 24th Hearing (2 May 1961), when the attorney general presented the document and the presiding judge accepted it (State of Israel, Vol. I, p. 387), and at the 79th Hearing (26 June 1961), when Defense Attorney Dr. Servatius asked Eichmann whether he had written the document on Müller’s order, but Eichmann replied in the negative (*ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 1424).

The anonymous German letter that “complained about Jewish corpses appearing in public places” is therefore a mere invention by Spektor. In his commen-

tary, he introduced two other fictitious elements: the general context in which the above-mentioned letters appeared, and the significance attributed to the number 1005. Spektor outlines the general context as follows (Spektor 1990b, pp. 157f.):

*“In December 1941 the Chelmno death camp started to operate in German-occupied Poland. The Jews were killed in gas vans, and buried in big pits. When winter 1941/42 ended, the running water from melting snow exposed the graves. Bodies floated around, the stench spread into nearby settlements, and both the local population and German army units encamped there complained about the stench.”*

In practice, Spektor implies that the anonymous letter which “complained about Jewish corpses appearing in public places” referred to the situation at Chelmno (was this “extermination camp” therefore a “public place”?). But he is unable to document the alleged resurfacing of the bodies in this camp, because there are no documents or testimonies in this regard. On the other hand, it is not very plausible for the snow at Chelmno to have melted before 6 February 1942. Even less believable, if not nonsensical, is his claim that “bodies floated around”: how could “the running water from melting snow” *expose* “the graves” and cause the bodies to rise to the surface, let alone make them float around?

It is obvious that Spektor, by means of his description, fabricated a fictitious context simply in order to attribute a sinister meaning to the two above-mentioned letters.

Since nothing proves that the letter from the anonymous German referred to bodies, and since the letter from Müller does not even mention them, not even implicitly, it is obvious that Spektor’s attempt to trace back the symbol of the alleged “Aktion 1005” to this document is completely unfounded.

To get an idea of the true value of Spektor’s narrative, it is necessary first to set forth his second document, which is a letter from Himmler to Müller dated 20 November 1942, to which Himmler had attached a propaganda speech given by Rabbi Stephen Wise in September of that year. Spektor’s translation of that letter reads as follows (*ibid.*, p. 158):

*“(1) I am not surprised that **reports** like these circulate in the world **regarding** the great Jewish emigration. We **also** know that among Jews sent to work, mortality is very high.*

*(2) Your responsibility is to see that **the** dead Jewish bodies are buried or cremated. **It is forbidden** to do anything else with the bodies.*

*(3) Please investigate whether **somebody** had misused **our intentions** according to the above-mentioned first paragraph, and caused the spread of lies around the world. Every such misuse has to be reported to me under the oath of the SS.”*  
(Emphases added)

Hoffmann reproduces the German text of this letter, which enables us to demonstrate the degree of Spektor’s manipulations (Hoffmann, p. 84). Here is my accurate translation of Himmler’s letter:

“1. That such **rumors** would be circulating in the world at some point does not surprise me, **considering** the great emigration movement of the Jews. We both know that the mortality rate is increased among Jews who are deployed for work.

2. You must assure me that the bodies of **these** deceased Jews are either cremated or buried **at every location**, and that nothing else can happen to these bodies **at any location**.

3. Let it be investigated immediately whether any misuse such as the one of Point 1) has occurred anywhere, which has probably been spread all over the world as a lie. Every such misuse is to be reported to me under SS oath.” (Emphases added)

Although the text is very reserved, the letter speaks of “emigration movement of the Jews” and “Jews who are deployed for work,” among whom a very high mortality rate has been recorded. And the context unequivocally shows that the expression “the bodies of these deceased Jews” refers to Jews sent to work, and has therefore no connection to any supposed extermination.

Precisely to prevent the reader from reaching this obvious conclusion, Spektor has omitted the specific reference “these,” writing only “the dead Jewish bodies.” Craftily, Spektor does not mention the contents of Wise’s speech. In fact, that content is based on information contained in the telegram sent on 3 September 1942 by Isaach Sternbuch, representative of an Orthodox Jewish group in Switzerland, to Jacob Rosenheim, chairman of the Agudah Israel World Organization with headquarters in New York. With reference to the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, this telegram stated (Wyman, pp. 45, 51):

*“The corpses of the murdered victims are used for the manufacturing of soap and artificial fertilizers.”*

On 30 August 1942, the Geneva office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine sent a report to the U.S. government that was forwarded by the U.S. government to the Holy See on 26 September 1942. This report stated, among other things (Noble/Perkins, p. 775):

*“Liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto is taking place. Without any distinction all Jews, irrespective of age or sex, are being removed from the Ghetto in groups and shot. Their corpses are utilized for making fats and their bones for the manufacture of fertilizer. Corpses are even being exhumed for these purposes.”*

Raul Hilberg reports other rumors relating to human soap which were circulating at the time (Hilberg 2003, Vol. III, pp. 1032f.):

*“On July 29, 1942, the chief of the Ethnic Germans in Slovakia, Karmasin, had written a letter to Himmler in which he described the ‘resettlement’ of 700 ‘asocial’ Ethnic Germans. One of the difficulties, wrote Karmasin, was the spreading of rumors (furthered by the clergy) that the ‘resettlers’ would be ‘boiled into soap’ (dass die Aussiedler ‘zu Seife verkocht werden’). In October 1942 the Propaganda Division in the Lublin District reported the rumor circulating in the city that now it was the turn of the Poles to be used, like the Jews, for ‘soap production’ (Die Polen kommen jetzt genau wie die Juden Seifenproduktion dran).”*



In his 2004 paper on “Soap from Jewish Fat,” Joachim Neander has summarized the entire matter as follows:

*“In September 1942, Rabbi Dr. Stephen Wise, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, wrote a memorandum in which he addressed these rumors. The New York Times quoted him on 26 November 1942 as the source of information for the report that the Germans were processing the fat from the bodies of deported Jews into soap and lubricants. Similar stories, in which ‘glue’ and ‘fertilizer’ were mentioned as the products of corpse-processing, were repeatedly purveyed by the media of the Allied countries over the following months. However, among official agencies in England and the USA – as well as in large sections of American journalism – these reports were met with great skepticism, which was also transferred to other reports relating to National-Socialist mass crimes. The Allied propaganda lies of the ‘corpse exploitation facilities’ were still ringing in the ears of news analysts and journalists as well as the tardy apologies of the British government for them. It is part of the history of the effectiveness of the soap legend that it contributed to the fact that the Allies were only made aware of the Holocaust when it was too late to intervene.*

*In contrast to the Allies, Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler took Wise’s memorandum very seriously and reacted immediately. Making explicit reference to it, he categorically demanded in a letter dated 20 November 1942 to the Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller: [...]” (This is followed by Point 3 of Himmler’s letter.)*

The context clarifies the real meaning of Himmler’s letter: it had nothing to do with wiping out traces of crimes committed by the SS, but was a direct response to the story of the production of soap and fertilizer out of the bodies of deceased Jews. Spektor, by contrast, draws the following incredible conclusion from this document (Spektor 1990b, p. 158):

*“Himmler’s letter testifies to the fact that in the second half of 1942 the Nazis were cremating bodies, not only burying them.”*

Did we really need Himmler’s letter to learn something so obvious? Or perhaps Spektor was unaware of the existence of cremation furnaces in the majority of German concentration camps in November 1942?

By contrast, the proper conclusion to be drawn is this: if Himmler – through Müller – had already ordered the elimination of mass graves in June 1942, this would have implied a formal prohibition against the continued burial of human bodies, but the above-mentioned letter shows exactly the opposite: that, in the second half of 1942, by order of the *Reichsführer SS*, the SS were permitted or rather required to *either* bury or to cremate the bodies.

On the other hand, the heading of Himmler’s letter bears no mention of the number 1005, which also invalidates Spektor’s claim that “the number 1005 was used later as the code name for the operation of erasing the mass murders.”

In conclusion, Himmler’s letter shows merely that the presumed “Aktion 1005” order supposedly issued by Müller and Himmler to Blobel is pure fantasy.

Spektor also quotes a third document, almost in passing, which does mention “*Sonderkommando 1005*” (*ibid.*, pp. 166f.):

*“Sonderkommando 1005-Mitte proceeded on 3 April 1944 to Pinsk where it was helped by the local Gebietskommissar Klein, as well as the headquarters of the Second German Army. Confirmation of this can be found in the intelligence report of army activities in April 1944: ‘By special order of the Reichsführer SS, Sonderkommando 1005 arrived, to execute special duties in the area of the army.’”*

Dieter Pohl presents the original text of this information in a general context, which I summarize as follows (Pohl 2009b, p. 330):

*“Starting in the summer of 1943, the Security Police began to identify the mass graves of Nazi victims and have them opened by forced laborers. These ‘Sonderkommandos 1005’ were also active close behind the Eastern front. Despite the strict secrecy obligation, a few military agencies also became aware that the Security Police was attempting to wipe out the traces of the mass graves. In one case, the Security Police opened a grave located in the midst of a barracks in Nikolayev; it is hard to imagine that these doings failed to attract the attention of the responsible military leaders. The AOK 2 [Army Supreme Command 2] were even aware of this operation’s cover name:*

*‘Based on a special order of the Reichsführer SS, Sonderkommando 1005 is assigned to special tasks in the army zone.’”*

The source is: “Tätigkeitsbericht AOK 2, Ic/AO, 25.4.1944.” Pohl states that “at that time, the second army was in Polesye in the area of the Pripyat Marshes” (*ibid.*, fn 37).

Pohl’s demonstrative method is clearly misleading. The story of a mass grave in the midst of a barracks is not, in actual fact, derived from any document, but from the interrogation of Gustav Herold on 21 September 1969 (*ibid.*, fn 36). In practice, he presupposes the existence of a *Sonderkommando 1005* employed in the exhumation and cremation of bodies from mass graves, and adduces the above-mentioned document as proof or confirmation of his own presupposition! In reality, the document only speaks of “special tasks” without specifying what they were! From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, one could claim that proof or confirmation consists of the fact that *Sonderkommando 1005*-Center was in Pinsk on 25 April 1944 (see Subchapter 6.6. below), in the area of the Pripyat Marshes, but this is not a “fact” attested to by a document, but merely a trial “truth” established exclusively by testimonies.

A document cannot be confirmed by a testimony; if anything, then the exact opposite is true. I shall return to this distorted interpretive method later.

Hoffmann reports a proposed conferral of “*Kriegsverdienstkreuze 2. Klasse*” (War Merit Crosses 2nd Class) written on 26 May 1944 at Lvov by an official in the Security Service containing this phrase (Hoffmann, p. 105):

*“Furthermore, the men listed under consecutive numbers 1 through 16 have been members of Special Squad 1005 (Secret Reich Matter) for months, and have been exposed to very special emotional and physical stress during this activity.”*

Hoffmann moreover quotes a radio message from the commander of the Security Police Black Sea, SS *Sturmbannführer* Friedrich Hegenscheidt, who arrived at Lvov on 28 March 1944 (*ibid.*, p. 127):

*“Deployment of Sonderkommandos 1005 A and B, Secret Reich Matter assignment RFSS to SS Standartenführer Blobel in Region BdS Black Sea not possible. Recorded precipitation area only still in area KdS Crimea. Deployment currently impossible due to front and partisan situation. Transport area for overall squad not available. According to current rumor, evacuation of Crimea now pending. Propose dissolution of both squads, or deployment in other area.”*

The document has the appearance of an artificial construction meant to “document” orthodox Holocaust theories: the reference to *Sonderkommandos* 1005 A and 1005 B as well as to a secret “assignment” assigned by Himmler to Blobel.

Here as well, we must presume that the leaders of the Reich were complete imbeciles. As I shall explain later (Subchapter 6.3.), *Sonderkommando* 1005 B was active at Nikolayev near the Crimean Peninsula until the end of January 1944, and was then sent to Lvov, and thence into the holiday destinations of Zakopane and Krinica (Krynica). Its members were then assembled again at Lvov. Here, on 28 March 1944, the above-mentioned radio message was allegedly received. The distance by road between Nikolayev and Lvov is approximately 800 km; it follows that *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, although it was only a short distance from the Crimea while active at Nikolayev, was sent to Lvov with the intention of sending it right back to the Crimea a few months later!

Since the area to the north of the Crimea was under the competence of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, why did the radio message also mention *Sonderkommando* 1005 A? Based on the document, it was in fact intended to deploy both in the Crimea. That the commander of the Security Police Black Sea only knew about the imminent evacuation of the Crimea from “rumor,” is absolutely unbelievable.

The fact that the document is a “typed copy” (*ibid.*, fn 75, p. 127) may mean that the original – if it exists – has been “retouched,” and not very skillfully.

It is a fact that the British, who, thanks to the interception of German radio messages, were following events in the Crimea with particular attention at the time, knew nothing about it. There are no transcripts of individual messages for 1944. The messages were intercepted individually, but only summarized weekly. The report for the week of 25 March-1 April says that the ethnic Germans from Transnistria were being concentrated at Sambor, and that weapons and munitions were being transported from Nikolayev and Simferopol to Breslau.<sup>423</sup> The report relating to the following weeks concerned themselves specifically with the Crimea.<sup>424</sup>

*“Internal evidence suggests that the HSSuP and Bdo Black Sea have left TIRASPOL; they may be transferred to GALATZ where Vomi Headquarters are*

<sup>423</sup> TNA, HW 16-68. Notes on German Police Decodes. Week ending 1 April 1944. PEARL/ZIP/P.85.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, Week ending 8 Apr 44. PEARL/ZIP/P.86.

*located on 27 March. Messages referring to the evacuation of Odessa by the Police point to considerable transport difficulties. The O.K.H. has put a ban on all transport from ODESSA to the North; Police authorities in Crimea are told to use the port of KONSTANZA.”*

Arad mentions another document (Arad 2009, p. 503):

*“Thus, according to the report prepared by the Sipo in Lithuania and dated January 13, 1944, regarding the situation during December 1943: ‘On the night of December 25, 1943, there was an escape from the fort of prisoners from enterprise 1005b. The escape was not felt at first, and when it was, there began an immediate manhunt for the escapees. So far, we have managed to catch 37 of the escapees, 5 of whom were shot trying to escape.’”*

There is also another document which refers to this event. This is an express letter sent on 3 February 1944 by “The Head of the Security Police and the SD IV B 4” (Eichmann) to the *Reichsführer* SS, with the subject “Escape of Jewish workers out of Kaunas”; only the salient portion of it are quoted here (the document is reproduced in Faitelson 2006, p. 268):

*“Finally, on the escape of 64 Jewish workers from Fort Kaunas, I report the successful recapture of 37 of these Jews so far.*

*The leader of Sonderkommando 1005 – SS Obersturmführer Radif – and the leader of the guard squad on duty at the time – Gendarmeriemeister Apelt – were arrested for negligence after the escape. Since the investigation has now been concluded, I commuted the imprisonment to house arrest.”*

From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, this document might also be thought to find apparent confirmation. On 26 December 1943, eleven former prisoners at Kaunas wrote a memorandum in which they told a story which I shall examine in Chapter 7.3. These men claimed to have been assigned to participate in the exhumation and cremation of bodies in Fort IX, but they did not claim to have been members of any *Sonderkommando* 1005.

The date of their escape, the night of 25-26 December 1943, corresponds to the document cited by Arad (it is not clear to whom the escapees made their statement in the city of Kaunas on the very same date as their escape), but there are also notable discrepancies, particularly on the number and above all the nationality of the escapees. The escapees reported that their squadron originally consisted of 72 prisoners, 34 Soviets, 14 Jewish partisans, 3 Russians, 4 women (3 Jews and one Polish woman) and 17 Jews from the Kaunas Ghetto; eight prisoners, one Jew and seven POWs, were later shot. On the day of the escape, the Jews from the squadron were therefore 33 in number; the express letter states, however, that there were 64 Jewish escapees, almost twice the number of those present. It is therefore obvious that the statement of the eleven escapees is incompatible on an essential point with the document in question, and one can also doubt that it was written on 26 December 1943. Nothing is known of its origins, moreover.

Another document, relating to Otto Erich Drews, requires the explanations given in its source: In the summer of 1943, Drews was assigned to the 4th Platoon of the 9th Police Tank Company and was sent to Russia. Here, like most members of the platoon, he joined the *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center; on 1 January 1944, he was appointed Polizeisekretär. He was later transferred to *Einsatzkommando* 13 in Kärnten, Austria, and dealt with personnel economic and administrative affairs. On 18 November 1944, he wrote a letter addressed to the Police Administration in Kiel which was signed by Max Krahnert, his superior and presumed head of *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center between December 1943 and October 1944. The following are the essential passages of his letter (Bracher/Rüter, pp. 14f.):

*“For special deployment -Einsatzkommando 13-1 (12b) Klagenfurt, 18 Nov. 1944 Ref. 10.10, Journal No. 16/44 - Geheime Staatspolizei - Burg.*

*Registered mail!*

*To the State Police Administration  
in Kiel*

*Re: Assignment of Police Secretary Drews.*

*Police Secretary Drews, from the Ordinary Police Command Kiel assigned on 25 March 1943 to long-term emergency service at the Police Reserve, as platoon constable of the Ordinary Police Reserve, has now been assigned to my staff, at my request, on order of leader of the ‘Iltis’ Group for Special Tasks – Reich Security Main Office – as leader I (personnel officer) and leader II (senior economic officer) due to his knowledge in administrative matters. With regard to his military experience during front-line deployment as platoon leader, with simultaneous exercise of incidental administrative tasks, Drews satisfied my expectations to the fullest. Since the beginning of his service in the East, he has been active in my unit and has been assigned to the Security Police.*

*With regard to the fact that all members of the ordinary police who during the deployment in the East were entrusted with carrying out the tasks within the framework of Secret Reich Matter 1005, an official assignment within the framework of ordinary police deployment is no longer possible based on orders issued by the Reichsführer SS – Reich Security Main Office – [...<sup>425</sup>]*

*You are furthermore informed that political secretary Drews has been awarded the War Merit Cross Second Class with swords, by the Reich Security Main Office, effective as of 1 Sep. 44.*

*Please also find the photo in the attachment for issuing the new SS paybook.*

*I attachment”*

Blobel was appointed head of *Einsatzgruppe* “Iltis,” a specialist anti-partisan unit in Yugoslavia, in September 1944. He therefore appointed Drews “Leader I (personnel officer) and Leader II (Senior Economic Officer)” of *Einsatzkommando* 13

<sup>425</sup> Followed by the request, which is irrelevant in the present context, to exempt Drews from “emergency duty.”

“due to his knowledge in administrative matters.” Drews therefore had acquired a remarkable range of experience in administrative matters during his long-term activity with *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center. But in what way could he have acquired that experience if the activity of the “*Sonderkommando*” consisted solely of the exhumation and cremation of corpses?

As for “Secret Reich Matter 1005,” just what its “tasks” consisted of is not explained.

One might also add a British intercept from September-October 1944 which states:<sup>426</sup>

“d) *Baltic*. [...] Bds RIGA had a *Sonderkdo* 1005 under his command (2972DD11).”

These documents show that there was a *Sonderkommando* 1005,<sup>427</sup> also referred to by the letters “A” and “B,” which was a “Secret Reich Matter” and which corresponded to a “special order of the *Reichsführer* SS”; one might also concede that it involved an “assignment RFSS to SS *Standartenführer* Blobel,” but none of this provides us with any knowledge of the fundamental questions:

1. When was it formed?
2. Why was it formed?
3. What were its duties?
4. Why was it referred to by the number “1005”?

Apart from the forced linking of the number 1005 with Müller’s letter to Luther of 28 February 1942, orthodox Holocaust historiography responds to these questions by referring exclusively to testimonies. This is the distorted method which I mentioned earlier: they pretend to explain the documents by means of testimonies. This case is similar to that of the *Sonderkommando* of the crematoria at Birkenau: here as well, there are multiple documents which mention a *Sonderkommando* – but only one document with the specification “Krematorium.” Yet these documents never clarify what tasks these *Sonderkommandos* carried out. The collaboration in the gassing of persons and the cremation of the bodies of the gassed persons, as claimed by orthodox historians, is derived *exclusively* from testimonies. Once it has been determined *a priori* that a *Sonderkommando* assigned to such a task actually existed in the Birkenau crematoria, every document containing the term *Sonderkommando* is used to prove the “reality” of the homicidal gassings (cf. my study Mattogno 2015b).

Similarly, documents attesting to the construction and operation of the Birkenau crematoria, which are taken by mainstream historians as evidence for the existence of homicidal gas chambers, merely show that such crematoria existed, not that they were involved in any way in the mass extermination of human beings.

<sup>426</sup> TNA, HW 16/6, Summary. Covering information received between 1 Sept and 31 Oct 44. CI-RO/PEARL/ZIP/MSGP.61, 5 November 1944.

<sup>427</sup> In Mattogno/Graf, p. 227, I mistakenly wrote: “The designation ‘*Sonderkommando* 1005’ was invented by the Soviets.”

In the same way, the above-mentioned documents are equally improperly referred to as proof or confirmation of the presumed exhumation and cremation activities supposedly carried out by *Sonderkommando* 1005, which is, in fact, supported solely by testimonies.

The orthodox Holocaust narrative presents other aspects which are just as surprising, to say the least. One relates to the fact that, as we have seen earlier, 16 members of *Sonderkommando* 1005 were recommended as potential recipients for the German military award medal “War Merit Cross 2nd Class,” and at least Drews was actually awarded the medal on 1 September 1944; nevertheless, the leader of “Aktion 1005,” Blobel, was not even considered deserving of promotion. His service record in fact lists his promotions up to the rank of SS *Untersturmführer* (21 March 1935), SS *Obersturmführer* (9 November 1935), SS *Hauptsturmführer* (9 November 1936), SS *Sturmbannführer* (30 January 1938), SS *Obersturmbannführer* (20 April 1939), SS *Standartenführer* (30 January 1941). This was his last promotion. In the “rank” section of his service record, all the boxes indicating subsequent ranks are left blank, starting with that of SS *Oberführer* (NO-3197, pp. 1, 3). The same document mentioning the decoration awarded to Drews confirms that Blobel was still a SS *Standartenführer* on 18 November 1944, when “Aktion 1005” was a thing of the past.

It should also be noted that the source situation in this regard is disastrous, to say the least. In support of a claimed operation which would have been enormous for the vastness of the territories concerned and for its duration, a handful of documents are presented, two of which have no connection to the matter at all, while the others contain only the term *Sonderkommando* 1005. The absurdity of the situation is obvious: this operation was so secret that it left almost no documents, but at the same time, the shootings which created the problem of the mass graves to be eliminated were carried out in the light of day; not only that, but Himmler is said to have issued the order to eliminate the mass graves, but not any documents relating to the shootings!

From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, what may be considered conceivable is that Himmler, in August 1943, after the battle of Kursk, ordered “Aktion 1005” to prevent advancing Soviet troops from discovering the mass graves containing the bodies of the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and using them for propaganda purposes against the Germans, as the Germans had used Katyn against the Soviets. But what is the sense of declaring such an operation a “Secret Reich Matter” and ordering the destruction of all the related documents, when the executions were carried out by the light of day, and were attested to by hundreds of documents?

The United Nations declaration of 17 December 1942 called attention to the crimes perpetrated by the Germans (IMT, Vol. 12, p. 364):

*“From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German in-*

*vaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation, or are deliberately massacred in mass executions."*

This was followed by an open threat of legal retribution:

*"The above-mentioned Governments and the French National Committee condemn, in the strongest possible terms, this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom-loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny. They reaffirm their solemn resolution to ensure that those responsible for the crimes shall not escape retribution, and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end."*

The National-Socialist leaders, starting with Himmler, whose fates were now irremediably sealed, knew well what awaited them at the end of the war.

In this context, the idea of a presumed "Aktion 1005" to eliminate the material proofs of the executions, with the total destruction of all the related documentation, but leaving an enormous mass of documents attesting to the executions available to the enemy, appears even more absurd. This is so true that at the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, the U.S. investigators were hardly interested in material evidence at all, that is, they didn't concern themselves with "Aktion 1005" itself at all, but based their accusations on the many documents on executions gratuitously bequeathed to them by the Germans.

Stephen Tyas discovered and later, in 2006, published English-language translations of two German messages dated 12 and 13 October 1943 intercepted by the British. In 2005, Robert J. Hanyok commented on them, supplying the orthodox Holocaust interpretation:<sup>428</sup>

*"In late 1943, as the Axis forces retreated west all along the front before the resurgent Red Army, the Nazi authorities were faced with the problem of destroying the evidence of the earlier massacres perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen, police and SS formations. In October 1943 intercepted and decoded radio messages of the SD revealed that the Germans were in the process of exhuming the sites of mass executions and destroying the remains. The texts of the intercepted messages were written in the obtuse language that the Germans used for all matters pertaining to the Holocaust. These messages indicated that such work, executed by Sonderkommandos (Special Detachments), and [sic] included cleaning up 'special places of work' in the Baltic region southwest of Leningrad, near the cities of Novgorod and Pskov. Interestingly, in trying to identify the murder sites, SS officials had to rely on information from Latvian and Russian collaborators."*

This is the text of the first intercept.<sup>429</sup>

<sup>428</sup> Hanyok, p. 83. The source given is: "ZIP/ISOSICLE 7639, Berlin to Crimea Area, 12 October 1943 and ZIP/ISOSICLE 7654 (combined with 7684), 13 October 1943, PRO HW 19/238." *ibid.*, fn 43, p. 112.

<sup>429</sup> TNA, HW 19/238.



“GROUP XIII/27

BERLIN to CRIMEA area

RSS 49/15/10/43

LFC on 10223 kcs 1651 GMT 12/10/43

SSD Nr 18 1110 2220

For ROEDER. For the completion of urgent business of winding up in the sphere of the EK 1 and EK 2, exact details are required immediately concerning special places of work from November 1941 up to July 1943. Positional details, special places of work, particularly in GRIGOROVO near NOVGOROD, are to be transmitted at once to SS Stubaf. BLOBEL, at present B.d.S. RIGA and RSHA 4 B 4. All speed essential. GUENTER, SS Hastuf”

This is the second message’s text from the same archival source:

“GROUP XIII/27

CRIMEA AREA TO BERLIN

RSS 45/15/10/43

LFC de KIF on 9280 kcs. 1210 GMT 13/10/43

Nr 1310/1020/21 2 Tle 1585

To RSHA IV. B[Written in ink] 4. Secondly. BdS. RIGA SS Stubaf. BLOBEL. Ref. W/T message of 11/10 No. 18.

1) Ravine near air-force barracks SIEVERSKAJA close by to the north-west of the airfield, little material. 2) GATTSCHINA castle grounds about 200 m. distant from the former quarters of the Kdo. Ostuf. BOSSE, former Latvian interpreters, TONE, DZELSKELEJS, and others, all apparently ~~from~~ [crossed out in ink] RIGA, are able to give information concerning 1) and 2). Russian collaborator, RUTSCHENKO, can also give indications. At present PSKOV UZ [<sup>?430</sup>].

3) Ref. PUSCHKIN, ZARSKOJE, SELO and TOSSNO.

Please question Stubaf. Dr. ? and Stubaf. Hubig, both RSHA I b.

4) GRIGOROWO at NOVGOROD not known to me. As EK 2 [is concerned], perhaps Ostuf. EHLINGER of EGR. N can give information or else Hstuf. KRAUS brother of Stubaf. OTTO KRAUS, who is at present at PSKOV.

Sgd. ROEDER, Stubaf.”

Hanyok explicitly stated that “the intercepted messages were written in the obtuse language that the Germans used for all matters pertaining to the Holocaust,” therefore their meaning is not clear at all, and the author pretends that he has “de-coded” it.

The first message, from Office IVB4 of the RSHA, was sent by SS *Hauptsturmführer* Rolf Günther – who was the deputy of the head of this office, SS

<sup>430</sup> Operation Zeppelin was instituted on 10 March 1942 by Office VI C of the RSHA and was intended to recruit opponents of the Soviet regime who were expected to undermine the Soviet population’s will to resist behind the front lines; Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 116, pp. 305f.

*Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Eichmann – to SS *Sturmbannführer* Rudolf Oebser-Röder, who was in the “Crimea area.”

Tyas, who reproduces the transcript of the related texts, comments as follows (Tyas, p. 237):

*“These two decoded messages provide details of a previously unknown perpetrator, the names of other perpetrators, the inability of the Security Police to trace all the execution sites (an event unplanned in every war), and the exact location of two execution sites.*

*Who was ‘ROEDER’ in the Crimea? This is SS-Major Dr. Rudolf Oebser-Röder, in October 1943 the field-office commander based in the Crimean area for Unternehmen Zeppelin operations into the Caucasus and beyond on behalf of Schellenberg’s RSHA VI C/Z. [...] The knowledge he provides in his answer to Guenther and Blobel on 13 October 1943 can only have come from someone who was present at the executions; in other words, he was a perpetrator and at the very least complicit in the murders at Sieverskaja and possibly Gatschina. The other locations mentioned were not known to him, indicating that there was some information available to Eichmann’s office from other sources about these special places of work.”*

He then wonders:

*“Who were the victims at Sieverskaja and Gatschina and which unit carried out the execution?”*

He answers these questions by saying that these two localities were located approximately 25-30 miles south of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), and cites the only *Einsatzgruppen* report that mentions either of the two localities; I shall now provide the original text of the report:<sup>431</sup>

*“The number of inspections carried out by squads of Einsatzgruppe A around Leningrad amounts to several hundred. A total of 93 persons were executed, among them a gypsy gang which had been causing trouble in the region around Siverskaya. Jewish civilian population is no longer present.”*

Tyas states that he does not know why the report uses the name Gatchina instead of Krasnogvardeysk and declares that he “could not find any reference to executions here.” The names “Pushkin, Tsarskoye, Selo” all refer to Tsarskoye Selo – this town’s name was changed to Pushkin in 1919 – where, he continues, “some individual Russians” were shot. He then cites EM No. 186 dated 27 March 1942, which dedicates a few lines to Pushkin, in order to tell the story of the “ethnic German Oleg Smilkow” who had committed “a murder with robbery against his likewise ethnically German aunt,” and who was then captured and shot.<sup>432</sup> Tyas also cites EM No. 190 dated 8 April 1942, which contains the following passage relating to Pushkin:<sup>433</sup>

<sup>431</sup> NARA, T-175/234, 2723471 (p. 9 of the report).

<sup>432</sup> NARA, T-175/235, 2724071, p. 10 of the report.

<sup>433</sup> NARA, T-175/235, 2724160, p. 8 of the report.

*“The number of deaths has remained just about the same. In order to fend off the danger of possible epidemics during the coming spring, measures are being taken already now in order to collect the corpses lying in front of residences, to stack them up at certain locations in order to bury them later when thaw commences.*

*In Pushkin, for example, a squad was formed consisting of militia members who searched the houses for corpses. Some 400 corpses have been found so far which had not yet been buried. Insofar as possible, they have even been buried here already.”*

As for Tosno, Tyas adduces Document NOKW-1580, a report dated 3 November 1941 which mentions the reprisal shooting of “13 persons (selected from persons refusing to work and from known Communists)” by the Security Police (TWC, Vol. X, p. 1155), in addition to Document NOKW-2268, a report on the activity of the XXVIII Corps referring to the period from 29 November 1941 to 9 May 1942. The document reports about an “insane asylum located in the former monastery Makaryevskaya pustyn” which accommodated 240 patients in disastrous conditions, so that measures had to be taken (*ibid.*, p. 1197). On 3 January 1942, the headquarters of the XVIII Army communicated: “Insane asylum in Makaryevskaya. The matter has been settled” (*ibid.*, p. 1200). The document mentions a *Kommando* Hubig – named after the head of *Einsatzkommando* 1b of *Einsatzgruppe* A – which was to receive “the appropriate instructions for the implementation directly from Brigadier General Stahlecker with the army” (*ibid.*), so that, if the patients were shot, this would be attributed to *Einsatzgruppe* A, but this shooting is not mentioned in its reports. The document explicitly states that the monastery at Makaryevskaya, in which the “insane asylum” had been set up, was located “20 kilometers north-northwest of Lyuban” (*ibid.*, p. 1198), approximately 75 km southeast of Saint Petersburg, more than 60 km south east of Pushkin as the crow flies.

As for the killing of the mental patients, if it really took place, it marked the conclusion of a long and difficult decision-making process.

On 2 December 1941, *Kommando* Hubig sent a report with the subject “Insane Asylum at Makaryevo” to the head of *Einsatzgruppe* A. The document reports the existence, since 1936, of a “House of Invalids” at Makaryevo in an old monastery, at that time containing 230-240 persons – mental patients as well as syphilitics and epileptics. Food and pharmaceuticals were almost exhausted. The female acting physician treating them had lost all control and feared that the patients might constitute a danger to the populace of the village of only 150 inhabitants. Even the physician of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade, SS *Sturmbannführer* Dr. Blies, shared her fears, because the patients, if they escaped, could have attacked the townspeople and spread diseases, such as typhus. The report declared that he “was of the opinion that the patients would leave the asylum only step by step. There was no more food in the surrounding villages anyway, so that the patients would either be eliminated by the civilian population or brought back to the asy-

lum.” SS *Hauptsturmführer* Hubig requested a “review of the case” (Angrick *et al.*, pp. 248f.).

The problem, as we have seen, was “settled” on 3 January 1942, after a month of hesitation. This is in contrast to the contextless information provided as to the execution of mental patients contained in other Incident Reports, such as in EM No. 88 of 19 September 1941, which relates to *Einsatzgruppe A*:

“On 22.8. a total of 544 patients from the Aglona mental hospital were liquidated with support from the Latvian militia.” (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 494)

If it was so easy to eliminate mental patients, why did the (alleged) elimination of the mental patients at Makaryevo take a month?

Finally, Tyas mentions “Activity and Situation Report No. 7 of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police and the SD in the USSR,” relating to November 1941, which states the following:<sup>434</sup>

“13 hostages were shot at the crime scene in the presence of municipal representatives in reprisal for an act of arson against the sawmill in Tosno, in which building material for 5 German divisions was being prepared.”

This is obviously the same execution as the one mentioned in Document NOKW-1580.

Tyas’s interpretations are simply flabbergasting. To start with, Günther’s message mentions one single locality: Grigorovo. Why, then, in Röder’s response, did Röder speak of Siverskaya, Gatchina, Pushkin, Tsarskoye, Selo and Tosno? When was Röder asked any questions about these localities? Are there other messages whose existence has not been disclosed by Tyas?

The specific question as to Grigorovo, which Röder was actually asked, does not appear to make much sense, because this locality constitutes the northwestern perimeter of Novgorod, which is approximately 1,400 km north of the Crimea as the crow flies, approximately 160 km south-south east of Saint Petersburg. What could Röder possibly know about Grigorovo? Nothing, as the response stated: “not known to me.” In fact, Tyas adds that “the known career of SS *Sturmbannführer* Dr. Rudolf Oebgger-Röder contains no inkling of a post with an *Einsatzgruppe*” (Tyas, p. 239).

On the other hand, Günther’s request for information referred “particularly” and precisely to Grigorovo, but Tyas is completely uninterested in this aspect of the matter and writes nothing about it.

From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, if the National-Socialist authorities were not afflicted with congenital cretinism, “Aktion 1005” should have been directed first and foremost at mass graves containing thousands of bodies and located near the much larger extermination sites, whether real or imagined.

So what happened at Grigorovo-Novgorod that was so disturbing that a *Sonderkommando* 1005 had to be sent there?

<sup>434</sup> YVA, O.53-3, p. 108 (p. 4 of the report).

As far as is known, Novgorod was not the theater of any particularly tremendous massacre. The locality is mentioned in *Ereignismeldung* No. 136 dated 21 November 1941, only for the purpose of supplying a bit of innocuous service information:

*“Einsatzgruppe A: garrison Krasnogvardeysk. Spanish Blue Division in the East: Blue Division already very conspicuous when moving into the signed positions on the Volkhov, between Novgorod and Chudovo.”* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 821f.)

The only “known” or presumed shooting is that of 387 persons declared by the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes Committed by German Fascists and Their Collaborators on the Territory of the USSR, which presumably occurred on 6 January 1943 at Novgorod-Seversky (Weiss-Wendt 2015, p. 126).

Can one seriously believe that Office IV B 4 of the RSHA was really concerned about a presumed mass grave containing a mere 387 bodies? And what is the connection between Novgorod and Röder? Why was the question directed precisely to him, who could not possibly have any knowledge about it?

For the localities discussed by Tyas, the situation is even more absurd, because the executions which can be said to have been carried out involved 93 victims at Siverskaya, 1 at Pushkin and 13 at Tosno, for a total of 107 people.

EM No. 186 dated 27 March 1942 and cited earlier, which mentions the killing of a murderer at Pushkin, mentions, almost in passing: “15,000 Jews were shot in Cherven.”<sup>435</sup> Cherven (in Polish: Czerwień) is located approximately 55 km east of Minsk, along the road to Mogilev. Hoffmann mentions it, but only fleetingly in a quite irrelevant context, so that, as far as is known, no “1005” exhumation-cremation operation was ever carried out there.

This fleeting reference is all that is known of this massacre. With reference to EM No. 186, Gerlach asserts that it was a “typo in the victim figure (‘15,000’)” (Gerlach 1999, fn 986, p. 685), but does not say what the correct number is. Arad, by contrast, considering himself an authority, corrects the figure: “Some 1,500 people were murdered in Cherven”! (Arad 2009, fn 5, p. 582)

Hanyok and Tyas agree in concluding from the two messages in question that there was an “inability of the Security Police to trace all the execution sites,” to such an extent that the “SS officials had to rely on information from Latvian and Russian collaborators.”

If this were true, Office IV B 4 of the RSHA would have to have sent several hundreds of messages to locate the mass graves, of which, according to generally accepted Holocaust opinion, no maps existed.

If we assume the average figure of the presumed victims indicated by Arad – 2,550,000 people – how many mass graves should there have been?

The mass grave at Drogichin mentioned above contained 3.5 bodies per cubic meter, that at Zagare 2.9 bodies. It therefore follows that the 2,550,000 bodies mentioned above would have required  $(2,550,000 \div 3,816 =)$  668 mass graves the

<sup>435</sup> NARA, T-175/235, 2724069, p. 8 of the report.

size of that at Drogichin, or, in general,  $(2,550,000 \div 3,5 =) 728,571$  cubic meters of grave space, or 1,061 mass graves the size of that at Zagare, or 879,310 cubic meters of grave space. The Incident Reports nevertheless mention many shootings of a few dozen or a few hundred Jews, so that the number of mass graves should be much higher. The order of magnitude of several hundred messages hypothesized above is therefore quite plausible.

Tyas, by contrast, has not found hundreds of messages confirming the underlying fact – not even dozens – but only two!

These two messages, I add, were drawn up “in the obtuse language that the Germans used for all matters pertaining to the Holocaust,” because their real meaning is not obvious *per se*; they are only interpreted based on “Aktion 1005,” because Blobel is mentioned in them; by virtue of this name, in the collective fantasy of orthodox Holocaust historians, the “special places of work” are transformed into work places (mass graves and cremation pyres) in the context of “Aktion 1005.” And this is done without even examining the German text of the messages!

From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, we also would have to deduce from the two messages that Office IV B 4 of the RSHA, and Eichmann in particular, played a primary role in “Aktion 1005.” Nevertheless, the Jerusalem Tribunal, notwithstanding the enormous quantity of documents which it examined, never succeeded in establishing a link between Eichmann and Blobel’s office, and, in Point 148 of the Judgment declared (State of Israel, Vol. V, p. 2164):

*“Wisliceny says of Blobel’s unit that it ‘was formally placed under Eichmann’ (T/85, p. 9). The Accused denied that he was Blobel’s superior. According to him, the only connection between his Section and Blobel was that Blobel himself and some of his men were housed in the building of Section IVB4 while they were in Berlin, and his Section dealt with them only from an administrative aspect (T/37, pp. 264, 390, 3044). He also mentions strained personal relations between himself and Blobel.*

*We find that the evidence is not sufficient to place the responsibility for the activities of Blobel’s unit on the Accused. [...] The Accused’s name is not mentioned by Blobel, and also in the nature of things it does not necessarily follow that the Section of the Accused, which was occupied with carrying out the Final Solution, should also be engaged in the special operation of covering up the traces. Accordingly, the Accused will have the benefit of the doubt in this matter.”*

It is not by accident that Hans Safrian, in his 2010 study of Eichmann, never even mentions Blobel.

From the distribution list of the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, we can see that the following copies of the reports were sent to the various departments of Office IV of the RSHA, the Gestapo:

17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51

Among the copies found by the Americans, those of Office IV were 33, 34, 35, 47, 48 and 51. Nevertheless, no document relating to “Aktion 1005” was found in

the archives of the Gestapo. We must therefore believe that the SS considered this operation so secret that all the related documentation had to be destroyed, but at the same time they left all the *Einsatzgruppen* reports (except for one); hence we may deduce that for the SS the exhumation and cremation of Jewish cadavers was much more secret than shooting the Jews in the first place!

Tyas dedicated the article cited several times here precisely to Eichmann, as is readily apparent from the title: “Adolf Eichmann: New Information from British Signals Intelligence.” But apart from the two messages in question, he does not indicate the slightest link between Eichmann and Blobel, which confirms that the orthodoxy’s interpretation of these documents is forced and therefore unsupported.

There is another, rather enigmatic, British intercept relating to the period between 8 May and 8 June 1943, which could fit into the topic dealt with in this subchapter:<sup>436</sup>

“*Einsatzkdo 5 at KHARKOV is asked to send photographs of graves to Sonderkdo SPACIL at KIEV (1480 FF 10, of 11).*”

What good are “photographs of graves”? It is difficult to answer this question directly, but we can establish what the photos are *not* good for. In fact, from the orthodox Holocaust point of view, the message has nothing to do with *Sonderkommando* 1005. First of all, no “*Sonderkommando Spacil*” has ever been known to exist, and the name of the person involved is completely unknown. Hoffmann reports that Blobel visited Kiev in July 1943. He briefly revealed his duties to his collaborators and explained “the details of ‘Aktion 1005’” before mid-August, after which he formed “*Kommando 1005A*,” commanded by SS *Sturmbannführer* Baumann, and “*Kommando 1005B*,” commanded by SS *Sturmbannführer* Hans Sohns (Hoffmann, pp. 107-109).

Hence, the intercepted German message could not refer to “Aktion 1005,” because at the time, Blobel had not yet communicated his decision regarding Kiev, but nevertheless there was talk of “photographs of graves.”

Were the graves involved those of the Jews shot at Kharkov? Although this is possible, would the German authorities really have created documentary evidence for a crime whose material traces they are said to have been in the process of eradicating at that time? Anyway, very little is known of these executions. Arad reports that “Yordan, an intelligence officer with the Sixth Army, testified at the trial of members of *Sonderkommando* 4a that 21,685 Jews had been murdered in Kharkov by January 1942” (Arad 2009, p. 192), but the documents do not confirm any massacre of such proportions (see Subchapter 8.4. below).

The total absence of documentary proof permits Holocaust historians to invent the most incredible stories. Thus, Hoffmann, summarizing a passage from the sentence of the Stuttgart District Court of 13 March 1969, says that Blobel, in a

<sup>436</sup> TNA, HW 16/6, Summary. Covering information received between 8 May and 8 June 1945. ZIP/MSGP/48/10.6.43.

mythical “discussion of principles” which is said to have been held at Kiev in the first half of August 1943,

*“reminded those present that the elimination of the murder traces has the status of a ‘Secret Reich Matter’ and that they therefore have to take steps to keep their activity secret. Apart from that, Office IV of the RSHA, directed by Müller, was to be informed daily, through the agency of local BdS offices, of the number of corpses eliminated. In this connection, Sohns<sup>[437]</sup> proposed to encode the reports as ‘weather reports’, and the number of burned bodies as ‘cloud altitude.’ The proposal was accepted.”* (Hoffmann, p. 108)

Hoffmann later returned to the matter, citing the testimony of ex-radio activity director for the SK 7b, Walter Mayer, who spoke of ordinary “weather reports.” He knew through a “member of the SK 7b typing pool” – whose name he could unfortunately no longer recall – that these reports had a different meaning. The witness recalled 4-5 of these radio messages. The testimony dates back to 24 September 1967, really a bit too late (*ibid.*, fn 47, p. 158).

Since *Sonderkommando* 1005 carried out several hundred alleged exhumations and cremations, there must also have been hundreds of these coded “weather reports,” and there was no reason to destroy them, precisely because they were encoded, but orthodox Holocaust historiography has never cited a single one.

This alleged “encoding,” apart from the intrinsic difficulties, is rather foolish, because German meteorologists were constantly issuing real “weather reports,” very many of which were intercepted by the British. Since the “coded” weather reports could not be distinguished from the real ones on their face, but contained obviously incorrect meteorological data, how did the various German units distinguish the real reports from the fake ones?

Here are a few examples of real weather reports (this is the forecast for the General Government and the Ukraine):

*“General weather situation for 26 Oct. 42 15 hours. [...] In the other territories of the Reich, the General Government and the Ukraine: sunny with cloudy intervals, largely due to a Russian high [pressure system]. Forecasts for tomorrow. Southern General Government: clear to cloudy weather tonight, with slight southwesterly wind. Ground temperatures may fall below zero degrees, particularly at higher altitudes. Tomorrow’s daytime weather: sunny weather with predominantly high-altitude clouds. Early morning: local ground fog and haze, dissipating towards mid-morning. Temperatures unchanged. Sun tomorrow in CRACOW rising at 07:20 and setting at 17:27 hours. WBZ CRACOW”<sup>438</sup>*

*“General weather situation, 16 Nov. 42, 15:00 hours. [...] Before the cold front widespread precipitation in the form of rain and drizzle. In the East also as snow from closed stratified cloud cover of 300 to 500 m [altitude]. The front moves southwest. The Russian high and arctic cold air shift further southeastwards. Outlook for tomorrow in southern General Government: increasing westerly to*

<sup>437</sup> SS *Sturmabführer* Hans Sohns, alleged commander of *Sonderkommando* 1005A and 1005B in the Ukraine.

<sup>438</sup> TNA, HW 16/21. German Police Decodes Nr 3 Traffic: 26.10.42. ZIP/GPDD 278a/6.11.42.



*northwesterly winds, overcast to cloudy, widespread rain and showers. Improved visibility over the course of the day; becoming slightly warmer. Sun tomorrow in CRACOW: rising at 06:54; setting at 16:54 hours. WBZ CRACOW.*"<sup>439</sup>

*"General weather situation for today in southern General Government. Continuing low-hanging clouds well below 300 m above ground. Early morning increasingly thicker haze. Visibility westwards of REICHSHOF, less than 3 km. Local fog. Temperatures 0 to -2 degrees, around 0 degrees during the day. Heavy icing in clouds. Slight winds, around west; widespread local precipitation. Sunset 16:26 hours. WBZ CRACOW.*"<sup>440</sup>

I shall now conclude this paragraph with a rumor relating to the exhumation and cremation of bodies which somebody may have taken too seriously:

*"(708) SD Field Office Bad Neustadt*

*General attitude and situation*

*Bad Neustadt, 15 Oct. 1943      StA Wü, SD-Hauptaußenstelle Würzburg No. 14*

*According to a rumor traced to Münnerstadt, the hostile powers are said to have asked the Führer through the Red Cross where the Jews are who had formerly resided in the Reich. The Führer, as a result, is said to have had the Jews dug up and burnt, so as to prevent any propaganda material from falling into the hands of the Soviets in the event of a further German withdrawal in the East, as it did in the Katyn case. <3652>" (Kulkah/Jäckel, pp. 531f.)*

That this rumor had nothing to do with any imaginary "Aktion 1005" is already obvious from the context and chronology: the presumed action is said to have been ordered in October 1943 and is said to have concerned the Jews who once lived in Germany. This is an obvious "sib," a false news item disseminated by the British (see in this regard Part One, Subchapter 6.7.).

On 31 March 1943, a British official ascribed the source for one of these "sibs" to a government official:<sup>441</sup>

*"As you may know, 'C' supplies us regularly with a list of stories and rumours circulating in Germany etc. They are stories which 'C' specifically states to be 'unfounded opposition propaganda.'"*

A few "sibs" were equally macabre:

*"About 200,000 amputations have been made in Vienna hospitals. The meat is very sensibly being rendered for its fat for soap."*<sup>442</sup>

*"The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute has worked out a method of extracting calcium from the bones of air raid victims. It will be used in special diets for children."*<sup>443</sup>

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.11.42. ZIP/GPDD 299a/6.2.43.

<sup>440</sup> TNA, HW 16/23. German Police Decodes Nr 3 Traffic: 28.1.43. ZIP/GPDD 372a/12.2.43.

<sup>441</sup> TNA, FO 898-69.

<sup>442</sup> *ibid.*, "U.P. minutes for Friday 2nd July, 1943," I/755.

<sup>443</sup> *ibid.*, "U.P. minutes for Friday 9th July, 1943," K/542.

### 2.3. The Origins of “Aktion 1005”: Müller’s Presumed Order to Blobel

In the article mentioned above, Spektor writes about “organizing the headquarters of ‘Operation 1005.’” On 13 January 1942, SS *Standartenführer* Paul Blobel was relieved of command of *Sonderkommando* 4a of *Einsatzgruppe* C. “He was relieved,” says the Israeli historian, “for reasons of bad health; because of acute alcoholism his liver was badly infected.” After medical treatment, he was assigned to Office IV of the RSHA, the Gestapo.

*“In June 1942, after a long recuperation, Blobel was sent by Müller to Eichmann to study the scope of the ‘Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe.’ Following a short period of studies, he was appointed to head of the operation for obliterating all traces of mass murder, named ‘Aktion 1005.’ [...] He started in June 1942, not in the East, but in the death-camps.”* (Spektor 1990b, p. 159)

Spektor’s source, as I shall clarify below, is Blobel’s affidavit of 18 June 1947, NO-3947, with the addition of fanciful dates. For an event of such importance, this exposition is pathetic, to say the least.

Hoffmann is unable to do more. In this regard, he writes:

*“Blobel learned the exact details of his assignment in March or April 1942, when he spent a few days in Müller’s Office IV in Berlin, of which Adolf Eichmann, working in Department IV B4, was also a member. After his instructions, Blobel and Bauer drove back to the East.”* (Hoffmann, p. 80)

Spektor gives no hint about the source of these fantasies; let’s hope it’s not the same source as given in his Footnote 95, which follows the quotation a few lines down, because that source is in fact the interrogation on 4-5 July 1963 of a certain Julius Bauer, who was none other than Blobel’s driver (*Fahrer*)!

Spektor states that “in July 1942 Blobel organized a small staff in the city of Lodz (Litzmannstadt)” and explains that “Blobel chose the city of Lodz because of its proximity to the first death camp, Chelmno” (Spektor 1990b, p. 159). This conjecture is a risky one to say the least, because the presumed “extermination camp” is located at a distance by road of approximately 60 km from Lodz. If the problem was “proximity,” it would be more sensible to organize the “staff” at Dębice (approximately 7 km from Chelmno) or, if Blobel preferred, in a larger town, such as Koło (approximately 11 km away).

As is known, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, Blobel is said to have performed cremation experiments at Chelmno in order to perfect a secure system to eliminate the bodies from the mass graves left by the *Einsatzgruppen*. This system was also to be adopted later in the “extermination camps” in the East (and at Auschwitz).

I shall concern myself with Blobel’s presumed activity at Chelmno in the next subchapter. Here, it is important to delimit the chronological boundaries as exactly as possible. In this regard, it should first be noted that Spektor’s claim of Blobel organizing his staff at Lodz in July 1942 is pure fantasy. When did the ex-

perimentation at Chełmno cease? The only thing we know for sure is that the experiments must have been over when the mass cremations themselves began. On 30 March 1963, the Bonn Jury Court established that the cremations began “starting in the fall of 1942” (Rückerl 1979, p. 273). But Rückerl reports a testimony by Franz Schalling of 9 March 1961, a former senior police officer (*Polizei-oberwachtmeister*) who had been a member of the guard personnel at Chełmno. Schalling gave an earlier date:

*“In the summer of 1942, they began to open the graves and burn the bodies.”*  
(*ibid.*)

We may therefore conclude that, from the orthodox Holocaust point of view, Blobel’s preliminary activity was carried out between June (when he was assigned to the job) and September 1942 (end of summer).

Having established these limits, we may turn to Blobel’s direct statements. In his affidavit of 6 June 1947, he declared (NO-3824):

*“In January 1942, I was relieved of my post as head of Sonderkommando 4 A and transferred to Berlin for disciplinary reasons. I was left unoccupied there for a while. I was under the supervision of Office IV, under former Gruppenführer Müller. In fall 1942, as Müller’s representative, I was assigned the task to drive to the occupied territories and eliminate the traces of the mass graves resulting from the executions by the Einsatzgruppen. I had this assignment until the summer of 1944.”*

In a later affidavit, dated 18 June 1947, Blobel made the following statements (NO-3947):

*“After I had been relieved of this assignment, I had to report to SS Obergruppenführer Heydrich and Gruppenführer Müller in Berlin and was entrusted by Gruppenführer Müller in 1942 with the task of eliminating the traces of executions by the Einsatzgruppen in the East. My order stated that I was to report personally to the commanders of the Security Police and SD and to give them Müller’s order and supervise its implementation. This order was considered a Secret Reich Matter, and Gruppenführer Müller had ordered that due to the strict secrecy of this assignment no written correspondence was to be conducted.*

*In September 1942, I reported to Dr. Thomas in Kiev and transmitted the order to him. The task could not be carried out immediately, for one thing, because Dr. Thomas was disinclined to carry out the order, and for another thing, because the material needed to burn the bodies was not on hand. In May and June 1943, I traveled to Kiev several times in this matter, and then, after consulting with Dr. Thomas and SS and Police Leader Hennecke, the task was carried out.”*

These two statements provide us with two important bits of information:

1. The date of the presumed order is contradictory: June or fall 1942?
2. Blobel did not mention “Aktion 1005” or any *Sonderkommando* 1005.
3. He did not say a word of his alleged activity at Chełmno.

4. Regarding his presumed order, he referred exclusively to the graves left by the *Einsatzgruppen*, without the slightest mention of Eastern “extermination camps.”

As I have noted above, Himmler’s letter to Müller dated 20 November 1942 shows that no exhumation-cremation order existed at all at that time, since the *Reichsführer* SS had ordered that the bodies of the Jews were to be “either cremated or buried”; this document demolishes Blobel’s related fantasies.

The question of the secrecy borders on the ridiculous; the exhumation-cremation operation was so secret such that no “written correspondence” was to exist in this regard, but at the same time all the SS and Police units involved in the extermination of the Jews were to carry on calmly drawing up their reports on the shooting of the Jews! On 29 December 1942, Himmler himself is said to have forwarded to Hitler a report which mentioned the shooting of 363,211 Jews! Himmler moreover is said to have ordered Blobel to begin the operation in September 1942, but this “Secret Reich Matter” was delayed for nine months without any objection from Himmler!

Not only that, but a copy of all the 195 Incident Reports, except for a single one – as I noted in Part One, Chapter 1 – were blithely left in the offices of the Gestapo in Berlin for the benefit of the Allies. Headland informs in this regard:

*“The complete set [of the Operational Situation Reports] was found in seven folders, which were given file numbers by American investigators that resulted in the following distribution: Folder One (E328) Reports 1-30; Folder Two (E 330) Reports 31-78; Folder Three (E 329) Reports 79-100; Folder Four (E 327) Reports 101-129; Folder Five (E 325) Reports 130-150; Folder Six (E 326) Reports 151-173; and Folder Seven (E 331) Reports 174-195.”* (Headland, p. 221)

He adds that “during the *Einsatzgruppen* trial the prosecution did not put a single witness on the stand. The evidence presented by the prosecution consisted of 252 exhibits” (*ibid.*, p. 161). The majority of this documentation consisted precisely of the *Ereignismeldungen* (*ibid.*, Appendix A, pp. 217-221).<sup>444</sup>

It follows that the office which was supposed to be careful not to allow any “written correspondence” relating to “Aktion 1005,” and which was supposed to destroy all possible written documents in order to erase all proof of the shootings carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* – the Gestapo, to be exact – was precisely the one which left the proof of these shootings practically intact!

The two following fundamental questions nevertheless remain to be examined:

1. Why did Himmler issue the exhumation-cremation order?
2. Why was this extremely important task entrusted to Blobel in particular?

As to the first question, it is not clear whether Spektor traces the presumed order back to Müller’s letter to Luther dated 28 February 1942, which is irrelevant in

<sup>444</sup> Of the 194 existing reports, 185 were introduced into evidence as proof, and accepted by the court, which assigned NO classification numbers.

any case, as I have explained above. Molotov's declaration of 27 April 1942, in which he announced the killing by the Germans of 14,000 Jews at Kharkov (Spektor 1990b, p. 158), is also a very weak motivation for the "Aktion 1005" decision.

Hoffmann's explanation is even more inconsistent. According to him, when Blobel was relieved as Commander of *Sonderkommando* 4a on 13 January 1942, he received the order to meet Heydrich at Warsaw (although Blobel said he had to meet Heydrich in Berlin). According to the already-cited Julius Bauer, Blobel's driver, his superior received a new assignment which originated from an order from Hitler. Arriving at Berlin, Blobel was informed in broad terms of Müller's new mission and, as I have already mentioned, he received all the related details in March-April 1942 (Hoffmann, p. 80).

Based on this fanciful reconstruction, Hitler or Himmler is said to have decided on "Aktion 1005" as early as January 1942. This is one of the many absurdities of the orthodox Holocaust version. If, in fact, the presumed decision was taken already in January 1942 – but this applies equally to the month of June 1942, the dating indicated by Spektor – it would be impossible to understand why the *Einsatzgruppen* and the other SS and Police units continued to shoot and bury Jews in common graves long after the presumed order. The same is also true for the victims of mass gassings allegedly occurring in the so-called extermination camps. These are said to have been buried until the summer of 1942 (Auschwitz, Sobibór) November 1942 (Belżec) or even March 1943 (Treblinka). I remind the reader also that the official beginning of this operation in the occupied Eastern territories dates only to May-June 1943. If, therefore, the order to cremate the bodies from the mass graves already existed for a year or more, how does one explain why this was not done in these 14-15 or 11-12 months? Admitting for the sake of argument that there existed insuperable impediments (although that would not apply to the alleged extermination camps), how does one explain why the units which carried out the executions did not draw up precise maps of the mass graves in the East to be made available to Blobel?

In fact, orthodox Holocaust historians deduce from the radio messages of 12 and 13 October 1943 intercepted by the British – which I have examined earlier – the non-existence of such maps, since the Germans had to have recourse to information from Latvian and Russian collaborators.

But why was the decision made to exhume and cremate the bodies dug up from the mass graves? Hoffmann not only does not answer, but never even asks the question.

There is, moreover, another problem of no less importance which has been completely neglected by the orthodoxy: On 30 April 1942, a "Ministerial Decree" was issued (II 2 c - 3186), probably by Department IV (Healthcare and *Volkspflege*) of the German Ministry for the Interior. The document does not seem to have survived, but the text was cited in a letter by the "Reich Commissar for the East. Dept. 'Healthcare and *Volkspflege*'" dated "Riga, 27 May 1942." The letter, ad-

dressed to the General Commissars at Riga, Tallinn, Kaunas and Minsk, had as its subject “Burial of Bodies and Carcasses” and made explicit reference to the just-mentioned Ministerial Decree.<sup>445</sup>

*“I subsequently inform about a Ministerial Decree which concerns itself with the necessary measures for the burial of bodies and carcasses:*

*‘The poor burial of human corpses and the insufficient disposal of animal carcasses, caused mainly due to snow and frost conditions, are bound to become a serious health hazard for the troops and for the civilian population with the onset of the warmer season. For the most part, the existing graves are not deep enough, are located haphazardly and are not marked as graves. There is a danger that working the ground with the plough will tear the graves open again.’*

*I request that all necessary measures be taken to redress this bad state of affairs. First of all, human bodies and animal carcasses are to be buried so deeply in non-arable locations as to constitute no health hazard. If possible, the groundwater level must not be reached when arranging the graves. [Drinking] Water catchment areas must be avoided. Mass graves must be covered by a layer of dirt at least one meter thick. The earth can be piled up if local conditions do not permit deeper burial. The graves must be marked.*

*The burial of Soviet army soldiers killed in action and the deceased of the civilian population, as well as the disposal of animal carcasses is to be performed by local civilians.*

*Please proceed in accordance with this decree and report its implementation by 1 July 1942.”*

Since these dangers concerned all the mass graves located not far from urban centers, or at least the majority of them, we need to bear in mind that the Ministerial Decree applied to all territories in which mass graves existed, hence not just the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, but also the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. It follows that the county physicians of the various counties should have compiled maps of the mass graves existing in their territories of competence.

Some documents attest to the activities carried on by the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* to comply with the provisions of the Ministerial Decree.

On 17 June 1942, the administrative-health department of the Ministry of Health of Latvia sent the physicians direct instructions based on the letter of 27 May cited above. Among other things, it recommended that “corpses are to be buried at least 1 m deep without risk of groundwater pollution.”<sup>446</sup> A letter from the district physician of Liepāja (Libava) and Aizpute dated 25 June reported that the graves containing the bodies of soldiers and civilians and animal carcasses satisfied the requirements of the letter of 17 June.<sup>447</sup> The head of the Riga health department communicated the same information on 27 June, with reference to the

<sup>445</sup> LVVA, P-1023-1-4, p. 303.

<sup>446</sup> LVVA, 4426-1-3, p. 16. The letter was written by Dr. E. Bušs, “Veselības departamenta direktors” (health department administrators).

<sup>447</sup> LVVA, P-1023-1-4, p. 276, Liepājas-Aizputes apriņķa ārsts (district physician of Liepāja-Aizputes).

mass graves in Riga and surrounding areas, without further details.<sup>448</sup> On 29 June, the “*Veselības pārvalde*” (Health Department) of Jelgava (Mītaue), in response to the letter of 17 June, stated that there were four mass graves in the district, three of which were located in a forest (the name is not indicated) and were covered by a soil layer 2 meters thick.<sup>447</sup> On 2 July, the “Healthcare Administration of Vilnius County” transmitted the list of mass graves located in various municipalities to the District Commissar Vilnius-Land.<sup>449</sup> The letter from the Main Healthcare Administration (medical examiner of Trakai County) to the District Commissar Vilnius dated 8 July 1942 is very similar.<sup>450</sup> I shall return to these and other documents in Subchapter 7.1.

On 22 August the *Generalkommissar* in Kovno sent the City Commissars in Kovno and Vilnius and the District Commissars in Kovno-Land, Vilnius-Land, Siauliai and Panevezys a letter with the subject “Burial of Corpses and Carcasses” and the reference “Ministerial Decree of 30 April 42. - II 2 c 3186” which discusses the situation in detail:<sup>451</sup>

*“In response to my former request for a report on the existence of mass graves, very comprehensive and excellent reports on the location and condition of mass graves in the general district have arrived from the district commissars. In examining the reports, it turned out that a large proportion of these mass graves fully satisfy all requirements relating to the prevention of epidemics. Some of them, however, do not exhibit the necessary security, since the covering layer of dirt is very thin.*

*I hereby request to order the county leaders that all graves be examined based on the available documentation, and that all those not protected by a covering layer of at least 1 meter be heaped up accordingly.*

*It is also necessary that each of these mass graves be marked as a grave in an appropriate manner. The manner of marking may be left up to you, but it must be such as to make it very clear to everyone that the site is a burial location.*

*Hence, I request to arrange for necessary measures and for an implementation report by 15 September 1942.*

*The county physicians have been similarly instructed by me through official administrative channels.”*

According to the most-careful orthodox reconstruction, that by Hoffmann, the decision for “Aktion 1005” had already been taken at the beginning of 1942 and was communicated to Blobel in March or April. But the above-mentioned Ministerial Decree dates back to 30 April 1942. Since the object of both the Ministerial Decree and “Aktion 1005” were identical – the bodies in mass graves – how can one believe that there were two parallel chains, decisional and operational, the one aiming at the maintenance and conspicuous marking of mass graves and the

<sup>448</sup> LVVA, P-1023-1-4, p. 275.

<sup>449</sup> LVVA, R-613-1-10, p. 70-70a; “Vilnius-Land” refers to the rural area around the city of Vilnius.

<sup>450</sup> LVVA, R-613-1-10, pp. 69-69a.

<sup>451</sup> LVVA, R-613-1-10, p. 58.

safeguarding of public health, and the other at hiding and eliminating of the mass graves?

On the other hand, the documentation gathered by the county physicians would certainly have been transmitted to the various *Sonderkommandos* 1005, but there is no trace of this, not even in the testimonies.

This fact is in blatant contradiction to Hanyok and Tyas's interpretation of the two German messages dated 12 and 13 October 1943 intercepted by the British, showing, as I have shown earlier, that "the inability of the Security Police to trace all the execution sites," was such that "SS officials had to rely on information from Latvian and Russian collaborators."

The Ministerial Decree of 30 April 1942 explicitly required the identification of *all* mass graves, in such a way that they would all be *recognizable* at such. In this context, one might mention the order of the commander of the district of Rezekne (Rēzeknes apriņķa priekšnieks; Rositten in German), which prohibited public gatherings at the "graves of Jews and Communists."<sup>452</sup> From this one may argue that these graves had not received any "camouflaging" at all, but were known to everyone.

All this is in blatant contradiction to the orthodox Holocaust claim of the extreme secrecy of the presumed "Aktion 1005" and the consequent absence of written documents. On the one hand, the Ministerial Decree ordered that the mass graves, including those of Jews shot by the *Einsatzgruppen*, had to be identifiable and recognizable as such for health-sanitary reasons. This means that related documents were created on specific orders and could have been preserved – and in fact did indeed survive at least partially. On the other hand, orthodox historians maintain that, for reasons of eliminating the traces and keeping this state secret, documents were either never created or would have been destroyed.

Hoffmann's conjectures are nullified by Blobel's statements when claiming that he was "transferred to Berlin for disciplinary reasons" (NO-3824). His transfer was therefore a punishment, not a promotion, obviously because of his alcoholism.

Now to the second question: Why did Müller pick Blobel? No one has ever explained why such an important mission, constituting a "Secret Reich Matter," was entrusted to a sick alcoholic, who, notwithstanding his "long recuperation" (barely two or three months according to Hoffmann's chronology), must not have inspired great confidence in his superiors. Patrick Desbois and Levana Frenk state that, toward the end of the war, Blobel "developed a stomach ulcer and cirrhosis of the liver, no doubt caused by his excessive reliance on alcohol, to which he resorted for its supposed analgesic properties" (Desbois/Frenk, p. 9).

His technical credentials, too, were rather modest. Blobel had not even studied architecture, as he falsely stated at Nuremberg during the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial at Nuremberg, but had only attended "a state technical school located at Barmen-

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<sup>452</sup> LVVA, 1371-1-49, p. 26.



Elberfeld (today's Wuppertal), where he began a half-year course of study during the winter of 1913-1914, before joining the army" (*ibid.*, p. 17).

When interrogated by U.S. Colonel Brookhart in 1945, Otto Ohlendorf expressed the following opinion of Blobel:<sup>453</sup>

*Q. Do you know what methods were used by Blobel to carry out his mission of removing traces of executions?*

*A. According to what I know, it was his mission to find these graves, to take the corpses and burn them.*

*Q. Do you have any knowledge or information as to Blobel's perfecting his own incinerator for this work?*

*A. I did not hear anything about that. He, himself, did not have any intelligence and I did not think him capable of anything like that.*

*Q. Blobel supposedly gave a lecture in November of 1942 before Eichmann's group of specialists on the Jewish question, in which he spoke of his special incinerators and generally commended himself on his work.*

*A. I did not hear about that."*

In summary we can state that total darkness reigns on Müller's supposed order to Blobel regarding "Aktion 1005".

There is another fundamental point which no orthodox Holocaust historian has paused to consider in detail: Why did Hitler or Himmler merely order the elimination of the mass graves of the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen*? Why did they not care at all about the mass graves of Soviet POWs? There were enormous numbers of them. According to Christian Streit, 274,961 of them died in the theater of operations between December 1941 and April 1942 alone, 68,000 of them died in the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* in the period between the end of November 1941 and 1 January 1942, while 134,000 of them died in the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* in February 1942 alone; 292,560 of them died in the General Government between June 1941 and 15 April 1942; 1,400,000 of them died before the beginning of December 1941. Another 600,000 of them died between the beginning of December 1941 and 1 February 1942 (Streit 1997, pp. 133-136). The *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* estimates the total number of victims at 3,300,000.<sup>454</sup>

In practice, in the theater of operations in which the *Einsatzgruppen* and other SS and police units were active, there were mass graves with a number of bodies of prisoners of war practically equal to or greater than that of the Jews presumed shot. What was the sense of ordering the elimination of the bodies of a couple of million Jews, leaving intact those of millions of prisoners of war?

<sup>453</sup> Testimony of Otto Ohlendorf taken at Nurnberg on 27 November 1945 by Colonel John H. Amen and Lt. Col. Smith W. Brookhart. NARA, M1270 R 13, pp. 13f.

<sup>454</sup> Gutman *et al.* Vol. II, entry "Sowjetische Kriegsgefangene," p. 817.

## 2.4. Judge Bednarz Versus Orthodox Holocaust Historians

In the conclusions to his studies on the Chełmno Camp titled “*Vernichtungslager Chelmno in Polen*” (“The Chełmno Extermination Camp in Poland”) dated 7 January 1946, investigating judge Władysław Bednarz wrote (USSR-340, p. 6):

*“Until the spring of 1940 [recte: 1942] the bodies were buried in large communal graves, one of which was 270 meters long, 8-10 meters wide and about 6 meters deep. In the spring of 1942, 2 cremation furnaces were built. Since this time, all bodies were burned.”*

In the article published in the authoritative bulletin of the Central Commission Investigating German Crimes in Poland, Bednarz reiterated (Bednarz 1946a, p. 154):

*“In the period up to the spring of 1942, the bodies were buried in large ditches, each of which measured 270 meters long, 8-10 meters wide, and approximately 6 meters deep. In the spring of 1942, two cremation furnaces were built, in which all the bodies were burnt from that time onwards. (The bodies previously buried in mass graves were also cremated there.)”*

In a later report, Bednarz changed the commencement period of the cremations without explanation (Bednarz, 1946b, p. 20):

*“In the summer of 1942, the large quantity of putrefying bodies which had accumulated caused a typhus epidemic. The escalation was moreover so intense as to render the reception of new transports impossible. It was therefore necessary to find new means of prevention. The Germans therefore began to cremate the bodies. They then reinforced the numerical strength of the Waldkommando (deposition of the witness Kozanecki, p. 82) and they ceased to receive new transports [footnote: probably in June and July 1942]. Two cremation furnaces were built, whose chimneys overshadowed the forest (deposition of the witnesses on pages 13, 57, 61, 67 and others).”*

The fact remains that the judge who investigated Chełmno placed the commencement of cremations in this camp in a purely hygienic-health context and knew nothing about Blobel and “Aktion 1005.” Being unable to take account of the writings of Bednarz, the orthodox Holocaust advocates of the “Western” version sought to eliminate the blatant contradiction with a compromise. Hoffmann attempts to resolve it as follows (Hoffmann, p. 11):

*“Over the course of the summer of 1942, Blobel visited the ‘forest camp’ of Kulmhof several times in order to test corpse-cremation procedures. The local camp personnel were also interested in the experiments of Blobel, who, as a sapper during WWI, had learned something about flame throwers and incendiary bombs.<sup>[455]</sup> Due to the summer heat, the bodies of victims buried in mass graves had become a hygienic problem. The murderers were worried about the quality of*

<sup>455</sup> This information is evidently intended to accredit Blobel as a “specialist” in the cremation of bodies, because he had completed a course on the use of flamethrowers and incendiary bombs. This is like saying that the engineer from the Topf Company, Kurt Prüfer, was a specialist in the use of flamethrowers and incendiary bombs because he had a knowledge of the cremation of bodies.

*the groundwater; some of them also objected to the noticeable odours and effluents from the graves on aesthetic grounds.”*

So it was all just pure coincidence! Patrick Montague’s explanation is even more hare-brained (Montague, pp. 114f.):

*“The problem of the decomposing corpses was so acute that all transports to Chelmno were stopped. [...] To solve the problem, the notorious Standartenführer Paul Blobel soon arrived in Chelmno. [...] Blobel required a location to experiment and develop a method to employ throughout the East, and Chelmno proved ideal; it was far from the front and therefore secure, and the site offered an abundance of material with which to work. Bothmann also needed Blobel to solve his immediate problem of the decomposing corpses, as well as the longer term issue of erasing evidence of the mass murder in the forest.”*

It is truly inconceivable that individuals with more or less profound historical knowledge seriously believe that Himmler could entrust the task of cremating the bodies from the mass graves to Blobel. History teaches that, every time institutional cremation was required (that is, not just localized improvised cremation), the German authorities always turned to specialist firms, such as H. Kori and J.A. Topf. Even the problem of cremation at Mogilev at the end of 1941 was dealt with by the competent authorities of the Reich with an order to the Topf firm for four 8-muffle furnaces (see Subchapter 8.1. below). This obviously does not mean that the RSHA should have used cremation furnaces to burn bodies from these mass graves, but in order to solve the problem of open-air mass cremations, they would have consulted a real specialist, such as the engineer Kurt Prüfer.

The preliminary phase of “Aktion 1005” at Chelmno and Auschwitz has no basis in historical fact, as I have abundantly shown in other studies.<sup>456</sup> Harping on the subject is therefore futile, and I shall now discuss something else.

## 2.5. “Aktion 1005”: Organization and Working Plans

In this subchapter, I will examine how, according to orthodox Holocaust historians, Office IV of the RSHA prepared for “Aktion 1005.” In the spring of 1943, Blobel visited Lvov to organize the operation. Relying on the statements by Leon Weliczker, which I will analyze in detail in Chapter 3, Spektor writes that this was done between 15 June and 20 November 1943. This was the first *Sonderkommando* 1005.

In July 1943, Blobel went to Kiev, where he met Max Thomas, who was commander of the Security Police and the SD of the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine. During the meeting, it was decided to create two “*Sonderkommandos*” referred to as “1005A” and “1005B.” The first was commanded by SS *Obersturmführer* Baumann, the other by SS *Obersturmführer* Fritz Zietlow.

<sup>456</sup> Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, Chapter 12, pp. 1169-1332; Mattogno 2011, Chapter 8, pp. 73-81; Mattogno 2008, Chapter 6, pp. 31-56; Mattogno 2015b, Subchapter II.10., pp. 151-156.

In October 1943, Blobel's adjutant, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Arthur Harder, set up *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center, which he commanded for a few months. In November, he was replaced by Friedrich Seekel, who was in turn replaced by Max Krahnert on 7 December. The task of this unit was to eliminate the mass graves in the *Generalkommissariat* Byelorussia.

According to Spektor, the work force of these *Kommandos* was as follows:

- “*Sonderkommando* 1005”-Lvov: 129 inmates
- “*Sonderkommando* 1005 A”: 327 inmates, including 250 killed on 30 September 1943
- “*Sonderkommando* 1005 B”: 50 inmates
- “*Sonderkommando* 1005-Center ”: 280 inmates
- “*Sonderkommando* Micholl”: 43 inmates.

Therefore, in order to destroy approximately 2,500,000 bodies scattered over an area of over 1,200,000 square kilometers, the authorities of the Reich are said to have created four “*Sonderkommandos*” with a total strength of a few hundred inmates. Not only that, but they are said to have waited almost a year for no apparent reason before beginning the operations!

According to orthodox Holocaust historians, the number of bodies to be dealt with by each *Kommando* was as follows:

- *Sonderkommando* 1005-Lvov: district of Galicia. This included the four administrative regions (in Polish: *województwa*, in Russian: *oblasts*) of Drohobych, Lviv, Stanyslaviv and Ternopil, currently part of the Ukraine. According to Alexander Kruglov, the number of victims was 529,400 (see below). Of these, approximately 250,000 were killed at Bełżec (Kruglov 2008, pp. 280f.), therefore the execution victims numbered approximately 279,000.
- *Sonderkommandos* 1005A and 1005 B operated in the *Generalkommissariat* Ukraine, for which Kruglov supplies data on the Jewish victims, year for year, which I have summarized in the following table (*ibid.*, pp. 278f, 281f.):

**Table 27**

OBLAST	1941	1942	1943	Total
<i>Drohobych</i>	4,500	60,000		
<i>Lviv</i>	12,000	123,000	80,500	280,000
<i>Stanyslaviv</i>	27,400	90,000	8,600	126,000
<i>Ternopil</i>	12,000	65,000	46,400	123,400
<i>Volhynia</i>	7,100	101,000	1,500	109,600
<i>Rivne</i>	24,500	70,000	/	94,500
<i>Proskuriv</i>	42,100	75,000	/	117,100
<i>Zhytomyr</i>	48,500	4,000	500	52,500
<i>Kiev (Kyiv)</i>	64,000	10,500	100	74,500
<i>Vinnitsia</i>	63,020	90,000	4,400	157,420
<i>Kirovohrad</i>	7,850	3,500	500	11,850
<i>Mykolaiv (Nikolayev)</i>	31,100	8,700	/	39,800
<i>Dnepropetrovsk</i>	24,000	10,000	/	34,000
<i>Chernihiv</i>	2,150	1,500	/	3,650
<i>Poltava</i>	9,000	2,500	/	11,500
<i>Zaporizhzhia</i>	3,400	6,500	/	9,900
<i>Donetsk (Stalino)</i>	9,500	6,000	/	15,500
<i>Sumy</i>	2,000	1,000	/	3,000
<i>Kharkiv</i>	2,000	10,500	/	12,500
<i>Crimea</i>	16,500	8,000	/	24,500
<i>Voroshilovhrad (Luhansk)</i>	/	2,000	/	2,000
<i>Transcarpathia (Kamianets-Podilskiy)</i>	23,600	/	/	23,600
			Total:	1,326,820

Subtracting the 529,400 victims of the first four oblasts, which were part of the Galicia District (but Drohobych was part of the Lviv Oblast), gives us 797,420 victims for the Ukraine, and an equal number of bodies to be eliminated.

- *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center: this squad is supposed to have dealt with Byelorussia, whose western territory was included in the *Reichkommissariat Ostland* as the *Generalkommissariat* Byelorussia. Arad estimates the number of victims in Byelorussia at 556,000 at least (Arad 2009, p. 525), including 224,000 in the eastern part of the area (*ibid.*, p. 521), and 332,000 in Byelorussia.

Faced with such a huge task, the organization of “Aktion 1005,” which orthodox Holocaust historiography attributes to the authorities of the Reich, is puny. A few hundred inmates, divided up into four *Kommandos*, were supposed to run back and forth over a vast territory, I repeat: measuring over 1,200,000 square kilometers, in spasmodic search of mass graves. It is quite obvious that, if the story of the Himmler order to Blobel were true, there would have been not four, but dozens if not hundreds of such *Kommandos*, each operating concurrently in its area of competence, for example, one for every oblast, which would have meant 27 *Kommandos* for the Ukraine alone.

The absurdity of the orthodoxy's Holocaust-style "reconstruction" appears even more obvious if we follow the movements of the individual *Kommandos*.

### 2.5.1. *Sonderkommando* 1005-Lvov

Dieter Pohl states that Blobel, once in the General Government, turned to the commander of the Security Police and the SD SS *Oberführer* Eberhard Schöngarth, who "ordered the registration of all mass graves and the formation of disin-terment<sup>457</sup> squads by the KdS." For this reason, a "*Kommando* 1005" was organized under the command of SS *Unterscharführer* Walter Schallock and his adjutant SS *Oberscharführer* Johannes Rauch (Pohl 1997, p. 379). The most incredible thing is that two of the biggest Holocaust specialists on Galicia, Thomas Sandkühler and Dieter Pohl, never found the slightest trace, whether contemporary or dating back to immediately afterwards, of the presumed "Aktion 1005" apart from the statements by Leon Weliczker.

Concerning the chronology, Pohl summarized it as follows, without explicitly calling it so:

*"They first began burning the bodies of the victims of the Lvov 'Julag', which had not even been buried. The Kommando then opened the mass graves in the 'Pias-ki.' This horrible work lasted more than three months. During this time, the smell of burnt human flesh spread over western Lvov almost every day. The residents were very soon talking about how this operation was unfolding – which should have been subject to the strictest secrecy. In September/October 1943, Schallock transferred his unit to the eastern edge of the city into the woods near Lyczakow and Lesienice, where most of the mass murders prior to the fall of 1942 had taken place. The Kommando once again participated there in the shootings of over 1,000 inmates from the Janowska Road [Camp] on 25/26 October 1943. Smaller groups of the unit simultaneously worked on various mass graves in and around Lvov."*

In a footnote, Pohl states that these graves were located at Bobrka, Brzuchowice (today: Bryukhovichi), Jaryczow (Jaryczów Nowy; today: Novy Yarychev), Szczerec (today: Shchirets; *ibid.*, p. 380).

No one can seriously believe that Schöngarth, in order to destroy the mass graves of the entire district of Galicia, ordered the formation of merely one single *Sonderkommando* 1005, the one where Weliczker claims to have worked.

What is more, as we shall see in Chapter 3, Weliczker's presumed activity was limited to very restricted sectors of the territory of Lvov (Lviv). The presumed principal activity of *Sonderkommando* 1005 was carried out around this city, behind the Janowska Camp, in the forest of Krzywicki (or Lyczaków or Lesienice; today: Lychakov) and at Brzuchowice. The first site was located in the wooded periphery northwest of Lvov, approximately 8 km from the city center, while the

<sup>457</sup> The German term used here – *Enterdung* – is presented by orthodox Holocaust historiography, almost always in quotation marks, as a technical term used to indicate the exhumation (and cremation) of bodies. In reality, the term originated during the post-war trials, and is not based on any document.

other was located on the wooded periphery east of the city, approximately 6 km from its center. Here, orthodox Holocaust historiography finds itself constrained to explain something absolutely implausible: how is it possible that many tens of thousands of bodies were exhumed and cremated a few kilometers from the city and nobody noticed anything? Why did the Polish resistance, which had thousands of eyes and always knew everything, knew nothing of this event?

One of the most important sources which published the reports of the Polish resistance was the *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, the Information Bulletin. In the second half of 1943, it repeatedly reported on the district of Galicia and Lvov. Issue No. 30 of 29 July 1943 spoke of mass transfers of the Polish population to the Ukraine.<sup>458</sup> No. 45 of 11 November 1943 informed its readers that “the Jewish labor camp at Lvov was liquidated at the beginning of October” (p. 1596). Issue No. 46 of 18 November 1943 carried a noteworthy bit of news. In an article on “Lwów,” it said that “the definitive liquidation of the Jewish labor camp began on 25 October. The bodies of those killed were cremated in the crematorium of Piaski Łyczakowskich” (p. 1604). Łyczakowski is a cemetery in Lvov (Lyckachovskoye *kladbishche*). It is therefore possible that this referred to an actual cremation facility. Finally, No. 50 of 16 December 1943, with reference to the definitive liquidation of the Jews of Lvov, states that on 18 November, 2,000 Jews had escaped “from the camp,” but were then captured by the Germans, and that all were killed (pp. 1639f.).

“*Sonderkommando* 1005,” according to orthodox Holocaust historians, is said to have cremated at least 100,000 bodies, although Weliczker’s book, the sole existing source, indicates approximately 22,000 (see Subchapter 3.2. below). But even if the former affirmation were exact, this would correspond to much less than half of the 279,000 bodies buried; there should therefore still be 179,000 bodies in the soil of Galicia.

### 2.5.2. *Sonderkommando* 1005 A

This unit operated at Kiev from 18 August until 29 September 1943. Its subsequent changes of location were ascertained in the Verdict of the Stuttgart District Court of 13 March 1969 (Rüter/Mildt, pp. 714-724), and repeated by Hoffmann. It is very useful to follow these changes of location on a map of the Ukraine (see Document II.2.1):

1. From Kiev, the *Kommando* moved to Berdichev, approximately 150 km southwest,
2. From Berdichev to Belaya Tserkov, approximately 110 km east of Berdichev,
3. Thence to Uman, approximately 125 km south of Belaya Tserkov. After this enormous job, the *Kommando* was sent on furlough to Zakopane and Krinica (Krynica).

<sup>458</sup> *Biuletyn Informacyjny*. Part II: *Przedruk roczników 1942-1943*, Year III (LIV), Special Number 2 (195), Warsaw, 2002, p. 1466; the following three page numbers area also from there.

4. In February 1944, it was sent to Kamenets-Podolsky (approximately 490 km from Zakopane as the crow flies), where it could not operate as it was threatened by the Red Army.
5. It was then sent to Zamość (approximately 330 km from Kamenets-Podolsky). After six weeks, the activity of the *Kommando* ceased.

### 2.5.3. *Sonderkommando* 1005 B

1. From Kiev, this *Kommando* traveled to Dnepropetrovsk, approximately 400 km to the southeast.
2. It then traveled to Krivoy Rog, approximately 140 km southwest.
3. Thence to Nikolayev, approximately 140 km southwest.
4. Thence to Voznesensk, approximately 80 km northwest.
5. After this, this *Kommando* was also sent on furlough to Zakopane and Krinica.
6. On 9 April 1944, it was transferred to Riga, evidently because, for the three General Districts Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, there had been no provision for any *Sonderkommando* 1005, so that it was necessary to repurpose *Sonderkommando* 1005 B! And yet, according to the second Stahlecker Report, more than 161,000 persons had been killed there up to 1 December 1941, and an equal number of bodies were therefore awaiting exhumation and cremation.

### 2.5.4. *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center

1. This *Kommando* began to operate at Maly Trostenets on 27 October 1943 and concluded its work on 15 December.
2. From the above location it moved to a location 10 km northwest of Minsk, on the road to Molodechno, where it remained from 16 to 22 December.
3. It then moved to Smolevichi, 20 km south of Minsk (17 January 1944).
4. It then turned north, along the road from Minsk to Molodechno, 30 km from the capital (2 February 1944).
5. A partial unit under the orders of *Kriminalsekretär* Adolf Rube was then sent back to Maly Trostenets in order to exhume and cremate the bodies buried near a cemetery used by the men of the Security Police and the SD to bury their fallen. The work here lasted 3-4 days and ended on 10 March 1944.
6. From 3 April to 28 May 1944, the *Kommando* operated at Pinsk.
7. A partial unit led by SS *Sturmscharführer* Paul Fischer moved to a Bereza-Kartuska and Brona-Gora.
8. On 2 June 1944, the *Kommando* traveled to Kobrin and worked there until the 16th or 17th.
9. It then traveled to Slonim, where it operated from 25 June until 5 July 1944.
10. From Slonim, the *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center was sent to Grodno, and then Augustowo (Augustów), where it was inactive from 6 to 14 July.



11. On 15 July, it traveled to Lomscha (Łomża), where it remained until mid-August. It was then sent to Litzmannstadt (Łódź) and ceased its exhumation-cremation activity.

#### 2.5.5. “Sonderkommando” Micholl

Between 17 May and 13 July 1944, this *Kommando*, formed for the performance of exhumation-cremation work in General District Białystok, was active at Augustów, Grodno, Skidel, Lunna (today: Lunno) and around Białystok. The overlap of the paths traveled by *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center, which, in the final phase of its activity, traveled to Grodno and Augustów and then passed through Łomża, which also formed part of the General District Białystok and is located approximately 80 km west of this city, is therefore rather strange.

In summary, the Holocaust history of “Aktion 1005 ” cannot be true, unless we wish to presuppose that the officials of the RSHA were complete idiots and that the operation was carried out under the reign of total anarchy, disorganization and superficiality, as shown by the claimed sequence of events:

1. Müller transmitted the presumed order to Blobel in June 1942, but the work began only as late as June 1943 near Lvov.
2. There was not one single, uniform exhumation-cremation order sent to *all* presumed extermination camps. On the contrary, this order is said to have been transmitted to the individual camps over a period of several months: to Auschwitz in July-August 1942, to Sobibór in the summer of 1942, to Bełżec in November 1942, and to Treblinka in March 1943.
3. The presumed operation did not begin during the same period as the execution of a specific order, but in mid-June (Lvov), in mid-August (Babi Yar) and the end of September (Maly Trostenets).
4. The formation of four *Kommandos* consisting of a few hundred inmates in total to clean up a territory measuring over 1,200,000 square kilometers is quite ludicrous. Any remotely rational working organization would have required the formation of a number of *Kommandos* at least 10 times larger, since the District of Galicia and the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine were subdivided into 27 oblasts, the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* had 4 *Generalkommissariate* and the Białystok District consisted of 7 counties, in addition to the occupied Soviet territories.
5. Not one German document mentions the exhumation-cremation operations, nor does any report from the various resistance movements.
6. In this regard, there are practically no ground photos, and no aerial photos, although the territories in question were overflowed by both Soviet and German reconnaissance flights.
7. Nor are there any documents on the enormous quantities of wood which would have been required for the cremations; the wood would have had to be cut near the cremation sites or transported to them.

### 3. *Sonderkommando* 1005 in Galicia: Leon Weliczker and the “Death Brigade”

#### 3.1. “Aktion 1005” in the Area of Lvov in Orthodox Historiography

According to Holocaust historiography, “Aktion 1005” began in the General Government, in the area of Lvov, to be exact; Spektor reports as follows in this regard (Spektor 1990b, p. 161):

*“In the spring of 1943 Blobel returned to the occupied Soviet territories, where he began to organize Operation 1005. He started at the Janowska camp in Lvov. Outside the camp in the area of ‘Piaski’ (sands) the Jews of Lvov and its surroundings were buried. [...] The detailed operation in Janowska camp is known from the testimony of Leon Weliczker, a prisoner who worked there and survived.”*

His exposition is based exclusively on the account of this one witness. Spektor adduces information of every kind – starting with the number of members of *Sonderkommando* 1005, 75, a figure mentioned by Weliczker and repeated by orthodox Holocaust historians from generation to generation – including fundamental information regarding the number of victims exhumed and cremated (*ibid.*, pp. 161f.). The same thing is true of Hoffmann, who refers to Weliczker at even greater length (Hoffmann, pp. 92-96). Thomas Sandkühler dedicates a short paragraph to “Aktion 1005.” He notes that

*“written sources in this regard are very rare due to the strict secrecy of ‘Aktion 1005.’”* (Sandkühler, p. 278)

In a footnote, he writes (*ibid.*, fn 428, p. 522):

*“Weliczker’s shocking notes have only little probative value.”*

Notwithstanding this, he relies upon Weliczker’s account, from which he also derives the number of members of the “death brigade” (*ibid.*, p. 277):

*“...75 Jewish workers of the Janowska ZAL [Zwangsarbeitslager = forced-labor camp] were selected on 15 June 1943...”*

Even more clearly (*ibid.*, p. 279):

*“The ‘Death Brigade’ worked approximately two and a half months in the ‘Sands’, according to Weliczker’s notes, until 6 September, when they were transferred to the forest of Lesienice (suburb of Lyczaków), to eliminate about 45 mass graves.”*

Sandkühler concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 279f.):

*“The aim of wiping away the traces of the ‘Final Solution’ could not nearly be achieved, but the ‘unearthing’ has made an exact determination of the numbers of deaths based on subsequent exhumation impossible. If one follows Weliczker’s notes, in the terrain behind the Jewish cemetery alone up to 100,000 bodies may have been burned, Heinrich Chamaidés reports at least 70,000 victims in the*

*'Sands' and another 45-50,000 in the Lesienice Forest. One must therefore assume between 100,000 and 120,000 Jews shot in Lvov.*"

Later on, in the chapter "Death Numbers," he takes up the figure again (*ibid.*, p. 460):

*"In Lvov alone, as we have seen, up to 120,000 Jews from the city and the district were shot."*

Incredibly, therefore, he takes at face value and as historical facts the assertions of two self-proclaimed eyewitnesses, and what is even worse, he himself considers the more important one of the two as being unreliable!

Hoffmann cites Sandkühler's critical comment but objects that reports such as that by Weliczker have "great probative value" (Hoffmann, fn 23, p. 94).

Even Dieter Pohl, in his work on the persecution of the Jews in eastern Galicia, deals briefly with *Sonderkommando 1005* (Pohl 1997, pp. 378-381). His sources consist, above all, of court verdicts and interrogations from the 1960s.<sup>459</sup> In this context, among other things, one passage from the indictment of the district attorney's office in Stuttgart against Rudolf Röder dated 10 March 1965, which begins as follows:

*"Under Schallock's supervision, the graves were opened based on available site plans."*

So site plans existed for the mass graves after all?

Pohl does not reject Weliczker either, whom he mentions under the pseudonym of Wells (Pohl 1997, fn 146, p. 379):

*"The notes by the Janowska inmate [Weliczker-]Wells are considered the most important source [...], although they are problematical in their dating (presumably always a few weeks too late)."*

The end of his chapter is surprising:

*"The object of the leaders of 'Aktion 1005', Blobel, to eradicate all traces was not even approximately achieved. His squad burned more than 100,000 corpses in Eastern Galicia; the related numbers were radioed to Berlin every week, disguised as 'water level reports.' But with the help of the population, the graves – even the ones filled with ashes – could be located by the Soviet authorities without difficulty."*

The figure of 100,000 victims originates from a secondary source: a member of the Security Police is said to have heard from Walter Schallock, the presumed head of *Sonderkommando 1005*, that 90,000 bodies had been cremated at Lvov (*ibid.*, fn 159, p. 381). It is not clear why Pohl speaks of "more than 100,000 corpses." The fairy tale of the "water-level reports," by contrast, is taken from an interrogation of Lothar Wandel on 24 July 1965.<sup>460</sup> Finally, if the Soviet authori-

<sup>459</sup> In order to document Blobel's presence at Chełmno, Pohl refers, among other things, to the brief 1980 article by Blanka Meissner (fn 141, p. 378). Meissner's article is not of great value, however, given that it is based primarily on German trials. The reference to Blobel originates with two Polish publications from the years 1950 (on Chełmno) and 1970 (on Warthegau): Meissner, fn 6, p. 415.

<sup>460</sup> Pohl 1997, fn 160, p. 381. Due to an error, the year is given as 1945 instead of 1965.

ties found mass graves full of ashes “without difficulty,” why did Pohl not add a footnote in reference to these important discoveries?

The Soviet findings are described in the “Information of the Extraordinary State Commission on Atrocities of the German-Fascist Invaders in the Territory of Lvov Region” dated 23 December 1944. Here it is claimed that “in the Janov Camp the fascists shot more than 200,000 peaceful Soviet people.” In the area of the camp, “the commission has discovered three pits with the bodies of Soviet citizens shot in the second half of July, 1944.” It is not revealed how many bodies there were, nor whether any were exhumed and examined. The legal-medical commission established the following (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 212f.):

*“3. On the territory adjacent to the Janov camp the Germans made mass burial and burning of the bodies. The burning of the bodies was performed for a long time in different parts of the camp, but the major part of the bodies was burned in the gully.*

*4. The soil in that gully at a considerable depth is impregnated with the body liquids and fats with stench of rot and burning.*

*5. The type of ash found, consisting of small parts of bones and softness of the larger bone fragments prove that the burning of the bodies was performed at a high temperature. The ashes remaining after the burning of the bodies were buried in different parts of the camp grounds at the depths of up to 2 meters. Fifty nine such spots were discovered on the surface of almost the entire camp grounds that were examined. Considering the general area of the burial and scattering of the ashes and bones, which covers two square kilometers, the commission of experts believes that in the Janov camp more than 200,000 Soviet citizens had been exterminated.”*

The claim to deduce the number of cremated bodies from the mere *surface area* of presumed mass graves filled with ashes, without any indication of the volumes, is clearly senseless. Moreover, the figure of 200,000 victims must be considered purely propagandistic, even from the orthodox point of view. It moreover remains to be proven that the Soviets really found “fifty nine such spots” (with regard to which, incidentally, they have absolutely nothing to say). From the examination of the ashes they deduced “that the burning of the bodies was performed at a high temperature,” but what is meant by “high temperature”? The alternatives were pyres or cremation furnaces, and of these two possibilities, “high temperatures” can be reached consistently only in the second.

The Soviet experts forgot the presumed grinder for human bones, allegedly in use precisely at Lvov, described by a commission of Soviet experts on 29 September 1944, which is mentioned a few pages later. The report contains no mention of the fact that the bones were crushed and pulverized with the machine in question. The topic of cremation is addressed again further along in the chapter “Special Measures Undertaken by the German Invaders to Cover Their Crimes.” The Soviet counteroffensive, it is said, induced the German authorities to wipe out the traces of their horrible crimes (*ibid.*, pp. 221f.):

*“Upon the orders of Germany’s Reichsminister Himmler and Major General of the SS Police Katzmann, in the June of 1943 special measures were undertaken to dig out and burn the bodies of the tortured and shot peaceful citizens, Soviet prisoners-of-war and citizens of foreign countries.*

*In Lvov the Germans set up a special Sonderkom[m]ando No. 1005 which consisted of 126 persons. The chief of that kom[m]ando was Hauptsturmbannführer Scherliak [Schallock?], and his deputy – Hauptsturmbannführer Rauch. The duties of the Sonderkommando included the digging out of the bodies of the peaceful residents and prisoners-of-war killed by the Germans and the burning of those bodies. The excavation and burning of the bodies was supervised by the SD-Scharführer Rauch and SD-Oberwachmeister Kapick. The bodies removed from the pits were placed on special platforms into piles, 1,200 to 1,600 bodies in each. The bodies were sprayed with tar, gasoline and then burned. The ashes and bones were sifted through special strainers with the purpose of collecting golden articles: dental bridges, false teeth, rings and watches. Witnesses Velichker, Khamaides and others testified that over the five months of their work in the ‘death squad’ 110 kilograms of gold was strained from the ashes of the bodies they had burned and sent by Germans to Germany.*

*The ashes were scattered in the fields and also dug in the ground; large bones were collected separately and crushed in the bone-thrasher which was designed to speed up the ‘work.’ The Germans did not manage to destroy the bone-thrasher, it remained on the grounds of the former Janov camp as material evidence of the bloody crimes of the Hitlerite butchers. The chief of the bone-thrashing of the victims was a German, SD-Scharführer Elitko.”*

This is followed by an extract from the deposition of “Velichker” (Weliczker), upon which I shall dwell at length below.

The “commission of medical examiners” which inspected “the burial and burning sites in Lisenitsy” established that “the symmetrical distribution of the sites where the pits with the ashes were discovered” and the young trees planted on the site demonstrated that the Germans pursued “the purpose of disguising these sites” (*ibid.*, pp. 222f.). Nothing is said about the discovery of these ashes, but the subsequent comment disqualifies the entire report with this clumsy comparison with Katyn which I addressed earlier (*ibid.*, p. 223):

*“In that manner, the Hitlerite murderers in Lvov Region stuck to the same methods of concealing their crimes which they began earlier, by killing the Polish officers in a forest near Katyn. The commission of examiners has established full identity of the burial sites located in Lisenitsy with the same type of masking the graves of the Polish officers killed by the Germans in Katyn.”*

### 3.2. Leon Weliczker and the “Death Brigade”

The book by Leon Weliczker, alias Wells, *Brygada śmierci (Sonderkommando 1005): Pamiętnik (The Death Brigade (Sonderkommando 1005): Diary)* is considered the fundamental orthodox source for everything regarding the so-called

“Aktion 1005” in the area of Lvov and, as we have seen above, it is also used by those who consider it unreliable.

In 1944, the witness issued a statement for the Soviets, of which the following fragment is known (Denisov/Changuli, p. 222):

*“In the ‘death squad’ on burning the bodies I had worked since June 6, 1943 till November 20, 1943. Over that period the squad burned more than 310,000 bodies on [sic; of] which about 170,000 were burned in the sand quarry of the Janov camp and more than 140,000 bodies in Lisenitsky Forest. That number includes the bodies dug out by the team from graves and also those which were not buried but were burned immediately after the shooting. On November 20, 1943 our whole squad ran away. The German butchers organized another squad from the inmates which continued the burning of the bodies. The number of bodies burned after my escape I do not know, but I do know that the burning of bodies in Lisenitsky Forest continued till January, 1944.”*

These claims do not find any confirmation in his memoir *Brygada śmierci*, which appeared only two years later. The book has never been analyzed critically. Orthodox Holocaust historians have limited themselves to mining it for data which they considered useful, without checking it for reliability and correctness. Such an examination is therefore indispensable, which I will do here.

### 3.2.1. Captures and Escapes

Weliczker was born on 10 March 1925 at Stojanów, in the district of Lvov (Leopoli). His account begins with a series of amazing and quasi-miraculous escapes.

#### First Capture and Escape

*“Following the German entry into Lvov, I was arrested on 2 July [1941]. For three days, I remained in prison without food, without even a drop of water. They beat me terribly, probably, by the way, like the 5,000 Jews who were in jail with me. On Friday 4 July they shot the majority of those whom they had arrested, but I and a few others escaped that evening.”<sup>461</sup>*

#### Second Capture, Followed by Release

*“Saturday, 5 July, I am in hiding at home, half dead. Sunday, 6 July, our house has been searched, some Ukrainians found me and took me to work on the Żolkiewska customs barrier. There were a hundred of us. Eighty-eight died on the spot due to torture, twelve of us returned home.”* (p. 25)

#### Third Capture and Escape

*“On 27 August, the day of the ‘Perlura anniversary,’ they came to our house with a list, containing my father’s name, with orders to arrest him. My father is sick. He has damaged lungs. They beat him on 3 July, when I was arrested. He came to me in prison, they took him and beat him terribly. I appeared at my father’s job. That day, more than 1,000 people were killed, but I escaped again.”* (pp. 25f.)

<sup>461</sup> Weliczker, p. 25; all subsequent page numbers from there unless stated otherwise.

#### Fourth Capture and Escape

*“When they set up the first, the most terrible camp in the territory of eastern Galicia at Lvov, at the Janowska Road, they came to arrest my father again. I appeared at his job for the second time, and they took me to the camp. I remained in Janowska Camp until 8 June 1942. On 5 June, I got sick with typhus and double pneumonia. On 8 June, they took me to be shot, along with 180 other persons. I dug the grave all by myself, naked, with a fever of 41 degrees [105.8°F]. They were already shooting people from our group, and it was almost my turn, but I ran away and arrived at my house half naked, with a short bathing suit. I lay senseless for three weeks.”* (p. 26)

After hiding in the woods, Weliczker returned to the Lvov Ghetto.

#### Fifth Capture and Escape

In the ghetto a “camp action” was carried out intended to obtain inmates for the Janowska Camp, during which Weliczker was captured:

*“I stayed in the camp for a day and then escaped.”* (p. 26)

He then returned to the ghetto, where he met his two brothers, aged 12 and 14. All this happened when Weliczker was 16.

#### Sixth Capture and Escape

*“When they liquidated the ghetto, they took us, me and my two brothers, together with all the Jews, ‘na piaski.’<sup>462</sup> It was 3 June 1943. One brother was killed in an escape attempt near the barbed wire fences where we were all housed together. Me and another brother both showed up for death [to be killed], but they separated me from him. They sent him to his death, and me to the camp.”* (p. 27)

Weliczker was interned in the Janowska Camp, where he remained until 15 June 1943.

*“From 15 June until 20 November, I was in the ‘death brigade.’ On 20 November 1943, I escaped from this terrible brigade and remained in hiding until 27 July 1944, that is, until the entry of the Red Army into Lvov. I didn’t know where to go, I had no one in the world, I didn’t know anyone, I didn’t have a cent. I couldn’t even stand up, because after eight months of sitting down and without moving, in a damp place of hiding, I suffered from weak muscles.”* (p. 27)

This is no doubt the greatest marvel of his life.

### 3.2.2. The Number of Bodies Exhumed and Cremated

Weliczker’s book is presented as a diary written on a daily basis. He explains in this regard:

*“I only wish to mention once again that a few days after my arrival at the shelter, I took out the notes I had compiled during my stay in the ‘death brigade’; I had*

<sup>462</sup> “Piasek” means “sand”; “na piaski” is literally equivalent to “on the sand.” “Piaski,” the execution site, is the nominative plural and means literally “sands.”

*the possibility [to make notes] because, since I was the one who kept order in the barracks, I had a paper and pencil, intended for the accountant, who noted the number of dead cremated every day.*" (p. 128)

Since his stay in the "brigade" lasted 158 days, the diary should have amounted to several hundred pages; and no one can seriously believe that no German ever noticed these notes, or the paper and pencil missing from the "accountant's" office supplies.

In the book, this diary is highly fragmentary; of the 158 days in question, the notes only cover 25 days, and no more than 10 contain numerical data on the exhumations and cremations.

In the following table, I have listed the days given by Weliczker, the number of bodies exhumed and cremated, with the location and page number in the book where these data can be found.

**Table 28**

DATE	BODIES	LOCATION	PAGE
15 June			29
[17-18 June]	1,450	"Piaski" (near Janowska Camp)	51
21 June			55
22 June			56
23 June	2,000		58
24 June			59
25 June	700		61
26 June			62
27 June			64
28 June			65
29 June	275		66
30 June			67
1 July			69
15 July	425		76
18 August	1,500		79
22 August	9,000	"Piaski," near Pilichowska St.	80
26 August	275		88
7 September			90
9 September	[2,000]	Krzywicki Forest: 5 weeks cremations on pyres of 2,000 bodies each; first and last pyre	94
8 October	[2,000]		96
9 October	2,000	Wólka (Rosnovka)	97
25 October	[400]	Camp inmates	103
26 October			106
27 October			109
10 November			113
19 November			117

The total of the numbers mentioned by Weliczker amounts to 22,025; for this reason, Sandkühler's claim as reported earlier is quite incomprehensible that



*“If one follows Weliczker’s notes, in the terrain behind the Jewish cemetery alone up to 100,000 bodies may have been burned.”*

This is all the more incomprehensible since Sandkühler refers exclusively to “Piaski,” which is located directly behind the Jewish cemetery.

Weliczker’s book contains a plan of the Janowska Camp, which is reproduced in Document II.3.1. The same diagram, but with English labels, appears in an American edition of the book (Document II.3.1a.).

“Piaski” is indicated by the dotted area north of the camp, to which it is connected by a “road through the valley of death,” to which I shall return later. The two triangles with a cross seen in the right-hand margin of the drawing represent the extreme offshoots of the Jewish cemetery, as may be easily seen in Document II.3.2.

The real point of Weliczker’s note is that 15,625 bodies were cremated at “Piaski.” In his statement of 1944, he stated that the “death squad” cremated 170,000 bodies in this place alone, which completely disqualifies him as a witness and renders his statements quite unreliable.

He describes “Piaski” as a “long gully, very deep, which extends for several hundred meters” (p. 36). In the drawing which appears in his book, this gully is located north of the camp. A diagram of Lvov from 1936 shows the contours of the area around the camp, Document II.3.3.

East and north of the camp there were two little hills clearly depicted in the drawing of the Janowska Camp by Zeev Porath,<sup>463</sup> one of which reaches as high as 370 meters above sea level, and the other 340 meters. In front of these little hills was a third hill, 345 meters in height. In the middle, between these elevations, ran a valley, 500-600 meters in length, which extended from 325 meters to 290 meters above sea level.

As we see in the diagram of Lvov from 1943 (Document II.3.4.), the Janowska Camp was located along the northwest periphery of the city. Hence, one cannot but agree with Sandkühler’s overly clever observation:

*“The idea that one could conceal from the public the cremation of tens of thousands of corpses within the city limits of Lvov was naturally absurd per se.”* (Sandkühler, p. 278)

There is not the slightest contemporary documentary evidence of this alleged enormous cremation activity, which is said to have lasted eleven weeks: no photographs, no documents, no testimonies.

With regard to the activity in the Krzywicki Forest, Weliczker supplies little information. The activity is said to have begun on 9 September with the cremation of 2,000 bodies:

*“Stacks with 2,000 ‘figures’ were prepared.<sup>[464]</sup> [...] Five weeks passed. [...] Friday 8 October: we finished the work on the spot. Then there was the last stack of*

<sup>463</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 4215.

<sup>464</sup> “figuri”: Polonization of the German term “Figuren,” by which term the Germans, according to witness accounts, referred to the bodies.

*bodies and there were more than 2,000 of them. [...] Saturday 9 October: We set fire to a stack of over 2,000 bodies, among them a few of the best sons of Poland.”* (pp. 94-97)

There were four weeks between 9 September to 8 October, not five; if we start counting at the first mention of the site, on 26 August, when “a few persons” went there (p. 86), there would have been six weeks. At any rate, in the area were “*groby masowe*” – mass graves, plural, but Weliczker does not indicate the number. The witness’s data relating to the time required for the exhumation and cremation are contradictory; if we take the highest number indicated, 9,000 in 15 graves. Two “*Brandstellen*” (fireplace, pyres) were created designed for 1,000 bodies each, which functioned alternately: while one pyre was burning, the men were piling bodies onto the other. The work was supposed to terminate on 1 September, because the “brigade” was supposed to move to the Krzywicki Forest at that time (p. 81). Here, however, the activity, as we have said, began on 9 September, therefore the elimination of the 9,000 bodies in question evidently lasted from 22 August until 8 September, or 17 days.

### 3.2.3. The Technology of Exhumation and Cremation

On these aspects of the work of the “brigade,” initially consisting of 75 inmates (p. 32), Weliczker dwells at length several times. The first working day at “Piaski,” on 15 June 1943, 44 inmates were brought into the “gully” (p. 35). Weliczker describes it as follows:

*“This gully is a big mass grave which contains thousands of bodies. On one side of the mountain is a stack of wood. Not far away is a machine tended by a member of the Schutzpolizei<sup>[465]</sup> with black cladding.<sup>[466]</sup> Near the machine we see drums with olive oil<sup>[467]</sup> linked to the machine by aluminum tubes. The machine pumps the olive oil, which is blown onto the fire through an aluminum tube.”*

Apart from this, there were two “fire pits” (*paleniska*) upon which the oil was pumped (pp. 36f.). It therefore appears that the activity of “Brigade 1005” had already begun when Weliczker joined, but he is rather vague in this regard. Together with two other inmates, he was sent to build a wooden shelter. The other surviving inmates, 42 in number (p. 42), were subdivided into two groups:

*“One brigade worked with shovels, that is, they dug away the earth that covered the bodies. The second brigade worked on the bodies. It was a terrible job. The bodies were pulled out by hand. They were grabbed by a hand or a leg, and that’s how they were pulled out. When you grabbed a body, very often they slipped out of your grip several times, or their skin came off in the hands of the guy who was pulling them. [...] Thus, the bodies were pulled out using two men, one man grabbed him by the arm, while another man grabbed him by the leg. Each body*

<sup>465</sup> “Szupowiec,” polonization of “SchuPo.”

<sup>466</sup> “ferszalungu,” polonized phonetic transcription of “Verschalung.”

<sup>467</sup> “oliwa,” similar to German and English “Olive,” properly designates olive oil. Oil in general is called “olej,” combustible oil is called “olej napędowy.”

*weighed 70-80 kg. There were bodies that were relatively fresh, from about 2 weeks before, that is, from the period of the liquidation of the ghetto. [...] They carried the bodies over to the fire. Over there was the 'Brandmeister' [=fire master]. His job consisted of making sure that the fire didn't go out while the others were throwing the bodies onto the fire. They laid down the wood, and moved the ashes out of the way. On the other side was the 'Zähler' [=counter] with a pencil and paper in his hand. His task was to note the number of bodies thrown onto the fire."* (p. 42)

We presume that this extraordinary olive-oil pumping machine was used on this occasion, but the witness does not explicitly say so, and does not mention it again.

On 16 June, 85 inmates returned to the "gully." The date is derived from the remark that the "gully" was the same where they had worked the day before. They found damp, putrefying bodies, but did not perform any cremations (p. 46).

128 inmates were later compelled to open a grave containing 1,450 bodies. The work was finished in two days, Thursday and Friday, 17 and 18 June. At lunchtime on the 19th, the inmates were 122 in number. No cremations are mentioned (pp. 51f., 54).

On Saturday and Sunday (19 and 20 June), the men did not work (p. 55). Work resumed on Monday 21 June. Tombstones weighing 300-400 kg each were transported to the "gully" from the nearby Jewish cemetery. They were arranged in such a way as to form a square, and the cracks were filled with cement. A few steps away, a small open space was leveled out and used to burn the bones which had escaped combustion. Weliczker carefully describes the work of the "Aschkolonne" ("ash labor gang"):

*"A few persons carry the ashes to the open space in a basket. Others come along and dump the ashes into their sieves and take them to the sifting location. The fine ashes pass through the sieves, but the bones and metal remain in the sieves. (These sieves are the kind normally used to sift flour at home). After the first screening, the persons sit with the sieve on a bench and inspect the ash to see if there were any metal bits. They then throw the remaining bones onto the ground in the clearing prepared with the [tomb]stones and, using beechwood stampers, smash them until they are shattered. They then clean the tombstone by throwing the remains of the unsmashed bone dust into the pile from which they first took the ashes. The ashes are then sifted through the sieves once again, and the bones that don't pass through the sieve this time are thrown back on the fire."* (p. 56)

On 25 June, the inmates opened three mass graves containing a total of 700 bodies. Like the rest of the region, the graves were covered with vegetation, "but the administration had a diagram of the graves." Weliczker describes the preparation of the pyres, a topic to which he returned shortly afterwards with additional details:

*"We prepare the fireplace to burn the bodies. We level an area of land 7 meters on one side. We build a platform along two sides, approximately one meter high. We place the so-called foundations on this cleared open space, that is, we put big*

logs at regular intervals on the ground, forming a scaffolding [grate] underneath the bodies. The fact is that the bodies must not lie flat on the ground, rather, there has to be air underneath them in order to burn well. All three graves were opened in a single day's work, and everything was prepared for the exhumation of the bodies and to transport them to the fireplace, the so-called 'Brandstelle.' They brought us hooks, like those used to haul blocks of ice. They will be used to pull out the corpses. A brigade of 20 people is working on these preparations." (p. 62)

The next day, 26 June, saw the exhumation and cremation of the 700 bodies:

"The work at the three graves is carried on in the following manner: 3 men with hooks descend down into the grave while 2 men remain above, also with hooks. The three men in the grave with hooks stick their hooks in the body and pull the body out from where it was. The two men on top also stick their hooks into the body in such a way as to avoid breaking the body in half, and pull it up. Up on top, the body-carriers place 2 to 4 bodies on stretchers prepared yesterday (like those in hospitals). Each stretcher requires 2 men, carrying the bodies to the 'Brandstelle', which is very close to the graves. The 'Brandmeister' pours gasoline and olive oil on the foundations prepared yesterday and sets fire to it. The stretcher bearers with their stretchers go onto the prepared platforms and throw the bodies into the fire. On each side, the pair of stretcher bearers step up on one side [of the platform] and step down on the other side, to avoid blocking the way of the next pair of stretcher bearers. The stretcher bearers have to rub their hands with sand continuously to keep their hands and the stretcher handles from getting slippery with grease. The 'Brandmeister', black with smoke and soot from the fire, with an iron hook in his left hand with which he continually stokes the fire, directs the traffic. He indicates where to throw the bodies, onto which platform to climb, and how to throw [the bodies] in order not to choke the fire out. Woe to you if you throw them incorrectly! Then you have to get down into the fire, pull them out and throw them in again. The fire is so big that it burns you already at a distance of more than 10 meters.<sup>[468]</sup> Near the 'Brandmeister' stands his assistant and the 'Zähler.' The 'Brandmeister's' assistant removes the burnt bones and adds wood continually." (p. 62)

Weliczker then described the procedure for disguising the empty mass graves:

"Now that all the bodies have been pulled out, a few men (later a special brigade) probe the grave. They pick up every bone and every hair, and put it in a bucket with their hands, then throw them into the fire. After the exploration of the pit, they report to the Untersturmführer. The Untersturmführer inspects everything. Standing in the grave, he scrapes the walls of the grave, which have turned green because of the bodies, and sprinkles the empty grave with chloride to lessen the odor. Now, the grave is filled up and the ground is leveled. Then they pass over it with a harrow, drawn by us instead of a horse. Finally, a mixture of various seeds of grass and weeds such as those growing in the area is sown here. After a few weeks, the area is covered by grass, so much so that it is impossible to see that anything has been touched." (p. 63)

<sup>468</sup> "Kilkunastu" indicates numbers from 11 to 19.

In the annotation for 29 June, Weliczker writes:

*“The three graves opened Friday [25 June] were leveled today. The fire is [near-  
ing] extinguishment. A few men can be seen carrying ashes to the ash labor gang  
in boxes.”* (p. 66)

The complete elimination of 700 bodies, including the crushing of the osseous residues, therefore required four days.

On the same day, 275 Jews were shot “behind the fence at our camp, in front of the long side of the barracks.” A fire was burning ten meters away. The Jews were killed in groups of five, with a gun shot to the back of the head. 20 of the strongest inmates from the “brigade” were forced to burn the bodies: “After an hour, all the bodies were burnt. There were 275 of them.” (pp. 66f.)

This tale is quite implausible, not just for the rapidity of the cremation. Only an insane person would build a funeral pyre right next to a wooden barracks when the whole “gully” of “Piaski” was readily available.

Weliczker claims that a new cremation technique was later introduced.

The new worksite, the fourth, was located on the road between the camp and the “gully,” approximately 30 meters from the gully. Before finding any bodies, they had to dig up a wagonload of dirt. The dressed bodies had been buried some 6-8 months earlier. Laid out in layers of 30-50 bodies each, the lowest ones were at a depth of 8 meters. The ditch was 25 meters long. This “*Brandstelle*” was structured differently. Large logs about a meter apart were placed on the ground. Other logs were chopped into thinner pieces, which were arranged on top of the blocks like cross-beams, so that the bodies couldn’t fall through. A layer of bodies was laid out on top, followed by more wood, “at average intervals of half a meter.” In this way, funeral pyres were constructed, initially containing 500 bodies, then 750 and finally 2,000.

*“The stretcher bearers go out onto the stack of wood on beams to which slats have been nailed, like what you see on a construction site. Standing on the stack, they throw the bodies off the stretchers and return to get others. Above are two so-called arrangers<sup>[469]</sup> who arrange the bodies in the right place, according to weight and size. They don’t pull a lot of bodies out, because it often takes a whole day of digging to find 30-40 bodies. In this way, the pyre is ready for an entire week, and is ignited on Saturday.”*

The height of the pyre and the length of time required for cremation depended on a variety of factors, such as whether the bodies were of men or women, whether or not they were dressed, and whether they were more or less decomposed:

*“The more putrefied they are, the worse they burn. At any rate, the difference in cremation time between a pyre of putrefied bodies and fresh ones is a day.”*

A great deal, moreover, depended on experience. The same pyre whose cremation lasted an entire week using olive oil at the outset later burned in two days and

<sup>469</sup> “Układacze,” from “układać,” to order, to arrange, to set up.

without oil, moreover with a quarter of the quantity of gasoline and half the wood (pp. 72-74). This scenario refers to the beginning of July 1943.

Around 18 August, the work in the “gully” was finished, and the “brigade” moved “where the last executions had been carried out.” The work lasted approximately a week and a half.

*“There were 1,500 bodies. A stack was set up with 750 bodies, and it was burnt.”*  
(p. 79)

The work was therefore finished on 28 or 29 August, but according to Weliczker, on 22 August the “brigade” was already somewhere else, 25 meters from the Pili-chowska Road, a side road off the Janowska Road leading to the Jewish cemetery. There were allegedly 15 mass graves 50 meters long and containing 9,000 bodies in this place. The Pilichowska Road is mentioned by Weliczker at the beginning of his account: when the “brigade” went out for the first time from the Janowska Camp, the truck carrying the inmates stopped specifically near the Pili-chowska Road, “which leads to ‘piaski’” (p. 35).

As may be seen from the diagram of the city in Document II.3.5., the road was in such a topographical position that the mass graves could only be located in the cemetery, but Weliczker does not say so. As I mentioned earlier, the elimination of the bodies took 17 days, from 22 August to 8 September.

At the end of their work in the “gully” of “Piaski,” “a grey pile of minute bone fragments which we were unable to crush any finer” was left over. At this point, a machine similar to that used to grind gravel was brought in. It was powered by a Diesel engine, and had a sort of large closed cauldron, inside which were metal spheres; the cauldron rotated around its axis, and the spheres ground the bones. The bones were reduced to the finest powder, like the highest quality flour. To finish the job by 1 September, the machine had to work from five in the morning until nine at night, and was as a result continually clogged, while the motor, which was old and cracked, was leaking.

“The work was finished on the last Sunday of August” (pp. 84f.), that is, the 29th day. Weliczker disposes of the brigade’s subsequent work in a few lines. From 9 September to 8 October, as has been said, the brigade operated in the Krzywicki Forest. On 9 October, after the departure – it does not say whose – for Wólka, now Rosnovka (Rosnivka), which is located approximately 60 km west of Lvov, 40 inmates went to work at Jaryczów Nowy, now Novy Yarychev (Novyy Yarychiv), a locality approximately 20 km northeast of Lvov. Weliczker, who evidently was a member of this group, writes:

*“I don’t know where the bodies were exhumed over there, I only know that it happened in a forest. Even there, the bodies were loaded onto a refrigerated truck and transported back to us. Thus, today we departed by train for Brzuchowice [Bryukhovichi], Dornfeld [Ternopolye] and Bóbrka. We opened graves everywhere and transported the bodies back to us for cremation.”* (p. 97)

In the Polish text, “do nas” – “to us” (verb of motion to a place) – probably designates the Janowska Camp, and in particular the “Piaski” area where the pyres

were set up. The distances between the various localities mentioned above and the camp (see Section 2.4.5. below) confirm this interpretation. On the work of this group of inmates, Weliczker supplies no details, so that it is neither known how many mass graves there were, nor how many bodies were exhumed and burnt, nor how long the activity lasted. The first date mentioned later is the 25th of October, but in the related entry that location is no longer mentioned, hence this work there was carried out between the 9th and the 24th of October at the latest.

On 25 October, 2,500 inmates from the camp were shot. Weliczker ascertained the number this way: there was a “big pile of shoes, approximately 2,500 pairs,” on the sand (p. 104). One cannot fail to admire the extraordinary computational capabilities of this witness. At any rate, only 400 bodies were arranged on the pyre that day. No one knows what happened to the rest of them.

On 17 November, the inmates of the “brigade” prepared their escape (p. 113), and 19-20 of them managed to escape that night (pp. 117-121).

### 3.2.4. Critical Analysis of the Weliczker Account

#### 3.2.4.1. The Exhumation of the Bodies

Initially, the mass graves were opened with shovels, and the bodies were extracted by workers using their bare hands, after which they were transported to the pyres bare-handedly at all times. Two inmates carried one body, grabbing the body by the arms and legs. This procedure is obviously rather primitive.

The technique changed over time, but the related description is even more implausible. Three inmates descended into a mass grave, equipped with a hook, while two other inmates, also equipped with one hook each, remained at the edge of the grave. The three inmates in the grave hooked a body and passed it to the two inmates at the edge of the grave, above. The bodies extracted were carried to the pyre on a stretcher by body-carriers (stretcher bearers), two persons for every stretcher, carrying 2-4 bodies. Since the pyre was “very close to the grave,” the number of carriers had to be small, adequate to that of their colleagues who pulled out the bodies, because a couple of carriers would have had to wait not long before they could load 2 to 4 corpses onto the stretcher. On the other hand, the stretcher bearers stepped down “on the other side” of the pyre’s loading platform in order “to avoid blocking the way of the next pair of stretcher bearers,” hence there were at least two sets of them.

This ice-hook system, in Weliczker’s narration, was adopted to exhume 700 bodies. The entire operation was therefore carried out by as few as seven inmates!

#### 3.2.4.2. The Cremation Technique

The initial cremation procedure, as described by Weliczker, appears quite senseless. They cleared an area of approximately 50 square meters (a square 7 meters on a side). In this square, they arranged large logs at regular intervals in such a way as to form a sort of grid for the bodies. On two opposite sides of the square,

wooden platforms approximately one meter high were erected. This was the “*Brandstelle*.” The “*Brandmeister*” poured gasoline and olive oil onto the grid and set it on fire. At this point a couple of body carriers transported 2-4 bodies by stretcher, which they had loaded at the edge of the grave, to the “*Brandstelle*,” went out on one of the lateral platforms, and threw the bodies into the fire. Weliczker has the ingenuity to report that the “fire is so big that it burns you already at a distance of more than 10 meters,” and this would no doubt have been true for a real combustion covering a surface area of approximately 50 square meters. It is obvious that the two lateral platforms would inevitably have caught fire. It is equally obvious that the body carriers would have been burned alive or mortally burned, not to mention the *Brandmeister*, who was allegedly standing right next to the fire at all times, stoking it continually. He would not have been “black with smoke and soot,” as Weliczker claimed, but burned to a crisp and quite dead. In addition, it is pure folly to claim that the body carriers who had failed to throw the body in the right spot had to “get down into the fire, pull them out and throw them in again.” If they had been miraculously able to carry out their work without any inconvenience, they would have been able to throw the bodies no more than a few meters from the platform, so that the bodies would have piled up next to the two platforms. They would have been able to use only a small part of the approximately 50 square meters of pyre. It is also absurd to claim that the *Brandmeister*’s assistant was able to remove the “burnt bones” from this burning surface area of 50 square meters.

The whole story is clearly fictitious.

The machine which squirted olive oil on the pyre is also from the realm of fantasy.

Another system of cremation was allegedly introduced later. A grid was set up with parallel logs arranged at one-meter intervals. Logs split into several pieces were placed cross-ways, and the bodies were placed on top of that. It is not clear whether one layer of wood and bodies was half a meter thick or whether this was the thickness of the layer of wood. Using this system, layers of wood and bodies were stacked until the “*Brandstelle*” contained a maximum of 2,000 bodies. Weliczker neither indicates the surface area of the pyre nor its height, nor how many bodies were arranged in every layer. To reach the top of the pyre, the body carriers used rudimentary gangways consisting of a cross-beam with individual planks nailed to them. Since two inmates carrying one or more bodies on a stretcher were supposed to go out on one gangway, the slope could not have been excessive, and, as a result, the pyre could not be too high. Weliczker makes no mention of appropriate gangways for the return descent, which would have accelerated the procedure. Above the stack, there were two inmates who put “every body in the right place, depending on the weight and size.” If we consider that two persons were supposed to arrange from 500 to 2,000 bodies with scrupulous attention, we can imagine how much time such a procedure would have required.



On the duration of the procedure of eliminating the bodies, Weliczker supplies contradictory data. A mass grave containing 1,450 bodies was opened in two days; as far as one can tell, the grave was only exposed. The exhumation and cremation of 700 bodies, including the crushing and pulverization of bone residues, required four days. The complete elimination of 9,000 bodies required 17 days. The elimination of 1,500 bodies required 10-11 days (a week and a half), but 750 bodies were cremated in these days. The duration of one week for the setting up of a pyre depended on the scarcity of bodies, so that this should not be taken into consideration.

From the above data we deduce the following daily activities: approximately 750 bodies extracted from the graves, approximately  $(700 \div 4 =)$  175 bodies cremated, or  $(9,000 \div 17 =)$  approximately 530, or maybe  $(750 \div 3 =)$  250.

### 3.2.4.3. The Ashes

The description of the ash-gathering procedure is based on the fiction that, after the combustion of the pyre, only osseous fragments would remain, which could be easily identified and collected. Weliczker gives not the slightest consideration to the ligneous ashes, which would have been greater by both weight and volume. If, for example, we consider a pyre of 1,000 bodies, this would have produced  $(1,000 \text{ bodies} \times 3.7 \text{ kg residue per body} =)$  3,700 kg of ash and unburnt human mass, while a wood pyre needed to cremate those bodies would have produced  $(132 \text{ kg wood/body} \times 1,000 \text{ bodies} \times 8\% \text{ wood ash} \times 1.67 =)$  17,635.2 kg of wood ashes.<sup>470</sup>

In practice, the human ashes would have constituted 17.3% of the total weight of the ashes of approximately 21,335 kg. In a scenario as described by the witnesses – who only talk about crushing bones but not any charcoal – a preliminary screening would have been required to separate the human remains from incompletely burned wood. However, given the logic of concealing *all* traces of the cremations, any incompletely burned wood would have had to be ground up and scattered just as much as the human remains, all the more so since both would have been thoroughly mixed, and separating them would have been both laborious and pointless. Weliczker, by contrast, pays no attention to this not-exactly irrelevant aspect of the presumed activity of the “brigade.”

But even ignoring all that, the witness’s account is decidedly stupid.

The ashes were smashed with wooden-handled stamper (we don’t know how many there were, just as we don’t know the number of baskets and sieves). Ashes having an average bulk density of 0.5 kg/dm<sup>3</sup> or 500 kg/m<sup>3</sup> (Mattogno 2015c, p. 31), they would have corresponded to approximately  $(3.7 \text{ tons ash}/1,000 \text{ bodies} \div 500 \text{ tons/m}^3 =)$  7.4 m<sup>3</sup> for every 1,000 bodies, plus all the intermingled wood ash-

<sup>470</sup> Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 1315f. Explanation of the data: 3.7 kg/body = ashes and unburnt human corpse material in kg per average human body during pyre cremation; 132 kg wood/body = minimum mass of dry wood for the cremation of a human body; 0.08 % wood ash = average mass percentage of ash from completely burned wood (80g/kg); 1.67 = experimental coefficient to calculate total incombustible material.

es, and one can imagine how much time would have been required to smash the bone (and wooden) remains using instruments consisting of simple blocks of wood with a handle for manipulation, as pictured by David Olère in his well-known drawing relating to Auschwitz (see Document II.3.6.).

Weliczker claims that the cremation residues were carried in boxes to the place where the “ash labor gang” worked. These boxes may have been more or less similar to those depicted by Olère. Leaving aside the crazy figure declared by Weliczker when interrogated by the Soviets in 1944 – 310,000 bodies exhumed and cremated – even if we assume the figure adopted by Sandkühler and Pohl (100,000-120,000 bodies), we easily understand the absurdity of the “eyewitness account.” In this case, the above-mentioned values must be multiplied by 100-120, resulting in approximately 2,133 to 2,560 tons of ashes and total unburnt human material, 370-444 tons of which originating from the bodies, and 1,763-2,116 tons from wood.

The corpse remains – I repeat, 3,700 kg for every 1,000 bodies plus any mixed-in wooden ash and charcoaled remains – were then sifted with ordinary flour sieves! Even supposing that every sieve could collect 10 kg of ashes and unburnt human body material,<sup>471</sup> every 1,000 bodies would require the performance of 370 sievings, if ignoring the mixed-in wood ash, charcoal etc.! These ashes were brought to the “ash labor gang” using boxes, that is, a quantity of 20-30 kg at a time, using very large boxes. With these flour sieves, the men from the “brigade” would therefore have had to sift through 370 to 444 tons of human ash, plus all the wood ash and remains inevitably mixed into this!

Sifting the corpse-combustion residues with flour sieves is an obvious fiction, because these instruments have a mesh with openings no larger than 1 mm (see Document II.3.7.). Using the system described by the witness, it would be impossible to pulverize the residues in such a way that a large quantity would pass through the mesh of the sieves, because it is obvious that these sieves would be completely unsuited to the task, and the method described would be utterly useless.

The ultimate in absurdity is that, even if one disposed of a machine to grind the residues, the Germans supposedly used it only at the end of their work in the “gully” of “Piaski,” or around the middle of August, and only for residues which they had been unable to grind by hand!

#### 3.2.4.4. Camouflaging the Graves

After a mass grave was emptied, a few inmates climbed down into it and examined it carefully; they picked up “every bone and every hair” that remained, scraping the putrid walls and carrying away the earth, sprinkling the grave with “chloride,” after which they filled it up, leveled the terrain, harrowed it, and finally seeded it using the same species of grass and weeds as was growing all around.

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<sup>471</sup> A very large sieve, measuring 50 cm in diameter by 15 cm in height, would contain the volume of 29.4 dm<sup>3</sup>, or (29.4 dm<sup>3</sup> × 0.5 kg/dm<sup>3</sup>) almost 15 kg; 10 kg would correspond to a sieve 2/3 full.

After a few weeks, it became impossible to identify the location of the grave – an impossibly short time for grass and weeds to form a dense cover. If this were true and had been the usual practice, we may wonder how the various Soviet investigating commissions were able to identify these mass graves so perfectly as to be able to indicate their exact dimensions.

In fact, a Soviet forensic medical report exists which is undated but was written after 30 September 1944, affirming that “in the territory of the Janowska Camp” two mass graves were found, the first 12 × 4 meters in area and 3 meters deep, containing 150 bodies; and the other, 19 × 3 meters in area, also 3 meters deep, containing 250 bodies. 116 bodies were exhumed, *i.e.*, 96 men, 18 women, and 2 children.<sup>472</sup>

This is the same commission whose conclusions – summarized in another report – I have cited earlier: the absurd claim that the figure of 200,000 cremated bodies had been deduced from the surface area of alleged mass graves presumably filled with human ashes.<sup>473</sup> Here, the figure of 200,000 was written by hand, meaning that this determination was left to the zeal of some Soviet bureaucrat.

#### 3.2.4.5. The Activities of the “Death Brigade” at Other Locations

In addition to the “gully” of “Piaski” and the Krzywicki Forest, Weliczker mentions other localities in the district of Lvov in which the “brigade” is supposed to have carried on its activity (Weliczker, pp. 97, 113; see Document II.3.8.).

- Wólka (Rosnovka): Locality approximately 60 km west of Lvov, unknown to Holocaust historiography.
- Jaryczów Nowy (Novy Yarychev), approximately 20 km northeast of Lvov. Sandkühler claims that 2,500 Jews were killed in mid-January 1942. He refers to an article by Tatiana Berenstein (Sandkühler, p. 235; fn 317, p. 515). In it, Berenstein states that approximately 2,500 Jews were shot on 15 January 1943 at Jaryczów Nowy, but the source consists of two “eyewitness testimonies” (Berenstein, Table 7).
- Brzuchowice (Bryukhovichi), approximately 10 km northwest of Lvov; according to Sandkühler, “a shooting may have taken place there,” but he supplies no information, not even a source (Sandkühler, p. 231).
- Bóbrka (Bobrka), approximately 30 km southeast of Lvov. Berenstein claims that 63 Jews were killed in this locality in July 1941, and approximately 200 on 12 August 1942, when 1,260 were sent to Belżec. This information originates from two witnesses (Berenstein, Table 7).
- Dornfeld (Ternopolye), approximately 30 km south of Lvov. This locality is also unknown to Holocaust historiography.
- Szczerzec (Shchirets), approximately 30 km southwest of Lvov. Berenstein only mentions a deportation of 180 Jews to Bóbrka in August 1942, and of an undetermined number of Jews on 29 or 30 November to Belżec (*ibid.*).

<sup>472</sup> File of the Forensic Medical Expert Report, City of Lvov. GARF, 7021-67-76, pp. 28-30.

<sup>473</sup> *ibid.*, p. 33.

It is therefore unclear what the “death brigade” was doing at these locations. Weliczker implies that the bodies exhumed there were loaded onto one or more refrigerated trucks and taken to the Janowska Camp, probably “Piaski,” for cremation. It is mindboggling to think that the Germans sent refrigerated trucks to the East in order to transport corpses. If we were to take this far-fetched claim at face value, it is clear that the number of corpses transported this way must have been rather low.

Filip Friedman reports that Weliczker, on an unspecified date but probably in 1945, published an article titled “Mogiła na Wólce” (“The Grave at Wólka”), of which nothing is known. However, in 1947, this “witness” became transformed into an historian. That year, an article appeared written by him in Yiddish titled “*Lagern in Mizrekh-Galitsie*” (Camps in East Galicia), in which, among other things, he reproduces the diagram of the Janowska Camp already published in *Brygada śmierci* (Welitscher, p. 21).<sup>474</sup> Nevertheless, his value as an historian does not exceed his value as a witness by much, because he writes:<sup>475</sup>

*“In order to erase the traces of the crimes, on 3 June 1943, on the orders of SS Reichsminister [sic] Himmler, a special brigade was organized at the Janowska Camp for exhuming and burning the dead who were murdered there. In the German evidence, the brigade designated formally as ‘Sonderkommando 1005,’ and among the workers and the local population, it was called the ‘death brigade.’ In this special brigade, 126 Jews worked under the supervision of 120 Gestapo personnel. SS personnel from various camps and cities (e.g., Lublin, Warsaw, Kraków, etc.) used to come there to study and acquire the appropriate experience in order to be able to introduce such ‘works’ in other locations (23 Dec. 44, Pravda).*

*On 19 Nov. 1943, the Jews who worked there made an uprising. Almost all of them fell in battle. Only a few saved themselves. After the uprising, a new brigade was put together which continued to work there. The workers in the new brigade thenceforth would wear chains on their feet while at work. The ‘death brigade’ burned, crushed the bones and scattered the ashes of around 350,000 people. [...] 700,000 East Galician Jews were burned there and their ashes scattered. And so shall facts and figures speak and demand a reckoning!”*

### 3.3. Leon Weliczker Wells at the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem

Weliczker, who had changed his name to Wells in the meantime, appeared as a witness during the 22nd and 23rd Hearing of the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem (1 and 2 May 1961). His book *Brygada śmierci* was introduced into evidence as Document T-214. He supplied further clarification on his editing as follows:

*“I wrote it during the War. But it was handed over the second day after the War to the Polish Historical Commission, which published it a year later. [...]*

<sup>474</sup> In the text, the author’s name is given as וויעליטשקער; the group טשק corresponds to the German sound “tschk,” Polish sound “czk” (Weliczker) or English “chk” (Velichker).

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24. Translation from Yiddish by Kladderadatsch.

*The original notes during the War were handed to Dr. Friedman, and he took it over, as the head of the Historical Commission, to be published in Łódź [sic]. From these original papers, which I never rewrote then, only a part was published as The Death Brigade. But these original papers contain the whole story of the whole time of the War.”* (State of Israel, Vol. I, p. 361)

In his “Preface” to *Brigada śmierci*, Filip Friedman wrote that Weliczker, after his escape from the “death brigade,” had brought with him notes that he had written in the form of a diary during the months of his stay in hiding. This diary was made available to the Extraordinary Soviet Investigatory Commission of German Crimes in Lvov, which used it for its report as published by *Pravda* on 23 December 1944. Friedman moreover rendered signal services to the above-mentioned Commission by serving as a guide for its members on the spot which he knew extremely well. For doing so, he received an official expression of gratitude:

*“In the meantime, Weliczker’s manuscript underwent corrections and was supplemented by the author thanks to many conversations which we had with him on the topic of his vicissitudes. Weliczker’s memoirs, regarding the Lvov Ghetto and the Janowska Camp, were scrupulously transcribed, inserted into the archives of the Jewish Central Historical Commission, and constitute a precious source for the history of this period.”*

The manuscript was “developed” (“*opracowany*”) for publication and supplied with an explanatory note by Rachel Auerbach, limiting any literary and stylistic changes to a minimum (pp. 8f.).

As far as is known, no one has ever seen this precious manuscript, and it is amazing that the *Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce* (Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland) has only published a part of it, to be exact, that which appeared in the book *Brigada śmierci*.

Weliczker Wells’s deposition at the Eichmann Trial is not of great interest, since it aims in large measure at secondary matters, and the few remarks relating to the brigade’s activity almost always closely follow the book. Details not contained in this book are scarce and of disparate value. For instance, he explained that at the beginning there was only one “*Brandmeister*,” but later there were two, and that there were also two “*Zähler*”; he stated that “there was an exact list of how many people were killed.” The “*Zähler*” kept precise accounts of the cremated bodies, and every evening he filed a report with *Untersturmführer* Scherlack (SS *Unterscharführer* Schallock?), or, in his absence, with *Hauptsturmführer* (= SS *Oberscharführer*) Rauch (State of Israel, Vol. I, p. 370):

*“The report was given over with the pencil and paper – because we couldn’t have with us anything left – and it was forbidden for anybody to tell the number, and he [the ‘Zähler’] had himself to forget. So that if the *Hauptscharführer* [sic] or *Untersturmführer* next morning asked: ‘How many were burned yesterday?’, he couldn’t any more tell. He had to say: ‘I forgot.’”*

The witness declared that the “brigade” was supplied with “gasoline and oil and wood, piles of wood,” but he said nothing of their origin, particularly of the wood, and from his book, nothing can be inferred on this subject either. There was also a “grinding machine.” However, its use was a little different than that described in the book: here, it was introduced for the purposes of the activity in the “gully” of “Piaski,” to grind the pile of residues which could not be crushed using the wooden stampers; in the deposition, by contrast, after sifting the ashes (Weliczker insisted on the fact that “the sieves were like sieves we use for flour, to sift flour”), what remained “was put into the grinding machine.” The list of persons killed was at once a list of corpses, and, as Weliczker wrote in his book, there also existed maps of the mass graves, so that the men from the SD knew exactly where they were and how many bodies they contained (*ibid.*, p. 371):

“[Attorney General] *Who had lists of the bodies?*

[Witness Wells] *I don't know who had the list, but it always came. They often, one of the SD people will uncover, it will be exactly the location of the grave... and we will even go and it will be said from this corner you will have to measure six steps, right, south, east and so on. We measured and here we started to make the grave. It was also written how many people had to be in this grave.*

[Q.] *And they knew how many bodies were there exactly?*

[A.] *Exactly, because we were looking to fit this number with the Zähler.”*

At Krzywicki as well, “the SD knew exactly where the graves were located” (*ibid.*, p. 372). The topography indicated by the witness contains notable exaggerations, probably to make readers believe that the place was highly suited for executions and cremations (*ibid.*, p. 373):

*“An area of about two miles radius – which is about six kilometres, in diameter – was closed off [...]. We were normally allotted to a ravine. All around us were mountains and on top of the mountains were standing guards [...].”*

He spoke of a “deep ravine.” As I have noted above, the presumed “mountains” were three little hills with altitudes between 340 and 370 meters above sea level, while the “gully” was a narrow valley leading from an altitude of approximately 325 meters to where it terminated, at an altitude of 290 meters. The entire area containing the Janowska Camp and “Piaski” was marked off by a curving railway that formed a sort of semi-circle (see Document II.3.3.). The diameter of the semi-circle, from the camp to the point opposite, where I indicated the altitude of 290 m, was approximately 1,400 meters; the radius, from the center of this diameter to the “Piaski” extreme point, where I indicated the other altitude (290), was approximately 500 meters. The other half of the semi-circle, that running towards the southeast, contained two cemeteries, that of Janowski and the Jewish cemetery, in addition to several roads, as may be seen from Document II.3.5.

Weliczker then adds (*ibid.*):

*“In this ravine was also the Brandstelle as well as the Aschkolonne – all the work was done in the ravine. But even in this deep ravine, normally the fire could be seen for quite a few kilometers away when we started the fire.”*

But according to his book, there was a “Brandstelle” at each of the locations in the “ravine” in which the “brigade” was working, that is, at least four. For the rest, it would be senseless to build one single pyre and carry the bodies there from hundreds of meters away.

If, as the witness claims and as would have been inevitable, the cremation activity at “Piaski” could not have gone unobserved in the city of Lvov, there is a need to explain why there is no trace in the documentation from that time, no document of any kind, no report from any partisan unit, no photographs of the columns of smoke, nothing.

The crucial question was left for last by the Attorney General Gideon Hausner (*ibid.*, p. 374):

*“Now, my final question, Dr. Wells. Could you give the Court an approximate figure of the number of bodies burned by your brigade?”*

[Wells] *A few hundred thousand.*

[Q.] *Could you tell us how many were executed in front of those fires, approximately?*

[A.] *About 30,000 during the time that I was there. That was after the liquidation because there were no more Jews.”*

These figures are contradictory and senseless. As I have clarified above, the total number of bodies mentioned by Weliczker is 22,025: how, therefore, does he come to declare a figure of “a few hundred thousand”? All these cremations should have been noted by him in his “diary,” which would mean that Filip Friedman and Rachel Auerbach, in their publication, have omitted the great majority of the data noted by the witness. These are obviously absurd hypotheses to which Weliczker never referred.

As for the number of persons shot “in front of those fires” – 30,000 – in his book, Weliczker only mentions less than one tenth of this number: seven inmates from the “brigade” shot on 18 June (p. 53), and 275 inmates shot on 29 June in front of the camp barracks, upon which event I dwelled at length above. Moreover, on 25 October, there was an execution of inmates in the Janowska Camp. During the trial, Weliczker said that there were “around 2,000 people” (State of Israel, Vol. I, p. 372), in the book he wrote that he saw a pile of approximately 2,500 pairs of shoes, but only mentioned the cremation of 400 bodies.

Hausner moreover asked when Weliczker Wells had learned that his group called itself “Sonderkommando”; the witness replied:

*“I knew it during the time that I was there because every time it came in under an order, or it was sent, it was from Sonderkommando 1005.”* (*ibid.*, p. 374)

In his book, this designation occurs only twice; the first time, in the entry to 7 September 1943: “Our *Kommando* (*komenda*) is known as ‘Sonderkommando

1005.” Then, almost at the end, in relation to 19 November 1943, Weliczker writes in German: “*Das ist unser Kommando 1005*” (“This is our *Kommando 1005*”; p. 115). The text contains a note by R. Auerbach explaining: “The German SD unit assigned to the elimination of the traces of German crimes in the region of Lvov appeared in the official documentation as *Sonderkommando 1005*” (fn 117, p. 133), but she does not mention any official German document. This name is like a foreign body in the text, and Weliczker probably learned this during his talks with Filip Friedman.

In the preliminary discussion on the admissibility of the witness – a question raised by Eichmann’s defense attorney, Dr. Servatius – the Presiding Judge Moshe Landau established that the witness was admissible, but that (State of Israel, Vol. I, p. 366):

*“in this connection, the Prosecution has firstly to prove that all these acts were committed and secondly – [that they were] the responsibility of the Accused.”*

In reality, as in all the trials of this type, the “proof” that the facts declared were real, consisted of the testimony itself; in the specific case, the “facts” were real because Weliczker had asserted them. As for the second point, the prosecution in no way demonstrated Eichmann’s involvement in the alleged “Aktion 1005” at Lvov.

When he appeared before the Court, Weliczker Wells listed his professional and academic titles: “doctor’s degree in mechanical engineering and post-graduate work in physics,” “graduate from the School for Mathematics and Mechanics”; he had also formed part of the “Project Engineer at Curtiss-Wright Aeronautics”; starting in 1957, he was “Technical Director and Vice-President of Ark Projection Company,” and had moreover published “many scientific publications” and held “several patents” (*ibid.*, p. 360).

The fact that Weliczker, notwithstanding these technical skills which he had acquired after the war, had completely swallowed the technical silliness of his book, is complete proof of his bad faith.

### 3.4. *The Janowska Road*

In 1963, Leon Weliczker Wells published a prolix autobiographical book titled *The Janowska Road*, into which he inserted the text of *Brigada śmierci* (*The Death Brigade*) as “Part V” (Weliczker Wells, pp. 131-224), but here as well, the information in his “diary” is very limited:

*“During this part of my imprisonment I was able to keep a diary. Thus I am able to give, to some extent, and as far as it proves useful here, a day-by-day account of what happened to me. Of course, if I had been caught keeping such a record I would have been shot. Later I shall explain how it happened that I was able to keep this journal of my experiences in what we inmates called the ‘Death Brigade’ – that group of Jews the Germans forced to burn the bodies of their countless victims.”* (*ibid.*, p. 133)



In fact, this book does not even contain the explanations supplied in the book *Brigada śmierci*, as reported earlier, because the related passage has been cut out (*ibid.*, p. 224).<sup>476</sup> Further along, Weliczker adds that, after his escape,

*“my only possession was a package of papers tied together with a piece of string and fastened to my belt by a short length of rope. This was the day-to-day record I had kept of my experiences in the concentration camp and the Death Brigade.”* (*ibid.*, p. 249)

About the publication of his Polish book, Weliczker writes:

*“A Central Jewish Historical Commission was established in Lodz with branches in all the main cities of Poland. The director was Dr. Philip Friedman, one of the few Jewish historians left in Poland after the war. The purpose of this Commission was to collect documents about Nazi crimes. The Commission also published documents and memoirs that were important contributions to the history of Nazi crimes. One of the first books to be published was my memoirs. Because of limited funds and scarcity of paper, only one part, namely, the ‘Death Brigade,’ which constitutes Part V of the present book, was published in the spring of 1946. To prepare this book for publication, I went to Lodz a few times. During this time Dr. Friedman and I became close friends, and our friendship continued until his death in 1960.”* (*ibid.*, p. 286)

Here is an obvious ambiguity: the diary written “day-to-day” regarded in fact exclusively Weliczker’s presumed experience in the *Brigada śmierci*, as shown by the passage from the “Conclusion” omitted from the American translation, where he explicitly states that he had taken paper and pencil from the accountant’s office supplies. If, therefore, in 1943, “because of limited funds and scarcity of paper,” there was not the slightest possibility of publishing the entire diary, this was obviously not true in 1963, but not even then did Weliczker disclose the presumed unpublished pages of the diary. This feeds the suspicion that these alleged pages are purely imaginary.

In *The Janowska Road*, Weliczker mentions the destiny of a few survivors of the “*Brigada śmierci*”:

*“How many of us in the Death Brigade escaped is hard to say; I discovered that one man named Widder, who had worked in the shop in the Death Brigade, was caught shortly after our escape, but was not recognized. He was put into the new Death Brigade from which he escaped again a day before our liberation by the Russian Army. From his account, there were about twenty from our old group in the new Death Brigade. After we had escaped the whole guard had been changed. The inmates worked with chains on their feet. These chains were never taken off; they did not even have a lock; they were welded together. This Death Brigade was put to work in other cities, and near Stanislav (southwest of Lvov) the Russian Army finally caught up with them. The Germans shot the entire brigade; but one of the members, Widder, was not fatally wounded, and lay between the corpses*

<sup>476</sup> The final chapter (Chapter 37, in the Polish text “Zakończenie,” Conclusions) is interrupted by the phrase “...we found twenty-two other Jews.” In the Polish text, this is followed by two other phrases and then the passage in question. Weliczker, pp. 127f.

*until next day, when he was liberated. I estimate that in our breakout over fifty had escaped, which, under the circumstances, was a very high percentage.*

*The fate of forty-four of these people was as follows: Ten were liberated, of whom three now reside in the United States, four in Israel, and one in Australia; one I do not know of.” (ibid., pp. 255f.)*

According to this account, after the escape of the inmates from “Kommando 1005” on 19 November 1943, the Germans instituted a new “*Brigada śmierci*.” This presumed fact has been echoed in the literature through the indictment in the trial of Rudolf Röder, cited as a source by Sandkühler for the following information (Sandkühler, p. 279; already quoted in part here on p. 278):

*“An investigation was opened against Schallock and the police unit for this incident [the escape of the inmates on 19 November 1943], and a new Kommando 1005 was set up in the Janowska forced-labor camp before Christmas 1943, in order to continue the ‘unearthing’ in Stanislaw. After lengthy preparatory work, this began only in March 1944 in the new Jewish cemetery, with 25 Jewish inmates still, who were guarded by an entire company of military police. Due to the weather, work progressed only very slowly; furthermore, Krüger’s successor Brandt no longer knew the exact location of the mass graves. Since the Red Army occupied Kolomea already at the end of the month, the Jews were shot by Schallock or on his directive, by order of the commander of the Security Police, before the exhumations had even properly begun. There was only one survivor.”*

Hoffmann claims that this presumed shooting took place on 29 March 1944, and refers to Weliczker Wells and the verdict of the Stuttgart District Court in the trial against Rudolf Röder of 9 May 1968 (Hoffmann, p. 104).

The vacuity and incoherence of this trial account and the chronology confirm that his primary source is the passage from Weliczker Wells’s book, which I have reported above. That such an account is the fruit of fantasy is demonstrated by the circumstances described by the author: He was the only person who spoke to the supposed survivor Widder, and although ever since he had ambitions to keep memoirs and even to write history – claiming to have jotted down even irrelevant events on a daily basis in his “diary,” which he had already entrusted to the historian Filip Friedman (Weliczker Wells, p. 255; Widder’s account appears a few lines further down) – no one ever bothered in the least to transcribe all of the supposedly contemporarily recorded assertions of this allegedly unique, extremely crucial witness.

If we are to believe Weliczker Wells, at least ten witnesses from the first “*Brigada śmierci*” escaped, and he even gave the names of a few of them:

*“[...] Max Hoening, who now lives with his wife and daughter in New York and works in the garment center as a cutter; a man named Gleich, who works as a bookkeeper in New York; David Manucewicz, who, with his wife and three children, resides in Israel where he has become a successful car dealer. Another, Mandel, lives with his family on the outskirts of Tel-Aviv and runs a shoe store.” (ibid., p. 256)*

Manucewicz (pronounced Manusevich), who signed a statement for the Soviets (see Section 3.6.3.), does not appear in the text of Weliczker's Polish book, which nevertheless mentions another self-proclaimed member of the *Brigada śmierci*, Mojżesz (Moische) Korn (see Section 3.6.2.), who, after the escape of the inmates, joined him and a certain Buk (Weliczker, p. 122). There remain, therefore, another eight fundamental witnesses who never signed any statements on this important Holocaust event and who never even appeared during the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem, although some of them lived in Israel at the time, and it would seem permissible to wonder why they did not.

### 3.5. Weliczker Wells and Patrick Desbois

In his book, Desbois recalls his meeting at New York with Leon Wells, alias Weliczker (Desbois 2008, p. 114):

*“A year later I went back to the United States and found, thanks to the Holocaust Memorial Museum of Washington, Wells’ contact information. He is the author of one of the first accounts of the Holocaust by bullets. I couldn’t get over it: He was living in New Jersey. This book that had guided us for years was for me a history book, an ancient testimony. I had never imagined that the author might still be alive.”*

I shall now reproduce Desbois's dialogue with Weliczker, numbering Weliczker's responses to facilitate the discussion (Desbois 2008, p. 115):

*“He told us how he had burnt other Jews with the commando of requisitioned Jews. He told me that the Germans had nicknamed him ‘Baby.’<sup>[477]</sup> He was 14 years old at the time.<sup>[478]</sup>*

*I asked him: ‘What did you do, Baby?’*

[1] *He answered, ‘I pulled out the gold teeth of the Jews who had been dug up, put them in a bag and gave them to the Germans in the evening.*

[2] *That went on for a long time because there were 90,000 bodies.*

[3] *There was also my friend who was younger than me, who was called the Tzeler [Zähler], the Counter. He was in charge of counting the bodies every evening, and writing the number in a little book.’*

*I asked: ‘He counted the bodies? What happened to him?’*

*His expression fell. ‘Of course they killed him.’ I told him that I knew that they killed the counters.*

*‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘that is why there is no record of the numbers.’*

[4] *I asked: ‘They made you sleep under some sort of canvas so that you wouldn’t see who it was they were killing?’*

<sup>477</sup> There is no trace of this nickname in the book.

<sup>478</sup> At the time of his entry into the “Death Brigade,” on 15 June 1943, Weliczker was 18 years and 3 months old, having been born on 10 March 1925.

[5] *'Yes, but I was the smallest so I managed to peek under the canvas. I saw all the executions and afterwards we had to go out to undress and burn them. That went on for six months.'*"

Point [1]. In his book, Weliczker makes no specific mention of "gold teeth," but of "any precious metal... like gold or platinum," which were found among the ashes from cremation after the remains had been sifted. In all this, Weliczker performed no task at all, because in the evening the "brigadier" (= the leader of the *Kommando*) took away the sieve full of precious metals and consigned it to the *Untersturmführer*, who poured the contents into a linen sack (Weliczker, p. 56). The recovery of the precious metals was performed by the "ash labor gang," of which Weliczker was not a member.

Point [2]. The figure of 90,000 contradicts both the total of all the individual figures mentioned in the book, and the figure declared under oath in the Eichmann trial, "a few hundred thousand," as well as the figure contained in his testimony to the Soviets in 1944: 310,000.

Point [3]. With regard to the *Zähler*, we read in Weliczker's book:

*"On the other side was the Zähler, with a pencil and paper in his hand. His task was to note the number of bodies thrown into the fire. Not even the members of the Schutzpolizei (szupowcom) could say how many bodies were cremated over the course of a day. In the evening, he provides the Untersturmführer with a precise report on the number of cremated bodies. He himself could not remember how many bodies were cremated the day before. If the Untersturmführer asked him the next day how many bodies were cremated the day before, he was supposed to answer by saying he had forgotten."* (*ibid.*, p. 42)

No mention that the "*Zähler*" was shot.

To ensure that there was "no record of the numbers," the Germans, first of all, are supposed to have destroyed the several dozen reports from the acting "*Zähler*," for whose existence in reality we have only Weliczker's word, by the way. But his possible shooting would not have been at all sufficient to achieve this aim, because the "*Zähler*" could easily have communicated the number of cremated bodies to the other inmates every evening. As we have read earlier, Weliczker had "paper and pencil, intended for the accountant, who noted the number of dead cremated every day," therefore, he had direct contact with the "*Zähler*" precisely by virtue of his tasks in the barracks; since keeping a diary on his part would obviously have been intended to gather evidentiary material against the Germans, he could easily have recorded the numbers of bodies cremated daily, and thus presented a complete statistical record of the cremations in his diary.

Point [4]. The motivation, suggested by Desbois and declared true by Weliczker, for the fact that the "death brigade" slept in tents (that is, to keep them from seeing the killings of the Jews) is contradicted by the book itself, which says (Weliczker, p. 92):

*"Every tent is 9 meters long and 6 meters wide. 80 people live in each tent, the rest in another, intended for specialists only, the body arrangers and a few work-*

*ers in the ash labor gang, that is, persons who, for the most part, have no direct contact with the bodies. One third of the second tent is used as an office, separated from the rest of the tent by a partition. Next to the partitions of the tent, on both sides, there are single cots. In the middle, there is a bench. Here, we even have electricity. There are floodlights on all sides of the courtyard which remain lit all night."*

The tents, therefore, served merely logistical purposes, since they were used to house men and materiel.

Point [5]. In the book, the scene unfolds in a camp barracks, the door to which is covered "by a coat" (*ibid.*, p. 66):

*"A few of us look through the cracks in the roof. They report everything they see."*

Weliczker later says that, after the tents had been pitched, during the executions of the Jews, the men from the "brigade" were compelled to go inside so as to prevent them from seeing the shootings, but on this occasion he does not declare that he spied through the cracks; he reports what he heard (*ibid.*, p. 106).

He does not claim ever to have seen anything "under the canvas" because he was "the smallest."

If one were to draw up a summary evaluation of Weliczker's various testimonies, we could say that he made hare-brained statements for the Russians, wrote nonsense in his "diary," gave false testimony at the Eichmann trial, and told Desbois fairy tales which contradicted his previous stories.

### 3.6. Other Witnesses from the "Death Brigade"

#### 3.6.1. Heinrich Chamaidés

As mentioned earlier, Sandkühler refers to the testimony of Heinrich Chamaidés, according to which the victims of the Germans numbered "at least 70,000 in the 'Sands'," and another "45,000-50,000 in the Lesienice Forest." The testimony dates to 21 September 1944 and was published in German by Ernst Klee and Willi Dreßen, together with that of Moische Korn, under the title "Some 45,000 or 50,000 People Exhumed" (Klee/Dreßen, pp. 226-228).

In June 1943, Chamaidés was assigned to the "*Todesbrigade*" (= *brigada śmierci*, death brigade), which consisted of 126 persons. This is how he describes the beginning of his activity:

*"We had to open graves, exhume bodies and burn the exhumed bodies. There were 1,000 or 2,000 bodies in each grave. In addition, we found the bodies of about sixty or seventy thousand people in the 'Death Valley' who had been shot only a relatively short time earlier."*

This scenario must have played out in the "sand pit" mentioned a little while ago, which was located 1.5-2 km from the Janowska Camp. This "sand pit" or "Death Valley" is the locality which Weliczker refers to as "*na piaskach*"; in the diagram of the Janowska Camp published by "Welitschker" in the periodical *From the*

*Last Extermination.* It was referred to in Yiddish as “*tojtn-tol*,” the equivalent of the German “*Totentat*” (“Death Valley”). Hence, Chamaides’s and Weliczker’s testimonies overlap. According to the latter, the “death brigade” was formed on 15 June 1943, and the work of exhumation-cremation in this locality terminated on 18 August. It therefore lasted a little over two months (64 days), and the number of bodies disposed of every day amounted on average to 937-1093.

As we have seen earlier, of the presumed 60,000-70,000 cremated bodies, Weliczker accounts for little more than 15,000.

Chamaides continues with his account as follows:

*“In September 1943, after the conclusion of burying bodies, our Brigade was transferred to the Ligakovsk Forest [?]. In this forest, we also had to open graves. There were a total of 45 graves, in which we found corpses both clothed and unclothed. From the clothes I could conclude that the persons shot were Russian and Italian prisoners and civilians. I remember well that in one of these mass graves there were exclusively POWs, some 2,500 of them. We exhumed roughly 45,000 or 50,000 people from these graves.*

*We also burned all the bodies by stacking up wood and bodies to piles 4-5 meters high and pouring gasoline over them. After the cremation, gold objects were separated, the bones were ground by means of a special mill, and the all the resulting ashes were scattered in the woods. In addition, the police shot between two and five hundred people daily, once, as I recall, it amounted to 2,500 people.*

*After we had exhumed the bodies, we had to fill the graves with earth and plant young trees on them. We threw the ashes of burned bodies into some of the graves, so that there would be proof of the Germans’ crimes in the event that any of us remained alive.”*

The “Ligakovsk Forest” ought to be identical with that of Lyczaków, also known as the “*Wald von Lesienice*” or “*Krzywicki-Wald*.”

Chamaides states that on 19 November 1943, the “death brigade” rebelled, and among 126 persons, there were only 12 survivors.

According to Weliczker, the work in this forest began on 9 September and terminated on 8 October 1943, so that it lasted 30 days. From Weliczker’s account, it seems that the brigade’s daily “production rate” was at least 750 bodies exhumed and 530 bodies cremated (maximum figure).

It follows that, in order to exhume 45,000 bodies (this does not just mean the mere removal of the earth covering the top layer of bodies in a mass grave), the “brigade” would have had to work for  $(45,000 \div 750 =)$  60 days, while the bodies’ cremation would have taken another  $(45,000 \div 530 =)$  85 days, hence 145 days in total. It should be noted that the two activities allegedly did not overlap, in view of the remark that exhuming 750 bodies required the labor of the entire “brigade.”

Chamaides’s testimony collected by the Soviets contains no lack of the absurd fairy tales typical of crude atrocity propaganda:

*“As an eyewitness, I experienced how a violent German criminal, whose name I do not know, shattered an eight-year old boy and threw him into a fire. Several one- and two-year old children were thrown into the fire alive. The criminals gave the victims a glass filled with water to hold and conducted their target practice by shooting at the glass: If they hit the glass, the victim was allowed to live. If they hit the victim’s hand or arm, however, they went up to him, told him he was unfit for work, and as result would have to be shot, after which they shot him right there on the spot. Small children were thrown into the air and shot while falling.”*

### 3.6.2. Moische Korn

The statements of Moische Korn, made and signed on 13 September 1944 (*ibid.*, pp. 228f.), are even more inconsistent with those of his colleague. His account is very generic; we do not know when the witnesses came to form part of the “*brigada śmierci*,” which consisted of 120 persons (as against 126 according to Chamaidés); the only date mentioned in his testimony is that of the decision to escape, and the date of the escape itself (17 and 19 October 1943), over the course of which the majority of the inmates were killed, and only 12 survived (Chamaidés also mentions 12 survivors, but for him, the revolt occurred on 19 November 1943). The working locations are never explicitly mentioned by Korn, but the context shows that, in general, his account overlaps with that of Chamaidés. This begins as follows:

*“After opening the graves, we prepared a special place next to the graves, where wood and bodies were stacked in layers on piles measuring 10 x 10 x 10 meters. Some 1,200 or 1,600 bodies were on each of these stacks. There were also stacks with 2,000 bodies. When such a stack was finished, we poured tar over it, in addition to which we poured a bucket of gasoline over it. Then we dipped a stick into gasoline, lit it and threw it onto the pyre from a certain distance away. A pyre like that, depending on the size, burned for three to five days.”*

These statements are hard to believe, to say the least. How did the inmates build pyres 10 meters long, wide *and* high? How did the inmates put the wood and bodies onto the top layers of such a pyre, *i.e.*, those higher than 2 meters above the ground? They would have needed a crane at least, but the witness makes no mention of any such device. And when burning it down, how did they make sure such a pile burned down absolutely evenly? Because if it didn’t, it would have tipped to one side and eventually collapsed, spilling embers, burning wood and partially burned body parts all over the place!

A pile of wood and bodies that size would have contained ( $[10 \text{ m} \times 10 \text{ m} \times 10 \text{ m}] \times 0.9 \text{ t wood/m}^3 \div 1.4 =$ ) approximately 640 tons of wood, or from (640,000 kg  $\div$  1,600 bodies =) 400 to (640,000 kg  $\div$  1,200 bodies =) 530 kg per body.<sup>479</sup>

If the “special place” created to accommodate the pyre was big enough to accommodate only one of the pyres described by Korn, and if, as he claims, it took three to five days (or four days on average) for the pyres to burn out completely

<sup>479</sup> The factor 1.4 considers the gaps between the stacked wood; for details on this see Section 4.3.3.)

before the next pyre could be built, then the cremation of the (60,000 to 70,000 + 45,000 to 50,000) 105,000-120,000 bodies alone would have taken from (105,000 corpses ÷ 1,600 corpses per pyre × 4 days per pyre =) 262 to (120,000 corpses ÷ 1,600 corpses per pyre × 4 days per pyre =) 300 days; therefore, if this sequential burning started on 15 June 1943, it would have finished in mid-April 1944!

Moreover, if all 120 of the inmates were assigned to cutting wood in the forests, obtaining the 640 tons required for a single pyre would therefore have required (640 t of wood ÷ [120 inmates × 1.35 t of wood/inmate/day] =)<sup>479</sup> approximately four days, or approximately eight days' work at twelve hours' work per day,<sup>480</sup> which means, at a minimum, another (105,000 corpses ÷ 1,600 corpses/day × 8 days =) 525 days!

The witness dwells at length on the description of the "machine for grinding bones," to which I shall return later. His account also contains the usual pathetic Holocaust *haggadah* in which he is said to have found the corpse of his wife in the mass of bodies:

*"I begged Untersturmführer Scherlak [Schallock?] to kill me, too, since life was meaningless now, after my wife and children had been killed. Then he forced me to throw my wife's body into the fire."*

### 3.6.3. David Shmulevich Manusevich (Manussevitch)

At the First Nuremberg Trial (or IMT), during the hearing of 13 February 1946, Colonel Y. V. Pokrovsky, Deputy Chief Prosecutor for the U.S.S.R., summarized the contents of Document USSR-6(c) (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 391):

*"It seems to me sufficient to read into the Record extracts from the evidence submitted by D. Sh. Manussevitch, and I wish to state that this evidence is confirmed by the testimony of two other witnesses: F. G. Ash and G. Y. Khamaydes. I am presenting all three documents as Document Number USSR-6(c). Witnesses Manussevitch, Ash, and Khamaydes worked for some time in the detachment which cremated the dead bodies of men shot by the Germans in the region of Lvov and particularly in the Lissenitzky camps. Witness Manussevitch states [...]:*

*'When we (the Brigade of Death) had completed the cremation of the corpses, we were conveyed at night in cars to the Lissenitzky forest, opposite the yeast factory at Lvov. There were about 45 pits in this forest, containing the bodies of people previously shot in 1941-42. There were between 500 and 3,500 bodies in the pits. These were not only the bodies of soldiers of the Italian, French, Belgian, and Russian armies, that is, of prisoners of war, but of peaceful inhabitants as well. All the prisoners of war were buried in their clothes. Therefore, when digging them out of the pits, I could recognize the dead by their uniforms, insignia, buttons, medals, and decorations, as well as by their spoons and mess cups. All these were burned once the corpses had been exhumed. As in the camp at Yanovsky, grass was sown on the site of the pits, and trees and dead tree*

<sup>480</sup> According to Datner, "Kommando 1005," which was operating in the Bialystok district, worked from 6 AM until 6 PM, with a one-hour break for lunch. Datner 1976, p. 73.



*trunks were planted so as to erase any trace of the crimes, which are certainly unprecedented in the history of mankind.”*

Manusevich had been interrogated on 13 September 1944. The text of the interrogation in my possession is a not-always-pristine carbon copy.

He was interned in the camp at Brody, a locality approximately 100 km north-east of Lvov, from November 1942 to May 1943, when the camp was liquidated, and the inmates, including the witness, were sent to Bełżec. Here, he claims, operated a human soap factory producing “soap from human bodies.” Persons were sent for extermination from Italy and France and moreover from the camps in the area around Lvov. At Bełżec, “2 million people were exterminated.” Manusevich learned this from the residents of Bełżec who were deported to the Janowska Camp when he was there, too. The circumstances which brought him there are not clear. He seems to have succeeded in escaping in a freight car, and was later captured by the German police and transported to the Janowska Camp to be shot. “This happened at the end of May 1943.” Instead of being executed, he was enrolled in the “death brigade for the cremation of the bodies” which consisted of 126 inmates.

In June 1943 the commandant of the Janowska Camp, Willhaus, ordered the exhumation and cremation of all the bodies. The description of the exhumation procedure is even more laconic:

*“The cremation was effected according to the following procedure: a special open space measuring 6 x 8 square meters was prepared, upon which a layer of bodies was laid out, then a layer of wood, and so on, so as to form a stack 4-5 meters high. Gasoline was poured on top of this and it was set on fire. The burnt ashes were passed through a special sieve.”*

The incombustible osseous residues “were smashed in a specially constructed grinding machine [*mashina-drobilka*],” and then scattered on the spot together with the ashes.

In the area where the shootings took place in the Janowska Camp, “an entire lake of blood has formed, measuring 4 x 5 meters and 1 meter deep.” In the Lisenitski Forest (or Lesienice or Krzywicki Forest), not just exhumations and cremations were performed, but executions as well. Here, crash courses in cremation were held with the participation of German officers from the Lublin Camp, the Warsaw Camp and others. The courses were directed by Colonel (in fact, *Unterscharführer*) Schallock, who explained on-site how to exhume and cremate the bodies and disperse the ashes. In the Janowska Camp, between 50 to 3,500 people were shot every day, sometimes as many as 8,000. The total number of persons shot at the camp and in the Lisenitski Forest was roughly 200,000. On 19 November 1943, the 126 men from the “death brigade” rebelled and escaped, but there were only 12 survivors.<sup>481</sup>

These absurdities refute themselves.

<sup>481</sup> Record of interrogation of D. Sh. Manusevich dated 13 September 1944. GARF, 7021-67-76, pp. 2-5.

It is worth noting that the bit about the “crash courses in cremation” is a recurrent theme. Weliczker speaks of contingents consisting of personnel from the Security Service (Weliczker, p. 107):

*“These contingents arrived from various parts of Poland in order to learn from us and conduct executions and cremations. After a few weeks, they went away again for various cities in the provinces to which they had been assigned to carry on the same work.”*

If this were true, there would have existed several other *Sonderkommandos* 1005 in Poland, of which Holocaust historiography, however, knows nothing.

### 3.7. The Bone-Grinding Machine

The four witnesses examined in this chapter all mention a machine to grind the residues of cremation. The machine, which was found at the end of September 1944, presumably in the Janowska Camp, was given tremendous publicity by the Soviets. The machine was examined by a group of experts, and the related report constitutes Document USSR-61. The following are the report’s conclusions (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 204-206):

*“1. The machine for the thrashing of burned bones has been fixed on a platform of a tractor trailer upon a special order. The machine is easily moved at any distance without being dismantled, tugged by a truck or any other vehicle. It is operated from a motor fixed on the same platform, through a rope transmission. The machine consists of a thrashing drum, transmission, elevator, Archimedes’ screw and the motor. The thrashing drum is a manufactured and massproduced type designed for thrashing any material. It consists of three parts: the cylinder and side walls.<sup>[482]</sup> The cylinder part is cast iron, screwed to the side walls, also cast iron and heavy. The side walls are fixed rigidly on the axis. One disc has an opening in which there is a screw for transporting the bones inside the drum. The inner part of the drum is faced with steel slabs, and the outer one covered with a metal fine grate. The drum is put in a case the lower part of which serves as a receiving bunker for the thrashed bones. The measurements of the drum are as follows: the inner diameter is 900 mm, width – 600.*

*2. Transmission. The axis of the drum, 70 mm in diameter, on the side of the motor has a gear 375 mm in diameter which is fixed with a gear 160 mm in diameter setting on the intermediary axis together with a four-groove pulley, 730 mm in diameter, set in motion by the motor.*

*The elevator consists of a tow chain with ladles on it 300 mm apart. The chain moves between two spro[c]kets fixed on the frame of the elevator. The chain is set in motion from the upper spro[c]ket 370 mm in diameter resting on the axis together with another spro[c]ket, connected with the tow chain with a spro[c]ket fixed to the center of the drum axis from the side the bones are transported.*

<sup>482</sup> The Russian text states that there were two “side walls,” which, together with the cylinder, formed precisely three parts. *Nyurnbergsky protsess*, Vol. I, p. 640.

*The Archimedes' screw is meant for transporting the bone powder from the bunker beneath the drum to the side of the platform where the unloading opening is. The screw is set in motion by a transmission system from the axis of the lower sprocket of the elevator.*

*The motor is diesel of the approximately 5 hp rate.*

*Method of work. The burned small bones are loaded in the receiving part of the elevator from which the ladles on the tow chain deliver it to the receiving bunker. From the receiving bunker the screw takes the bones inside the drum. During the spinning of the drum the bones are thrashed like in a steam mill. The bone powder through the openings in the cylindrical part of the drum is dusted on a grate through which it falls into a receiving bunker. From that bunker the Archimedes' screw gets it to the unloading opening.*

*The cinematics of the machine. The shaft of the motor has a four-groove pulley 220 mm in diameter which, through the trapezoid belts, sets in motion the axis of the drum 730 mm in diameter. The axis of that pulley has a small gear 160 mm in diameter which, fixed with a large gear 375 mm in diameter, is moving the drum. The opposite side of the drum axis has a sprocket which, through the tow chain, moves the sprocket on the upper shaft of the elevator. The same shaft also has a sprocket which sets the elevator chain in motion. From the rotation of the lower sprocket of the elevator a transmission system sets the Archimedes' screw in motion.*

*The machine can work in any chosen place and does not need a specially prepared side. It is transported by a truck or any other vehicle.*

*3. In the given dimensions the machine has a productivity of approximately 3 cu. m. of burned small bones an hour.*

*4. The machine has been made upon a special order and designed for thrashing burned bones in any place. The drum used is the general purpose one, from the steam mills. The task of the designers was to choose the type of the drum, and also the unloading of the powder. A compact fixing of the machine had been envisaged with its possible employment in any place."*

The Commission did not declare that this machine had been found in the Janowska Camp. The report limited itself to stating that "the commission made [up] of [...followed by the names of the members] has conducted an examination of the machine for crushing the bones of the peaceful Soviet citizens shot and burned by the German-fascist villains" (*ibid.*, p. 204). As far as one can tell, this commission did not even have the curiosity to see what was inside the drum other than metal spheres – for example, to find possible human-bone residues. Apart from this, it never mentioned the fact that the machine was very badly damaged, as may be seen from the photographs taken of it.

In a 2013 paper, Klaus Schwensen investigated claims about this machine in a very detailed and in-depth manner, and has arrived at several conclusions which are almost undoubtedly correct, two of which are particularly important. Above all, the machine was a normal "ball mill," produced by the Grusonwerk Company

of Magdeburg. In the second place, the machine was found in an indeterminate location, certainly not in the Janowska Camp: no photograph shows the machine against a recognizable background, and one photo, in which Moses Korn is depicted as standing right next to it, is a clumsy photomontage (*ibid.*, pp. 318-323 and 327).

The Soviet commission's claim that the machine was designed specifically to grind human bone fragments is without basis in fact; the structure and functioning of ball mills was innocuously illustrated in the prestigious German engineering manual *Des Ingenieurs Taschenbuch* (Akademischer..., p. 356).

Several photographs exist of the machine in question. One shows it without any people standing around it (see Document II.3.9.). In the book already cited, which contains documents presented by the Soviets at Nuremberg, this same photograph was published with the following caption (*Nyurnbergsky protsess*, Vol. I, photo between pp. 640 and 641):

*"The 'kostedrobilka' [bone-grinding] machine to grind the bones of the bodies burnt by the Hitlerites. This was done to conceal the [traces of the] mass executions. The machine remained in the territory of the Janowska Camp and is preserved at Lvov (From the documents of the Extraordinary State Commission)."*

Klaus Schwensen's research confirms that the machine in question remained at Lvov until the 1960s, when it was moved to Kiev; he published several photographs along with his article (Schwensen, 314-318, 324).

Although nothing would prevent this machine from being used to grind human-bone residues, it is also true that nothing indicates that it was so used. The testimonies not only do not constitute proof that it was used for this, but they themselves require proof showing that they are reliable.

The ball mill, since it does not appear that it was brought specifically to Lvov from some other locality, was most likely already present in that city in order to perform its function. So what was its function? Klaus Schwensen proffers the hypothesis that it was used for roadwork on Thoroughfare IV (*ibid.*, pp. 325f.), which was being built to link Lvov to Taganrog through a stretch of highway 2,175 km in length. The first stretch – Thoroughfare IVb – was to link Lvov to Rovno via Brody and Dubno (Angrick, p. 192). The section of this highway over which the General Government had jurisdiction was to run from Breslau to Lvov via Cracow, and a report dated 22 June 1942 sent by the "Administration of the Government General – Main Department Construction" to the local "Main Department Labor" very probably referred to the related work. The report informs us that 18,365 Jews employed in the districts of Cracow, Warsaw, Lublin, Radom and Galicia in the performance of "important work on the strategic thoroughfares of the General Government" were assigned to the "road maintenance and expansion work in the districts of Cracow, Warsaw, Lublin, Radom and Galicia."<sup>483</sup>

In his famous report of 30 June 1943, Friedrich Katzmann wrote (L-018; IMT, Vol. 37, p. 393):

<sup>483</sup> APL, sygn. 746, p. 387.

*“The best way to handle this was by forming forced-labor camps by the SS and Police leader. Working possibilities presented themselves above all at the extremely important upgrading of Thoroughfare 4, which was in a catastrophic condition but was necessary to the entire southern section of the front. On 15 October 1941, construction on the camps along the highway was begun, and in spite of considerable difficulties, 7 camps manned by 4,000 Jews emerged already after only a few weeks. These first camps were soon followed by others, so that 15 such camps could be reported to the Higher SS and Police leader in the shortest time. Roughly 20,000 Jewish workers have passed through these camps over time. Despite the difficulties of all kinds which have arisen in connection with this problem, it has been possible to report today that some 160 km of road have been finished.”*

Weliczker himself supplies important clues that support this explanation when he speaks of camp *Kommandos* assigned to the “Kulikov-Zholkva road construction.” he also mentions a “cemetery work gang” which was “breaking up the tombstones and building the main road with the broken rock” (Weliczker, pp. 32f.). The tombstones were therefore reduced to gravel, which naturally required a “ball mill.”

The witnesses who mentioned the machine, beginning with Chamaides, Korn and Manusevich, who had themselves photographed beside it (see Klee/Dreßen, p. 225), probably really had something to do with it, but in the context of road construction or other such work.

One cannot seriously believe that the Germans would have left the Soviets in possession of a machine which they had used to conceal the traces of their crimes, *i.e.*, physical “proof” of that concealment.

## 4. *Sonderkommando* 1005 at Babi Yar

### 4.1. The Legal Context and the Witnesses

The verdict of the Stuttgart District Court states that Fritz Zietlow and Fritz Kirstein, who formed the core of the future *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, remained at Babi Yar until the end of August 1943, in part to practice for the tasks incumbent upon them. The two defendants, together with another 4-5 SS men, then left Kiev for Dnepropetrovsk, where they took charge of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B:

*“Unit 1005 B was actually put together in Dnepropetrovsk. 40-50 ordinary policemen were mustered there around mid-August 1943. The head of the police unit was District Lieutenant (later Senior Lieutenant) Winter.”* (Rüter/Mildt, p. 714)

On 17 October 1945, a certain Gerhard Adametz, who by his own statement had been a member of Reserve Battalion 83, signed a written statement in which he referred precisely to these events (USSR-80, pp. 1, 4):

*“On 24 August 1943, I and Franz Matyssek, Revieroberwachtmeister of the Reserves, received an order from our commanding officer of the police, Major Peter Burgfels, to hand in all our superfluous equipment and to report to Dnepropetrovsk. We thought we would be sent to the front. In Dnepropetrovsk, we reported to Lieutenant Winter of the police, and together with about 40 other policemen, we were put together to form a platoon. [...]*

*We 40 comrades from the police were mostly commanded from cities in the general district of Dnepropetrovsk at a rate of 2-4 from each urban SO-Kdo [sic]; later we stayed together with the 6-8 SD men as a group known as 1005 b. [...]* *We 40 policemen from Detachment 1005 b left Dnepropetrovsk on or about 5 September 1943 and were marched off to Kiev. [...] On or about 10 September, we were told that we were to move out to reinforce a group doing service in the vicinity of Kiev, but we were not told what kind of duty we would be assigned to. This group, as we later found out, was referred to as 1005 a.”*

This statement could seem to constitute confirmation of the verdict mentioned above. In reality, however, the Stuttgart District Court merely incorporated Adametz's statement, which appears among the verdict's sources merely as “Statement given by the witness Ad. in Dachau Prison Camp on 25 Oct. 1945” (Rüter/Mildt, p. 734). Its procedural importance, as we shall see, is even greater. I shall return to this witness later, in relation to Babi Yar. At this point I will merely analyze the general context of his statement.

The witness asserted that he was a member of the 4th Company of the 83rd Police Reserve Battalion, and that he had done service, first as *Wachtmeister*, and then as *Oberwachtmeister*, from mid-December 1941 until 24 August 1943, with the police command of Kamenskoye (present-day Dneprodzerzhinsk), a city some 40 km west of Dnepropetrovsk (USSR-80, p. 1). On 24 August 1943, he was sent to Dnepropetrovsk with his colleague, Franz Matyssek, an utterly un-

known person, by the “commanding officer of the police, Major Peter Burgfels,” another unknown person. The 83rd Police Reserve Battalion, as noted by Curilla, “was based in Gleiwitz” and escorted Jewish transports from Slovakia to the Lublin district in 1942, and perhaps also from Slovakia to Auschwitz and Sobibor between the end of May and the beginning of July. In July 1942, the battalion was at Lvov (Curilla 2011, p. 142). Here it became the 1st Battalion of the 24th Police Regiment and as such received a mission order on 24 August to combat robber gangs in the territory of Logosk (*ibid.*, p. 400). In May 1943, the 24th Police Regiment was subordinated to the Higher SS and Police leader Russia Center headquartered at Mogilev (*ibid.*, p. 585), while Dnepropetrovsk was under the jurisdiction of the Higher SS and Police leader Russia South. For this reason, on the one hand, Adametz did not mention his presumed membership in the 1st Battalion of the 24th Police Regiment; on the other hand, it is not clear how he ended up at Kamenskoye as early as December 1941. In addition, it is not plausible that his unit, consisting of 40 men, would have been sent to Kiev, 475 km away by road, merely for surveillance duty. Weren’t there 40 policemen able to do this at Kiev?

At any rate, Adametz was familiar with the designations “1005 a” and “1005 b,” but not with those of “*Sonderkommando*” or “*Kommando*”; he called it “*Abteilung*” (detachment). On the other hand, the statement that there was an “*Abteilung*” (which later became a “*Sonderkommando*”) 1005a and 1005b operating at Kiev originates precisely with Adametz, so that it does not constitute a “confirmation” of anything.

It is important to note that the designation “*Abteilung* 1005 b” is dubious, because *Sonderkommando* 1005 B should have consisted entirely of inmates: as workers *and* as guards doing the surveillance; Adametz, by contrast, asserts that this designation was only attributed to the 40 policemen transferred – without inmates – from Dnepropetrovsk. The question will be examined in greater depth in Section 4.2.13. dedicated to the witness Adametz.

The verdict of the Stuttgart District Court established that at Babi Yar *Sonderkommando* 1005 A began its activity on 18 August 1943 and concluded it on 29 September.

In the ravine near the Jewish cemetery, there were “mainly two large mass graves with together at least 50,000 bodies of killed civilians, mostly murdered Jews, of whom more than 33,000,” were shot on 29-30 November 1941, in addition to approximately 25,000 “Russian people” (Rüter/Mildt, pp. 718f., 722). 327 inmates were used for the work, with chains 75 cm long around their ankles. The operations are described as follows (*ibid.*, p. 716):

*“Before the various mass graves were opened, the terrain had to be completely cordoned off according to Blobel’s orders, and visual shields had to be set up through the erection of appropriate protective fencing or reed screens as a visual barrier, insofar as the terrain’s features required it. Where in doubt, ‘trial digs’ were performed to determine the location of the graves. After exposing the bodies or their remains, the inmates began to pull them out of the mass graves with spe-*

*cial hooks, and to pile them up in gigantic stacks. By their very nature, the pyres were not always exactly the same size; as a rule, however, about 2,000 bodies were burned in a pile several meters high covering a ground area of at least 50 square meters on average. To ensure a complete and thorough combustion, T-bars (railroad rails) or large steel grates were put onto a stone base, and on top of this, then, wood and the exhumed bodies were stacked in layers. Every pyre was then sufficiently soaked in tar oil and set on fire. It usually burned for more than 24 hours. Subsequently, any bones or other residue left over had to be pulverized by the inmates. The ashes were sifted through in search of precious metals, and finally scattered or buried."*

60 pyres were constructed; the tar oil was sprayed over them "with an apparatus connected to a compressor, like in road construction"; moreover, to accelerate the work, Blobel asked the Organization Todt for a big steam shovel (*ibid.*, p. 719).

The first report on the exhumations-cremations at Babi Yar is found in the "Information of the Extraordinary State Commission on Destruction and Atrocities Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders in the City of Kiev," dated 29 February 1944. In the paragraph headed "Mass Extermination of Peaceful Civilians and Soviet Prisoners-of-War," we read the following (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 201f.):

*"In 1943, sensing their instability in Kiev, the invaders tried to cover the traces of their crimes. They dug out the graves of their victims and burned them. The Germans sent the inmates of the Syrets camp to do the job of burning the bodies in Babi Yar. That work was supervised by SS officer Topaide, officers of Gendarmes Johann Merkel, Focht and SS platoon commander Rewer.*

*Witnesses L.K. Ostrovsky, S.B. Berlyand, V. Yu. Davydov, Ya. A. Steyuk and I.M. Brodsky who escaped the shooting in Babi Yar on September 29, 1943 have testified the following: 'As prisoners-of-war we were kept in the Syrets camp in the outskirts of Kiev. On August, 18, 100 of us were sent to Babi Yar. There we were chained into shackles and ordered to dig [sic] out and burn the bodies of Soviet citizens exterminated by the Germans. The Germans brought there granite tombstones and iron grates from the cemetery. From the tombstones we made platforms on which we placed rails, and on top [of] the rails we put the grates, using them as fire-grates. We put a layer of logs upon the grates, and on the logs a layer of bodies. Upon the bodies we again put a layer of logs and poured crude oil over it. In this order several rows of bodies were laid, and then set on fire. Each such furnace contained up to 2.500-3.000 bodies. The Germans set up special teams which removed from the bodies earrings, rings, pulled out gold teeth. After all the bodies were burned, new furnaces were piled up, and so forth. The bones were crushed into small fragments. We were made to scatter the ashes across the ravine so that no traces were left. We worked there 12-15 hours every day. To speed up work, the Germans used an excavator. Over the period since August 18 till the day of our escape, September 29, approximately 70,000 bodies were burned. They also burned here the just delivered bodies of men, women and children killed in Gasenwagens [sic].'"*



The Extraordinary State Commission investigating Kiev compelled a few German prisoners of war to conduct excavations in the Syrets Camp, at Babi Yar, Darnitsa and other places. These prisoners then issued a proclamation in perfect Soviet propaganda style, in which they thanked the Soviet authorities for having turned them into “witnesses of the atrocities committed over the Russian population during the German occupation of Kiev.” The results of the excavations are summarized as follows:

*“In two pits alone we discovered 150 killed Soviet citizens. In other places we came across numerous remains of the burned bodies, clothes and bones.”*

The report then affirms that a “Special Commission”

*“has established that, according to incomplete data, more than 195,000 Soviet citizens were tortured to death, shot and poisoned in Gasenwagens in Kiev, including:*

- 1. In Babi Yar more than 100,000 men, women, children and old persons.*
- 2. In Darnitsa – more than 68 thousand Soviet prisoners-of-war and peaceful civilians.*
- 3. In the anti-tank ditch, near the Syrets camp and in the camp itself – more than 25 thousand peaceful Soviet civilians and prisoners-of-war.*
- 4. In the territory of the Kirillov mental hospital – 800 patients.*
- 5. In the territory of the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery – about 500 peaceful civilians.*
- 6. In Lukvanovka cemetery – 400 peaceful civilians.” (ibid., pp. 202f.)*

All this is obviously such crude propaganda that it does not even shrink from the most blatant contradictions. First of all, if 195,000 people had been murdered and buried in the region around Kiev, but only 70,000 were exhumed and cremated, there should still have been 125,000 bodies in mass graves, but the excavations conducted by the German POWs only found 150. Secondly, if 100,000 bodies were buried at Babi Yar, but only 70,000 had been exhumed and cremated by 29 September, there should have been 30,000 bodies still in the ground; since the Soviets did not find them, one must conclude that the exhumation-cremation continued after that date, and one can even calculate how long that would have taken. The 70,000 bodies were eliminated in 42 days, an average of 1,666 per day; hence, to extract the remaining 30,000 would have required  $(30,000 \div 1,666 =)$  18 days, and the operation would have been concluded on 17 October 1943. That final date, as we shall see, is also important for another reason.

It is nevertheless a fact that the report was drawn up barely five months after the official conclusion of the exhumation-cremation activities (29 September 1943), and that the witnesses were interrogated already in early November 1943, hence right after the events, so that their statements should have been the most-reliable ones.

## 4.2. The Witnesses

Since several witnesses made more than one statement, the subsequently quoted statements are numbered in brackets.

### 4.2.1. Vladimir Yuryevich Davydov (Davidov)

[1] This witness was interrogated at Kiev on 9 November 1943<sup>484</sup> by the head of the NKGB (People's Commissariat for State Security), Major Lavrenko. The witness had been interned in the Syretsky (Syrets) Camp, 5 km from Kiev, from 15 March to 16 August 1943. The witness described his experiences as follows:<sup>485</sup>

*“On 18 August, during morning roll call, 100 persons were selected from amongst us prisoners, including myself. By and large, Jews suspected of membership in the [Bolshevik] party were placed in a separate group, but also entirely innocent geriatrics. After the 100 persons had been counted, we were escorted by ‘SS’ men and taken to Babi Yar.*

*We all assumed that we were being taken to ‘Babi Yar’ to be shot, but one and a half hours after we got there, we were divided up into groups of five and led away. When it was my turn, I saw that my comrades, who had been led away before, had not been shot, but that they were all sitting there in chains. Hence, we were all out in chains, that is, all 100 persons, including myself, and crammed into so-called earth huts.*

*The entire guard detail at Babi Yar consisted of lower and middle-ranking SS men.*

*Afterwards, we found out that the planned action was subject to the greatest secrecy, and that no one was allowed to get closer to Babi Yar than one kilometer. For this reason, there were also screens there. From conversations among the Germans I gathered that this work was to be kept secret on Hitler's orders, and that no one except the above-mentioned persons was to learn about it.*

*Initially we didn't know what our work was to consist of exactly, but when we started excavating, we noticed that we were exposing the bodies of those who had been shot in 1941.*

*After a few days, a horrible sight met our eyes during the exhumation activities (during that time we were already in chains): we saw and heard as well the stench of decomposing bodies. We were driven to work very quickly, and didn't even have time to straighten up.*

<sup>484</sup> The text only gives the month, “9 November” (see Mattogno/Graf, p. 224). I supposed that the year was 1944, but the Soviet report is dated 29 February 1944 and mentions Davydov's testimony, hence it must be 9 November 1943.

<sup>485</sup> Hoppe, Doc. 275, pp. 653-659; quotations: pp. 656-658. The editors of this work erroneously read the name of the NKGB major who interrogated the witness: Davrenko instead of Lavrenko. “Protokol doprosa” (record of interrogation) of Valdimir Davidov, Kiev, 9 November 1943. GARF, 7021-65-6, pp. 13-16. Copies of the document can be found in GDA SBU, 7-8-1, pp. 86-93, and in DAKO, FP 5-2-21, pp. 23-32.

*There were thousands<sup>[486]</sup> of bodies in this ravine. There were two big ditches with about 50,000 bodies of Jews, and then there was another pit with shot persons at 'Babi Yar,' about half a kilometer away. To be more exact, this was an anti-tank ditch containing the bodies of killed commanders of the Red Army, probably commissars. That could be seen from the rank insignia and sabers. There were about 20,000 bodies in this ditch. These were persons in pilot's uniforms and overalls. It was obvious that many of these shooting victims had been wounded, since they either had crutches with them or wore bandages on their arms or legs.*

*Every time we had dug up 2,000 bodies, we had to build a furnace,<sup>[487]</sup> for which we piled up wood. Granite tombstones were brought from the Jewish cemetery and arranged on the ground in the form of a square. Railroad rails were laid on top, which were covered with a layer of wood, onto which a layer of bodies was stacked in a certain way (a German, an engineer, who was very knowledgeable, occupied himself with this working process). The result was a stack 10 to 12 meters high, consisting of up to 3,000 bodies. A torch was then put to the stack, and it began to burn. This is how the bodies were burned, and only bones remained, which did not burn completely. The bones were pulverized on metal sheets with special stamping tools and scattered in the empty ditch, which was filled up with this.*

*Initially, always only one such furnace burned, and each time a stack had burned down, the furnace was destroyed, since the stones melted and the rails got warped. For this reason, a new furnace had to be built for every stack. Since the number of bodies was very high and there were only a few furnaces, they started to burn the bodies in three locations at once. The number of the furnaces burning simultaneously, was later increased to four. Some 75 furnaces were built over the entire span of time in which the cremations were going on.*

*Because I was in 'Babi Yar' this entire time, I can say that roughly 70,000 bodies were burned in these furnaces. [...]*

*On 25 or 26 September,<sup>[488]</sup> when the work was almost finished, we were supposed to build one more furnace, for our own destruction. We realized this, because there were no more bodies in Babi Yar, but we were still building a furnace."*

On the night of 28-29 September, Davydov escaped with a group of inmates, but only 10 of them succeeded in getting away.

It is obvious that the sums are not correct: if 2,000 bodies were cremated on a single "furnace" at one time, and if 75 of these furnaces were built, the number of cremated bodies would have equalled (75,000 × 2,000 =) 150,000, not 70,000; vice versa, if there were 70,000 cremated bodies, then each "furnace" only destroyed on average (70,000 ÷ 75 =) 933.

The calculation is even more nonsensical since up to 3,000 bodies were said to have been placed on a single "furnace."

<sup>486</sup> In the Russian text, "desyatki tysyach," tens of thousands.

<sup>487</sup> In the original text, "pechka," literally "furnace, stove."

<sup>488</sup> In the original text, erroneously, "August."

The height of the “furnaces,” given as 10-12 meters, is so implausible that it does not even deserve comment. One possible attempt at explaining this away is by positing that the witness, who just prior to this spoke of “layers,” actually meant 10 to 12 layers rather than meters. This, is, however, first of all refuted by the fact that the record of interrogation was signed by witness Davydov in his hand on every single page. Hence, this possible error could not have escaped him. In addition, even if it were layers rather than meters, in order to reduce the size of the pyre to a more reasonable height of, say, four meters, each layer could not have been higher than some 0.3 to 0.4 m. Since each layer of corpses alone would have been 0.2 to 0.25 m high, there would have been hardly any space left for the firewood. Hence, no matter which way we look at it, it remains absurdly implausible.

[2] On 17 January 1946, the newspaper *Pravda Ukrainy* published an account of Babi Yar by the “engineer V. Davydov.” The account is a little short on information, but it still contains details worthy of note. The total number of bodies amounted to “tens of thousands,” and their exhumation was effected using shovels:

*“The Germans decided to cremate these tens of thousands of bodies. Two layers of bodies were placed on one layer of wood, about two hundred in each layer. The whole thing was then soaked in naphtha. On top of the bodies, layers of wood were again placed, and on top of them more corpses, and it was again soaked in naphtha. The stack grew to the height of a two-story house. Everything was again soaked with naphtha, [then] the Germans set fire to this enormous pyre. It burned for several days.”*

The mass grave with the bodies of the Soviet soldiers, which in the previous deposition was found half a kilometer from Babi Yar, is one kilometer away here. Here, 15 inmates succeed in escaping, as against 10 in the previous deposition.<sup>489</sup>

[3] On 9 February 1967, Davydov was interrogated by the German judiciary, and declared, among other things (Trubakov, p. 174):

*“In one oven we stacked about 2000 cadavers mixed with layers of wood, doused them with oil and set [them] on fire. Stacks of firewood and the corpses were up to 4 meters. Bonfire of the corpses burned for 1-2 days; then we shoveled it, crushed the burned bones with slabs and sieved them through metal sieves in order to find valuables. Ashes were carried on stretchers and scattered in the fields near the ravine; several such furnaces were burning at the same time. To speed up work on the incineration of corpses (the Soviet troops were approaching Kiev), the Germans increased the number of prisoners to 330 and also used excavators and blasting method.*

*During the period when we worked in the ravine in Babi Yar, the Germans, in addition to burning the exhumed corpses, brought people in gas vans and asphyxiated them in front of us and then threw them into the same burning stoves. From*

<sup>489</sup> TsDAVO, 4620-3-278, pp. 13-15.

*other locations adjacent to Babi Yar, the Germans brought a lot of corpses, and also burned [them] in the stoves.*

*We – the prisoners who were a part of the so-called ‘Sonderkommando’ – were subjected to severe torture, beating, shooting and burning at the site. [...]*

*Over the entire period in Babi Yar 50-60 furnaces were built and about 125,000 dead were burned.”*

[4] On 22 May 1980, Davydov was interrogated at Kiev by a section of the KGB. He declared that “no fewer than 2,000 bodies” were placed on a pyre (which he called “stove” or “oven”), that 55-60 such pyres were built, and that the total number of bodies cremated was “no fewer than 120,000.”<sup>490</sup>

The contradictions between these three witness statements are obvious. The number of pyres is given as 50-60, 55-60 and 75, with a body count that drops from 3,000 to 2,000; the total number of cremated bodies is given as “tens of thousands,” 70,000, 120,000 and 125,000! The height of each pyre varies from 10-12 meters, to the equivalent of a two-story house, which is approximately 6 meters, down to 4 meters.

#### 4.2.2. Leonid Kivovich Ostrovsky

[5] This witness was interrogated by the NKGB on 12 November 1943. He said that, on 16 August 1943, he was taken from the Syretsky Camp to Babi Yar together with 100 other inmates, Jews and Soviet partisans:

*“At Babi Yar, all of us were in chains. The distance between the chains was 50-60 cm and permitted us to move about with difficulty and to excavate the ground using shovels. This same day, they forced us to excavate the ground at Babi Yar. Then, when the earth was removed to a depth of 0.5-3 meters, the bodies of Soviet citizens began to appear from underneath. Blocks of stone were brought from the Jewish cemetery upon which we built a rectangular platform measuring approximately 30 x 40 meters. Railroad rails were placed on top of the platform, and grids were arranged on top of the rails. A layer of wood was placed on top of the grid, upon which we placed the bodies exhumed at Babi Yar. The bodies were placed with their heads pointing outwards, in two rows, after which the bodies were covered by another layer of wood and the whole thing was soaked with naphtha. In this way, we piled the bodies up to a height of 2-2.5 meters, and then we set fire to it. Then, when all the bodies were burned, we built another furnace upon which bodies were again placed, as before. [...]*

*A total of 25-30 furnaces were built, upon each of which 2,500-3,000 bodies were cremated in this way.”*

The number of inmates in the squad amounted to 100 persons, but “at the beginning of September” this number was increased to 321. During the night of 29 September, 15-18 inmates escaped, but all the others were killed.<sup>491</sup>

<sup>490</sup> GDA SBU, 7-8-1, pp. 133-138.

<sup>491</sup> TsDAVO, 4620-3-282, pp. 1-7.

### 4.2.3. Yakov Andreyevich Steyuk

[6] The witness was interrogated on 13 November 1943 by the NKGB.

*“On August 18, 1943, among other 100 people, I was sent to work in Babi Yar (a place of mass executions of the population of Kiev), under the authority of the SD. Upon arrival at Babi Yar, we all were shackled; we never returned to the camp. [...] The first time we did not know the meaning and purpose of our ‘earth works’ (‘Excavations’) until on the sixth day, when digging a pit about 4 meters deep we found a large number of human corpses, including women, children and the elderly. [...]*

*Yes, I know well the place of the excavations in Babi Yar and can even specify where they buried the metal for construction on which the bodies were burned.*

*Partially the corpses were pulled out from holes with hooks, often by mechanical means using an excavator type ‘Polik.’ The exhumed corpses were stacked in layers on a specially constructed platform in the following order: on each layer of corpses was put firewood, which was doused with engine oil mixed with kerosene, and then, when several layers of corpses and wood were arranged reaching the overall height of four meters, the platform was set on fire, and thus about 5000<sup>492</sup> corpses were consumed at the same time. There were no less than ten such platforms set up between August 18 and 29.” (Trubakov, pp. 137f.)*

The number of cremated bodies is not indicated, but if 10 pyres were built, and approximately 5,000 bodies were put on each of them, the total number is obviously 50,000.

[7] Two days later, on 15 November 1943, Steyuk was interrogated by Colonel Rudenko. Steyuk declared:

*“On 18 August 1943, the inmates transported to Babi Yar were chained up, given shovels and put to work excavating a large ditch. After digging along a length of 10-15 meters, a mass of bodies appeared at a depth of 3-4 meters. For the first 5-6 days, there were 100 working inmates, but two were shot. Then, gradually, groups of 20-40 inmates arrived, and on 28 September there were 321 of them.”*

In response to the question of how many bodies were removed from the mass graves at Babi Yar, the witness replied:

*“In can’t say regarding all the bodies, because I went and saw bodies only where I was working personally, that is, at Babi Yar itself,”*

but, he added, excavations and exhumations were also carried out by the Germans in the so-called anti-tank ditch, located in front of the ravine (see Document II.4.11, “protivotankovy rov”) as well as at another location, where from 50 to 85 inmates had worked every day for 20 days. But the question related to Babi Yar in particular, and was repeated. Steyuk then declared:

*“Approximately 45,000 bodies were exhumed and then cremated before my very eyes and with my participation, including 500 bodies extracted from the ground*

<sup>492</sup> The translation reads 3,000, but this is a transcription error; the Russian text says in fact “okolo 5 tysyach trupov” (“about 5 thousand corpses”). TsDAVO, 4620-3-243/6, p. 13.

*near the forest of Kirillovskaya Bolnitsa [Hospital]; the rest were all at Babi Yar."*

When he was asked how the bodies were cremated, technically speaking, the witness declared:

*"For the cremation of the bodies, no fewer than 10 stone platforms were specifically built with grates made of iron and tin. The bodies were placed on the grids in layers, together with the wood, in about 20 layers, and then, as I have already explained, the whole thing was drenched with fuel, layer by layer, and set on fire."*

But, he was asked, how did he know that 45,000 bodies had been cremated? Steyuk replied that

*"for the cremation of the bodies, with my participation in the work, no fewer than 10 platforms were built upon which the bodies were cremated. An average of 5,000 bodies were placed on each platform and then cremated."*

The work continued from morning till night. During their stay at Babi Yar, the Germans shot 24 inmates.<sup>493</sup>

[8] On 11 June 1980, Steyuk was subjected to further interrogation by the KGB:<sup>494</sup>

*"On August 18, 1943, in Syrets Camp came a large group of Germans with dogs and took away 100 prisoners. I was one of these prisoners. We were taken nearby Babi Yar, which seemed to have been divided into many sectors. All around there were many Germans with machine guns who were guarding the area. One of them asked if there were locksmiths and blacksmiths among us. Several people responded, and they were taken over an earth escarpment; five more people from our hundred were led away with them. Then again five people were taken; I was among them.*

*Behind the mound was a heap of metal chains and long rails, next to which sat a fascist with a hammer in his hand and a few prisoners, also with hammers; they fitted all others with fetters. After that, everybody was given a shovel, led into a ravine and was forced to dig deeply. On this day, we did not get to the bottom; after dark they took us in the prepared dugout, which had no windows, and instead of a door in the doorway was lattice, taken from the cemetery fence. On the lattice hung a large padlock, and in front of the dugout was a watchtower with a machine gun mounted on it.*

*The next day they took us into the same ravine, and forced to dig again. At this time an SS officer came whom the guards addressed by his surname, Topaide. He began to give orders and under his leadership we soon got to the bottom layers of corpses, which were extracted from the ravine with special hooks and taken to the furnaces. The furnaces were built of tombstones, rails and bars according to Topaide's instructions. On the stove we stacked firewood, then layers of dead bodies, then a layer of wood and corpses again. This way we made a stack of*

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-47.

<sup>494</sup> Trubakov, pp. 184f.; all subsequent page numbers from there unless stated otherwise.

*three or more meters high. In each stack fit at least 2,000 corpses, which were then drenched in oil and set on fire. From personal observations I can say that in Babi Yar were built up to sixty such furnaces in which dead bodies were burned.*

*Given the fact that the Germans forced us to lay two thousand and more dead bodies on every stove, I came to the conclusion that over 100,000 dead were burned in Babi Yar. To speed up work on the extraction and burning of corpses an excavator was delivered in the ravine and the number of employed in this work was increased to 325 people.*

*Personally, I repeatedly saw how gas vans, filled with living people, came from the city. These people were either shot from [with] rifles or killed by gas."*

These statements also contain obvious contradictions. The number of pyres has increased from 10 to 60, and the number of bodies cremated has increased from 45,000 to 100,000, which is not a very intelligent thing to say: if a furnace contained "two thousand and more dead bodies" and "up to sixty" of them were built, the number of cremated bodies should have been at least 120,000, not 100,000. The height of the pyres, however, has decreased from 4 to 3 meters.

#### 4.2.4. Semen Borisovich Berlyant

[9] The witness was interrogated on 16 November 1943 during the investigations at Kiev, during which he declared (p. 144):

*"After that I was sent in [to] a suburban town called Myshelovka (Mousetrap), where I worked at a subsidiary farm for the Gestapo until September 1943. From this farm in September 1943 I and 8 other people, all ethnic Jews, were sent to Babi Yar, where we first of all were fettered, and approximately from September 2-3 1943, I worked with others on the excavation and incineration of corpses of Soviet citizens and prisoners of war buried in the ground.*

*At first, there were 320 people working there, then the number changed. We worked 12-15 hours a day. We dug pits, pulled the bodies out of them, above these pits we arranged iron bars – a temporary 'oven' – on which we laid the pinewood planks, on top of them – about three hundred human corpses in one row, on top of the corpses again a layer of wood, then drenched all of it with oil and ignited. The arrangement of one such furnace consisted of about 3,000 dead because the corpses were arranged in several superimposed rows. This way were burned about 70 thousand corpses.*

*Once all the bodies had been exhumed and burned, the Germans began to bring from the Gestapo people asphyxiated in gas vans, 70-80 dead in one van; they also were burned.*

*All of us, 180 people, worked shackled in the iron chains."*



#### 4.2.5. Isaak Moiseyevich Brodsky

[10] This witness was interrogated in November-December 1943 (p. 152):

*“In early June 1943 we, in the number of [unclear] were sent to Babi Yar to dig corpses [the following is unclear].*

*People who have worked there were shackled in chains with special clamps. While working in the Yar, we burned piles of dead people on a specially prepared oven, doused with oil, then set on fire and people were burned to ashes, then the ashes were sifted through a special lattice and if we found valuable items, the Germans would take them. In my opinion, that during my work on the incineration of corpses in Babi Yar, the Germans burned 70000 of corpses.”*

#### 4.2.6. Vladislav Frantsevich Kuklya

[11] This witness was examined on 4 February 1944 (p. 154):

*“On August 22, 1943, I, together with 22 other condemned to death prisoners, was put into the gas van, brought to Syrets concentration camp, where we spent three days in the same dugout under strict surveillance of the guards. Every minute we expected to be executed, but on the fourth day we all were brought to Babi Yar; we believed that finally we would be shot there, but it turned out we were driven to work on the excavation of buried in the ravine [sic] corpses of Soviet citizens shot in 1941-1943.*

*Our legs had been bound in fetters and we were forced to dig up the corpses and burn them in furnaces prepared for this purpose. We built these furnaces ourselves from stone monuments of the Jewish cemetery and grids, which we put on rails, and on top of the rails we put wood and then put the bodies, and each row of wood and bodies was drenched in oil specially delivered for this purpose.*

*Thus, the layer of dead bodies laid on the furnace grew to 4 feet [sic; probably meters] in height, a length of about 10 meters and 5 meters in width. There were 70-80 such furnaces in the ravine, in each furnace fit from 2 to 4 and more thousand of corpses. Then we set them on fire, and these furnaces were burning day and night. After burning, the bones of [the] corpses were ground into a powder by slabs, sifted through a sieve, and the powder was scattered on the soil surface and mixed with the ground. In addition to burning exhumed from the ravine [sic] corpses, we had to throw into fire the bodies of people asphyxiated in the gas vans, which delivered them from the city every half an hour. There were men and women of different ages, including elderly and babies. The total number of burned corpses in Babi Yar by our calculation was 95-100 thousand.”*

[12] On 1 March 1944, the witness had a conversation with the secretary of the Kiev Regional Komsomol Committee, P. Tronk (pp. 159f.):

*“So all this happened around August 18-23. After we had been chained they led us to the dugout, where 100 people were housed. [...] There were already 100 people, and now the 22 of us were added – 21 from the Gestapo death row cell plus one Jew from Syrets camp. [...]*

*The corpses had been already unearthed, but not burned yet. When we were building the escarpment, we felt a terrible smell, we suspected what people were doing there, but we did not know for what purpose. The stench was awful.*

*The next day we went down to work at 5:00 in the morning, began to build the furnace, arranged monuments from the Jewish cemetery and stones, then placed grating (fences from the cemetery), then a layer of firewood, twigs, doused them with oil and some other special igniting components. When I was pouring it, I dipped my hand in it, then rubbed my eyes and now my left eye sees poorly. On top of all that we put a row of 250 people, then again 250 corpses, and then wood and again poured the liquid over the wood. Then another such row on top of it so that, in general, there were two thousand corpses. Then [we] poured more gasoline (in the corners). The height of the furnace reached approximately the height of this room, the width too, only that it was a little narrower. There were 70-80 such furnaces, in some of them would fit 3-4 thousand people. [...]*

*For the first time we burned bodies on August 25, the first furnace was burning for 24 hours, after that there were only bones. Then the bones were crushed, put through a sieve, taken up the slope and covered with earth. According to our estimates, 90-95 thousand corpses were burned. We ran away from there on September 28-29. We burned the corpses from the anti-tank ravine, where lay 35000 of our POWs and the bodies of the Jews shot in '41. [...] This work was completed on August 28."*

#### 4.2.7. Iosif Yakovlevich Doliner

[13] The witness was interrogated on 4 February 1944 (pp. 156f.):

*"On August 18, 1943, they selected 100 people – about 50 Jews and [the] others were Russian – and took us to Babi Yar, and began to shackle our feet in chains; for this work they selected two fitters from our midst, and they fitted the shackles. After that, we were ordered to dig. At first I did not know for what purpose we were digging a pit, but when on the third day we got the corpses of people, I realized that the purpose was to unearth these bodies. When the bodies were exhumed, we were forced to manufacture a furnace, i.e., we brought a number of monuments from the Jewish cemetery, which we laid out right there in the ravine on the specially leveled off sites; on these plates we placed rails and lattice fences from the cemetery, on the lattice we put wood, which we doused with oil; on the wood we placed the bodies, on which we also poured oil and so this pile grew to two meters in height and 2-8 meters in diameter; such stoves were made three in a row and each held up to 2,000 corpses, but the excavations were carried out in three places, and everywhere stood the furnaces; when the required number of bodies was stacked, the furnace was ignited and burned in one night, and the bones were turned to powder by ramming and scattered on the slopes of the cliffs and mixed with the ground. When all the corpses had been burned, these furnaces were dismantled and the rails, bars and stones were carried in different parts of the ravine and covered with earth.*

*In addition to burning corpses dug out of the ravine, the Germans brought daily 5-6 gas vans full of asphyxiated people: men, women and young children were immediately stacked on these furnaces, doused with oil and burned. Often people taken out of the gas vans were still alive but, without paying any attention to it, the Germans threw them into the fire.*

*This lasted until September 29, 1943. During the period from August 18 until September 29, were burned about 100000 cadavers of people of different ages and gender.”*

#### 4.2.8. Yakov Abramovich Kaper

[14] The witness was heard by German court officials on 13 February 1967:

*“In August 1943, we were taken to Babi Yar, shackled in chains and forced to pull out the corpses, to build special furnaces and burn in them the remains of victims. [...] In Babi Yar there were more than 300 such prisoners.*

*After excavation of the pits we pulled the corpses with hooks and put them densely in the furnace, built of stone slabs, rails, rods and sections of wood, drenched with oil. Between these layers lay the dead. The furnaces were set on fire, and they burned for a day and longer. At the same time elsewhere in the ravine, we were forced to build new furnaces. This was repeated many times. The bones that remained after the burning of corpses were crushed with mortars, sieved through a mesh, mixed with sand and scattered with ashes, leveling off the road. Prisoners were also forced to pull out gold teeth and other valuables before burning the corpses. I saw how a gas van came to the ravine, stayed for a few minutes with the engine running, and then we had to unload corpses from the van and throw in the burning furnace. Often people in gas vans did not die and they were thrown into the fire alive. From the bonfire we could hear shouts and groans. In addition, we saw how people were brought in the ravine of Babi Yar in the vans and shot here, not gassed; then their corpses were burned too. The victims of gassing and shooting in Babi Yar were civilians, partisans, and Soviet activists.*

*In Babi Yar, I and other prisoners were about two months. During this time about 120000 dead were burned.”* (pp. 176f.)

[15] Upon a suggestion from Erhard Roy Wiehn, Kaper and Budnik (see below) compiled a memoir between late 1992 and early 1993, which was published in 1993. In the English translation, Kaper’s account is titled “Thorny Road,” and Budnik’s “Under a Lucky Star.” Kaper added a few other details in his account:

*“When everything was ready we were ordered to pull the corpses out and put them on the furnaces. For this special tools were prepared. There was a handle in the form of [a] ring and a rod 50-60 centimeters long with the hooked sharpened end [sic]. We were shown how to insert this hook under the chin and pull the corpse out. All this work was done very quickly since every five prisoners were supervised by a German with a whip. If he struck he could kill. And all the time we heard the cries ‘Schnell!’ We pulled out the corpse and brought it up to the ground[.] There other people picked it up. They opened the mouth first. If there*

*were golden teeth, they were pulled out. Then they took off the footwear and then accurately laid it [down] the head. Several layers of corpses were put together and then all were doused with oil. Logs were laid and then more corpses and so forth. So at the end it was 2.5 or 3 meters in height. In order to put corpses on the top, a special scaffolding was erected. Thus, during the day we prepared for each furnace about two and a half to three thousand corpses. When everything was ready once again oil was poured over everything and the furnace was lit with torches. At first the bright flame lit the whole ravine but gradually the black smoke covered the flame. The air filled with smoke and the sweetish smell of burning. It became impossible to breathe. At first hair was burning then the bodies caught fire.*

*Germans who were with us there also couldn't breathe and were very often replaced. They also carried flasks with water and they drank it constantly. At the same time another furnace was being prepared in another place, and while one furnace was burning down another was lit. Bones remained almost untouched though they were in [the] fire. They were gathered and put on a special ground lain with granite plates. A special team was crushing those bones into small pieces with special mortars. Then they were sieved and big bones were again crushed then mixed with sand and were scattered on the road. [...]*

*Our team in charge of burning corpses counted 330 persons. Each day three times a day our chains were checked and they reported to Topaide with humor that in the heavenly team there were so many figures. In German the word figure means corpse. They reported it and laughed since they considered us live corpses." (Budnik/Kaper/Wiehn, pp. 282f., 285)*

Here the witness evidently commits a *lapsus*. The German term "Figuren" does not refer to cadavers. According to witness mythology, it was applied to cadavers only, not to living people.

#### 4.2.9. Zyama Abramovich Trubakov

[16] The witness was examined by German court officials on 14 February 1967:

*"I was in this camp [Syrets] until August 18, 1943, and then, among the hundreds that included Jews, communists and partisans, was sent to Babi Yar, where we were put into some pit, which had an exit on one side, heavily guarded exclusively by officers from the SS troops. [...]*

*During the 3 days we were digging a hole, until we got to what we thought to be a solid ground, but it turned out to be corpses. Tombstones and iron fences were brought from the Jewish cemetery, and then the area 10 x 10 m was planned, where they were laid in check[er] board order so that they formed and [sic] ash pan; rows of firewood and corpses were stacked and drenched with oil.*

*2-2.5 thousand corpses would fit in this furnace; they were set on fire simultaneously on all four sides, at first creating great smoke, and then burning without smoke, and at the bottom, from under the ash pan, a thick black mass flowed in a specially adapted pit and then [was] buried.*

*We were forced to grind the remaining unburned bones and sift them through the grid, after that the powder was scattered on the nearby vegetable gardens.*

*I, together with Rappoport (deceased), was forced to check the corpses before burning for the extraction of gold and other valuable items.*

*Gradually, our team increased to 320 people in 2 dugouts.*

*I stayed with this team till September 28, 1943, i.e. till our escape.*

*During this time I witnessed the burning of about 125 thousand of corpses that we were forced to dig up and burn, as I have said above.” (Trubakov, p. 181)*

[17] On 28 May 1980, the witness was interrogated by the KGB:

*“On August 18, 1943 I was among a group of prisoners sent to Babi Yar. 300 people altogether had been escorted there. In this camp we all were put in fetters, which were a piece of ordinary metal chain 70 centimeters long. The ends of the chains were put around our ankles encircling both legs and secured with a cut link.*

*Then we were forced to exhume and burn the bodies of people who were executed in September 1941 and later. The SS officer Topaide supervised the exhuming and the subsequent burning of corpses. According to his schemes were made special hooks for pulling corpses; on his directions were built special furnaces for burning corpses. For the construction of furnaces were used tombstones and monuments, rails of metal beams and fences. On the stove were stacked layers of wood, then the corpses, then wood and the corpses.*

*At each such furnace were put 2000 and more dead bodies, then they all were drenched with oil and ignited. I was in a group of several prisoners, whom the Nazis singled out to search the corpses and seize the gold teeth, jewelry and other valuables. Laughing at me, the Germans used to call me ‘prospector.’ Here I saw that some corpses were only in their underwear, and some were fully dressed. In the pockets of clothing I found small amounts of jewelry, coins, and other valuable items and passed all of those items to the SS officers.*

*From my personal observations over the entire period about 60 such furnaces were built and at least 120000 dead were burned.” (ibid., pp. 183f.)*

#### 4.2.10. David Iosifovich Budnik

[18] The witness was interrogated on 14 February 1967:<sup>495</sup>

*“In mid-August 1943 I was sent to the Babi Yar Camp together with a group of inmates. There, we were chained and forced to exhume bodies of persons previously shot in this ravine, and then we burn them in furnaces. The furnaces were constructed out of disassembled funereal monuments and metal gratings, upon which a layer of wood and a layer of bodies were arranged. The construction of the furnaces was overseen by German specialist instructors. The parts of the job consisting of the exhumation of the bodies and supplying the naphtha were mechanized. We were forced to build these furnaces in various places and burn them in*

<sup>495</sup> GDA SBU, 7-8-1, pp. 129-132.

turn. We arranged up to 2,000 bodies in a single furnace. Following the complete combustion of the furnace, we crushed the unburnt bones with special rammers and passed them through a sieve. In so doing, the Hitlerites gathered the objects of gold which appeared and, in particular, the gold fillings from the teeth. The inmates scattered the remaining ashes at the bottom of the ravine.

During the period in which we were burning the bodies, the Germans brought living inmates in gas vehicles [dushegubki] no less often than twice a week, 8-9 trips a day, and then poisoned them with gas in the vehicles, and the bodies were then disposed of by ourselves in the cremation furnace. We were also forced to exhume bodies in the anti-tank ditch located near Babi Yar as well as in the territories of the psychiatric hospital on Pavlov Street, and cremate them in the above-mentioned furnaces. Some of the inmates in our group were shot and cremated on the spot. In all, 120,000-125,000 bodies were cremated at Babi Yar within a month and a half.”

[19] On 22 May 1980, Budnik was examined by Major Pluzhnik of the KGB. He described the structure of a furnace and explained:

“On top of such a foundation, a layer of wood was laid, followed by a layer of bodies which we had just exhumed, then the bodies were drenched in naphtha. Various layers were stacked atop each other in this way. To get the maximum number of bodies on one furnace, we had to build wooden platforms and carry the bodies to the top of the platforms and lay them out correctly. The preparation of the furnaces and the arrangement of the bodies on top of them was directed by fascist instructors specifically assigned to the job. We extracted the bodies with special hooks, and, when the Hitlerites began to burn the bodies at a sustained pace, the camp procured an excavator, and this part of the work of exhumation of the bodies and supplying the naphtha with which the bodies were soaked was mechanized. During the arrangement of the bodies, a few Hitlerites specifically assigned to the task watched us carefully. On their orders, we placed no fewer than 2,000 bodies on each furnace.”

According to the witness, approximately 55-60 furnaces were built at Babi Yar, upon which “no fewer than 120,000 bodies were cremated.”<sup>496</sup>

[20] The account published by Erhard Roy Wiehn contains further implausible details, such as this one:

“We were guarded by 18 SS officers, none of them less than a junior lieutenant. That was in addition to the regular guards around the entire territory.”

Budnik adds that “the shooting went on until the last day. Even when we were taken to Babi Yar, we saw the vans filled with prisoners passing by and heard the shots,” which is a bit dubious even from an orthodox point of view.

The “gastruck” “had room for 110 people,” which means that (8-9 × 110 =) 880-990 persons were “gassed” every day, at least twice a week, which means 3,520-3,960 total over the four weeks of activity at Babi Yar – and these are the minimum figures. I shall return to this question later in an appropriate section.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-138.

The witness was assigned to the exhumation of the bodies as well as to the construction of the pyres. In this regard, he writes:

*“Besides digging, we also helped the team that built the furnaces. For this, tombstones and iron fences brought over from the neighboring Jewish cemetery were used. These tombstones were laid on the site 10 meters across by 10 meters in width, like a chessboard. Rails and fences were laid on top of them. Then two rows of logs were put down and then a layer of corpses, then more logs and then more corpses. After this everything was doused with oil and burnt.*

*The furnaces were of differing sizes, but not less than three meters high. The corpses were laid with their heads on the outside. Any remaining bones were crushed with iron hammers and then sifted with special sieves to remove gold and jewels. The ashes were then mixed into the ground. [...]*

*We worked 12 to 15 hours every day. The Germans made us hurry. The black smoke was rising above Babi Yar from the 60 furnaces that were built and in each one over two thousand people were burnt.*

*We did not suspect that there even existed a special German firm for designing crematoria. A real industry of annihilation.”* (Budnik/Kaper/Wiehn, pp. 113-115)

#### 4.2.11. Mikhail Fyodorovich Matveyev

[21] On 12 October 2000, this witness wrote his “Memoirs,” which are rather generic with regard to the exhumation-cremation activity at Babi Yar, in which he nevertheless “recalled”:<sup>497</sup>

*“Approximately 100 ovens burned day and night at Babi Yar for a month and a half.”*

#### 4.2.12. Paul Blobel

[22] Blobel, the alleged German outdoor-cremation specialist, dwelled on the question of the exhumation and cremation of bodies in his statement of 18 June 1947. The cremation technique described by him is in total contradiction to that indicated by all the witnesses mentioned above. In this regard, he declared (NO-3947; the first half of which I already quoted on p. 434):

*“In September 1942, I reported to Dr. Thomas in Kiev and transmitted the [Müller’s] order to him. The task could not be carried out immediately, for one thing, because Dr. Thomas was disinclined to carry out the order, and for another thing, because the material needed to burn the bodies was not on hand. In May and June 1943, I traveled to Kiev several times in this matter, and then, after consulting with Dr. Thomas as well as SS and Police Leader Hennecke, the task was carried out.*

*During my visit in August, I personally inspected the burning of bodies in a mass grave near Kiev. This grave was approximately 55 m long, 3 m wide and 2 1/2 m deep. After the top cover had been removed, the bodies were drenched with fuel*

<sup>497</sup> [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/documents/doc97.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/documents/doc97.html) (last accessed on Sept. 13, 2018).

*and set on fire. It took about two days before the grave was burned down. I personally saw that the grave had smoldered through all the way to the bottom. After that, the grave was covered up, and with this all traces were as good as erased.”*

The bodies were not, therefore, cremated on the furnaces described above, but inside the very grave in which they were found! Moreover, adopting the parameter of 3.5 bodies per cubic meter, Blobel’s grave, assuming a minimum top cover of 20 cm of sand, would have contained (55 m × 3 m × 2.30 m × 3.5 corpses/m<sup>3</sup> =) approximately 1,330 bodies. In order to contain the bodies of the presumed 33,771 Jews, (33,771 corpses ÷ 1,330 corpses/grave =) 25 graves of equal size would have been needed. The burial of the 70,000 bodies allegedly exhumed and cremated at Babi Yar (the lowest figure indicated by the “eyewitnesses”) would have required (70,000 corpses ÷ 1,330 corpses/grave =) more than 52 such graves.

On 9 October 1947, Albert Artl, a Gestapo official, signed a sworn statement in which he stated the following about the above-mentioned mass grave (NO-5384):

*“In March or April 1942, I met Paul Blobel in Kiev. On a car trip together to the Kiev estate of the commandant, Dr. Thomas, on the edge of the city near the cemetery, Blobel showed me a place and told me that Jews lie buried there who had been executed by his kommando. It was an old anti-tank ditch, which was later filled in.”*

If this were true, it would be necessary to conclude that Blobel had no idea where the Jews lay buried whom he had shot, since the “anti-tank ditches” were located outside the ravine of Babi Yar (see Document II.4.11, where they are called “protivotankovy rov”) and, according to the witnesses, contained the bodies of Soviet officials.

#### 4.2.13. Gerhard Adametz

[23] I take the account of this witness deposited in his statement of 17 October 1945, which I already mentioned earlier. Having reached Kiev around 10 September 1943, the group of 40 policemen, which became “Detachment 1005 b,” was taken “to an old cemetery about 5 km from Kiev,” evidently the Jewish cemetery.

*“We were led out of the cemetery into the adjacent field. The path leading through this field was cordoned off on both sides by policemen, who turned back everyone who approached. We saw about 100 inmates in the field, who were resting from their work. Every prisoner was shackled by both legs to a chain three quarters of a meter long. The prisoners were dressed in civilian clothing. As far as I can judge, the prisoners were Jews [...].*

*As we found out later, the inmates’ work consisted of exhuming bodies buried in two large graves on this spot, transporting them, stacking them onto huge piles, and burning them. It is hard to say, but I believe that 40-45,000 bodies were buried here on this spot. One mass grave was in an anti-tank ditch, which was par-*



tially filled with bodies. The ditch was about 100 m long, 10 m wide and 4-5 m deep. The second mass grave was on the other side of the path, about 200 m from the anti-tank ditch. In the second mass grave, there were about 15,000 bodies. These were smaller and bigger bodies, and one must assume that these were men, women and children. I have never been able to learn when and how these people died or were killed. I believe that they were all Jews and probably all civilians, but this could not be determined because the bodies were badly decomposed. There were no longer any signs of any clothing. The bodies had probably been buried for more than a year, and there was nothing left but skeletons. I never did more than throw a fleeting glance at the bodies, because the awful smell made me sick, and I lost my appetite for months.

On the day we arrived at this place (about 10 Sept. 43), there were about 3 to 4 small piles of bodies stacked up in the field. Each of these small piles consisted of about 700 bodies and was about 7 m long, 4 m wide and 2 m high. In the anti-tank ditch itself, which had already been partially emptied, there were three large piles of bodies of about 2,000 bodies, about 8 m long, 8 m wide and 3 m high. We were told later that Detachment 1005 b had begun this work (the exhumation and cremation of bodies) about a month earlier.

Here, as well as at other locations, I saw that the following working method was in use. (Burning of bodies). The bodies were dragged to a certain place with iron hooks and laid on a wooden base. More wood was then leaned up all around the finished pile, the whole thing was then drenched with oil and gasoline and set on fire." (USSR-80, pp. 4-6)

"Detachment 1005 b" was supposed to cooperate with "Detachment 1005 a," consisting of 40 policemen and between 4 to 8 SD men, in the formation of two cordons, one external, which prevented outsiders from approaching, and one internal, which kept the inmates under surveillance.

"This chain was formed in a big circle about 100 m from the middle of the worksite."

The work continued "until around 1 October 1943." *Standartenführer* Blobel inspected the work around 20 September 1943 (but Blobel declared that this took place "in August").

"The piles of bodies were not set on fire at regular intervals, but every time when one or more piles were ready, covered with wood and drenched with oil and gasoline. The inmates received rich and rather good food, and I have seen how they once got schnapps to drink during their work. They worked from 7 in the morning until 6 in the evening, and had a 1-2 hours' lunch break. [...] In Kiev, at first about 100 inmates were at work, but this number was later increased to about 330 inmates." (*ibid.*, pp. 6f.)

Around 29 September 1943, 30 inmates escaped, 6 of whom were killed, and the others vanished in the fog. 14 policemen were on duty that night, one of whom was Adametz. The policemen were arrested and threatened with being shot. Around 10 October, they remained in prison at Kiev, and were then released and

reassigned to the same guard duty; they were sent to Berdichev, because, they were told, “Group 1005 b” was already there.

“On about 30 September 43, the work (exhumation and cremation of corpses) was concluded, and all 330 inmates who had worked here were killed.” (*ibid.*, p. 7)

“I believe that roughly 100,000 bodies were exhumed from mass graves and burned by the SD men from 1005 a and 1005 b.” (*ibid.*, p. 12)

From this account, it is clear that Adametz had never been at Babi Yar. In fact, he not only never mentioned the name, but did not even know that the mass graves were supposed to be located in a ravine. By contrast, he spoke of a “field,” as if the area had been flat. His account has unmistakable similarities with those of witnesses having rendered their statements before him, but also exhibits various distortions.

The initial number of inmates working in the ravine, 100, coincides with that of the other witnesses; similarly, the final figure of 330 is the same as that mentioned by Davydov. Adametz says nothing of the origins of the other 230 inmates added to the labor crew after 10 September 1943, which is incomprehensible, because, if there were any logic to this story, the group of 40 policemen of which he was a member had been transferred to Kiev precisely to keep these additional 230 inmates under surveillance. On the other hand, if there were 330 inmates, and 20 fled the day before, how could 330 of them be shot?

The witness declared that the bodies had been reduced to skeletons, but he had only given them a fleeting glance; what is more, the internal chain of sentinels was arranged at approximately 100 meters from the workplace: it is therefore far from clear how much of a “glance” Adametz could have given the bodies.

The previous witnesses spoke of pyres consisting of 2,000 bodies. Adametz only described “pile of bodies,” which were simply bodies all piled up, not pyres of bodies; to describe a pyre, he in fact uses the rather curious term “wooden base,” which was evidently not built on a foundation of tombstones and steel rails. Adametz saw three to four small “piles of bodies” consisting of approximately 700 bodies and measuring 7 m × 4 m × 2 m, and another three big body piles consisting of 2,000 bodies and measuring 8 m × 8 m × 3 m. The first type of body pile had a volume of 56 m<sup>3</sup>, and one body occupied a volume of (56,000 dm<sup>3</sup> ÷ 700 bodies =) 80 dm<sup>3</sup> or 80 liters. In the second type, the volume was 192 m<sup>3</sup>, and the volume available for a body was (192,000 dm<sup>3</sup> ÷ 2,000 bodies =) 96 liters. Since the specific weight of a human body is considered approximately equal to 1, and assuming a factor of 1.4 for the gaps between them when stacked (similar to stacked wood; Francescato *et al.*, p. 11), it may be seen that a body weighed approximately (80 ÷ 1.4 =) 57 or (96 ÷ 1.4 =) 68 kg, a little too much for mere skeletons.

The “body-pile” procedure was clearly nonsensical, if it was supposed to save time, and if, as is said, *Sonderkommando* 1005 B had been sent to Kiev for precisely this reason: they wasted time building these enormous “body piles” and then wasted more time disassembling them, taking all the bodies and transporting

them to the pyres. It would have been easier to exhume the bodies and place them directly on the pyres, without the needless intermediate procedure.

The witness reported observing two mass graves containing a total of 40,000-45,000 bodies. One was in a “anti-tank ditch” measuring 100 m × 10 m and 4-5 m in depth; the other, of unknown dimensions, contained approximately 15,000 bodies. In the first, therefore, there were (40,000 to 45,000 – 15,000 =) 25,000 to 30,000 bodies. A total of 100,000 bodies were cremated – just accidentally a figure identical to the number of bodies buried at Babi Yar according to the Extraordinary Soviet Commission –, including a maximum of 45,000 from when Adametz began to render service (on 10 September), and 55,000 in the 22 previous days, during which an average of (55,000 bodies ÷ 22 days =) 2,500 bodies were cremated per day. From 11 to 30 September, in 20 days, by contrast, the remaining 45,000 bodies were cremated, an average of (45,000 ÷ 20 =) 2,250 per day. When, therefore, the exhumation-cremation *Kommando* was “reinforced” to increase its productivity, the latter diminished.

There is basically no description of the term “wooden base”; the witness does not say how they were built, nor how many bodies they supported, nor how long the combustion lasted, nor where they got the wood. Adametz’s account, more than a report of an experience he actually had, rather resembles the incoherent assemblage of fragments of stories (including the reference to “Detachment” 1005a and b), probably learned by him during his post-war imprisonment at Dachau,<sup>498</sup> perhaps from Ukrainian collaborators who had learned of the “investigations” of the Extraordinary State Commission on Babi Yar from newspapers.

Adametz’s written statement was entered into evidence during the hearing of 19 February 1946 at the IMT by the Soviet Deputy Prosecutor Smirnov, who introduced it as follows (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 593):

*“I omit the next four pages of the report, and submit to the Tribunal as evidence the original record of the interrogation of Gerhard Adametz (Exhibit USSR-80, Document Number USSR-80), taken by an American army lieutenant, Patrick McMahon. Gerhard Adametz was interrogated under oath. I dwell especially on this document, which has been put kindly at our disposal by our American colleagues, because Adametz’ testimony, to use a legal term, in some points corroborates our own evidential material. The testimony is very lengthy, and I will limit myself to a few short quotations.”*

The document, USSR-80, is a 12-page manuscript in German bearing the following heading (USSR-80, p. 1):

*“Before me, Patrick W. Mc Mahon, 2nd Lt., being authorized to administer oaths, appeared Gerhard Franz Adametz, who, beeing [sic] by first [sic] duly sworn in GERMAN, made and subscribed the following statement in his own handwriting.”*

On the last page (12), we may read as follows:

<sup>498</sup> The show-trial character of the U.S. war-crimes trials at Dachau staged right after the war, and the pervasive torture used against defendants as well as many witnesses are legendary; cf. Köhler, pp. 91-96.

*“This declaration was written by myself, on 36 pages, in my own hand, at Dachau, Germany, on 25 October 1945, at 2:00 PM, voluntarily and without compulsion.”*

The original text is therefore a 36-page manuscript which has apparently been lost (nobody seems to know where it is), of which Document USSR-80 is supposed to be the transcript. Moreover, the date which appears on page 1, immediately below the heading, reads “Dachau Camp, 17. October 1945.” The reason for this dating discrepancy is unknown; perhaps the text was written on 17 October and delivered to Mc Mahon on the 25th, in which case it is not an interrogation.

Adametz’s statement is practically unknown in Holocaust literature. Document USSR-80, which was introduced into evidence at Nuremberg, was a translation into Russian (*Nyurnbergsky protsess*, Vol. I, pp. 641-645), and for precisely this reason, the quotations appearing in the German edition of the Nuremberg Trial transcript (IMG, Vol. 6, pp. 652-656) do not correspond to the original text, as it is a re-translation. A long extract from Adametz’s statement in Russian was published by Alexander Kruglov with the reference GARF, 7021-148-256 (Kruglov 2011, pp. 112-117). As far as one can tell, the only partial transcript (“*Auszugweise Abschrift*”) of the original text is found in a 1949 German book (with minor transcription errors: Meyer-Abich, pp. 70-75).

[24] There are moreover at least four other testimonies of defendants mentioned by Hoffmann, which I cannot access: the interrogation of Fritz Zietlow dated 7 November 1961, of Max Hanisch dated 7 August 1962, of Franz Löbbert dated 28 January 1964, and of Hermann Kappen dated 21 February 1964 (Hoffmann, pp. 110-117). Considering Hoffmann’s selected quotations from them regarding insipid fragments, these testimonies probably do not possess great value. They were all, moreover, issued 18-21 years after the alleged event in a trial context when the story of Babi Yar had crystallized in orthodox Holocaust literature and in the accusations directed against the defendants. It was therefore inevitable that the defendants were conditioned by these factors. In these quotations, only Löbbert makes reference to exhumation-cremation work, mentioning a “grab excavator” which extracted bodies from the earth (*ibid.*, p. 112). The majority of the witnesses speak of shovels or spades, however, while Budnik mentioned an excavator. Such a machine could be used to move the claimed 1-4 meters (!) of earth covering the mass graves, but certainly not in order to extract the bodies, because the excavator would have pulled out a cluster of earth and crushed bodies. The “hook” technique remains the most sensible, though primitive, method which would have been efficient only for a limited number of bodies.

#### 4.2.14. Davydov (Davidov), Budnik and Kaper at the Stuttgart Trial

[25] In his “memoir” of 1992-1993, Kaper describes Davydov’s, Budnik’s and his participation in the trial of the defendants Sohns, Zietlow, Helfsgott and Kirstein before the Stuttgart District Court, held between late 1968 and early

1969. The story is verbose and full of irrelevant anecdotes. I shall report only the essentials (Budnik/Kaper/Wiehn, pp. 303-305):

*“In 1969 Budnik, Davidov and I were sent to Stuttgart, Germany to testify against the fascists. We were supposed to recognize three leaders who orchestrated the atrocities in Babiy Yar.*

*We flew to Warsaw then to Zurich (Switzerland). In Zurich we had a four-hour lay-over so we managed to see the city. [...]*

*The judge received us very cordially [and] asked us what the weather was like in Moscow, what type of climate there was. We talked a bit. Thus, we made our acquaintance with the judge. He told us that the hearing of the case would begin on Monday and that we would have to stay there for 10 days. Here in the court we got money for our trip and for 10 days stay. [...]*

*When we arrived at the court the hearing began and we were summoned to the hall. The judge and the jury were wearing black gowns and high caps. We were offered to swear on the Bible that we would tell the truth but since we didn't believe in G-d we were told to lift our hand with two fingers raised and swear that we would tell only the truth.*

*In the hall there were schoolboys and [-]girls from the sixth to the tenth classes.*

*We were told to go to the adjoining room so as not to hear what was said.*

*Davidov was called first. He was kept there very long and Budnik and I became very nervous. Then Budnik was called and I was left alone. [...]*

*At that moment [a] recess was announced. We went to have a snack. After the recess, Budnik was called again and then me. When I came into the hall Budnik and Davidov were sitting on the benches for witnesses. I was asked to approach the judge and an interpreter sat nearby. The questions were asked in German and the interpreter translated. The first question was whom I recognized among the charged. They were ordered to stand up but I didn't recognize anybody. Then they asked questions about what I knew about Babiy Yar to check that I were not a fake. I answered all their questions. After this I was told that there was an album on the table and asked whom I recognized in it. I opened the album with photos which had no names on them but only numbers. I looked through it and only at the end of it I saw a picture in which I recognized sturmbahnfuhrer [sic] Radomsky. I said that under the number such and such was Radomsky. I was asked if I recognized anybody else, but I did not. This was the first day of the trial. [...]*

*For two more days we went to the court to present our testimonies. I want to mention that the charged came to the court in white shirts and ties in their own cars. They were not imprisoned.*

*With the permission of the court we left for home not having waited for the end of the trial.*

*In Moscow we were gathered in the USSR Procurator's office and we told how the trial went. They listened with great interest.*

*Only some time later from the newspapers did we learn about the sentence [sic] of the German criminals.”*

Budnik also recalled this event, but his discussion of it is more concise:

*“At the end of 1968, my past knocked at my door in the person of a postman. The letter he carried was completely unexpected to me. I was asked to testify to speak in front of the jury in Stuttgart on January 7th, 1969 at 9 o’clock. The charged were Sturmbannführer SS Gans Sons [sic: Hans Sohns], Hauptsturmführer SS Fritz Zi[e]tlow, Hauptsturmführer SS Walter Helfsgot[t] and Sturmbannführer Fritz Kirstein [sic]. As it turned out, they were part of the group that designed crematoria in the concentration camps [utter nonsense]. It was they who financed [sic!] and organized the cover-up of Babi Yar during the retreat.*

*The letter read as follows ‘The evidence given by you earlier can not substitute for the interrogation at the hearing, as according to the rules of the German Criminal law procedure charter for sentencing only the evidence given before the jury at the hearing is acceptable.’*

*So Davidov, Kaper and I went to Stuttgart. The process was very well organized. Everything was done very properly without any excess. I liked one of the prosecutors. He spoke Russian very well and could communicate with us without an interpreter. I was very surprised that there were many young people in the courtroom. When I asked the prosecutor about it, he explained that it was necessary to bring young people here so that they know what their parents and grandparents did. They had to learn.*

*Even now I still have a yellowed and aged issue of the newspaper ‘Stuttgarter Zeitung’ dated February 14, 1969. One of the columns contains a big headline: ‘Process over sonderkomand 1005; three Russian witnesses in Stuttgart; genuine and precise description of prisoner’s activities; nobody knows the accused.’*

*We did not know either Sons or Helfsgot or Zitlov or Kirstein even if we had seen them in Babi Yar. Each of us were given photographs of Radomsky and Topaide for identification. I recognized Radomsky at once, but Topaide did not look like he did when he was young and had a crew cut. His appearance, for us, was always associated by the fact his head jerked. That was why we could not state if it was him.*

*We gave our testimony to the court and told how the corpses were burnt and how we escaped. All this was published in Stuttgarter Zeitung.” (ibid., pp. 128f.)*

The *Stuttgarter Zeitung* of 14 February 1969 in fact published an account of the hearing during which Davydov, Budnik and Kaper were interrogated; the headline was “Sonderkommando Trial 1005: Three Russian Witnesses in Stuttgart. Abominable and Precise Descriptions of the Inmates’ Activities. No One Knows the Defendants.” The article stated, among other things (*ibid.*, pp. 311-313, facsimile of the article):

*“The witnesses reported on the cremation of some 124,000 bodies. The names of the defendants, however, were entirely unknown to them; nor were they able to identify even a single defendant during their otherwise very precise descriptions.”*

The first witness interrogated was Davydov, who described the technical procedure of the exhumations and cremations as follows:

*“There were about ten gravesites in the Babi Yar ravine. The bodies of some 60,000 Jewish men, women and children were taken out of the main grave, and burned on 30 fireplaces. The witness estimated the total number of fireplaces at 62. Some 2,000 bodies were burned on each fireplace.”*

The newspaper then referred to the question of recognizing the defendants:

*“Basically the most interesting question, that is, whether the defendants’ names were known to the witness, was answered in the negative. ‘Neither the defendant Sohns’s name?’, the witness was asked again, who then responded very clearly and unmistakably: ‘I heard this name for the first time when I received the summons to appear in court.’ The attempt to identify the defendants in the courtroom as suspected SS guards in Kiev was also unsuccessful: ‘I don’t know anyone.’”*

The article dedicated very little space to the two other witnesses, no doubt because their interrogation was much shorter.

Budnik “spoke of some 120,000 bodies burnt on pyres, and then gave a vivid description of the escape.”

Lastly, Kaper deposed as follows:

*“Regarding the most important facts, his statements are in accordance with the testimonies of the two other witnesses. [...] Not a single defendant was known to the witness Kaper.”*

Two points should be noted. The witnesses did not recognize any of the defendants, with the exception of *Sturmbannführer* Paul Radomsky, who had been the commandant of the Syretsky Camp, where Davydov, Budnik and Kaper were interned. For the rest, they supplied names completely unknown to Holocaust historiography: *Sturmscharführer* Topaide, *Hauptwachmeister* Merkl or Merkel, *Hauptwachmeister* Vogt, *SS Rottenführer* Rewer, *SS Rottenführer* Reed, and *Oberleutnant* Hanisch. Jens Hoffmann, who has studied the pre-trial investigation files of the “1005” trials, only knows the last defendant of them all, *Bezirkoberleutnant der Gendarmerie* Max Hanisch (Hoffmann, p. 109).

The second point is that the witnesses, in view of the trial, had come to agree on the number of bodies cremated: 120,000-124,000. The second figure resulted from simple arithmetic: 62 pyres × 2,000 bodies = 124,000 bodies. As a matter of fact, after the jumble of contradictory figures from their previous statements, which I have discussed earlier, the streamlining of this figure had occurred early in 1967, when the German investigators, over the course of the preliminary investigations for the impending Stuttgart trial, interrogated Kaper (13 February),<sup>499</sup> who then claimed 120,000 cremated bodies, Budnik (14 February) with 120,000 to 125,000 cremated bodies, and Trubakov (14 February), who mentioned 125,000 cremated bodies.

<sup>499</sup> German interrogation text in Klee/Dreßen, pp. 133-136.

### 4.3. Discussion of the Testimonies

#### 4.3.1. The Number of Victims

Hoffmann asserts that “a total of between 100,000 and 125,000 bodies were burned on pyres during trace elimination at Babi Yar” (Hoffmann, p. 111). This means that, in addition to the almost 34,000 shot there, as attested to by documents, another 66,000-91,000 were shot at Kiev without leaving the slightest documentary trace! On the total number of victims at Kiev, orthodox Holocaust historiography is unable to propose anything but disparate and contradictory conjectures. This is shown clearly by one of the most important works on the “Shoah in Ukraine,” the volume by Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower. Pohl declares that “the Germans continued to kill Jews at Babi Yar after the first massacre. In all, the total number of Jews killed at the site could be as high as 50,000” (Pohl 2008, fn 77, p. 65), but as his source he refers to a simple Holocaust article. Kruglov, by contrast, claims that 64,000 Jews were killed in the Kiev Oblast in 1941, 10,500 in 1942, and 100 in 1943 (Kruglov 2008, pp. 279, 281f.), a total of 74,600. He then writes that there were a total of 77,000 “indigenous Jewish victims” in this same oblast (*ibid.*, p. 284). In his study on Babi Yar, he reviews the figures cited by Soviet investigatory commissions and historians and concludes that “the figure of 40,000 Jews murdered in the city [of Kiev] does not seem too low” (Kruglov 2011, p. 42).

Nevertheless, in the “Incident Reports,” in addition to the figure of 33,771 Jews mentioned on 29 and 30 September 1941, there is no mention of any numerically relevant executions, either before or afterwards. And yet there appear communications such as these:

*“In Kiev, 3 persons were publicly hanged for sabotage”*<sup>500</sup>

*“The bandit Dmitry Ivanovich Semenov was shot during the attempted robbery of a district financial office in Kiev.”*<sup>501</sup>

No. 21 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” (18 September 1942) gives extensive coverage to Kiev. According to a census of 1 July 1942, there were 293,000 persons in the city, including 75,000 children up to 15 years of age; 96,000 were supplied with labor ID cards, another 60,000 were “key personnel,” indispensable to the armaments industry and the *Wehrmacht*. There is no mention of killings of either Jews or non-Jews (Angrick *et al.*, p. 448). The number of victims attested to by documents therefore remains approximately 34,000; all the rest is conjecture and fantasy.

It follows that the enormous figures of bodies exhumed and cremated mentioned by the witnesses are completely invented; and since these figures are inextricably linked to the number of pyres, this is not a matter of mere exaggeration, but of deliberate lies.

<sup>500</sup> EM No. 187 of 30 March 1043; Angrick *et al.*, p. 246.

<sup>501</sup> Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebiete, No. 50 of 16 April 1943; *ibid.*, p. 785.



But should the official figure of 33,771 victims be considered reliable? It is not easy to answer this question, but a few German documents may assist us in gaining an idea of the question.

EM No. 106 dated 7 October 1941 reports that 3,145 Jews were shot at Zhitomir and that 25 to 30 tons of clothing belonging to the victims were then gathered (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 643); thus, on average, every victim wore  $(25,000 \text{ to } 30,000 \div 3,145 =) 8.75$  kg of clothing.

EM No. 135 of 19 November says (*ibid.*, p. 777):

*“187 truckloads of clothing accumulated over the course of the Jewish action undertaken in Zhitomir and Kiev were placed at the disposal of the NSV for further use.”*

Activity and Situation Report No. 7 dated November 1941 provides the same information, but with a different number of truckloads:<sup>502</sup>

*“Over the course of the Jewish action in Kiev and Zhitomir, 137 truckloads of clothing were secured and made available to the NSV.”*

Which of the two numbers is correct: 187 or 137 truckloads? According to Document NO-1257, 400 railway cars of “old clothes” had a mass of 2,700,000 kg, and one railway car transported 6,750 kg. The letter which Otto Luchterhandt, deputy executive director of the Lodz Ghetto, sent on 27 May 1942 to the Office of Agriculture at Posen informs us that there were approximately 370 railway cars of clothing at *Sonderkommando* Lange, and that this clothing required approximately 900 trucks for transport (Eisenbach 1946, pp. 233f.). From these data we may deduce that 370 railway cars corresponded to about 1,800 trucks, or  $(1,800 \text{ trucks} \div 370 \text{ cars} =)$  one railway car to some five trucks. Therefore, the 187 trucks mentioned above were equivalent to  $(187 \text{ trucks} \div 5 \text{ trucks/car} =)$  37.4 railway cars, or  $(37.4 \text{ cars} \times 6,750 \text{ kg/car} =)$  252,450 kg; of these, some  $(25,000 + 30,000 \div 2 =)$  27,500 kg referred to Zhitomir, so that 225,950 kg remained for Kiev, or  $(225,950 \text{ kg} \div 33,771 \text{ victims} =)$  approximately 6.7 kg of clothing per person. 137 trucks would have amounted to just some  $(27.4 \text{ cars} \times 6,750 \text{ kg/car} - 27,500 \text{ kg} =)$  157,450 kg of clothing, or  $(157,450 \text{ kg} \div 33,771 =)$  4.7 kg of clothing per person.

Consider that a normal set of clothing worn indoors during fall (light shoes, socks, underwear, t-shirt, sweater, pants) already weighs some 3 kg. Adding to this a second set of clothes and a coat, this already exceeds the 4.7 kg per person corresponding to 137 trucks in total, and easily reaches the 6.7 kg per person corresponding to 187 trucks in total. But not even this figure is realistic, because the Jews at Kiev believed that they would be resettled in another locality and, according to the German proclamation, they had to bring “warm clothing, underwear, etc.” with them. Keep in mind that we all tend to take along way more clothes just for a brief one- or two-weeks’ vacation. (A standard suitcase contains some 20+ kg of clothes.)

<sup>502</sup> YVA, O.53-3, p. 126 (p. 22 of the report). Underlined in the original. NSV = *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, National-Socialist People’s Welfare.

The photographs of the persons who were being taken to Babi Yar, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, show that they were dressed in heavy clothing, with caps or overcoats. If each of these victims had brought an average of 8.75 kg of clothing along, as in the case of Zhitomir, this would have amounted to some 296 tons of clothes or some 219 truckloads from Kiev alone (plus some 20 truckloads for the 27.5 tons of clothes from Zhitomir). Vice versa, if assuming 8.75 kg of clothes per victim and assuming 137 truckloads, we arrive at some  $(157,450 \div 8.75 \text{ kg/person} \approx) 18,000$  victims, while 187 truckloads amount to some  $(252,450 \text{ kg} \div 8.75 \text{ kg/person} \approx) 25,700$  victims. But, as I have mentioned above, these people believed that they were going to be resettled, and therefore took warm clothing and spare clothing with them, hence maybe 10 kg per person or even more; this means that even the two reduced victim figures calculated here are probably still too high.

These calculations, without claiming to establish the exact number of victims, nevertheless permits us to say that the figure of 33,771 is an exaggeration.

#### 4.3.2. “Gas Vans” at Kiev in 1943?

Orthodox Holocaust historiography knows nothing about the alleged use of “gas vans” at Kiev in 1943; in this context, the only reference cited is a very late statement by Wilhelm Findeisen, the purported driver of a “gas van” (Spektor 1983, pp. 95f.). As Walter Kornfeld informs us, Findeisen was tried by the Darmstadt District Court together with Theodor Christensen and Karl Kretschmer (10 December 1968 – 18 April 1969). Findeisen was accused “of participating in several gassing operations of Jews as a gas-van driver in the fall of 1941 in Kiev and in early 1942 in Kharkov” (Kornfeld, p. 80).

If we consider that the only proof of the use of “gas vans” at Kiev, relating solely to the year 1941, is a statement signed in 1967, we can easily judge the reliability of the use of several “gas vans” (the witnesses always use the plural) in that city in 1943.

#### 4.3.3. The Exhumation and Cremation Technique

An analysis of the testimonies reveals the following pattern: The inmates were taken to Babi Yar and chained up on 18 August 1943. During the first two days they removed the soil covering a mass grave using shovels, and on the third day they reached the first layer of bodies. The soil cover of the mass graves reached a thickness of 3 to 4 meters, which is implausible. Only one witness mentioned an excavator.

The number and dimensions of the mass graves are not clear. Davydov speaks of four graves with a total of 80,000 bodies (one with 10,000, two with together 50,000 and one with 20,000); Blobel mentioned a grave measuring 55 m × 3 m × 2.5 m, while Adametz spoke of two graves with 40,000-45,000 bodies, one of which was 100 m long, 10 m wide and 4-5 m deep.

The bodies were extracted from the graves with suitable hooks, then collected in large piles; according to Adametz, the smaller ones measured 7 m × 4 m × 2 m and contained 700 bodies, while the big ones with 2,000 bodies measured 8 m × 8 m × 3 meters. From these piles, the bodies were transported to the pyres, as reported by Steyuk, after being “loaded on motor vehicles.” The pyres, or furnaces, consisted of a stone base with railroad rails laid on top; metallic grates were placed on top of the rails, upon which alternating layers of wood and bodies were piled up to a height that varied between 2 and 4 meters. Davydov speaks of 10 to 12 meters.

The number of bodies thus arranged on the pyre ranged from 2,000 to 5,000; many witnesses agreed in saying 2,000. For Kuklya, these pyres were “4 feet in height, a length of about 10 meters and 5 meters in width.” Since 4 feet correspond to only 1.22 m, it is obvious that this should be intended to mean 4 meters. Trubakov mentions a “planned” area measuring 10 m × 10 m, but it is not certain whether this corresponds to the total surface area of the pyre.

Doliner mentions a “pile” measuring “two meters in height and 2-8 meters in diameter”; it was therefore round and of very variable diameter, as far as one can tell. Ostrovsky describes a platform measuring 30 m × 40 m and 2 to 2.5 m high.

First of all, let us examine the dimensions of 10 m × 5 m × 4 m for a minimum of 2,000 bodies. Of these 200 cubic meters, at least 52 were *theoretically* occupied by bodies (assuming a minimum weight of some 26 kg for every heavily decomposed body;<sup>503</sup> hence a total mass of some 52,000 kg for the bodies); the remaining 148 cubic meters, with an average specific weight of 0.9 for fresh wood, in addition to a factor of 1.4 for the gaps in stacked wood (Francescato *et al.*, p. 11), it would have contained around  $(148 \text{ m}^3 \times 0.9 \text{ kg/dm}^3 \div 1.4 \times 1,000 \text{ dm}^3/\text{m}^3 =) 95,150 \text{ kg}$  of wood; in reality, the bodies must have been arranged in layers like the wood, so that the factor of 1.4 also applies to them. It follows that the effective volume occupied by the bodies was  $(52 \text{ m}^3 \times 1.4 =) 73 \text{ cubic meters}$ , leaving a volume of  $(200 \text{ m}^3 - 77 \text{ m}^3 =) 127 \text{ cubic meters}$  for the stacked wood. The available wood was therefore  $(127 \text{ m}^3 \times 0.9 \text{ kg/dm}^3 \div 1.4 \times 1,000 \text{ dm}^3/\text{m}^3 =)$  some 81,650 kg of wood. Hence, there would have been only about 40.8 kg of wood per body, or 1.6 kg of wood per kg of body.

The requirements in green wood for the cremation of an exhumed body, depending on its state, varies from some 250 to some 370 kg. In one day, an average workman can cut approximately 1.35 tons of it (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 1291, 1331). Assuming the lower value of wood requirement, the cremation of 2,000 bodies would have required  $(2,000 \text{ bodies} \times 250 \text{ kg/body} =) 500,000 \text{ kg}$  of wood, a quantity more than eight times higher than what is inferred. A real pyre would have been very large:  $(500,000 \text{ kg} \div 0.9 \text{ kg/dm}^3 \times 1.4 \div 1,000 \text{ dm}^3/\text{m}^3 =)$  some 778 cubic meters for the wood, plus 73 for the bodies, for a total of 851 cubic meters; if the pyre was 4 meters high, the base would have had to measure

<sup>503</sup> This is the average weight of decomposed bodies which a fan of Holocaust stories attributes to the camps at Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka. Cf. Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, p. 1292.

some 214 square meters. If, therefore, at least one side of the pyre measured 10 meters in length, the other had to be more than 21 meters long. Obviously, if the number of bodies placed on this pyre was 4,000 or 5,000, the absurdity would have been even more obvious.

If, on the other hand, the pyre measured  $30\text{ m} \times 40\text{ m} \times 2.5\text{ meters}$ , its volume was therefore 2,400 to 3,000  $\text{m}^3$ , a blatant exaggeration in contradiction to the 851 cubic meters calculated above.

All this vitiates Budnik's assertion that the stone platform measured  $10\text{ m} \times 10\text{ m}$  (and was 3 m high), in the event that these were the dimensions of the pyre. With these data, the pyre would have contained approximately 143 tons of wood, 3.5 times less than the real requirement.

Davydov, Berlyant and Kuklya also indicate the number of bodies in every layer of the pyre, at 200 and 300 respectively for a pyre of 3,000 bodies, and 250 for a pyre of 3,000-4,000 bodies. If the pyre was four meters high, it would have had to consist of  $(3,000 \div 300 =)$  10 layers of bodies and wood, and every layer would have had to be  $(400 \div 10 =)$  40 centimeters thick! In a real pyre, just the wood alone would have been  $(300\text{ bodies} \times 0.25\text{ t/body} \div 0.9\text{ t/m}^3 \times 1.4 =)$  approximately 116  $\text{m}^3$  in volume, and if the surface area of the pyre were  $(10\text{ m} \times 5\text{ m} =)$  50  $\text{m}^2$ , then each layer of wood would be  $(116\text{ m}^3 \div 50\text{ m}^2 =)$  2.32 m in height, or, in round numbers, approximately 2.5 m, including the layer of bodies above the wood.<sup>504</sup>

The naphtha and kerosene presumably employed in the cremations influences the above-mentioned calculations in no significant way: they were used above all to initiate the combustion of the wood; on the other hand, I assumed the lowest quantity as the requirement for the cremation of a body. Many witnesses mention this pouring of fuel onto the pyres, but no one explains how, where, and by whom all these things were transported to Babi Yar.

Steyuk mentions 20 layers for 5,000 bodies in relation to the height of a two-story house, approximately 6 meters, so that every layer would have had to be  $(600\text{ cm} \div 20 =)$  30 centimeters thick! Vice versa, 20 layers of wood and bodies would have reached a height of  $(2.5\text{ m} \times 20 =)$  50 meters, or a 20-story house!

Three witnesses mention 70,000 cremated bodies, while one mentions 70,000 to 80,000. The cremation of 70,000 bodies would have required  $(70,000\text{ bodies} \times 0.250 =)$  17,500 tons of green wood. Where did they get it? Very significantly, the witnesses maintain strict silence in this regard: the wood was just there, by a sort of magic Holocaust trick.

The trucks which transported wood from Radostowice, near Pszczyna, to Auschwitz had a capacity of 5 metric tons each. To transport the wood required for the cremations to Babi Yar would therefore have required  $(17,500\text{ t} \div 5\text{ t/truck} =)$  3,500 trips, assuming a truck of a similar design.

<sup>504</sup> Each layer of bodies would add  $(300\text{ bodies} \times 0.026\text{ t/body} \div 1\text{ t/m}^3 \times 1.4 =)$  some 11  $\text{m}^3$  or a mere  $(11\text{m}^3 \div 50\text{m}^2 =)$  0.22 m of height, hence a total of 2.54 m per layer.

If the 330 inmates (this is the maximum figure) had been assigned to cutting the wood in nearby forests, they could have supplied ( $330 \text{ men} \times 1.35 \text{ t/man/day} =$ ) 445.5 tons in one day. To obtain the total requirement would have taken ( $17,500 \text{ t} \div 445.5 \text{ t/day} =$ ) 39 days, after which they would have had three days in which to exhume and cremate the 70,000 bodies. The story is even more absurd, since it is claimed that between 50 and 85 of the inmates were working elsewhere for 20 days.

Finally, the witnesses do not explain how the upper layers of wood and bodies were placed on pyres 3 to 4 meters high or even higher. Kaper limits himself to a very generic reference to “a special scaffolding” with no further details.

Even more enigmatic is how the bodies of the victims of the “gas vans” could have been “throw[n] in the burning furnace,” which, among other things, would have been impossible to approach because of the intense heat.

The burning time for one pyre (from a minimum of one night to a maximum of 1-2 days) is rather meager and, at any rate, to proceed with the processing of the ashes, it would have been necessary to either cool the embers with abundant water or to wait several days, but in this regard the witnesses have nothing to say.

All the exhumation and cremation procedures were standardized, supervised by specialist German instructors, so that all the contradictory data cannot be explained by procedural variations.

In conclusion, from whatever point of view you look at it, the story of the cremation of a minimum of 70,000 bodies at Babi Yar is implausible and nonsensical, to say nothing of the alleged 100,000 to 125,000 bodies mentioned by Hoffmann.

#### 4.3.4. The Cremation of 33,771 Executed Jews

All that remains is to examine a less-unlikely number, that is, the cremation of the 33,771 Jews presumably shot at Babi Yar.

In this case, since no witness mentions a squad of wood-cutters assigned to supplying wood for the pyres, if we exclude Holocaust magic, we must assume the use of dry wood from some warehouse. Since 1 kg of dry wood is equivalent to about 1.9 kg of green wood, the requirement for the cremation of one body can be fixed at ( $250 \text{ kg/body} \div 1.9 =$ ) some 130 kg per body. This alters the order of magnitude of the results of the calculations set forth above in no significant way. Substituting 130 for 250, a pyre of 2,000 bodies would have measured  $10 \text{ m} \times 12 \text{ m} \times 4 \text{ m}$ ; one layer of wood would have been 1.2 meters thick, or approximately 1.4 including the bodies. It follows that, in the most favorable hypothesis, the 10 to 12 *layers* of the pyre mentioned by Davydov (according to a charitable interpretation, since he is speaking explicitly of meters) would have been ( $1.4 \text{ m/layer} \times 10 \text{ to } 12 \text{ layers} =$ ) 14 to 16.8 meters high!

The cremation of the bodies of the persons shot would therefore have required ( $33,771 \text{ bodies} \times 0.13 \text{ t/body} =$ ) 4,390 tons of seasoned wood, the equivalent of ( $4,390 \text{ t} \div 5 \text{ t/truck} =$ ) 878 trips by truck. I shall return to the question of transport

later. If the bodies were cremated on pyres consisting of 2,000 bodies each, this would have required  $(33,771 \text{ bodies} \div 2,000 \text{ bodies/pyre} =) 17$  pyres in 42 days of activity, on average one pyre every 2.5 days. In practice, Babi Yar would have smoked for 42 consecutive days, day and night, filling the air around Kiev with the stench of the exhumed cadavers and the stink of the burnt bodies.

If this had really happened, there would be numerous objective confirmations.

#### a) Residues of the Equipment Used for the Construction of the Pyres

On 13 November 1943, Steyuk declared to a representative of the KGB:

*“Yes, I know well the place of the excavations in Babi Yar and can even specify where they buried the metal for construction on which the bodies were burned.”*

On 4 February 1944, Kaper confirmed:

*“When all the corpses had been burned, these furnaces were dismantled and the rails, bars and stones were carried in different parts of the ravine and covered with earth.”*

Therefore, the rails and grids (pieces of metallic fencing from the Jewish cemetery) and the tombstones were also buried at Babi Yar, and at least two witnesses knew exactly where they were. And yet the Extraordinary State Commission did not even take the trouble to bring to light these important instruments from the crime scene, which most likely means that there was nothing to find in the soil at Babi Yar. This is also true of the tombstones allegedly used as the base for the pyres. The Soviet commission did not even take the trouble to inspect the Jewish cemetery to verify whether there is any proof that any iron fencing or tombstones were even missing.

#### b) Obtaining the Wood

No. 43 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” dated 26 February 1943 refers to the difficulties of supplying the civilian population of the General Commissariat of Kiev with firewood for fuel, but also, from the same city (Angrick *et al.*, p. 697):

*“In Kiev, the population could only be supplied with firewood to a minor extent, since there was no transport available for the delivery of peat and firewood.”*

There is neither any documentary trace of the presumed deliveries of 4,390 tons of wood to Babi Yar, nor, we must add, of the tanks of naphtha and kerosene with which the pyres were allegedly soaked.

#### c) Impossible Ignorance on the Part of the Resistance and the Civilian Population

Karel C. Berkhoff has documented the fact that the Soviets were immediately informed of executions at Babi Yar, thanks in particular to two reports written immediately afterwards. Andrei Ivanovich Maremukha, a junior lieutenant in the militia, authored a report on 4 November 1941 stating, in part, that

*“on September 23 of this year, the German police arrested about a hundred Jews, took them outside the city of Kiev to the sapper field, where there was a deep pit.*

*Mines had been placed, and all were taken there. The mines were detonated and the entire group of people perished.*" (Berkhoff 2015, p. 254)

On 6 November 1941, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency published an article with the headline "Nazis Execute 52,000 Jews in Kiev; Smaller Pogroms in Other Cities," reading:

*"Fifty-two thousand Jews, including men, women and children, were systematically and methodically put to death in Kiev following the Nazi occupation of the Ukrainian capital, according to information received today by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency from an unimpeachable source.*

*The details available here establish that the victims did not lose their lives as the result of a mob pogrom, but by systematic, merciless execution carried out in accordance with cold-blooded Nazi policy of Jewish extermination. Similar measures, though on a smaller scale, have been taken in other conquered towns."*

Berkhoff then notes that this news item was reproduced on 19 November by the two Soviet newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* (Berkhoff 2015, p. 252):

*"As a correspondent of the Overseas News Agency reports from a location in Europe, information that the Germans in Kiev killed 52,000 Jews – men, women, and children – has been received from reliable sources."*

If the source was Marenukha's report, as it seems to be, his "about a hundred Jews" was now transformed into 52,000. The killing with "mines" is equally fantastic, but this is not the point. Another, more important report was compiled on 4 December 1941 by the regiment commissar Aleksei Popov. As noted by Berkhoff, "two months after the massacre of Kiev's Jews, Popov was the first Soviet informant to mention the ravine in this regard and to name it Babi Yar" (*ibid.*, p. 256). The information in the report was repeated with manipulations by the Soviet newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in an article dated 10 December headlined "Unprecedented Crimes of the Fascists in Kiev" (*ibid.*, pp. 261f.).

Soviet knowledge relating to Babi Yar stops here. In the summer of 1943, when the stench of the bodies and cremations purportedly blanketed the city for 42 days, when the glow of the pyres allegedly lit up the skies at night, when innumerable trucks full of firewood with the destination Babi Yar supposedly passed by in the streets every day, no one noticed; no one wrote a report; no citizen of Kiev ever wrote a diary entry or took a photograph of the smoke rising constantly from Babi Yar; no Soviet reconnaissance plane ever photographed it from the air.

Udo Walendy (1992) has called attention to the fact that, during this period, the front was very close to Kiev. From the *War Diary of the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht* (*Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*) it can be derived that on 17 September 1943, the Soviets were only "60 km from Kiev."<sup>505</sup> Over the following days the front got increasingly closer to the city:

– 19 September: "Enemy attacked near Kiev; retreat was successful" (p. 1121)

<sup>505</sup> Schramm 1982b, p. 1111; all subsequent page numbers from there unless noted otherwise.

- 20 September: “The situation is unfavourable in Kiev region and on the right wing of the 2nd Army” (p. 1123)
- 21 September: “They [German troops] withdrew to a bridgehead near Kiev and northwards” (p. 1125)
- 22 September: “Enemy follows retreat movement; north of Kiev they advanced across the Dnieper” (p. 1128)
- 23 September: “He [enemy] crossed Dnieper with weaker forces south of Kiev” (p. 1131)
- 24 September: “Diminishing air activity on both sides due to deteriorating weather conditions” (p. 1135)
- 26 September: “Further north, enemy attacks on Kiev could be repulsed” (p. 1143)
- 27 September: “At 8th Army, bridgeheads north of Kiev had to be scaled back” (p. 1145)
- 28 September: “Our own bridgehead near Kiev managed to hold out against enemy attacks.” (p. 1148)
- 29 September: “4th Tank Army evacuates bridgehead at Kiev.” (p. 1151)

On 7 October 1943, the following information appeared:

*“Our own air activity approximately equal to previous day with a total of 2,212 missions.”* (p. 1180)

Therefore, over the period of the presumed exhumation and cremation of bodies at Babi Yar, the front line was relatively close to Kiev, and there was intense air activity on both sides, German and Soviet. Can we seriously believe that Soviet reconnaissance planes never photographed Kiev, as the Germans did? As I have shown above, as far as is known, German reconnaissance planes flew at least three missions over Kiev in the second half of 1943, on 26 September, 6 November and 27 December.

Orthodox Holocaust historiography adduces at least two diaries from residents of Kiev which mention the 1941 shootings at Babi Yar. From the diary of L. Nartova, the entries relating to 26 and 28 September 1941 are quoted;<sup>506</sup> from the diary of Irina A. Khoroshunova, the entries of 30 September and 2 and 10 October 1941 (Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 94, pp. 311-315).

Where are the 1943 diary entries for the period of the alleged cremations at Babi Yar?

An article in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency of 28 October 1942 headlined “Systematic Execution of Jews in Nazi-occupied Russia Reported by Partisans” shows in an exemplary manner that, for the Soviets, it was not difficult to receive information directly from Kiev. The article in fact narrates the story of “a Jewish partisan who succeeded in slipping into Kiev, dressed in peasant clothes” and then wrote a report to the *Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee*; the information supplied was very general and without reference to any shootings at Babi Yar.

<sup>506</sup> Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 84, p. 296. The original Russian is an extract containing the entries for 26, 28 and 29 October, followed by 16 and 19 November 1941. TsDAGO 1-22-347, pp. 1f.



New information on Babi Yar only began to appear after the Soviets retook Kiev. On 16 November 1943, the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* published an article by Evgeni Krieger headlined “*Tak bylo v Kieve*” (“Thus It Was at Kiev”); on 20 November, it was republished by the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda*, with an article by A. Avdeyenko and P. Olender under the headline “Babi Yar” (Berkhoff 2012, pp. 149, 338).

On 29 November, *The New York Times* dedicated an article to Babi Yar by William H. Lawrence under the headline “50,000 Kiev Jews Reported Killed.” The author reports:

*“Kiev authorities asserted today [22 October] that the Germans machine-gunned an estimated 50,000 to 80,000 Kiev Jewish men, women and children in late September, 1941, and two years later – when Kiev’s recapture by the Red Army seemed imminent – forced Soviet war prisoners to burn all the bodies, destroying all evidence of this crime.*

*This was the story told to the Kiev Atrocity Commission and a group of Anglo-American-Soviet correspondents in bleak Babi Yar, deep in a ravine northwest of Kiev where the massacre allegedly took place.”*

The story had been told by three Soviet soldiers who had participated in the cremations. Lawrence revealed that

*“no witness to the shooting appeared before the commission or talked with the correspondents,”*

before commenting as follows:

*“On the basis of what we saw, it is impossible for this correspondent to judge the truth or falsity of the story we were told. It is the contention of the Kiev authorities that the Germans with characteristic thoroughness not only burned bodies and clothing but crumbled bones, and shot and burned the bodies of all the war prisoners participating in the burning except the handful who escaped; so evidence of their atrocity will not be available for the outside world.”*

At the end of the article, Lawrence described his own direct observations:

*“If this were the German intent they succeeded well, for there is little evidence in the ravine to prove or disprove the story. We did see a few isolated bones, including a skull, some matted hair, a shoulder bone, an arm, a gold tooth, bridgework and some spots on the ground which we were told was blood of prisoners who were shot by Germans after the Jew-body burning had been completed. There were spectacle cases, handbags and other evidence left in Babi Yar.*

*Freshly excavated earth in the ravine’s floor left no doubt that something had happened there.”*

The problem was precisely that of determining what had happened there.

This meticulous elimination of all traces is in open contradiction to the traces the Germans left in the Syretsky Camp, very close to Babi Yar, where the Soviet

Commission exhumed and photographed many dozens of bodies,<sup>507</sup> which had not, therefore, been cremated.

Furthermore, the events said to have transpired in August-September 1943 were described only *after* the Soviet recapture of Kiev. On 15 November 1943, the witness Ivan Stepanovich Yanovich declared (Trubakov, p. 140):

*“Question: Did you see how the Germans dug up corpses from the graves and burned them in the fire?”*

*Answer: I did not see because it was impossible to see, first of all, guards stood around the ravine, and there is a tall sand escarpment around it, so it could not be seen what they were doing there, but starting from August 1943 to October 1943 a fire burned in this ravine, day and night – with black smoke and the smell was unbearable, there was talk among residents that the Germans had dug up all the dead bodies with a machine like an excavator, poured oil on them and burned.”*

If this had been true, any one of the approximately 180,000 inhabitants of the city<sup>508</sup> would have made some reference to this infernal spectacle as early as in the months of August and September.

In conclusion, this sort of ignorance on the part of the Soviets of all the essential elements of the presumed exhumation-cremation operation, in the face of a real event, is inexplicable.

#### d) The Aerial Photograph of 26 September 1943.

In 1992, Canadian geologist John C. Ball published an aerial photograph of Babi Yar taken on 26 September 1943. He wrote that the exhumation-cremation activity was carried on from 18 August to 19 September 1943, and that the photograph in question was taken “one week after the end of the supposed mass cremations in the ravine.” His comment was that the photograph shows no trace of any such activity and that there is no visible vehicle traffic (Ball 1992, pp. 106-108).

In the revised edition published in 2015, he has added two photographs taken by Johannes Hähle (which I will address later), one of which is captioned “Schematic Drawings of the Section of Babi Yar Where Murders Allegedly Happened.” The comment is identical to that of the prior edition (Ball 2015, pp. 133-136).

Two principal objections have been raised against Ball. The first is that he has only reproduced part of the aerial photograph in question, leaving out a large part of the ravine. It is moreover objected that the witness Davydov declared that on 25-26 September the operation was almost over, so that the aerial photograph could not have shown the cremation activity in any case.

I shall begin with the second objection. There is no doubt that the witness, as we have seen above, declared:

<sup>507</sup> Babi Yar Album, GARF, 128-132. Two photographs show “bodies exhumed from a mass grave by digging with shovels,” while another shows “bodies exhumed from a mass grave.”

<sup>508</sup> Khiterer, p. 9, mentions this figure, which originated with Anatoly Kuznetsov, together with that of 70,000 adopted by *The Black Book* (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 360).

*“On 25 or 26 August [correct: September], when the work was almost finished, we were supposed to build one more furnace, for our own destruction. We realized this, because there were no more bodies in Babi Yar, but we were still building a furnace.”*

But he also asserted that there were four mass graves containing 80,000 bodies, and that a total of 70,000 bodies were cremated. Since the Soviets did not find the remaining 10,000 bodies, either the figure of the exhumed bodies is inexact or that of the cremated bodies is incorrect. In any case, the Russian adverb “*pochti*” (almost) obviously means that on 25-26 September, the work was not yet finished, and that a small fraction of the bodies were still awaiting cremation; in fact, the inmates were ordered to build another furnace, according to Davydov, in order to cremate their own bodies, but this is only his supposition. This furnace no doubt could have been planned to serve for the cremation of the remaining bodies. If, moreover, a pyre burned up to 1-2 days, on 26 September there should also have been one or two recently lit pyres which were still smoking.

A Soviet diagram from 1947 clearly shows the contours of the ravine of Babi Yar (see Document II.4.1.). Compare this with a German diagram from 1943 (see Document II.4.2.). This permits us to establish that the ravine was delimited by the following streets: Lagerna and Dorohozhytska to the south, Kasarmenna to the west, Petropavlivska to the north, and Vrubelivskyi uzviz (Russian: Vrubelevsky spusk) to the east. The principal ravine at Babi Yar was located to the west; to the east, flanked by Vrubelivskyi uzviz, which was a secondary branch. To the south, between the two branches of the ravine, was the “Jewish cemetery.” To the south of this latter, separated by the Dorohozhytska Road, was the “Bratske cemetery,” and further south, separated from the Bratske cemetery by the Lagerna Road, was the “Lukyanivka (Lukyanovka) cemetery.”

A German map from 1941 (see Document II.4.3.) reports the three cemeteries with the simple designation “*Friedhof*.” However, the name of the street which separated the first two is “*vulitsya Melnikova*,” which was therefore another name for the Dorohozhytska Road. (I will return later to the question of the names of the road.)

The above permits us to establish the coordinates for an examination of the photograph published by J. Ball (see Document II.4.4.). These are the captions to the photos: “location of alleged shootings and cremations was at edge of Jewish cemetery at Babi Yar ravine”; “Melnik(ova) Street”; “Jewish cemetery”; “orthodox cemetery” and “Babi Yar ravine.” The “orthodox cemetery” is that shown on the 1943 diagram, known as the “Bratske Friedhof.” The road at the bottom which cuts the right corner of the photograph is the Lagerna road, which follows the southern edge of the ravine, as clearly shown in the 1947 diagram. It follows that the photograph published by J. Ball depicts the entire ravine of Babi Yar, so that the accusation made against him is unfounded.

The enlargement of the photograph examined by Ball, however, covers only a part of the ravine (*ibid.*, p. 135). And it is true that the branch of the ravine indi-

cated by Ball is not the location where the 33,771 Jews are said to have been shot, buried and cremated (see further below).

German reconnaissance planes flew over Kiev at least three times between September and November 1943, and took hundreds of photographs. According to the available partial data,<sup>509</sup> the missions were as follows:

Reference numbers <sup>510</sup>	Date	Photographs
No. 1979	26 September 1943	1-151
No. 3482	26 September 1943	1-176
No. 6726	6 November 1943	1-111
No. 4235	17 December 1943	1-146

The ravine at Babi Yar appears very clearly in two photographs taken on 26 September 1943, No. 1979/104 and No. 1979/105. In the first (Document II.4.5.), the ravine is visible in the upper margin of the image; in the other (Document II.4.6.), it is visible in the lower part, well centered, showing the entire district. Documents II.4.7 and II.4.8. show an enlargement of the ravine.

It is not easy to interpret these images with certainty. In both, in the left-hand branch of the ravine, we see something which could appear to be a faint column of smoke originating from a square or rectangular white object. Nevertheless, in both images, taken in sequence, the contours of the presumed smoke are practically identical; not only that, but section “D” (see Documents II.4.9 and II.4.10, enlarged in II.4.9a & II.4.10a) is linear, which is not compatible with the theory that this is a vertical column of smoke.

It is therefore much more probable that the “smoke” is an artifact of color of the soil. In any case, a pyre consisting of 2,000 bodies, that is, a pile made up of (2,000 bodies × 0.130 kg wood/body =) 260 tons of wood, would have generated a column of smoke enormously bigger and more intense, even and in particular during the final phase of combustion. The possible presence on the spot of more than 300 inmates supervised by dozens of German guards, as well as vehicles used for the transport of wood and liquid fuel would not have remained unnoticed in the photographs, but the images do not appear to show any trace of them.

There is another even more convincing argument. According to the most meticulous reconstruction, the pathway of the Jews destined to be shot was that which appears outlined in Document II.4.11. The victims’ procession ran along the Dorogozhitska Road, turned left (taking the road which in the diagram is referred to as Lagerna Road in Documents II.4.1. and II.4.2.), skirting the “Bratske Cemetery,” and entered the area of the ravine at the southeast end at the corner between the Dorogozhitska Road and the Oranzhereina Road (black arrow in Doc. II.4.11).

<sup>509</sup> Now archived online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20160307133951/http://www.kievograd.org/karty> (last accessed on 14 Sept. 2018).

<sup>510</sup> These numbers are located in a small square panel in the upper left-hand corner of the photographs, but it is not clear what they mean.

Document II.4.12 shows in a more meticulous way the ravine in a diagram similar to that in the preceding document. The arrow marks the entry point in the ravine at the corner of the two roads mentioned above. The continuous line in Document II.4.11. running along the Melnikova Road indicates the pathway of the (presumed) subsequent victims between 1941 and 1943. Below, I supply additional explanations on the change in the name of these roads over time.

If we now return to the aerial photographs, it is easy to notice that the point of the presumed smoke (top ellipse in Document II.4.13.) is located in an area completely different from that of the claimed shooting (and eventual cremation) of the Jews (bottom ellipse). This point is not even compatible with the entry into the ravine of the presumed additional victims from the Melnikova Road, which is indicated by the double-arrow line in the center of Document II.4.13.

One may therefore conclude that the two photographs of Kiev taken on 26 September 1943 do not at all confirm the story of the cremations; on the contrary, they refute it.

#### 4.4. The Executions

From the above, it may be seen that it is quite implausible that the bodies of 33,771 Jews were exhumed and cremated at Babi Yar; consequently no such number of persons was ever buried there and therefore not even shot there, notwithstanding the German documents which mention this figure.

EM No. 101 dated 2 October 1941 reports the following scanty bit of information (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 615):

*“In collaboration with Group Headquarters and two squads from the Police Regiment South, Sonderkommando 4a executed 33,771 Jews in Kiev on 29 and 30 Sept. 41.”*

“Activity and Situation Report No. 6 of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police and the SD in the USSR” relating to the period 1-31 October 1941 reads:

*“In reprisal for acts of arson in Kiev, all Jews were arrested and a total of 33,771 Jews were executed on 29 and 30 Sept.”*

According to this document, the shooting occurred for a very well-defined reason: reprisal. However, none of these documents specify where exactly the executions took place at Kiev.

Victoria Khiterer has reconstructed the background to the matter in an article. First she asks, “why did the Nazis in Kiev switch from their policy of concentrating Jews in ghettos” suddenly to a general massacre (Khiterer, p. 1), and explains the fact as follows:

*“In Kiev the Nazis met more severe resistance than they had experienced in their prior occupations of other European capitals. On September 24, several large buildings in the downtown area of Kiev, on Kreshchatik Street and Proreznaiia*

<sup>511</sup> Tätigkeits- und Lagebericht Nr. 6 der Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in der UdSSR (Berichtszeit vom 1.-31.10.1941). RGVA, 500-1-25/1, p. 15.

*Street, were blown up, including the German Army headquarters and the hotel 'Continental' where many Germans officers were quartered. On September 25 the resulting fire continued to spread in the center of the city. The explosions and fire destroyed the area about one square mile. [...]*

*Hundreds of German soldiers were killed in the explosions and fires. Several partisan groups worked underground in the city. Kiev was turned into an arena of total war.*

*The Nazis blamed the Jews for these explosions. During the fire on Kreshchatik Street they caught and killed one young Jew, who had cut the water hose that the Germans were using to suppress the fire. This case was used by the Nazis to justify the massacre of the Jews in Babi Yar as revenge against the Jews for the terrorist explosions in the city." (ibid., p. 5)*

At Nuremberg, General Alfred Jodl declared that the explosions were the work of a Soviet commando, so that the Jews of Kiev were innocent.

*"Therefore, the explanation of the massacre of Jews in Babi Yar as an act of retaliation for the explosions in the city was designed as a bureaucratic justification for the killing." (ibid., p. 6)*

But if *Einsatzgruppe C* needed "a bureaucratic justification" to kill Jews, then they had obviously not received any extermination order for all Jews as Jews.

EM No. 106 dated 7 October offers another explanation. After delving into the damage caused by the explosions, the author of the report informs that

*"approximately 25,000 people had become homeless as a result of the destruction particularly of houses, and the resulting forced evacuation of endangered blocks of houses, and had to spend the first few days of the occupation under the open sky."*

In the meantime, dwellings undamaged by the explosions or the fire were made available to the population, the report continues:

*"On the other hand, corresponding numbers of dwellings were made available through the liquidation of some 35,000 Jews on 29 und 30 Sept. 41, so that housing the homeless has now been ensured, and has actually been accomplished in the meantime." (Mallmann 2011 et al., pp. 639f.)*

A little bit further on, the report sets forth the background to the shootings:

*"There was particularly great excitement on the part of the population against the Jews at that time, for one thing due to the economically privileged situation of the Jews under Bolshevik rule, and for their services as informants and agents for the NKVD, as well as because of the tensions in Kiev and the great fire resulting from them. Add the fact that the Jews had demonstrably participated in setting the arson. The population therefore expected the German authorities to carry out appropriate reprisals. For this reason, by arrangement with the city commandant, all Jews of Kiev were ordered to gather at a certain place at 8.00 AM on Monday, 29 September. These proclamations were bill-posted all over the city by members of the Ukrainian militia. At the same time, it was orally announced that all the Jews in Kiev were to be resettled. In collaboration with the group headquarters*

*and 2 squads of the Police Regiment South, Sonderkommando 4a executed 33,771 Jews on 29 and 30 Sept. Money, valuables, underwear and clothing were secured and partly made available to the NSV to supply ethnic Germans, partly to the provisional administration of the city for distribution to needy members of the local population.*

*The operation itself proceeded without friction. There were no incidents. The ‘re-settlement measures’ carried out against the Jews has definitely met the population’s approval. That the Jews were really liquidated has hardly become known so far, and in the light of previous experience would hardly have met any disapproval.” (ibid., pp. 641f.)*

EM No. 97, dated 28 September 1941, also refers to the explosions at Kiev, and states (*ibid.*, p. 598):

*“Demonstrably, Jews significantly involved in acts of arson. Supposedly 150,000 Jews present. Verification of these data not yet possible. 1,600 arrests during first operation. Measures introduced to register entire Jewry. Execution of at least 50,000 planned. Wehrmacht welcomes measures and requests radical course of action.”*

The German proclamation required all the Jews in the city to appear at the collection point, under pain of death. The German text said:<sup>512</sup>

*“All Jews of the city of Kiev and surroundings are to appear by 8:00 AM on Monday, 29 September 1941, at the corner of Melnik and Dokteriwski Street (next to the cemeteries). Documents, money and valuables are to be brought along, as well as warm clothing, underwear, etc.”*

Nevertheless, EM No. 128 dated 3 November 1941 says that *Einsatzgruppe C* was expecting the arrival of only 5,000-6,000 Jews, but surprisingly 30,000 of them showed up:

*“The biggest of these operations took place immediately after the capture of Kiev; for this, only Jews with their entire families were used. The problems arising in carrying out such a large-scale operation – particularly with regard to registration – were overcome in Kiev by ordering the Jewish population with bill-posting to be resettled. Although initially a participation of only some 5,000 to 6,000 Jews was expected, more than 30,000 Jews showed up, who, because of the extremely skillful organization, kept believing in their resettlement until immediately before the execution.” (Mallmann 2011 et al., p. 744)*

The Germans, therefore, invited *all* the Jews in the city – presumably 150,000 of them – yet they only expected 5,000 to 6,000 to show up, and were amazed when they saw that more than 30,000 of them came!

Other documents mentioned shootings in Kiev with a similar order of magnitude, but with direct or indirect reference to the first source.

For example, the report by Department VII of the 454th Rear-Security Division of 2 October 1941 reports (Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 90, pp. 306f.):

<sup>512</sup> TsDAVO, 4620-3-243-a, p. 141. The poster is written in Ukrainian; in the background, in very small letters, is the German text.

*“The Jews of the city had been ordered to appear at a certain place for the purposes of registration and internment in a camp. Approximately 34,000 of them appeared, including women and children. After having had to hand over their valuables and articles of clothing, all were killed, which took several days.”*

Another document, “Report 10” by Erich Koch, dated 5 October 1941, states:<sup>513</sup>

*“The Kiev fire (24.-29. September 1941) destroyed exactly the center, i.e., the most beautiful and most representative part of the city with the two biggest hotels, the main post office, the radio station, the telegraph office and a few department stores. The area affected is about 2 km square, rendering about 50,000 people homeless; they were provisionally lodged in abandoned quarters. In retribution for this act of obvious sabotage, the Jews of the city were liquidated on 29 and 30 September, a total (according to data from the SS Einsatzkommandos) of some 35,000 people, half of them women. The population took the executions calmly – insofar as they even found out about of them – frequently even with satisfaction; the vacated Jewish residences were mainly used to ameliorate the housing calamity.”*

All these documents, which mention an order of magnitude of the victims of 34,000, are therefore mere repetitions of the initial information and do not constitute subsequent confirmation.

The British never intercepted any radio messages in this regard, and those transmitted, as far as one can tell, made no mention of the shootings. Kruglov published a series of radio messages in Russian translation from the Higher SS and Police leader Russia South, Friedrich Jeckeln, from 26 September (no. 136/37) to 14 October 1941 (no. 195) which do not contain any reference to the shootings (Kruglov 2011, pp. 56-59).

Khiterer disputes the exactitude of the above-mentioned figure of 33,771 persons shot. The principal reason is that

*“the Nazi report of an exact number of executed Jews cannot be correct, because there is no evidence that the Nazis registered their victims or kept an exact count.”*

On the other hand, according to some witnesses, the shootings lasted not two but five days. Moreover, the above-mentioned figure does not explain the disappearance from the city of the remaining 115,000-135,000 Jews, so that the above-mentioned writer concludes that at Babi Yar “more than 100 thousand Jews were murdered there, not 33,771 as claimed in the Nazi report” (Khiterer, p. 7). Or rather, better still, according to her, “until the liberation of Kiev by the Red Army on November 6th 1943, almost 200,000 people may have been murdered in Babi Yar,” including 115,000-135,000 Jews (*ibid.*, p. 8).

In an article published in Volume 49 of the *American Jewish Year Book*, George J. Glikzman writes that the Jewish population of Kiev was 120,000 (Glikzman, p. 396). Therefore, the failure to register the victims can also mean

<sup>513</sup> “Bericht 10 (abgeschlossen am 5. Oktober 1941).” GARF, 7445-2-138, p. 269.



that there were fewer than 33,771 victims. Blobel himself, the principal architect of the shootings, asserted:<sup>514</sup>

*“I think that the figure of 33,771, mentioned to me as the number of persons executed in Kiev, is too high. In my opinion not more than half of the mentioned figure were shot.”*

## 4.5. The Execution Procedure

Regarding the perpetration of the actual executions at Babi Yar, the testimonies – whether given by perpetrators, surviving victims and bystanders – exhibit an essential divergence. There are in fact two versions: the “Soviet” version, sponsored by the Soviets since the very beginning and based on their witnesses, and the “German” version, based on much later testimonies and trial findings.

### 4.5.1 The Soviet Version

With reference to “an article based on documentary materials and depositions from the people of Kiev. Prepared for publication by Lev Ozerov,” the *Black Book* sets forth the following picture (Ehrenburg/Grossman 2002, p. 8):

*“An office with many desks was set up in the open air. From the gates that the Germans had placed at the end of the street, the crowd could not see these desks. People were separated from the crowd in groups of thirty to forty and escorted under guard to be ‘registered.’ Their documents and valuables were taken away from them. Indeed, at this point, the documents were thrown to the ground. Witnesses say that the area was covered with a thick layer of discarded papers, torn passports, and union cards. Then the Germans ordered everyone, without exception – girls, women, children, and old men – to strip naked; their clothes were gathered up and placed in neat piles. Rings were torn from the fingers of the naked people, both men and women. Then the executioners placed the doomed people in rows along the edge of the deep ravine and shot them at point-blank range. The bodies fell over the cliff. Small children were pushed into the ravine alive.”*

Udo Walendy reports a Soviet document cited by Erhard Roy Wiehn:

*“The leading member of the University of Kiev, Professor Aloshin, and several other professors of the University, a few physicians and citizens of the city, declared under oath:*

*‘On 28 September 1941, the German city command in Kiev issued an order that all of Kiev’s Jews (men, women and children) were to gather in a suburb of Kiev on 30 September. They were to bring their movable property along. From there, the Sonderkommando of the SS took the unhappy people in columns of 1,000 persons each to a ravine located immediately outside the city. Heavy machine guns had been set up on both sides of the ravine, and immediately after the men, women and children had entered the ravine, concentrated fire was directed at them, until they had fallen to the ground. Then, Russian POWs, stand-*

<sup>514</sup> Affidavit of P. Blobel dated 6 June 1947. NO-3824. TWC, Vol. IV, p. 213.

*ing on both sides of the ravine equipped with shovels, had to throw sand on top of the victims under the threatening muzzles of the machine guns, so that the whole thing became a mass grave.”* (Walendy 1992, p. 18)

Nadezhda Trofimovna Gorbacheva declared as follows on 28 November 1943:<sup>515</sup>

*“On 22 September 1941 [sic], at Babi Yar, I personally saw approximately 40 trucks passing by, for an entire day, loaded with Jews from Kiev – men, women and children, in addition to which there were also women with infants at the breast. I, and a few other women who lived near Babi Yar, without being seen by the German guards, approached the place where the trucks were stopping and unloading the persons being carried on them. We saw that 15 meters from the beginning of Babi Yar, the Germans were forcing the Jews who had been transported there to undress, after which they were ordered to run along the ravine, while the Germans shot at them with automatic rifles and submachine guns. I personally saw how the Germans threw infant babies into the ravine. In the ravine, there were only the bodies of people who had been shot, as well as wounded people and even living children. The Germans nevertheless buried them in the ravine while at the same time, we saw a small layer of dirt which was moving due to the movements of living persons.”*

The most important testimony is considered to be that of Dina Pronicheva, for its quality of being the statement of a survivor of the shooting; between the 1940s and 1960s, she signed a good 12 sworn statements, which have been analyzed by Karel C. Berkhoff. He summarized the matter of the witness's stories as follows:

*“On September 29, 1941, she went to Babi Yar with her parents and her younger sister, all of whom were murdered there. Dina Pronicheva, one of the tiny number of survivors of the massacre, is the only person known to have fallen into the ravine unwounded and feigned death. Assuming various non-Jewish identities and surmounting incredible obstacles, she survived the Nazi regime and after the war resumed her work at the Puppet Theater.”* (Berkhoff 2008, p. 294)

In the 12 above-mentioned statements, the witnesses describe the shootings in rather vague terms.

Berkhoff has supplied the following comparative analyzes (I omit the references in parentheses to the individual statements, which Berkhoff refers to as PRI-12):

*“After reaching the intersection, the great mass of people walked on (obviously along Melnyk Street) and came upon a roadblock near the gate of the Jewish cemetery, which was on the right side of the street (...). The guarded checkpoint consisted of barbed wire and (Soviet) anti-tank obstacles, and there was a gap in it that anyone could walk through. [...]*

*The Jews were steered left, evidently down Kahatna Street (today Simi Khokhlovykh Street), which had a long fence on the left and the small Orthodox Bratske Cemetery on the right. The Jews then turned right into another street, evidently*

<sup>515</sup> GDA SBU, 7-8-1, p. 18.

*the wide Laherna Street (today Dorohozhytska Street), which separated the Bratske Cemetery from the large (and also Orthodox) Lukianivka Cemetery. [...]*

*Seven accounts state that the Jews then arrived at a horrible 'corridor', or gauntlet, of Germans with rubber clubs, big sticks, and vicious dogs (...). [...]*

*In any event, the seven accounts that mention the gauntlet state without exception that none of the Jews could avoid running it; all of them were beaten severely, and those who fell were attacked by the dogs. [...]*

*Most versions of Pronicheva's testimony state or imply that the gauntlet led to a large 'space cordoned off by troops, a sort of square overgrown with grass' (...), where policemen who were not German gave the Jews an equally terrifying reception (...)." (ibid., pp. 301f.)*

According to the interrogation on 12 January 1946, the police

*"chased the fully undressed people one by one up a hill. The people reached the crest and there, through a cut in a wall of sand, neared the ravines... Before my very eyes people went insane, they turned gray, all around there were heartrending cries and moans. All day long, there was machine-gun fire. I saw how Germans took children away from their mothers and threw them from the precipice into the ravine." (ibid., p. 303)*

In a testimony published in 1963, Dina Pronicheva asserted:

*"The [Jewish] cemetery was fenced off by a high stone wall. One side of that stone wall borders on a rather deep ravine called Babi Yar. In this wall was a gate. All of the Jews, having undressed down to their underwear and having taken off their shoes, had to walk along a path toward the gate. But somewhere behind the gate stood a machine-gun. Right after people walked through the gate they came under fire and fell into the ravine. Dina saw how her entire family came under fire and fell into the ravine. Fortunately, the bullets somehow missed Dina, and she was not wounded when she fell into the ravine." (ibid., p. 306)*

The witness turned to a Ukrainian guard and told him that she was not Jewish, but Ukrainian; while waiting for the commandant, she was kept aside until after the executions, after which the commandant decided that she was to be shot as well.

*"When only one person was left before me [to be shot], I gathered all of my strength and jumped into the pit,' Pronicheva said in Darmstadt (...). Other reports also say that she dropped down before being hit, landed on people covered in blood, and pretended to be dead (...)." (ibid., pp. 304f.)*

The bodies were then covered with a thin layer of sand. "Somewhat later," – concludes Berkhoff – "Pronicheva snuck out of the mass grave" (ibid., p. 307).

Klee and Dreßen published a "Report in the Soviet newspaper 'Yunost'" which contains the account "How Dina Mironovna Pronicheva survived Babi-Yar" (Klee/Dreßen, pp. 118-133). This is an elaboration on an interview with the witness by Anatoly Kuznetsov and published in the newspaper *Yunost (Youth)* in August 1966. The text is as long as it is vague. The description of the shootings is limited to a few lines which leave the event itself in uncertainty:

*“At this moment she reached a long passageway between two rows of soldiers and dogs. This passageway was narrow, about one and a half meters. The soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder, with their sleeves rolled up; all of them had rubber truncheons or large cudgels.”* (ibid., p. 124)

What happened afterwards is not very clear, because the following scenario is this:

*“The naked people had to form small lines. They were then led into a cut that had been dug into the steep, sandy berm. One couldn’t see what was behind it, but in any case, that is where the shooting was coming from.”* (ibid., p. 127)

This account is a rehash of the statement signed by the same witness on 24 April 1946. Here as well, she describes the “corridor” formed by the two lines of soldiers with dogs, which terminated with a “door”:<sup>516</sup>

*“Exiting through this so-called door, there was a protrusion, not very big, where the persons were lined up and killed with a sub-machine gun from the other side.”*

On 2 February 1967, Dina Pronicheva was interrogated by the German judiciary and put forth a rather clear description of the events (Kühnl, pp. 398-400):

*“As we approached the collection point, we saw the encirclement by German soldiers and officers. Among them were also policemen there. On the cemetery grounds, the Germans took the luggage and valuables from us and the other citizens and led us in groups of 40-50 people each into a so-called ‘corridor’ of about three meters’ width formed by Germans standing tightly together on both sides with cudgels, rubber truncheons and dogs. My father, my mother and my sister had been pushed ahead; they were walking already much further ahead, and I could no longer see them. All those who passed the ‘corridor’ were cruelly beaten by the Germans; they crowded onto the space at the end of the ‘corridor’, and there they were undressed by policemen; they were forced to take off all their clothes, except for the undergarments. During that, the people were also beaten. Many people were already killed when passing through the ‘corridor.’ Then, the beaten and undressed people were taken in groups to the Babi Yar Ravine, to the execution site.*

*At the place where they undressed us, I turned to one of the policemen and explained to him that I was not a Jewess, but allegedly of Ukrainian nationality, and that I had only accompanied my acquaintances. After that, they took me to a group of about 30-40 people sitting on a hillock, to the side of where the people were being undressed. I myself saw how the Germans took the children away from the mothers and threw them alive into the ravine; I saw beaten and slain women, elderlies and sick people. Young people turned grey right before my eyes. I heard endless shooting from machine pistols and machine guns; I was an eyewitness to the most frightful act of violence against completely innocent people. Towards the end of the day, a German officer came to our group with an interpreter, and in response to his question, the policemen answered that we had come here as accompanying persons and had gotten to this place by accident and should be released.*

<sup>516</sup> TsDAVO, 4620-3-281, pp. 3-5.

*But the officer shouted around and ordered that we were to be shot, too; nobody was allowed to get released, because we had seen everything that had happened at Babi Yar.*

*And so they took us all to be shot. I was almost the last one in the group in line. They led us to an overhang over the ravine and started to shoot us with machine pistols. Those standing in front fell into the ravine, and when it was my turn, I threw myself into the ravine alive. It seemed to me as if I was flying into eternity. I fell onto human bodies which were there in a bloody mass. Moans arose from these victims; many people were still moving; they were only injured. Here, too, Germans and policemen walked about who shot or slew those still alive. This fate awaited me as well. One of the policemen or Germans turned me over with his foot, so that I was lying with my face upwards; he stepped on my hand and on my chest; after that they walked away and were shooting somewhere further behind.*

*After that, they started covering the bodies with earth and sand from above. I couldn't breathe anymore, freed myself from the earth with one hand, and crawled to the edge of the ravine. During the night, I crawled out of the ravine, I met a boy named Motja there, about 14 years old, who told me that he was to be shot together with his father."*

#### 4.5.2. The German Version

The truck driver Höfer testified as follows on 27 August 1959 (Klee/Dreßen/Rieß 1988, pp. 66-68):

*"One day I received the order to drive with my truck to just outside the city. I had a Ukrainian with me as passenger. It must have been about 10.00 AM. On the way there, we overtook Jews walking on foot with luggage who were marching in the same direction. There were entire families. The further we got outside the city, the thicker these columns became. Huge piles of clothing lay around on a large open field. These were my destination. I was guided there by the Ukrainian. After stopping at the place, near the piles of clothing, the truck was immediately loaded with articles of clothing. This was performed by the Ukrainians present there. I saw at that place that the arriving Jews – men, women and children – were received by the Ukrainians. They were led past various stations, where successively they had to lay down first their luggage, their overcoats, shoes and outer clothing and also their undergarments. They had to lay down their valuables in the same way at a certain spot. For every article of clothing, a special pile had been created. [...]*

*The undressed Jews were led to a ravine measuring about 150 meters long, 30 meters wide, and a good 15 meters deep. 2 or 3 narrow entranceways led to this ravine, through which the Jews were channeled down. When they got to the edge of the ravine, they were grabbed by officials of the police and laid on top of already-executed Jews. This all happened very quickly.*

*The bodies were truly stacked up. As soon as a Jew lay there, a gunman from the police came with a machine gun and shot the person lying there in the back of the neck. [...]*

*There were only 2 gunman who carried out the shootings. One gunman was active at one end of the ravine, and the other at the other end. I saw the gunman standing on the already stacked-up bodies while shooting alternately. As soon as one Jew was killed by a shot, the gunman walked on the bodies of those shot to the next Jew, who had been laid down, and shot this one. It went on this way non-stop, without distinction between men, women and children. The children were left with their mothers and shot with them. [...]*

*In the pit, I saw already 3 rows of bodies stacked up at a length of about 60 meters. I couldn't see how many layers were already stacked up on top of each other. [...]*

*Besides the two gunmen, there was a 'packer,' a policeman, at each entrance to the ravine, who laid the victims on top of the other bodies in such a way that the gunman walking by only needed to fire one shot."*

Kurt Werner, former member of SK 4a, testified that he was one of the gunmen at the executions. On 28 May 1964, he declared (*ibid.*, pp. 69f.):

*"After one kilometer, I saw a large natural ravine. It was sandy terrain. The ravine was approximately 10 meters deep, about 400 meters long, about 80 meters wide at the top and about 10 meters wide at the bottom. Right after my arrival at the execution grounds, I had to go down into this depression, together with other comrades. It wasn't long before the first Jews were led to us down the ravine's slopes. The Jews had to lie down faces-down along the walls of the depression. There were three groups with gunmen in the depression, with a total of about 12 gunmen. At the same time, Jews were continually led towards these shooting groups from above. The following Jews had to lie down on the bodies of the previously shot Jews. The gunmen stood behind the Jews in each case and killed them with shots to the back of the neck. [...]*

*I had to remain down in the ravine the whole morning. There, I had to shoot repeatedly for a while, and then I was busy reloading the machine pistols' magazines with ammunition. During this time, other comrades were assigned as gunmen. Toward noon, we were withdrawn from the depression, and in the afternoon, I, with others, had to lead the Jews to the depression from above. During this time, other comrades did the shooting down in the depression. The Jews were led by us to the depression's edge; from there they ran down the slopes by themselves. The whole shooting operation may have lasted up to about [...] 5 or 6 PM that day."*

Anton Heidborn, another member of SK 4a, made the following statements on 1 November 1963 (*ibid.*, p. 70):

*"On the third day after the execution, we were driven once more to the execution ground. [...] On this day, they began covering up the piles of bodies. Civilians were deployed for this. To some extent, the walls were even dynamited off. I didn't return to the execution ground after this day."*

Another witness, a “platoon constable of a police company cordoning off the execution site,” was interrogated by the German judiciary on 19 November 1965 (Kühnl, p. 397):

*“Posters in Russian appeared in Kiev stating that the Jews were to gather for resettlement at a certain location in the city. We all had to report to the barracks’ courtyard – I believe it was the end of September 1941. Everyone belonging to the Kommando was there, even the typing pool and the people from the sick bay. All the officers were there, too. Blobel made a speech, to the effect that the orders to be carried out on that day were to be obeyed under any circumstance, otherwise we had to reckon with the most severe measures, in particular execution for cowardice and punishment of our families. We were then driven on trucks through the city of Kiev to a big poplar boulevard. On our way we already saw that long columns of Jews of all ages and both sexes were moving toward this boulevard. This boulevard led to a high plateau. On this plateau, the Jews had to undress. The Jews were watched by units from the Wehrmacht and by a Hamburg police battalion, which bore the number 303, as far as I can remember. Blobel was in charge of the whole organization and implementation of the executions. The Jews had to lay down their clothes; large heaps were piling up. Following this, they had to walk to the edge of the pit and lie down. Then they were shot. The shootings were done by taking turns. The shooting extended over the length of the entire ravine. The individual gunmen were issued loaded machine-gun magazines by other members of the unit. The shootings lasted 2 days. Thousands upon thousands of Jews were shot. They all went calmly to their deaths. There was no crying and no wailing.”*

The two versions of events set forth above present a radical and irreconcilable contradiction, which, as far as one can tell, no orthodox Holocaust historian has dwelt upon. The Soviet version claims that the victims were shot at the edge of the ravine and fell into it after having been shot, with the variant that they had to run into the ravine and were shot from the top, from both sides. The German version, by contrast, says that the victims were brought into the ravine, made to lie down and were killed with a bullet to the back of the neck. I shall examine the shooting technique described in the two versions later.

The only concordant claim is that the victims were made to undress before walking to their execution.

#### 4.5.3. The Executions in the Light of Hähle’s Photographs

The shootings at Babi Yar were photographed, in their preliminary and final phases, between 29 September and 1 October 1941, apparently by Johannes Hähle, military photographer from the 637th Propaganda Company of the Sixth Army. There are at least four series of photographs which show groups of persons walking.

1) At least three photographs taken by Hähle depict the passage of a long column of persons marching along a long platform. In front, seen from the side, is a body (see Document II.4.14.).

The second photograph shows the same column, seen from the right;<sup>517</sup> in the third photograph, the column is further away.<sup>518</sup> These three photographs were published by Klee and Dreßen, but printed in reverse, that is, the right side on the left and vice versa, and with erroneous captions (Klee/Dreßen, pp. 101, 104f.). The photograph reproduced as Document II.4.14 in the Appendix of this study has been given the following caption by Klee/Dreßen: “In a Soviet city (Lubny?): Jews on their way to the collection point and to their execution. They have to walk past corpses lying around on the ground” (*ibid.*, p. 101).

2) Two photographs, also by Hähle, showing a group of persons; the group is numerically considerable but certainly not large (see Document II.4.15.). The second photograph is a close-up image.<sup>519</sup>

3) A group of approximately 60 men marching in formation, four abreast, along a road escorted by four German soldiers (see Document II.4.16.).

4) Another photograph shows a group of 50-60 women with purses and bundles along a country road in a disorderly column (see Document II.4.17.).

This series of photographs shows at most one hundred persons, very far from the figure of over 33,000.

Since the persons depicted walk in a rather sparse column of three to four persons, or a front of approximately three meters with at most two persons per square meter, therefore six persons per linear meter of column, the presumed 33,771 persons shot would have formed a column ( $33,771 \div 6 =$ ) over 5,600 meters long!

According to the German proclamation mentioned above, the Jews of Kiev were ordered to assemble by 8 in the morning at the “corner of Melnik and Dokterivski Street (next to the cemeteries).” On the map of Kiev from 1943, Dokterivskaya Road is referred to as “*Dechtjatiwska-Strasse*,” while Melnikova Road is another name for Dorohozhytska (Dorogozhytska, Dorogozhitskaya) Road. In the map shown in Document II.4.11., Melnikova Road corresponds to the old Dorogozhytska Road, and this is the old Degtyarivska (Degtyarevskaya, Dokterivskaya) Road. The circle closes the angle of the two streets, the place indicated by the German proclamation. Dorogozhytska road (in the Melnikova diagram) flanks the Jewish cemetery (*Evreyskoye kladbishche*), Degtyarivska Road (in the Dorogozhytska diagram) passed in front of the “Fraternal Cemetery” (*Bratskoye kladbishche*). The Jewish cemetery’s entrance gate must have been located where the black rectangle appears, since it designates the “*kontora kladbishcha*,” the cemetery office.

A photograph from the time shows this road with the cemetery entrance gate (Document II.4.18.). If over 33,000 people had really appeared at the point indicated, the resulting crowd would have resembled that depicted in Document

<sup>517</sup> In: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo2.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo2.html)

<sup>518</sup> In: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo3.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo3.html)

<sup>519</sup> In: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo18.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo18.html)



II.4.19 showing the crowds gathered during a 1979 demonstration against nuclear weapons.

As anticipated above, the only concordant fact in the two versions of events is that the victims were forced to disrobe before entering the ravine. This is confirmed by Klee and Dreßen, who published two photographs relating to this fact. The first – Document II.4.20 – shows a few dozen persons and a few soldiers, with this caption:

*“Babi Yar, September 1941: Jewish Soviet citizens above the ravine. Before the murder, they are forced to undress.”* (Klee/Dreßen, p. 125)

In the other photograph (Document II.4.21) we see a long pile of clothing in a wooded area, with a few persons standing around the edges; the caption says:

*“Babi-Yar, September 1941: The murderers rummage through the victims’ property.”* (*ibid.*)

Various photographs taken by Hähle nevertheless present a vast assembly of clothing lying *inside* the ravine. I shall discuss the two most significant photographs.

In the first photo reproduced in Document II.4.22, the layer of clothes at the top travels through the ravine transversely and continues, closer up, in the photo reproduced in Document II.4.23. If all the sources agree that the victims undressed *before* entering the ravine, then why are the clothes *inside* the ravine? This is another question which no orthodox Holocaust historian has addressed.

From the diagrams of Kiev, it may be seen that the width of the ravine at its widest point was 120 meters; in the two photographs reproduced in Documents II.4.22f., we see a long strip of clothing, first very close together, running along in the longitudinal direction of the ravine; further along, there appears another strip which crosses the ravine transversely: up to a little less than half, it is rather wide, but then it thins out up until the opposite wall at 2-3 meters.

The transverse strip could therefore be a maximum of 120 meters long, and 15-20 wide for the first half and no more than 10 meters wide for the second half, for a total of approximately 1,800 square meters. The longitudinal strip may be seen only at the beginning, and it is not said that it joins the transversal strip. In this hypothesis, based on the proportions of the image, it would be more or less as long as the transversal and 5-10 meters wide, so that it would cover at the most 1,200 square meters. There would therefore have been a total maximum surface area of 4,000 square meters, corresponding to a column of approximately 4,000 persons, each of whom undressed in a square meter.

In practice, the order of magnitude resulting from the photographs would be little more than one tenth of the official number of victims (33,771).

Other photographs taken by Hähle depict several dozens of POWs equipped with shovels working at the bottom of the ravine. One shows two women in the foreground speaking with a German soldier on the edge of the ravine (Document II.4.25). Another photograph depicts the POWs inside the ravine (Document II.4.26).

The scenario underlying these photographs must be evaluated in the light of the two versions of events set forth above. According to the Soviet version, the victims were taken in groups of one hundred (Khiterer, p. 7) to the edge of the ravine and shot in such a way that the bodies fell down (*ibid.*, p. 6). In this case, the bodies would have fallen into the ravine all higgledy-piggledy, after which it would have been necessary to take the bodies out one by one and place them in mass graves. In this case, on both slopes of the ravine, one single grave, or a series of successive graves, would have existed (the POWs are arranged one after the other) in a very long and sinuous development (the line of POWs in fact meanders following the meandering edges of the two walls of the ravine). In this case, the shootings would have been carried out from both sides of the ravine, which contradicts the testimonies. This version is obviously implausible and cannot explain the scenario of the photographs.

One photograph (Document II.4.25) shows two women, one with a child in her arms, speaking calmly with a German sentry on the edge of the ravine, while the POWs are working diligently below them. This image testifies to the fact that this work was not secret at all, that the alleged cordon of guards around the ravine to keep outsiders away did not exist, and that consequently anyone could approach without danger.

The German version asserts that the victims were taken in small groups “to the edge of the pit,” after which they had to enter the grave and lie down on the bottom, face down; the “gunmen” fired a shot at each victim in the back of the neck; the next group had to lie down as well, on top of the bodies, and they were also shot in the back of the neck; there was at least one mass grave approximately 60 meters long which contained “3 rows of bodies” and finally “The shooting extended over the length of the entire ravine.” With this in mind, the POWs had finished filling the mass graves and leveled the terrain. This implies, as in the preceding case, the presence of a very long grave, or a series of successive graves, on both sides of the ravine. But the only witness who spoke of what happened after the shootings, Anton Heidborn, asserted that just that day they “began covering up the piles of bodies,” that “civilians” were being employed for the work, and that “to some extent, the walls were even dynamited off.” Now, the word “piles of bodies” makes one think of bodies piled up on the surface of the ground rather than of bodies piled up one on top of the other in an orderly arrangement in mass graves; the term “civilians” means that the workers cannot have been prisoners of war, and in the photographs reproduced there is no obvious proof that any part of the ravine’s walls had been “dynamited off.”

Not even the German version satisfactorily explains the scenario of the photographs.

#### 4.5.4. The Execution Procedure According to the German Version

It remains to examine the feasibility of an execution of over 33,000 persons in the manner described by the German witnesses. Höfer claims that the executioners

were “only 2 gunmen,” but the witness Werner has more credibility, because he claims to have participated directly in the shooting: according to him, the shooting was carried out by “three groups with gunmen in the depression, with a total of about 12 gunmen.” During the first day, these gunmen executed people until about 5 or 6 PM. The proclamation required the Jews of Kiev to assemble at the pre-established point by 8 in the morning, so that the time available for the first day of the executions was at most 10 hours. If there is any consistency between the accounts of Höfer, Werner and those of the “platoon constable,” the events played out as follows:

- the large boulevard, that is, Degtyarivska Road, “led to a high plateau. On this plateau, the Jews had to undress.” This is the place indicated by the arrow in Document II.4.12a.
- “The Jews had to lay down their clothes; large heaps were piling up.”
- The guards escorted the undressed victims “to the depression’s edge; from there they ran down the slopes by themselves.”
- At the bottom of the ravine, “at each entrance to the ravine,” there was “a ‘packer,’ a policeman, at each entrance to the ravine, who laid the victims on top of the other bodies in such a way that the gunman walking by only needed to fire one shot.”

It is pertinent to recall that this reconstruction is in direct contradiction to the photographs which show the clothing in the ravine, placed in such a manner as if there had been a line of a few thousand persons who had undressed on the spot. Alternatively, it would be necessary to suppose that the clothing left by the victims on the edge of the ravine was transported to the interior of the ravine only to be retransported away later. The conjecture is obviously implausible.

Since there were 12 executioners, the 33,771 victims were subdivided into  $(33,771 \div 12 =)$  2,814 dozens. Dividing them up equally results in 1,407 dozens on both 29 and 30 September 1941. The time available was 10 hours or 36,000 seconds. It follows that, for 10 hours at a time, each of the 12 executioners shot one victim every  $(36,000 \div 1,407 =)$  approximately 26 seconds. In this very brief period of time, the 12 victims were taken in charge by the “packer,” frog-marched to the place of execution, made to lie down on the bodies, and killed with a shot to the back of the neck. Not only the victims were moved during the shooting, but the executioners moved as well, because “The shooting extended over the length of the entire ravine.” The 26 seconds therefore include the time required to walk from each execution site to the next, but also include the changes in function and duty. The executioners, at a certain time during the morning, stopped firing and loaded the magazines for the following squad, and in the afternoon they all stopped working in the ravine in order to render services elsewhere. It follows that the actual time required for the executions was even less than the above-mentioned 26 seconds. Who can seriously believe that a massacre of such dimensions could be perpetrated using the methods described by the witnesses?

But there is another problem. On the first day, the shootings stopped at 5 or 6 PM. If half the Jews who appeared in response to the German proclamation had been killed, 16,800 more Jews were still alive; where did they spend the night? What was done with them? How were they prevented from escaping? And can one believe that, after listening to rifle fire all day (more than 16,800 shots), such a mass of people would continue to await death patiently without reacting? Without rebelling? Without any attempt to escape *en masse*? Like sheep to the slaughter?

In conclusion, there was no doubt an execution of Jews at Babi Yar, but all the physical evidence leads to the conclusion that its order of magnitude was maybe a tenth of that asserted.

## 5. *Sonderkommando* 1005 A: Other Activities

### 5.1. Berdichev, Belaya Tserkov and Uman

Having finished at Babi Yar, *Sonderkommando* 1005 A moved approximately 150 km southwest to Berdichev (Berdychiv), and then traveled another 110 km east to Belaya Tserkov (Bila Tserkva) and then Uman, 110 km south. The verdict of the Stuttgart District Court of 13 March 1969, the only Holocaust source on these three sites, is extremely laconic (Rüter/Mildt, p. 714):

*“Sonderkommando 1005 A moved further to Belaya Tserkov and Uman by way of Berdichev – one last part of the members of the ordinary police of Unit 1005 B may possibly have been separated only here from Unit 1005 A. At least in the first two cities mentioned, bodies were exhumed and cremated during the remaining time of the year 1943 until January 1944.”*

The number of bodies exhumed and cremated is not indicated in the verdict. A few pages further along, the verdict returns to the subject of Belaya Tserkov (it adds nothing where Berdichev is concerned), with this brilliant consideration (*ibid.*, p. 723):

*“More precise information on formation, start, duration and exterior circumstances of this deployment could not be established.”*

On Uman, by contrast, it is stated that “some 5,000 bodies were probably exhumed and burned in Uman” (*ibid.*). This is obviously mere conjecture on the part of the court.

In practice, nothing is known of the activity of this unit over the three-month period from October 1943 until January 1944. Hoffmann accepts the above-mentioned figure of 5,000 supposed bodies, but claims that these were only a part of the victims, who really numbered 24,000; these were “driven together and murdered at the city airport” in September and October 1941 (Hoffmann, p. 119). He doesn’t even wonder why only 5,000 of these 24,000 victims were ever exhumed and burnt, and, above all, why the Soviets did not find the remaining 19,000.

According to Arad, when Berdichev was captured by the Germans, there were between 16,000 and 17,000 Jews in the city. On 25 August 1941, a ghetto was established. On 4 September, 1,500 Jews were shot, and another 1,200 during the night of 14-15 September (Arad 2009, pp. 169f.). The total number of victims amounted to 13,500. The source for this enormous massacre is nothing less than Ehrenburg’s *Black Book!* (*ibid.*, fn 31, p. 567)

The Incident Reports do not at all confirm a massacre of such proportions. In EM No. 38 dated 30 July 1941, *Einsatzgruppe* C reported the execution of 148 persons at Berdichev by *Einsatzkommando* 4a (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 208). EM No. 47 dated 9 August 1942 reports (*ibid.*, p. 265):

*“A detachment of Einsatzkommando 4a was active in Berdichev until the arrival of Einsatzkommando 5. 148 Jews were executed for looting and Communist activity. Furthermore, 74 Jews have been shot there by Einsatzkommando 5 so far.”*

This report about the execution of the 148 Jews is therefore a repetition. The most substantial execution took place at the beginning of September 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 496):

*“Leaflets and inflammatory pamphlets had been distributed by Jews in Berdichev on 1 and 2 Sept. 41. Since the offenders could not be determined, 1,303 Jews, including 876 Jewesses above the age of 12, were executed by a squad of the Higher SS and Police leader.”*

At Belaya Tserkov, reports Arad, the entire Jewish population of the city, 5,000-6,000 persons, was exterminated in mid-August 1941. He refers to “a Soviet committee of inquiry” which is said to have “determined” the killing of 6,000 persons in this locality (Arad 2009, p. 171; fn 41, p. 567). The only document referred to by Arad is a report from the field headquarters of Belaya Tserkov dated 11 September 1941, which states (*ibid.*):

*“Many of the Jews in Belaya Tserkov were shot. All the others escaped. In fact, no more Jews remain there.”*

This only shows that the 5,000 or 6,000 Jews of the city were not all killed. Klee, Dreßen and Rieß assert that at Belaya Tserkov “between the 8th and 19th of August, the Waffen-SS platoon – with help from the Ukrainian militia – shoots several hundred Jewish men and women” (Klee/Dreßen/Rieß 1988, p. 132). Ensign Liebe declared on 14 June 1965 that the victims of the executions amounted to 800-900 people. Some 90 children of the executed persons were gathered together in a house under inhumane conditions and were then shot, too (*ibid.*, pp. 135-142). There were, therefore, approximately 1,000 victims.

EM No. 119 dated 20 October 1941 concerns itself with Uman at great length. The document informs us that, prior to the outbreak of the war, the city had approximately 55,000 inhabitants, including approximately 10,000 Jews. After that, 8,000 still remained. These had formed “a well-functioning intelligence network,” which attracted the attention of the Germans. On 21 September, there were “excesses against the Jews by members of the militia with the participation of numerous members of the Wehrmacht,” which consisted above all of looting and demolishing Jewish houses. As a result, “a great number of Jews were now warned in advance and hastily left town.” The conclusion of the matter was that “apart from that, 1,412 Jews were executed by *Einsatzkommando 5* in Uman on the 22nd and 23rd of September 1941” (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 704f.). The report makes no mention of the purported executions on the 4th and 14-15th of September, and says that a great number of Jews had fled, so that the 1,412 Jews shot were no doubt those remaining in the city.

Summarizing, there were 1,525 documented victims at Berdichev, approximately 1,000 at Belaya Tserkov, and a little over 1,400 at Uman, for a total of a little over 3,900.

If we consider the following facts:

- there should have been the bodies of almost 4,600 documented victims at Zhitomir alone – which is located some 40 km north of Berdichev by road (see Part One, Section 5.4.5.);
- if we are to believe Arad (2009, p. 170), the Germans killed 10,760 persons at Vinnitsa from the beginning of August until 20 September 1941 (although there were only 6,000 victims according to Pohl (2008, p. 47); this town is some 86 km away from Berdichev to the south);
- if we follow Dieter Pohl (*ibid.*), 8,000 Jews were moreover shot at Khmelnik (Khmilnyk) in January 1942 (this town is around 65 km southeast from Berdichev);
- for none of these three locations, any “1005 activity” is claimed by anyone;

then it becomes clear that the activity of *Sonderkommando* 1005 A appears quite nonsensical: the *kommando* is supposed to have focused on the elimination of traces of fewer than altogether 4,000 bodies in Berdichev, Belaya Tserkov and Uman, while leaving untouched the traces of over 23,000 claimed victims in the same district.

## 5.2. Kamenets-Podolsky

After finishing their work at Uman, *Sonderkommando* 1005 A was transferred to Lvov, whence it was sent on furlough to the Polish tourist locales of Zakopane and Krinica. Over the following period, the verdict of the Stuttgart District Court of 13 March 1969 ascertained the following (Rüter/Mildt, p. 729):

*“Towards the middle of March 1944, Partial Unit 1005 A assembled in Lvov once more. It then moved on to Kamenets-Podolsky to continue the unearthing operation. ‘Sounding digs’ were performed at a causeway on the edge of the city, near a large grain warehouse. The actual work was not commenced, however, since Soviet troops had encircled the city. After days of combat deployment, the squad members finally succeeded in fighting their way through the encirclement in small groups toward Lvov.”*

It follows that *Sonderkommando* 1005 A did not open the mass graves, did not exhume the bodies and did not cremate them; the graves therefore remained intact, containing at least 27,600 bodies according to Hoffmann (Hoffmann, pp. 124f.). But was this enormous number of bodies ever found by the Soviets? This is an essential question which neither Hoffmann nor any other orthodox Holocaust historian has ever even raised. Before answering, it is advisable to outline the rather controversial orthodox narrative of the massacre of Kamenets-Podolsky. Randolph L. Braham summarizes the events in this locality as follows:

*“The extermination of the Jews deported from Hungary was carried out on August 27-28. According to an eyewitness account, the deportees were told that in view of a decision to clear Kamenets-Podolsk of Jews, they would have to be relocated. Surrounded by units of the SS, their Ukrainian hirelings, and reportedly a*

*Hungarian sapper platoon composed of Swabians, they, together with the indigenous Jews of Kamenets-Podolsk, were compelled to march about ten miles to a series of craters caused by bombings. There they were ordered to undress, after which they were machine-gunned. The number of victims executed at Kamenets-Podolsk cannot be established with any degree of accuracy. In his Operational Report USSR No. 80, dated September 11, 1941, Jeckeln put the total number of those shot at Kamenets-Podolsk at 23,600 – the first five-figure massacre in the Nazis' Final Solution program.” (Braham 2000, p. 34)*

In fact, EM No. 80 dated 11 September 1941 says (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 444):

*“Within 3 days, 23,600 Jews were shot by a squad of the Higher SS and Police leader in Kamenets-Podolsky.”*

In this regard, there also exist three telexes from Jeckeln addressed to the *Kommandostab* of the *Reichsführer SS*. The first is dated 27 August 1941 (Sauer, pp. 56f.):

*“The 1st SS Brigade is engaged in cleansing operations north of the highway Korosten – Belokorovichi, Mikhaylovka, Nudniawyzranka, Stepanovka and Zere, during which they take 99 prisoners and shoot 16 Jews and partisan members.*

*Police Regiment South provides for rail security, arrests 22 former prisoners of war and shoots 914 Jews.*

*Police Battalion 320 with Einsatzgruppe of the headquarter's company undertakes a special operation in Kamenets-Podolsky: 4,200 Jews were shot.”*

This telex was intercepted by the British, who summarized it as follows:<sup>520</sup>

*“Slaughter of Jews is again reported in messages of 27.8.41, referring to area round KAMENEZ-PODOLSK (that is the corner of the Ukraine where Poland and Rumania meet). Regt. SOUTH claims 914 shot and Special Action Staff operating with the Police Battalion 302 claims to have shot 4200 Jews without loss to themselves. To have shot 174 looters and 21 members of the Red Army, claimed by S.S. Kav. Regt. 1 in the MINSK area, pales by comparison.”*

The number of the battalion (302 instead of 320) is probably a transposition of digits. The second telex is dated 28 August (Sauer, p. 57):

*“SS Brig. Forces through cleansing operation north of Korosten – Belokorovichi: 42 prisoners made, 12 Jews and 1 partisan shot.*

*Police Regiment South takes 4 prisoners and shoots 369 Jews.*

*Police Battalion 320 continues special operation in the Kamenets-Podolsky region and shoots 5,000 Jews in the process.”*

On 29 August, Jeckeln sent this teletype:

*“1. Locations unchanged.*

<sup>520</sup> TNA. HW 1/35, “German Police,” 11.9.1941.

<sup>521</sup> Original on the web at:

[www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/database/germanReports.asp?cid=278&site\\_id=288](http://www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/database/germanReports.asp?cid=278&site_id=288); the transcript reproduced by Sauer, p. 57, is very accurate.



2. *Activities: 1st. SS Brig. continuation of cleansing operations north of Korosten – Belokorovichi [...]. Stabskp. HSSUPF Russia South concludes operation under leadership of SS Obergruf. Jeckeln in Kamenets-Podolsky.*

*Successes: 1st SS Brig. makes 18 prisoners and shoots 77 Jews. Stabskp. again shoots 7,000 Jews, so that total number of Jews liquidated during the operation in Kamenets-Podolsky about 20 thousand. Change in activity report of 26 and 27 August 1941 instead of Pol. Batl. 320 put Stabskp. in report of 27 August instead of 5 thousand 11 thousand. Pol. Batl. 320 only deployed for cordoning off. [...]"*

The last telex dates back to 31 August 1941 (Hoppe/Glass, pp. 270f., Doc. 70):

*"1. Locations unchanged.*

*2. Activities: 1st. SS Brigade – continuation of cleansing operations north of highway Ignatpol, Malakhovka, Usovo. Pol.-Regt. South – cleansing operations in region south of highway Zwiahel, Zhitomir concluded. Pol.-Batl. 320 – reconnaissance and preparations for operation in Kamenets-Podolsky region.*

*3. Successes: 1st. SS Brig. – 1 prisoner, 36 rifles captured. P. platoons rebuild 3 destroyed bridges. Pol. Regt. South – in Slavuta 3 Ukrainians and 4 Russians, probably dropped by parachute, arrested and handed over to SD. 65 Jews shot. Addendum: the number of Jews shot by [the] State Comp. [of] HSSPF. Russia South in Kamenets-Podolsky increased to 23,600.*

*Losses: [...]"*

Strangely, these radio messages are not mentioned in the British intercepts.

As far as one can tell, Jeckeln had no clear ideas about the Kamenets-Podolsky massacre; it lasted three days, starting on 27 August, when Police Battalion 320 and Jeckeln's *Stabskompanie* shot 4,200 Jews; the day after, Police Battalion 320 killed another 5,000; on 29 August, the action concluded with the murder of another 7,000 Jews, making a total of 16,200 victims, but Jeckeln announced 20,000; he moreover corrected himself, in that the shooting on the first day had been carried out by the *Stabskompanie* instead of Police Battalion 320, and that there were 11,000 victims instead of 5,000. These gross errors certainly do not increase faith in the credibility of the reports. With this correction, the total number of victims rises to 22,200, but in the radio message of 31 August, Jeckeln assured that the total was 23,600, although, according to him, the action terminated on the 29th. How reliable are these figures?

Even Klaus-Michael Mallmann, author of a documented article on Kamenets-Podolsky, asks (Mallmann, p. 242):

*"Was Jeckeln really so blind that he needed two days to understand who shot and who cordoned things off?"*

As we shall see, he not only does not answer this question, which for him was obviously rhetorical in nature, but adds additional contradictions.

Another reference to Kamenets-Podolsky may be found in Document NOKW-1554, summarized as follows in the transcript of the Nuremberg "High Command Case":

*“On 2 September von Roques’s<sup>[522]</sup> chief of staff had a conference at the headquarters of Army Group South in which the figures ‘concerning the settlement of the Jewish question in Kamenets Podolsk’ were discussed. (NOKW-1554, Pros. Ex. 938.).” (TWC, Vol. XI, p. 363)*

Note the use of the “euphemism” “settlement” after Jeckeln’s explicit mention of shooting.

The background to the executions shows that the SS were particularly anxious to get their hands on the greatest possible number of Jews so as to shoot them, and this is particularly true of those whom the Roumanians were unloading into the territory controlled by the Germans. Matatias Carp’s opus *Cartea Neagra* provides plentiful information on this singular attitude on the part of the Germans:<sup>523</sup>

*“5 August 1941. The Bessarabian Jews chased over the Dniester by Roumanian troops are now being sent back by German troops to the western side of the river. The first convoy of 3,000 people is being taken from Mogilev-Podolsky to Otaci.*

*6 August 1941. [...] The Germans no longer permit the transfer to Transnistria, so that the Jews are being driven back in the direction of Secureni.*

*7 August 1941. The Germans are attempting to bring over there a new convoy of 4,500 Jews, but the Roumanian troops are refusing this. The Jews are being led back to Mogilev-Podolsky, and the Roumanian military authorities are demanding that military units be shifted further south, in order to foil a possible German plan to re-introduce the Jews back at another location.*

*8 August 1941. The conflicts between the local German and Roumanian troops in the Mogilev-Podolsky – Otaci region have been decided in favor of the Germans. The Great Praetor of the [Roumanian] Army ordered that the return of the Jewish columns driven over the Dniester by the Germans should be admitted: naturally, he added that all returned Jews were to be gathered and interned.”*

On 16 August, Manfred von Killinger, German ambassador at Budapest, sent the following message to the German Foreign Office (Rothfels 1970a, p. 264):

*“General Antonescu complained today that Bessarabian Jews taken along by Soviet troops would now be shoved back by German military headquarters from the Ukraine to Bessarabia. To start with, this was about 11,000 Jews waiting for entry visas in the vicinity of Soroca on the Bessarabian border. The General urgently requests that the return of these Jews to Bessarabia, which is in violation of the guidelines given to him in Munich by the Führer on the treatment of eastern Jews, be prevented, and that the German authorities be instructed to arrange for the deportation of the Jews in another direction. I remark in this regard that, also in domestic political terms, the return of Jews to Bessarabia would constitute an undesirable burden upon Roumania. Please advise by wire.”*

<sup>522</sup> General Karl von Roques was commander of the rear army area of Army Group South and collaborated with Jeckeln.

<sup>523</sup> Carp 1946, Vol. III; translation of extracts for trial purposes from the Treichel Public Prosecutor’s Office. YVA, O.53-157, pp. 161f.

On 8 September, Franz Rademacher, legation councillor to the Foreign Office, called the Bucharest delegation's attention to the decision of the *Wehrmacht's* High Command (Rothfels 1970b, p. 431):

*"Insofar as this is about the deportation of Jews between Roumanian territory and the areas between Bug and Dniester soon to be transferred to Roumanian administration, interventions by German agencies must not occur. Deportations from these areas into the occupied territories under German administration and vice versa must be prevented in the future."*

At a conference of the German Army's High Command relating to the preparation for the transition of the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine to civilian administration, which took place on 25 August 1941, Major Wagner also referred to the question raised above (PS-197. NCA, Vol. III, p. 211):

*"Near Kamenez-Podolsk, the Hungarians have pushed about 11,000 Jews over the border. In the negotiations up to the present it has not been possible to arrive at any measures for the return of these Jews. The higher SS and Police leader (SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Jeckeln) hopes, however, to have completed the liquidation of these Jews by the 1.9.1941."*

The date was that anticipated for the transfer of power from the military administration to the civilian administration.

The "liquidation" of the 11,000 Jews mentioned above therefore depended exclusively on the fact that it was not possible to return them to Roumanian territory.

EM No. 67 dated 29 August 1941 reports (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 378):

*"Roumainia had driven thousands of selected frail persons and children out of Bessarabia and Bucovina into the German sphere of interest. In total, about 27,500 [were] driven back into Roumanian territory near Swaniza-Mogilev-Podolsky and Yampol, and 1,265, in part younger people, were shot."*

A report from Otto Ohlendorf dated 2 September 1941 confirms (Angrick *et al.*, pp. 122):

*"Prior to closing off of the Dniester bridges, the Roumanians had driven about 35,000 Jews into the section east of the Dniester, which was considered part of the German sphere of interest until 28 Aug. 41. As already reported, some 27,500 Jews were brought back into Roumanian territory near Mogilev-Podolsky and Yampol by deployed squads of Einsatzgruppe D."*

If Jeckeln really exerted himself to the extent of shooting the 11,000 Jews mentioned above, then why did he refer, with the contradictions which I have noted earlier, to having killed 23,600 of them?

And why weren't the 27,500 Jews driven back into Roumanian territory shot rather than expelled?

Mallmann adduces various motivations for the executions at Kamenets-Podolsky: the risk of epidemics, the scarcity of food, and rivalry: von dem Bach-Zelewski had announced a higher number of victims than the figure cited by Jeckeln, and Himmler was unhappy with the latter, so much so that on 12 August

he ordered him to report to him; Jeckeln – hypothesizes Mallmann – took advantage of the meeting to put himself in a good light towards Himmler by proposing a radical solution of the “problem” at Kamenets-Podolsky, but this is only a conjecture, because the pertinent annotation of Himmler’s service diary merely states: “Jeckeln’s visit to Himmler” (Witte *et al.*, p. 191).

The actual decision is said to have been made on a local level between von Roques and Jeckeln and is said to have been favored by the first with three decisions, the second of which, dated 28 August, regarded, however, the “Creation of ghettos in towns with larger Jewish population proportions, especially in cities” (Mallmann, pp. 243-250; here p. 250)

I conclude this cursory survey by addressing the issue of victim numbers. Mallmann maintains that, in July 1941, when the Germans captured Kamenets-Podolsky, there were 12,000 Jews in that city (*ibid.*, p. 242), a figure which rose to 26,000 a month later (*ibid.*, p. 243), because 14,000 Jews expelled from Roumania were added to it. Of these, 4,800 were provisionally left alive in a ghetto until November 1942, when they were all shot (*ibid.*, p. 254). It follows that the victims during August 1941 numbered (26,000 – 4,800 =) 21,200. This figure is somewhat lower than the one given by Jeckeln (23,600), but Mallmann has nothing to say in this regard.

Executions did indubitably take place, but to what extent? The only objective confirmation could be found in the mass graves, which were left intact by the Germans. I shall now return to the initial theme, which I had left in suspense.

On 27 May 1944, the Soviets drew up an “Act on the Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders in the City of Kamenets-Podolskiy” (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 157-162). It is characterized by the same crude propaganda not only regarding the death toll, but also for the “bestial acts” purportedly committed by the Germans, such as this (*ibid.*, p. 159):

*“As a rule babies were thrown into the pit alive where they died not from bullets but of suffocation under a heap of dead bodies and earth. There were cases when babies were tossed over the pit and fired at in the air.”*

With regard to the specific theme under discussion, the Soviets made this “establishment of fact” (*ibid.*):

*“On the whole, during the Nazi occupation the Germans shot, tortured to death and buried alive over 85 thousand people in Kamenets-Podolskiy, among the Hungarian, Czechoslovakian and Polish Jews, local residents, POWs, women, children and old people.*

*The commission has discovered seven places of common burial of civilians and POWs consisting of 30 common graves. The place of the burial places is annexed.”*

A certain Captain Salog, commander of the police squad which participated in the executions, declared (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 533):

*“The pit was approximately twelve by six meters and about one-and-a-half meters deep. On the side that was closer to Kamenets-Podolsky, the pit’s entrance was*

*about two meters wide, with a slope to the bottom, along which the condemned walked.”*

Assuming the filling coefficient of 3.5 corpses per m<sup>3</sup> established by experience, the grave described by the witness, with an earth coverage of 20 cm, would have had a useful volume of (12 m × 6 m × 1.3 m =) 93.6 cubic meters and would have contained (93.6 m<sup>3</sup> × 3.5 bodies/m<sup>3</sup> =) 337 bodies. Hence, the claimed 85,000 bodies mentioned earlier would have required (85,000 bodies ÷ 337 bodies/grave =) 252 mass graves like the one described by the witness.

The Soviet report makes a distinction between the shooting of foreign Jews and local Jews from Kamenets-Podolsky (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 159f.):

“Shooting of Foreign Jews

*Starting from late July, 1941 Jews from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland were brought in trucks allegedly for labour in Kamenets-Podolskiy. They were placed in the special ghetto set up for them in Stariy Gorod (literally ‘old town’ – Transl.) and in the former Cossack barracks. After a month’s stay in the hard conditions of [the] ghetto, more than 7,000 men, women, children and old people were shot on September 27, 1941 near the former gunpowder depot.”*

This “fact” was confirmed by several witnesses (Denisov/Changuli, p. 160). The report then states that

*“the total number of the shot foreign Jews reached 18 thousand people. Their graves were found in the area of the former training battalion and gunpowder depot.” (ibid., p. 160)*

On the second category of victims, the report states:

“Extermination of Local Population

*On August 28, 1941, more than 12,000 heavily guarded residents of Kamenets-Podolskiy and neighboring villages were marched to the gunpowder depot, and machine gunned according to the Nazi established pattern and buried in common graves.” (ibid.)*

The report then indicates other executions: in July 1942, 53 students were shot, in the month of November 4,000 civilians, 2,000 persons in February 1943, and 91 the following month (*ibid.*).

The report then asserts that

*“In the [sic] late 1942 the Germans forcibly assembled many children at the age of 4 to 8 at the Jewish cemetery and buried them in a common grave which contained more than 500 children’s corpses.*

*It was established for certain that the majority of children had been buried alive.”*

This was all “confirmed” by several witnesses (*ibid.*, p. 161). The report adds:

*“In the old Orthodox cemetery near the POW camp, the commission has found 4 trenches where more than 6 thousand POWs are buried,” (ibid.)*

but then states that “[a]ccording to evidence” of 15 witnesses, “over 6 thousand POWs died in the camp over the entire period of the camp’s existence” (*ibid.*).

This means that the Soviets found exactly the number of victims asserted by the witnesses. This continual recourse to the witnesses, however, shows that the Soviets did not really find the number of victims declared by them. This is confirmed by the use, or more exactly, by the non-use of such extraordinary finds at trial. At the Nuremberg Trial, in fact, the only mention of Kamenets-Podolsky appears in a list of concentration camps (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 173):

*“I must name the concentration camps of Smolensk, Stavropol, Kharkov, Kiev, Lvov, Poltava, Novgorod, Owl, Rovno, Dniepropetrovsk, Odessa, Kamenetz-Podolsk[y], Gomel, Kerch, of the Stalingrad region, of Kaunas, Riga, Mariampol (Lithuanian) of Klo[o]ga (Estonian) and many others, in which hundreds of thousands of Soviet nationals belonging to the civilian population, as well as soldiers and officers of the Red Army, were tortured to death by the Hitlerites.”*

Can one seriously believe that, if the Soviets had really found 85,000 bodies at Kamenets-Podolsky, they would have limited themselves to this fleeting reference?

The Yad Vashem Institute is in possession of three photographs showing mass graves full of bodies, allegedly of Jews from Kamenets-Podolsky. These photographs show at least two mass graves linked by a narrow corridor (Documents II.5.1.-3.). On of them shows a corner of one of the graves (II.5.2.). The third photograph probably does not belong to the same scenario (Document (II.5.3.)), an assumption supported by the fact that the first two photographs originate from a certain Moshe Fuks, while the third was taken by a certain Masha Oembruski.

At any rate, the bodies visible in the three photographs are about 160 in number, total. If the respective mass graves are also supposed to have contained 10 layers of bodies, the total number of bodies would have amounted to approximately 1,600. These photographs therefore show that there was a massacre, but they do not substantiate the enormous dimensions in question here.

In addition, the bodies shown are fresh, which means they are not the result of an exhumation years later. That these photos were taken at Kamenets-Podolsky is merely asserted by Yad Vashem, obviously based solely on the assurance of the two persons who supplied the photographs.

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, as mentioned earlier, *Sonderkommando* 1005A was transferred to Kamenets-Podolsky in February 1944. During this period, the British intercepted a German radio message which stated:<sup>524</sup>

*“Russia. [...] Reference is made to exhumations being carried out at KAMENEZ-PODOLSK. The Minister of Propaganda for East Prussia requires a full report (2477EE19).”*

The message speaks only of “exhumations” but make no mention of “cremations,” but, which is even more important, the “Minister of Propaganda for East Prussia” requested “a full report” in this regard: it is therefore clear that the ex-

<sup>524</sup> TNA, Notes on German Police Decodes: Week Ending 18.3.44. PEARL/ZIP/P. 83.

humations underway at Kamenets-Podolsky were expected to be propagandistically exploited by the Germans such as were those at Katyn. Hence, they could not refer to Jewish victims of German executions from 1941, and if *Sonderkommando* 1005 had really been involved in the affair, it would not have had the tasks that orthodox Holocaust historiography attributes to it.

### 5.3. Zamość

Having arrived at Lvov, continues the verdict of the Stuttgart District Court, *Sonderkommando* 1005 A was transferred to Samocz (Zamość; Rüter/Mildt, p. 729):

*“The next deployment began around mid-May 1944 in Samocz. Outside the city, surrounded by an old circular wall – probably from an earlier military ring of fortifications – there was a larger mass grave, which was being cleared out. A second ‘construction site’ was located in a forest cutting. Overall, the deployment in the Samocz region lasted about 6 weeks. An estimated 50 inmates, most of them Jewish, were deployed here. They were killed at the end of the unearthing, possibly in a gas van.”*

Hoffmann adds that “all in all about 2,000 dead were lying at both locations,” for which he relies on the interrogation of Max Hanisch dated 7 August 1962 (Hoffmann, p. 126). 50 inmates therefore needed (6 weeks × 7 days =) 42 days to exhume and cremate 2,000 bodies, with an average ratio of (2,000 bodies ÷ [42 days × 50 inmates] =) around 1 body per day per inmate!

Who were the presumed 2,000 victims? When were they killed? The verdict does not supply this information, and even Hoffmann remains silent. Since “Aktion 1005” concerns exclusively Jews, we must consider that the victims were Jews from the local ghetto. According to the *Encyclopaedic Informer*, this ghetto was formed in the spring of 1942 and liquidated in the month of October. Over the course of the liquidation, the Germans are said to have shot 500 persons, not 2,000.<sup>525</sup> Other executions are not mentioned. Sending *Sonderkommando* 1005 A to Zamość was therefore quite nonsensical when considering that, if we follow the orthodox Holocaust narrative, the *Sonderkommandos* 1005 were deployed only to locations where there were mass graves containing at least several thousands, if not tens of thousands of corpses.

At any rate, *Sonderkommando* 1005 A’s exhumation-cremation activity is said to have ended here, because it was subsequently transferred to Litzmannstadt (Łódź), where it accompanied the Jewish transports to Auschwitz (Rüter/Mildt, p. 729).

<sup>525</sup> Pilichowski *et al.*, entry “Zamość,” p. 583.

#### 5.4. “Documents” on “Aktion 1005” in Volhynia. The Rovno “Sonderkommando 1005” Phantasm

On 11 March 1944, Radio Moscow broadcast a long program in which it spoke of German documents captured by the Red Army; some of these allegedly related to “Aktion 1005”.<sup>526</sup>

*“Later, when the Red Army began to purge Soviet territory of German fascist detachments, and when the Soviet authorities began to uncover the terrible misdeeds of the fascist fiends, when they found the numerous graves of the Soviet citizens, fighters and officers tortured to death, the German high command carried out frantic measures to conceal and destroy the traces of their crimes. To this end, the German high command organized the exhumation of the graves and the cremation of the exhumed bodies everywhere.*

*In the special order by the Obersturmführer, dated Rovno 3 August 1943, IVa 1, No. 35/43 SS, to the district leader of the Gendarmerie Kamen-Kashirsky, it was decreed to report immediately the location and number of the graves located in this area, especially ...*

*Among the documents found in the Gestapo buildings in the Rovno region were reports in reply to the above-mentioned order with some 200 points with which such graves had been recorded. This register indicates that the German-fascist hangmen had sought such locations for the graves as were inaccessible to unauthorized persons. Here is a partial list of these locations:*

*78 Shepetovka, in the forest, 3 graves,*

*79 Slavuta, gravel pit, 1 grave,*

*80 Slavuta, in the forest, 1 grave,*

*121 Gorokhov, 1 km south of Gorokhov (ph), 100 m from roads to Breshkopol (ph), 1 grave; city cemetery, in the western corner, at right 1 grave, in the clay pits, south of Gorokhov, 1 grave.*

*123 Berestechko, in the courtyard of the police barracks about 500 m north of the Narynchin sovkhoz, 1 grave.*

*124 – Lokachi, 1 km south of the city, in the clay pit, 1 grave.*

*125 – Iselin, about 1 km northwest of Iselin, next to the ruins of the building, 1 grave.*

*140 – ... Nagornaya Street, sand pit, 400 m behind the northern barracks, 1 grave; Nagornaya Street, northwest of the city, in the sand pit to the right of the road, 1 grave; Vladimirskaya Street, next to the Jewish cemetery, 1 grave; in the prison yard, 1 grave; Ploshchadnaya Street, next to the old cemetery 1 grave.*

*142 – ..., 3 km west of the city, 1 grave.*

*143 – ..., 2 km southwest, beside the lake, 1 grave,*

<sup>526</sup> Hoppe, Doc. 282, “Transkript (geheim) einer von Interradio-Sonderdienst Seehaus (NPo 69/Brm, Bericht: Wörtlich, Stichwort: Deutsche Greuel) abgehörten Sendung von Radio Moskau vom 11. 3. 1944, Beginn: 6.37 Uhr MEZ (Auszüge),” pp. 686-688.



144 – ..., next to the security police, 1 grave.

145 – ..., 4 km northwest of the city ...

146 – Melnitsa, 2 km west of Melnitsa, in the sand pit, 1 grave.

147 – ...

*At the end of the register it stated that all graves were listed in the register, including the graves of the squads who had formerly worked here.*

*The bodies of persons shot and prisoners of war as well as POWs and peaceful Soviet citizens tortured to death were burned by the tens of thousands in Kharkov, Kiev, Rovno and a great number of other cities and districts along the path of withdrawal of the Hitlerite army.”*

The order to list all the mass graves in the territory was therefore sent from Rovno to the district leader of the Kamen-Kashirsky Police on 3 August 1943. Kamen-Kashirsky (Polish: Kamień Koszyrski) is located in Volhynia, approximately 100 km southeast of Brest (see Documents II.2.1. and II.8.24.).

The authors of the work containing the above document inform their readers in footnote 16 on their page 687:

*“There is an earlier, identical order by Blobel to these recipients: Letter (Secret State Matter, IV A 1 No. 35/43 SS) from the Heads of Kommando 1005 to the District Police leader in Kamen-Kashirsky, undated (before 15 July 1943).”*

Notwithstanding the obvious importance of this document – the exact archive reference for which they supply – the authors, strangely enough, did not publish it. There must have been some good reason for this omission, and perhaps the fact that the document is a mere translation into Russian was perhaps not even the most important reason (*ibid.*). No doubt, as I shall explain, Blobel had nothing to do with it, and the nature of the document was entirely different.

“Reports,” in the plural, relating to the registration of mass graves, are moreover supposed to have been found in 200 localities in the territory of Rovno, which means more than 200 mass graves. The fragmentary list made known by the Soviets relates to only a small portion of these localities; it is not clear whether this originates from one or more reports, or whether the phrases quoted are a translation or a summary.

In Document II.2.1. I have indicated the few localities mentioned.

- Slavuta and Shepetovka (Shepetivka), Proskuriv Oblast: Slavuta is located some 55 km southeast of Rovno (Rivne), while Shepetovka is about 20 km southeast of Slavuta;
- Melnitsa is some 100 km northwest of Rovno, about 30 km southwest of Kovel, in the center of the Volhynia Oblast;
- Berestechko, Gorokhov (Horokhiv), Druzhkopol and Lokachi are located in the southern part of the Volhynia Oblast; Berestechko is located some 85 km southwest of Rovno, while Gorokhov is about 30 km northwest of Berestechko; Druzhkopol is ca. 10 km southwest of Gorokhov, Lokachi is roughly 30 km north of Gorokhov; this locality is around 90 km northeast of Lvov.

The “reports” in question are therefore said to have listed mass graves in the Volhynia Oblast, but no *Sonderkommando* 1005 ever operated in this region.

Hoffmann states that, on an unstated date but probably in the first half of June 1943, Blobel went to Lvov accompanied by his adjutant Arthur Harder, and there formed the “*Kommando*” spoken of by Weliczker (Hoffmann, pp. 92f.). He is then supposed to have continued on to Kiev, where he is thought to have organized *Sonderkommando* 1005A and 1005 B, presumably in the second half of July. These trips are not attested to by any document, and one would be fully entitled to consider them merely the fruit of fantasy. From the orthodox point of view, they lack all logic: Rovno is located between Lvov and Kiev, but much closer to the first city; the localities listed in the Soviet radio broadcast are even closer to Lvov, being located beyond the southern confines of the district of Galicia. If, therefore, on 3 August 1943, and even before that, the police of Kamen-Kashirsky had received Blobel’s order to carry out a mapping of the local mass graves, we cannot understand why he didn’t go to Rovno to set up an appropriate exhumation-cremation squad, before going to Kiev. He did not even do this when he returned from Kiev.

Another curious fact relates to the designations of the various “*Kommandos*” allegedly set up by Blobel. The one at Lvov was called simply *Sonderkommando* 1005, while, being the first in a planned series, it would have deserved the term *Sonderkommando* 1005 A. Weliczker knew nothing of Blobel and never even mentions him in his “diary.” At Kiev, Blobel is said to have organized two other *Sonderkommandos* A and B, but none in Volhynia, notwithstanding the alleged mapping of the local mass graves already begun.

Why did Blobel neglect Volhynia? Why didn’t he set up a specific “*Kommando*” for this region? Orthodox Holocaust historians never even notice this problem.

Let us return to the Soviet radio broadcast. In this regard we only know that “the document” – is a “transcript” of the “Special Services Seehaus,” which was a German radio monitoring service based in Berlin; its task was “the procurement and evaluation of intelligence through the monitoring of foreign radio stations” (Granier *et al.*, p. 69). Nevertheless, the existing text “is a contemporary translation from Russian” (Hoppe, p. 684, fn 1). Therefore, a Radio Moscow broadcast, probably in Russian, was listened to and translated by a German agency, but the existing document is a (re-)translation into Russian!

It is a fact that the original German text of this and other presumed “reports” were never published by the Soviets, notwithstanding their importance; not only that, but at Nuremberg these “reports” never even enjoyed a fleeting reference. This gives rise to the justified suspicion that these documents, if they really existed, were simple requests for information in the field of health, like the documents I will analyze in Subchapter 7.1.

It is true that these documents would require the heading “IVa 1, No. 35/43 SS,” but checking the original text is not possible. On the other hand, “Office

IVa 1” formed part of the RSHA, but constituted the sector of the Gestapo which concerned itself with Communism. The heading only lacks the fateful figure “1005,” which, for orthodox Holocaust historiography, characterizes the related presumed secret correspondence. From what I have said above, the conclusion remains that the Soviet radio broadcast does not have anything to do with “Aktion 1005.”

## 6. *Sonderkommando* 1005 B and ... Center

### 6.1. The Activities of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B According to the Verdict of the Stuttgart District Court

I referred earlier to the assertion in the verdict of the Stuttgart District Court, according to which Zietlow and Kirstein tarried at Babi Yar until the end of August 1943, then traveled to Dnepropetrovsk, where they set up *Sonderkommando* 1005 B. But already “during about the second week of September,” a part of that *Kommando*, in fact “the majority,” were sent back to Babi Yar to reinforce the inmate squads working there (Rüter/Mildt, p. 714). It is clear that SS *Sturmabführer* Baumann, who directed the exhumation-cremation work, was perfectly incompetent, even incapable of evaluating how many staff he needed, so that he made the majority of this *Kommando* travel 950 km uselessly (round trip to Kiev and return to Dnepropetrovsk). What was the partial unit remaining at Dnepropetrovsk doing? The verdict does not say, and limits itself to asserting (*ibid.*):

“Zie.[tlow] and Kir.[stein] remain – to what purpose is unclear – with the rest in Dnepropetrovsk, until the others return from Kiev in the early days of October.”

Hoffmann confirms (Hoffmann, fn 19, p. 112):

“Whether the rest of *Kommando* 1005 B remaining in Dnepropetrovsk eliminated any traces of mass murder there could not be definitely established during the Stuttgart trial against Sohns et al.”

Further along, the verdict asserts (Rüter/Mildt, p. 724):

“*Sonderkommando* 1005 B was transferred to Krivoy Rog immediately after conclusion of the unearthings in Kiev.”

It is hard to see how one can reconcile this with the preceding statement that the Kiev *Kommando* had returned to Dnepropetrovsk at the beginning of October. Further along, the verdict reiterates that a “partial unit” went to Krivoy Rog, but this was no doubt a confusion, because the “partial unit” of Dnepropetrovsk is not mentioned in the verdict. It is therefore necessary to understand that the two partial units met at Dnepropetrovsk at the beginning of October and then went to Krivoy Rog, which is also supported by the court’s chronology, as we shall see in the next subchapter. Because *Sonderkommando* 1005 B had to leave the area toward the middle of October, it follows that it was active at Dnepropetrovsk starting with the beginning of September until a little before mid-October, and starting with the beginning of October it was reduced by the larger part, which worked at Babi Yar.

All this makes very little sense.

EM No. 135 dated 19 November 1941 reports the following ratio of *Einsatzgruppe* C (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 818):

*“Of the roughly 100,000 Jews originally present in Dnepropetrovsk, about 70,000 fled before the arrival of our troops. Of the roughly 30,000 remaining [Jews], about 10,000 were shot on 13 Oct. 41 by a squad from the Higher SS and Police leader.”*

Kruglov, as we have seen earlier, states that there were 34,000 victims in the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, more than at Babi Yar. Notwithstanding this fact, a “*Sonderkommando*” is supposed to have been sent to eliminate the bodies, and then the majority of members of this “*Sonderkommando*” were immediately sent back to Kiev! And this “partial unit” is supposed to have operated in the territory for little over a month!

## 6.2. Krivoy Rog

From Dnepropetrovsk, *Sonderkommando* 1005 B moved to Krivoy Rog (Ukrainian: Kryvyi Rih), where the victims of an execution had fallen into a well, and the bodies could not be extracted. The heads of *Kommando* then decided to cover the well with a layer of cement and, while they were just about to carry out this plan, there was a sudden incursion by Soviet troops in the direction of Krivoy Rog, therefore, the “partial unit” (in fact, the entire *Sonderkommando*) had to withdraw (Rüter/Mildt, p. 724).

How many persons were killed at Krivoy Rog? Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower, in the “Introduction” to their book *The Shoah in Ukraine*, assert that 4,000 persons were killed at Krivoy Rog on 14-15 October 1941 (Brandon/Lower, fn 21, p. 20). Alexander Kruglov says that there were 3,300 victims (including 800 POWs) on 15 October 1941 (Kruglov 2008, p. 277). No source is given, but the comparison with Arad solves the enigma. The Israeli historian in fact appeals, with regard to the executions of 14-15 October 1941, to “an eyewitness”! (Arad 2009, pp. 180f.) This “eyewitness” mentioned two executions, one of 3,000 persons on 14 October, and the other of 2,000 (including 800 prisoners of war) on 15 October.

The Incident Reports make two references to executions at Krivoy Rog. EM No. 86 dated 17 September 1941 records the killing of 105 Jews, in addition to 39 officials and 11 saboteurs and looters (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 477). EM No. 135 dated 19 November 1941 mentions the killing of 8 political officials and 2 saboteurs during the period from 28 September to 4 October (*ibid.*, p. 777). Since *Einsatzgruppe* C also made reference to quite irrelevant data, how can one believe that it would have remained silent about the shooting of 3,000 or 4,000 Jews on 14 and 15 October 1941?

In conclusion, one cannot seriously believe that *Sonderkommando* 1005 B was mandated to carry out its tasks at Krivoy Rog.

### 6.3. Nikolayev

From Krivoy Rog, *Sonderkommando* 1005 B traveled to Novy Bug (Novyi Buh), approximately 90 km west-southwest, to do... we know not what. It then continued to Nikolayev (Mykolaiv). With regard to this town, the Stuttgart District Court stated:

*“On the western edge of the city of Nikolayev, at least some 3,000 to 4,000 bodies lay on the grounds of an unobstructed barracks. These were men and women who had presumably been shot as Ukrainian nationalists or for racial reasons by members of the security police and the SD at the beginning of the German occupation. The bodies had been thrown together in several mass graves immediately behind a wall.”*

The exhumation and cremation work was performed by a *Kommando* of at least 30 inmates, “at the latest during the last third of November 1943” (Rüter/Mildt, p. 726), and concluded “shortly before Christmas 1943” (*ibid.*, p. 727).

Kruglov states that the Germans killed more than 7,000 Jews at Nikolayev in 1941, and over 8,000 at Kherson (Kruglov 2008, p. 275). In the entire Nikolayev Oblast there were 31,100 victims in 1941 and 8,700 in 1942 (*ibid.*, pp. 278 and 281), for a total of 39,800.

From the orthodox Holocaust point of view, the surprising thing is that Kherson, a town 65 km southeast from Nikolayev by road, was largely neglected by *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, which limited itself to processing 3,000-4,000 bodies, therefore leaving 35,800-36,800 to the Soviets.

To tell the truth, the orthodox Holocaust story of these massacres is disputed. I shall return to this matter later, in Subchapter 8.2.

### 6.4. Voskresensk and Voznesensk

*Sonderkommando* 1005 B then moved to Voskresensk, which is approximately 15 km north of Nikolayev. Here, it found three to four mass graves with 1,000 bodies, which were exhumed and cremated between 12 to 20 January 1944 (Rüter/Mildt, p. 728). It is not known who the victims were, because this town is completely unknown to Holocaust literature.

The Tribunal rejected the prosecution’s conjecture that *Sonderkommando* 1005 B had also operated at Voznesensk, a locality located approximately 82 km northwest of Nikolayev, because it could not perform any investigation in this regard (*ibid.*, p. 729). On the other hand, Voznesensk was not the site of any execution. Krausnick and Wilhelm mention it only twice – in connection with its crossing by *Sonderkommando* 10b towards the middle of August 1941 and for the securing of “bridge crossings” (Krausnick/Wilhelm, pp. 200, 242).

During the last week of January 1944, *Sonderkommando* 1005 B was transferred to Lvov and was then sent on furlough to Zakopane and Krynica (Rüter/Mildt, p. 728).

## 6.5. The Verdict's Anecdotal Sources

The verdict upheld the greater part of the charges in the indictment, based essentially on the statement by Gerhard Adametz. As I mentioned earlier, Adametz claims to have stayed at Kiev until 12 October 1943. His account continues as follows (USSR-80, pp. 8-10):

*“The next morning we departed by motor vehicle for Bielu-Gerkw [Belaya Tserkov]. There we met people from Detachment 1005 a, and we spent the night there. We, from Division 1005 b, then traveled onwards by motor vehicle to Kri-voy Rog. When we got there, we were told that there were mass graves there. I saw some 40-50 inmates there under SD guard in a bunker in the vicinity of the mass graves. But since the front was getting closer, the work (the exhumation and cremation of the bodies) wasn't even begun. I don't know, and I also never heard, how many bodies were buried there; it was a smaller grave, perhaps 1,000, perhaps 10,000 bodies.”*

Around 16 October, Adametz was transferred to Nikolayev with his unit.

*“We stayed there a few days in an old prison and started with the work. There were mass graves on the other side of the Bug River. After a few days, our quarters were transferred there to an old potato cellar. About 40-50 inmates worked there together [for] the Division 1005 b, guarded by the SD and police.”*

*Hauptsturmführer* Zietlow, who had taken over command of “Detachment 1005 b” at Berdichev, and *Sturmscharführer* Kirstein were also present.

*“Here, there were about 3-4000 bodies. I believe most of them were Jews, but I don't know exactly. [...]*

*The work in Nikolayev, which is between Kherson and Odessa in the Ukraine, lasted about 8 days. The bodies there were of men, women and children of all ages. They were burned in the same way as I described under Kiev.”*

When the work was finished in the early days of November, the 40-50 inmates were shot. At that time, the front was approximately 200-300 km away from Nikolayev.

*“Group 1005 b then took the train to Voskresensk. At this location, there were several mass graves in a sand hollow behind the village; there about 1,000 bodies in these 3-4 graves.”*

Here again, the 40-50 inmates were then shot.

*“The shootings took place about mid-December 1943, after the work (exhuming and burning the bodies) had lasted about 3 weeks.”*

At that time, Zietlow was “commander of the SD people of 1005 b.” With regard to the locality, however, Adametz was a little bit doubtful:

*“But I can no longer remember whether this was in Voskresensk or Voznesensk.”*

Adametz asserted in fact that he had been in both towns:

*“Our Detachment 1005 b spent about 2 weeks in Nikolayev until about 3 January 1944, and then we took the train to Voznesensk. There existed mass graves as well*

*with an estimated 1,000 bodies. Here, also about 40-50 inmates were working in the same manner as in Kiev, Nikolayev and Voskresensk.”*

The inmates were shot around 20 January 1944.

*“We of Detachment 1005 b then went to Nikolayev for about 3 days, and from there to Zakopane, south of Cracow, where we had to stay for recovery from the end of January until the end of February 1944. We subsequently got 4 weeks’ furlough and reported to Lvov (Poland) at the end of March 1944.”*

In the meantime, Zietlow, Kierstein and another non-commissioned officer from the SD were arrested for pilfering Detachment 1005 b’s food rations.

*“After we arrived [back] from our furlough in Lvov (Poland), we stayed there until mid-April 1944; from there we drove to Kattowitz (Poland) where we stayed 2-3 days in the police barracks in Laurahütte near Kattowitz, and then took the train to Riga in Latvia.”*

Adametz declared that his “Detachment” went from Kiev to Belaya Tserkov, which is approximately 40 km south of the capital, while most of the members of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, according to the Stuttgart District Court, were at Dnepropetrovsk, approximately 450 km southeast. Since Belaya Tserkov was in the area of competence of *Sonderkommando* 1005 A, we do not understand why Adametz was sent to this locality. His statement that the bodies in all the locations mentioned were cremated “in the same way as I described under Kiev” confirms his ignorance of the cremation procedure, because when talking about Kiev, he limited himself to mentioning a “wooden base,” without stone supports, railroad rails and gratings.

The repeated shooting of the 40-50 inmates of every *Kommando*, as I have noted above, is nonsensical: every time, in every new locality, it was necessary to recruit 40-50 persons, when it would have been much easier to create a stable *Kommando* of personnel experienced with this kind of work who could be shot at the end of the entire operation.

The chronology of the account is somewhat dubious. On 12 October 1943, Adametz was at Kiev, on the 13th he was transferred to Belaya Tserkov, where he remained until the 15th; on the 16th he went to Nikolayev, where he spent eight days, therefore until the 24th; but the inmates were presumably shot immediately after finishing the job, at the beginning of November. He then traveled to Voskresensk, where he remained for three weeks, or until the third 10-day period of November; but the shooting of the inmates, after the end of the operations, allegedly occurred in mid-December. Adametz then returned to Nikolayev, where he remained for two weeks until 3 January 1944. The course of the last legs of his journey is somewhat peculiar. From Nikolayev, Adametz was sent to Voskresensk, 15 km away, then returned to Nikolayev, then traveled to Voznesensk, 82 km from Nikolayev, passing through Voskresensk again, traveling over 67 km.

From 21 January to mid-April 1944, “Detachment 1005 b” remained inoperative. Since its activity began on 10 September 1943, it follows that it was only active for a bit less than four and a half months, and remained inactive for almost



three months (to which two weeks and three days of inactivity at Nikolayev should be added). During this long period of “recovery” and “furlough” it was not replaced by another *Kommando*, so that the exhumation-cremation operations were completely suspended. This behavior presupposes the complete insanity of Blobel and his collaborators and subordinates directing the operations on the spot.

The activity times also leave one perplexed, to say the least. The *Kommando* of inmates always consisted of 40-50 persons, but eight days were nevertheless sufficient for the elimination of 3,000-4,000 bodies at Nikolayev, while the elimination of 1,000 bodies at Voskresensk required three weeks, and the elimination of 1,000 bodies at Voznesensk required 16 days.

From 16 October 1943 to 20 January 1944, during more than three months, “Detachment 1005 b” exhumed and cremated an unimaginable number of bodies – fully 6,000!

## 6.6. *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center

All the information relating to this *Kommando*, as in the last case, is derived from a trial, and specifically, from the verdict of the Hamburg District Court of 9 February 1968, in the trial of three ex-members of said *Kommando*: Max Hermann Richard Krahnert, Otto Hugo Goldapp and Otto Erich Drews.

### 6.6.1. Maly Trostenets (Trostinets)

Spektor dedicates hardly two lines to this affair (Spektor 1990b, p. 166):

*“From 27 October to 15 December 1943 the Sonderkommando burned 40,000 bodies in Maly-Trostinets.”*

Hoffmann dwells on this for many pages, but without saying much more than this. The number of victims fluctuates from 150,000 (Soviet claim) to 60,000 (C. Gerlach’s “rough estimate”; Hoffmann, p. 173). The operation’s beginning and end dates coincide with Spektor’s. There were 15-18 mass graves in the Blagovshchina Forest, containing 40,000-55,000 bodies (*ibid.*, p. 176). It is not clear how three more graves (+20%) could determine a variation of 15,000 bodies (+37.5%). In the specific case, the variation should have been 20% of 40,000, hence 8,000, leading to 40,000-48,000.

The verdict of the Hamburg District Court of 9 February 1968 enshrined the following in this respect (Bracher/Rüter, p. 38):

*“The work at the burial location in the little forest near the Mala [sic] Trostenets estate lasted from the end of October until mid-December 1943. Tens of thousands of bodies had to be eliminated: their minimum number has to be set to 26,500. [...] The number of workers employed until the end was either 100 or some 50, but definitely not lower than 45.”*

On the cremation technique, we learn the following (*ibid.*, p. 30):

*“When the laborers and SD members assigned to instruct them had gathered some experience in the construction of pyres, larger pyres with up to 200 bodies were built. They also proceeded to use green wood for the outer edges of the pyres, which burned more slowly than the wood in the middle. This was done because they wished to prevent the outwards collapse of a burning pyre, as had happened at least once.”*

It is worth noting that, according to the verdict, after every “operation,” the inmates of the related *Kommando*, who had gathered a few experiences in the technique of cremation, were unfailingly killed, so that it was necessary to recruit and train new personnel every time. As I pointed out earlier, it would have made more sense to maintain the same *Kommando*, consisting of experienced workers, for the entire activity, and to kill them only at the end.

Another fact worth noting is that the court considered the burning of 200 bodies in a pyre as a notable advance, the fruit of experience. This is in open contradiction to the statements of many self-proclaimed eyewitnesses, who spoke of 1,000 bodies or more. Not only that, but if the cremated bodies numbered at least 26,500, then there must have been at least 132 such pyres, burning continuously for over a month and a half, without anybody noticing anything. Yet Maly Trostenets was on the southeast edge of Minsk, in an area surrounded by villages, as we see in Document II.6.1.

The cremation technique did not provide for the famous grid, according to the system allegedly contrived by Blobel and introduced in the “extermination camps” and with the *Sonderkommandos* 1005, but a base of rough tree trunks and smaller branches; it was provided with seasoned wood and fresh wood, but the court did not inquire where they obtained the enormous quantities of wood required for the cremation of so many bodies.

On 15 December 1943, at least 45 inmates of the *Kommando* were killed in one or two “gas vans” (*ibid.*, pp. 38f.). With rather odd logic, the verdict established that, if there were two “gas van,” 100 inmates were killed; if, by contrast, there was only one “gas van,” only 50 inmates were killed (*ibid.*, p. 76). In practice, the verdict sheds no light whatever on the alleged exhumation-cremation activity at Maly Trostenets.

To learn more, it is necessary to resort to obscure testimonies.

On 9 August 1944, Brigadier General Burdenko interrogated the witness Lev Shaevich Lansky, who had been deported to the Trostenets Camp on 17 January 1942. Here are two pearls from the interrogation (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, pp. 194f.):

*“Burdenko: Did you see the Germans burning people alive?”*

*Lansky: Yes, they burned people alive.*

*Burdenko: Where did they burn people alive?*

*Lansky: In the camp. They would set a storehouse on fire and force people into it. Meanwhile they were gassing people in the mobile vans all the time.*

*Burdenko: When was the last time they burned people?*

*Lansky: The 28th of June. [...]*

*Burdenko: How many were burned in Trostyanets [sic; Trostenets], besides the Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia?*

*Lansky: Around 200,000 people. I don't know exactly how many were shot before I got there; 299,000 people were shot while we were there."*

This is another confirmation that, in a Soviet context, neither the interrogators nor the persons under interrogation had any sense of the ridiculous.

Another witness, Piotr Nikiforovich Golovach, made the following statement in 1944:<sup>527</sup>

*"I was also a witness to the fact that in the fall of 1943, all the graves in the area of Blagovshchina were opened, the bodies were cremated and the ashes were taken away somewhere. For the cremation of the bodies, the peasants of a series of rural localities were mobilized (to supply the wood). So that 5,000 cubic meters of wood was taken from the district of Lyubavshchina and Danilovshchina and 2,000 cubic meters from the pine forest of Apchak. Near the area of Blagovshchina, the Germans built a 'furnace' on the edge of the forest near the village of Maly Trostenets, upon which they cremated the persons (until the Germans were driven out). But before the withdrawal, at the end of June 1944, around 28 June, the Germans filled the barracks of the Karl Marx kolkhoz to the brim with shot persons and burned it. I personally heard the cries and laments of the persons being shot and burned. It is necessary to say that the Germans built a suitable junction leading from the 'furnace' to the Minsk-Mogilev road. The persons being taken to be shot and cremated were taken along this road."*

This is the only known statement which takes concrete account of the fundamental question of the wood required for the cremations. The 7,000 cubic meters mentioned above correspond to  $(7,000 \text{ m}^3 \times 0.9 \text{ t/m}^3 \div 1.4 =)$  some 4,500 tons of green wood, enough for the cremation of  $(4,500 \text{ t} \div 0.25 \text{ t/body} =)$  18,000 bodies. It is advisable to clarify that we are not talking about actual supply of wood, for the existence of which no objective evidence exists, but about a simple assertion. At any rate, the number of cremated bodies must have amounted to 40,000-55,000.

Golovach's statement obviously has no documentary confirmation. The most probable scenario is that he was present at the real cremation carried out in June 1944, which I will address later, and that he has projected this event backwards in time to the fall of 1943.

Hoffmann reports a statement by Adolf Rube dated 10 June 1961 on the cremation technique (Hoffmann, p. 179):

*"The pyres were built in the following manner: First, two tree trunks 6-8 m in length were laid 6 m apart and parallel to each other. Two tree trunks were again laid crosswise on top of these, again about 6 m apart. A layer of dry pole wood was now laid out on top of these, and then two more tree trunks on top of those, 6*

<sup>527</sup> "Record of interrogation of P. N. Golovach, Bolshoy Trostenets, Minsk region, 19 July 1944," in: Beluga, p. 209.

*m apart. The space in between was now filled with bodies, which were laid tightly packed to one another. This was followed by yet another layer of dry pole wood. Then, again, two tree trunks were laid on top. The space in between was again filled with bodies. This procedure was continued until the pyre was 3-4 m high. In the case of particularly large pyres, a chimney was left open in the interior. At first, when the pyre was finished, gasoline or Diesel oil was poured over it. A pyre like this, however, burned very slowly and incompletely. To accelerate the combustion process, we later proceeded to pour flammable oil over every layer of bodies, so that the pyre was drenched with it. Harder had demonstrated this and practiced it with us."*

There is no doubt that, with such a system of construction, the pyre would have burned "very slowly and incompletely," but it would not have made much sense to remedy its inefficiency through the use of flammable oil instead of changing the system of construction. If we consider the structure of the pyre and its vertical section, its inefficiency is immediately obvious. At the base, it was delimited by two pairs of tree trunks, overlaid and criss-crossing each other; the internal space was left empty, instead of filling it with branches and other firewood. On top of the second pair of tree trunks, a layer of pole wood was placed, and on top of that, again, another two tree trunks; the space between them was filled with bodies. This was followed by another layer of pole wood and then two more tree trunks, and so on. The first layer of the pyre was therefore constructed of 6 external tree trunks and pole wood, and those following, of 2 tree trunks and pole wood. It is easy to see that the heat produced by the eventual complete combustion of the tree trunk – since these were on the outside – would have been lost, most of it through convection and irradiation, with an insignificant impact on the combustion of the bodies on the inside.

It should also be noted that the witness, like the others, with very few, rare exceptions, always speak of wood and liquid fuel without ever explaining where it came from.

A few pages further along, Hoffmann quotes an excerpt from a book on Maly Trostenets by Paul Kohl, which contains a description of the "furnace" (*ibid.*, p. 181):

*"A pit about 8 x 8 and 3 m deep was dug, and a ramp was put in on one of the four walls, upon which the trucks with the victims could drive backward into the pit. Since the Red Army was constantly getting closer to Minsk, starting at the end of October we no longer buried the persons shot, but rather burned them immediately. To do so, a grid of railway rails was built above the ground, and the pit's walls were covered with metal plates. The whole thing was a gigantic furnace. To block the view, a 3m-high wooden fence was set up around the area with barbed wire, and signs were posted saying 'No Entry! Trespassers Will Be Shot!' The 30 workers who had built this furnace were the first to be shot and cremated in it upon completion. The victims brought there by truck were made to lie face down in the pit and were killed with a bullet in the back of the neck. To increase the heat of the fire for the combustion, tar was poured over the bodies and phosphorus*

*bombs and hand grenades were thrown into the flames. [...] Some 50,000 people were shot and cremated in this furnace at Shashkovka until the end of June 1944, before the dissolution of the camp.”*

One of the principal sources for this account was the interrogation of Anna S. Karetta by Lieutenant Colonel Krasnov of the NKGB on 17 July 1944:

*“In the winter or spring of 1944, the Germans built a ‘furnace’ on the edge of the Shashkovka Forest, which is half a kilometer from the Karl Marx kolkhoz of the village of Maly Trostenets. Here, those peaceful citizens were burned who had been shot or asphyxiated. I didn’t see how this furnace worked on the inside. I only saw it from the outside. It was concealed by a high wooden fence and barbed wire. A gate was included in the north side, through which open and enclosed vehicles of the type ‘Black Raven’ could drive with living or shot victims. After the arrival of the vehicles, the gate was shut, and we did not see what happened inside the ‘furnace.’ Shots were only heard occasionally, when people were being shot who had been transported while still alive. Also on the northern side, by the side of the road, about 20 meters from the ‘furnace’, was a sign fixed to a pine tree reading ‘Access to this area is prohibited.’ I personally saw the smoke rising from the ‘furnace’ when people were being burned.” (Hoppe, Doc. 288, p. 695)*

Hoffmann explains that the forest of Blagovshchina could no longer be used as an execution ground because of the daily presence of *Sonderkommando* 1005; therefore, in order to continue with their “plans of extermination,” the Germans built a “crematorium” in the Shashkovka Forest (Hoffmann, pp. 180f.). This alleged incompatibility between exhumation-cremation and executions appears to have been devised in order to have a pretext for the introduction of more horror stories: We do not, in fact, understand why executions could not be carried out precisely where the above-mentioned “*Sonderkommando*” was working, so as to cremate the bodies right away on the pyres built by the “*Sonderkommando*.”

On 15 July 1944, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia, Panteleimon Ponomarenko, wrote to Stalin to inform him of the discoveries at Minsk:

*“In the vicinity of Minsk, mass graves have been discovered containing more than 130,000 bodies. Today, together with a number of governmental and military representatives, I visited one of the above-mentioned mass graves and a cremation location near Trostenets, 7 km east of Minsk. 40 gigantic graves full of bodies of our citizens are located there. It is difficult to convey the terrible impression left by the thousands of burned and half-burned, stacked-up corpses as well as skeletons, skulls, distorted arms, legs separated from the torso. Residents report that the occupiers began to burn the bodies from the mass graves in mid-1943. The excavation work was carried out by Soviet POWs who were shot and burned afterwards in turn, as were chance witnesses.”*

He requested that members of the Extraordinary Soviet Commission, such as Burdenko and Tolstoi, be sent to Minsk (Hoppe, Doc. 287, pp. 693f.).

The Soviet Commission investigated the territory of Minsk and wrote a report dated 23 August 1944 which speaks of the discovery of 34 graves concealed with tree branches:

*“A few graves were as much as 50 meters long. Upon partially opening 5 graves to a depth of 3 meters, burnt and carbonized human bone was found and a layer of ashes from 0.5 to 1 meter thick.*

*Beneath the layer of ashes was a dark brown liquid. In some graves, there were carbonized trunks with bones of bodies lying above these and rails. Around all the graves, the Commission found a large quantity of human bone fragments with combs, dentures and a multitude of small everyday personal effects of all kinds (forks, knives, mess kits, purses, etc.).”*

Based on unknown evidence, the Commission “established” that the total number of victims was 150,000! (Beluga, p. 225) The report speaks of trunks on the bottom of a grave. The witness Lansky declared (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 195):

*“Burdenko: Did you know there was an oven there?”*

*Lansky: There was a pit nine meters by nine meters. We dug it ourselves. That was about eight months ago.*

*Burdenko: Can you describe how the oven was built?*

*Lansky: I was not involved in its construction myself, but I could tell from a distance that they used iron rails. They would start it with a small incendiary bomb and then on large pieces of wood.”*

The book in which the Soviet report was published also contains a photograph of the remains of a pyre at Maly Trostenets. The image was cut off at the left (Beluga, unpaginated appendix). The full uncut photograph is reproduced in Document II.6.2.<sup>528</sup>

There are also other photographs which show the same scenario.

- A person in a white lab coat, probably a Soviet physician, examines charred bodies placed on top of large tree trunks.<sup>529</sup>
- Foreground shot of 3-4 charred bodies lying on tree trunks.<sup>530</sup>
- A cluster of charred corpses whose skulls are clearly distinguishable. (Document II.6.3.).
- Foreground shot of tree trunks with charred bodies lying on top of them (Document II.6.4.).

These photographs undoubtedly refer to a real pyre, and one may even admit that they refer to Maly Trostenets. The Soviet investigatory commission asserts that it found “127 bodies of men, women and children, not entirely burned, in various degrees of carbonization” and based on the photographs, this appears plausible.

<sup>528</sup> USHMM, Photograph Collection, 71958.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 71956.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, 71950.

It is nevertheless a fact that the pyre was located on the surface of the terrain and not at the bottom of a pit, as declared by the witness Lansky.

The real problem is whether this unsuccessful cremation fits into the picture of "Aktion 1005" and can therefore constitute material proof of its historical reality. The photographs which I have reproduced categorically rule this out. According to orthodox Holocaust historiography and the testimonies examined, the *modus operandi* of the various *Kommandos* 1005 invariably provided, at the end of every operation, for the meticulous elimination of all traces, which consisted of gathering and grinding up all osseous residues of the bodies and the removal of the ashes from the pyre; the whole was scattered in the fields or buried in ditches, over which grass or saplings were often planted.

The above-mentioned photographs, on the contrary, show that a hasty last-minute action was abandoned before it was finished. They remind us also of the photographs taken by the Soviets at the Estonian camp at Klooga (see (Graf/Kues/Mattogno, pp. 1339-1344 for details).

The historical context of this cremation could only be the one described by Paul Kohl and repeated by Hoffmann (Hoffmann, pp. 198f.):

*"The first victims had to stand on top of a layer of tree trunks in this barn and were shot down with machine guns. More tree trunks were placed on top of the bodies, onto which the new arrivals had to climb, to be shot down in turn. The process was repeated until the last ones were standing right under the rafters. 6,500 bodies were piled up inside the barn. Then they set fire to them, three days before the Red Army liberated Minsk. When the first Soviet units entered Trostenets, the pile of bodies was still burning. All the barracks and wooden structures in the camp and the estate were also in flames, having been set on fire by the Germans before fleeing."*

Nevertheless, both the number of victims and the method of killing seem very dubious. It would be more reasonable and sensible to shoot the inmates in the open, in front of the barn, and then arrange the bodies on the pyre, because already at the second or third layer of wood and bodies, the executioners would have had to climb up onto the pyre and would have had to shoot while keeping their balance between the inevitably unstable pile of wood and bodies with the living victims allegedly standing on top of that pyre, an obviously unworkable scenario.

The witness Anna S. Kareta reported the following in this regard:

*"On 29 and 30 June as well as on 1 July 1944, the Germans filled a barn to the top with suffocated and shot people, and set it on fire on 1 July. Thousands of bodies were burned. I myself saw how the Germans stacked up killed Soviet persons in the barn. First they put a layer of people down, then a layer of straw, and then another layer of people. And so on right up to the top. Next to the barn lay a pile of fallen trees. That was in an easterly direction, near the Sinyavka River. The Germans piled up the bodies of asphyxiated and shot people on these trees as well and set fire to them. The trees didn't burn completely, and the half-burned bodies are lying on them now."* (Hoppe, p. 696)

Therefore, according to her, only bodies were piled up in the barn but no wood.

From the few existing photographs, which are not very clear, it is difficult to judge whether the scenario they depict is compatible with that of the pyre inside a barn or not. A few clues would seem favorable: in one photograph (see Document II.6.2), we see the remains of a cart, three wheels of which are visible, along the left-hand margin. Furthermore, seven other poles in a row seem to rise from the center of the pyre, while another four form the right-hand margin of the photograph. These could be the support poles of the barn, in which there was also a cart. Another photograph, however (Document II.6.4), shows an intact tree trunk in the foreground, the bark of which can still be distinguished. If it had been inside a wooden barn consumed by fire, it would have been carbonized at least, and also the above-mentioned poles would only with great difficulty have escaped the flames.

Be that as it may, this scenario closely follows the Klooga scenario, and like it, has nothing to do with “Aktion 1005.”

On 19 September 1944, some 2,000 inmates from this camp are said to have been shot by the Germans; we know not by whom or why. The massacre was completely outside the political line followed by the authorities of the Reich at the time: between 12 July and 14 October 1944, the Security Police of Kovno (Kaunas) and Riga evacuated over 25,000 Jews to the Stutthof Camp (transports list in Graf/Mattogno, pp. 97f.).

According to Soviet data, approximately 1,200 bodies were cremated on large pyres measuring 6 m × 6.5 m, but they did not burn completely, and many charred corpses remained. Speaking of that, Hoffmann admits that the direct participation of Blobel’s men in the cremation work “could not be proved thus far” (Hoffmann, p. 334). In this regard I refer to what I have written elsewhere (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 1339-1344).

The extremely rare photographs showing remnants of pyres in fact have nothing to do with “Aktion 1005.” Apart from those already mentioned, as far as is known, two other photographs exist of large cremation sites. One refers to the Krępiecki Forest, near Lublin, and the other to the Stutthof Camp.

The photograph relating to the Krępiecki Forest dates to 1943 and shows a pile of charred bodies (with an order of magnitude of a few dozen), laid out on a grid made of metal beams about half a meter off the ground; the beams have bent and collapsed under the weight, spilling the bodies on the ground. The left-hand corner of the grid consisted of two pairs of concrete blocks laid on top of each other, with a metal beam bent by the heat (Mencel, unpaginated illustration pages).

Hoffmann cites a postwar statement by Erich Muhsfeldt, crematorium director at Majdanek, according to which, on 19 April 1943, he, by order of the camp commandant, Hermann Florstedt, traveled to Auschwitz to learn the open-air cremation technique for the bodies buried in the Krępiecki Forest. Returning to Lublin, he designed his own cremation installation, upon which he placed ap-



proximately 100 bodies at a time. The operation lasted until the end of October 1943. It was supervised by an SD man forming part of *Kommando* 1005, who supplied equipment to grind the osseous residues. Hoffmann suspects that this man was none other than Blobel! (Hoffmann, pp. 255f.)

Muhsfeldt's statement must be considered in context. He stated that the first, naphtha-fired crematorium, from June to October 1942, cremated approximately 5,000 bodies; at the beginning of November, it was closed due to a shortage of naphtha. He then added that "over the period between November 1942 and February 1943, an approximate total of 2,000 bodies were buried in the forest." Further along, without any explanation, Muhsfeldt described his alleged visit to Auschwitz, which he claims took place in February 1943. It is at this point that the excerpt cherry-picked by Hoffmann begins (taken from the well-known history of Majdanek by Józef Marszałek). The last few lines, which are the most important, are missing:<sup>531</sup>

*"According to my calculations, I burned approximately 6,000 bodies in the forest and approximately 3,000 bodies in field five [Feld V]."*

It therefore took Muhsfeldt seven and a half months to cremate 9,000 bodies, from mid-February until the end of October 1943.

The reference to the presence of a man from "*Kommando* 1005" was no doubt a mere trial reminiscence; if this had been true, the man, with his bone-grinding equipment, would first and foremost have brought the famous cremation "technique" along, contrived by Blobel at Chełmno, without any need to travel to Auschwitz.

The other photograph was taken by the Soviets at the Stutthof Camp in May 1945. It shows a structure of distorted metall beams, criss-crossed and superimposed so as to form a large gridwork (see Document II.6.5.). While at Majdanek the bodies were buried when they could not be cremated, at Stutthof, when the camp's mortality skyrocketed in early 1943 and that camp crematorium proved insufficient, the camp authorities improvised by creating an outdoor cremation pit. In both camps, "regular" cremations, which had nothing to do with "Aktion 1005," were already underway, of which the open-air cremations of bodies, whether exhumed or fresh, were an extension, hence they followed the same logic.

There is an important lesson to be learned from the discoveries at Maly Trostenets and Klooga: when the Germans really need to carry out mass cremations, as in this case, the results were far from satisfactory, and obvious evidence of the cremations remained.

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<sup>531</sup> Record of interrogation of E. Muhsfeldt dated 14 August 1947. AGK, NTN, 144, pp. 66f. Only the Polish text of the interrogation exists.

### 6.6.2. “Smaller Burial Site Northwest of Minsk”

The verdict of the Hamburg District Court then dwells on the second site of operations of *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center. Before Christmas 1943, it was transferred “to a smaller burial site”; unfortunately, “the location has not been established with certainty; there is an overwhelming probability that it was located a few kilometers northwest of Minsk, next to the road to Molodechno and further towards Vilnius.” Not even the number of bodies exhumed and cremated can be established, but “there were probably a few hundred of them at least, possibly 2,000,” an estimate no doubt based on the duration of the operation of “just a few days.” It was already finished a few days before Christmas. The inmates in the *Kommando* numbered about 20. At night, they slept in the SD prison at Minsk, and every day they traveled back and forth in a “gas van”! Strangely, at the end of their activity, the inmates, instead of being “gassed” (during the last transport by “gas van” from the prison to the graves), were shot.

The fact that the court did not succeed in identifying the site of the mass graves, notwithstanding the self-proclaimed witnesses, doesn’t make much sense, because the only forested area northwest of Minsk extended south of Zaslavl, a locality 25 km from the center of Minsk, on the road to Molodechno, but there were at least fifteen or so villages in the area of varying size. Therefore, it would not have been overly difficult to identify the site of the mass graves with precision.

In conclusion, the least that one can say is that the story is a pathetic historical “reconstruction.”

### 6.6.3. Smolevichi

After completion of their activity at Minsk, Krahnert, Goldapp and Drews went on furlough; upon their return, the weather conditions did not permit *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center to operate, and it was necessary to wait until 17 January 1944 to resume work. The new site was located at Smolevichi, a locality 35 km northeast of Minsk on the road to Smolensk. The work was completed with the help of 20 or 40 inmates, and lasted until 26 or 28 January 1944. Upon completing the work, the inmates were killed in a “gas van.” The court did not even succeed in establishing the number of bodies exhumed and cremated, but “it may have been nearly 1,000.” Upon what evidentiary basis this claim rests is utterly unknown (Bracher/Rüter, pp. 41f., 80).

Spektor writes that “between 17 and 26 January 1944 5,000 bodies were eradicated in the area of Smolevichi, and the prisoners who worked there were killed in a gas van” (Spektor 1990b, p. 166). The source for this information is the Krahnert trial,<sup>532</sup> yet not the verdict, but the “indictment,” as may be deduced from Hoffmann; with regard to the presumed 40,000-55,000 victims at Maly Trosten-

<sup>532</sup> Spektor indicates, as his source, “YVA, Tr-10/761.” *ibid.*, fn 24, p. 172. The archive reference TR 10 regards Legal Documentation from Trials of Nazi Criminals.

ets, he notes with reference precisely to the indictment that Spektor, on p. 166 of his article, had adopted the minimum figure of 40,000 (Hoffmann, fn 18, p. 176). The repeated use<sup>533</sup> of an indictment as a historical source, the reliability of which must have been evaluated by the court in the verdict, is obviously abusive and illicit.

Neither Spektor nor Arad, who recycled Spektor's figure, ever wondered who these presumed 5,000 victims were. The case of Arad is even more egregious. Picking up Spektor's narrative, he asserts that, "following a brief Christmas break, the *Sonderkommando* on January 17–26, 1944 resumed its work in the Smolevichi region northeast of Minsk, where it incinerated about 5,000 corpses" (Arad 2009, p. 352). In all of Spektor's work, Smolevichi appears only twice, once here and once earlier with the name Smolovich (*ibid.*, p. 216):

*"Near Smolovich, the Jews were under suspicion as well of having several times, together with the partisans and other criminal elements, blown up the Minsk-Smolensk railway line. In conjunction with the Kommando from Minsk, 1,401 Jews were shot during large-scale operations carried out in Smolovich.."*

EM No. 108 dated 9 October 1941 tells us, in fact (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 662):

*"Also in the vicinity of Smolevichi, the Jews were under heavy suspicion to have blown up several times the railway on the stretch between Minsk and Smolensk in cooperation with partisans and other criminal elements. 1,401 Jews were shot in a large-scale operation in Smolevichi, with the help of a rear unit from Minsk. Following the implementation of this cleansing action, there are no more Jews left north, south or west of Borisov."*

Therefore, at Smolevichi, located approximately 40 km southwest of Borisov, there were no more Jews; but then how could there have been 5,000 bodies of Jews in local mass graves?

#### 6.6.4. "Large Burial Site Northwest of Minsk"

On this point, the verdict says (Bracher/Rüter, p. 42):

*"Between 2 February 1944 and about 2 April 1944, the Kommando was deployed at a large burial site northwest of Minsk, on the road to Molodechno and Vilnius; this burial site was about 30 km from Minsk."*

In this case as well, the incompetence of the court in failing to find the burial site is amazing. Document II.6.6. shows the area around the road from Minsk to Molodechno, and from Dekhnovka, some 25 km northeast of Minsk, to Radoshkovichi, some 40 km; the site should therefore have been located inside the circle, where there are many towns and villages, so that it would not have been difficult for the witnesses to locate the area with the mass graves.

There were reportedly 10,000–20,000 bodies at this site; the slave-labor inmates, at least 33 of them, were killed in a "gas van" (*ibid.*, p. 43). Where these

<sup>533</sup> In the 37 pages which Hoffmann dedicates to "*Sonderkommando 1005-Mitte*" (pp. 171–207), he mentions the "indictment" as an historical source at least 16 times.

10,000-20,000 Jews came from, and why they were shot precisely at this site, remains a Holocaust enigma. Krausnick and Wilhelm make a single mention of one of the two localities cited above, Radoshkovichi. No. 38 dated 21 (correct: 22) January 1943 of the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories” refers to an “Operation ‘Munich’ in the region north of Radoshkovichi” over the course of which the partisan bands suffered 63 deaths (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 523), and that is all.

#### 6.6.5. The “Partial Unit Rūbe”

Between the end of February and the beginning of March 1944, a “partial unit” of *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center, under the command of *Kriminalsekretär* Adolf Rūbe, was deployed in the vicinity of Maly Trostenets, where Jews and other persons had been killed and then buried in bomb craters. “These bomb craters” – asserted the verdict in the Krahner Trial – “were located next to a small cemetery set up by the Minsk agency of the Security Police and SD for German military dead and other deceased staff members.” The work lasted three to four days and concerned 200-300 bodies (Bracher/Rüter, p. 44). To deploy a “partial unit” and have it work for three to four days to cremate such a small number of bodies fits perfectly into the bizarre logic attributed to the organizers and executors of “Aktion 1005” by orthodox Holocaust historians.

#### 6.6.6. Pinsk

*Sonderkommando* 1005-Center was then transferred to Pinsk, some 300 km southwest of Minsk (by road). There existed “at least two large burial sites with about 2,000 bodies of Jewish victims.” The work was carried out between the beginning of April and 27 May 1944 (according to Hoffmann, p. 195, from 3 April until 28 May). Initially, to exhume the bodies, they used an excavator from the Organization Todt, but they soon abandoned this approach since it tore the bodies to pieces. 25 inmates were employed in the work; they were killed on 27 May 1944 (Bracher/Rüter, pp. 44f.).

#### 6.6.7. Brona Gora (Bronnaya Gora)

The verdict in the Krahner Trial quickly settled the question of Bronnaya Gora (*ibid.*, p. 46):

*“After his return from furlough, Krahner had to supervise, aside from Sonderkommando 1005-Center, another Sonderkommando active within the framework of Aktion 1005 which was working northeast of Brest-Litovsk, in the region of Bereza-Kartuska and Brona-Gora (see following, under V.G.).”*

Point “V.G.” states (*ibid.*, p. 87):

*“The findings on the activity of the sub-unit under SS Sturmscharführer Paul Fischer northeast of Brest-Litovsk, in the region of Brona-Gora and Bereza-Kartuska, are based primarily on a statements of the deceased witness Sc. As read*

*into the record, the testimony of the witness Schu. and the statements of the defendant Krahnert. This evidentiary base is supplemented by the statements of the witnesses Alb. and Rube.*"

But if the court did not succeed in learning anything of substance in this connection (when the work started and ended, number of bodies cremated, number of inmates employed), this "evidentiary base" cannot be of any great value to historiography.

Hoffmann dedicates only a few lines to this site (Hoffmann, p. 194):

*"According to statements by the Public Prosecutor's office during the Hamburg Proceedings vs. Max Krahnert et al., the Kommando, in addition to other mass-murder locations, also processed graves near Brona-Gora, a railway station north of the Byelorussian city of Kobrin, where at least 15,000 Jewish men, women and children were shot and buried between 14 and 17 August 1942."*

The work is said to have been carried out by the "sub-unit Fischer." Hoffmann relays a decisive piece of information in a footnote: "The work of the sub-unit Fischer was not taken into consideration in the verdict of the trial against Max Krahnert et al." (*ibid.*, fn 72, p. 195). Thus does he invert the normal order of values: the verdict, which is much more important than the indictment, should appear in the text, and the reference to the indictment should appear in a footnote.

Spektor is only a little more loquacious (Spektor 1990b, p. 166):

*"Towards the end of this operation in the north of Minsk, a small sub-unit [of Sonderkommando 1005-Center] was set aside, and sent to the area of Brest-Litovsk. It was headed by Fischer and consisted of a few SD-men, interpreters and one policeman who specialized in burning bodies. Additional local German policemen, soldiers of the Waffen-SS, as well as a hundred prisoners taken from the local prison joined the unit. The work began in Brona-Gora, in the area of Bereza-Kartuska, where 48,000 Jews originally from Brest-Litovsk, Pinsk, Bereza-Kartuska, Drohiczyn, Janov, Horodetz [Gorodets], and various other places were murdered. The operation ended in the middle of May 1944, the prisoners were killed, and the unit moved to Lomza."*

As I have mentioned above, *Sonderkommando 1005-Center* was active at Pinsk from 3 April to 28 May 1944; then, starting on 2 June, it worked at Kobrin, where it processed 2,000 bodies (see next point below). It follows that, to exhume and cremate (20,000 + 2,000 =) 22,000 bodies at Pinsk and Kobrin required most of the staff of *Sonderkommando 1005-Center*, but to process 48,000 bodies (as claimed by Spektor), a mere "sub-unit" was created! This is also a perfect reflection of the madness which orthodox Holocaust historians are compelled to implicitly attribute to the executors of "Aktion 1005."

Spektor's source is Beluga's book *Prestupleniya nemetsko-fashistskikh okkupantov v Belorussii 1941-1944 (The Crimes of the German-Fascist Invaders in Byelorussia 1941-1944)*, which reproduces an extensive excerpt from the record of interrogation of a resident of Bronnaya Gora, R.S. Novis, dated 12 September 1944. The witness declared (Beluga, p. 233):

*“In March 1944, the Germans brought about 100 civilians on foot. Nobody knew where they came from. They were all housed in the camp near the Bronnaya Gora station and were subjected to strict surveillance. At the beginning of May 1944, these persons reopened the graves near the railway branch in which the executed citizens had been buried, who had been brought earlier by train. After the exhumation, the bodies were burned. For the cremation of the bodies, the Germans dismantled 48 military barracks. Moreover, obviously, they also used a few liquid [fuels]. This I infer from the fact that at night we could see a blue [glow] color. During the cremation of the bodies, the intolerable odor of the [burnt] bodies could be smelled all the way to the inhabited center of Bronnaya Gora; this can be confirmed by every citizen of the village. The cremation of the bodies continued for 13-14 days. They burned continuously, day and night. [...] After the end of the work of exhuming and cremating [the bodies], I didn’t see any of the citizens whom I had recognized in the group of 100 persons.<sup>[534]</sup> I suppose they were shot and cremated like the others. At Bronnaya Gora station, a total of 186 railway carriages arrived with Soviet citizens who were shot. [...] Thus, in a conversation, he<sup>[535]</sup> told me that the Soviet citizens who were taken away and were shot numbered over 48,000.”*

In the respective Soviet report published in the *Black Book*, to which I shall return later, this statement was reworded as follows (Ehrenburg/Grossman 2002, p. 180):

*“In order to hide all traces of their savagery, the Germans brought more than one hundred people from various villages in the Brest district to the camp at the Bronnaya Gora train station; these people were given the task of digging up the mass graves and burning the bodies. The bodies were burned in the vicinity of the mass graves, where our citizens had been shot. They burned day and night for fifteen days. In order to fuel the flames that consumed the bodies, the Germans dismantled forty-eight military warehouses and barracks located nearby. They also used a flammable liquid that burned with a dark blue flame. After the work of burning the bodies was finished, the Germans had to shoot and burn all the workers who had dug up and burned the bodies; there were more than a hundred of them. The Germans planted saplings in the area where the graves had been and the burning had taken place. All around were found charred bones, barrettes for women’s hair, children’s shoes, Soviet money, a shoulder blade, and a baby’s arm eighteen centimeters in length.”*

The description by witness Novis evidently excludes the presence of any *Sonderkommando* 1005, which consisted of experienced staff and deployed Jews and/or Soviet POWs, not civilians randomly picked up in the surrounding areas.

The references to body parts discovered on the spot – “charred bones,” “a shoulder blade, and a baby’s arm eighteen centimeters in length” – the remains of the cremation of 48,000 bodies! – only denotes the proverbial absence of any sense of the ridiculous in Soviet propaganda.

<sup>534</sup> The witness had recognized two persons.

<sup>535</sup> The stationmaster at Bronnaya Gora, a certain Heil.

Even assuming the most dubious data proposed by a few supporters of the orthodox Holocaust narrative, that is, an average weight of the bodies of approximately 36.5 kg, the requirement in *dry wood* (barracks, etc.) for the cremation of 30,000 bodies would have been (133 kg/body × 48,000 bodies =) 6,384,000 kg or 6,384 tons, and would have produced (3.4 kg ash/corpse × 48,000 corpses =) 163,200 kg or 163.2 tons of unburnt ashes, the equivalent of approximately 2,080 cubic meters (cf. Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, esp. p. 1330). Where did the Germans conceal this immense quantity of ashes? Even considering the figure of “at least 30,000” victims accepted by Gerlach (Gerlach 1999, p. 723), this would still require of 4,000 tons of wood and produce 1,300 cubic meters of ashes.

The Soviets had been preceded by the Polish resistance, which had already set the propaganda tone two years earlier. The *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, No. 50, 24 December 1942, wrote in this regard:<sup>536</sup>

*“And even on 15 Oct., the liquidation of the Jews of Brest continues. The execution site is Bronnaya Gora, where 12,000 persons were shot during the first three days of the operation.”*

The question of the deportations and mass graves at Bronnaya Gora will be dealt with in Subchapter 8.6.

#### 6.6.8. Kobrin

*Sonderkommando* 1005-Center began its activity at Kobrin on 2 June 1944. “There was a smaller burial site with about 2,000 victims to be eliminated.” The operation terminated on 16 or 17 June. The 30 inmates who had been employed there were shot after they were done (Bracher/Rüter, pp. 47f.).

#### 6.6.9. Slonim

On 25 June 1944, *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center was at Slonim and was active there until 5 July. The investigative activity of the Hamburg District Court were rather deficient in this regard:

*“How many bodies had been exhumed and cremated by that time could not be ascertained more exactly; it may have been several thousand.”*

The work was terminated “before all local mass graves had been eliminated”; the 30 inmates who had done the work were then shot (*ibid.*, p. 49).

#### 6.6.10. Lomscha (Łomża)

*Sonderkommando* 1005-Center was then transferred, via Grodno, to Augustowo (Augustów), where it remained inactive until 14 July 1944. The next day it was sent to clean out the mass graves at Lomscha. The work was done “a few days after 14 August 1944.” The court did not announce any concrete facts regarding this site:

<sup>536</sup> *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, op. cit. (note 458), p. 1193.

*“The Jury Court was unable to determine anything in detail about the number of bodies exhumed from the mass graves at Lomscha. But there may have been at least several thousand of them.”*

The work was carried out by more than 20 inmates, who were killed when they were done (*ibid.*, p. 51).

This was the last operation of *Sonderkommando* 1005-Center; from Łomża, it was in fact transferred to Lodz (Łódź, Litzmannstadt), where it was assigned to escort transports of ghetto Jews to Auschwitz (*ibid.*).

## 6.7. “Aktion 1005” in Western Byelorussia

### 6.7.1. The Witness Stefan Ivanovich Pilunov

Hoffmann asserts that “Aktion 1005” began in Byelorussia in the summer of 1943, with the

*“Compilation of information on the geographical location and size of the existing mass graves by Department IVb of the KdS Office Minsk, headed by SS Obersturmführer Müller.”*

There, Blobel created “several units” under the command of Friedrich Seekel. At that time, the eastern part of Byelorussia, with a surface area of approximately 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>, was under German military administration, while the western part, of some 60,000 km<sup>2</sup>, formed the “*Generalkommissariat* Byelorussia.” Blobel and Seekel concerned themselves with the eastern area, while Arthur Harder, Blobel’s adjutant, concerned himself with the western area. This reconstruction is based solely on “Findings of the Public Prosecution in the Proceedings against Max Krahnner *et al.*, Hamburg” (Hoffmann, pp. 139-141). I have already pointed out Hoffmann’s illicit use of a mere indictment – which had to be appraised by the court – as a historical source. And in fact, the court verdict says nothing about the eastern part of Byelorussia. Hoffmann is in fact compelled to admit that in this regard

*“only statements of varying precision exist concerning the individual squad deployments in the militarily administrated eastern part, from which the actual scope of evidence elimination can hardly be deduced.”* (*ibid.*, p. 141)

Spektor says more frankly that “unfortunately, there is very little information about this,” and refers the reader to a single source, the statement of a certain Stefan Ivanovich Pilunov (Spektor 1990b, p. 165), which is also the only source cited by Hoffmann.

On 20 May 1944, Pilunov, who lived in the village of Prisna in the district of Mogilev, signed a statement before the chief of staff of the Byelorussian partisan movement, P. S. Kalinin.

According to Pilunov’s account, he was arrested in July 1943 for partisan activity and was held in the Gestapo headquarters at Mogilev for two months. He was then transferred to the local prison and remained there from 15 September



until 4 October 1943. Notwithstanding its length, the following is the essential part of his testimony concerning the subject of exhumation-cremation (Beluga, pp. 165-174):

*“On 4 October, around 6 AM, after the ‘evacuation’, 280 persons were loaded into four vehicles weighing 3 tons each, after being provisionally (not completely) equipped with tools – spades, axes, saws – and transported off in the area of the village of Pashkovo, district of Mogilev. We stopped in a meadow near the forest of Pashkovo, next to an open anti-tank ditch, which began 200 m from the Minsk-Mogilev road, and led to a swamp north of the two last-named places, between the old and new Pashkovo.*

*Around 8 AM, after breakfast (bread and a cup of black ersatz coffee) some of us (about 40 persons) were led to the anti-tank ditch. The interpreter (a Volga German named Vasily, I don’t remember his family name, about 30 years old, of average stature, gaunt, pimply-faced, long nose, blue eyes, reddish hair), explained, without going into detail, that we were to dig an anti-tank ditch.*

*The second group (about 20 persons) started digging construction pits, which, as it later turned out, were intended for the cremation of bodies.*

*Every one of the construction pits was 7 to 8 m long and 1 meter both wide and deep. Two construction pits, dug parallel to each other at 2 meters apart, crossed a second pair of such parallel ditches at right angles. The result was a square with four continuations jutting out of its corners, each perpendicular to the other (extensions of the construction pits after mutually intersecting). The ends of the latter were sloped, and over the length of half a meter, it descended continually and steadily from the ground level to the bottom level of the construction pit.*

*A number of planks or wooden sticks were laid on top of this system of construction pits, with split wood on top. On top of this was an intermediate layer of pitch, mixed with bituminous coal, upon which the bodies dragged out of the grave by the work party were laid next to each other in a row. On the latter were laid, in the same sequence, wooden sticks, split wood, pitch and bituminous coal, and on top of this a layer of bodies. In the end, the pile reached a height of 8 to 10 meters and consisted of up to 20 rows [layers] of bodies.”*

The description is accompanied by a drawing (see Document II.6.8) which I will analyze later.

*“The above work required special contraptions reminding of a primitive scaffolding such as used when building houses. Some of the workers fell from the scaffolding, were injured and were taken away to be shot under the pretext that they were being sent to a hospital. The furnace was ignited from three sides, and the combustible material at the ignition spots was first doused with large quantities of gasoline. The supply of sufficient quantities of air into the construction pits beneath the lower layers of combustible material was assured by the slope depicted in the drawing.*

*The third group – about 35 men – chopped the firewood needed to burn the bodies. The others were occupied with getting planks, wooden sticks, bituminous coal,*

*pitch and other combustible materials, which was brought from Mogilev and the villages near our worksite.*

*When we started the job of excavating the ditch, we discovered at a depth of half a meter buried corpses which were already so badly decomposed that many of us had to throw up. The bodies in the ditch were stacked up on top of each other in 6 to 8 or in some places 12 layers – the first layer with their feet forwards, the next with their heads forwards, and so on, in the same order. On the first day, working until dusk, we pulled no fewer than 4,000 corpses out of the ditches. On spots flooded with water, the bodies were pulled out either with iron rods half an inch thick and two meters long, whose tips were bent to form hooks, and equipped with ring-shaped handles, or with ordinary pitchforks with wooden handles. In the dry places, the bodies were pulled out without tools, with the bare hands. At first, the Germans forced those who didn't want to hold a corpse or a single piece of half-rotten flesh in their hands to lie face down on top of a corpse and to breathe in the smell for five or ten minutes. In particular, the Germans proceeded four times in this manner with Paratroop Captain Bondarev (I'll get around to speaking about him later), to whom the stench of the corpse caused strong urges to vomit and a complete loss of appetite for a long period of time.*

*Insofar as one can judge from the remaining objects, those murdered and buried in the ditches were soldiers and a large number of civilians as well. Among them were many infants, old people, adolescents and women.*

*Interpreter Vasily explained to us that we had to gather and hand over to him any valuables found on the bodies – watches, gold, including gold teeth, money, etc. The compliance with this order was supervised by the policeman Lyakhov (who was later shot and burned by the Germans), a resident of the city of Bryansk, who was forced to extract from the mouths of the corpses not only gold, but also artificial teeth made of white metal. [...]*

*In this zone, I worked from dawn to dusk; I was there until and including 19 October 1943. As of this time, more than 25,000 bodies had been pulled out of the pits, and burnt in four furnaces. Every furnace burned for three or four days. As Interpreter Vasily told Lyakhov, some 35,000 bodies were buried in this zone.*

*On 19 October, a fifth furnace was set up and filled with bodies. Four of them were set west of the ditch and one, the tallest of them all, was built directly in the ditch. When the next furnace was burned out completely, a Sonderkommando of 15 to 20 inmates was formed, whose members gathered all those bone fragments which had survived the fire, and chopped them on a wooden rack with special stampers, similar to those used during road repairs, and then mixed them with soil. The guards consisted of 68 Germans equipped with machine pistols and four heavy machine guns. There were also eight tracker and guard dogs, four of whom were used to cordon off the working area, and four for guarding of the inmates directly. 12 policemen were assigned to guard our group. [...]*

*On 20 October 1943, as a member of a group consisting of 35 of the strongest men, I was sent to some agricultural settlement about 12 km northwest of Gomel*

*(I don't know the exact name of this settlement), while the rest of the Kommando continued to work at the old location.*

*According to the interpreter Vasily, some 35,000 shot people were buried in the vicinity of the Pashkovo Forest. Consequently, the remaining prisoners were faced with the task of exhuming roughly 10,000 more bodies.*

*Everyone of those sent to the new place was given a kilo of bread and was once allowed to drink directly from the brook along the way. After arriving, one of the prisoners, a teacher from the Chaussky District who had eaten too much bread after a period of starvation, died from a twisting of the bowels. The Germans forced one of the prisoners, a Jew, to make a cross for the deceased, and after the burial (in the village where they were billeted, in a vegetable garden), also under orders from the Germans, we all sang a dirge.*

*In the zone south of the agricultural settlement, about half a kilometer away, we brought to light more than 6,000 bodies from four graves within five days (in total, according to the interpreter Vasily, up to 8,000 bodies are supposed to be there). In the second grave were 1,500 to 1,600 bodies, mainly soldiers, about 800 in the second, soldiers and civilians, more than 1,000 in the third (mainly Jews – women and children, to a smaller extent men). I have no information about the fourth grave. In view of the fact that the ground is dry at that location, the bodies were less strongly decomposed than in the area of the Pashkovo Forest.*

*All exhumed bodies were burned in two piles, onto which, during this combustion process, corpses were laid which had also been taken from the graves in the meantime. The size of the furnaces and the type of contraption were the same as in the Pashkovo Forest.*

*We were guarded by 20 Germans, who had 4 dogs with them. To spend the night, they brought us in a 'dushegubka' (gas van) to the nearest village, whose name we did not know, because there were no civilians there. The 'dushegubka' was accompanied by two armored vehicles, one ahead and the other behind.*

*On the second day, after work, the head of the Gomel Gestapo drove hither (his family name starts with the letter B); he gave every one of us a piece of bread, whereupon we all, while sitting near a burning pyre, sang the songs 'Stenka Razin' and 'Katyusha' and others on the order of this German. The German was moved to tears and told us through the interpreter that he loved Russian songs very much; he thanked us, gave every smoker among us a cigarette, and drove away.*

*On 26 October, we, 34 men, were taken in the same 'dushegubka' to the town Ozarichi, where we exhumed about 4,000 bodies within five or six days from three graves located about half a kilometer from the Jewish cemetery (I am unable to give the cardinal directions with much precision). In total, according to German data, some 6,000 shot people lay buried in this area.*

*The first and second graves were dug in an anti-tank ditch, the third in a big crater caused by the explosion of an aerial bomb. The bodies of the Jews in this grave had been thrown in in complete disorder, but in the first two graves they had been arranged in rows, in which the heads of the bodies in the second row lay*

*between the legs of the bodies in the first and third row. Due to the dry consistency of the soil, the bodies were only slightly decomposed; with many of them clothing and shoes were still present. [...]*

*We did our work the same way as at the old location. Within two days, all the bodies were burned in a furnace whose base formed a cross, since it did not consist of four, as in the last case, but only of two construction pits, which had the same dimensions as the previous ones.*

*On the 3rd or 4th of November 1943, we arrived in the area of the village Polykovichi, Mogilev District, but we stopped a kilometer to the east at the edge of the forest. Part of our prisoner squad was already in action there, who had arrived there after finishing their work in the area of the Pashkovo Forest. The Germans told us that we had to recover about 11,000 bodies from six graves in the anti-tank ditch, but we dug up about 8,000, mostly soldiers. Among the civilians were a few Gypsies."*

Having finished the job of exhumation and cremation of bodies, the *Kommando* was divided into two groups: one was loaded into two "*dushegubki*" (gas vans), taken away and killed. Of the remaining group, six inmates were selected, including Pilunov, while the others, more than 100 persons, were gassed in another "*dushegubka*." The six survivors were compelled to unload the bodies from the "gas vans" and to throw them onto the burning pyre. The Germans then fired on these inmates as well, but Pilunov was only wounded in the head and lost consciousness. When he woke up, he found himself on a pyre which had just been lit. The flames were getting closer, but he succeeded in fleeing, and thus became the sole survivor of the 280 men in the *Kommando*.

In May 1975, Pilunov was interrogated by two court officials from the Federal Republic of Germany. Hoffmann reproduces an excerpt of the interrogation, which contains several differences compared to the statement made in 1944. The most relevant ones relate to the use of railroad rails in the construction of the "furnaces," and their height, now reduced to four meters (Hoffmann, p. 143):

*"First, we dug pits, upon which railroad rails were laid, onto them in turn wood and tar, then bodies were laid [on top], then again the wood, tar and bodies. In this way, a stack of wood and bodies resulted that was about 4 m high."*

### 6.7.2. Pilunov's Assertions and the Orthodox Holocaust Narrative

I shall now summarize the activity of the *Kommando* based on Pilunov's chronology.

- 25,000 to 35,000 bodies were exhumed and cremated from the mass graves at Pashkovo between 4 and 19 October 1943; the work was later completed in an unindicated period of time;
- 6,000 to 8,000 bodies were exhumed and cremated in five days between 20 and 25 October at an unspecified location 12 km northwest of Gomel; Pilunov says nothing about the remaining 2,000;

- 4,000 bodies out of the 6,000 present were exhumed and cremated at Ozarichi between 26 October and 2 November; the work was finished within two days; Pilunov keeps silent about the remaining 2,000 bodies in this case as well;
- 8,000 of the 11,000 bodies present were exhumed and cremated at Polykovichi between 3 or 4 November and a later, undetermined date; nothing is known of the remaining 3,000.

It is not clear whether the *Kommando* left (2,000+2,000+3,000=) 7,000 bodies in the mass graves, or whether they eliminated all of them and there were simply overstatements of the numbers of bodies present at the various sites. This seems the most reasonable scenario.

Before analyzing Pilunov's statements in greater detail, we must examine the Holocaust-related relevance of the localities mentioned by him.

Pashkovo is a village located on the northwest periphery of Mogilev, consisting of two neighboring agglomerations, Novo-Pashkovo and Staro-Pashkovo (see Document II.6.7., top left). Some 35,000 bodies had been exhumed and cremated in this area, according to Pilunov, 25,000 of them in his presence, while the remaining 10,000 were exhumed and cremated while he was in Gomel.

8,000 bodies were exhumed and cremated at Polykovichi, which formed the northern periphery of the city (see Document II.6.7., center top). Gerlach, in his powerful work on Byelorussia, mentions "Novopashkovo" only three times. The first mention says that "the people murdered by the SS and Police in Mogilev were buried in mass graves near the villages of Novopashkovo and Polykovichi, and cremated by *Sonderkommando* 1005 in 1943." The source is the "Report of the Mogilev Investigatory Commission of 8 Oct. 1944" (Gerlach 1999, p. 652)

Later, with reference to the Mogilev "death camp," he writes:

*"The shooting and unloading of persons murdered in gas vans were no longer taking place in Novopashkovo, as they mostly had in 1941, but near the village of Polykovichi."*

In a footnote, Pohl again refers to the above-mentioned Soviet investigatory commission, which estimated the presence of 10,000 bodies in the mass graves of of Polykovichi, and 17,000 in those at Novopashkovo (*ibid.*, p. 772). Finally, Gerlach reports that the investigatory commission was said to have "found in the anti-tank ditches of Novopashkovo [...], among other things, the corpses of institutional inmates evidently killed by gas" (*ibid.*, fn 82, p. 1070).

In practice, Gerlach knew nothing about Novopashkovo and Polykovichi.

### 6.7.3. The Soviet Report on Mogilev

The Soviet report on Mogilev dated 8 October 1944 was published with a few abridgements by Ernst Klee and Willi Dreßen. According to this, the Germans killed 30,000 civilians at Mogilev, among them 10,000 Jews, plus 40,000 Soviet POWs (Klee/Dreßen, p. 186):

*“To conceal the traces of their crimes, the German-fascist aggressors carried out mass cremations of the bodies of exterminated Soviet citizens in the villages of Polykovichi and Novopashkovo in the fall of 1943 after extracting the bodies from mass graves. Mass graves from which the bodies could no longer be exhumed (village of Polykovichi) were meticulously masked by the occupiers: They built roads across the graves, sowed them with grain cultures, etc. Similar disguises were carried out at the sites in the village of Novopashkovo where the bodies had been burned.”*

After an outtake, the text continues as follows:

*“10,000 Soviet citizens, among them also children, were exterminated during the occupation era at a distance of 6 km from the city of Mogilev. The exterminations occurred near the anti-tank ditches in the wooded ‘Bezvoditsa’ area by shooting or in so-called ‘gassing vehicles.’”*

Most of the text reproduced by the two authors is a sequence of testimonies which should have constituted the basis for the findings of the report, but which, at least regarding the figures, have little value, if any. In fact, these individuals were only accidental witnesses of the claimed shootings, hence they could not possibly know the total number of persons shot. These witnesses include Sidor Romanovich Boldov, who declared that 6,000-7,000 persons had been shot at Polykovichi “in my opinion,” and Daria Danilovna Kondratyeva and Sofia Vasilyevna Asotina, who spoke of more than 10,000 persons killed at Novo-Pashkovo (*ibid.*, pp. 186, 193f.).

Further along, the Soviet report dwells upon precisely this locality:

*“The German-fascist aggressors and their lackeys annihilated more than 10,000 in the anti-tank ditches of the village Novopashkovo, and more than 7,000 Soviet citizens in the forested area of the Kazimirovo sovkhos [state-owned farm]. The killings were carried out by shooting or through the use of ‘gassing vehicles,’ furthermore by blowing up the doomed persons with mines, by strafing them with shell fire, etc.”*

This is followed by a description of the exhumation-cremation of the bodies clearly taken from Pilunov’s account, which was nevertheless explicitly mentioned only in the following statement by Maria Vasilyevna Polyakova, who lived at Novo-Pashkovo with her husband. In the fall of 1943, an unknown person introduced himself at her house (*ibid.*, p. 194):

*“He called himself Pilunov, Stepan, and stated that he, as an arrested Soviet citizen, was being used by the Germans to burn the corpses in the village of Polykovichi and near us. That night, Pilunov was shot together with other workers, but because he was only wounded and was placed on the pyre to be cremated with the other shooting victims, he ran away from the cremation site under the cloak of darkness and the heavy smoke. Pilunov was also surrendered to the partisans.”*

This more or less accords with Pilunov’s account (Beluga, p. 174):

*“During the day, I fought my way through to the village of Staro-Pashkovo, where I stayed with Nikolai Pavlovich Polyakov, who was in contact with the partisans.*

*The last evening, until the evening, I was sitting in the hut underneath the floor, when two partisan scouts from the 121st Partisan Division came by Polyakov. From local residents, they had received information on me in their division, and a vehicle came to fetch me around 8 PM."*

The fact that both accounts correspond does not necessarily confirm the reliability of Pilunov's account, however, because the Soviet investigatory commission certainly possessed Pilunov's account, so that the witness could have learned the details she described from Pilunov's account.

The text reproduced by Klee and Dreßen contains not one single reference to any discovery of "corpses of institutional inmates evidently killed by gas" mentioned by Gerlach; in the passage relating to the "psychiatric hospital" at Mogilev, they refer to the "gassing chamber" which produced 700 victims in the fall of 1941. On the bodies, the report says (Klee/Dreßen, p. 195):

*"The bodies of the patients killed by gas were transported away on motor vehicles and buried in the anti-tank ditches of the village of Novopashkovo and in the forested area of Kazimirovka."*

There is no mention of their discovery, and it seems strange that Klee and Dreßen should have omitted this detail. Instead, and equally strangely, they published two photographs showing three rows of exhumed bodies arranged on the surface of a grassy area without trees. The first two rows contain 25-30 bodies each; in the third, shorter than the other two, we see 7-8 bodies; the total number of bodies is around 70. Standing around are civilians and men in white coats. The photographs are accompanied by the following caption (*ibid.*, p. 188):

*"Forensic physicians from a Soviet investigatory commission in the village of Polykovichi, near Mogilev. Among the murdered were also infants and children. For comparison, the body of an adult was laid down in the foreground."*

If the two photographs really refer to Polykovichi, then we must wonder why the Soviet report of 8 October 1944, which speaks of the killing of 10,000 persons in this locality, makes no mention of these exhumations. On the other hand, the number of exhumed bodies does not correspond to Pilunov's statements, according to which 8,000 bodies were exhumed and cremated out of 11,000 buried bodies. I have already stressed the ambiguity of such a statement; if it be taken literally, that is, if the figure of 11,000 is not an exaggeration but the actual number of bodies, it is impossible to understand why Pilunov's *Kommando* would have left 3,000 bodies in the ground. And if they were exhumed by the Soviets later on, than why do these two photographs show far fewer than 100 of them?

The assertion in the Soviet report that a few of the mass graves were left intact and then "camouflaged" because "the bodies could no longer be exhumed" is contradicted by Pilunov's account when he says that the bodies around Gomel were "less strongly decomposed than in the area of the Pashkovo Forest," which implies that the bodies in the Pashkovo Forest were "strongly decomposed," and were exhumed nevertheless!

With regard to finding the mass graves, Pilunov himself described a system of surveys which would have failed only with difficulty to notice any mass grave containing 3,000 bodies (Beluga, pp. 171f.):

*“In all the cases known to me, the Germans located the graves in the following manner. After establishing the approximate location of a mass grave on a map, a squad of five or six men supervised by a German dug exploratory ditches on an area of 1,000 x 250 m with a diameter of some 4 meters and a depth of a half to a full meter, which were each 5 to 10 m apart, depending on the circumstances. Since the Germans knew the position of the mass graves only approximately and not very accurately, it took two or three hours to excavate the exploratory ditches in each case.”*

The identification of all the mass graves, whether by the Germans or the Soviets, would have been further facilitated by the fact that, according to the above-mentioned report, the executions took place “before the eyes of the population,” and a few inhabitants of the adjacent villages, such as Daniel Andreyevich Loktorov, who is said to have participated “on repeated occasions” in digging the mass graves (Klee/Dreßen, pp. 186, 188).

The identification of the two photographs is therefore mere conjecture on the part of Klee and Dreßen, who are not new to errors of this kind. I only point out the more-obvious:

- Two photographs of the ravine at Babi Yar bear the caption “photograph from 1941” (*ibid.*, p. 117), while they were taken by the Soviets after the occupation of Kiev (GARF, 128-132).
- As mentioned in Chapter 4, they published three photographs of Babi Yar and printed them reversed with erroneous captions (Klee/Dreßen, pp. 101, 104f.).
- Another two photographs depicting an open mass grave bears the caption: “Babi Yar, 1944. Soviet experts at an opened mass grave” (*ibid.*, p. 135). Both are commonly referred to as having been taken at Kharkov (see Subchapter 8.4).
- Finally, Klee and Dreßen attribute a photograph mentioned earlier by myself bearing the caption “Jews of the Zolochew (Zloczow) Ghetto being brought to the mass killing site beside the village of Jelichowice [Yelikhovichi]” to the “Forced-labor Camp in the Janowska Road at Lvov” (*ibid.*, p. 145).

Returning to Pilunov’s account, for Mogilev, as shown by the related paragraph (see Subchapter 8.1.), a maximum of 7,471 victims are attested to by documents, so that one must wonder where the presumed (35,000 + 8,000 =) 43,000 persons came from whose bodies are said to have been exhumed and cremated according to Pilunov’s account.

#### 6.7.4. Gomel

As for Gomel, Arad asserts that approximately 4,000 Jews remained in the city when it was captured by the Germans on 19 August 1941 (Arad 2009, p. 189):



*“The major murder operation, in which 2,500 Jews were annihilated, took place on November 4, on the outskirts of town. The other Jews had been murdered earlier in the course of smaller actions.”*

The source given by Arad is “YVA, M-33/481” (*ibid.*, fn 26, p. 570), but the reference “M-33,” according to the “Listing of the record groups in the Yad Vashem Archives” concerns “Records of the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory.” The figure of 4,000 Jews remaining in the city is also taken from a Soviet war crimes report.<sup>537</sup>

In EM No. 148 dated 19 December 1941, *Einsatzgruppe B* reports:

*“52 Jews without identification papers were found in Gomel, some of whom attempted to disguise themselves as Russians. Among them were also Communist agitators. They were shot. V-men reported that the partisans still numerous around Gomel were supported by Jews in all respects. Hence, a special operation had to be carried out in Gomel, Rogachev and Korma. A total of 2,365 Jews and Jewesses were shot.”* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 889)

Still, Rogachev is located approximately 115 km northwest of Gomel (by road), while Korma is approximately 100 km to the north; hence, it is not very plausible that all the 2,365 bodies were buried 12 km from Gomel.

Moreover, the claim that the remaining 1,500 Jews were killed beforehand, for which Arad refers to EMs 92; 108; 148 and 179 (Arad 2009, p. fn 18, p. 570), is utterly groundless.

EM No. 92 dated 23 September 1941 says (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 545):

*“Only 10 Jews could be identified in Gomel who were suspected of carrying out acts of sabotage and of having acted as partisans.”*

EM No. 108 dated 9 October 1941 reports the following information:

*“In Gomel, 41 Jews and 9 Russians were liquidated for sabotage and looting in the possession of firearms.”* (*ibid.*, p. 661)

EM No. 148, cited above, mentions 52 Jews shot in addition to the above-mentioned 2,365; finally, EM No. 179 dated 11 March 1942 contains no mention of killings at Gomel. Here is the English translation of the related German passage which appears in the work cited by Arad, of which he is also a co-author (Arad/Krakowski/Spektor, p. 310):

*“The following report is available on Gomel: because of the present situation at the front, increased anti-German tendencies are noted, finding expression in Gomel on posters, calling upon the population to come out and fight against the German Army. These calls are enhanced by vivid whisper propaganda, transmitted by partisans in transit and Jews who are still on the move in the area.”*

There were therefore 103 victims in total, and if the initial number of Jews present at Gomel was 4,000, then  $(4,000 - 2,365 - 103 =)$  1,532 victims are missing; in reality even more, however, because the above-mentioned 2,365 victims did not all live in Gomel; rather, some of them lived in Gomel, some in Rogachev

<sup>537</sup> Report of 9 June 1945 of the Soviet investigatory commission on the Gomel Oblast. Beluga, p. 312.

and some at Korma, approximately 560 km from Gomel, so that Pilunov's detachment would have to travel 740 km.

From the geographical point of view, while it makes sense for the Germans to take the *Kommando* to exhume and cremate bodies at Pashkovo and Polykovichi, which were suburbs of Mogilev, the claim of detachments having been sent to Gomel and Ozarichi is quite implausible. Gomel is in fact located 180 km south of Mogilev (by road), while Ozarichi is approximately 120 km west of Gomel. A transfer of such a distance presupposes among other things that no *Sonderkommando* 1005 was in operation in the area of Gomel.

### 6.7.5. Ozarichi

The story about Ozarichi was no doubt invented by Pilunov because the Red Army had entered this city on 18 March 1944. The report "The mass extermination of the peaceful Soviet citizens by the Hitlerite invaders in the concentration camps near the city of Ozarichi, Polesye Region, in March 1944" is dated 18 March – 30 April 1944 (Beluga, p. 142). The news was disseminated by the Soviet press. The newspaper *Stalinsky udar* spoke of it as early as in issue No. 106 of 6 May 1944, while *Pravda* mentioned it in issue No. 104 of 30 April.

The merely propagandistic character of Pilunov's account is confirmed by the fact that Ozarichi was not the theater of any extermination on a scale such as to justify sending a "1005" detachment to that place from over 700 km away.

In this regard, Arad limits himself to writing that "on October 26, this subunit moved to Ozarichi, west of Gomel, where it burned 4,000 corpses over four or five days," but as a source he adduces the related passage from Spektor, based on Pilunov's statement (Arad 2009, p. 352 and fn 16, p. 597). It is therefore clear that Arad had no other information of any extermination at Ozarichi.

Hoffmann is hardly less laconic (Hoffmann, p. 146):

*"On the mass murders by German perpetrators in Ozarichi, information of varying exactitude is available. Thus, at an undetermined time, 2,000 to 4,000 Jewish civilians were killed in the vicinity of the municipality; possible perpetrators are members of Einsatzkommandos 8 and 5, or of Sonderkommandos 7b and 4a."*

He then reports on the killing of 6,000 persons, "mostly Byelorussian civilians," within the framework of the "Bamberg" anti-partisan operation between 26 March and 6 April 1942, while referring to Gerlach. He then continues (*ibid.*, pp. 146f.):

*"In Ozarichi, in an area about 500 m from the local Jewish cemetery, the inmates had to exhume a total of about 4,000 bodies from three corpse pits and had to burn them on a pyre."*

What is the source for this alleged Jewish extermination? As I mentioned above, it is Gerlach's book *Kalkulierte Morde*. In this work, the first mention is as follows (Gerlach 1999, p. 608):

*“Thus, the date and responsibility for the murder of Jews at Ozarichi (2,000 to 4,000 victims) and Osipovichi (1,000 to 2,000) must remain unclarified.”*

The other reference concerns the chapter titled “*Pilotunternehmen ‘Bamberg’*” and addresses precisely the anti-partisan operation which I mentioned earlier. In the related pages (*ibid.*, pp. 885-893), Ozarichi appears only in one map and one footnote: “In Karpilovka, a designated ‘collection point for Jews from Bobruisk, Ozarichi and Parichi,’ 133 Jews were murdered, for a total, insofar as mentioned, of about 200” (*ibid.*, fn 146, p. 889). Krausnick and Wilhelm, cited by Gerlach, say that Infantry Regiment 727 “reported, under 2 April 1942, during [anti-]partisan operations, the shooting of 133 Jews (‘no weapons captured’), in addition to the shooting of 224 partisans (‘no weapons captured’), under 4. April, the shooting of 47 Jews, in addition to 651 partisans” (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 275). There is no mention of Ozarichi in their work. There are supposed to have been 180 deaths. (Karpilovka/Oktyabrsky – today’s Akciabrski – is some 30 km northwest of Ozarichi – today’s Azarychy – as the crow flies). A Soviet list of Jews killed at Ozarichi in 1942 and in the surrounding villages contains 262 names,<sup>538</sup> a figure notably short of the 4,000 or 6,000 bodies mentioned by Pilunov.

#### 6.7.6. Pilunov’s Claimed Cremation Technique

Turning back to the witness’s account, one should first of all note that his description of the cremation contraption is a little unusual, to say the least. Document II.6.8. reproduces Pilunov’s drawing. On the left is Pilunov’s diagram of the “furnace,” with inclined lateral planes (*skosy*), 0.5 meters in length, represented by the eight external rectangles. The image to the right is the vertical Section A-A. This is a system of four intersecting ditches, 2 meters apart, 1 meter deep and wide, 7 to 8 meters long. The ditches, except for the inclined planes which served to supply air for the combustion, were covered with tree trunks, boards or sticks, forming a base upon which a layer of firewood, pitch and coal was placed, then a layer of bodies, then another layer of fuel and then another one of bodies, and so on, until it reached 20 superimposed layers to a height of 8 to 10 meters. The “furnace” covered a total surface area of some (7 m × 8 m =) 56 m<sup>2</sup>, but the useful surface area was some (6 m<sup>2</sup> × 4 – 2 m<sup>2</sup> =) 22 m<sup>2</sup>, therefore, in practice, a good 34 m<sup>2</sup> remained unused. That the cremations occurred only above the system of ditches is confirmed by the fact that the combustion air flowed “into the construction pits beneath the lower layers of combustible material.” It is clear that such a construction system would have made it practically impossible to stack up 20 layers of fuel and bodies up to 8-10 meters high. Because the base was only 1 meter wide, the stack would inevitably have collapsed well before the height of 8 meters was ever reached, unless the inmates who had to build it had wasted entire

<sup>538</sup> YVA, M 33, File Number JM/20018.

days exactly calculating the weight and equilibrium, but even in this case the equilibrium would have been rather precarious.

Assuming a height of 10 meters, a layer of fuel and bodies would have been  $(10 \div 20 =)$  0.5 meters thick. If the bodies were 15 cm thick, only 35 cm would have remained for the fuel, which is very little – as I have shown in the case of Babi Yar – even if they used pitch and coal in this case, in addition to wood.

Assuming four bodies in ten rows on one square meter of “furnace,” the total number was  $(22 \text{ m}^2 \times 4 \text{ bodies/m}^2 \times 10 \text{ rows} =)$  880 bodies. Since a “furnace” burned for 3-4 days, in the 15 days between 4 and 19 October one could cremate a maximum of  $(15 \div 3 \times 880 =)$  4,400 bodies, while Pilunov mentions the figure of 25,000. The fact that a fifth “furnace” was added on 19 October changes little, because this fifth ditch could have cremated at most as many as each one of the four existing ditches, that is,  $(880 \div 4 =)$  220 bodies in 3-4 days; even if these bodies were cremated on the 19th, the total figure would still be 4,620 as against 25,000.

In fact, the number of bodies cremated in these 15 days would have been even lower, because the above-mentioned 3-4 day period does not include the time required for the preparation of the “furnace”:

The *Kommando*, as we have seen, consisted of 280 inmates. Their subdivision into the various work groups creates additional perplexities. One group of 40 inmates was assigned to exhuming the bodies, while another consisting of 20 inmates was assigned to digging the cremation ditches, and another group of 35 inmates was assigned to chopping wood, while another of 15-20 was ordered to gather and crush the cremation residues. This makes a total of 110-115 inmates. The others, a good 165-170 inmates, were supposed to procure the boards, sticks, coal, pitch and other fuels at Mogilev and in the nearby villages. This is all quite incredible, also because the German surveillance consisted of only 68 policemen – for 280 inmates running all over the area who were not even chained. The inmates had been taken out of prison at Mogilev in 4 trucks, hence  $(280 \div 4 =)$  70 persons per truck, with (almost) all their tools! Hence, to travel to Mogilev and elsewhere in search of fuel, the squad of 165-170 inmates would have had to ride in at least 3 trucks, escorted only by a fraction of the 68 policemen, since the rest of the policemen had to supervise the inmates in the other squads; the group performing the exhumations, consisting of 40 inmates, was controlled by 12 policemen; the group sent to Gomel consisted of 35 inmates, guarded by only 20 policemen. Finally, it is too obvious that 165-170 persons sent to procure various types of fuel in several towns would have been completely out of control; therefore this story cannot be true. All the more so since these inmates were “bearers of the secret,” and the Germans absolutely could not run the risk of their escaping.

On the first day, the squad of 40 inmates engaged in performing the exhumations, including Pilunov, working from dawn to dusk, extracted 4,000 bodies from the mass graves. Between 4 and 19 October, *i.e.*, within 15 days, the *Kom-*

*mando* cremated a total of 25,000 bodies, an average of  $(25,000 \text{ bodies} \div 15 \text{ days} \div 280 \text{ inmates} =) 6$  bodies per day per inmate, but at Gomel, 35 inmates cremated 6,000 bodies in 5 days, an average of  $(6,000 \div 5 \div 35 =) 34$  bodies per inmate. The cremations occurred on two “stacks,” which were “furnaces” equal to the ones used until 19 October, and which therefore required an equal amount of work for their preparation. At this rate, the 280 inmates from the entire *Kommando* were said to have exhumed and cremated the above-mentioned 25,000 bodies in three days. Even if the bodies were “less strongly decomposed,” this fact cannot explain the immense disproportion involved.

Pilunov’s statement is therefore a typical expression of fantastic Soviet propaganda.

### 6.7.7. “Aktion 1005” at Krupki

Waitman Wade Beorn supplies the following information (Beorn, p. 90):

*“Vladimir Baranchik from Krupki recalled in December 1945 that ‘German thugs burned the bodies of killed Jews before retreating. Burnings were carried out with the involvement of arrested Soviet citizens who were brought from [the] prison in Borisov. They were also burnt afterwards. I can’t give you the exact number of bodies burnt, but the number of Jews was about 2,000.’ Margarita Kosenkova remembered that the ‘smell was terrible and the villagers saw (the burning operation) from the roofs of their houses.’ The Red Army entered the town on 28 June 1944. As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, they uncovered the crimes of the ‘fascist occupiers’, including the murder of the Jews of Krupki.”*

Krupki is located on the road leading from Minsk to Orsha, approximately 130 km northeast of Minsk and approximately 90 km northwest of Mogilev. In 1943, this locality was outside the *Generalkommissariat* Byelorussia, in the eastern part of Byelorussia, and was part of the territory assigned to Pilunov’s *Kommando*. This witness, however, makes no mention of this locality; we do not, therefore, know by whom and when these bodies are supposed to have been cremated.

The assertion that the Soviets supposedly discovered the murders at Krupki is without confirmation and is entirely without source references. EM No. 124 of 25 October 1941 mentions this locality under the name “Krupka”:

*“The squad carried out two rather larger operations in Krupka and Kholopenichi. In the first town, 912 Jews were liquidated, and 822 in Kh. Krupka County may therefore be considered Jew-free.”*

Even in this case, the motivation adopted was not racial, but security-related (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 732):

*“The complete liquidation of the Jews in the towns named was necessary to withdraw all support for the partisans and parachutists, who were numerous there, who were assisted by the Jews in every conceivable way.”*

Kholopenichi is located approximately 30 km north of Krupki; the victims were not, therefore, buried at the same site.

Leonid Smilovitsky, in an encyclopedia article on Krupki, writes as follows in this regard (Dean 2012, p. 1693):

*“After the shooting, local Byelorussians were ordered to bury the corpses. According to Anton Krukovsky (born 1883), the bodies of the dead were placed in rows in two pits: one 60 meters long and 3 meters wide (197 by 9.8 feet), the other 15 meters by 3 meters (49 by 9.8 feet) and just over 1 meter (3.3 feet) deep. The corpses were packed almost to the top of the pits.”*

Shortly afterwards, he adds (*ibid.*):

*“In 1943, the Germans, with the help of Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), exhumed the mass grave and burned the corpses. Afterwards, the Soviet POWs were murdered.”*

The theoretical volume of the two mass graves was 225 m<sup>3</sup>, but the effective volume, with a cover layer of 20 cm of soil, was much less, 180 m<sup>3</sup>. Applying the coefficient of 3.5 bodies per cubic meter ascertained earlier, they could have contained approximately 630 bodies.

The reference to the cremation of the bodies is without any reference to the source, which is probably the Baranchik statement. The article in question contains no mention of any inspection of the mass graves by the Soviet investigatory commission.

## 6.8. “Sonderkommando” Macholl in the Białystok General District

### 6.8.1. Spektor and His Polish Source

Spektor writes as follows in this regard (Spektor 1990b, p. 168):

*“At the beginning of May 1944, Harder arrived in Bialystok, with instructions to begin Operation 1005. He instructed SS Captain (Hauptsturmführer) Waldemar Macholl, the commander of the local Sonderkommando 1005. The unit had a few SD-men, 50-60 German policemen from the mobile gendarmerie and 40-50 Jewish prisoners. The prisoners were young men discovered after the liquidation of the ghettos in Bialystok, Grodno and vicinity. At the beginning of the work they were chained by their feet, but when it became obvious that this slowed down the operation, the chains were taken off. In the second half of May 1944 the unit opened between 11 and 16 graves in the area of Augustów, and burned 5000-6000 bodies. They proceeded to Grodno, where they burned 10,000 bodies in two weeks, and then to Skidel, where they burned 4000 bodies in a few days. The unit then returned to Bialystok, where it worked mainly in Grabowka, and burned about 10,000 bodies. Altogether, the unit exhumed between 25,000 and 29,000 bodies. On 13 July 1944 the work was completed, and the prisoners were brought to a pit to be executed. In broad daylight and in the presence of 50 German policemen, 43 Jews tried to escape. Eleven succeeded, and after the war they were witnesses at the trial of Waldemar Macholl.”*

Spektor’s source is a Polish article by Szymon Datner published in 1976, which I will address later, but Datner’s figures are different, in that he assures us that the

result of “Aktion 1005” in the district of Białystok “was the cremation of 29,500-35,000 bodies of murdered Poles, Jews, Byelorussians and Soviet prisoners of war” (Datner 1976, p. 75).

Orthodox Holocaust historians blindly repeat Spektor’s account, but no one wonders which executions resulted in which presumed bodies and which German unit shot them. The following are two examples.

Arad takes up the story with the appropriate variations: Grodno becomes “in the Grodno region” and Skidel becomes “in the region of Skidel and Luna” (Arad 2009, p. 353); but these adjustments are not enough, and he felt constrained to ignore Grabówka. His embarrassment is easily understandable: in all his work, Skidel appears only in this context, and Grabówka and Augustów are never mentioned. This means that the Israeli specialist had not the slightest clue as to any alleged massacre in these localities. As for Grodno, in Chapter 18, headlined “The Killing Actions in Ostland and the Grodno-Volkovysk Region (Białystok General District),” Arad only refers to deportations from Grodno, without mentioning any executions in the city (*ibid.*, pp. 251-258). Thus, in all his discussion of the “*Generalbezirk* [General District] Białystok,” he only speaks of deportations, without mentioning shootings on the spot (Arad 2009, pp. 258-260). For this reason alone, from the orthodox point of view, there did not seem to have been any necessity for the Germans to create any *Sonderkommando* 1005 in the General District of Białystok. Hilberg mentions the killing of approximately 1,000 Jews in the Białystok Ghetto in February 1943 (Hilberg 2003, Vol. 2, p. 541), but refers to a testimony of a certain Avraham Karasik during the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem on 4 May 1961 (State of Israel, Vol. I, p. 468). The source is therefore more than dubious.

Hoffmann, who repeats Macholl’s account in a rather fleeting way (less than three lines), mentions the locality of Augustów, Grodno, Skidel and Grabówka (Hoffmann, p. 379), the last two only in this context, and the other two in a context of executions.

Curilla repeats the account of Waldemar Macholl’s presumed activity, and only in this context does he mention the names Grabówka and Skidel, but not Augustów,<sup>539</sup> perhaps because in that locality only one single execution is attested to, that of 316 persons on 26 June 1941, by the EK Tilsit (*ibid.*, p. 840), mentioned in EM No. 19 dated 11 July 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 102).

Nothing is known of huge executions (on the order of 10,000 victims) at Grodno. EM No. 21 dated 13 July 1941 merely reported: “In Grodno and Lida, only 96 Jews were initially executed during the first few days” (*ibid.*, p. 115). The Activity Report of *Einsatzgruppe* B of 14 July for the period of 23 June to 13 July 1941 mentions Grodno, but without reference to executions (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 19, pp. 54-61).

<sup>539</sup> Curilla 2006, p. 765. Skidel is mentioned four times in the work, but never in connection with executions.

In practice, of the claimed (5,000 to 6,000 + 10,000 + 4,000 + 10,000 =) 29,000 to 30,000 presumed bodies, only (316 + 96 =) 412 are attested to by documents!

### 6.8.2. The Witnesses Simon Amiele and Salman Edelman

Hoffmann refers to the testimonies of Simon Amiele and Salman Edelman published in the infamous Soviet propaganda book *The Black Book*. This is merely a single account titled “The ‘Brenners’ from Bialystok. (The Story of the Workers of Bialystok, Zalman Edelman and Shimon Amiel)” (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, pp. 242-245). I will summarize it now with a few comments.

In August 1943, the Germans selected 43 persons from among the inhabitants of the Bialystok Ghetto, among them the two witnesses who were held in prison until 15 May 1944. They “were put into a ‘death machine’ (something like a gas-sing truck) and were taken in the direction of Augustów” (*ibid.*, p. 242). These inmates were therefore transported in a “gas van”! The witnesses do not explain how they understood that the vehicle was a “death machine.”

Arriving at their destination, they were met by 50 police men – to guard 43 inmates who had, what is more, chains two meters long on their hands and legs! (*ibid.*, pp. 241-243)

The witnesses knew nothing of any *Sonderkommando* 1005, but belonged to it by way of authority (Spektor dixit). And here is their description of their work:

*“When we began to dig the earth, we came upon the corpses at a depth of 15 centimeters. We were ordered to drag these bodies out with hooks and stack them on two-meter-high heaps of wood. The stacking took place in the following fashion: each row of corpses was alternated with a row of wood. (We cut the wood in the forest.) When the height of the bonfire preparation reached three meters, kerosene or gasoline was poured over the wood, inflammatory [incendiary] cartridges were inserted in a few places, and the entire structure was set afire. An hour later it was impossible even to approach the fire, since clothing caught fire at a distance of one meter. The burning of a group of corpses took 12-18 hours. After that the bones were removed from the ashes and were ground to dust in large mortars. Then the ashes were sifted through sieves to discover melted crowns of teeth or the gold or silver objects that the murdered people may have had on their persons. Then the ashes were buried in the same pits from which the bodies had been taken for burning. The Gestapo men ordered that the hills above the pits be leveled and the surface planted with trees and flowers.”* (*ibid.*, p. 243)

The first three graves in the forest near Augustów contained 2,100 bodies, dressed, “in a state of decay,” particularly the upper layers; by contrast, “the skin and fatty tissue were soft and had the appearance of raw white soap” (*ibid.*, pp. 243f.). The technique of extracting the bodies is described as follows (*ibid.*, p. 244):

*“The bodies were dragged out with the aid of hooks attached to ropes. One or two hooks were thrown into the pit and would snag a corpse.”*



From Augustów, the inmates were taken to an area full of villages inhabited mainly by Byelorussians.

*“Near every village was a distinctive hill under which were buried murdered Jews. It was impossible to count those graves. We could bury [sic; burn] 200-300 bodies and bury the ashes in the pits by working from morning till late at night. In the vicinity of Grodno, near Staraya Krepost, we burned several thousand corpses. We burned a particularly large quantity of corpses fourteen kilometers from Bialystok, in the small towns of Novoshilovki and Kidl.” (ibid.)*

The irresistible allure of crude atrocity propaganda is easily perceptible in this account (after the story of the “gas vans” used for transport). Near Białystok, the inmates excavated the bodies of 700 women.

*“The bodies were absolutely naked. The breasts of many of the victims had been cut off and were lying beside them in the pit.” (ibid.)*

### 6.8.3. Szymon Amiel’s 1945 Testimony

Simon Amiele, whose real name was actually Szymon Amiel, was interrogated twice at the end of 1945 by Judge Leon Damulewicz of the District Court of Białystok during the legal proceedings relating to mass executions and mass graves in the territory of Białystok. The first interrogation is dated 12 October 1945:<sup>540</sup>

*“During the German occupation, I was living in the so-called Bialystok ghetto. In the month of October 1942, I was captured during a ‘raid’ by the Jewish militia together with another 20 Jews and taken to Nowosiołek. We traveled in an uncovered truck under surveillance by three SD officers. Upon arriving at our destination, we noticed 5 or 6 filled ditches. We were ordered to take charge of a ditch<sup>[541]</sup> measuring (in meters) 10 x 3 x 2 and were told to finish within 3 hours, that is, from 3 to 6 in the afternoon, and in this period of time we opened the ditch, after which we were taken back to the ghetto and were given 1 kg of bread for our work.”*

The ditches were located in the district of Nowosiołek (Nowosiółki); the witness knew nothing of Grabówka and Baciaczki (Bacieczki). The ghetto was liquidated on 16 October 1943. A group of approximately 30 persons, among them the witness, was sent to the prison at Białystok. The group worked for nine weeks on the construction of an administrative building for the police leader at Markow-szczyzna. On 1 November 1943, Amiel escaped, but after six days he was recaptured and locked up in prison again. He was supposed to be hanged as punishment, but in prison there was a selection among all the Jews, and he was assigned to a group of 40 inmates, supervised by *Hauptsturmführer* Makol (Macholl), for

<sup>540</sup> Record of interrogation of Szymon Amiel dated 12 October 1945. YVA, O.53-94, pp. 7-9.

<sup>541</sup> The original text says: “Nam dano wymiar grobu...”; “wymiar” means “measure,” “dimension,” but this way the phrase does not make much sense; I have therefore used the rarer sense of “administration” (for example, of justice), in the sense that the inmates received the assignment to handle the work in that grave.

construction work. The group was kept in prison for 6 months and was only let out to work.

On 21 November 1943, 20 children from 1 to 12 years of age were transported from the prison toward Grabówka and shot.

The witness remained in prison from August 1943 until mid-May of 1944. In the months of September and October 1943, transports of inmates destined to be shot were often sent to the prison. He counted some 10 transports with at least 70 inmates each.

The following is his account of his exhumation-cremation activity:

*“In mid-May 1944, our group was transported in a big covered truck (the same truck used to transport people on their way to be shot) to Augustów. We were under surveillance by 60 gendarmes armed with automatic rifles and grenades. We were ordered to open the mass graves, pull out the bodies, stack them up, sprinkle them with bitumen and gasoline, and set fire to them. We placed up to 1,000 bodies on a pyre measuring 6 x 7 x 5 meters. At Augustów we burned 5 or 6 pyres of this kind, I don’t remember. After burning the pyres, we had to grind the bones into dust with special tampers and sift the ashes in search of teeth, rings and golden earrings, which were immediately seized by the men of the Gestapo. At Augustów, we opened three big mass graves and one smaller one. The big graves were 15 meters long, the smaller ones 5-6 meters.”*

In the graves were the bodies of Poles, Jews and Soviet soldiers who had been shot, and hundreds of bullets. In one grave, they found more than 100 prostheses; old people and cripples were lying there. Their old age could be inferred from their long beards.

*“We spent 10 or 11 days at Augustów (from 17 May to 28 May 1944). I recall the following fact from this period:”*

An entire Polish family was shot, and the inmates had to place the bodies “on a burning pyre.” The undertaking cannot have been easy, “since clothing caught fire at a distance of one meter.”

*“The bodies were burned in 10 minutes. After cremating the bodies at Augustów, they took us 10 km away, to a place called [illegible name]. I don’t know the place. There we opened 10-12 graves; on average, there were 400 people in each grave. We burned bodies there for perhaps 5 or 6 days.”*

That night, the inmates were taken to Augustów. They were then transferred to Grodno.

*“There, we cremated bodies in 3 or 4 places. The biggest graves were at Fort 9. We cremated some 10,000 bodies in total. From there, we were taken to Skidel and Puszcz, where we cremated the bodies from 4 mass graves of executed residents from 4 villages. There were approximately 1,000 persons in every grave. We were later taken to Białystok, more or less on 12 June 1944. [...]*

*Towards 15 June 1944 we were taken to Nowosiołek. We worked there for 10 days. We opened 18 graves. The graves varied; in one, there were up to 500 persons, in others 300 or even less. All in all we burned 5 or 6 pyres there, with*

*1,000 bodies in each one. There were cases in which, in one place, after setting one pyre aflame, we prepared another one and burned that one down, too. From there, we were taken to the other side of the road, I don't know what the locality was called, but it wasn't far from Białystok. I think it was Baciczki. There, we exhumed, it seems to me, 8 graves, each of which contained some 500-600 bodies. I recall that we prepared 4 pyres, with about 1,000 bodies in each one. We worked for 5 or 6 days, the pyres burned for 2 days, but the preparation and then the bone grinding and burial lasted so long that it took 6 days."*

The second interrogation dates to 22 November 1945.<sup>542</sup> The witness declared that, after concluding the work at Baciczki (Bacieczki), he and the other inmates were taken to Grabówka at the end of June 1944. There, they were divided into groups and every group was assigned the task of opening the graves and arranging the bodies on the pyres.

*"We opened an approximate total of 10 graves and cremated the bodies from 3 large mass graves, including a grave containing several thousand bodies; this grave was very large, the other two were smaller. Apart from these three large mass graves, we burned [the contents of] four smaller ones; there were about 200 people in each one."*

The three remaining graves are not mentioned. The witness then reports on the cremation of the bodies from seven mass graves, including three large ones (one of them contained the bodies of 700 women) and four small ones; the victims were presumably Jews from the Białystok Ghetto.

*"We extracted some 1,500 people from the first grave, and 1,500 from the other two. In all, we cremated about 4,000 bodies from these three large graves. There were around 1,200 bodies in the 4 remaining graves."*

The work at Grabówka was suddenly interrupted on 13 July 1944.

The account published in the *Black Book* and Amiel's two statements are in open mutual contradiction:

The activity at Nowosiołek (opening of a grave measuring 10 m × 3 m × 2 m in 3 hours!) is not mentioned in the account quoted in *The Black Book*.

In mid-May 1944, the squad of inmates consisting of 40 or 43 men and guarded by 50 or 60 policemen, was either taken to Augustów in a "death machine" (*Black Book*) or in the truck used to transport inmates from prison on their way to be shot.

*"The first three pits in the forest near Augustow contained 2,100 bodies"* (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 243), but Amiel and Edelman do not mention any others. However, Amiel asserted that he had opened four mass graves, three large ones (15 meters long) and a small one (5-6 meters long); the exhumed bodies were arranged on five or six pyres consisting of 1,000 bodies each, so that there were four graves and not three, and there were 5,000-6,000 bodies and not 2,100. When the pyre "reached *three meters*, kerosene or gasoline was poured over the wood" (*Black Book*); Amiel, by contrast, declared that the pyres measured 6 m ×

<sup>542</sup> Record of interrogation of Szymon Amiel dated 22 November 1945. YVA, O.53-94, pp. 10f.

7 m × 5 m (hence they were 5 m high, not 3) and that they were ignited with “bitumen” (not kerosene) and gasoline. The squad remained at Augustów for 11 days, from 17 to 28 May. Working from morning until evening, it succeeded in eliminating 200-300 bodies, therefore, for the 5,000-6,000 bodies mentioned above, it would have required  $([5,000 \text{ to } 6,000] \div 300 =)$  16-20 days. But these data are purely fictitious. As I mentioned earlier, the requirement in green wood – “We cut the wood in the forest” – for the cremation of one exhumed corpse, based on the condition of the body, varies from about 250 to about 370 kg, and one worker can cut some 1.35 tons of wood in one day (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 1291 and 1331). Assuming the lowest value, the burning of 1,000 bodies would have required at least 250 tons of green wood, or 1,250-1,500 tons for the five or six pyres. Just cutting this quantity of wood, if the entire squad of 40 or 43 inmates had been assigned to this task, would have required  $([1,250 \text{ to } 1,500 \text{ t} \div 43 \text{ persons} \times 1.35 \text{ t/person/day} =])$  from 21 to 26 days, plus the number of days spent exhuming the bodies, preparing the pyres, plus the combustion time, the time required to crush the bones and sift the ashes, then bury them, level the ground and plant trees and flowers over them (*Sonderkommando 1005* was obviously equipped with a squad of gardeners and landscapers).

The total volume of a pyre was  $(6 \text{ m} \times 7 \text{ m} \times 5 \text{ m} =)$  210 cubic meters. Subtracting a minimum volume of 26 cubic meters of the bodies and assuming an average specific weight of 0.9 for the fresh wood, in addition to a factor of 1.4 per stacked cubic meter, the pyre contained approximately 120 tons of wood, an average of approximately 118 kg of green wood per body: very little, if one considers that the Mokshda Green Cremation System, a true and proper cremation furnace, requires approximately 150 kg of green wood for the cremation of a 70 kg body (*ibid.*, pp. 1227-1230).

With the technique described by Amiel and Edelman, the exhumation would have required a very long time; it was like fishing: tossing “one or two hooks” tied to “ropes” into the uncovered pit, which may or more likely may not have caught a body, and was then extracted this way from the grave!

The claim that the cremation of the bodies of the Polish family shot by the Germans took only 10 minutes, is simply absurd.

Having finished work at Augustów, presumably on 29 May, Amiel’s squad was transferred to an unknown locality 10 km away. There, they opened 10-12 mass graves, each containing 400 bodies, and cremated the 4,000-4,800 bodies in five or six days, or until 3-4 June. This, too, is quite implausible. Amiel and the others then eliminated 10,000 bodies at Grodno and another 4,000 (four graves, each containing 1,000 bodies) at Skidel and Puszczka, and on 12 June they were transferred to Białystok. This work was performed in seven days at most (from 4 to 11 June 1944), which is, again, implausible.

Towards 15 June, Amiel’s squad was transferred to Nowosiołek, where they had already worked before May 1944; within ten days, they opened 18 mass graves and prepared five or six pyres, each containing 1,000 bodies. As in the

preceding case, this work would have required much more time. Then the squad was taken to Baczicki, where it opened eight graves and prepared four pyres, each with 1,000 bodies. The work lasted six days, including four for preparation and two for true and proper cremation. In reality, the squad would have needed  $([4 \times 1,000 \text{ corpses} \times 0.25 \text{ t/corpse}] \div 43 \text{ persons} \times 1.35 \text{ t/person/day} =)$  17 days just to cut the wood.

During his interrogation on 12 October, Amiel declared: "I heard nothing about Grabówka and Baciczki at that time,"<sup>543</sup> but described his squad's work in the first-named locality. On 22 November, perhaps by a prodigious recovery of memory, he spoke of Grabówka, too. Here, at the end of June 1944, Amiel and the other inmates supposedly opened the ten mass graves, including three large ones (with a thousand bodies each), in all no fewer than 6,000 bodies, and four smaller ones, with some 200 bodies each (= 800 bodies total); then another seven graves containing approximately 5,200 bodies. The work was finished on 13 July. The time available was therefore from 26 June to 13 July, 17 days. This task would have been unfeasible as well.

Amiel's chronology is summarized in the following table:

Period	Working days	Locality	Number of bodies exhumed and cremated
17-28 May 1944	10-11	Augustów	5,000-6,000
29 May to 3-4 June	5-6	Locality unknown	4,000-4,800
4-5 to 11 June	7	Grodno	10,000
		Skidel & Puszcza	4,000
12 June	–	Białystok	–
15-25 June	10	Nowosiołek	5,000-6,000
26 June – 13 July	17	Grabówka	12,000
Totals:	49-51		40,000-42,800

Amiel's squad therefore exhumed and cremated at least 40,000 bodies in a maximum of 50 days. Just to cut the necessary wood would have taken  $([40,000 \text{ bodies} \times 0.25 \text{ t/body}] \div 43 \text{ persons} \times 1.35 \text{ t/person/day} =)$  172 days, almost six months!

It should be noted that, according to Datner, Macholl's *Kommando* was divided up into three groups of inmates: "one excavated the graves with shovels, the second extracted the bodies with iron hooks, arranged them on stretchers (*tragi*<sup>[544]</sup>) and (in a hurry) carried them to the stack, the third cut the wood, built the stacks with the trees they had cut down, arranged them on top of the bodies and burned them" (Datner 1976, p. 73). Therefore, only a part of the *Kommando* was even assigned to cut the wood. What is more, the work was performed from six in the morning until six in the evening, with a one-hour break for lunch (*ibid.*), and

<sup>543</sup> Record of interrogation of Szymon Amiel dated 12 October 1945. YVA, O.53-94, p. 7.

<sup>544</sup> This is supposed to be the German term, which is, however, "Tragen."

the inmates wore chains two meters long which weighed twelve kg! (*ibid.*, p. 71) One can therefore easily imagine their working efficiency.

According to Sz. Datner, the *Kommando*'s activities were carried out in the following order:

Augustów – Grodno – Skidel and Łunna – Białystok – Dzikie – Fasty – Nowosiółki – Bacieczki – Grabówka. Document II.6.9. shows the position of these locations.

Grodno is located approximately 95 km southeast of Augustów (by road), while Skidel is approximately 30 km southeast of Grodno, Łunna is approximately 20 km south of Skidel, Białystok is approximately 110 km east of Łunna; Dzikie, Fasty and Bacieczki are three suburbs of Białystok, northwest of the city, and Grabówka is a suburb to the east, and finally, Nowosiółki is located in a wooded area approximately 25 km from Białystok (as the crow flies). *Puszcza* is not the name of a locality; in Polish, it means “forest,” and probably refers to the “*puszcza grodzieńska*,” Grodno Forest, which extends southeast of Grodno towards Skidel. Since the *Kommando* was transferred to Białystok on 12 June, then back to Nowosiółki on the 15th, to work at Dzikie, Fasty and Bacieczki, only two days, the 13th and 14th, were available to them; but it took them five or six days to exhume and cremate 4,000 bodies just at Bacieczki.

#### 6.8.4. Szymon Datner and “Aktion 1005” in the Białystok General District

In the article cited earlier, Datner notes that “the data regarding ‘Aktion 1005’ in the territory of the District of Białystok are scarce, as are archival data and also those contained in publications”; everything that exists in this regard “is the result of a post-war reconstruction in the form of trial materials and the like, for which one advantageous circumstance was the fact that the director responsible for this action in the Białystok District (W. Macholl) ended up in the hands of the Polish authorities and made important statements or written annotations in his own handwriting” (*ibid.*, p. 70).

Datner based himself on the trial proceedings staged by the Poles against Waldemar Macholl (the verdict was handed down on 25 March 1949), yet cites neither the defendant’s “statements” nor his “annotations,” but merely the testimonies of former inmates: Izrael Felder, Abraham Karasik, Mojżesz Gerszuni, Ch. T. Wróbel and Szymon Amiel; nevertheless, the data set forth in his article are practically those supplied by the last named witness. Datner in fact writes of the cremation of 5,000-6,000 bodies at Augustów from 15-17 and the end of May 1943, of 10,000 at Grodno within two weeks, of 4,000 at Skidel and Łunna within a few days, of 5,000-6,000 at Nowosiółki and another two localities within ten days, of 4,000 at Bacieczki within five to six days, of 1,500 (according to Gerszuni) or 5,000 (according to Amiel) at Grabówka, resulting in a total of 29,500-35,000 (*ibid.*, p. 75).

Datner also supplies details as to the cremation technique (*ibid.*, p. 74):

*“While at the camps [at Treblinka, Bełżec and Sobibór] the base of the pyre consisted of grids made of railway rails with layers of bodies placed on top of them, here, this function was carried out by huge tree trunks 6 meters long (the pyre was 6-7 meters wide, and 5-8 meters high [sic!]). A layer of bodies was placed on top of the tree trunks, sprinkled with tar or gasoline, and on top of this another layer of wood and more bodies, etc.”*

He just inflicts another blow to the fairy tale of the cremations with metal grids allegedly excogitated by Blobel and extended to “Aktion 1005.”

It is therefore clear that the presumed activity of *Sonderkommando* 1005 in the district of Białystok is based on contradictory and nonsensical statements, and it is not supported by any documents regarding the number of persons executed.

## 7. “Aktion 1005” in the Baltic Countries

### 7.1. “Aktion 1005” in Lithuania and the “Jäger Report”

The second “Stahlecker Report” lists a total of 143,774 victims for Lithuania by 1 February 1942 (including 136,421 Jews). How many of these bodies were cremated? And how many were found? This subchapter is dedicated to an examination of these questions.

I mentioned earlier the letter sent by the Main Healthcare Administration (medical examiner of Trakai County) to the district commissar Vilnius dated 8 July 1942, and I have examined it in the context of the presumed orders issued by “Aktion 1005.” I will now discuss the specific content of that letter. The letter, signed by Dr. Paskevicius, was directed by the district commissar Vilnius-Land, Wulff. The text is as follows:<sup>545</sup>

*“Re: Burial of corpses and cadavers*

*Dr.Di. /F.*

*Ref.: Ministerial Decree of 30 April 42 - II.c.3186.*

*To the Herr District Commissar Vilnius-Land in Vilnius*

*Answer to the letter of 16 June 1942 as follows:*

*1. Borough of Trakai.*

*In an easterly direction, 2 km. from Trakai, 1 km. from the village of Wornicken, 1 km from the forest, 1 km. from the sea, in a sandy depression, is located a Jewish mass grave, 80 meters long, 4 meters wide and 4 meters deep.*

*2. Borough of Semeliskes.*

*In a northerly direction, 1 km. from Semeliskes am Walde, 50 meters from the road, 2 km. from the Streva River, on a sandy hillock is located a Jewish mass grave 30 meters long. Drains in the direction of Semeliskes.*

*3. Borough of Ziezmariai.*

*1/ In a northerly direction, 3 km. from Ziezmariai, in the area belonging to the village of Trilischken, 1 km. from the Zalsen-Ziezmariai road, on a sandy hillock is located a Jewish mass grave 33 meters long.*

*2/ In a northerly direction, 5 km. from Ziezmariai, 2 km. from the road Kaisiadorys- Ziezmariai, in the Bladukishk Forest is located a Jewish mass grave 30 meters long.*

*The mass graves were strewn with lime and covered with soil in 1941. In the spring of 1942, the graves were uncovered and strewn with chlorinated lime and covered with a 1-m layer of soil and fenced off.*

*Individual graves.*

<sup>545</sup> LVVA, R-613-1-10, pp. 69-69a. Cf. Hoppe/Glass, pp. 623f, Doc. 239.



1. Borough of Kaisiadorys.

1/ In a southern direction, 2 km from Kaisiadorys, on the road Kaisiadorys-Ziezmariai, is located in the forest a shallow grave with 8-10 bodies, covered with a layer of soil up to 1 meter thick.

2/ In the village of Palomene, 12 km. north of Kaisiadorys, on the road Palomene – Zasliai is located a grave with 8-12 bodies.

2. Borough of Zasliai.

In a northerly direction, 1 km. from Zasliai, on the road Zasliai – Gegusien, is located a grave with 15-20 bodies. The grave is covered with a layer of soil up to 1 meter thick.

3. Borough of Rudiskes.

In a northerly direction, 3 km. from Rudiskes, 200 meters from the road Trakai – Rudiskes, in the forest is located a grave with 15-20 bodies. The grave is covered with a layer of soil up to 1 meter thick.

In 1942, I sent a letter to the county chief in Trakai in which I informed him that he ought to order the borough provosts of the Trakai County to bury all the corpses and cadavers not yet buried in the spring.

Furthermore, all graves already in existence were to be inspected and improved.

I further remarked that the borough provosts ought to be instructed as to how to handle cases such as the above in the future.”

The first part of the letter mentions three boroughs: Trakai, Semeliskes and Ziezmariai; the first two formed (and still form) part of Trakai County, while Ziezmariai was part of Kaisiadorys County. It is not clear why Ziezmariai is included in this letter by the medical examiner of Trakai County.

According to the “Jäger Report,” 1,446 Jews were killed at Trakai on 30 September 1941; 962 at Semeliskes on 6 October; and 784 at Rumsiskes and Ziezmariai on 29 August.

In the Trakai area, there was a mass grave measuring 80 m × 4 m × 4 m = 1,280 m<sup>3</sup>, no doubt compatible with the 1,446 victims declared by the “Jäger Report.” The mass grave in the area of Semeliskes was 30 meters long; if, as seems probable, the dimensions of the mass graves were similar to the former in terms of width and depth, the volume of this one would have been 480 m<sup>3</sup>, and thus equally compatible with the 962 victims from the that locality.

At Ziezmariai, there were two mass graves, one 33 meters long, the other 30. In the hypothesis assumed above, the first measured 528 m<sup>3</sup>, and the second 480 m<sup>3</sup>, for a total of 1,008 m<sup>3</sup>. It is hard to understand why two mass graves of such large size were required for the 784 victims from Rumsiskes and Ziezmariai. But then again, they could have been narrower and/or shallower.

At any rate, the above-mentioned data appear to confirm these specific points in the “Jäger Report,” but there are things that do not fit. Above all, in the Borough of Kaisiadorys was located only one single grave with 8-10 bodies in it, while, according to the “Jäger Report,” 1,911 Jews were shot in this locality on

26 August 1941. If the burial of the 1,446 bodies of the victims from Trakai required a mass grave measuring 80 m × 4 m × 4 m, the bodies of the victims from Kaisiadorys would have required an even bigger grave.

The second strange aspect of this matter is the course of events. The locations in question are all very close together: Semeliskes is located approximately 22 km east of Trakai, Kaisiadorys is approximately 33 km northwest of Semeliskes, Rumsiskes is approximately 21 km west of Kaisiadorys; Ziezmariai is approximately 7 km south of Kaisiadorys and approximately 19 km east of Rumsiskes.

In the chronology of the “Jäger Report,” the first locality mentioned is Kaisiadorys (26 August), followed by Rumsiskes-Ziezmariai (28 August), Trakai (30 September) and Semeliskes (6 October). Therefore, it took 41 days to shoot the Jews in these boroughs, which were very close together! Within three consecutive days, any raiding squad which really took its “organizational matters” seriously would have carried out its task without wasting time and fuel.

The executions on 29 August give rise to further perplexity. 784 Jews were shot in these two localities, but, as we have seen, there were two mass graves at Ziezmariai, one 3 km north of the city (near Triliskes), the other 5 km also to the north, not far from the road to Kaisiadorys. It follows that the Jews of Rumsiskes were buried at least 15 km from the city, while, according to the “Jäger Report,” the average distance of the mass graves from the collection point was 4-5 km.

There was also an earlier letter, dated 2 July 1942, which was sent by the “Healthcare Administration of Vilnius County” to the district commissar Vilnius-Land. This letter had as its subject “Order of corpses a cadavers” (sic) and as its reference the “Ministerial Decree of 30 April 42. - II 2 c. 3186, and your letter of 16 June 1942.” The medical examiner of Vilnius County informed the recipient that various mass graves had been found, “after a performed investigation.” He listed these, indicating the position of each:

- 1) In the town of Nemenčine: a grave measuring 50 m × 30 m;
- 2) In the town of Mickūnai: a grave measuring 50 m × 12 m;
- 3) In the town of Rieše: a grave measuring 25 m × 4 m;
- 4) In the town of Jašiūnai: a grave measuring 30 m × 10 m.

The above is followed by this observation:

*“All mass graves are under continual surveillance by the police. In case of need, the graves have been covered with additional soil. There is no risk of epidemics.”*

The letter does not specify the nationality or category of the buried bodies (Jews? POWs? Soviet combat casualties? Civilians?) nor how many of them there were. The most important piece of information concerns Ponary (Paneriai):<sup>546</sup>

*“5) In the borough of Rudamina, in the Paneriai Grove (near the railway station Paneriai), the mass graves were laid out a bit higher on the sandy bend. There are several round-shaped burial sites about 30 meters in circumference. In the event of subsidence, these locations are topped up with earth. The burial locations*

<sup>546</sup> LCVA, R-613-1-10, p. 70.

*are fenced off and under constant guard, and subordinate to the German Security Police."*

The number of graves is not indicated, and it is not specified whether any Jews were buried there.

These documents raise another important question: although the district commissar Vilnius-Land was in possession of all the documentation relating to the location of the mass graves in the territory of his competence, "Kommando 1005," which operated in Lithuania, apart from the Ponary site, never took the slightest pains to clean up the graves listed, which must therefore still exist, and the information in this letter is already sufficient to locate them, although until now this has never been done, as far as we know.

This fact is moreover in strident contradiction to Blobel's declarations. Blobel asserted in his affidavit of 18 June 1947 (NO-3947):

*"Due to the approach of the front, it was not possible to destroy the mass graves caused by the executions of the Einsatzgruppen and located further south and east. Because of this, I drove to Berlin to report, and was then sent to Estonia by Gruppenführer Müller. I gave the same order to Oberführer Dr. Achamer-Pifraeder in Riga as well as Obergruppenführer Jeckeln. To procure fuel,<sup>[547]</sup> I returned to Berlin. The cremation of the corpses began only in May or June 1944. I remember that these cremations took place in the region of Riga and Tallinn. I was present at a number of these cremations in the region around Tallinn, but here the graves were smaller and only contained 20 to 30 bodies. The graves in the region of Tallinn were about 20 or 30 km east of the city, in a swampy area, and I believe that four or five such graves were opened and the bodies burnt."*

This account is extraordinary. Leaving aside the fact that Riga was located in the General Commissariat of Latvia, it is absolutely implausible that Blobel was sent into the General Commissariat of Estonia to begin exhumation-cremation activities there. According to the Stahlecker's Summary Report relating to the period from 16 October 1941 until 31 January 1942, "some 4,500 Jews lived in Estonia at the beginning of 1940." However, "with the advance of German troops, the majority of Jews left the country, together with the Soviet Russian authorities. About 2,000 Jews stayed behind." On 31 January 1942, there were no longer any Jews in Estonia.<sup>548</sup>

Dov Levin asserts that the number of Jews present in Estonia claimed by Stahlecker, approximately 4,500, is correct, but that the Stahlecker Report did not take account of the hundreds of Jews exiled to the interior of the Soviet Union before the start of the war, so that "altogether about 3,500 Jews fled or were evacuated and deported from Estonia, and about one thousand remained under German occupation" (Levin, pp. 273, 283). In reality, he confirms the above-mentioned report, because the "coffin map," headed "Executions carried out by *Einsatzgrup-*

<sup>547</sup> No document exists referring to this.

<sup>548</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 57.

pe A,” attributes 963 victims to Estonia, which was now defined as “free of Jews” (*ibid.*, p. 184).

It is worth noting, *en passant*, that Estonia suffered more under Soviet rule than under German rule. In fact, the Germans arrested 18,893 Estonian citizens, 7,798 of whom (including the Jews and 243 Gypsies) were executed or perished in concentration camps during the three years of German occupation. Adding “all those who perished while fighting in the Red Army, Finnish army, German army and the units,” we arrive at 32,000 victims, but “the human losses of Estonia caused by the repressive measures of the first Soviet occupation [1940/41] totals 48,000, according to the latest information” (Estonian State..., pp. 16, 19).

After the *Generalkommissariat* Estonia was declared “free of Jews,” Estonia started receiving thousands of Jews during the second half of 1942. A transport of 1,000 Jews arrived at Raasiku from Theresienstadt at the beginning of September 1942 (Kárný, Vol. I, p. 66; the transport had departed on 1 September), another transport from Frankfurt upon Main and Berlin carrying 1,049 Jews arrived at the end of the same month (Weiss-Wendt 2009, p. 233). Furthermore, 500 French Jews from Transport No. 73 of 15 May 1944 were diverted to Tallinn,<sup>549</sup> while at least 12,309 Jews in seven transports (four from Vilnius,<sup>550</sup> two from Kaunas and one from Kaiserwald) were transferred to camps in Estonia in 1943 (Weiss-Wendt 2009, p. 321).

A letter from the *Baltische Öl Gesellschaft* (Baltic Oil Corporation) dated 2 June 1944 addressed to the “Labor [Deployment] Office Baltöl of the GBA<sup>[551]</sup> in Kiviöli” bearing the subject “Deployment of Hungarian Jews” sets forth the labor project for 2,310 Jews and 240 Jewesses.<sup>552</sup> The “Memo on [the] Conference at the Labor Deployment Office of the GBA in Kiviöli on 26 June 44,” written the day after, states under Point 2, “Jewish inmates”:<sup>553</sup>

*“An exchange of the inmates present for POWs is no longer an option. – Additional inmates from Hungary have... been rejected due to poor performance caused by insufficient supervision.”*

According to Ruth Bettina Birn, 500 Jewesses from Hungary arrived in Estonia in June 1944 (Birn, fn 16, p. 144).

According to orthodox Holocaust historiography, the majority of the Jews deported from Theresienstadt and Germany to Raasiku in 1942 were either shot immediately upon arrival or later (French Jews at Tallinn), but the others were distributed through the transit camp of Vaivara to various Estonian labor camps. The above-mentioned Jews amounted to at least 15,000 persons. As noted by Arad, between 8,000 and 9,000 Jews were evacuated to Stutthof from Estonia start-

<sup>549</sup> Klarsfeld (unpaginated), comment on “Convoy No. 73 dated 15 May 1944.”

<sup>550</sup> Arad asserts that 7,130 Jews were deported to Estonia from the local ghetto between 6 August and 5 September 1945 (Arad 1982, p. 420).

<sup>551</sup> *Generalbevollmächtigten für den Arbeitseinsatz* = Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment.

<sup>552</sup> ERA, R-187-1-33, p. 58.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

ing in April 1944 (Arad 2009, p. 331), therefore, the maximum number of bodies present in the mass graves of the General Commissariat Estland was 8,000.

The above-mentioned “coffin map” for the General Commissariat supplies a total of 35,238 victims and a total of 136,421 for the General Commissariat of Lithuania, as has already been said.

Can anyone seriously believe that Müller, pressed hard by the Red Army, would have given priority to the exhumation-cremation of the presumed 8,000 bodies from Estonia, if there were 136,421 to be destroyed in nearby Lithuania?

The conclusion is that either Müller was a perfect imbecile or that Blobel told quite an implausible story.

Following the assertion which I quoted earlier, Blobel made no mention of Latvia and Lithuania, and closed his sworn statement as follows (NO-3947):

*“According to orders, my tasks should have extended across the entire area of the Einsatzgruppen, but due to the withdrawal from Russia I was unable to carry out my order completely.”*

## 7.2. Riga and Latvia

As noted earlier, the RSHA initially had not anticipated any *Sonderkommando* 1005 for the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. To carry out the work of exhumation and cremation, *Sonderkommando* 1005 B was reactivated. Orthodox Holocaust historiography knows practically nothing about any of this. Spektor limits himself to mentioning Jeckeln’s statements during his trial at Riga in 1946, but supplies no information on exhumation-cremation activity (Spektor 1990b, p. 168), which is quite understandable, because his source, in turn, knew nothing about it either. In his interrogation on 14-15 December 1945 by Major Tsvetayev of the NKVD, Jeckeln stated:<sup>554</sup>

*“In January 1944, the Gestapo staff member Blobel from Berlin visited me in Riga and said that he had personally received a secret order from Himmler to destroy all Jewish corpses in the occupied territories by burning. Blobel said that this is a very serious task, and that all who belong to this Kommando are loyal people responsible for maintaining secrecy. I told Blobel where the bodies of the Jewish corpses from the Riga Ghetto were, and asked how the bodies will be destroyed? Blobel said that bodies are exhumed and stacked up in piles. One row of bodies, the other wood, etc. The piles are drenched with fuel and set on fire. Such a process lasts until no traces are left of the human corpses. This task was so secret that the Kommando was even referred to by a number, 1189.*

[Question:] *Did Blobel carry out Himmler’s order?*

[Answer:] *Yes, he started to carry it out. To this end, Jews from several camps were used who exhumed the bodies. The Jews were shot afterwards and set on fire*

<sup>554</sup> “Ausforschungsprotokoll des Verhafteten Friedrich Jeckeln, Riga, 14. December 1945,” in: Christoforow *et al.*, pp. 354f.

*with the other corpses. No one, not even the Higher SS and SD leaders, could come to these sites without a written certificate from Blobel."*

These statements blatantly contradict those of Blobel quoted earlier, since Blobel said that they operated only in Estonia and that he had transmitted Müller's order also to Jeckeln, who was therefore supposed to provide personnel for the exhumation-cremation.

It should also be noted that the made-up designation "Kommando 1189" can hardly be explained on the basis of any confusion with "Kommando 1005," and it is not by chance that Krausnick and Wilhelm omitted this in the passage of Jeckeln's interrogation they quoted (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 569).

Hoffmann dedicates a few pages to this question, but essentially without saying anything (Hoffmann, pp. 127-133), limiting himself to summarizing the verdict of the trial against Hans Friedrich Sohns, Fritz Otto Karl Zietlow, Walter Ernst Helfsgott and Fritz Karl Kirstein. The verdict of the Stuttgart District Court of 13 March 1969 dedicates the paragraph headed "Deployment of Kommando 1005 B in the Riga Area under the leadership of the defendant Helfsgott" to this question (Rüter/Mildt, pp. 729-732).

After the furlough period spent at Zakopane and Krinica, *Sonderkommando* 1005 B met at Lvov, awaiting new orders. In the first week of April 1944, the unit, commanded by Helfsgott, who had in the meantime been promoted to SS *Obersturmführer*, was transferred to Kattowitz and on 9 April from there to Riga. Helfsgott found lodgings in the labor education camp of Salaspils for a few weeks, until he went into action in the wooded territory east (southeast) of Riga, that is, Rumbula. Apart from this scanty information, the verdict says nothing at all. Hoffmann comments as follows:

*"In the Stuttgart Trial of Sohns and others, the judges were, however, unable to determine with exactitude the duration of the elimination of traces in the Rumbula Forest and the number of bodies cremated there."* (Hoffmann, p. 132)

The term "exactitude" is an excessive characterization, because the verdict in fact supplies no such facts at all.

At Rumbula, as Hoffmann claims, 13,000-15,000 bodies were buried on 30 November 1941, and 10,000-12,000 on 8 December (*ibid.*, pp. 131f.), for a minimum total of 23,000.

Angrick and Klein dedicate a few pages to the activity of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B at Rumbula, but add nothing essential; neither do they say anything about the number of mass graves and the number of bodies exhumed and cremated (Angrick/Klein, pp. 405-407).

Gerhard Adametz recalled that "Detachment 1005 b" met at Lvov towards mid-April 1944, and then moved to Kattowitz, where it remained for three days, and was then transferred to Riga. With regard to this location, he declared:

*"We from Detachment 1005 b were quartered in a barracks, in a labor education camp, about 18 km from Riga. The work was begun there with about 50-60 inmates. The work there consisted of exhuming and burning bodies (about 12-*

20,000), of men, women and children of all ages. These bodies lay there in 6-8 mass graves, about 8 km from Riga, and about 100 m from the road Riga-Daugavpils. [...] The work at this location began about the end of April 1944, continued in May and ended around the beginning of June 1944.

*The working method, how the bodies were burned, was the same as before, except that here, we burned mostly 2 piles at the same time.*"

The 50-60 labor inmates were killed in early June 1944 (USSR-80, pp. 10f.).

The verdict of the above-mentioned trial also dwelt upon the activity of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B in the Bikernieki Forest (Rüter/Mildt, p. 733):

*"Around mid-May 1944, the Kommando moved into the hut camp which had been set up only a few kilometers east of Riga. Sonderkommando 1005 B 'cleaned up' at least two large mass graves with at least 20,000 bodies in the Bikernieki Forest, over the following months, until about mid-September 1944. Of the number of bodies eliminated, Helfsgott notified the KdS, Dr. Lange, weekly in so-called 'wood reports.' Apart from that, the work went on in the usual manner. For that, two groups of at least 30 Jewish inmates from a camp – possibly the Kaiserwald Concentration Camp – were employed, one after the other. The first group might have consisted of at least 30 prisoners who had to participate in the activities of the preceding group."*

Document II.7.1. shows the position of the localities in question.

Since it is presumed that *Sonderkommando* 1005 B had already accomplished its mission at Rumbula before proceeding on to Bikernieki, it follows that it eliminated at least 23,000 bodies within a month (mid-April to mid-May), but it took four months, from mid-May until mid-September, to eliminate 20,000 bodies at Bikernieki!

Adametz reports in this regard:

*"We from Detachment 1005 b, were then ordered to go to some newly built barracks that were about 250 m away from 6 or 7 mass graves. These [graves] were located about 4 km from the edge of the city of Riga, in the Bikernieki Forest. About 10,000-12,000 bodies were located there. A new detachment of 50-60 inmates was brought there by the SD, and the work (excavation and burning of bodies) was begun in the same way as described before, in mid-June, and ended at the end of June [sic; recte: July] 1944. I believe that the front was about 300 km away at that time."*

The inmates were killed at the end of July:

*"We from Detachment 1005 b were then ordered to go to another site in the Bikernieki Forest, where there were 7-8 other mass graves. Here were also about 10-20,000 bodies, smaller and bigger ones, perhaps of men, women and children. The work of excavating and burning corpses was begun about the start of August 1944 and ended about mid-September 1944."*

After the operations had been finished, the inmates were shot, and "Detachment 1005 b" embarked at Riga with destination Danzig (USSR-80, p. 11).

In these three sites, therefore, between a minimum of 32,000 and a maximum of 52,000 bodies were exhumed and cremated.

As regards the mass graves in this locality, the witness Hermann Heymann declared that “in the period from the end of February until June or August 1942,” at Bikernieki, there were “10 pits filled with corpses” (Angrick/Klein, p. 321). As for the number of persons killed and buried at Bikernieki, Hoffmann asserts that the number is not known, but mentions that the Soviet propaganda figure is 46,500 (Hoffmann, p. 134).

But one may very much doubt even the lowest figure of 20,000. Arad mentions Bikernieki one single time, in this context (Arad 2009, p. 148):

*“In Riga, thousands of Jewish men were snatched off the streets and out of their homes; they were taken in groups to the nearby Bikernieki forest and shot. By the end of July 1941, some 4,700 men had been murdered.”*

It is a fact that EM No. 24 dated 16 July 1941 asserts that 2,700 Jews had been killed at Riga as of that time, including 400 in one pogrom (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 130), and until the end of November, small-scale executions of a few hundred persons were recorded.

Angrick and Klein moreover mention a mass shooting said to have taken place on 5 February 1942, which is not, however, documented; they mention witnesses who estimate the number of victims at between 800 and 1,500 (Angrick/Klein, p. 224). Therefore, even the figure of 20,000 bodies exhumed and cremated is doubtlessly much exaggerated.

From the orthodox point of view, one cannot seriously believe that *Sonderkommando* 1005 B was in operation along the southeast periphery and east of Riga for five months, exhuming and cremating at least 43,000 bodies, without anyone in the city realizing this. It is not true, in fact, that eyewitness reports exist, or reports from the various resistance movements, on the persistent stench and smoke which must have afflicted the city for this long period of time.

The only known document is a letter from the head of the 4th District to the commandant of an outpost at Jekabpils dated 17 May 1944, which says in Point 13:<sup>555</sup>

*“Among the public have appeared rumors that the Germans in secret are excavating the Jewish ‘E’ site and are removing corpses for burning. This also happens near Riga.”*

Jekabpils is located approximately 120 km southeast of Riga as the crow flies; nothing is known of exhumation-cremation in this locality, and these rumors are not confirmed by any documents or testimony.

Another problem is that of wood procurement. The cremation of 43,000 bodies would have required approximately (43,000 corpses × 0.25 t/corpse =) 10,750 tons of green wood. The situation at the time in Riga and in all of Latvia, however, was not very prosperous. A “Headquarters Special Order” from the “Local

<sup>555</sup> LVVA, P-252-1-44, p. 89.



Wehrmacht Headquarters Riga” dated 16 June 1944 bearing the subject “Supply with Heating Material 1944/45” forwarded the order by the *Kommandant* of the Security Region Latvia that all units of the *Wehrmacht*, with a few exceptions, had to “cut their own firewood.” Major General and *Kommandant* Ruff, who signed the document, issued the following detailed orders in this regard:<sup>556</sup>

### “2.) Logging

*It does not appear practicable for every unit and agency to log their own wood requirements independently. At least the small users must be pooled together into logging squads professionally supervised by trained forestry personnel and equipped with the necessary working equipment and power saws.*

*The local Wehrmacht headquarters has been assigned to form such logging squads for the Riga garrison. Those units and agencies which do not log their own wood, but rather wish to participate in pooled logging squads, report their anticipated logging totals, and the numbers of soldiers, volunteers, POWs and other manpower to be deployed for this by 25 June to the 4th Detachment of the L.W.H. When calculating the necessary workforce, it is to be assumed that one soldier or volunteer can prepare 1.5-2 cubic meters per day, a POW or other workers 1 cubic meter, and for now that the logging must be carried out by the end of September. For this, one week is to be considered to consist of 5 full working days.*

*Logging sites favorably located for hauling off the wood are to be selected with the approval of the forestry administration. Quantities up to 200 cubic meters can be released for logging by the chief forest ranger’s office based on an order from a billeting administration office (see 3). Any quantities in excess will require the approval of the general commissar in Riga, FoHo [Logging] Division. Applications for this are to be filed with the headquarters of the Security Region Latvia via the billeting administration office in charge. In urgent cases, application by phone directly with the Kommandatur Latvia suffices.*

### 3.) Release

*Chief foresters are instructed to release prepared firewood and wood for self-logging only based on an order from the billeting administration office [...].”*

These extremely detailed restrictions could not have been evaded by *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, and supplying almost 11,000 tons of wood would have left obvious traces in the documents, particularly without specifying what it was needed for. *Sonderkommando* 1005 B would therefore have instituted its own logging unit of inmates, and after requesting the related permits, should have sent them to gather wood.

The volume unit used in the original German text – “rm” – stands for “*Raummeter*,” “stacked cubic metre,” a unit of measurement which, as has been stated, would correspond to approximately 1/1.4 cubic meters of solid wood. Starting with a specific weight of 0.9 for fresh wood (900 kg per 1 solid cubic meter), one *Raummeter* of wood would weigh (900 kg/m<sup>3</sup> ÷ 1.4 =) approximately 640 kg.

<sup>556</sup> LVVA, P-752-2-1, pp. 221-221a.

Prisoners of war and inmates were assigned a production quota of one *Raummeter* per day, therefore, approximately 640 kg per day. It follows that, if all the inmates of *Sonderkommando* 1005 B, assuming the maximum figure of the number mentioned in Holocaust historiography – 60 inmates –, had been sent to gather wood, to reach the quantity of 10,750 metric tons would have required  $(10,750 \text{ t} \div [60 \text{ men} \times 0.640 \text{ t/man/day}] =) 280$  days!

One documentary proof of the extermination is said to consist of a photograph which purportedly shows a mass grave in the Bikernieki Forest (Document II.7.2.). Whoever invented this location did not possess brilliant acuity, since the local graves must have been located in a forest, as shown by the drawing reproduced in Document II.7.3. The “existing mass graves” (“*vorhandene Massengräber*”) are located at the right; the photograph in question, by contrast, shows only one tree, standing out alone on the horizon.

What is more, the Yad Vashem photographic archive registers this same photograph with the following caption:

*“Bobruisk, Belorussia. Burial of corpses in a mass grave, probably of Soviet POWs in Dulag 131, winter 1941.”* (see Subchapter 8.5)

The Soviets, as usual, are distinguished by the crudity of their propaganda.

In a report dated 12 December 1944, the Soviet forensic commission which operated at Riga listed the number of victims buried in six sites:

1. Bikernieki forest:	46,500
2. Rumbula forest:	38,000
3. Dreylinsky forest (Dreiliņu mežs):	13,100
4. Škirotava (Šķirotava) Station: <sup>557</sup>	450
5. Bišu-Mujža [?]:	4,650
6. Rope works:	13,900

Total: 116,600

From 24 November until 6 December 1944, the Commission examined 10 burial sites: Bikernieki, Salaspils (camp and site near the cemetery), new and old Jewish cemetery, Bišu-Mujža, tank barracks, Ziepnieku Kalns, Rumbula and Dreylinsky. 549 bodies were exhumed at these locations.<sup>558</sup> This means 549 (presumably) real bodies as against 116,600 claimed ones!

There is also a list of these mass graves, presumably discovered at Riga, city and district, with an indication of dimensions and surface area<sup>559</sup> (I have added the presumed number of bodies in the last column):

<sup>557</sup> Railway freight yard, Riga.

<sup>558</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-35, pp. 28-28a.

<sup>559</sup> “Perechen” (List), undated. LVVA, P-132-30-35, pp. 200-202.

Location	# of graves	Total surface area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	# of bodies
Bikernieki	55	2804.85	46,500
Salaspils	33	2648	
Salaspils	9	3043	
New Jewish cemetery	3	1026	
Ziepnieku kalns	18	1687	
Ziepnieku kalns	1	1	
Bišu-Mujža [?]	3	272	4,650
Rumbula	12	1350	38,000
Dreylinsky	3	220	13,100
Škirotava km 6	1	16	
Škirotava km 9	1	16	
Prison	1	198	
Mežu-park	4	65	

The depths of the graves are not indicated, but the disproportion is very obvious:

$46,500 \div 2804.85 = 16.5$  bodies per square meter of grave

$38,000 \div 1,350 = 28.1$  bodies per square meter of grave

$4,650 \div 272 = 17.1$  bodies per square meter of grave

$13,100 \div 220 = 59.5$  bodies per square meter of grave

The first 43 graves in the Bikernieki Forest were depicted by the Soviets in a detailed map on a scale of 1,500.<sup>560</sup> This map represents so-called “Site B” (the southwestern section of the forest), which allegedly contains the bodies of the Jews deported from the Reich and killed in 1942. “Site A” (the northwest section), consisted of the remaining 12 graves, in which the Jews from Riga killed in 1941 are said to lie buried. It is not clear how all this can be reconciled with the current orthodox Holocaust narrative (Document II.7.3.).

There is also the possibility that some of the graves contained bodies killed by the NKVD, or the Soviet secret police. A note from the department of Health in Riga dated August 1941 revealed that “a few graves completely filled with corpses and one empty grave” had been found in the Bikernieki Forest and that it remained to be found out how many corpses were in them.”<sup>561</sup> Although 4,700 Jews were shot at Bikernieki by the Germans since the end of July 1941, as asserted by Arad, it is quite implausible that the above-mentioned note refers to the “discovery” of the related mass graves a few weeks afterwards; the context clearly shows that the bodies were of persons killed and buried by the Soviets.

An undated list titled “Summary Information on the Victims of German-Fascist Crimes” and relating to Latvia reports the number of victims of 24 districts: 313,798 “peaceful citizens tortured to death,” including 39,831 children. More than half, 170,000, were from Riga.<sup>562</sup>

<sup>560</sup> LVVA, P-132-28-10, p. 1.

<sup>561</sup> LVVA, P-1494-1-276, p. 47.

<sup>562</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-44, pp. 3-3a.

According to the report “Jews in Latvia 1940,” 7,552 Jews were living at Liepaja (Libava) at the time.<sup>563</sup>

The letter from the *Generalkommissar* in Riga to the Reich Commissariate for the East dated 20 October 1941 said that “there are around 5,500 Jews in the entire Kurzeme (Courland) region,” for whom a ghetto was being set up at Liepaja.<sup>564</sup> On 20 November 1941, the *Generalkommissar* in Riga sent the Reich Commissar for the East a letter bearing the subject “Monthly Report on Formation of Ghettos in Jewish Labor Camps, Labor Deployment and Handling of the Jews,” in which he informed him that there were 3,890 Jews at Liepaja.<sup>565</sup> The number of the Jews killed between these two dates was approximately 100 (see below); the fate of the 1,500 Jews missing is unknown.

The so-called second Stahlecker Report states that “2,350 Jews were... executed in Liepaja in mid-December 1941,” 300 of which were from the local ghetto.<sup>566</sup> But the “War Diary No. 1 of the SS and Police Garrison Leader Libau (Liepaja),” which extends from 20 September 1941 to 30 November 1943, contains the following entry:<sup>567</sup>

*“15 Dec. 1941. On 15 Dec. 41, one member of the Wehrmacht was shot by unknown perpetrators at the naval base. Start of Jewish operation. On the same day, 270 were shot on the beach at Liepaja behind the naval base terrain.*

*3 members of Wehrmacht arrested for closer relations with Jewesses.*

*16 Dec. 1941. Continuation of the Jewish operation.*

*Transfer of the concentration camp from Liepaja to Frauenburg.*

*Arrest of 26 members of Jewish organizations.*

*Confiscation of 425 kg meat and 40 kg bacon by price-control agents.*

*17 Dec. 1941. End of the Jewish operation. A total of 2,749 Jews were shot. Courland is therefore free of Jews, except for about 350 Jewish artisans needed for urgent work projects.”*

The “Situation Report of the SS and Police *Standartenführer*” at Liepaja dated 3 January 1942 agrees with this figure, saying:<sup>568</sup>

*“2,772 persons were executed in Liepaja between 14 and 16 Dec. 41, namely 23 Communists and 2,749 Jews. The total number of Jews still living here can only be given after a registration to be carried out soon.”*

The source for these data seems to be the report from the Libau (Liepaja) branch office of the Security Police dated 3 November 1941. However, the figures in it are inexplicably slightly different (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 574):

<sup>563</sup> LVVA, P-1026-1-3, p. 213.

<sup>564</sup> GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 46.

<sup>565</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-19, p. 21.

<sup>566</sup> RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 59.

<sup>567</sup> LVVA, P-83-1-21, p. 23b. Transcript in: Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 572. Written erroneously here as 2746 instead of 2749.

<sup>568</sup> LVVA, P-83-1-22, p. 59.

*“2,754 persons were executed in Liepaja between 14.-16.12.41, namely 23 Communists and 2,731 Jews. The total number of Jews still living here can only be given after a registration to be carried out soon at the police stations.”*

The “War Diary No. 1” mentioned earlier records 3,218 Jews shot by 1 February 1942; since there were 3,890 Jews in Liepaja on 20 November 1941, it follows that there were 672 survivors (3,890 – 3,218 =), not 300 or 350.

A report attributed to *Gebietskommissar* of Liepaja Walter Alnor, an undated document without letterhead and without signature, supplies no additional information.<sup>569</sup>

*“2,700 Jews were shot in Liepaja between 14 and 17 December. In the other towns in the county, for example, in Ventspils, comprehensive shootings took place. These were mainly women and children. The implementation of the shootings, which went on for days within the territory of the town, namely on the grounds of the naval base, caused great excitement among the population, as all sides confirmed to me. There can be no doubt that the German reputation has suffered considerably as a result. It has been pointed out to me repeatedly that women and children and infants were shot in a nearly naked condition, which hardly differs from the Soviet methods. The view is held among naval circles that the shootings were taking place by order of the Reichskommissar, who intended to inform the Führer of a Jew-free country on 1 January.*

*Extensive shootings are once again taking place at the present time, again causing considerable unrest. It is incomprehensible to me why this cruel method of execution is being used. During the December shootings, about 2,800 people were thrown into a single mass grave measuring 100 meters in length, 3 in width and 3 m deep. The shootings took place without the presence of a doctor and officer, so that in two cases [presumably] dead shooting victims were able to get out of the grave and into the city by night dressed in a shirt.”*

The Jews shot at Liepaja were buried at Šķēde, a locality located approximately 10 km north of Liepaja (Libava). This site was the object of an investigation by a Soviet commission which drew up an “File” dated 10 June 1945. Their conclusions were:<sup>570</sup>

*“During the inspection of the location, it was ascertained by us that, as many witnesses also testified, mass graves were actually located there with peaceful citizens of the city of Liepaja [Libava] exterminated by the Germans. 50 meters from the sea, all in all 11 mass graves with the following dimensions were found:*

*Grave No. 1 – 50 meters in length and 4 meters wide*

*Grave No. 2 – 265 “ “ 8 “ “*

*Grave No. 3 – 25 “ “ 15 “ “*

*Grave No. 4 – 50 “ “ 10 “ “*

*The remaining 7 graves measured 70 meters in length and 5 in width.*

<sup>569</sup> LVVA, P-69-1a-17, p. 425.

<sup>570</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-22, p. 24.

*On the surface of the above-mentioned graves were found a large quantity of human bones, shreds of clothes, and shoes reduced to dust, things testifying to the fact that the shootings were carried out at the beginning of the occupation of the city of Liepaja.*

*Moreover, near the trigonometry tower, in the pine forest on the left side of the road, an isolated grave was discovered with a total surface area of 35 square meters.”*

Another “File” with the same date, also regarding the mass graves of the “peaceful citizens” killed at “Liepaja” by the “German-fascist invaders,” says that the site measured 2,000 square meters and contained three graves measuring 70 m × 2 m and 50 m × 2 m.<sup>571</sup> Another, later “File” of 30 June 1945 lists the four above-mentioned graves and indicates the depth: two meters for all of them. The other seven graves measured 7 m (probably an error for “70”) × 5 m × 2 m.

The report confirms the presence of a grave measuring 35 square meters near the trigonometry tower.<sup>572</sup>

According to the Walter Alnor report mentioned earlier, the approximately 2,800 Jews killed at Liepaja between 15 and 17 December 1941 were buried in one single grave measuring 100 m × 3 m × 3 m (= 900 cubic meters, approximately three bodies per cubic meter), but strangely, none of the graves allegedly located by the Soviets possessed even approximately similar dimensions. Not only that, but the 11 graves mentioned above had a total volume of 11,290 cubic meters, which would mean that they should have been capable of accommodating approximately (11,290 m<sup>3</sup> × 3 bodies/m<sup>3</sup> =) 33,870 bodies! But the most surprising thing is that no grave was opened and not a single body was exhumed.

Which bodies were the 11,290 cubic meters of mass grave supposed to contain? The above-mentioned “war diary” lists all the executions carried out over the period between 20 September 1941 and 30 November 1943. The following is a reproduction of the table (dates in d/m/y format):

Date [d/m/y]	Jews	Non-Jews	Date [d/m/y]	Jews	non-Jews
22/9/1941	61		11/10/1941	67	6*
24/9/1941	37		1/11/1941	123**	
25/9/1941	123		6/11/1941	2	2
26/9/1941	137*		10/11/1941	30	26
30/9/1941	21		15-17/12/1941	2,746	
3/10/1941	37		2/5/1942	40	
4/10/1941	18	2	21/5/1942		19
8/10/1941	36				

\* Ventspils; \*\* Priekule/Weinoden

The total number of persons killed at Liepaja was therefore 3,267 (including 3,218 Jews), less than 10% of the presumed content of the mass graves allegedly

<sup>571</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-22, p. 27.

<sup>572</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-22, p. 20.

discovered by the Soviets. It does not appear that any bodies were ever exhumed from these mass graves, nor are there any known photographs of the mass graves or bodies.

The Soviet forensic commission which investigated Daugavpils “ascertained” in its report dated 14 November 1944 that over 40,000 “peaceful Soviet citizens” were killed there, a term designating civilians, particularly Jews. Some 3,000 Jews were shot in the district of Srednyaya Pogulyanka (Viduspogulanka) in September-October 1941, after which they were buried in a grave measuring 100 m × 4 m × 3 m. Another 10,000 persons, including 7,000 Jews, had been killed during the month of June. It seems that the Soviets did not locate the mass graves associated with that mass execution. In this connection, the report merely comments:

*“In order to conceal the crime, this location was covered by a thick layer of waste.”*

In the district of Zolotaya Gorka, the Soviets claimed to have discovered 30 mass graves measuring 15-30 meters in length, 3 meters in width, and 2.5-3 meters in depth; 15,000 civilians and POWs were shot here. In another site, eight mass graves were presumably found, one measuring 120 m × 4 m × 2-3 m, five circular mass graves, each 10 meters in diameter and 2-3 meters in depth, plus two more measuring 60 m × 4 m × 3 m, which must have been capable of accommodating the 12,000 persons shot between June and August as well as November 1941. Among the victims were said to have been the elderly, women and children, that is, Jews. At the end, the report refers to future annexes relating to exhumed bodies of civilians and prisoners of war “in the form of 1,027 protocols.”<sup>573</sup> If this is true, then 1,027 exhumed bodies “prove” the burial of 40,000 bodies. Since nothing is known of any “Aktion 1005” at Daugavpils, the bodies of the Jews shot there must have remained in the mass graves, and have never been found or photographed.

Serious doubt about the Soviet procedures is more than permissible, because the “Summary Diagram” relating to the burial site at Srednyaya Pogulyanka contradicts the related description; the diagram only shows two rectangular graves and perhaps another two elliptical ones.<sup>574</sup>

All this documentation relating to the mass graves (forensic reports, diagrams of the mass graves, exhumation records) render even more damning the total absence of photographs, which should have visibly confirmed the alleged Soviet discoveries.

<sup>573</sup> LVVA, P-132-30-13, p. 5.

<sup>574</sup> “Summary diagram of the position of the graves of peaceful citizens shot at Daugavpils during the period of the German occupation (1941-1944).” LVVA, P-132-30-14, p. 16.

### 7.3. Kaunas

#### 7.3.1. A Report by Eleven Escapees

On 26 December 1943, a group of eleven former inmates authored a statement relating to the exhumation-cremation of bodies in the vicinity of Fort IX, Kaunas. According to this, the local Gestapo had recruited 72 persons in late October/early November 1943 to do the work; but eight of them were shot on 13 November, and only 64 remained. The area of the mass graves was fenced off with canvas to block it from sight. The report continues as follows:<sup>575</sup>

*“5. In the course of the work – that is, from 1 November to 25 December (the day of our escape) – 4.5 pits were dug up, each one 100 to 200 meters long, 3 meters wide, and 1.5 meters deep; more than 12,000 bodies of men, women, and children were extracted from them. The bodies were stacked on huge piles of wood about 300 at a time and burned. What was left of the fires (the charcoal and bones) was ground into dust. The dust was mixed in with the soil, so that no trace would remain.*

*6. In order to prevent them from escaping, the workers were chained together while they did their work. Machine gun towers were set up. The guards were armed with submachine guns and pistols.*

*7. Among the 12,000 bodies that were burned, approximately 5,000 were Jews brought from Vienna, Frankfurt-am-Main, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and other German cities; another 150 were Jewish Soviet prisoners of war, and about 7,000 were Jews from Kovno [Kaunas]. The Jews from Germany were shot and buried in their clothing; the rest were forced to strip to their underwear before they were shot.*

*8. The position of the bodies indicated that the people were herded into the pits in groups, forced to lie down, and then were shot. It was evident that many of those who were buried were either lightly wounded or not wounded at all.*

*9. At the time of our escape there were still 9.5 pits left to be dug up. The overseer from the Gestapo estimated that the job would not be finished until 1 February 1944.*

*10. Judging from the fact that there were 12,000 bodies in 4.5 pits and that 9.5 pits remained, it may be assumed that in the area surrounding the Ninth Fort there were approximately 40,000 victims of the savage terror that the Germans inflicted upon the civilian population. Forty thousand is also the figure mentioned in conversations by the representatives of the Gestapo.*

*(Eleven signatures appear at the end of the report.)”*

Hoffmann utilizes this source to the fullest extent (Hoffmann, pp. 347-350), although it is in obvious chronological contradiction to Blobel's own statement, which I have quoted earlier. The remarkable thing is that Hoffmann presents the

<sup>575</sup> Ehrenburg/Grossman 2002, pp. 319f. The document is also reproduced in Arad/Gutman/Margaliot, pp. 473-475.



same declaration a few pages earlier (*ibid.*, p. 330), evidently without noticing the contradiction.

The above-mentioned report is written in the classical style of Soviet propaganda. It states, in summary, that there were 14 enormous mass graves in the vicinity of Fort IX; the four and a half (!) graves which were opened contained 12,000 bodies, with 28,000 bodies in the remaining nine and a half (!) graves, since the total number of deaths was estimated at 40,000.

The “Jäger Report” nevertheless shows that a total of 16,013 persons were shot at Fort IX, so that the estimated total number of victims is incorrect, as is the number of graves. If, then, 12,000 of these approximately 16,000 bodies were exhumed and cremated, this means that the remaining 4,000 should still be there in the mass graves, but until the present time, it does not appear that they have ever been found.

As for the cremation technique, one should note a rather odd remark by the editors of the *Black Book*, who inform us in all seriousness that “in the autumn of 1943, peasants delivered to the fort about five hundred kilograms of firewood, a large quantity of gasoline, and various chemical fuels and explosives” (Ehrenburg/Grossman 2002, p. 318). How the “peasants” could possess “a large quantity of gasoline, and various chemical fuels and explosives” remains an enigma. On the other hand, the quantity of “firewood,” which they certainly possessed, is decidedly ridiculous: 500 kg (!). It is however possible that this is a translation error. Hoffmann, citing the German edition of the *Black Book*, speaks of “500 solid cubic meters” or about 500 tons (Hoffmann, p. 347). This quantity should have been sufficient for the cremation of approximately 2,000 bodies, with a requirement of 250 kg of green wood per body. Regardless of the fact that there is no proof of the actual delivery of this wood, where did the remaining 2,500 tons required for the cremation of the remaining 10,000 bodies come from?

The cremation of the bodies took place simply on “huge piles of wood,” therefore without any metal grill. This system is in open contradiction to the fantasies of certain orthodox Holocaust scholars who attribute to Blobel the invention of “a certain technique for cremating corpses *on the grates*,” a phrase borrowed with extreme nonchalance from an interrogation of Fritz Ismer relating to Chełmno on 1 August 1961, credit for the discovery of which is, however, attributed to the camp *Kommando*, not to Blobel (*ibid.*, p. 81). From here this technique is said to have been extended to the “extermination camps” (although it was never used at Auschwitz) and then to “Aktion 1005,” since Blobel’s presumed task at Chełmno was precisely that of perfecting a cremation technique for the bodies of *Einsatzgruppen* victims.

Every pyre, according to the authors of the report, measured 4 m × 4 m and could contain 300 bodies. This means that, to cremate the 12,000 bodies mentioned above, (12,000 ÷ 300 =) 40 pyres would have been required, or in practice one pyre every day and a half (the operation lasted 55 days). Minus nighttime and

lunchtime, little more than 24 hours remained for every pyre. During this time span, the inmates had to do the following, typically:

- exhume 300 bodies
- procure the wood (in what manner, no one knows)
- prepare the pyre, with wood and bodies
- ignite the pyre and have it burn down
- pulverize the incombustible residues from the bodies
- mix the residues with earth from the soil.

To render this undertaking even more difficult, “the workers were chained together while they did their work”!

The preparation of the pyre, in turn, was entirely implausible. Assuming a requirement of 250 kg of green wood per body, an average specific weight of 0.9 for the wood and a factor of 1.4 for every stacked cubic meter, the volume of the wood would have been  $([250 \text{ kg/body} \times 300 \text{ bodies}] \div 900 \text{ kg/m}^3 \times 1.4 = )$  approximately 117 m<sup>3</sup>; plus another 8 m<sup>3</sup> for the bodies (average weight: 26 kg), the pyre would have been  $(125 \text{ m}^3 \div 16 \text{ m}^2 = )$  almost 8 meters high!

Needless to say, not a single documentary trace remains of this laborious activity.

### 7.3.2. The Witness Alex Faitelson

Alex Faitelson, one of the escapees from Fort IX, who was among the signers of the declaration of 26 December 1943 mentioned earlier, published his memoirs in 1996, in which he narrated the events in the form of a diary. The story, long-winded and confused, interspersed with quotations from books and various other digressions, begins suddenly with a paragraph titled “The Corpse-Burners” which starts with an ellipsis: “... and the Ninth Fort received us into its bloody arms.”<sup>576</sup> Without any chronological reference, he then describes the place of the events, which was called the “battlefield” (pp. 221f.):

*“The earth is muddy. One must dig with a pick-axe and use a shovel or rake to move the earth to the pit. The length of the pit is almost a hundred meters, it is 2.5 meters wide, and some three meters in depth. The ‘battlefield’ occupies an area of approximately 100 by 120 meters, enclosed by a fence three meters high and made of cloth attached to wooden poles. [...] Towards the back, there is a mound of ash taken from the pit which had been worked on by the bulldozer, which lifts off the upper layer of ash from the adjoining pit. From time to time a thick vapor rises from the earth and the smell of rotting flesh pervades the area. That is where the bulldozers reach the level of murdered corpses. Again, it is the same putrid smell that permeates the cells in the sector. A large fire is blazing near the bulldozer. I cannot see anything and the air is filled with the smell of burnt flesh. I sense that something terrible is going on here.”*

<sup>576</sup> Faitelson 1996, p. 220; subsequent page numbers from there unless stated otherwise.

This report of the deployment of a bulldozer, a rather uncommon sight in the German-occupied East during the war, is quite unique. The experience described by the witness should have been the first day at work for the group of inmates locked up in Fort IX of Kaunas, that is, on the basis of the declaration of December 26, 1943, it was 1 November 1943. According to the above quote, however, these inmates already found burning pyres when they arrived. This implies that another group of prisoners had already been in action earlier, of which nothing is known. On the first day, Faitelson and his companions were employed to fill a mass grave whose bodies had already been exhumed, although no one knows by whom (p. 222):

*“Without any doubt, we are filling a pit from which the bodies of murdered Jews were removed. The bulldozer removes the upper layer after the fire seen from afar has cremated the corpses of the murdered Jews taken from their graves. A new and blazing bonfire rages.”*

Hoffmann, however, accepts the dating of the aforementioned declaration and states that the first mass grave was opened on 1 November 1943 (Hoffmann, p. 348). Faitelson’s account does not imply a chronological contradiction, but presupposes that there was already another group involved in exhumation-cremation work that is totally unknown to orthodox Holocaust historiography.

Faitelson’s “diary” describes for the most part and with an exhausting prolixity the silly events inside his cell, including the dialogues, after returning there from work, while only a few lines are dedicated here and there to the work itself.

The first entry of the “diary” referring to events with a date is November 19 (p. 224). For the previous 18 days (1-18 November), no entry appears in the “diary” other than the one mentioned earlier which should refer to the first day.

In the following table I list the dates of the entries in the “diary” until December 24, the day before the prisoners’ escape. The entries mentioning exhumation-cremation activities are rendered in italics:

19 November	25	30	4	<i>13</i>	19
20	25	31	5	15	21
21	27	<i>1 December</i>	8	16	22
22	28	2	10	17	23
23	29	3	11	18	24

This means that, of the 50 days of exhumation-cremation activities which his group of prisoners is said to have carried out, Faitelson talks about it only on four days.

The chapter “Erasing the Traces of Mass Murders” explicitly refers to 27 November:

*“From November 27 until the day of the escape, December 25, 1943, there were 64 prisoners in the fort.”*

This is followed by a listing which almost perfectly corresponds to that of the declaration of December 26, 1943, but that does not mean much, since Faitelson

wrote his book many years later and, as we shall see, he was quite familiar with that declaration. Starting 27 November, 20 inmates were placed in each of the fort's Cells Nos. 3, 6 and 7. The four women were locked up in Cell No. 5. The Germans decided to improve the prisoners' food. Then we read (p. 236):

*“For breakfast, each prisoner received a quarter of a loaf of bread, black coffee, honey substitute, Swiss cheese spread or Norwegian herring. After work at the ‘battlefield,’ they would receive two liters of thick soup with noodles and meat. The better-quality food was one of Paul Blobel’s tactics to spur on the workers and thus do away with the traces of the Nazis’ murders as quickly as possible.”*

It remains unexplained why this happened only on 27 November rather than already at the beginning of this inmate group's activities. On the other hand, Faitelson at this point provides one of the rare concrete descriptions of his activities (pp. 237-239):

*“Work at the ‘battlefield’ was conducted according to the German system whereby each task was given a special name. The bulldozer would remove the upper layer of the clay-like earth. Afterwards, the ‘gravediggers’ would turn up with shovels to uncover the ‘dolls.’ They are followed by the ‘drawers’ who, with the help of long poles with hooks at their ends, would lift the ‘dolls’ from the pits’ surface. At this point, they were awaited by the ‘checkers’, who would look for valuable items among the ‘dolls,’ especially gold, diamonds, jewelry or money. They would extract gold teeth and dentures from their mouths. The items they found were put into a box watched over by a guards officer. After the ‘checkers’ came the ‘porters’ with stretchers, loading two ‘dolls’ on a stretcher and taking them to the site of the conflagration [sic]. A group of ‘firefighters’ headed by the chief firefighting officer dealt with the fire that was being prepared near the pit. It was arranged in layers, a layer of wood and a layer of ‘dolls’ forming a square. A narrow ditch was dug around the fire, into which the fat and fuel from the bodies would drip. The ‘chief firefighter’ would register the number of ‘dolls’ brought to the fire and when he had marked down 300 ‘dolls,’ they would pour fuel on the pile, placing lighters and mines [sic] under the lowest layer of wood. Lighting the fire marked the end of the working day at the ‘battlefield.’*

*The fire would burn throughout the night. On the following day, the ‘grinders’ would crush what remained of the bones on a metal plate with the aid of special mortars used for paving roads, and the ash was scattered to the winds. Forty-two men worked at the ‘battlefield’ burning corpses, twenty were employed doing other jobs in the fort building itself and only two were permitted not to work because of illness.”*

The first thing to note is that Faitelson had obviously misunderstood his book sources when attributing to cadavers the name of “dolls.” This has its origin evidently in Weliczker’s *“Figuren,”* a term purportedly used by the Germans when referring to corpses. But the German equivalent of “doll” is *“Puppe,”* while to the German noun *“Figur”* corresponds to the English noun “figure” (in terms of figurine, not number).

The work of the “checkers” contrasts with Weliczker’s stories and those of other witnesses, and moreover makes little sense: the Jews are said to have been shot naked or half naked after having been deprived of all their possessions, especially “gold, diamonds, jewelry or money.” In addition, the other witnesses claimed that gold teeth were not harvested by checking every single corpse, but they were recovered when the ashes were sieved.

The fire is called “the site of the conflagration,” quite a theatric expression to use, unless Faitelson wanted to allude to the explosion of the “mines” allegedly placed underneath the first layer of wood. But that claim in itself is utterly absurd, for mine explosions would have scattered the firewood and body parts several tens of meters all around instead of lighting a conflagration, let alone incinerating the corpses.

The tale of the “narrow ditch [...] dug around the fire, into which the fat and fuel from the bodies would drip” is a clear echo of similar testimony relating to Auschwitz. That the corpses’ melting fat could somehow flow through the burning wood and embers without catching fire and end up in a “narrow ditch” is even more absurd. And what about the “fuel” allegedly oozing out of the pyre? No doubt it did not stem from the corpses, so it was presumably fuel poured “on the pile”: was it gasoline? Kerosene? Petroleum? Whatever it was, it would have caught fire when poured onto the pyre, just like the body fat, and would not have flowed into any ditch.

Only 42 of the 64 prisoners were carrying out the exhumation-cremation work; 20 were employed in construction work at Fort IX, and two were not working because they were sick. So the ruthless Germans held these two inmates, true “useless eaters,” without shooting them on the first day.

I will return to the pulverizing of cremation residues later.

On 1 December, Faitelson was sent to the “battlefield.” When the “corpse-burners” saw him, they were amazed. It follows from this that Faitelson had not been part of this unit until then. He recounts the events of that day as follows:

*“I was put to work carrying the corpses, that is, the ‘dolls,’ to the fire. With my bare hands, I had to take the dead corpses from the ‘checkers,’ lay them down two by two on the stretcher and take the pile to the fire that was just lit. I had to carry the corpses from two pits: one that was almost empty and the other, which was only at first stage of being emptied. When I approached the grave which was almost empty, I stood there petrified: all the murdered were dressed and they looked as if they were alive, that they had fallen asleep from exhaustion.”*

Among the corpses were those of Viennese Jews; not all had been killed by bullets and some only had injuries. Some corpses were different due to their mouths being open in a desperate attempt to breathe. From this could be inferred that they had been buried alive.

In the second pit, the corpses, dressed only in their underwear, were half-decomposed. These were Jews of Kaunas (p. 242). It was a terrible scene, and it was difficult to separate the bodies (pp. 242f.):

*“With my bare hands, I placed the ‘dolls’ two by two, or parts of them, on the stretcher together with another corpse-burner and brought them to the fire. The ‘dolls’ would slip out of my hands. Their limbs exuded a strange fat, and it was difficult to hold them with my bare hands. Other ‘porters’ had prepared special gloves for this purpose, in order to make it easier for them to perform this ‘work.’*

*Now a new pile is being prepared for burning the ‘dolls.’ On the ground is a layer of square pieces of wood on which we ‘porters’ place the ‘dolls’ we have brought. Nearby stands a ‘firefighter’ supervising the placing of the ‘dolls’ in the proper order. The chief ‘firefighter’ registers in his thick notebook the number of ‘dolls’ heads, for the other parts of their bodies do not interest him. These are the Germans’ instructions.”*

The entry of December 3 states (p. 247):

*“The corpse-burners were returning from work at the ‘battlefield’ and were so weary that they could hardly drag their feet and their shoulders sagged from carrying loads of firewood. They moved slowly, lifting their chained feet with difficulty, physically exhausted, and emotionally broken after another day of suffering. Another day had passed and with it another three hundred Jews who had been murdered. Tomorrow their bones would be ground and together with the ash, scattered over the large field and forgotten.”*

Here we learn that the inmates carried “loads of firewood,” and that the complete elimination of 300 bodies required two days.

Under the date of 13 December, Faitelson says that in Fort IX there was a tunnel that was used to store wood, presumably for the needs of the garrison. There was “a pile of wood,” “bushes,” “branches” and also “two tall trees.” Apparently, this wood was brought by the “corpse-burners” on their return from the “battlefield” (p. 256):

*“When we had collected a sufficient number of branches, we returned to the fort accompanied by a downpour of German curses on the part of the officer. After the return of the corpse-burners from the ‘battlefield’ the police chief repeats his speech. He mentions that a committee headed by a general visited the fort and they expressed their satisfaction with our work. We work better than the crews at Ponar[y]. But we can achieve more. The general decided that we could manage two fires a day, that is, we could burn 600 ‘dolls’ in a day. I realized immediately what their aim was and [he] gave an order to tell the ‘burners’ to demand dry wood and then they would be able to manage two fires per day.*

*Tuesday, December 14. Dry wood could only be found in that tunnel which we hope to use for our new plan of escape. The Chief of Police ordered the corpse-burners to take the wooden logs from the tunnel with them when they go out to work, which meant that the tunnel would be emptied in a short time. The workers took as many as they could. On their return, they were only permitted to take one log. Now there are two fires blazing in the ‘battlefield’ – i.e. 600 ‘dolls.’ The Gestapo is pleased and the police chief rubs his hands triumphantly.”*

So until 13 December a single pyre was built at a time with 300 corpses, fed with green wood; from 14 December onward, two pyres were built. For at least one of them the dry wood piled up in the tunnel was used. Given the late date of this alleged event, it does not significantly affect the calculations I have outlined earlier.

The 42 prisoners were divided into six teams: “gravediggers,” “drawers,” “checkers,” “porters,” “firefighters” and “grinders.” The breakdown is not known; the average is seven for each team, but the “porters,” who worked in pairs, had to be an even number. We immediately notice that Faitelson forgot the “loggers.” That the wood was supplied by local peasants is not only never claimed by him, but is excluded by the fact that the wood cache in the tunnel was supplied by the prisoners, who evidently had to pick up branches in the woods and bring them to Fort IX at the end of their work day. With seven different teams, therefore, each unit would have consisted on average of six inmates.

It is not mentioned how the detainees got to the “battlefield.” This is important for transporting wood to and from the tunnel. The expression “the workers took as many as they could” makes it clear that the prisoners were loading wood onto their shoulders. If everyone carried 50 kg, to get to  $(132 \text{ kg/body} \times 300 \text{ bodies} =) 39,600 \text{ kg}$  necessary to cremate 300 corpses, the 64 prisoners would have had to make  $(39,600 \text{ kg} \div (64 \text{ inmates} \times 50 \text{ kg/inmate}) =) 12$  trips between the tunnel and the “battlefield.”

Since the cremation of 12,000 corpses would have required at least  $(0.25 \text{ t} \times 12,000 =) 3,000$  tons of green wood, if the entire group of prisoners had devoted all its time exclusively to this work, given that their productivity would have been similar to that of PoWs – *i.e.*, according to the “Headquarters Special Order” of 16 June 1944 quoted in the previous chapter:  $1 \text{ m}^3$  per day (see here on p. 607) – they all would have been busy for  $(3,000 \text{ t} \div 64 \text{ inmates} \times 1 \text{ t/inmate} =)$  about 49 days, out of the 55 available. But a potential “logger” unit could have consisted only of some six members. With such a much-smaller workforce, the logging time needed would have increased dramatically.

In this context, as I mentioned earlier, the use of dry wood for an additional pyre maintained between 13 and 24 December would have had a negligible influence.

Faitelson does not provide any data about the results achieved in the operation: no indication of the number of reclaimed pits and the number of cremated corpses. He is also reticent about the declarations of one of his comrades of misfortune, a certain Anatoli Garnik, and without a doubt for good reasons.

This witness had made a declaration already on 3 February 1944, yet it evidently did not satisfied the Soviets. This “confession” (it is unclear of what) consisted of 18 pages and includes details on the exhumation-cremation activity, omitted by Faitelson, who published only the final part of the “confession” (pp. 392-394). On 8 February, a Major Valeri of the Soviet “State Security Services” questioned Garnik. In the pertinent transcript, the aforementioned activity is mentioned only once briefly (p. 395):

*“Q: When you were at the Ninth Fort, why were you always left behind and the newcomers who were brought, were shot?”*

*A: We were left as a group of eleven people. Our work was to bury those who had been shot. This group was always maintained. The Germans did not want to uncover their crimes.*

*Q: You worked digging up the bodies of those who were shot from their graves and despite the strict control and the small number of workers, the Germans tied you in chains. Why did they do this?”*

*A: The Germans tried to keep the work of digging up the bodies and burning them in utter secrecy and in order to prevent anyone from escaping, they would tie us in chains every day from 7 a.m. to 16 hours, at which time they would remove the chains.”*

Hence, the inmates worked only nine hours a day (including a lunch break), which makes the whole operation of exhuming and cremating 12,000 bodies even less likely.

Already these few sentences contain a clear contradiction: while Garnik claims that for the trace-elimination work the Germans left only “a group of eleven people,” Faitelson speaks of a group of 64 inmates. Nor can it be supposed that the witness referred to the group of prisoners in his cell, because Faitelson explicitly states that the 60 male inmates had been divided into three groups of 20 people, each of whom had been assigned a cell.

On 14 February 1944, Garnik was transferred to the headquarters of the Byelorussian partisans with an accompanying letter. The letter referred to the witness’s testimony of 3 February (pp. 396f.):

*“During the interrogation, Garnik gave us some very important information of value to the state. Here is a direct witness who carried out the last orders from Berlin to dig up and burn the corpses of those who were shot and buried in pits at the Ninth Fort, a branch of the Kovno [Kaunas] prison.*

*His evidence reveals the Germans’ method of eradicating the traces of their crimes. The uncovering and burning of their bodies was carried out in utter secrecy. The number of workers executing the work was limited. When the work was at an end, the workers were killed.”*

In spite of these credentials, Garnik was shot by the Soviets as a traitor shortly afterwards (p. 398).

Faitelson reproduced the drawings made by Garnik during his interrogation of 8 February 1944. The first shows a burning pyre with a German beside it writing in a notebook. The other has a wider perspective (see Documents II.7.4f.). In the foreground, we see a burning pyre and another pyre next to it in preparation; on the right is shown a prisoner with a stamper for crushing bone residues. Next to the stack in preparation, an inmate is shown standing in front of a barrel (which can also be seen in the first drawing, perhaps a fuel container). Further back, two inmates carry two corpses on a stretcher. Behind them, an excavator stands out, and the “battlefield” fence is drawn behind it.



This scenario shows a small-scale activity and is compatible with a team consisting of eleven prisoners in total, six of whom are shown at work.

The system of transporting corpses with a stretcher is clearly primitive and inefficient. The crushing of cremation residues was to take place “on a metal plate,” which had to have a very limited surface of a few square meters at best, on which one or two prisoners could operate, so that the drawing reflects well the miniaturized fantasies of the witness.

All in all, these drawings do not correspond to the statements of the other witnesses.

### 7.3.3. The Witnesses Mikhail I. Geltrunk (Gelbtrunk), Makar E. Kurganov and Dmitrii Gelpern (Gelpernas)

The “Report of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Determination and Investigation of the Misdeeds of the German-Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices on the Crimes of the Hitlerite Invaders in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania” cites a brief excerpt from the deposition of Mikhail Ilyich Geltrunk, one of the eleven signatories of the report examined above (*Zverstva...*, p. 24):

*“We exhumed and cremated 600 corpses a day. This was the rule established by the Germans. Every day two large fires burned, into each of which 300 corpses were placed. After the cremation of the corpses, the bones were crushed with metal objects and buried in the ground. Within six weeks, three and a half pits were opened by us, from which 12,000 corpses were taken and cremated; nine and a half pits and a very small pit were left to be opened; no less than 40,000 corpses were in them.”*

Here, the figure of 40,000 does not refer to the total number of victims, calculated with an arithmetical proportion ( $12,000 \div 4.5 \times 9.5 \approx 25,300 + 12,000 \approx 37,300$ , rounded to 40,000), but to the number of corpses still contained in the unopened mass graves. Therefore, the total number of victims would have amounted to roughly 52,000. The Soviets, however, were unsatisfied even with this figure, because they “ascertained” that the total number of victims of Fort IX was 70,000 (*ibid.*, p. 25).

On an unspecified date, but prior to 1959, a certain Mikhal Gelbtrunk, evidently identical with Mikhail I. Geltrunk, made the following statement (Segalson, p. 42):

*“On 28 November 1943, a large guard unit of S.D. men transferred us to the 9th Fort. Here we joined a detachment engaged in exhuming bodies from the Jewish mass graves and burning them. The detachment consisted of 58 Jews, including 10 Jewish Red Army soldiers, who had been in captivity since the first days of the war. They were the remainder at the fort of thousands of prisoners who had been poisoned or even buried alive. Later, another 15 Jewish Red Army soldiers of higher military ranks joined them. They lived as Russians in the prison camp for an extended period of time until they were denounced as Jews. In addition, there were also Jews from the Kaunas Ghetto in this detachment. There were also bap-*

tized Jews among them. There was also a boy from Czechia among them who had been hiding for some time in the surrounding woods. He was called the 'forest man.'

The work of cremating the dead took place under the strict surveillance of SD men. In the morning, when we had to go to work, chains were put on our feet. This impeded the work severely. The SD men 'comforted' us by saying that our end would be the same as that of our brethren we were dealing with then. The victims lay in long pits of 25 meters in length. The hardest work was that of the so-called 'extractors' (Zieher), who had to pull out the corpses, because the bodies were entangled with each other. According to the stories of the first ten prisoners who had been present at all the executions – the Jewish experts there – most of them had been tossed into the graves half alive. The victims had been twisting and turning for a long time in their agony. Not enough soil had been thrown onto the victims, so that screams of pain and shouts for help were heard for a long time. While pulling out the bodies, we also saw that their hands were pressed onto their mouths, as if they had suffocated by a lack of air. The same prisoners told us that it sometimes happened that, on the day after an action, some children had crawled out of the pits, because they had been tossed onto the upper layers of the mass graves, and precisely in the seventh row. They [SD men] had ordered to throw them back into the 'holes' immediately."

In this story, the emphasis of atrocities lies more on the killing of the victims than on the activity of exhumation and cremation, which is relegated to the background. The length of the pits – 25 meters – is in contrast to that claimed by his comrades – 100 or 200 meters – as is the number of prisoners employed – at least 73. In order to describe the mass killings, the witness is forced to introduce the *deus ex machina* of ten Soviet prisoners who had been captured at the beginning of the war and had witnessed *all* the executions, although it is not clear how they could have witnessed them.

On May 12, 1959 another escapee, Makar Eftropevič Kurganov, made a statement that focused on Faitelson. Kurganov had been imprisoned with Faitelson in Fort IX as part of a group of 64 inmates who had fled during the night of 25 to 26 December 1943. On his activities, Kurganov limited himself to saying:<sup>577</sup>

*"These people were forced to unearth and burn on pyres hundreds of thousands of shot Soviet citizens, and to conceal in this way the misdeeds of the fascists."*

Dmitrii Gelpert (Gelpernas) was not a direct witness to the alleged exhumations and cremations at Kaunas, but was in contact with "reliable witnesses" who "both lit up flames of bonfires in the 9th Fort and shed light on what had happened there for the rest of the world," which is a clear reference to the escapees mentioned earlier. In 1948, the Moscow magazine *Der Emes* published an article written in Yiddish titled "Partizaner fun Kaunaser geto" ("Partisans from the Kaunas Ghetto") which has been translated with the title *The Gelpertus Diary*.

<sup>577</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 3366.

*Resistance in the Kovno Ghetto.* I quote the passage that pertains to the present context.<sup>578</sup>

*“To carry out the obliteration of mass graves 72 people, mainly Jews from the ghetto and prisoners of war, were brought to the 9th fort.*

*The opening of the pits and burning of the remains proceeded in the following manner: the top soil was removed by excavators. A group of prisoners cleaned bodies of stuck soil. The next group removed bodies from the pits. There the bodies were inspected. A specially designated person (\*doctor Neimionov) pulled out gold teeth. Pockets were also inspected. The next turn was for the carriers – they took the bodies to the bonfires. When the pit was emptied the Germans checked it and ordered to fill it up.*

*The bonfires for body burning was [sic] arranged in the following manner: logs were put in a 4x4 metres square. Underneath a channel was dug up which was filled with inflammable liquid. A layer of bodies was put onto a layer of logs, then another layer of bodies and another layer of logs. 300 (\*according to more correct information – 250) bodies, a ‘norm’ for each bonfire, were put together. To light up the fire several charges were put into the channel and then exploded. A bonfire would burn for 24 hours. The fire was seen several kilometres from the place and its smoke stretched out a long way.”* (Commentary added by the translator is marked with \*.)

This version contains additional imaginative and senseless elements: Merely one man was involved in extracting the gold teeth from the corpses, so he had to process about 40,000 corpses all by himself! In the channel underneath the pyre, explosive charges were placed to light the fire! In addition, the number of prisoners of the detachment (72) is in contrast to the number claimed by the eleven escapees.

#### 7.3.4. Escape from Fort IX

The one aspect common to all the stories that is actually true is the escape of the prisoners who were held in Fort IX. Faitelson refers to various documents confirming this. A radio message sent by the police at Rokishkis on 26 December 1943 informs us that “On 25-26 Dec. 1943, 63 Jews escaped from the Ninth Fort near Kovno” (Faitelson 1996, p. 367). Other confirmations come from a 26 December letter by the Chief of the Lithuanian Constabulary, and a message from the police headquarters at Vilnius dated 27 December (*ibid.*, pp. 367-370).

Two documents mentioned earlier, the report of 13 January 1944 and the “express letter” of 3 February 1944 (see p. 419) make explicit reference to an “enterprise 1005b” or “*Sonderkommando* 1005.” But the 11 prisoners who wrote the declaration of 26 December 1943 did not mention any “*Sonderkommando* 1005.” Faitelson was aware of the original text of the declaration – a manuscript in Russian, from which he publishes an extract (*ibid.*, p. 281), but he does not claim that

<sup>578</sup> The Gelpernus Diary. Resistance in the Kovno Ghetto. Part IV. To the “Partisans Forest”, in: [www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/gelpernusdiary5.html](http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/gelpernusdiary5.html)

it contained such terms (which could have been lost in translation). Therefore, the escapees, who must have been aware of having belonged to a “*Sonderkommando* 1005” – if that was so – deliberately omitted it, perhaps because at the time it was well known that this unit carried out completely different tasks.

None of the documents mentioning a “*Sonderkommando* 1005,” as noted earlier, puts it in any way in correlation with any exhumation-cremation activities, which remain always presupposed, but are never documented.

## 7.4. From Leningrad to Vilnius

What little is known to Holocaust historiography about the presumed exhumations-cremations in the area of Leningrad originates from the declarations of two former German policemen, Peter Fuchs and Otto Knipp, both dating back to May 1962. The related *Sonderkommando* was probably formed on 1 October 1943; of how many men it consisted is unknown. Hoffmann, who reports in this regard, hastens to warn us that

*“detailed information on the location of the crime scene, the origin and treatment of the workers, or the number of cremated bodies in the vicinity of Leningrad were not provided by the interrogated persons. Remarkably, their testimony also contains no comments on conditions at the worksites, such as the stench, the appearance of the bodies or the construction of the pyres.”* (Hoffmann, p. 335)

It is obvious that the two interrogatees had no idea of what “Aktion 1005” allegedly was.

It is a fact that “nothing has been found out yet” of the inmates presumably working in the vicinity of Leningrad (*ibid.*, p. 337). Practically nothing is known of this matter.

Hoffmann then informs us that, a few days before Christmas 1943, Knipp and Fuchs left the region “and drove about 600 km [!] in a southwesterly direction to Vilnius” (*ibid.*). It is not clear how to interpret this 600 km transfer; obviously, in this vast area, there were no mass graves at all, or, if there were, they were insignificant. The *Kommando* remained at Vilnius “until the start of May 1944.”

## 7.5. Ponary (Paneriai)

### 7.5.1. Knowledge and Sources of Orthodox Holocaust Historians

Hoffmann asserts that “the number of persons murdered in Ponary by July 1944 is estimated at 70,000 to 100,000,” but, unfortunately, “more exact information are hardly possible, not least due to the activity of the 1005-*Kommando*”; in fact, he says absolutely nothing in this regard (*ibid.*).

Arad is a bit more talkative. He writes that “*Sonderkommando* 1005 began its activity in Paneriai near Vilnius in late September and early October 1943, immediately following the liquidation of the Vilnius ghetto” (Arad 2009, p. 354).

If this *Sonderkommando* left the region of Leningrad a few days before Christmas 1943, as Hoffmann claims, how could it commence its activity at Paneriai at the end of September/beginning of October 1943?

After supplying the above-cited few bits of information on the *Sonderkommando*, Arad refers to the testimony of the “Jewish POW Yuri Farber,” who claims that the inmates attempted to escape during the night of 15 April 1944, but only 15 succeeded. He then concludes (*ibid.*, p. 355):

“In Paneriai, in the space of nine months, around 60,000 corpses were incinerated.”

As a source, he refers to a page from his *Ghetto in Flames* and to the *Black Book* (*ibid.*, fn 28-30, p. 597). The sources cited in *Ghetto in Flames* consist of two books in Hebrew, one in Russian, and two pages from the trial of Martin Weiss (a member of EK 3 who is alleged to have directed the executions at Ponary between October 1941 and July 1943) before the Würzburg District Court in February 1950 (Arad 1982, p. 445). Even Spektor refers to a work in Hebrew by Arad, on the basis of which he claims that “altogether 56,000-68,000 bodies were burned in Ponary” (Spektor 1990b p. 167). This incestuous quotation cartel obviously lacks all reliability.

### 7.5.2. The Testimony of Yuri Farber (*The Black Book*)

Yuri Farber issued a long and detailed declaration, probably in 1944. Before examining the corpse-exhumation-cremation technique, it is instructive to describe the surrounding circumstances of his testimony in order to gain an idea of his trustworthiness. Farber was transported to Ponary on 29 January 1944.<sup>579</sup> The exhumation-cremation operations are said to have begun immediately afterwards, and were purportedly entrusted to a *Kommando* of 80 persons, including four women (pp. 463f.). When he reached Ponary, the entire site had been fenced in. The vehicle in which he was a passenger passed through the first checkpoint, and then, after “approximately three-hundred meters came to a second gate.” Further along, within the fenced-off area, was a narrow passageway leading to an “enormous pit which used to be a foundation area for an oil reservoir; its diameter measured twenty-four meters. The pit was four meters deep, and its walls were lined with concrete” (p. 459). This circular mass grave, partially covered, served as the *Kommando* barracks. The men were subjected to strict surveillance, and their legs were chained together (p. 459).

Farber asserts that he arrived at Ponary on 29 January 1944, and that the inmates had already begun to construct a tunnel on 1 February. The story of this tunnel is obviously absurd. It was “seventy centimeters wide and sixty-five centimeters high” (p. 471). In a little over two months, the inmates excavated 200-250 meters from the ditch (p. 474), and on 9 April 1944, the tunnel finally opened up into an open area not subject to surveillance (p. 472). In reality, the tunnel

<sup>579</sup> Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 459; subsequent page numbers from there unless stated otherwise.

would have led to an exit inside the outer fenced perimeter, and, if it is true that “Ponary was impenetrable” (p. 459), this was true not only for the entry, but the exit as well. The tunnel came out just at the surface, starting from the bottom of the pit, four meters deep. Therefore, it was necessary to calculate exactly the slope of the tunnel based on its projected length, that is, something almost impossible to tell under the circumstances. Two inmates worked in the tunnel for an hour or an hour and a half at night – with their legs chained. What did they dig with? Where did they put the soil they extracted from the tunnel? I remind the reader that the walls of the grave were “lined with concrete.” To penetrate this, it would have required special tools which the inmates could not have had.

Farber mentions other serious problems, but the solutions he describes are quite implausible. One is the lack of air in the tunnel: “The difficulty was that there was not enough air, so matches and cigarette lighters would not burn.” Here is the solution: “We managed to install electricity” (p. 472). Even if it were true that the grave-barracks “had electric lighting,” where would the inmates have obtained 200-250 meters of electrical cable? Of course, electrical light could have solved the illumination problem, but certainly not the lack of air. It is well known that a flame becomes extinguished when the concentration of oxygen falls below 13-14%, but this concentration, and the proportional increase in carbon dioxide in the tunnel, is dangerous in itself, especially for hard-working adults. Without adequate ventilation, the undertaking could have been suicidal.

A tunnel of this type would have required intensive propping of the walls and roof. Farber fleetingly mentions this fact: “First we installed two posts and upright supports – this part of the work had to be done by two people” (p. 471). He does not, however, explain where the inmates could have obtained hundreds of posts made to measure – plus the boards needed for the tunnel roof.

Another problem is the excavated earth: (0.70 m × 0.65 m × 200 m =) at least 91 cubic meters. How was it extracted from the tunnel, and what did they do with it? As we see, the story of the tunnel is a series of absurdities.

These are the witness’s credentials. Having noted that, let’s examine his testimony on exhumation-cremation (pp. 461f.):

*“There was a technique for burning the corpses: on the edge of the pit was a small hearth, measuring 7 meters by 7 and built out of pine logs, a scaffold, one row of tree trunks stacked across other tree trunks, and in the middle a chimney made from pine trunks. The first operation was to shovel the sand until a ‘figure’ was uncovered; that is what the Germans ordered us to call the corpses.*

*The second operation was performed by the hook-man, which is what they called the worker who extracted the bodies from the pit with an iron hook. The bodies lay close together. Two hook-men, who were usually the strongest men from the work unit, would throw down a hook and pull out a corpse. In most cases the bodies came apart in pieces.*

*The third operation was done by the carriers – the Träger. They had to put a corpse on a stretcher, and the Germans made sure that they had a whole corpse on the stretcher, i.e. two legs, two arms, a head and torso.*

*The Germans kept a strict account of how many bodies had been removed. Our task was to burn eight hundred corpses a day; we worked from dawn to after dark. The Träger carried the bodies to the wooden hearth. There the figures were piled up in rows, one on top of the other. When one layer was stacked, spruce branches were put on top; a special worker, a Haufenmeister, looked after the fuel and added dry logs to the fires.*

*When the logs and branches had been piled on, black fuel oil was poured all over them, then a second layer was piled on, then a third, etc. In this way, the pyramid would reach four meters in height, sometimes even higher. A pyramid was considered ready when it contained three and a half thousand corpses. [...]*

*A pyramid usually burned for three days. [...]*

*A Feuermeister would stand nearby with a spade. He had to make sure that the fire did not die out. After three days a heap of ashes would form, containing small bone fragments that had not burned through. The very old men and people who were physically feeble were used to tramp down the ashes. The burned bones were shoveled onto a huge iron sheet where they were crushed by the stampers so that not a single piece of bone would remain.*

*The next operation was to shovel the ground bones through a fine-mesh metal net. [...]*

*When a corpse was lifted out of the pit, a special worker inserted a metal hook in the corpse's mouth, and if he discovered any gold crowns or bridges, he ripped them out and put them in a box.*

*There were pits that contained twenty thousand corpses each."*

The witness does not say how many bodies were exhumed and burned with this system. However, from his data we infer that the maximum total would have amounted to some 88,700. Supposing that the work began on 30 January 1944 and lasted until 15 April – the day of the escape – hence 76 days, since they “processed” 3,500 bodies every three days, this means precisely  $(76 \text{ days} \div 3 \text{ days/batch} \times 3,500 \text{ bodies/batch} =)$  approximately 88,700 bodies cremated. But this contradicts the witness's statement that the task of the *Kommando* was to exhume and cremate “eight hundred corpses a day”; assuming this, the maximum number of bodies would have been  $(76 \text{ days} \times 800 \text{ bodies/day} =)$  60,800. But then again, this figure of 800 cannot be considered an average day's work, as his other number  $(3,500 \text{ bodies/batch} \div 3 \text{ days/batch} =)$  amounts to 1,150 bodies per day.

Here as well, the undertaking does not appear much more credible than the story of the tunnel. Farber speaks of the members of the various units, but does not say how many men there were to a unit. He mentions only two “hook-men,” an unspecified number of “Träger” (carriers), one “Haufenmeister” (pile master) one “Feuermeister” (fire master), one “dentist” and the “chief Brenner” (head

burner). Since the pyre burned for three days, let's presume that it was prepared in one day. All the operations to be completed were

- a. the exhumation with "shovels,"
- b. the extraction of the bodies with "hooks,"
- c. inspecting the mouths of the bodies and removing gold teeth or bridge work (all these operations were performed by one single inmate!),
- d. carrying the corpses to the pyre on a stretcher borne by two inmates,
- e. arranging the bodies on the pyre up to a height of four meters (how, is not explained),
- f. burning the bodies,
- g. recovering and crushing the ashes,
- h. sifting the pulverized ashes using a metal mesh.

All these operations were performed by 76 inmates with chains on their legs for 3,500 bodies at a time working "from dawn to after dark"!

The description of the pyre makes no sense. Farber mentions a stack of wood measuring  $7\text{ m} \times 7\text{ m}$  and up to four meters high and more, consisting of many layers of wood with bodies on top. It is hard to understand why he refers to such a pyre as a "pyramid"; he may have meant a truncated pyramid, because otherwise it would have been impossible to place the bodies on top of it. The total volume of the pyre concerned, if it was a cuboid, would have been ( $7\text{ m} \times 7\text{ m} \times 4\text{ m} =$ ) 196 cubic meters; much less, however, if it tapered off at the top; if there were 3,500 bodies on that pyre, these – according to the preceding assumptions – would have occupied ( $3,500\text{ bodies} \times 0.026\text{ m}^3/\text{body} \times 1.4 =$ ) around 127 cubic meters, leaving less than  $70\text{ m}^3$  for the wood, and even less in case the pyre was indeed shaped like a (truncated) pyramid.

That a "*Feuermeister*" could then have regulated the cremation process while simply standing "nearby with a spade" is simply absurd: given the enormous heat of the pyre, if he had approached it, he would have been burned alive. For the same reason, the "*Haufenmeister*" would not have been able to add "dry logs to the fires" when the pyre was four meters high (p. 462).

It is incredible that historians enjoying a certain reputation in orthodox Holocaust circles take such nonsense seriously.

### 7.5.3. The Testimony of Yuri Farber (NKGB)

Yuri Farber's testimony is an obvious re-elaboration of an NKGB report on the atrocities at Ponary dated 14 August 1944.<sup>580</sup> The report contains the account of a Soviet POW whose name is not given, but is clearly Yuri Farber. The narration begins with the arrival at Ponary on 29 January 1944; in the *Black Book*, before getting to this point, there are six introductory pages. The two accounts are presented very differently, but overall, the general data contained in each one are ra-

<sup>580</sup> Organy ..., pp. 146-158; see also: *Tragediya Litvy*, pp. 24-45; English translation: Yakovlev, pp. 18-31.



ther similar; that from 1944 contains noteworthy additions and variations. The most important of these are the following:

The “cremation technique” is described in sparse phrases here and there; the first phrase introduces the new data on the enormous mass grave.<sup>581</sup>

*“We go to work. An excavation of up to 100 meters in diameter is filled with sand. If you dig a couple of shovels of it, you discover... decayed human remains, ‘figures’ in the Germans’ terminology. A fireplace is built near the excavation. It is a wooden scaffold 7 x 7 meters with a chimney in the middle.”*

Further along, another important datum appears:

*“The fireplace was built in the centre of the territory, and we had to carry the corpses there, which was about 400 meters away. The Germans could not show a bonfire of 3,500 human corpses to civilians passing along the highway: it was 1944, not 1941. Some time, back in February, the Sturmführer ordered [us] to carry out 800 bodies a day.”* (p. 30)

Therefore, every cadaver, individually extracted from the mass graves using a hook, had to be carried 400 meters to the pyre, obviously on the stretchers mentioned by the witness Blyazer, with whom I shall concern myself later. This absolutely implausible practice openly contradicts the assertion immediately preceding, according to which the pyre was built “near the excavation.”

Farber repeatedly returns to the question of the 800 bodies:

*“On this day, we finished our work precisely on time. The goal was exceeded (something about 820–830 bodies). And then we saw a whole procession of commanding officers coming.”* (p. 30)

And again:

*“We were lined up in two ranks. Sturmführer made a speech. His speech was mostly devoted to self-praise, but the main thing appeared to be that, owing to the brilliant organization of the work, the number of 800 figures a day was reached, which was the best achievement for all the numerous working areas in all Lithuania.”* (p. 31)

Therefore, the maximum daily ceiling on cremations, reached with great effort, was a little over 800 bodies. In contradiction to that, the witness asserts: “In a couple of days, we ignited the next fire of 3,500 corpses” (p. 27). According to his data, the exhumation of 3,500 bodies would have required over four days, and their cremation another three days, a fact which he emphasizes:

*“When the fire contains 3,500 figures, it is covered by dry Thermit bombs on every side and ignited. Figures burn for more than 72 hours, until there is a heap of ashes with completely burned bones.”* (p. 19)

On the number of victims, the witness declares:

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<sup>581</sup> Yakovlev, p. 19; subsequent page numbers from there unless stated otherwise.

*“The capacity of the Ponar pits is hard to estimate. The Germans gave a figure of 80,000. Among them 55,000 are of Jews. Several thousand (up to 10,000) Russians, Lithuanians, and people of various nationalities.”* (p. 19)

Nevertheless, in conflict with the above, he says:

*“During December 1942 and January 1944, 18,000 bodies were burnt. Before April 15, 1944, with the participation of the author of these lines, 38,000 figures were burnt; how many of them still remain unburnt – is unknown, but it is known for sure that all these are innocent victims of brutal bandits, all this senselessly spilled blood calls for revenge.”* (p. 20)

Nobody knows who cremated the 18,000 bodies before 29 January 1944, since there was no *Sonderkommando* 1005 at the time. On the other hand, that which was in operation from January to April 1944 cremated only 38,000 of the 80,000 bodies (or 56,000, including the above-mentioned 18,000).

This testimony supplies important clarifications on the tunnel, in partial contradiction to the later account. As far as one can tell, the tunnel was only 30 meters long: “And then a tunnel sideways was dug, with a 30-meter upwards slope” (p. 23), and required meticulous preparation and appropriate materials:

*“70 cm-long boards were placed on the ceiling supported by 65 cm-high pine poles. We had to prepare boards (7–8 pieces for a linear meter of the tunnel), poles (14–16 pieces for a meter of the tunnel) and carry out the sand.”* (p. 24)

This means 210-240 boards and 420-480 poles, which the inmates are supposed to have procured in a rather implausible way:

*“Our tool warehouse was... the dead bodies. Under the vigilant supervision of the chiefs we managed to extract knives, scissors, files, candles, and cutting nippers from the pockets of not undressed figures. Under the guise of firewood we made poles, brought firewood ostensibly for repairing plank beds. In the evening, all of us sang for the sound masking, and one would saw boards and poles under plank beds.”* (p. 24)

This means that the persons who were shot while dressed (it is not known why, since the majority of them had to undress) were not searched first, so that they could have carried knives or pistols in their pockets; it is obvious that the Germans would not have been so stupid as to expose themselves to this risk. It appears that the doomed persons arrived at Ponary precisely with bottles of acetic acid in their pockets, because the witness declares:

*“In case of collision with patrol, the first men were armed with knives and 2 bottles with acetic acid that they were supposed to splash in the eyes. Besides, there were 2 pairs of cutting nippers to cut the barbed wire protecting the territory. All of these arms were obtained from the corpses.”* (p. 26)

If the inmates did not find these bottles in the mass grave, one must wonder where they obtained them in their “bunker.”

The pretense that they obtained the necessary boards and poles required to shore up the tunnel “under the guise of firewood” is even more incredible, since

in the forest they would only have been able to find branches wholly unsuited to their purpose, and what is more, which would also have been difficult to cut to measure with the few tools available to them.

As regards the electrical system, the witness recalls:

*“Electric light was installed in the tunnel (one bulb was on the 13th, and the other – on the 25th meter of the tunnel). As soon as a German lowers the ladder to get down, the bulb in the tunnel starts to flash. The workers come back up. In case of a roll-call everything will be all right.”* (p. 26)

He does not say how the inmates procured the bulbs and sockets, nor does he supply information on the electrical network at Ponary: was it connected to the city electrical network? Or did it function with an autonomous generator? If inmates deprived of all possible means succeeded in installing such an installation in the tunnel, why did the Germans not install electrified fences around the site at Ponary?

The witness then describes the technical difficulties encountered by the inmates in digging the tunnel (p. 25):

*“The difficulties were not only physical. Going to work, we determined the place of rise to the surface. The only place inconspicuous for the guards was on the slope of the mountain, behind a stub. The question was how to get into that place. Outside, the distance was determined by sight. Measured by steps that were limited by the chain. The direction was measured by a compass stolen from one of the Germans. We measured the bottom of the tunnel by a steel meter found with one of the corpses; horizontal angles were determined, of course, by the same compass, and for defining the height of the lift we constructed a water-level. The data of the external measurements were, certainly, rather approximate. That was why at the beginning of April a crisis occurred in our work. On the one hand, it became clear that the work on the corpses was coming to an end. Our turn to burn on [the] fire was approaching. On the other hand, workers became exhausted.”*

In effect, under such conditions, the calculations relating to the excavation of the tunnel would inevitably have been very approximate; nevertheless,

*“on April 9, we found the root of the destination stub. It became clear that we came precisely in the planned place.”* (p. 25)

Therefore, the tunnel came out “*precisely* in the planned place”!

The one absolutely indispensable tool for establishing the direction of the tunnel is supposed to have been a compass, which had supposedly been “stolen from one of the Germans.” This, in the witness’s account, would have been impossible, since there was never and could never be any contact between the inmates and the Germans:

*“Aryans are pure people and the workers are impure, therefore any contact is inadmissible. To descend into the habitation pit, there were two separate ladders: for the workers and for the Germans. The Germans did not touch ours, and it was forbidden for us to touch the Germans’ ladder. If a German needs to give some-*

*thing to a worker, he does not hand it. The worker should take off his cap and the German will throw in it whatever it is. If a German needs to pass by, he moves the worker aside by a rod at a certain distance. Inspection of chains that was performed several times a day was also performed with the use of a rod.”* (pp. 20f.)

Equally contradictory is the assertion that “it became clear that the work on the corpses was coming to an end.” From what did “it became clear”? And how was that possible if they had estimated that only 38,000 bodies had been exhumed and cremated? As we shall see below, according to the Soviets, and parroted by Arad, the work at Ponary continued for months after the escape of the inmates. Many bodies therefore remained to be exhumed and cremated.

The story of the exit from the tunnel is also entirely implausible:

*“On April 15, we removed 40 more cm of sand; there were 10 cm left, which separated us from the surface.”* (p. 26)

Therefore, one layer of sand, first 40 centimeters in thickness, then 10, over a surface area of (0.70 m × 0.65 m =) 0.455 square meters could be held up by one single support! This would make sense only if it had been dug into volcanic tuff, for instance, like the Etruscans did.

At the end of the testimony comes a revelatory story:

*“There are no other desires, but there are duties. The main [one] of them is to expose the Ponar crematorium. The present article is written to carry out this duty, so that all the Soviet people under the impression of [the] dreadful Ponar corpses would even more actively assist [in] the crushing defeat of [the] Hitlerite gangs.”* (p. 26)

This story is therefore meant to be an edifying tale for the use of Soviet citizens not accidentally presented by an NKVD officer, namely by the “Chief of the 8th Department of the 4th Office of NKGB USSR.”

#### 7.5.4. The Witness A. Blyazer (Blazer)

Next to Yuri Farber, the above-mentioned “Special Report of the 8th Department of the 4th Office of NKGB USSR on Atrocities in Ponar” of 14 August 1944 mentions another witness (the Cyrillic name Блэзер is spelled “Blazer” here):

*“The territory of the Ponar massacre was not guarded at all. Blazer, one of the workers, was shot in Ponar in 1941. Together with a large group of prisoners he was driven to the edge of the pit. There were no ‘voluntary’ donations of clothes to the ‘Winter Help to the Front Fund’ back then, and that was why people weren’t undressed before the execution. Blazer guessed to fall down into the pit before the shooting. Killed people dropped from above. After the execution was finished, the pit was covered by some sand. There was so little sand that the air got to the bottom of the pit. Blazer lay for more than 4 hours in the pit. After dark, he made his way through the layers of corpses lying on top of him, raked sand and went back... home in Vilno. In 1943, Blazer was punished for this mistake. He was directed to Ponar to burn [the] corpses of his comrades. In 1944, Blazer left*

*Ponar for the second time. This time, he went towards the forest, to the partisans.” (p. 29)*

The account of this same witness, however, is less colorful:

*“I pulled myself together, dumped a heap of corpses from myself and, as I climbed from the pit, ran away to the forest.” (p. 37)*

This witness was interrogated by the Soviet investigatory commission which carried out an inquiry on Ponary; the report, titled “Act on Atrocities Committed by Fascist Aggressors in the Ponar District, near Vilnius,” bears no exact date, but it is known to have been drafted no earlier than 26 August 1946. Blyazer, who was brought to Ponary by the Germans in November 1943, declared as follows:

*“After we arrived in Ponar, all of us were fettered. Our work included digging out all corpses that accumulated there from the very beginning of the executions, and burning them on the fires specially built for this purpose. The work was organized in the following manner: 15 people prepared firewood; 10 people dug out corpses from the ground, 6–8 were given special hooks 1.5 m long and 25 cm thick with sharp tips. They were to thrust this hook into a corpse to be dug out and drag the corpse from the pit using this hook. Sometimes the corpses we found were not decayed, but dried-up. In this case it was possible to distinguish the color of the hair. The strongly decayed corpses were dragged by pieces: separately the head, separately a hand, a leg, etc. We worked with a stretcher, 2 men for one stretcher. 1–2 corpses could be put on a stretcher. Two persons continuously worked at the fire on which they piled the brought corpses. Corpses were piled in rows, and a row was then poured over with fuel. One person with a two-meter poker constantly maintained the fire, adjusting the fire and clearing channels of the fire from ashes.*

*18,000 corpses of men, women and children were dug out from the first pit. Most of them were shot in the head. The first pit was the result of liquidation of the 2nd Vilnius ghetto. There were many Poles, whom we recognized by the crosses on their bodies. There were also priests, which was proved by their clothes. Most of the Poles had their hands tied by ropes, belts, frequently by barbed wire. Some corpses were absolutely naked, others half-naked, some only in stockings. We dug out 8,000 corpses out of the fourth pit, exclusively young men, frequently blind-folded by towels or shirts. In the fifth pit, 25–30 wide and 6 meters deep, there were about 25,000 corpses. In this pit we found corpses of tenants of an almshouse, and also patients who were brought together with the personnel of the hospital – we found that out by the hospital clothes. Children from the orphanage were shot in the same pit.*

*Thus, from 8 pits we dug out about 68,000 human corpses.” (pp. 38f.)*

The witness mentions the first mass grave and then jumps to the fourth and fifth, but asserts that there were altogether eight graves, containing a total of 68,000 bodies. But the sum total of all the figures cited by him is only 51,000. It is not clear whether these omissions are to be attributed to the witness or to the editor of the testimony. The translation accords with the Russian text (*Tragediya Litvy*, pp.

57f.). The subdivision of the inmates in the various work groups is particularly important, since it supplies additional opportunities for testing the reliability of the testimony. The groups were as follows:

- 15 inmates cutting wood. It should be noted that the English translation is not very exact: “*rabotali na raspilke drov dlya kostrov*,” where “*raspilke*” means “sawing” (the term is derived from “пила” (*pila*), saw). Because these inmates were assigned to saw branches and trees in the forest.
- 10 inmates disinterring bodies.
- 6-8 inmates harpooning bodies with hooks and extracting them from the grave.
- 10 inmates carrying bodies on stretchers.
- 2 inmates placing bodies on the pyre.
- 1 inmate stoking the fire.

In total: 46 inmates maximum. But according to Farber, there were 76 working inmates (plus four women looking after the kitchen).

The cremation of 68,000 bodies would have required a minimum of (68,000 bodies  $\times$  0.25 t/body =) 17,000 tons of green wood; cutting this quantity would have taken the 15 wood-cutting inmates (17,000 t  $\div$  [15 men  $\times$  1.35 t/man/day] =) 839 days, over two years and three months.

The alleged use of liquid fuels (gasoline, kerosene, petroleum), of which the witnesses do not say one single word, would not have changed this order of magnitude by much, since I have assumed the lowest quantity as green wood requirement for the cremation of a body.

Over 68,000 bodies are said to have been disinterred by 10 inmates, hence 6,800 each, and extracted with hooks by six to eight inmates, therefore 8,500-11,300 bodies per harpoonist; ten inmates with five stretchers are supposed to have carried them (for 400 meters, as claimed by Farber?) to the pyre, making 13,600 trips with a single body, or 6,800 with a payload of two. If we take Farber’s statement seriously, they are supposed to have walked at least (6,800  $\times$  0.4 km  $\times$  2 =) 5,540 km, if we assume 800 meters for a round trip. Another two inmates are said to have arranged 68,000 bodies on the pyres, 34,000 for each inmate, and one single inmate is said to have stoked the fire, on a pyre consisting of 3,500 bodies!

If this is not madness, then what is?

#### 7.5.5. The Witness Matvey Fedorovich Zaydel

The above-mentioned “Act on Atrocities Committed by Fascist Aggressors in the Ponar District, near Vilnius” reproduces the narration of another witness, named Zaydel (“Zeidel” in the English translation; Yakovlev, p. 38):

*“In September, 1943, Gestapo arrested me, and I was imprisoned for 4 weeks. In October, 1943, I was taken to the Ponar railway station and placed in a bunker. Here Germans used us for preparing firewood and burning corpses. In December,*

*1943, we were fettered and began burning corpses. First, we put the firewood, and then up to 100 corpses of people, poured kerosene and gasoline on them, and then we laid a layer of corpses again. Thus we put together about 3,000 corpses, lay [sic; laid] firewood around them, poured petroleum, put incendiary bombs on four sides, and ignited it. This fire was burning for 7–8 days. Among the heap of corpses I recognized the mother and the sister of my comrade Kovmaski Lib. Most of these three thousand corpses were Jews. About 2,000 more corpses were laid on another fire, generally Red Army men and officers, and also 500 corpses of monks and priests. A total of 19 fires were made. Men, women and children were burnt on these fires. Then [we were forced] to gather up what remained from the burnt corpses, for example teeth, rings, etc.*

*We continued the incineration till April, 1944, when I managed to run from Ponar. For 5 months Germans had destroyed about 80–90 thousand corpses.”*

The witness asserts that, for a couple of months, he, together with an unspecified number of inmates, was assigned to the preparation of wood for the pyres. The number of cremated bodies is said to have been 80,000-90,000. This would have required (80,000 to 90,000 bodies × 0.25 t/body =) 20,000 to 22,500 tons of green wood. Even if all of Farber’s 80 inmates, including the four women, had been assigned to this task exclusively, its completion would have required no less than (20,000 t ÷ [80 men × 1.35 t/man/day ] =) 185 days, or half a year.

If 19 pyres were then built, each with 3,000 bodies, the total number of bodies was (19 × 3,000 bodies =) 57,000 bodies, not 80,000 to 90,000.

Finally, the witness Zaydel claimed that a pyre of 3,000 bodies burned for 7-8 days, while a pyre consisting of 3,500 bodies is said to have burned for 72 hours, *i.e.*, 3 days, according to the witness Farber.

If a new pyre began to burn right after the last one had burned out, the combustion time alone would have been (7 to 8 days/pile × 19 piles =) 133 to 152 days, that is, the entire period of five months or the greater part of the same. For this entire time, the Ponary site would have been smoking continually, day and night, but there is no contemporary indication that anyone noticed anything: neither physical evidence (documents, photographs) nor testimonies.

#### 7.5.6. The Witness Szloma Gol

Szloma Gol was a Jew who lived at Vilnius. On 10 August 1946, he signed an affidavit on his experiences in 1943. The following are the salient passages of it (Meyer-Abich, pp. 75-78):

*“In December 1943, 80 Jews from the ghetto, including four women, myself and my friend Josef Belic, were selected by an SA Sturmführer whose name I have forgotten, and on his orders we had to live in a rather broad pit at some distance from the city. This pit was dug to serve as an underground gasoline container. This pit was circular, 60 m in diameter and 4 m deep. While we lived in this pit, it was partially covered with boards. Two living areas were set off with boards, and also a kitchen and a latrine. We lived six months in this ditch before we escaped.”*

The Sturmführer made a deceptive speech on their destiny before the inmates; then,

*“SA men subsequently threw chains into the pit, and the Sturmführer ordered the Jewish foremen (we were a labor collective) to put the chains on. The chains were attached to my ankle as well as around the waist. They weighed 2 kg each, and we were only able to take short steps with them. We wore these chains constantly for six months. The SA told us that anyone taking off the chains would be hanged. The four women working in the kitchen were not included.*

*After this, we were led to work. We marched 5-600 m in chains.*

*Our work consisted of opening mass graves and extracting the bodies in order to burn them subsequently. My job was to dig up the bodies. My friend Belic was assigned to sawing and trimming wood.*

*We excavated a total of 60,000 bodies. I know this because two Jews, who lived with us in the pit, had been hired by the Germans to count the bodies. That was the only job of these two. The bodies consisted of a mixture of Jews, Polish priests and Russian POWs. Among those I exhumed was my own brother. I found his ID card with him. When I dug him out, he had been dead for two years. I know this because he belonged to the bunch of 10,000 Jews who came from the Vilnius Ghetto and were shot in 1941.*

*The burning of the bodies occurred absolutely methodically. Parallel ditches 7 meters long were dug; boards were laid across them; one layer of bodies was placed on top of it, the bodies were drenched in oil, then branches were spread out on top of them, then blocks of wood on top of the branches. A total of 14 such layers of bodies and fuel on top of each other were piled up to form a pyre. Every pyre was built like a pyramid, with a wooden chimney sticking out at the top. Gasoline and oil was poured out from this chimney, and incendiary bombs were placed all around the pyre. All this work was carried out by us Jews. When the pyre was finished, the Sturmführer ignited it himself or had it ignited by his assistant named Legel (who was also an SA man), using a burning rag on the end of a stick.*

*The work that consisted of opening the graves and building the pyre was supervised by about 80 guards. More than 50 of these were SA men in brown uniforms armed with pistols and daggers and automatic weapons (the weapons were ready to fire and pointed at us at all times). The 30 other guards consisted partly of Lithuanians and partly of SD and SS men.*

*Over the course of this work, the Lithuanian guards were themselves shot, probably so they could not blab about what had happened. [...]*

*The commander of the whole site was SA.-Führer Murer. [...] During the night, our pit was guarded by 10 or 12 of these guards.”*

The guards beat the inmates. On one occasion, the witness fell unconscious onto a layer of bodies, but his companions carried him away. The story continues:

*“Then I got sick. We were allowed two days’ sick leave; on the third day we were hauled out of the pit and taken to the hospital – that meant to be shot.*



*Of the 76 persons living in the pit, 11 were shot at work. 43 of us dug a tunnel out of our pit with our bare hands, broke our chains and escaped into the forests. [...] I declare that the above declaration is correct."*

In a "Supplement," also dated 10 August 1946, the witness declared that two inmates yanked gold teeth out of the bodies with pincers on the way from the mass grave to the pyre; another two or three threw the extracted teeth into gasoline. Three boys aged 12-13, who formed part of the 80 inmates, then washed the gold teeth:

*"The gold was packed in boxes weighing 8 kg each. During the duration of my stay in the pit, 7 or 8 of these boxes were filled with gold teeth."* (*ibid.*, p. 78)

Farber asserted that the inmate *Kommando* stayed at Ponary from 29 January until 9 April 1944, for two months and eleven days. Gol, by contrast, stated, and then repeated, that this stay had amounted to "six months," therefore until June 1944. Zaydel spoke of five months, but according to him, the cremation of the bodies began in December 1943.

That the inmates were under surveillance by 50 SA men (so-called brownshirts for the color of their uniform), in addition to members of the SD and SS, is not confirmed by anyone, like the other assertions, such as the killing at that site of Polish priests or the execution of the Lithuanian guards at the end of the operation.

The cremation technique is not very clear. The installation consisted of "parallel ditches 7 m long": how many ditches? How far apart? How wide? At any rate, on these ditches, they placed several layers of planks, branches and bodies, until they arrived at 14 superimposed layers. If they placed an average of four bodies on each square meter of pyre, the green wood requirement would have been 1,000 kg per m<sup>2</sup>, corresponding to a stacked volume of (1 t ÷ 0.9 t/m<sup>3</sup> × 1.4 =) some 1.56 m<sup>3</sup>, or some 1.6 m<sup>3</sup> if considering the volume of the bodies. It follows that one stack of 14 layers would have been (14 × 1.6 m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup> =) some 22 meters high!

The witness Farber mentions a stack of wood measuring 7 m × 7 m, and up to four meters high, but without any underlying ditch.

The story of 60,000 bodies exhumed and cremated, as I shall show later, is completely unfounded. Other claims are completely implausible: the claim that the inmates excavated the tunnel with their "bare hands," the assertion that only two inmates were assigned to the job of extracting gold teeth from the bodies (two for 60,000 bodies to be examined!); finally, that the gold extracted from the teeth amounted to 56-64 kg, like all the rest of it, is entirely unconfirmed. The fact that the inmates were allowed "two days' sick leave" is in open contradiction to Farber's testimony, who declared as follows in this connection (Yakovlev, p. 21):

*"The thing is that when a person was ill and not able to work, he would be sent to the 'infirmary.' Usually on Sundays a person had his chains removed and [was] taken from the habitation pit, somewhere near, then we would hear a shot, mean-*

*ing the patient 'was cured.' There was even a special doctor with a submachine gun for cases like this. After a couple of such 'cures' people stopped being ill. The author of these lines also had to work for two days with a fever of 39 degrees Centigrade, trying to look robust."*

### 7.5.7. The Witnesses Motle Zaidl (Zäidel) and Itzhak Dugin (Doughin, Dogim)

For his first film on the "Shoah," Claude Lanzmann interviewed, presumably in the first half of the 1980s, two self-proclaimed witnesses of exhumations and cremations at Vilnius, Motle Zaidl, identical to the already-mentioned Matvey Fedorovich Zaydel, and Itzhak Dugin. In the text of the film, their statements are fragmentary and confused (Lanzmann, pp. 21, 23-25), but a complete transcript of the interview, prepared by Lanzmann, is available online.<sup>582</sup> In general, the narration of the two witnesses closely follow Farber's narration, but diverge on certain points which are far from irrelevant. The strange thing is that Farber mentions these two persons, named Isaac Dogim and Motl Zaydel (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 464), but these persons in turn make no reference to him. Their respective accounts give the impression not so much of originating from real lived experiences, but of a type of Holocaust *Haggadah*: an edifying narration stylized according to a certain set of canons which everyone fleshes out in their own way. The two narrations, as I mentioned above, exhibit conspicuous contradictions.

The exhumation of the bodies started either after 29 January (Farber) or on 10 January (Zaidl-Dugin; p. 33).

Around the *Kommando's* live-in pit, which the two witnesses call the "Bunker," there were at least two fences, approximately 300 m apart (Farber), or first a fence, then a mine field seven meters across, and then another fence (p. 43). The more distant fence was at least 35 meters from the pit, because the tunnel planned for the escape had to be 35-40 meters long (pp. 47f.); thus, between the "Bunker" and the first trees, obviously outside the second fence, there was a little over 30 meters (p. 43). This tunnel, which for Farber was 200-250 meters long, measured only 35 for these two witnesses (p. 51). Also, the tunnel's cross section is contradictory: 70 cm × 65 cm for Farber as opposed to 50 cm × 50 cm (Zaidl-Dugin; p. 46).

Now let's examine the absurdities arising from this fact. Excavation of the tunnel commenced on 1 February 1944, the day after Farber's arrival, but the plan was designed after one month ("We had already been there for a month when we came up with the idea"; p. 41). Naturally, the designer and sponsor of the idea was Farber, something which Zaidl and Dugin attribute to themselves. For Farber, the pit, aka "Bunker," was four meters deep, some 24 meters in diam-

<sup>582</sup> Claude Lanzmann, transcript of *Shoah: Zäidel et Doughin*. US Holocaust Museum Archives: [http://data.ushmm.org/intermedia/film\\_video/spielberg\\_archive/transcript/RG60\\_5050/EB687219-2C21-4E8A-AEEF-A68D7FA3CBE6.pdf](http://data.ushmm.org/intermedia/film_video/spielberg_archive/transcript/RG60_5050/EB687219-2C21-4E8A-AEEF-A68D7FA3CBE6.pdf); subsequent page numbers in the text from there unless stated otherwise.

eter (hence with a surface area of about 450 square meters), and had walls “lined with concrete”; Zaidl and Dugin, by contrast, declare that the ditch was five meters deep, with a surface area of approximately 50 square meters (8 m diameter), and the walls were clad with stone “(with stones all around on the walls”; p. 20).

But this is trifling considering the enormous items of nonsense proffered by the two witnesses. Lanzmann often avails himself of the possibility, which he had, of questioning minor points in the narration of the two witnesses which may have seemed unclear to him. Almost always, the responses turn out to be improvised and artificial, and most often lead to a garbling of the account later on, instead of clarifying it. Often, moreover, the witnesses change their story, contradicting themselves, to evade the questions. I will limit myself to examining two specific points.

The pyres were built before the exhumation of the bodies began (p. 23):

*“But even before we could start working and burning the martyrs, they made us start building these types of large pyres upon which we had to burn the Jews, and that was our job, too, building these pyres.*

[Question by Lanzmann] *They built the pyres before opening the graves?*

[Answer] *Before.*

[D.] *How many pyres did they build?*

[R.] *In fact, there were 15 to 17 pyres, because they burned about 3,500 Jews on each pyre, in total, 64,000.”*

This nonsensical practice was perhaps related to the implausible fact that the Germans “knew exactly” how many bodies there were in each grave! (p. 31) Faced with Lanzmann’s perplexity, the witnesses promptly changed their story: the construction of the pyres consisted of preparing the ground, “we dug the ditch that made up the pyre, and as soon as everything was ready, we hauled the bodies out and started the work” (p. 26) therefore each pyre was built simultaneously with the opening of a grave, not before.

On the other hand, if 15-17 pyres were built for 3,500 bodies each, the maximum number of cremated bodies would have been  $(3,500 \times 17 =) 59,500$ ; the 64,000 cremated bodies presuppose, in fact  $(64,000 \div 3,500 =)$  around 18 pyres.

In the testimony examined earlier, Zaidl (Zaydel) asserted, on the contrary, that the Germans “destroyed” 80,000-90,000 bodies, that 19 pyres were built, and that a maximum of 3,000 bodies were placed on each pyre.

The witness’s narrative on the technique of pyre construction is rather obscure. As far as one can tell, one pyre was constructed inside a ditch (“the pyre ditch”), but, incomprehensibly (p. 25):

*“We therefore dug seven ditches for each pyre, each eight meters long; on these seven ditches, which were half a meter deep, we piled up logs one meter thick, and on these piles...”*

It is not clear why seven ditches were dug for *each* pyre, instead of just one.

It is a fact that, according to the witnesses, one pyre was as much as seven meters in height: “the pyre was 7 meters high”; “in fact, there was a layer of wood, a layer of bodies, a layer of wood, a layer of bodies, until it was seven meters high” (p. 25). At this point, Lanzmann asked, quite properly, how the inmates got up on top of it. This is the answer (p. 26):

*“In fact, we climbed up with... with the aid of beams that we had placed against the pyre, of course, we climb..*

[D.] *And how did you get the last layer of bodies up there?*

[R.] *In fact, that didn't reach up to seven meters, that is, to the height of the pyre; we climbed... the beams reached up to about four meters.*

[D.] *And the corpses, how did you get them up there?*

[R.] *We took the stretchers, exactly the same way that seriously wounded people are taken; first, we built a type of ladders, and with these stretchers, we took the... in fact, when we got up to three or four meters, there were already 3,500 bodies on the pyre, and then we started to pour inflammable materials and it was set on fire.”*

This shows clearly that the two witnesses improvised contradictory and nonsensical answers in their attempts to answer the questions. They first perjured themselves in saying that the pyres were seven meters high, a measurement repeatedly confirmed (four times); not knowing how to reply to Lanzmann's question, they then reduced the height of the pyres to three to four meters; already at this height they allegedly contained 3,500 bodies, but then it is incomprehensible why they needed to be up to seven meters high.

The reference to “beams” confirms the nonchalance with which the witnesses changed their stories to adapt them to Lanzmann's questions. The beams, in fact, only appear in their narrative for the purpose of answering a preceding question: if the pyre was in a ditch, how could one assure the inflow of combustion air? The witnesses then introduced the beams, which were positioned “cross-ways” or “perpendicularly” to the ditches; one must presume (the witnesses do not explicitly make this claim) that they built the pyre on top of that. In reply to the next question, from this function the beams transmogrified to act as ramps in order to facilitate climbing up onto the pyres. We are compelled to imagine that these beams were set up in such a way as to lean against the pyres, forming a narrow inclined plane upon which the inmates climbed upwards, obviously carrying wood and bodies! Such an image seems too daring even to the witnesses, so they promptly changed their story! To climb up onto the pyre, there were some kind of “ladders,” which can only mean ladders with rungs: I leave to the reader's imagination how it would have been possible, if at all, to carry a body on a stretcher up onto the pyre using a ladder with rungs, and how long such an operation would take...

Another implausible claim is that the inmates are said to have been forced to open the graves with their bare hands during January, at least initially and for the

first two days (pp. 29f.), even though at that time the soil at Ponary was frozen (p. 34).

In total, they cremated 64,000 bodies, but there was still one mass grave left containing 16,000 bodies (p. 35), so that the total number of victims at Ponary is supposed to have amounted to 80,000! At the beginning of the interview, the witnesses asserted that one single grave contained 24,000 bodies, and that there were eight graves (p. 3). Since the grave left intact contained 16,000 bodies, it follows that these two graves all by themselves already totalled 40,000 bodies, and that the six remaining graves contained the remaining 40,000 bodies (an average of approximately 6,700 bodies for every grave). Another admirable example of “German efficiency”!

It should be recalled that Blyazer asserted that the first grave contained 18,000 bodies, the fourth 8,000 bodies, and the fifth 25,000 bodies; the total number of bodies therefore amounted to 68,000.

The grave with the 24,000 bodies must have been the same as that to which 25,000 bodies are attributed, because in the contrary case the total number of bodies would have been  $(16,000 + 24,000 + 25,000 + 18,000 + 8,000 =)$  91,000 in five graves out of eight. There were, therefore,  $(24,000 + 16,000 + 18,000 + 8,000 =)$  66,000 bodies in four graves; it therefore follows that the remaining four graves contained  $(80,000 - 66,000 =)$  14,000 bodies, an average of 3,500 bodies per grave. This is quite inconsistent with the order of magnitude of the above-mentioned four graves.

Before becoming fascinated by their fairy tales, the witnesses assert that they had to exhume a precise number of bodies per day, *i.e.*, 300-400 (p. 3). To total the 3,500 bodies required for one pyre, therefore, required  $(3,500 \div 400 =)$  at least 8 eight and a half days. On the other hand, “the pyre usually burned for 7 or 8 days” (p. 26), so that, without considering the wood requirement, the exhumation-cremation of 3,500 bodies would have required 15.5 days. Since the cremation of 64,000 bodies required 18 pyres, to complete the entire task would have required at least  $(15.5 \text{ days/pyre} \times 18 \text{ pyres} =)$  279 days, approximately nine months, but the actual claimed time was some four months, from the first 10 days of January to the first 10 days of April 1944.

Zaidl and Dugin’s tale of the tunnel is even more nonsensical. Their tunnel, as mentioned earlier, had a cross section of 50 cm  $\times$  50 cm. It was dug to two meters’ depth from the floor of the “Bunker” (p. 46), or to seven meters from the surrounding terrain’s surface, since the “Bunker” was five meters deep (p. 51). Lanzmann asked how the inmates could have established the correct direction, and here comes the entry onto the scene of the *deus ex machina*: the engineer Youri (Yuri) had a compass which he had succeeded in stealing! (p. 49) That an inmate under these conditions should succeed in *stealing* a compass is only believable in the miraculous landscape of Holocaust fairy tales. How the inmates managed to calculate the precise length of the tunnel is not given to us to understand, but this, too, forms part of the above-mentioned miraculous Holocaust

landscape. Notwithstanding the compass, after digging for approximately 20 meters, they realize that the direction was erroneous, and they then made a sudden turn to the right; after excavating another 15 meters, they come out “exactly” where they had planned (p. 51); or, rather immodestly (p. 64):

*“the exit from the tunnel was one half-meter, fifty centimeters, from the spot we had intended. I think that today engineers with the most perfected instruments could not achieve such precision.”*

This sort of assertion is absurd, not just because the inmates lacked the tools required to work with such precision, but above all because they could not have established the precise exit point of the tunnel without a topographic map.

Another problem, no less serious, is the fact that the tunnel was constructed on a slope slowly ascending from seven meters below to the ground surface. In fact, Dugin claimed that he poked holes in the ground with an “iron bar” (another *deus ex machina*) at the end of the tunnel to widen the opening (p. 64), which means, precisely, that the tunnel arrived just below the surface of the ground. How was it possible to calculate the slope of the tunnel based on the length? Here as well, we are in open Holocaust Wonderland.

The excavation of the tunnel, in the witnesses’ narrative, is even more absurd. What did they dig with? Did the inmates have tools? Not knowing how to reply, the witnesses resorted to hasty improvisation (p. 41):

*“Yes, we were able to recover tools from the bodies of martyrs, there was a certain number of martyrs who had been taken away at the moment when they were leaving for work, so we retrieved their tools.”*

The reference to work gives the impression of working tools, such as hammers, chisels, etc. Instead, the witnesses claim shortly afterwards that at the beginning they had started to dig with their bare hands, but then they had to stop because they bled; “then we retrieved spoons from the bodies of the victims,” and they continued to dig with spoons. Therefore, the “tools” were spoons! Faced with Lanzmann’s perplexity, the witnesses explained that “the earth was sandy, it was a little bit like flour” (p. 48), but this does not solve the digging problem; rather, it introduces an even bigger problem: with such friable earth, how did they keep the tunnel from collapsing? Here as well they improvised rather clumsily (p. 46):

*“The earth was sandy, so much so that we were obliged each time, all along the tunnel, to reinforce, to fill in the ground with beams.”*

But where did the inmates obtain these beams? The answer is downright risible: the inmates collected firewood for the kitchen, and they set aside part of it for the tunnel! (p. 46) For the kitchen they could gather dry branches, but for the tunnel they needed sturdy beams, straight and cut to measure. And all of it was swiped from the kitchen firewood without tools to work the wood! I have already explained how all this is absolutely implausible. Here again we are full and complete in Holo Wonderland.

The problem of the lack of air is mentioned by the witnesses, but the solution is not explained. After the first four or five meters of the tunnel, there was no more air, and it was impossible to light a candle. The situation described by the witnesses is further strained by the fact that, if the support beams were a minimum of 5 cm in diameter, the dimensions of the tunnel would have been reduced to 45 cm × 45 cm. Into such a constricted space entered four inmates with chains on their feet (the inmates were chained day and night; p. 23). The first inmate excavated with the tablespoon and “passed the sand underneath his own body and passed it to the second inmate, who took it away,” etc. (p. 47). Further along, the witnesses supply additional details: the inmates entered the tunnel in groups of four, five or six; the inmate at the bottom dug, and passed the excavated sand “under his belly,” until it reached the second inmate, who repeated the operation until the sand was out of the tunnel, where it was gathered in a bucket. Under such conditions, the air would have penetrated even the interior of an empty tunnel only with extreme difficulty, let alone one which was obstructed by the bodies of five or six inmates. Any exchange of air would have been nigh unto impossible. Notwithstanding this fact, the excavator was able to work for an entire hour! (p. 50) The excavator had to proceed crawling on his stomach, with chains on his feet, and, to get out, he had to crawl backwards, since there was no room to turn around.

Even in this account, they speak of lighting in the tunnel. Dugin was an electrician and “since I still had tools, I built a sort of electrical system” (p. 47). Another *deus ex machina* – just like the “pliers” which suddenly appeared and which were used to cut the chains in a great hurry! (pp. 60, 63) Where Dugin had tens of meters of electrical cable and various lamps, and how they could cut the chains in a hurry with ordinary pliers, is not explained. Lanzmann moreover lost his chance to ask where, how and by whom the wood for the cremations was cut, and how much was required for each pyre. The witnesses have nothing to say in this regard. In response to Lanzmann’s question whether they knew that the unit assigned to the job of exhumating and cremating the bodies was called “*Kommando 1005*,” the witnesses replied: “No, nobody knows.” They did know, however, that “there was an equivalent unit at Kaunas” (p. 35). They therefore know that a “*Kommando 1005*” was in operation at Kaunas, but they did not know that the squad in which they themselves were active at Ponary must also have been a “*Kommando 1005*.”

### 7.5.8. The Witness Pflüger

The shooting technique at Ponary is not very clear. The testimony of a German “motorcyclist” who was on the spot at the beginning of July 1941, a certain Pflüger, who was interrogated on 18 June 1959, arouses much perplexity (Klee/Dreßen/Rieß 1988, pp. 44-49). There were “2 larger sand pits” separated by the road and also by a strip of land. 400 Jews were taken into the quarry on the right, which had an adequate accessway:

*“On the edge of the pit was a ditch which the Jews had to enter. The ditch had a circular shape. Among other things, the ditch was about 1.5 meters deep and of about the same width.”*

Since the terrain was sandy, the outer ditch was propped up with boards. The condemned persons were first pushed into the outer ditch, then pulled out 10 at a time and taken to the place of execution. They had their heads covered by a cloth and embraced the chest of the prisoner ahead of them with their arms. With regard to the place of execution, the witness asserted:

*“The pit into which the executed persons fell was about 15-20 meters in diameter and was 5-6 meters deep, as far as I know.”*

The publishers of the work which contains this testimony also published three photographs of the “sand pit” (*ibid.*, pp. 45-47), which are in the archives at Yad Vashem, together with others. One shows the “sand pit” with a long access gangway (Document II.7.6.). In another photograph, the circular outer ditch is visible which the Jews were made to enter (Document II.7.7.). A third photograph shows a line of persons with their heads covered and their hands behind their necks (Document II.7.8.).

The extermination technique described by Pflüger does not seem very sensible. We do not understand why the victims were made to go down into the circular lateral ditch only to be pulled out again later to be shot; since there was no avenue of escape in the “sand pit,” would it not have been more logical to mass them together in the center? As far as one can understand, the place of execution was another “sand pit,” presumably one set up on the left. The victims therefore went down into the “sand pit” by means of the wooden gangway, then into the circular lateral ditch, climbed up out of this ditch, were then hooded (for what reason?), climbed up out of this “sand pit” by means of the wooden gangway and went onto the edge of the second “sand pit,” where they were shot, and their bodies fell into the ditch. Who would ever have organized such a pointlessly intricate system of extermination?

The most probable explanation is that Pflüger, during the interrogation, was shown the photographs published by Klee, Dreßen and Rieß and, not knowing what to say, improvised totally senseless explanations.

### 7.5.9. Yitzhak Arad and the “Cremations at Ponar”

In his book *Ghetto in Flames*, Arad devotes a chapter titled “Cremations at Ponar” to an examination of this question (Arad 1982, pp. 444f.). He asserts that

*“A special unit was established in Vilna at the end of September 1943 to dig up the graves at Ponar, exhume the remains and burn them.”*

The inmates excavated a tunnel “35-40 yards long... by hand and with spoons.” Arad adds that



*“the digging lasted about three months, and the escape from the bunker took place on the night of April 15, 1944. They removed the fetters around their feet with the aid of a file they had found.”*

At least a file is more believable as a means of cutting chains than mere “pliers.” 40 inmates fled; 25 were recaptured, and the remaining 15 joined the partisans. Next follows an item of information reported only by Arad:

*“On April 20, 1944, seventy people were taken from the ‘Kaili’ camp to continue cremating the corpses. They were murdered before the Germans retreated from Vilna. Commando 1005 cremated between 56-68,000 bodies at Ponar.”*

The continuation of the exhumations-cremations (until when?) should have been attested to by other witnesses, but it does not appear that anyone else ever made any statements of the sort. Only a laconic affirmation from the above-mentioned Soviet report is known (Yakovlev, p. 39):

*“Witness Ostrovski Edward testified that he saw light from the fires on which the corpses were burnt, from October, 1943 till July, 1944.”*

This witness was not a member of any later *Sonderkommando* 1005, so that his statement has no value, since no outsider could approach the Ponary site.

The figure of 68,000 cremated bodies coincides with the figure cited by Blyazer, that of 56,000 was not asserted by any witness known to me.

#### 7.5.10. How Many Victims Were There at Ponary?

From the documents, it appears that approximately 24,300 persons were killed at Vilnius and elsewhere in the district; a little over 3,100 are recorded in the Incident Reports and in the “Reports from the Occupied Eastern Territories,” plus 21,169 in the “Jäger Report.” If the minimum number of victims at Ponary were 70,000, who were the remaining 45,700 persons, where did they come from, and when were they killed?

Arad asserts that *Einsatzkommando* 9 shot 5,000 Jews at Vilnius between 4 and 20 July (Arad 1982, p. 77), but EM No. 21 dated 13 July 1941, called into question by Arad himself, says that EK 9 shot 321 Jews by 8 July and had begun to liquidate “about 500 Jews and also Saboteurs” (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 114).

He moreover claims that 2,220 Jews were shot at the beginning of October 1941, but this execution does not fit in with those listed by the EK and in the “Jäger Report” (Arad 1982, p. 137); the source in fact consists of books and diaries.

Arad moreover says that by mid-October 1941 there were 27,000-28,000 Jews in the Vilnius Ghetto, 15,000-16,000 of whom had been sentenced to death (*ibid.*, p. 147). By the first week of November, 12,000 “legitimated” Jews remained (*ibid.*, p. 156). According to the “Jäger Report,” 9,997 Jews were killed at Vilnius between 16 October and 6 November 1941 (plus another 234 by 25 November), therefore the minimum number of “legitimated” Jews should have amounted to some 17,000, and we do not know what happened to the surplus 5,000 Jews. At any rate, assuming the figure of 12,000, increased to 13,250 by the arrival of a

transport from small ghettos over the period from 26 March and 2 April 1943 (*ibid.*, p. 359), since 1,000 Jews were deported to Estonia on 6 July 1943 (*ibid.*, p. 405), and another 7,130 between 6 August and 5 September (*ibid.*, p. 420), the number of possible victims at Ponary amounted to  $(13,250 - 1,000 - 7,130 =)$  5,120; among other things, it is impossible to understand how 11,000-12,000 Jews still remained in the Vilnius Ghetto after the deportation of these 7,130 Jews (*ibid.*).

Even if the 5,000 Jews mentioned above, whose fate is unknown, are considered to have been shot, the victims for this period would have amounted to 10,120 and the total figure would have been 34,320: how can one then “estimate” the victims at 70,000-100,000?

### 7.5.11. The Soviet Investigations and Post-War Photographs

The August 1944 “Act on Atrocities Committed by Fascist Aggressors in the Ponar District, near Vilnius,” cited earlier, also reports the results of the Soviet investigations at the Ponary site (Yakovlev, pp. 39-41):

*“The Commission made the excavation of the pits in Ponar.*

*From the round shaped pit 1, 34–35 meters wide and more than 5 meters deep, of capacity of 4,000 cubic meters, after removing the upper layer of the ground, mixed with ashes and burnt bones of people, 486 corpses were dug out and examined. After establishing the exact reason of death of the dug-out remains, which had a common character of death, further excavation of pit 1 was ceased. On the edges of the pit sand was removed from several corpses, and they were left to lie there. Thousands of Vilnius residents have seen the corpses.*

*After the excavation of a round shaped pit 2, of capacity of about 2,000 cubic meters, no corpses were revealed in it, however, the ground had the odour of corpses, and particles of burnt bones were found in the sand.*

*The bottom of the circular pit 3, with the same capacity as pit 1, was overgrown with grass. The pit had the smell of corpses, and its sand was mixed with burnt human bones. Near the pit there was a large amount of dentures. After the excavation of the pit, 27 tightly compressed corpses were found.*

*[Pit 4] In a ditch 100 meter[s] long, 2 meters wide and 1 meter deep two corpses in military clothes were found.*

*A total of 515 corpses were dug out and examined.*

*Besides, in many places of the Ponar pine forest, in the surface layer of the sand, lots of burnt human bones were found.*

*Burnt bones were found in pit 5 of capacity of 8,000 cubic meters, and also on the site prepared for communal graves of the exhumed corpses. [...]*

*Considering the huge quantity of burnt human bones spread on the surface of all the camp area, the corpses found in the pits that were not yet burnt, and witnesses’ testimonies, the total number of corpses is determined to be no less than one hundred thousand.”*

It should first of all be noted that the witnesses speak of eight mass graves, while the Soviets, in turn, claim to have found only five. The total volume of these graves was 18,200 m<sup>3</sup>. Assuming a packing density of 3.5 bodies per cubic meter, there would have been (18,200 m<sup>3</sup> × 3.5 bodies/m<sup>3</sup> =) 63,700 bodies; but the Soviets estimated at least 100,000 based on the “huge quantity of burnt human bones spread on the surface of all the camp area,” which is blatantly ridiculous. One should add that the witnesses, according to their statements, did not leave burnt bones, because they collected them, crushed them and sifted them until they were reduced to little more than powder. On the other hand, as we shall see below, none of the photographs of the Ponary site show this immense quantity of presumed burnt bones.

The Soviets claimed to have exhumed and examined 515 bodies. These bodies had obviously not been cremated, but if the Soviets found them so easily, simply by reopening mass graves already opened by the Germans, the Germans should have been able to find them even more easily. At this point, we invoke a claim made by Farber (*ibid.*, p. 20):

*“For the sake of this, a group of Soviet people, despite the vigilant supervision, saved from burning and buried in secret places in the sand several dozens of bodies.”*

But how can one seriously believe that chained and guarded prisoners, under constant surveillance, could spirit away and conceal 515 bodies at other locations?

But there is also another problem. In the summer of 1944, Major N.G. Kuznetsov and other Soviet officials inspected what they called the Ponary “depot,” and wrote a report dated 14 July 1944, hence exactly one month prior to the above-mentioned “Act.” Let us summarize the most important “discoveries”:

*“In three years of German occupation no fewer than 100,000 persons were taken away and killed at Ponary. [...]*

*The following discoveries were made in the ‘depot’: 7 enormous round graves, 6 meters deep and 14 meters in diameter in the smaller part and 25 meters in the upper part, 4 graves of smaller size and 7 ditches 4 to 1.5 meters in depth, 4 to 2.5 meters wide and from 20 to 50 meters long. The wounded were buried together with the murder victims. [...]*

*The last mass shooting was carried out by the Germans on 3-4 July 1944. Those doomed to die, 4,000 persons in all, were taken away on trucks to Ponary. The Germans did not have time to burn the bodies. They were completely buried in one of the larger graves and covered up with a thin layer of sand.” (Zverstva..., pp. 38-40).*

It is obvious that the figure of 100,000 victims was already pre-established and had no relation to the presumed discoveries of burnt bones. As far as numbers, shapes and dimensions are concerned, the mass graves allegedly located obviously contradict the data cited in the report dated 14 August 1944. Finally, what is even more serious, the Soviet forensic commission did not find these 4,000 bodies, so that, here again, we are confronted with typical propagandistic assertions.

If the Soviets really exhumed the 515 bodies mentioned earlier, they would have been depicted in some of the many existing photographs of Ponary. Let us examine a few of the more significant photos:

- “Bodies at the Ponary mass extermination site near Vilnius (Vilna).”<sup>583</sup> 10-12 fresh bodies on sandy ground.
- “Corpses exhumed from mass graves at the Ponary mass extermination site near Vilnius.”<sup>584</sup> In reality, the photograph depicts 50-60 fresh bodies lined up in a wooded area.
- “Ponary, Poland. A pile of corpses and skulls at the time of liberation.”<sup>585</sup> A mass of fresh bodies, rather emaciated, with a wall in the background. In the foreground, we clearly see a body wearing a striped uniform; the photograph was clearly taken in a German concentration camp.

Some photographs show exhumed bodies, but are totally irrelevant from the point of view of the present study, because they show:

- a single body,<sup>586</sup> three to four bodies,<sup>587</sup> earth removed, with one skull;<sup>588</sup> the edge of a grave, from which hang a few fragments of clothing, partially covering human long bones in two or three cases;<sup>589</sup> one small grave, at the bottom of which we see about twenty objects, mostly shoes.<sup>590</sup>

None of these photographs, therefore, confirms the Soviet claims. Other photographs no doubt refer to Ponary and depict the circular ditches mentioned above.

- “A mass grave at the Ponary mass extermination site near Vilnius (Vilna).”<sup>591</sup> The photograph shows a circular ditch with sandy walls sloping down slightly towards a flat floor. Nothing shows that this was a mass grave.
- “A bunker at the Ponary mass extermination site, which housed the Jewish ‘*sonderkommando*’ men.”<sup>592</sup> Another circular ditch, but much deeper, with the walls clad with large stones; in the center of the image we see a long ladder, in the background, the trees of a forest (see Document II.7.9.).
- Another photograph shows a ladder in the foreground, upon which a civilian is seen in the act of climbing upwards.<sup>593</sup>
- The last photograph depicts the same circular ditch, but from a different angle (Document II.7.10.).<sup>594</sup>

<sup>583</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5899, Registry No. 00237p.

<sup>584</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5904, Registry No. 09231p.

<sup>585</sup> YVA, Archival Signature 1869/478.

<sup>586</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5900, Registry No. 00467p.

<sup>587</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5901, Registry No. 00766p.

<sup>588</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5911, Registry No. 30762p.

<sup>589</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5912, Registry No. 30763p.

<sup>590</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5910, Registry No. 30761p.

<sup>591</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5906, Registry No. 16560p.

<sup>592</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5914, Registry No. 09220p.

<sup>593</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5913, Registry No. 00017p.

<sup>594</sup> GFHA, Catalogue No. 5915, Registry No. 30759p.

This circular ditch corresponds well to the witness testimony, but it is also true that the ditch was accessible to everyone, the witnesses included, after the arrival of the Soviets.

The two photographs reported above are moreover important because they supply obvious proof of the absurdity of the “tunnel” story: it provides visible proof of the obvious impossibility of digging a tunnel – with their bare hands or with simple spoons – through the wall of stone or underneath the same, with a length and slope so exact that it came out exactly at a precise point in a wooded area which can be seen in the background.

## 7.6. The Controversy Concerning the Mass Graves at Mariampole (Marijampole)

Under the date 1 September 1941, the “Jäger Report” records the shooting at Mariampole of:

*“1,763 Jews, 1,812 Jewesses, 1,404 Jewish children, 109 mental patients, 1 German national who was married to a Jew, 1 Russian woman,”*

for a total of 5,090 persons (see Part One, Chapter 4). Orthodox Holocaust historiography does not claim the bodies were exhumed and burnt by the phantasmagorical *Sonderkommando* 1005, so that they should still be found in the local mass graves.

In an article entitled “The Controversy about the Extermination of Jews. An Introduction,” Gernar Rudolf published the following information (Rudolf, pp. 44f.):

*“In the summer of 1996 the town of Marijampol, in Lithuania, decided to erect a Holocaust Memorial to the tens of thousands of Jews allegedly slaughtered and buried there by German Einsatzgruppen. In order to build the Memorial at the correct location, they tried to find where the mass graves are. They excavated the site described by the witnesses, but did not find a trace. Further digging throughout an entire year, all around the alleged killing site, has revealed nothing but undisturbed soil.”*

As sources, the author cited “*Lietuvos Rytas* (Lithuania), August 21, 1996” (footnote 145) and “Personal communication of M. Dragan” (footnote 146).

The article *Lietuvos Rytas* (Lithuanian Morning) was headlined “*Marijampolėje, žydų sušaudymo vietoje, neratsta jokių palaikų*” (“At Mariampole, no human remains have been found at the Jewish-execution site”) and written by Algis Vaskevicius. Among other things, Vaskevicius wrote as follows:

*“During the press conference organized at the City Hall of the city of Mariampole, the sensational findings of the archaeological investigations and prospecting were announced which had been performed with regard to the subject of the genocide of the Jews that had taken place in the city. At the emplacement considered to be that of the burial of the Jews and where a monument has been erected, archaeologists have failed to find any human remains, although historical*

*sources affirm that five to ten thousand persons of Jewish or other nationalities were shot there.*

*'We have long suspected that the limits of the burial site were defined inexactly,' said the head conservator of monuments of the arrondissement of Mariampole, Gediminas Kuncaitis. 'Various rumors were in circulation and needed to be dispelled.'*

*G. Kuncaitis has affirmed that the object of the archaeological expedition was to establish the exact location of the massacre, to prepare a grave-refurbishment project and to render homage to the victims. The most-reliable documents show that, in July 1941, 239 persons were shot at this location, in this place on the edge of the Scheschuppe, and 5,087 others on 1 August of the same year, among them 109 mental patients.*

*The conservator of monuments recalled how, after the war, documents were fabricated indicating an incorrect execution date and a false number of victims. According to the research director, A. Merkevičius, a Ph.D. from the University of Vilnius, it has become clear that the monument protected by the State, for the maintenance of which budgetary resources are allocated, and near which commemorations of the genocide of the Jews have been held, 'is a falsity, because there are no remains at this location. One may think that not thousands were shot there, but perhaps a few hundred persons.'*"

The information published by Rudolf had already appeared a few years before in the article written by Rudolf himself and by Sibylle Schröder, with a German text which is practically identical (Rudolf/Schröder, p. 150). Motivated by this article, or more exactly by the Internet version of it, the blogger Roberto Muehlenkamp ventured to examine the matter more deeply. On 19 May 2003, he wrote to the "Mayor of Marijampolė Municipality, Mr. Vidmantas Brazys" requesting information on the excavations referred to in the article by *Lietuvos Rytas* cited by Rudolf. Muehlenkamp made the following request:<sup>595</sup>

*"I would be very glad if you could give me further information about this site of mass killing, such as when it was discovered, what excavation or other investigations were conducted here, what human remains were found, the measurements of the graves, etc."*

The next day, Brazys replied (errors in the original):

*"In 1970 the cemetery were included into the list of Culture Monuments. The area, where is thought were graves, is planted with olive trees and placed the monument.*

*Because the exact location of the graves was not known, in 1996 were done archeological excavations and the place of fusillade was found (about 50 m to the west from registered graves ).*

*Doctor of Archaeology Science of Vilnius University Mr Algimantas Merkevičius did archaeological excavations. All the documents of excavation keep Chief Spe-*

<sup>595</sup> Discussion thread "Mass grave(s) at Marijampolė"; <http://holocaustcontroversies.yuku.com/topic/2032/Mass-graves-at-Marijampole#.UIePKmWV81F>.

cialist of Architecture and Urbanity Division of Marijampole Municipality Mr Gedeminas Kuncaitis.

*Facts in the article of Germar Rudolf are primary and not final results of archaeological excavations.”*

On 16 June, Muehlenkamp addressed himself to Merkevicus:

*“The reason why I’m writing to you, as you have probably guessed already, is that I would like to know as much as possible about the excavations you conducted at Mariampole Municipality in the summer of 1996. I would be particularly interested in the dimensions of the mass graves found and a quantification of the human remains – skeletons, ashes, bone fragments, teeth etc. – discovered therein, by what methods it was established when and how the people had been killed, as well as what belongings of the victims, and what traces of the ammunition and other artefacts belonging to the killers (including devices used to destroy the bodies in order to erase the evidence) were detected.*

*If you could send me a comprehensive summary of the results of your excavations, which I would of course share with the above-mentioned organization I volunteer for, this would be a significant contribution to the upholding of historical truth and the honest historical research and scholarship that my organization and myself are proudly trying to promote.”*

Merkevicus replied the following day, saying (emphases added):

*“Yes, I excavated mass graves in Marijampole in 1996. The purpose was to find an exact place of the graves. The supposed burial place was empty and I found the mass graves about 100 m outside of this supposed territory. People were killed and buried in a big ditch. But after finding the exact place, my work was over. I don’t know how much people were killed and how big the mass grave territory.”*

On the same day, on 17 June, Muehlenkamp upped the ante:

*“I presume, however, that there is a written report on the result of your investigation, which I would like to see, if this can be arranged. I expect it to be in Lithuanian language, and I would take care of the translation into English myself. Would it be possible for you to send me a copy of the report, if I give you my mailing address?.”*

In his final reply, dated 25 June, Merkevicus wrote:

*“Yes, I can send report about excavation in Marijampole, but bit late, because now I am excavating. But you will found very little information about these graves in this report.”*

In reply to Muehlenkamp’s question whether he was familiar with the article published on *Lietuvos Rytas*, Merkevicus said that he was aware of it, but did not have a copy of it.

Muehlenkamp triumphantly published this correspondence, as if he had refuted the information made available by Germar Rudolf, but the only possible deduction is that the excavations had failed to lead to any discovery of any im-

portance. The great embarrassment becomes apparent from Brazys's and Merkevičius's replies which clearly show the insubstantiality of the discoveries.

Muehlenkamp raised at least nine precise questions:

1. When was the site of mass killing discovered?
2. What excavation or other investigations were conducted there?
3. What human remains were found?
4. What are the dimensions of the mass graves found?
5. What is the quantification of the human remains discovered – skeletons, ashes, bone fragments, teeth etc.?
6. By what methods was it established when and how the people had been killed?
7. What belongings of the victims were found?
8. What traces of ammunition were found?
9. What other artefacts belonging to the killers were found (such as devices used to destroy the bodies in order to erase the evidence)?

The two Lithuanian respondents gave only evasive responses, without confronting any of the questions raised by their inquirer; the “mass graves,” plural, were located “about 100 m outside of this supposed territory” and “people were killed and buried in a big ditch” (singular); nevertheless, Merkevičius knew neither the number of people killed, nor the surface area of the “mass grave territory,” which is very odd, since his principal task was precisely to find and delimit the site of the mass graves. Then, to say that once the site was identified his work was finished is not only not very believable but even contradictory, because he informed Muehlenkamp that he could not send a report on the excavations “because now I am excavating”; what is more, incredibly, there was “very little information about these graves in this report.”

In practice, the alleged discovery of the mass graves was a pathetic fiction, obviously with reference to the purported number of bodies which it should contain, that is, at least 5,090.

Muehlenkamp himself was perfectly well aware of the inconsistency of the responses of the two Lithuanian individuals. In fact, in the eBook “*Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: Holocaust Denial and Operation Reinhard. A Critique of the Falsehoods of Mattogno, Graf and Kues,*” readily available on the Internet (Harrison *et al.*), just like our response (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, which also exists in a printed edition), Muehlenkamp prudently dropped the matter in his chapter on the “mass graves,” although there is a reference to the above-mentioned article by Germar Rudolf and Sibylle Schröder in footnote 25 on p. 97.

Only two articles are available on the matter, after 1996, both dated 15 August 2008. The first appeared in *The Baltic Times* (“Jewish Execution...”):

“VILNIUS – Authorities of the Lithuanian Jewish community and municipality administration of southern Lithuanian city Marijampole agreed there will be no more digging in the location of mass extermination of Jews. The remains of the killed will be buried, Lietuvos Zinios daily reported.



According to the Marijampole Municipality official in charge, Gedeminas Kuncaitis, mass killings of inhabitants on the bend of Sesupe behind a military town built during the reign of the tsars, took place in 1941.

On September 1st of that year alone, Germans, with the help of some Lithuanians, killed over 5,000 inhabitants here, most of whom were Jews, also killing some Lithuanians and Marijampole's inhabitants of other ethnic origins.

'Approximately some 8,000 people were killed here. The killing site is marked by a memorial, but there are no burial grounds of the victims in the area that is identified in documents as a protected Jewish extermination territory, as they [are] all buried under the buildings of the former military town and its vicinities. This was confirmed by archeological inquiries conducted in 1996,' Kuncaitis said.

According to the chief specialist, officers had erected a few military equipment storehouses and an ammo warehouse, and made embankments on the massive killing sites during the Soviet times. After the occupational army left Lithuania following the restoration of its independence, the said buildings were given over to the State Property Fund. A company owned by Vidas Kalasinskas and Daiva Kalasinskiene bought the buildings this year for demolition. Officials of the Municipality of Marijampole issued a permit for taking down the buildings without prior coordination with specialists of the Department of Cultural Heritage. Human bones were found when tidying up the area and dismantling the concrete pavement. Even though construction works were halted at once and bones lying around on the ground were all gathered, any larger downpour of rain washed new bones afloat to the surface.

According to Kuncaitis, no more demolition works are planned on the burial ground site of massive Jew killings, even though a part of it is still covered in concrete. 'It is about a meter thick there, therefore it will be impossible to dismantle it without heavy machinery. It hasn't been decided what to do with embankments made by Russian officers, which also contain the remnants of a large number of people's remains.' (Emphasis added)

The other article is by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency ("Construction Halted..."):

"Construction plans at the site of a Jewish mass grave in Lithuania have been scrapped. A site near Marijampole where tens of thousands of Jews were killed during the Holocaust recently had been sold to a company that had begun demolishing buildings at the site, disturbing the remains there. Bones began to appear after concrete pavement at the site was dismantled. Heavy rains sometimes would wash new bones to the surface. Jewish community leaders asked that the town halt work at the site, and Lithuanian authorities said this week the construction work would cease.

A local newspaper, *Lietyvoa Zinios*, reported that the remains that had risen to the surface would be buried with the cooperation of Jewish community leaders. The site is located behind a czarist-era military town near Marijampole. Most of the Jews and other victims of the massacre there were killed by Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators on a single day: Sept. 1, 1941. The site had been marked

*by a memorial, and the bodies had remained under heavy slabs of concrete and buildings.”* (Emphasis added)

This account is not very clear; nor is it very credible. Leaving aside the number of presumed victims, rising from 5,090 to 8,000 and then becoming “tens of thousands,” it is obvious that the certainty that the bodies would be found “under the buildings of the former military town and its vicinities” was only obtained in 2008, with the incipient dismantling of the buildings: “Human bones were found when tidying up the area and dismantling the concrete pavement”; more exactly, “bones began to appear after concrete pavement at the site was dismantled.” Therefore, if not all, at least a good proportion of the bones were located under the “concrete pavement.”

This openly contradicts the statements by Merkevicus to Muehlenkamp: if the bones (which permitted the localization of the site of the mass graves) were only found in 2008, how could Merkevicus locate them in 1996? And why did he make no mention of the buildings built by the Soviet army?

But there is also another, no less important problem; to return to Muehlenkamp’s question, “by what methods it was established when and how the people had been killed” and, more exactly, based on which methods was it established that the bones that came to light under the “concrete pavement” belonged to Jews shot by the Germans? The thing does not make much sense, because no one can seriously believe that the Soviets would have built buildings on top of one or more mass graves containing Jewish victims killed by their enemies: what for? To cover up enemy crimes? Nor can one believe that the tomb of over 5,000 bodies was not recognizable as such, and therefore easily identifiable a few years after its closure. If the story of the discovery of the human bones is true, one cannot exclude that they belonged to Lithuanian citizens killed by the Soviets. In that case, one would understand why they covered up the tomb with a “concrete pavement” one meter thick. That this possibility is anything but random, is confirmed precisely by another article in *The Baltic Times* dated 18 November 1999, headlined “Killing Field Found in Marijampole,” written by Rokas M. Tracevskis, which begins as follows:

*“Marijampole – A grave site of Soviet terror victims has been found in the town of Marijampole in south-western Lithuania. Six skeletons have already been found. There are suspicions that hundreds of tortured and massacred people were buried there at the end of the 1940s. In October Vilnius University archaeologists found six skeletons in the yard of former Soviet NKVD (predecessor of KGB) headquarters in Marijampole.”*

## 7.7. The Zichenau (Ciechanów) District

Spektor (1990b, p. 169) asserts that

*“this county known under the name of Ziechenau [sic] was incorporated into East Prussia, and a camp for Poles was opened in Dzialdowo (Soldau). About 3000*

*prisoners were murdered there and buried in the vicinity of the camp. After the war one of the prisoners, Stephan Runo, testified before the regional Commission for Investigation of the Nazi Crimes, that in April 1944 a special group of prisoners from the camp opened the graves and burned the bodies near the village of Białut. After the work was over the prisoners were liquidated.*"

His source is an article in Polish by Janusz Gumkowski, published in 1958. The author asserts that Działdowo was a transit camp through which 20,000 people passed. Between February 1940 and January 1945, approximately 3,000 persons were killed there, after which they were buried in the forest near Komorniki (a village located some 3 km northeast of Działdowo), in the Jewish cemetery of Działdowo, in the forest near Białuti (a village approximately 20 km east of Działdowo) and Bursz (a village approximately 15 km south of Działdowo) and in another forest near the city ("lasek Żwirskiego"). Gumkowski then writes that

*"over the course of the exhumation of a part of the mass graves effected in 1947, approximately 500 bodies were extracted and transferred to the cemetery. The bodies examined showed that the cause of death of the victims was gunshot wounds."*

In this context, he makes reference to the witness cited by Spektor:

*"From the testimony of Stefan Runo, interrogated during the investigations conducted by the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, it is apparent that in April 1944, such an action [action 1005] was effected in the forest near Białuti. A part of the bodies buried there was exhumed and burned by the inmates of Działdowo Camp. A few dozen prisoners who had carried out this work were liquidated upon termination of the work."* (Gumkowski, p. 87)

Trying to make these alleged operations form part of "Aktion 1005" is clearly senseless, because, instead of exhuming and cremating all the alleged 3,000 bodies, the *Kommando* operated in one single location (Białuti) and only opened a part of the graves. The other bodies were obviously neglected. If, then, the Polish Commission found only 500 bodies in spite of all the witnesses, one may consider that these were the only victims of the camp.

The encyclopaedic dictionary of the *Central Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland*, asserts under the heading "Działdowo" that 300 inmates died of typhus and 300 were shot in this camp, but it then nevertheless adopts the figure of 3,000 victims based on Gumkowski's article. The article reiterates that approximately 20,000 inmates transited this camp until 1941, including Jews (Pilichowski *et al.*, p. 165).

## 7.8. "Aktion 1005" in Yugoslavia

### 7.8.1. Shmuel Spektor's Exposition

Spektor asserts that the Germans killed 80,000 persons, including 1,000 Jews, in the camp at Sajmište (Semlin), and continues (Spektor 1990b, p. 170):

*“On 6 November 1943 a group of prisoners (among them Jews) were brought in from the Semlin camp. One of them, Momčilo Damjanovic, escaped close to the end of operation. After the war he testified how the burning of bodies was done. The bodies were laid out in mounds whose base was 7-8 m by 4 m and whose height was 1,5 m. Underneath and above the bodies were layers of wood saturated with flammable liquid. Before the fire was lit the prisoners were forced to collect jewelry from the bodies and to remove any gold teeth. Until the escape of the witness, some 68,000 bodies were burned.”*

The source is a work published at Belgrade in 1952. Hoffmann refers to Spektor, but adds that the former Higher SS and Police leader of Belgrade, August Meyszner, asserted in a statement written in September 1946 that a *Kommando* for the cremation of buried bodies was created in Serbia in 1943 (Hoffmann, p. 324). His source, a contribution headlined “Jugoslawien” (“Yugoslavia”) by Holm Sundhausen, says that, according to a record of interrogation dated 17 September 1945, Meyszner reported on a “Special Squad for the Cremation of Bodies in Serbia” which began to operate precisely in 1943 (Benz, p. 320). The author refers to the “Eichmann Trial, Doc. 1435,” which is the number attributed to the document by the Israeli police. The document, introduced into evidence during the Eichmann Trial by the Jerusalem Tribunal as T-896, is a Record of Interrogation of August Meisner (sic) drawn up in Belgrade on 4 September 1946 by the Judge Advocate General’s Corps of the Yugoslavian Armed Forces. The record consists of four pages, none of which contain any reference to the issue of the exhumation-cremation of bodies. Meyszner recalled the arrival of a “motor vehicle with the gassing chamber” at the Semlin Camp, “by means of which the Jews of the camp were gassed.” He adds:

*“The liquidated persons were buried on the firing range at Jajinci. The number of those liquidated this way is unknown to me, but I assumed that they amounted to no more than 2,000, because a large part of the Jews had already died earlier of typhus and other diseases or had been deported to the East.”*

In Jajinci, there had also been reprisal shootings, but not in significant numbers. Here is the crucial passage from Meyszner’s account (T-896):

*“I also learned from Schefer that in 1943 a special squad for corpse cremation was formed that had the task of burning the bodies from mass graves. I don’t exactly know the reason that gave rise to this, but I suppose that back then, in the course of the Kantiner Company [? perhaps a confused reference to Katyn], they wanted to erase all traces of mass murder. I don’t know the number of corpses cremated for this purpose, but I assume that Schefer registered them; I cannot possibly know the figures already because the work continued even after I left.”*

### 7.8.2. The Witness Momčilo Damjanović

This assertion, which is second-hand and rather general, is not confirmed by any documents, so that the sole source for the alleged exhumation-cremation of bodies in Yugoslavia is Momčilo Damjanović’s statement. The statement, more

properly a “Record of interrogation,” was recorded by the Yugoslavian “State Commission” on 7 February 1945. The original text was published on a web site with an English translation, which I reproduced below:<sup>596</sup>

*“As soon as we came to Jajinci, we were chained, while a German lieutenant gave us a short speech telling us that we were doing a job that was useful for the German Reich and that we would be compensated, but if one of us tried to escape, he would be immediately executed. As it was already evening, they took us and closed us up in a room where there were another 90 people of which 55 were Jews and 35 Gypsies. From them, we heard that we would be working on digging up and burning corpses.*

*The next day, we were all taken from the room and began work under the supervision and guidance of the Germans. Our work consisted of exhuming bodies from the graves. Corpses were placed on a canal bed in the same manner as you would stack wood. First one line, then a second across it and so on. By dinner, we managed to make a stack that was 7 to 8 meters long, 2 to 2.5 meters high, and 4 meters wide (because two dead bodies were placed next to each other, usually head to head). This one stack consisted of about 700 corpses. This large number of corpses could fit in such a small space because the bodies were dry. For this heap alone, a bonfire was built up a half meter from the ground and we laid out wood and poured motor oil on it. When this was completed, we ignited the pyre. We added oil until the fire was well lit. As the bonfire began to burn, we were counted and taken to eat dinner. Our dinner came from the camp in Banjica brought by Germans themselves, since no one else had access. As it appeared to the Germans that the work was not progressing quickly enough, the next day we were ordered to build two bonfires. We acted in the same fashion, working on the third day after my arrival in Jajinci.*

*On the fourth day, the Germans received a coal wagon. On that wagon, there were four beams which were connected in the middle as one, about a meter and half tall, and on those beams there was a metal bar about 6 to 7 meters long, and on its front end, there was a large shovel. This lever could move up and down, like a seesaw, and was also able to move left and right.*

*When they brought in this wagon, first a small bonfire was made, to which the vehicle continuously transported corpses to be burned. This job was done in the following manner: 3 to 4 meters from the bonfires, rails were built for the wagons with the devices as I described. Then, the upper arm of the lever would come forward and two corpses would be placed on the shovel. As the lever came down, the bodies would be lifted and the wagon would glide toward the fire, then the shovel would turn and the corpses would fall into the fire. In this way, the job went much faster so that it was possible to burn 1200 corpses daily. Thus we worked all the way up until my escape. I escaped after 36 days. Overnight, the fire stopped burning and work began again at 6:30 a.m. with a new fire. The bonfire was always in the same place the entire time that the bodies were brought from pits, which were nearby. Once a pit was emptied, then the fire was moved closer to newly excavat-*

<sup>596</sup> [www.serbianholocaust.org/Momcilo%20Damjanovic/momcilodamjanovic.html](http://www.serbianholocaust.org/Momcilo%20Damjanovic/momcilodamjanovic.html)

*ed graves. For the time taken to build a new bonfire, one group worked on excavating, placing, and transporting corpses using the wagons; one group on the field collected scraps of rotten clothing that remained as evidence of the corpses and threw them into the fire; while another group was distributing ashes from burnt corpses in the field. If one found unburned bones or remnants of burned bones, those bones would be crushed and spread in the field like sand for mortar, but the sieve was small and the ashes were also scattered on fields in Jajinci. As I worked on mining and burning corpses, I noticed that the bodies had no signs of being shot. I found that their clothes were not bloody, the bodies had no wounds on them, and I suspected that these were the bodies of people who had been suffocated. This is my opinion, supported by the fact that the bodies were completely naked, while, when I was working on the Jajinci excavation, in two or three graves, victims had been stripped of outer-clothing and I saw traces of blood on their underwear and wounds on their bodies. In addition, the pits where people were executed [shot] were characterized by blood visible on the pit walls, while in most of the pits we excavated, there was none.*

*During the excavation of the bodies, we were ordered to take gold teeth, rings, and watches from the cadavers. These things were all sorted, and in the evening after the end of our work day, presented to the Germans. One time, we found the corpse of a woman holding a box that resembled a 100-cigarette box, in which there were brilliant [diamond] rings and other jewelry worth 22,000,000 dinars (according to the Germans) and which they took.*

*When one of us who worked in Jajinci grew weak and could no longer work, he would be killed and thrown on the bonfire. I was present when a tall, swarthy Jew, who was rumored to be a musician, was so exhausted that he could not even refill the pits from which corpses had already been removed and burned, and Dr. Jung, who attended the burning, was disgusted and grabbed the young man and pushed him toward the fire. As the victim struggled and finally jumped from the shovel end of the lever, Dr. Jung ordered the boy to take off his coat and to lie face down on the ground. When this was done, he ordered Sergeant Stageman to kill him, which he did by shooting him in the head. After this, the young man was put on the shovel on the pyre.*

*As I suspected that the Germans would shoot all of us once we had finished the job, I along with Bozidar Drcan, Radoslav Zecevic and Zlativoje Jakovljevic agreed to make a plan for an escape, which we eventually accomplished.*

*As we were told to count the corpses that were burned, to my knowledge, in Jajinci 68,000 corpses were burned, and there remained 1400 corpses unburned, one pit with another 1200, and two other pits with 100 bodies in each."*

The original document bears, at the beginning and the end, a stamp indicating its classification: "Jevrejski Istorijski Muzej – Beograd [Jewish Historical Museum Belgrade] 159/2 K.24-2-2/17." This declaration is a "Record of interrogation" written by the Yugoslav "State Commission" on 7 February 1945. It should immediately be noted that the date of 6 November 1943 indicated by Spektor is not confirmed by the text.

As regards the statements of the witness, according to him, 69,400 bodies were buried at Jajinci, 68,000 of which had been exhumed and cremated by the time of his escape. The inmates of the Semlin and Banjica camps were also said to have been killed at Jajinci.

7,000 Jews are supposed to have been “gassed” in the first camp (Benz, p. 320); as for the second, Sundhaussen asserts that “the camp register contains the names of 23,697 persons, about 4,200 to 4,700 of whom were murdered in Serbia, while several thousands inmates were sent to Mauthausen and Auschwitz” (Sundhaussen, p. 345). Almost 12,000 bodies are therefore said to have been buried at Jajinci. The figure of 69,400 is all the more ridiculous since the Jewish victims from all over Yugoslavia amounted to 60,000-65,000, including 10,700 in Serbia (Benz, p. 330).

Damjanović’s account appears rather fantastic at first glance. To start with, the fettered inmates had to open the mass graves by hand, extract the bodies and arrange them in a pile – without wood. The pile measured 7-8 meters long, 4 meters wide and 2 to 2.5 meters high; a pyre was then built, consisting solely of wood *on top* of the bodies, as far as one can tell, since the witness speaks only of wood and not bodies. This amounts to a rather curious and no doubt highly inefficient burning technique, because most of the heat would have dispersed without even touching the underlying bodies. Nevertheless, they proceeded this way for three days; on the fourth day the *deus ex machina* arrived. It’s difficult even to imagine it based on the witness’s description. A railroad car carrying “four beams,” presumably coupled and superimposed, and welded to the center in such a way as to form one single beam with 4 arms, “about a meter and half tall”: 1.5 meters above the rails? We do not understand. On top of this quadruple beam there was “a metal bar about 6 to 7 meters long,” which finished with “a large shovel,” which was a “lever,” completely articulated, capable of moving, not only up and down, like a swing, but also left and right. Unfortunately, the witness does not reveal what mechanism permitting the “shovel” to perform these movements, no doubt a complex system of steel cables, guy wires and levers. With the railroad car thusly equipped – a unique feature in the history of cremation – the work could be very much accelerated, so much so that they were able to cremate 1,200 bodies a day. Even at this point, the story is rather chaotic, but we seem given to understand that there was a change in technology by first building the pyre of wood and then placing the bodies on it – thanks to the special railroad car.

I shall interpret this tale according to the least-irrational possible procedure. First of all, they built a set of train tracks from the grave to the pyre, up to a distance of 3-4 meters from the pyre. The railroad car traveled to the grave, two bodies were loaded onto the “shovel,” then the car traveled towards the pyre, and when it was at a safe distance, thanks to the long “metal bar,” the “shovel” was moved into position above the pyre and turned in such a way as to dump the two bodies onto the pyre. One must recognize the technical ingenuity of this operation! To load 1,200 onto the pyre with this system, the railroad car had to move

600 times forth and back between grave and pyre; if the distance between grave and pyre was only 10 meters, every day the railroad car must have traveled 12 km. Since the witness never mentions a locomotive, one must assume that the car was pushed along by hand by the prisoners.

Since the pyre burnt out completely during the night and had to be built again the next morning at 6:30 AM sharp, this means the work lasted 18 hours, or 1,080 minutes or 64,800 seconds. It follows that each round trip of the rail cart could on average not last longer than  $(64,800 \div 600 =)$  1 minute and 48 seconds. During that time, the railroad car was supposed to:

- a. be loaded with two bodies near the grave;
- b. be pushed to the pyre by hand by the prisoners;
- c. be unloaded of the two bodies, which were thrown onto the pyre;
- d. be pushed back to the grave.

Only a lunatic could have thought up such a crazy system. But even that's not enough. Every time one grave was emptied and they went on to another, they had to lay more tracks, thus moving the tracks they had just laid before, because the location of the pyre changed every time, too. The witness does not say how many mass graves there were and how many bodies they contained, but he informs us that at the end, three mass graves remained, one with 1,200 bodies, and the other two with 100 bodies each.

Even if we assume an average of 2,400 bodies per grave, the railroad car would have worked two days at the same site; the third day would have been spent moving to another site, with all the related procedures. Since 2,100 bodies were presumably cremated over the first three days, the remaining  $(68,000 - 2,100 =)$  65,900 bodies allegedly cremated after this using the railroad-car system would have required  $(65,900 \div 2,400 =)$  over 27 changes of position for the car, including re-arranging the tracks. The undertaking would not have been simple, because, if the first and last graves were several hundred meters away from each other, as seems probable, the job of laying the tracks would have been very difficult, because it would have been necessary to move the railroad car from the first to the last grave, pushing it the entire distance on rails by hand.

How can anyone believe such a simple-minded fairy tale?



## 8. Shootings, Gassings, Exhumations, Cremations and Soviet Investigations: Other Significant Examples

### 8.1. The Mogilev “Death Camp”

The fable of the Mogilev “Death Camp” spread successively from von dem Bach-Zelewski’s fleeting mention to the visit to Mogilev of a civilian commission to install a “gasification facility” at Minsk (see Part One, Subchapter 6.2.). Richard Breitman, one of its proudest advocates, reconstructed its alleged genesis with vivid fantasy.

On 23 October 1941, Adolf Eichmann chaired a meeting in Berlin regarding Hitler’s order to evacuate 50,000 Jews from Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia to Riga and Minsk (see Part One, Subchapter 2.2.). On the same day, Himmler flew to Mogilev, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski’s general headquarters. 3,726 Jews had been shot four days earlier in the local ghetto, and approximately 1,000 remained alive. “Bach-Zelewski” – Breitman notes – “apparently had high hopes of making his region into a major killing center for German and European Jews and of improving the process of mass extermination” (Breitman 1998, pp. 74f.). Breitman’s conviction of von dem Bach-Zelewski’s presumed hopes are based on these data (*ibid.*, p. 75):

*“He had pressed Himmler in mid-August in Minsk about the psychological problems caused by mass shootings, with some effect. He also had got Himmler’s approval for a large budget for urgently needed provisions. But he had to pry the money loose from the SS bureaucrats, which took time.”*

I have already dwelt at sufficient length on the first point mentioned. As for the second, the reference, provided in the associated footnote, reads: “German Police Decodes, 25 Nov. 1941, item 5, PRO HW 16/32” (*ibid.*, fn 29, p. 269), which is nothing but the announcement of a “blessed event” (*i.e.*, the wife of *Wachtmeister* Simmert, Breslau, had had a baby).

Breitman continues as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 75f.):

*“In 1946, Bach-Zelewski falsely testified that a commission from Hamburg came to Mogilev in 1943 (!) with an order to build a gassing facility. He said that he demanded an order from Himmler before proceeding and that his insistence stymied the project. He said that he had no previous knowledge of gassings. [...]*

*The discussion of gassing occurred in the fall of 1941, and German radio messages (intercepted by the British) offered some traces of it. Upon his return to Germany, Querner<sup>[597]</sup> placed an order with the Hamburg corporation Tesch and Stabenow for a large supply of Zyklon – the commercial insecticide based on prussic acid already tested for its ability to kill humans at Auschwitz.”*

<sup>597</sup> Rudolf Querner, Higher SS and Police Leader in Hamburg for *Wehrkreis* 10.

The “traces” of the British intercepts are described as follows (*ibid.*, fn 33, p. 269):

*“Head physician for the Higher SS and Police leader Riga to SS Oberabschnitt North Sea, 13 Nov. 1941, and Higher SS and Police leader East to Sugar Works Dessau for Zyklon and Chemical Zyklon, Dessau, 13 Nov. 1941, German Decodes, items 10 and 52, PRO HW 16/32.”*

These are the two messages which I quoted in Chapter 1 of Part One; but they are unrelated to either von dem Bach-Zelewski or Mogilev. Breitman himself admits this by noting (*ibid.*, p. 76):

*“This order was not just for Bach-Zelewski, since Dr. Bruno Tesch, the head of the firm, went off to Riga to give directions to Jeckeln’s medical officer on how to use the poison safely and effectively.”*

As regards the claim that Zyklon B had already been tested at Auschwitz “for its ability to kill humans,” as is known, the most representative source on this presumed event is a declaration by Rudolf Höss, ex-commandant of Auschwitz, dated November 1946 (Broszat, p. 159):

*“On occasion of an official trip, my deputy, Hauptsturmführer Fritsch, had used gas on his own initiative for the annihilation of Russian POWs, namely in such a manner that he packed the cells located in the basement with Russians, and that caused an instant death.”*

This was therefore a presumed accidental and episodic event which has no relation to institutional experiments on the effects of Zyklon B on human beings within the context of a plan of extermination, as Breitman would have us believe. Nevertheless, he wishes at all costs to find a link to Mogilev:

*“The order was for seven hundred kilograms of Zyklon, a substantial amount. At the time, Auschwitz had ordered only five hundred kilograms. Some later shipments of Zyklon went directly to the SS hospital at Minsk, in Bach-Zelewski’s region.”* (Breitman 1998, p. 76)

Breitman refers to Documents NI-2084 and NI-2085. The first is a letter from the Heerdt-Lingler Company to the Friedrich Boos Company, which was responsible for the construction of the Zyklon-B disinfestation chambers in the “laundry and admission building with delousing facility an inmate bath” (Building 160) at Auschwitz,<sup>598</sup> dated 26 November 1941. The subject is indicated as “K.L. A.[uschwitz] delousing facility.” The letter states that “the above concentration camp has ordered 500 kg of ZYKLON in 200-g cans, hence evidently wishes to carry out delousings on a large scale” (NI-2084).

The other document is a letter from Heerdt-Lingler to Degesch dated 2 December 1941 regarding “K.L. Auschwitz.” The order for 500 kg of Zyklon B is confirmed, and the reply confirms that construction of the “*Entlausungsanstalt*”

<sup>598</sup> As early as 1 July 1941, the Heerdt-Lingler company sent the SS-Neubauleitung at Auschwitz “auf Veranlassung der Firma Friedrich Boos” two specialist articles on disinfestation with “Zyklon-Blausäure.” RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 86-90.

has not yet begun, and that Heerdt-Lingler did not know the purpose for which Auschwitz Concentration Camp had made the order (NI-2085). The purpose was the normal disinfestation of buildings, which already began in July 1940 with “Building No. 54” (“fumigated against vermin and disease”).<sup>599</sup> In actual fact, Auschwitz received 3,000 kg of Zyklon B in November 1941 (Bartosik *et al.*, p. 51).

Breitman then observes that

*“on December 15, Magill was sent to the Oranienburg concentration camp to receive instruction from Tesch and Stabenow personnel regarding the use of Zyklon. (The only evidence of the posting comes from a radio message decrypted by the British).”* (Breitman 1998, p. 77)

The message in question said:<sup>600</sup>

*“DSR de DQB SPK1 Nt 10 1300 145 DSR 155*

*To SS Oberabschnitt North Sea, for TESCH & STABENOW Company. MAGILL training takes place 20 Dec. 41 ORANIENBURG. Issued Higher SS and Pol. Leader East.”*

This simply shows that Magill (according to Breitman: Franz Magill, commandant of the Second SS Cavalry Regiment) had been educated in disinfestation procedures. In the end, Breitman puts aside all grey areas and insinuation and speaks clearly (Breitman 1998, p. 77):

*“Bach-Zelewski may not have been able to afford top-of-the-line gas chambers. Himmler had given him only 100,000 marks, and the cost of the gas-chamber apparatus later built at Auschwitz-Birkenau was about 310,000 marks. There was the option of converting an existing building into an improvised gas chamber (using Zyklon B),”*

and there were, of course, the “gas vans.”

The reference to Auschwitz-Birkenau is incomplete to say the least: “Baubeschreibung [construction description], Kriegsgefangenenlager [POW Camp] Auschwitz, Military Archive, Prague, OT, Carton 9”; *ibid.*, fn 44, p. 270). This refers to a project description for the Birkenau Camp dated 28 October 1942 titled “Project: POW Camp (Implementation of Special Treatment).” Breitman refers to the “Construction Description” No. 1 (the document contains 12 of them) relating to “Accommodation, Personal effects, washing, toilet and administrative barracks. Guardhouse and headquarters building, warehouse, disinfestation facility, wire fence, crematoria and morgues, boilers and cauldrons” which, at number 16a, mentions a “delousing fac.[ility]” which was “not yet begun,” but had a volume of 8,449 m<sup>3</sup> and “total construction costs” of 310,000 RM. The related “cost estimate” specifies that this “disinfestation facility” was intended “for special treatment.”<sup>601</sup>

<sup>599</sup> “Tätigkeitsbericht vom 5. Juli bis 11. Juli 1940” authored by *Bauleiter* August Schlachter on 12 July 1940. RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 97.

<sup>600</sup> TNA, HW 16/32, German Police Decodes, No. 1 Traffic: 11.12.41. ZIP/G.P.D.550/6.1.42.

<sup>601</sup> VHA, Fond OT 31(2)/8. The pages are not consecutively numbered.

As I have documented in another study, the installation in question was the so-called *Zentralsauna* (BW 32), the most-important health and sanitation facility inside the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp (Mattogno 2016c, pp. 39-42 and Docs. 11f., pp. 132-134). Since Breitman was obviously unaware of these certainly not-irrelevant facts, his elaboration is irrelevant, and all his allusions are moreover simply unequivocal references to disinfestation. Just as irrelevant is his recourse to the order of cremation furnaces for Mogilev (Breitman 1998, p. 77):

*“In mid-November, the SS Main Office for Budget and Building in Berlin placed an order with the Topf Company of Erfurt to build a huge crematorium – an oven with four cremation chambers – in Mogilev. The cost was billed to Bach-Zelewski’s building administration.”*

In fact, the order was issued on 4 December 1941 and concerned “4 pieces Topf double 4-muffle cremation furnaces,” hence four furnaces with eight muffles each.<sup>602</sup> Breitman relies in this regard on an article by Gerlach (1997), the total baselessness of which I have already demonstrated elsewhere (Mattogno 2012). Hence, this issue does not deserve any further discussion here.

From Gerlach’s article, Breitman also derives his inspiration for his own theory on the “gas chambers” at Mogilev (Breitman 1998, fn 45, p. 270):

*“Gerlach, ‘Failure of Plans,’ 65, suggests that gassing experiments in improvised stationary gas chambers were conducted in Mogilev at this time. It now appears that the experiments were extensive and that they involved the use of Zyklon B.”*

Paradoxically, his lucubrations have been refuted by Gerlach himself, who has written (Gerlach 1999, p. 651.):

*“New findings by Richard Breitman show connections between Querner and the Tesch & Stabenow Company in Hamburg, which shortly thereafter sent representatives on the use of Zyklon gasses [sic] to Mogilev and Riga. However, the materials discovered by Breitman point to the relatively harmless explanation that these gases were used in Mogilev and Riga in accordance with their actual function for the disinfection of textiles or buildings, especially for Waffen-SS units as well as the police in the central section of the front.”*

In a footnote, Gerlach has set forth an even more decisive critique (*ibid.*, fn 811):

*“There are no indications at all that Zyklon B was ever used at Mogilev for the murder of human beings as Breitman conjectures, 1998, p. 270, footnote 45.”*

Breitman had not only delusions about a gas chamber at Mogilev, but also about one at Lvov, and in this regard he was not the only person to fantasize about “gas chambers.” As early as 18 May 1943, the British received a “Memorandum” from Stockholm containing the statements of “two Belgian prisoners of war, L.H. and R.C., who escaped from Germany on 28th April and arrived in Sweden on 5th May” and who had been “in the penal camp at Rawa Ruska (Rava-Russkaya).” They allegedly stated that

<sup>602</sup> RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 47f.

*“the Germans themselves boasted that at Lvov they had specially constructed gas chambers where Jews were systematically killed and buried. The total number was said to exceed 80,000.”*<sup>603</sup>

Regarding Mogilev, Gerlach abandoned any hope for gas chambers, but he did not abandon his theory of the “Death Camps” (Gerlach 1999, pp. 771f.):

*“Another large death camp existed in the midst of Mogilev. Created around late September/early October 1941 and temporarily planned as a nucleus for a transit and extermination camp with international functions, it was expanded after Himmler’s visit on 23 October 1941. Until 1943, a changing number of people from the region and possibly from Poland were imprisoned there – according to witness statements roughly between 1,000 and 4,000; according to a reconnaissance report by Soviet partisans, 500 people, among them 276 Jews, in early September 1943, before the evacuation. At a point in time that cannot be determined, presumably 1942, up to 4,000 Jewish inmates of the camp were shot at one stroke on von dem Bach-Zelewski’s orders – not the only operation of this kind. The shootings and unloading of murder victims from gas vans no longer took place predominantly in Novopashkovo, as in 1941, but in the village of Polykovichi.”*

Even if this story were true as well, it is impossible to understand why it is necessary to postulate the existence of a “death camp” for the shooting of 4,000 people. But is this story true? The presumed shooting is not attested to by any document, and Gerlach is compelled to refer to wholly unreliable sources, such as partisan reports or witnesses interrogated in 1958 and 1959 (*ibid.*, fn 1478f.).

In the Incident Reports, the first execution of a significant number of persons at Mogilev was recorded on 9 October 1941, carried out by *Einsatzgruppe B* (EM No. 108; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 662):

*“A resistance movement of the Jews became increasingly noticeable in Mogilev as well, so that it became necessary to crack down hard by shooting 80 Jews and Jewesses. When this measure also failed to help and false rumors continued to be spread by the Jews, and orders issued by the German occupation forces were sabotaged, 215 Jews and 337 Jewesses were shot.”*

In this case as well, the motivation was not a mere “pretext” to kill Jews for racial reasons. The “War Diary” of Police Battalion 322 dated 3 October 1941 contains the following entry:<sup>604</sup>

*“7th and 9th Company together with staff of Higher SS and Police leader Russia Center – execution of a total of 2,008 Jews and Jewesses outside Mogilev near forest camp (7th Company 378, 9th Company 545 executions).”*

It is not known with certainty whether the 2,008 victims also included the 552 victims indicated by *Einsatzgruppe B*. The fact that the “War Diary” does not mention this unit leads one to think that they were not. 80 Jews had already been

<sup>603</sup> Memorandum. To: Political Intelligence Department. From: Press Reading Bureau, Stockholm. 18th May, 1943. TNA, FO 371-34430, C 5895, 26 May 1943.

<sup>604</sup> YVA, O.53-127, p. 111.

killed beforehand (EM No. 67; Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 376). EM No. 108 also reports the killing of 836 mental patients at Mogilev (*ibid.*, p. 663).

EM No. 124 dated 25 October 1941 reports on other executions by *Einsatzkommando 8* (*ibid.*, p. 731):

*“Also in Mogilev, the Jews attempted to sabotage their resettlement into the ghetto by initiating a wholesale emigration away [from the city]. With the assistance of the police, EK 8 therefore blocked all outbound roads and brought in 113 Jews for liquidation. [...] Another 2 Jews were liquidated in Mogilev for kicking wounded German soldiers and for not wearing the prescribed insignia. 10 further Jews and Russians were liquidated as communist officials and agents.”*

Again, these Jews were not killed based on mere “pretexts.”

EM No. 133 dated 14 November 1941 mentions the killing of 55 persons, including 22 Jews, for membership in a “partisan organization” (*ibid.*, p. 786).

The largest execution took place on 19 October 1941 (*ibid.*, pp. 788f.):

*“On 19 Oct. 1941, a Jewish operation of a larger scale was carried out in Mogilev with support from the Pol. Regt. Center, during which 3,726 Jews of both sexes and all ages were liquidated. This measure was necessary because ever since the occupation of the city of Mogilev by German troops, the Jews, [sabotaged] the concerns of the occupation authority, and despite the measures already taken against them, they did not only [not] back away from such activity but continued their anti-German activities (sabotage, support to partisans, refusal to work, etc.) with such tenacity that it could no longer be tolerated in the interests of pacifying the areas behind the lines.”*

Here again, the motivation for the execution had no connection to the racial factor.

On 23 October 1941, another 279 Jews were shot “in the struggle against the partisans and in order to prevent acts of sabotage” (*ibid.*, p. 789). The last executions carried out at Mogilev (483 persons) were recorded in EM No. 148 dated 19 December 1941.

Arad asserts that a census taken in August 1941 registered “over 6,430 Jews” at Mogilev. A ghetto was set up at the end of September. In the three most important actions (750 + 2,208 + 3,726 =) 6,684 Jews were shot, more than the number registered. Arad concludes (Arad 2009, p. 188):

*“In Mogilev, 200 skilled Jewish workers were left alive in a ‘civilian prison camp’ (Zivilgefängnislager), along with several hundred gentiles, to serve the needs of the German administration. Their families were not spared.”*

Hence, if there were only 200 Jews in Mogilev by late October 1941, it is not clear how 4,000 could have been killed in 1942.

The story recounted by Gerlach is therefore without foundation.

The above-mentioned documents indicate a maximum of 7,471 victims. I have shown earlier that the Soviet Commission which investigated Mogilev attributed 70,000 victims to this locality, including 10,000 Jews. For his part, Pilunov spoke

of 46,000 bodies, 35,000 buried in the suburb of Pashkovo and 11,000 in the suburb of Polykovichi (see Sections 6.7.1-6.7.3.).

## 8.2. The Mass Graves at Kherson

Arad writes as follows concerning this locality (Arad 2009, pp. 178f.):

*“EG D operated in the Nikolaev-Kherson region, and according to the Einsatzgruppen report, the remaining Jewish population of each of these towns stood at about 5,000. They were murdered on September 14. The town’s military commander reported that, ‘in accordance with Sipo orders, the Jews of Nikolaev have been evacuated (their execution will follow).’ A priest from Nikolaev testified that ‘on the morning of September 14... I witnessed a procession of condemned Jews... The Gestapo, the police, and gendarmerie transferred the Jews... to the ravine and shot them.’”*

EM No. 89 dated 20 September 1941 reports in connection with the activity of *Einsatzgruppe D* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 511):

*“Kommando’s area of operation free of Jews. 8,890 Jews and Communists were executed between 18 Aug. and 25 Sept. Total number 17,315. Jewish question currently solved in Nikolayev and Kherson. About 5,000 Jews arrested in each city.”*

Krausnick and Wilhelm, to whom Arad refers in footnote 83 on p. 568, write:

*“Nothing can be read in the files of the Army High Command II/Dept. Ic/AO on the mass shootings carried out in September in Nikolayev and Kherson, to which thousands of Jews fell victim.”* (Krausnick/Wilhelm, pp. 224f.)

Further along, on the page mentioned by Arad, the two authors noted that on 15 September 1941, the local commandant of Nikolayev communicated a message stating:

*“by order of the Security Service... the Jews residing in Nikolayev had been evacuated on 14 Sept. 41.”*

These Jews are said then to have been killed, but there are no documents in this regard. Regarding Kherson, Krausnick and Wilhelm mention only the proclamation of the garrison commander to the population of Kherson dated 29 August 1941 that “100 Jews and 10 Bolshevik leaders” had been shot that day in reprisal (*ibid.*, p. 242).

An “Order to the Jews of the City of Kherson” from the first 10-day period of August 1941 required the Jews of the city to wear the Jewish star on their clothing starting on 12 August; in addition, all the Jews in the city were to report for registration at a certain location between 24 and 27 August. The registration was to be performed by the “Jewish Committee” (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 31, p. 85).

The “Report on the Activities of the S.Kdo. 11a in Kherson between 22 Aug. and 10 Sept. 1941” reports what happened afterwards:

*“Because of the registration, the Wehrmacht’s desires for Jewish labor units could be satisfied from the 2nd day onward. Jewish labor squads of all kinds were made available every day, whose strength, from initially 120, reached up to a thousand persons in the final days.”*

The report also says that “400 Jews and 10 Jewesses were shot in reprisal for acts of sabotage and communication links” (*ibid.*, Doc. 59, pp. 140f.)

EM No. 101 dated 2 October 1941 reports on these two localities specifically (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 615):

*“In particular the cities of Nikolayev and Kherson were made free of Jews during the reporting period, while remaining officials were treated accordingly. 22,467 Jews and Communists were executed between 16 Sept. and 30 Sept.”*

It is not clear whether this number refers to the two cities or, as is more likely, to the general activity of *Einsatzgruppe D*.

No *Sonderkommando* 1005 ever concerned itself with the bodies at Kherson, and not even the Soviets knew of the presumed massacre. The Soviets were informed of the massacre in 1944 by the British,<sup>605</sup> who in turn learned of it from a German POW, *Hauptscharführer* P.W., who was a member of the security police but was “definitely anti-Nazi,” or so he claimed. The interrogation was summarized in a long report which states the following, among other things:<sup>606</sup>

*“PW also stated that he saw a big anti-tank ditch about 3 or 4 km from Cherson, where they buried a large number of corpses. He estimates that at least 5000 people (all of them Jews) lie buried in this mass grave. They had all been shot – men, women and children, even pregnant women carrying a child in their arms and leading another by the hand. The actual shooting which PW himself saw was done by the Police, the Waffen-SS and also by members of the Security Service. The victims were brought up and shot in batches of ten in the immediate vicinity of the anti-tank ditch which was near a small strip of woodland and an open field with a road running in between. PW adds that these massacres, of which, as he explains, he was forced to be an unwilling spectator, and which not only revolted him as a married man with children, but, in his opinion, 70% of those present, must have [de]ceased in May or June 43 when an order came out whilst PW was in Croatia that no more executions were to take place, but that the people should be sent instead to the Reich to work.”*

That a SS *Hauptscharführer* in the security police should have been forcibly present at a shooting without directly participating is not very believable. The shooting “in batches of ten” would have required 500 “batches” and is equally improbable. The estimate of 5,000 bodies is inexplicable. Initially, it appears that the witness first saw the ditch, in which case any estimate of the number of bodies which it contained would have been highly random; it then appears that he witnessed the executions. But in that case, in order to draw up his estimate, he would

<sup>605</sup> TNA, FO 371/43374, communication from the British Embassy at Moscow to the Foreign Office.

<sup>606</sup> Report on further information obtained from PW M 320, *Hauptscharführer*, Sicherheitspolizei, captured at Foggia 31 Oct 43. TNA, FO 371/43374, pp. 28 and 35.



have had to count all, or almost all, the “batches,” and this, too, is not very plausible.

On 6 May 1944, the British ambassador in Moscow delivered a note to Molotov stating:<sup>607</sup>

*“Dear Monsieur Molotov,*

*My government have instructed me to pass on to the Soviet Government, for such enquiry as they may see fit to make, the following information which has been obtained from the interrogation of German prisoners of war:*

*‘Not less than four kilometers, and not more than ten kilometers, from Kherson, probably to the north-east, the main road runs through a collective farm. Near here there is a wood on one side of the road and on the other side is a large anti-tank ditch. This ditch is estimated to contain the bodies of at least 5,000 Jews who were shot by the Germans.’”*

On 13 May, Andrey Vyshinsky, Molotov’s deputy, replied to the British ambassador that

*“the circumstances described in the information have been communicated to the competent Soviet authorities for investigation.”* (p. 57)

On 15 June 1944, the British ambassador communicated to the Foreign Office in London a Soviet report from the day before saying:

*“This information was communicated to Mr. Vyshinski who has now informed me that investigations by Soviet authorities have established that in September 1941 6,700 Jews were shot by an S.S. detachment under command of [an] officer named Hanze in an anti-tank ditch 12 kilometres south of Kherson. Vyshinski confirmed this fact.”* (p. 59)

Vyshinsky’s confirmation, dated 12 June, mentioned the shooting of 6,700 Jews, stating that “the fact of this shooting is confirmed by evidence furnished by collective farmers of the neighbouring village” (p. 57).

Nevertheless, two days afterwards, the Soviets drew up a report entitled “File. 14 June 1944, city of Kherson.” An investigatory commission had examined the site on the spot between 9 and 11 June, and had found two mass graves. The first measured 112 m × 3 m × 3 m (= 1,008 m<sup>3</sup>); this grave was opened lengthwise for a distance of 7 m (= 63 m<sup>3</sup>), and 268 bodies were exhumed. The second grave measured 280 m × 3 m × 3 m (= 2,520 m<sup>3</sup>) and was opened lengthwise for a distance of 3 m (= 27 m<sup>3</sup>); from which 48 bodies were exhumed. The commission estimated that the two mass graves contained a total of 8,780 bodies, a figure obtained by means of a simple arithmetical operation; in the first case, the result comes to (1,008 m<sup>3</sup> × 268 corpses ÷ 63 m<sup>3</sup>) = 4,288 bodies; while in the second case, the result comes to (2,520 m<sup>3</sup> × 48 ÷ 27 m<sup>3</sup>) = 4,480 bodies; adding the two figures, we obtain 8,768, rounded off to 8,780.

The two graves were located 8 km from the city. The discovery was made based on the message from the British ambassador dated 6 May 1944 cited earlier.

<sup>607</sup> TNA, FO 371/43374, p. 51; next three page numbers from there.

er. But *Hauptscharführer* P.W. spoke of one single mass grave, 3-4 km from Kherson, with at least 5,000 bodies, while the Soviets, based on this information, found two graves, 8 km from Kherson, containing some 8,780 bodies.

This report also contains a statement by the witness Boris Vladimirovich Klyerman according to which the Germans shot “4-x [sic] thousand persons” (Jews), probably 4-5,000 persons, on 24 September 1941.<sup>608</sup>

The “Report on the General Destruction, and Investigations Relating to the Misdeeds of the German-Fascist Occupiers and their Lackeys in the Kherson Oblast,” undated but no doubt written earlier, says that “10,000 members of the Jewish population” were killed at Kherson in the fall of 1941.<sup>609</sup>

There is nothing to confirm the truthfulness of the Soviet discoveries, particularly regarding the two mass graves and the 316 exhumed bodies: as far as is known, there is no photograph or film documentation of either one of the two mass graves.

### 8.3. The Crimea

#### 8.3.1. The Fantastic 7,000 Bodies at Kerch

On the execution of the Jews at Kerch on the Crimean Peninsula, Arad reports as follows (Arad 2009, p. 206):

*“According to a report of the military administration in Kerch, between 10,000 and 12,000 Jews registered in the population census. A decree was posted on November 28, 1941, calling on all the Jews to report the following morning between 8 a.m. and noon at Sennaia Square, with food for three days. About 7,000 turned up as ordered, believing that they were being sent to work. The Jews were taken to the municipal prison and, on December 1, a three-day operation began in which they were driven to an antitank trench near the village of Bagrovo, about 4 kilometers west of Kerch, where they were shot.”*

Regarding the number of victims, Arad’s primary source for this massacre is a newspaper special report, later recycled as Document USSR-63, upon which I will dwell later. As reported by Karel C. Berkhoff, the death toll was initially very limited (Berkhoff 2012, p. 127):

*“On December 31, 1941, the Red Army recaptured the Crimean city of Kerch. Within a week Pravda quoted a local who had discovered ‘heaps of corpses of shot Jews’ at the cemetery. ‘Among them were many elderly, women, and children. Many corpses were with severed heads, arms, and twisted jaws.’”*

David Shneer says that Dmitrii Baltermants was one of the first Soviet photographers to travel to Bagerovo Trench (Russian: Bagerovsky rov) in January 1942, where he “saw dozens of corpses littering the bleak, frozen wintertime landscape.” His photographs, together with those of his colleague Israel Ozerskii,

<sup>608</sup> DAKO, R-1479-1-118, pp. 2-4.

<sup>609</sup> DAKO, R-1479-1-119, pp. 17f.

appeared in the 2 March 1942 issue of the magazine *Ogonyok* (see Document II.8.1.).

Another photographer present on the spot was Evgenii Khaldei. In his journal, he noted that “the trench was two kilometers long,” and that the victims were “7,000 women, children, and elderly.” Another journalist, Ilya Selvinsky, wrote the following in his diary in January 1942 (Shneer 2014, p. 69):

*“I got to Kerch with the landing troops of the second echelon. The city is half-destroyed. That’s that – we’ll restore it. But near the village of Bagerovo in an anti-tank ditch – [there were] 7000 executed women, children, old men and others. And I saw them. Now I do not have the strength to write about it in prose. Nerves can no longer react. What I could – I have expressed in verse.”*

The caption accompanying the photographs of Baltermants and Ozersky published by *Ogonyok* said: “7,500 residents from the very elderly to breast-feeding babies were shot from just a single city” (Shneer 2011, pp. 100-104). The story of the 7,000 bodies therefore originated immediately after the discovery of the Bagerovo Trench, although Baltermants had only seen “dozens of corpses.” And his photographs, and those of his colleagues, show only that many.

Document II.8.2. shows a photo taken by Baltermants that was accompanied by the following caption (Shneer 2014, p. 64; 2011, p. 101):

*“Kerch Resident P.I. Ivanova Found Her Husband, Who Was Tortured by the Fascist Executioners.”*

Document II.8.3., a photo taken by the same photographer, shows “Residents of Kerch Search for Their Relatives. In the photo: V.S. Tereshchenko digs under bodies for her husband” (Shneer 2011, p. 102).

Document II.8.4., by contrast, shows a photo captioned “Soviets Dig a Grave” (*ibid.*, p. 103). This shows a small grave with 8-10 bodies lying in front of it.

Document II.8.5.<sup>610</sup> is an enlargement of the illustration at the lower left of Document II.8.1. According to the caption, it shows “One of the mass graves where the Hitlerites threw the inhabitants shot by themselves from the city of Kerch.” This is obviously a drawing, inspired by the photograph reproduced in Document II.8.6.,<sup>611</sup> in which we see a small grave with about a dozen bodies.

At least two photographs showing small mass graves refute the story of the anti-tank ditch 1,000 meters long, as claimed by Document USSR-63.

Not without reason, the July 1942 issue of the US news magazine *Life* published an article by Cyrus L. Sulzberger, war correspondent for the *New York Times*, who mentioned the discoveries at Kerch in these terms:

*“When Timoshenko’s troops returned to Kerch they found, frozen in the snow-covered streets, the bodies of dozens of civilian peasants sprawled in the final agonies of death.”*

<sup>610</sup> YVA, Digital Collections, Archive Signature 5965.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, Signature 7265/175.

It is not even clear who the victims were that appear in the photographs. They are all dressed, but according to a Jewish witness who miraculously survived the execution, Joseph Weingartner, the Jews had to undress before being shot; in fact, he saw “a mountain of clothing” near the graves (Ehrenburg/Grossman 1981, p. 274).

In the afternoon hearing of 15 February 1946 of the First Nuremberg Trial, Chief Counsellor of Justice of the Soviet Union Smirnov read a few extracts from Document “USSR-63, which is a report of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of German Atrocities in the town of Kerch.” The reports says that the Germans gathered “over 7,000 people” in the city of Kerch on 28 November 1941 (IMT, Vol. 7, p. 493), and elaborated:

*“As a site for the mass execution, the Hitlerites selected an antitank ditch near the village of Baguerovsko [sic; Bagerovo] where for 3 days on end autobuses brought entire families which had been condemned to death.*

*‘When the Red Army entered Kerch, in January 1942, the Baguerovsko trench was investigated. It was discovered that this trench—1 kilometer in length, 4 meters in width, and 2 meters in depth—was filled to overflowing with bodies of women, children, old men, and boys and girls in their teens. Near the trench were frozen pools of blood. Children’s caps, toys, ribbons, torn-off buttons, gloves, milk bottles, and rubber comforters, small shoes, galoshes, together with torn-off hands, feet, and other parts of human bodies were lying nearby. Everything was spattered with blood and brains.*

*‘The fascist savages shot down the defenseless population with dum-dum bullets. Near the edge of the trench lay the mutilated body of a young woman. In her arms was a baby carefully wrapped up in a white lace cover. Next to this woman lay an 8-year-old girl and a boy of 5, killed with dum-dum bullets. Their hands still gripped the mother’s dress.’” (ibid., p. 494)*

This system of killing and burial is not very sensible; to fill the whole ditch uniformly, the victims had to be arranged in groups of seven for every linear meter of ditch, and the executioners had to walk a kilometer shooting them; this way, the ditch, assuming a cover layer of 25 centimeters, would have held 7,000 bodies, one per cubic meter! Assuming the experimental fill rate of 3.5 bodies per cubic meter on the other hand, the trench could have held over 27,900 bodies, assuming a cover layer of 20 centimeters; conversely, 7,000 bodies would have occupied only approximately 250 meters of trench.

The Soviet report was crude propaganda, which appears clearly from the additional “atrocities” attributed to the Germans, among them the use of dum-dum bullets and the poisoning of children (*ibid.*, p. 493):

*“According to instructions issued by the German commandant, all the school children were ordered to appear at the school at a given time. On arrival, the 245 children, school books in hand, were sent to a factory school outside the town, allegedly for a walk. There the cold and hungry infants were offered coffee and poisoned pies. Since there was not enough coffee to go round, those who did not get*

*any were sent to the infirmary where a German orderly smeared their lips with a quick-acting poison. In a few minutes all the children were dead. School children of the higher grades were carried off in trucks and shot down by machine gun fire 8 kilometers outside of the town. The bodies of the first batch of murdered children were brought to the same spot—a very large, very long, antitank trench.”*

There are two documents on the executions at Kerch, but only one is explicit. This is the Activity Report of Local Headquarters I/287 Kerch, Journal No. 328, signed Neumann, for the period of 28 Nov.-7 Dec. 1941 to the commanders of Rear Army Area 553 of 7 Dec. 1941, which contains this announcement:

*“The resettlement of the Jews, about 2,500 in number, was carried out on 1, 2 and 3 December. Subsequent executions must be expected, since part of the Jewish population has fled, is in hiding and must first be captured.”*

The editors of the documentary compendium in which this report appears inform us that the text originally contained the word *Exekutierung*, which was deleted and replaced by the word *Umsiedlung* (resettlement; Hoppe/Glass, p. 390). For Krausnick and Wilhelm, the original word was “presumably ‘liquidation’” (Krausnick/Wilhelm, p. 272), which means that it is not clearly legible. In fact, in the original document, this word has been meticulously crossed out with black ink and is therefore illegible (reproduced in M. Stein, p. 351).

In their view, the presence of the word *Exekutierungen* would render vain the introduction of this presumed “camouflage word,” *i.e.*, “resettlement.” In fact, the text may mean that 2,500 Jews were shot and that they were anticipating a second round of executions of those who had fled, but is not in contradiction to a real resettlement; in this case, it may mean that 2,500 Jews were resettled and they were anticipating the later execution of those who had concealed themselves, precisely because they had evaded the resettlement. In fact, it is known that during resettlement operations, real or feigned, shooting was the punishment for Jews who fled or concealed themselves.

The second document mentioning Kerch is EM No. 150 dated 2 January 1942, which says:<sup>612</sup>

*“Jews.*

*Simferopol, Yevpatoria, Alushta, Karasubazar, Kerch and Feodosia as well as other parts of West Crimea have been made Jew-free. 17,645 Jews, 2,504 Krymchaks, 824 Gypsies and 212 Communists and partisans were shot between 16 Nov. and 15 Dec. Total number of executions 75,881.”*

No EM dated 16 November 1941 exists; No. 133 is dated the 14th, and No. 134 the 17th. The following subsequent EMs were issued by the end of the year:

- No. 135 dated 19 November 1941
- No. 136 dated 21 November 1941
- No. 137 dated 24 November 1941
- No. 138 dated 26 November 1941

<sup>612</sup> NARA, T-175/234, p. 20/2723482.

- No. 139 dated 28 November 1941
- No. 140 dated 1 December 1941
- No. 141 dated 3 December 1941
- No. 142 dated 5 December 1941
- No. 143 dated 8 December 1941
- No. 144 dated 10 December 1941
- No. 145 dated 12 December 1941
- No. 146 dated 15 December 1941
- No. 147 dated 17 December 1941
- No. 148 dated 19 December 1941
- No. 149 dated 22 December 1941

The report from *Einsatzgruppe D* is only missing in EMs nos. 136, 137, 144, 147 and 148; it is present in all the others, even those with rather long texts (such as EM No. 141, and even more so No. 134). In EMs containing these reports, Jews are only mentioned in two:

EM No. 145 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 876):

*“Shootings: Another 2,910 Jews and 19 communist officials were court-martialed and shot. The total number of executions has thus risen to 54,696.”*

EM No. 149 (with reference to Yevpatoria; *ibid.*, p. 895):

*“Jews: After installing a Jewish council and the registration of the Jews, who amount to 750 persons, their concentration was carried out on 21 Nov. 41. In connection with the Jewish operation, six villages and several kolkhozes in the vicinity of Yevpatoria, in which there are still Jewish families, are to be searched.”*

A little bit further along, the report states (*ibid.*, p. 896):

*“The [grain] warehouse was set on fire by the retreating Russian. To fight the fire, 300 Jews were put to work, who salvaged 6,000-7,000 tons of usable grain.”*

Hence, of these 17,645 Jews killed between 16 November and 15 December 1941, only 2,910 are mentioned in the reports from *Einsatzgruppe D*; moreover, the figure of 54,696 persons killed is found in the EM dated 12 December, and nothing indicates that it refers to a preceding period; adding this figure to the 17,645 mentioned above, we obtain a total figure of 72,341, not 75,881; on the other hand, if 54,696 persons were killed by 12 December, it is hardly credible that 75,881 were murdered by the 15th. What is more, EM No. 129 dated 5 November 1941 attributes a total figure of 31,767 executions to *Einsatzgruppe D* (*ibid.*, p. 753), so that 22,929 persons would have been shot between this date and 12 December.

With regard to Kerch, no document mentions executions later than 3 December 1941, therefore the maximum number of Jews shot would have been 2,500. If this were really true, it remains to be explained why the Soviets did not exhume the bodies, did not photograph them, and did not perform a forensic examination. The photograph transmitted to the British in 1942 with the caption “Hitlerite Atrocities in Kerch. Bodies of Residents Shot by Germans” (Struk, p. 47; see

Document II.8.7) is none other than Baltermants's photograph depicting V.S. Tereshchenko (see Document II.8.3.), where we see 8-10 bodies.

In 1944, a Soviet investigatory commission drew up a "List of Victims of the German-fascist Invaders at Kerch," containing 1,202 names, numbered progressively from 4,795 to 5,996,<sup>613</sup> which is in blatant contradiction to the photographs showing a few dozen bodies in total.

### 8.3.2. Simferopol

The *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* asserts that *Sonderkommando* 11 b of *Einsatzgruppe* D and the 3rd Police Battalion shot 12,500 Jews at Simferopol between 11 and 13 December 1941 (Gutman *et al.*, Vol. III, p. 1318). This data does not come from documents; as regards the number of victims, the Local Headquarters I/853 informed the *Kommandant* of the area behind the front of the 11th Army on 14 November 1941 (NOKW-1573; TWC, Vol. X, pp. 1258f.):

*"Simferopol had about 156,000 inhabitants, of whom about 120,000 remained. Among these were 70,000 Russians, 20,000 Ukrainians, 20,000 Tartars, 20,000 Jews; the remainder is divided into various racial strains; scarcely 100 racial Germans, whose registration was begun by the Ortskommandantur.*

*The city is slightly damaged but all plants and businesses have been plundered.*

*The 11,000 Jews remaining are being executed by the Security Service."*

EM No. 170 dated 18 February 1942 reported (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, pp. 167f.):

*"More than 300 Jews were arrested and executed in Simferopol between 9 Jan. and 15 Feb. The number of executed Jews in Simferopol has therefore risen to nearly 10,000, and is about 300 higher than the number of registered Jews."*

EM No. 149 dated 22 December 1941 contains an extremely long report on the activity of *Einsatzgruppe* D – in particular *Sonderkommando* 11a, Advance Unit Yalta – on the struggle against the partisans. The only reference to Jews is the passage already quoted earlier (see p. 677).

It is known that Reginald Paget, one of the British defense lawyers of General Erich von Manstein at his trial held at Hamburg between 23 August and 19 December 1949, cast doubt upon the scope of the execution at Simferopol. Marcel Stein concerned himself with it, although in a summary manner. Here is what Paget wrote (Paget, pp. 170f.):

*"In one instance we were able to check their figures. The S.D. claimed that they had killed 10,000 in Simferopol during November and in December they reported Simferopol clear of Jews. By a series of cross checks we were able to establish that the execution of the Jews in Simferopol had taken place on a single day, 16th November. Only one company of S.D. were in Simferopol. The place of execution was 15 kilometres from the town. The numbers involved could not have been more than about 300. These 300 were probably not exclusively Jews but a miscellane-*

<sup>613</sup> YVA, M.33 - Records of the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory and similar items. File Number JM/19683.

ous collection of people who were being held on suspicion of resistance activity. The Simferopol incident received a good deal of publicity because it was spoken of by the prosecution's only live witness, an Austrian corporal called Gaffe who said that he heard anti-Jewish activities mentioned in an engineers' mess when he was [an] orderly and had passed the scene of the Simferopol execution. As a result we received a large number of letters, and were able to call several witnesses who had been billeted with Jewish families and also spoke of the functioning of a synagogue and a Jewish market where they bought icons and similar bric-a-brac right up to the time that Manstein left the Crimea and after. It was indeed clear that the Jewish community had continued to function quite openly in Simferopol, and although several of our witnesses had heard rumours about an S.D. excess committed against Jews in Simferopol, it certainly appeared that this Jewish community was unaware of any special danger."

Stein comments (M. Stein, p. 358):

"Witnesses? Not a single survivor from Simferopol testified at Manstein's trial."

This may also be true, but Paget did not speak of "survivors," or of Jews; from what he wrote it may be deduced that the testimony concerned was that of non-Jews who had lived with Jewish families or frequented the Jewish market.

And here Stein's second and final objection (*ibid.*, p. 358):

"Paget then adds:

*I am of the opinion that at the time, when the Germans arrived in the Crimea, extermination policy had given way to security police. Jews were no longer killed because they were Jews. Some Jews were selected and killed because they belonged to sabotage groups. Jews who were not under suspicion continued to live in full security in the townships.*

*This sentence would have given pleasure to David Irving."*

Stein counters Paget's assertions with the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, which, in the specific case of Simferopol, he considered himself able to invalidate. It does not appear that any Holocaust historian ever took Paget's theory seriously enough to search the trial records of the defense to establish the actual value of the evidence found by the defense.

The fact is that the trial testimonies of the presumed executioners and instigators are more favorable to Paget than the *Einsatzgruppen* reports.

Former SS *Sturmbannführer* Werner Braune commanded *Sonderkommando* 11 b between October 1941 and the beginning of September 1942. The executions at Simferopol were carried out under his command. He was one of the defendants at the *Einsatzgruppen* trial, where he declared the following as to this specific case (TWC, Vol. IV, p. 327):

"Q. Can you give me an approximate figure?

A. No. I cannot do that either, unless I can just work it out this way. There were approximately 10,000 before, half of whom had escaped and from that I can deduce that in all circumstances there must have been fewer than 4,000 to 5,000, but I cannot give you an exact figure.



*Q. Then there were more than 1,000 executed during this one instance, is that what I am to gather?*

*A. I think I am certain that there were more than 1,000."*

In his affidavit of 8 July 1947, Braune described the execution, but without indicating the number of victims; he nevertheless stated that the execution squad consisted of eight to ten men (*ibid.*, p. 215, NO-4234).

SS *Obersturmführer* Heinz Hermann Schubert, Ohlendorf's adjutant, reported as follows as to the execution at Simferopol in his affidavit of 24 February 1947 (*ibid.*, p. 207, NO-3055):

*"In December 1941 – I do not remember the exact date – I was assigned by Ohlendorf or Seibert to supervise and inspect the shooting of about 700 to 800 people, which was to take place in the close vicinity of Simferopol. The shooting was undertaken by the special Kommando 11b, one of the formations of the Einsatzgruppe D."*

General Otto Wöhler had been chief of the general staff of the 11th Army under the command of *Generalfeldmarschall* Erich von Manstein. In an "Affidavit. Concerning testimony Ohlendorf of 3 Jan. 46 on S.D. and Headquarters of the 11th Army," dated "Nuremberg, 25 June 1946," he asserted (IMT, Vol. 42, pp. 255-257):

*"3. None of the 3 military leaders notified me or the army of anything.*

*A. About an agreement between the R.S.H.A. on the one hand and the High Command of the Armed Forces or the Army on the other.*

*B. About any oral or written order from Hitler or Himmler regarding liquidation of the Jews. [...]*

*6. It is unknown to me that any of the commanders-in-chief named under §2 or anyone else gave the order to carry out the liquidation of the Jews only outside of a certain circle – 2½ km acc. to p. 1858, 200 km acc. to p. 1818. If this had been ordered, I would know it. On the contrary, I remember with certainty that Field Marshal von Manstein, in the first few days after taking over supreme command, in reaction to the rumor that, in the past, Jews are said to have been murdered somewhere, clearly prohibited this. Since this event allegedly took place behind the theater of operations – I think it was Kishinev, but I can't swear it – Field Marshal von Manstein immediately sent his ordinance officer to the O.Qu.[?] and made him responsible for ensuring that 'such a disgrace in the army's area would be made impossible once and for all.' This order was in no way issued with a wink of the eye, but most seriously and with the strongest emphasis. The High Command of the Army has heard nothing about any Jewish liquidation after that.*

*7. It is out of the question that the High Command of the Army ever gave orders to accelerate the liquidation in Simferopol. The justification of a 'great housing shortage' is totally wrong. Nothing at all was known of a liquidation of the Jews, but rather of a 'resettlement.' – Compare also testimony Ohlendorf on page 1820*

–.

8. *I have never heard anything about gas vans, just as I have never heard that the Army had demanded Jewish watches for its soldiers. Should individual Jewish watches have been delivered for soldiers of the Army, they can only have been accepted under the condition that these had been legally confiscated.*"

It is worthwhile dwelling on the question of these watches. On 12 February 1942, Ohlendorf sent the 11th Army's High Command a letter with the subject "Watches," saying (Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 148, p. 436):

*"Through a call from the local commanders of Simferopol, I learned that the commander-in-chief have requested the watches left over from the Jewish operation for official use by the Army. I herewith hand over to the Army 120 watches which in the meantime have been made usable by repairs. There are still about 50 watches in repair, some of which can be restored. If the Army still needs the remaining watches, please let me know."*

In this letter, the word "Ja" has been added by hand, followed by "W" (for "Wöhler") and vm" (for "von Manstein"; M. Stein, p. 361), which was the response to Ohlendorf's final request.

What is of interest here is not the meaning attributed to this letter by the American and British prosecutors, or the meaning subsequently attributed to it that same day by Ohlendorf.<sup>614</sup> What is important is the loot: how can one reconcile loot consisting of a few hundred watches with the execution of 12,500 persons?

### 8.3.3. Other Executions in the Crimea

The report on the activity of *Einsatzgruppe D* at the 11th Army High Command on 16 April 1942 contains the following statistical picture of the Jewish population of the Crimea. In 1939, there were 65,000 Jews in the Crimea, including approximately 44,000 in six cities, or more exactly (Angrick *et al.*, Doc. 121, p. 324):

Simferopol:	22,791
Sevastopol:	6,040
Kerch:	5,573
Yevpatoria:	4,229
Yalta:	2,109
Feodosia:	2,922

EM No. 145 dated 12 December 1941 asserts that "the total number of Jews amounts to an estimated 40,000; about one quarter of these live in Simferopol." The total number of executions amounted to 54,696 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 876). According to the 1939 statistics, there were approximately 21,000 Jews in

<sup>614</sup> The original text is reproduced in: M. Stein, p. 361. The letter was introduced into evidence as NOKW-631 during the trial proceedings against the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, TWC, Vol. X, "High Command Case," pp. 1259f; see also p. 1306, where Wöhler provided his explanation for the document in question.

the other five cities, but Sevastopol was captured by the Germans only on 3 July 1942. As quoted before, EM No. 150 of 2 January 1942 reports (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 30):

“Jews.

*Simferopol, Yevpatoria, Alushta, Karasubazar, Kerch and Feodosia as well as other parts of West Crimea have been made Jew-free. 17,645 Jews, 2,504 Krymchaks, 824 Gypsies and 212 Communists and partisans were shot between 16 Nov. and 15 Dec. Total number of executions 75,881.”*

Starting with the preceding total of 54,696 and adding the figures indicated in this report, we arrive at precisely 75,881. This means that EM No. 150 includes all the executions, including those at Simferopol. The killing of 17,645 Jews had made the city of Simferopol “Jew-free” (10,300 victims), Yevpatoria (750 Jews pre- sent: EM No. 149), Alushta, Karasubazar, Kerch (2,500 victims according to the Activity Report of the Local Headquarters I/287 Kerch dated 7 Dec. 1941) and Feodosia. The Local Headquarters of Karasubazar communicated the presence of 76 Jews on 14 December 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, fn 3, p. 877). There were a total of 240 Jews in the region of Alushta before the war (Hoppe/Glass, Doc. 147, p. 460). The total number was 13,866; the figure of 17,645 must therefore be understood to include approximately 3,800 Jews who lived in “other parts of West- ern Crimea.”

These EMs supply the following picture of executions of Jews:

- EM No. 153 dated 9 January 1942: 3,176 between 16 and 31 December 1941 (Mallmann 2014 *et al.*, p. 58);
- EM No. 157 dated 19 January 1942: 685 between 1 and 15 January (*ibid.*, p. 106);
- EM No. 165 dated 6 February 1942: 3,206 between 15 and 31 January (*ibid.*, p. 141);
- EM No. 170 dated 18 February 1942: 920 plus 300 at Simferopol between 1 and 15 February 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 168);
- EM No. 178 dated 9 March 1942: 729 between 16 and 28 February 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 202);
- EM No. 184 dated 23 March 1942: 678 in the first half of March 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 224);
- EM No. 191 dated 10 April 1942: 588 in the second half of March 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 276).

The total number is 28,007 persons. EM No. 145 dated 12 December 1941 records the execution of the first Jews: 2,910 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 876), total- ing 30,917. This does not include the presumed victims at Sevastopol (6,040 Jews in 1939), of whom the reports say nothing. Arad asserts that 4,200 Jews were killed in this city (Arad 2009, p. 288). Hence, in practice, all, or nearly all, the 40,000 Jews in Crimea were supposedly killed upon the arrival of the German troops.

No *Sonderkommando* 1005 operated in Crimea according to Holocaust historiography, and no known mass graves were discovered by the Soviets. In his book, Jens Hoffmann mentions neither the crime nor any of the above-mentioned localities in particular.

## 8.4. Kharkov

### 8.4.1. The Graves of “*Sonderkommando* Spacil”

A rather enigmatic British intercept exists relating to the period between 8 May and 8 June 1943, which, as far as I know, has never been mentioned by orthodox Holocaust historians.<sup>615</sup>

*“Einsatzkdo 5 at CHARKOW is asked to send photographs of graves to Sonderkdo SPACIL at KIEW (1480 FF 10, of 11).”*

Of what use were “photographs of graves”? It is difficult to provide a direct answer to this question, but one can easily establish what they were *not* good for. From the orthodox historians’ point of view, in fact, the message cannot be related to *Sonderkommando* 1005. First of all, there was no known “*Sonderkommando* Spacil,” and the name of the person is quite unknown. Hoffmann reports that Blobel traveled to Kiev in July 1943. He then is said to have revealed his task to his colleagues, and illustrated “the details of ‘Aktion 1005’” before mid-August; “*Kommando* 1005A” was then set up, commanded by SS *Sturmbannführer* Bauermann, and “*Kommando* 1005B,” headed by SS *Sturmbannführer* Hans Sohns (Hoffmann, pp. 107-109).

Hence, the intercepted German message could not refer to “Aktion 1005,” because at that time Blobel had not yet communicated his decision regarding Kiev, but notwithstanding that fact, it speaks of “photographs of graves.”

But were they really mass graves? If so, what were the photographs for? If it was a matter of locating the area of the mass graves in which the Jews shot at Kharkov were buried, in anticipation – anachronistically – of the activity of *Sonderkommando* 1005, it would have been more logical to indicate the location on a map or indicate it by means of identifying signs directly on the spot.

If this is a question of mass graves, indeed, it is possible that the Germans had discovered a few of the mass graves in which the Soviets buried the bodies of persons killed by the NKVD at Kharkov. The Poles, who suffered many victims there, began their search for mass graves in 1991, and continued it in 1994 and 1995. In 1996, their search activity was taken over under the direction of Prof. Andrzej Kola, known for his archaeological investigations at Bełżec and Sobibór, conducting his search activity from 27 May until 14 September. Thanks to 596 probes, 60 mass graves were located in the area of the cemetery; 15 contained a

<sup>615</sup> TNA, HW 16/6, Summary. Covering information received between 8 May and 8 June 1945. ZIP/MSGP/48/10.6.43.

total of 4,302 bodies of Poles; the bodies of another 2,098 persons of various nationalities were also found (Kola, pp. 34f., 38, 42, 44).

#### 8.4.2. Executions and Mass Graves

Very little is known about the execution of the Jews at Kharkov, and the documents do not confirm the enormous massacres declared by Holocaust historiography. The Incident Reports mention the Jews of Kharkov several times.

EM No. 156 dated 16 January 1942 speaks of them as follows:<sup>616</sup>

*“Jewish question in Kharkov.*

*On this question, considerations are currently being given to a registration of the Jews as wholesale as possible. According to past experience, connections to the saboteurs and partisans are maintained primarily by Kharkov’s Jewish population. The registration of all Jews is expected to contribute considerably to the elimination of partisan activity in this region. In consultation with the responsible general staff and field headquarters, the preparatory work for a major Jewish operation is being initiated by SK 4a, as soon as the set-up work for quartering the Kommando is taken care of.”*

EM No. 164 dated 4 February 1942 contains a paragraph, reproduced below, titled “Registration of Jews in Kharkov”:<sup>617</sup>

*“In the framework of Sonderkommando 4a, extensive preparations required in connection with the general registration of Jews in Kharkov are being accelerated. Suitable terrain first had to be found for the evacuation of the Jews in close collaboration with city’s housing office. A section of land was selected where the Jews could be accommodated in the barracks of a company housing estate. On 14 Dec. 41, a proclamation by the city commandant was issued to the Jews of Kharkov, with which they were summoned to show up at the settlement indicated in greater detail in the proclamation by 16 Dec. 41.*

*The evacuation of the Jews proceeded without friction, with the exception of a few incidents of looting which occurred while the Jews were marching to their new quarters and which involved almost exclusively Ukrainians. No numerical survey of the Jews encompassed by the evacuation has yet been made available. A census of the Jews has been initiated. At the same time, preparations for shooting the Jews are underway. 305 Jews were immediately shot for spreading rumors harmful to the German armed forces.”*

The last reference to Kharkov appears in EM No. 191 dated 10 April 1942:<sup>618</sup>

*“After it has been resettled, Jewry no longer manifests itself in Kharkov.”*

The “Activity and Situation Reports” referring to this period (No. 8, 1-31 December 1941; No. 9, 1-31 January 1942; No. 10, 1-28 February 1942; and No. 11, 1-31 March 1942) contain no mention of executions at Kharkov.

<sup>616</sup> NARA, T 175/234, 2723678, p. 45 of the report.

<sup>617</sup> NARA, T 175/234, 2723787, p. 10 of the report.

<sup>618</sup> NARA, T 175/235, 2724217, p. 29 of the report.

Krausnick and Wilhelm mention a figure of 10,000-20,000 persons shot, but this is solely a conjecture unsupported by any document (Krausnick/Wilhelm, fn 204, p. 193).

I take no account of the “truths” established in post-war trials (the verdict of the Darmstadt District Court of 29 November 1968 and of the *Bundesgerichtshof* of 5 April 1973, which appear in Vol. XXXI of the series *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*), because they are based on testimonies which were, to start with, quite late in coming; what is more, the witnesses had no way to establish the exact number or even the order of magnitude of the victims directly, so that they could only repeat estimates by hearsay.

As for the message intercepted by the British, *Einsatzkommado 5* had already been dissolved at the time; in June 1942, Kharkov was the garrison of *Sonderkommando 4a* of *Einsatzgruppe C*, commanded by SS *Obersturmbannführer* Erwin Weinmann.<sup>619</sup>

Hoffmann writes that at least 15,000 Jews were murdered by the Germans at Kharkov, and refers to the related article in the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* (Hoffmann, p. 79), which mentions the report of the Soviet commission which investigated Kharkov. The commission opened the mass graves at the Drobitsky Ravine, and established that 15,000 bodies lay buried there; nevertheless the counter-intelligence officer for the 6th Army declared that the actual number of victims was 21,685 according to Blobel (Gutman *et al.*, entry “Charkow,” Vol. I, p. 279).

The Soviets recaptured Kharkov on 16 February 1943, but it was recaptured again by the Germans on 15 March, who maintained control over it until 23 August, when it was definitively abandoned to the enemy. During these final months, the Germans, inexplicably for orthodox Holocaust historians, missed their last chance to clean up the local mass graves.

On 5 September, the Soviet Investigatory Commission drew up the report cited by Hoffmann, which is, in practice, the source for all that is known of the alleged massacre at Kharkov:

*“During the occupation of the city of Kharkov by the German-Fascist invaders the peaceful population was destroyed one by one. According to incomplete records, upwards of 15,000 Jewish residents of the city of Kharkov were shot during the months of December 1941 and January 1942 alone near the village of Rogan, 8 kms. from the city of Kharkov in the so-called valley of Drobitzki.”*

And here is the description of the alleged discoveries (Arad/Gutman/Margaliot, pp. 421, 424):

*“The Commission opened up two pits near the village of Rogan in the valley of Drobitzki, one of 100 meters long and 18 to 20 meters wide, and the second 60 meters long and 20 meters wide. According to the findings of the Expert Medical Commission, upward of 15,000 bodies were buried in these pits (attached: the re-*

<sup>619</sup> Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten, No. 6, 5 June 1942. NARA, T 175/235, 2724444, p. IV (appendix to the report).

*port of the Medico-legal Commission). Five hundred bodies were removed from the pits, of which 215 were submitted to medico-legal examination. They included the bodies of 83 men, 117 women and 60 children and infants. It was established that the cause of death of almost all these persons whose bodies had been examined was a wound and hole in the back of the skull caused by the passage of a bullet. This indicated that the shooting was carried out from behind the person to be killed and from a short distance away.”*

There is also an “Act on the Deportation and Extermination of Prisoners from Kharkiv Jail in the Period of the German Occupation” dated 13 September 1943, which refers to the mass graves (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 70f.):

*“The Commission has opened six pits in the forest zone. The first pit, 20 by 12 meters, is two meters broader in the middle section; the second is 6 by 3.5 meters; the third – 6 by 7 meters; the fourth – 6 by 9 meters; the fifth – 7 by 6 meters; the sixth – 9 by 5.5 meters. All pits are 2-2.5 meters deep.*

*Considering the size of the pits, the depth and the density of the layers of bodies, the coroner has determined that all the pits contain approximately 4,000 bodies, of this 506 have been exhumed and 173 examined by the coroner.”*

It is clear that the discovery of the bodies had to coincide with the number of victims allegedly shot between June 1943 and July 1943, or exactly 4,000 (*ibid.*, p. 70).

#### 8.4.3. The Kharkov Trial

Three months later, the Soviets tried three German soldiers and one Ukrainian collaborator, counter-intelligence officer SS *Hauptsturmführer* Wilhelm Langheld, SS *Untersturmführer* Hans Ritz, a member of the SD, corporal Reinhard Retzlaw of the Secret Field Police, and Mikhail Bulanov. The trial was held between 15 and 18 December 1943. The Soviets set up a Commission of Medico-Legal Experts which drew up a report on the mass graves that had been discovered (Bazyler/Tuerkheimer, p. 30):

*“In the 13 grave-pits opened in Kharkov and its immediate vicinity were found a huge number of corpses. In most graves they lay in extreme disorder, fantastically intertwined, forming tangles of human bodies defying description. The corpses lay in such a manner that they can be said to have been dumped or heaped but not buried in common graves. In two pits in the Sokolniki forest park bodies were found lying in straight rows, face downward, arms bent at the elbow and hands pressed to faces or necks. All the bodies had bullet wounds through the heads. Such a position of the bodies was not accidental. It proves that the victims were forced to lie down face downward and were shot in that position. [...] The fact revealed by the investigation – namely, that before being murdered Soviet citizens were stripped of their footwear – is fully confirmed by the medico-legal examinations: during exhumation the experts in most cases discovered naked or half-naked bodies. In order to ascertain which Soviet citizens were exterminated and in what manner, the experts exhumed and examined 1,047 bodies in Kharkov and*

*its environs. These included the bodies of 19 children and adolescents, 429 women and 599 men. The dead ranged in age from two to 70 years. The fact that the bodies of children, adolescents, women and old men as well as invalids were discovered in grave-pits with civilian clothes and articles of domestic use and personal effects on the bodies or near them proves that the German fascist authorities exterminated Soviet citizens regardless of sex or age."*

As far as one can tell, this discovery went unobserved in Western media, and it does not appear that Allied journalists were invited to see the mass graves. Karel C. Berkhoff writes in this regard (Berkhoff 2012, p. 150):

*"Reports about recaptured Kharkiv more typically omitted Jews entirely. A favorable review of Oleksandr Dovzhenko's documentary The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine, released in October 1943, two months after Kharkiv's recapture, quoted the voice-over accompanying footage of an unearthen mass grave: 'Look, living ones, do not turn away from our terrible pits... There is a great multitude of us in Ukraine. Do not forget us. Seek vengeance against Germany for our sufferings.'"*

The documentary, to which I will return later, showed one single mass grave. In addition, the two alleged mass graves measuring 100 m × 18 to 20 m and 60 m × 20 m, allegedly containing 15,000 bodies, had disappeared. It is important to note in this connection that a very similar figure relating to alleged victims had already been mentioned by the Soviet Union's foreign minister, Molotov, in his declaration of 27 April 1942 (Molotov, p. 20):

*"In the city of Kharkov alone, the Hitlerites executed 14,000 persons during the first days of the occupation."*

It is obvious that the order of magnitude of the number of bodies which had to be "found" was already pre-established in April 1942.

Yet the discoveries at Katyn and Vinnitsa, where the Germans found mass graves containing 4,143 bodies of Polish officers and 9,432 bodies of Ukrainian citizens, had occurred only a few months before: on 13 April and at the beginning of June 1943. The Katyn affair, as Berkhoff stresses, put the Soviets in a tight spot, especially in their relations with the other Allies (Berkhoff 2012, p. 131):

*"In April 1943 Nazi Germany publicly launched an investigation into the mass graves of Polish victims of the NKVD found in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk and linked them to a new wave of propaganda against 'Jewish Bolshevism.' The Nazis wanted to discredit Moscow in the eyes of the Western Allies and seemingly timed the announcement of their discovery to drown out British and American media reports of the imminent German destruction of the Warsaw ghetto and the killing of its last inhabitants. A special Bureau statement quickly denounced the 'foul fabrications of the German-fascist hangmen.' Stalin had personally edited it."*

But mere denials were propagandistically ineffective: can one seriously believe that the Soviets would not have organized an international media campaign if they had really discovered mass graves containing the bodies of 33,000 people killed by the Germans in the second half of 1943?



David Shneer supplies important information in this regard. He asserts that the journalist David Zaslavsky, in his diary, “discussed the debates about the number of Jews killed in Kharkov, suggesting that the Tolstoi Commission, the Extraordinary Commission investigating Kharkov, headed by the writer Alexei Tolstoi, exaggerated the number of Jewish dead” (Shneer 2011, p. 143). He then describes the Soviet propaganda technique: the use of photographs of mass graves at Krasnodar to “document” the massacre at Kharkov:

*“The December 1943 trial in Kharkov provided even more vivid descriptions of atrocities, especially since the massacres at Kharkov were on a scale that dwarfed what the public saw in Krasnodar. [...]*

*Photographs from the report about Krasnodar were published in the newspaper and presented at the trial. A photo essay by Boris Tsetlin did not shy away from brutality (Fig. 5.1). The photograph at the top of the page shows ‘corpses of those Soviet citizens tortured by the German bandits. The corpses were exhumed from an antitank ditch on the land of a state farm not far from Krasnodar.’ The photograph highlights some of the common tropes of Soviet Holocaust liberation photographs – large expanses of space filled with dead bodies and investigators at the scene. Beneath the panoramic shot are photographs of dead children, again highlighting the evil nature of the enemy and simultaneously humanizing the victims. Finally, the editor included a photograph of the city’s Gestapo headquarters and of a man giving testimony to the Extraordinary Commission. With photo layouts like this from Krasnodar and graphic descriptions from Kharkov, the Soviet press widely publicized images of Nazi mass murder and began shaping what would become common tropes in Soviet Holocaust photography: excavations, investigations, corpses, and those doing the investigating.” (ibid., pp. 142f.)*

The photographs of Krasnodar published by the magazine *Ogonyok* on 20 August 1943, although terrible, clearly showed an order of magnitude of exhumed victims immensely inferior to that adopted by Soviet propaganda. The largest-scale photograph, taken from a distance, shows approximately 100-150 bodies arranged haphazardly on the ground. In the background, nine or ten individuals are seen posing in white coats. Another two photographs depicted details taken from close-up, that is, two small groups of three to five bodies (*ibid.*, p. 144).

The Commission of Medico-Legal Experts at Kharkov did not, therefore, have much to show in terms of mediatic discoveries. It is furthermore very well known that there were also several non-Jewish victims in this locality; from January to August 1942, out of a total of 18,306 deaths, 11,183 cases were attributed to starvation (Hilberg 1992, p. 202). One may assume that at least some of these bodies were buried in mass graves. As a result, the discovery of bodies without an independent forensic examination such as that performed under German auspices at Katyn and Vinnitsa, is proof of nothing. We also need to consider the 3,820

Ukrainians killed by the NKVD, who no doubt also exhibited bullet holes in the back of the neck and who were also buried in mass graves.<sup>620</sup>

Soviet reliability is notoriously poor, and this is true for the Kharkov Trial as much as for anything else.

Three days after the end of the trial, on 21 December 1943, John Balfour, British ambassador to Moscow, drew up a meticulous record for Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. Given its importance, and because it is an unpublished document, I quote it in full, notwithstanding its length:<sup>621</sup>

“Sir,

*In my telegram No. 1570 of the 19th December, I had the honour to describe the motives which had prompted the Soviet authorities to stage the atrocity trial at Kharkov, where, for the first time, members of the German armed forces appeared in the dock along with a Russian civilian. In the present despatch I propose to recapitulate the charges brought against the accused, to analyse the reports on the affair in the Soviet press, and to dwell more fully upon the reasons for the trial and its attendant publicity.*

*2. The first public notice of the impending trial appeared on the 13th December in Pravda, which reproduced a statement by the Extraordinary State Commission on Atrocities recording German atrocities perpetrated in the Kharkov province, naming those responsible and announcing that the commission had placed the evidence in its possession at the disposal of the Public Prosecutor. A translation is enclosed of this statement, which mentioned by name nine members of the German armed forces and one Russian civilian.*

*3. On the 16th December, the Moscow newspapers reported that three of the above-mentioned Germans and Russian had been charged with committing crimes of the kind foreseen in an Ukase promulgated by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. on the 19th April, 1943, the text of which has not been published. The persons accused were Reinhardt Retslaw, aged 36, a corporal of the German Secret Field Police, Hans Ritz, aged 24, an ‘S.S. Untersturmführer,’ Wilhelm Langheld, aged 52, a captain in the German counter-espionage service, and Mikhail Petrovich Bulanov, a Soviet citizen who worked as chauffeur for a German ‘Sonderkommando’ at Kharkov and Nizhne-Cherskaya from October 1941 to February 1943. All the German defendants were accused of having directly participated in the mass-extermination of Soviet civilians by means of ‘gas vans’ and of having taken a personal part in mass-shootings, hangings, lootings and outrages against Soviet citizens. Retslaw was alleged to have tortured Soviet citizens as a means of extracting false confessions. He was charged with fabricating false evidence against them and with complicity in the use of ‘gas vans’ to suffocate Soviet civilians. Ritz was accused of participation in the torture and*

<sup>620</sup> A letter from Aleksandr Shelepin, then head of the KGB, to Khrushchev, dated March 3, 1959, stated that, on the basis of the decision of the NKVD special troika of the USSR of 5 March 1940, a total of 21,857 people were shot, 4,421 of them in the Katyn Forest (Smolensk Oblast), 3,820 in the Starobelsk Camp near Kharkov, 6,311 in the Ostashkov Camp (Kalinin Oblast) and 7,305 people were shot in other camps and prisons of western Ukraine and western Byelorussia (Cienciała, pp. 332f.).

<sup>621</sup> TNA, FO 371/43374, pp. 4-8.

shooting of Soviet civilians. Langheld was said to have shot Soviet prisoners of war and civilians and to have used torture and false accusations to compass the death of innocent persons. Bulanov was charged with treason and with complicity in the murder of Soviet citizens by means of 'gas vans' and shooting.

4. In accordance with normal Soviet criminal procedure, the actual public trial was preceded by a preliminary investigation, extracts from the *procès-verbal* of which were published in the newspapers on the 16th December. To judge from the references given at the end of each extract, the *procès-verbal* must have been a bulky document in at least three volumes. It is clear that far more evidence was considered during the preliminary investigation than during the public trial, and that the verdict was a foregone conclusion. The trial itself served as a means to emphasise the strict legality of the proceeding and to draw the widest possible attention to those aspects of the case which the Soviet authorities wished to impress upon the public both in the Soviet Union and abroad.

5. The trial was held in the main theatre of Kharkov by the Military Tribunal of the Fourth Ukrainian Front. Major-General of Justice Myasnikov, assisted by two military jurists, presided over the proceedings. The prosecutor was Colonel of Justice Dunayev. In accordance with normal criminal procedure, each of the accused was defended by a Soviet lawyer appointed by the court. Admission to the court-room, packed each day with spectators, was by way of tickets, valid for one session only, issued through trade union and other organizations. Loudspeakers and arc-lamps were installed in the auditorium and a film was made of the trial. Certain foreign journalists from Moscow were admitted to the last day of the court proceedings and witnessed the execution of the accused. The interrogation of the accused was conducted in such a way as to show that their individual crimes were part of a grandiose German plan for the extermination of Soviet citizens in the occupied areas. The President of the Court and the State Prosecutor, who conducted almost the whole cross-examination (the defendants played a very minor role), induced the accused to confirm the following important statements regarding German malpractices: The Germans had manufactured false charges against Soviet prisoners of war and subsequently shot the persons so accused. They had tortured prisoners of war and persons visiting them in order to extract false confessions. They had interned civilians in the same camps as prisoners of war. They had left the inmates of these camps to die from hunger and lack of medical treatment. They had allowed prisoners to make fires during the black-out and then fired on those who gathered round to warm themselves. They had robbed prisoners of war of anything valuable in their possession. They had set dogs on to attack them. They had followed a policy of exterminating Soviet citizens as a means of establishing German hegemony. With this end in view they had made use of 'gas vans,' in which batches of about fifty people could be suffocated while they were being transported from their prisons to a common grave. They had shot tens of thousands of men, women and children in the Kharkov province as part of the same policy. In some of these mass executions, in which they showed the greatest barbarity, they had buried people alive and particularly children. In December 1941 they had murdered about 435 patients in a Kharkov hospital. In

*March 1940 [sic] they had shot or burned alive some 800 wounded Red Army men in another Kharkov hospital.*

*7. The witnesses, who were called after the accused had been cross-examined, included three German prisoners of war. They described some of the atrocities in which the defendants were alleged to have taken part. Their statements, which had an atmosphere of reality absent from the replies of the accused, were at times horrifying in the extreme.*

*8. The defendants did not deny any of the charges preferred against them and, in accordance with the tradition of important Soviet public trials, they confirmed and amplified the accusations of the prosecutor. Their readiness to subscribe to statements placed in their mouths by the Public Prosecutor was used to bring charges against the German High Command, the German Government and the German nation. The High Command was accused of observing no legal forms on the Eastern Front and encouraging German officers to violate the requirement of international law relating to the treatment of Soviet civilians and prisoners of war. The German Government was accused of training special troops in the methods to be employed for the massacre of Soviet citizens. The German people was accused of having allowed itself to become accustomed, thanks to National-Socialist propaganda, to the idea that the population of the Soviet Union should be exterminated.*

*9. The sole excuse which the defendants advanced to justify their crimes was the plea that they were acting under the orders of their superiors. Although disallowed as an argument exonerating the defendants from blame, this plea was used by the court as evidence that the German High Command was largely responsible for the Kharkov atrocities.*

*10. On the 18th December, after every witness had been heard and the counsels for the prosecution and the defence had stated their cases, the Military Tribunal condemned all four accused to death by hanging. The execution took place on the following day in the main square at Kharkov before a crowd of some forty thousand people. I am informed by an American correspondent who witnessed the event that a murmur of approval went up from this vast concourse when the criminals were hanged.*

*11. The Soviet press and radio gave the widest publicity to the affair. From the 16th to 20th December all newspapers devoted their centre pages to reports on the proceedings. Most Moscow newspapers of the 16th, 20th and 21st December published leading articles by the best-known authors of the Soviet Union who were present in the court-room as eye-witnesses of the trial. Verbatim reports of the proceedings were broadcast in Russian and in foreign languages. During the first days of the trial revolting photographs of corpses in the common graves round Kharkov appeared beneath the press accounts of the proceedings. Nothing was overlooked which might serve to inflame public indignation. [...]*

*18. It would seem probable that the self-confessions of the accused Germans in this instance, which struck a somewhat artificial note in the proceeding, arose from the fact that, out of a number of miscreants under detention, the authorities*

*had selected for public arraignment those individuals who were most disposed to make whatever reply was expected to the questions put to them. I learn from The Times correspondent that one of the attorneys for the defence informed him that the prisoners had never seriously expected that they would be condemned to death. They had supposed that the trial had been staged as an elaborate piece of propaganda and that, once they had discharged their role as the principal actors, they would be permitted to return to the camps from whence they had come."*

On 30 December 1943, the Canadian legation at Moscow sent the Secretary of State for External Affairs at Ottawa a record of the trial. The following is a summary of the most important points:<sup>622</sup>

*"2. It will be noticed that the main facts constituting guilt were established before the trial began by preliminary investigations, and that all four accused pleaded guilty and fully admitted their responsibility. Indeed in the course of the trial the accused seemed remarkably willing to make the most damaging admissions regarding their previous activities, and to supply details of atrocities committed by themselves and their colleagues. In this matter there is a striking similarity between this trial and the main 'purge' trials held in Moscow in 1937-1938. [...]*

*3. Certain members of the diplomatic corps in Moscow are of the opinion that the reported behavior of the accused at the trials was 'psychologically impossible' and that the trials or reports must have been faked in some manner. On the other hand most of the diplomats and the foreign newspapers correspondents (many of whom attended the latter half of the trials) have no doubts whatever about the facts brought out in the trial or the accuracy of the verbatim reports of the proceedings. The correspondents who attended the trial say that the accused showed no sign of any ill treatment and their behavior appeared quite voluntary throughout. Bulanov, the Russian, who was a man of very limited intelligence and little character, was the only one of the prisoners who showed signs of being at all aware of his probable fate, the three Germans apparently being convinced that somehow or other they would get off.*

*4. It is quite clear, however, that the trial was carefully prepared for propaganda purposes in the sense that the four accused must have been selected after a careful sifting of thousands of other possible prisoners as those whose behavior at the public hearings would be most in line with what the Soviet authorities desired. The dramatic feature that three of the accused represented three distinct generations of Germans and the fourth a Russian 'quisling' is an obvious illustration of this. Moreover in the case of these four each one of them admitted his guilt, and further there were available a number of witnesses, both German and Russian, so that at no time was the court faced with the problem of choosing between the word of a Russian and the word of a German."*

The verdict of the Military Tribunal of 15-18 December 1943 established that

*"During the temporary occupation of the city of Kharkov and Kharkov Region, the German-fascist invaders had shot, hung, burned alive and poisoned by carbon*

<sup>622</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

*monoxide gas more than 30,000 peaceful completely innocent citizens, including women, old people and children. [...]*

*The German-fascist invaders used the so-called ‘gazenwagens’ – large enclosed trucks – for the mass killing of Soviet citizens. (The Russians called them ‘dushegubki’, i.e. murdergas vans.) The German-fascist invaders forced Soviet citizens into these gas vans and suffocated them by filling the vehicles with a special deadly gas – carbon monoxide.*

*With the purport of covering up the traces of their monstrous crimes and mass extermination of Soviet people by way of poisoning them with carbon monoxide in the ‘gazenwagens’, the German-fascist criminals burned the bodies of their victims.” (Denisov/Changuli, pp. 280f.)*

The cremations at Kharkov are pure fantasy even from an orthodox Holocaust point of view, but they have a precise propagandistic function: they exonerate the Soviet legal-medical experts from the necessity of inventing an expert report on the bodies of the alleged gassing victims. A year later, the propagandistic technique changed somewhat; in the case of Rovno, as I have documented earlier, the legal-medical experts pretended to have discovered the “proof” of the gassings in the “gazenwagens,” that is, a mass grave containing 2,000 perfectly intact bodies, months after burial in the mass grave, so much so that the experts were able to state that “the skin of all corpses was of bright pink color”!

#### 8.4.4. Soviet Photographs

The *Ghetto Fighters House Archives* contain two photographs of rather poor quality which are said to show a mass grave at the place of execution, Drobitsky Ravine. The documents show clear signs of having been retouched to make some of the skulls show more clearly. The first shows a section of a pit full of human skeletons (see Document II.8.8.). The second is an image taken closer up (see Document II.8.9.).

The documentary *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine*, produced by the Soviets in October 1943, referred to by Karel C. Berkhoff, was broadcast by the Italian TV station RAI 3 on 28 August 2010 and is available online.<sup>623</sup> Documents II.8.10. through 17. show stills taken from that broadcast. All these stills, as far as one can tell, probably relate to the same site.

First, I wish to state that Document II.8.13. appears in the book already cited several times (Denisov/Changuli, photographic insert between pp. 352 and 353) with the following caption:

*“The excavation of a grave in Babi Yar in Kiev where thousands of Soviet citizens had been shot by the Hitlerites, Kiev, 1944.”*

Documents II.8.11. and II.8.13, as indicated earlier, are also attributed to Babi Yar by E. Klee and W. Dreßen.

<sup>623</sup> Ukraine 1943 (7/8) Битва за нашу Советскую Украину (The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4agw5\\_oiwUw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4agw5_oiwUw)

The first thing to note is that there is no proof that the mass grave shown in the stills was located at the Drobitsky Ravine, and there is no proof that the bodies are those of Jews. As shown by the photographs, the victims were dressed; in Document II.8.16, a Soviet physician in a white coat looks at an ID card taken from a body lying stretched out in front of him, apparently in uniform. It is therefore much more probable that the victim is a POW, although it is not impossible that the victims were some of the Poles murdered by the NKVD. The fact that no children's bodies are seen seems to argue against the hypothesis of Jewish victims. It is true that the images are not clear enough to exclude it categorically, nevertheless, the only two frames taken close up clearly show adult bodies. If the grave had contained children's bodies, the Soviet film maker would not have failed to include them to document the bestial atrocities of the "German-fascist invaders," and this is particularly true for the "60 children and infants" or "19 children and adolescents" allegedly exhumed and subjected to forensic examination.

The grave depicted in all the photographs is apparently the only mass grave discovered by the Soviets, since no others are shown, not even fleetingly.

From the images we deduce that the grave was no more than three meters wide; as for the length, it is true that it is never shown in its entirety, but Document II.8.12. is taken more or less from the center of one end of the grave. Although this end is not visible in the photograph, the photographer taking this picture, and thus the grave's end, must be just a few meters away from the bodies. In this image, in the line arranged along the right edge of the grave, we can count about thirty bodies. This order of magnitude is confirmed by the fact that in Document II.8.13., along this edge, there are 14 persons standing next to each other for almost the entire length of the grave. From this we can establish that the visible length of the grave was about 20-25 meters in total, and some 30 meters when including the part not appearing in the photo. Even assuming a depth of three meters, the grave could contain maybe some  $(30 \text{ m} \times 3 \text{ m} \times 3 \text{ m} \times 3.5 \text{ bodies/m}^3 =) 945$  bodies. This order of magnitude is simply risible compared to the numbers and dimensions of the graves and the number of bodies declared by the Soviets: two graves measuring  $100 \text{ m} \times 18\text{-}20 \text{ m}$ , and  $60 \text{ m} \times 20 \text{ m}$ , respectively, or 13 graves with indefinite dimensions containing 15,000 or 33,000 bodies.

The case of Kharkov therefore constitutes another confirmation of the total unreliability of Soviet statements relating to the discovery of mass graves and bodies.

The grave in question is also entirely incompatible with the alleged murder of 10,000-20,000 Jews, whose bodies were neither destroyed by the Germans nor found by the Soviets.

## 8.5. Bobruisk

Therkel Stræde, a researcher from the University of Southern Denmark, has devoted an article to the Germans' victims of Bobruisk, in Byelorussia. He recalls the largest massacre of Jews ever committed in this locality (Stræde, p. 25):

*"It was conducted on 5-7 November 1941. Members of the German Einsatzkommando 8 and Police Battalion 316 aided by mainly Ukrainian-staffed auxiliary police murdered Jewish men, women and children – a total of 5,281, as the SS officer in charge proudly reported to the Einsatzgruppe B headquarters after the action."*

In EM No. 148 dated 19 December 1941, the report from *Einsatzgruppe B* reports as follows (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 889):

*"As results from confidential reports, the Jews of Bobruisk, following the withdrawal of the partial unit, instantly became active again. Some of them stopped wearing the required Jewish insignia, there were increased cases of refusal to work, connections to partisans were detected and finally also a provocative attitude towards members of the German occupation forces. To prevent these Jewish machinations, which are a serious threat to public security and order, the severest measures had to be taken. By carrying out a special operation, a total of 5,281 Jews of both sexes were shot. The city of Bobruisk and its close vicinity are free of Jews."*

The author appeals to "Activity and Situation Report No. 8 of the *Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police and the SD in the USSR" relating to December 1941 and published by P. Klein (Stræde, fn 5, p. 36), although this appears to be a simple summary of the text of EM No. 148 (Klein 1997, p. 268), so that no one knows whence Stræde got the date 5-7 November 1941.

The preceding reports mention executions on a smaller scale, but only partially of Jews: EM No. 67 dated 29 August 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 377):

*"Among others, an NKGB informant could be liquidated in Bobruisk who has some 200 persons on his conscience according to witness testimony. A number of Jews who created unrest among the population by spreading rumors were also shot."*

EM No. 92 dated 23 September 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 546):

*"A number of Jewish members of the Communist Party were also arrested in Bobruisk, among them a Jewish medical corpsman who, according to his own confession, had poisoned two wounded German officers and 4 wounded German soldiers. [...] In total, more than 600 persons were arrested by the squad of EK 8 in Bobruisk and surroundings. 407 of these persons were liquidated."*

EM No. 108 dated 9 October 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 662):

*"In Bobruisk and surroundings, a total of 1,380 persons were liquidated during the reporting period, including 20 shot while attempting to escape."*

EM No. 124 dated 25 October 1941 (*ibid.*, p. 732):



*“In Bobruisk, a squad of EK 8 executed another 418 persons during the reporting period.”*

The total number of victims would therefore amount to a little over 7,500. Stræde, by contrast, adduces two other massacres of Jews (Stræde, p. 26):

*“The November 5-7 massacre was not the first mass killing the Germans carried out in Bobruisk. Previously, on 5 August 1941, it seems, Sonderkommando 7b – a forerunner of Einsatzkommando 8 – conducted one on the same spot. The victims were 250-800 Jewish able-bodied men (testimony differs) who had been selected on the pretext of having to do out-of-town forced labour.”*

This alleged execution, however, is not mentioned in any document, and must therefore be considered fictitious. The author then speaks of the second alleged massacre (*ibid.*):

*“So a second large-scale massacre was conducted at a different location on 30-31 December 1941 which killed another 5-7,000 Jews and left only a few hundred Jewish craftsmen as well as some hidden Jews alive in Bobruisk, a city which in 1939 was home to more than 26,000 Jews, equalling one third of the total population.”*

Here again, there is no reference to documents. The author does not even wonder where these 5,000-6,000 Jews came from, since Bobruisk had been declared “free of Jews” no later than 19 December.

Henning Herbert Pieper asserts that the alleged massacre of 7,000 Jews “has not been documented at the time and could only recently be reconstructed by historical research,” but the author dates it to 4-9 September 1941 (Pieper, p. 174). Arad writes summarily (Arad 2009, p. 187):

*“According to some sources, about 7,000 Jews were murdered in September 1941 by the SS Cavalry Brigade.”*

As source, he adduces two articles (*ibid.*, fn 17, p. 570):

*“Gerlach, ‘German Economic Interests,’ 221; Büchler, ‘Kommandostab RFSS: Himmler’s Personal Murder Brigades in 1941,’ relates to the murder in Bobruisk carried out by SS Cavalry Brigade.”*

In the article cited, Gerlach makes an extremely fleeting reference to the execution of “7,500 [Jews] in Bobruisk” by the SS Cavalry Brigade, with reference to yet another article (Gerlach 2000, p. 221, and fn 57, p. 235).

The article by Yehoshua Büchler contains this brief mention (Büchler, p. 16):

*“Another type of auxiliary activity of the SS brigades can be seen in the murder of 7000 Jews at Bobruisk, where the special brigades provided the execution squads, while Einsatzgruppen units concentrated the Jews and brought them to the execution site, and the army provided the transportation.”*

The title of the article leaves one to anticipate an archival source; in reality, the only reference is as follows (*ibid.*, fn 51, p. 23):

*“The murder of the Jews in Bobruisk by the SS Cavalry Brigade is described in Karla Müller-Tupath, Reichsführers gehorsamster Becher (Fulda, 1982), p. 62.*

*The description is based upon the testimonies of the men who took part in this massacre.”*

The SS Cavalry Brigade formed part of the *Kommandostab Reichsführer SS* and consisted of SS Cavalry Regiments 1 and 2 which were combined on 2 September 1941.

The “War Diary No. 1” of *Kommandostab-RFSS*, which covers the period from 16 June to 31 December 1941, summarizes the reports from all subordinate units, therefore including the SS Cavalry Brigade, but does not contain any mention of the shooting of Jews at Bobruisk; not even the city itself is mentioned.

There are, therefore, no documents at the beginning of this chain of incestuous references, but mere testimonies.

Another massacre, according to Stræde, concerned Soviet POWs. In the related chapter titled “The 8 November 1941 Massacre of Soviet Prisoners-of-War,” he asserts (Stræde, p. 30):

*“Here the number of victims is uncertain, but it probably exceeds 4,000 on this single day. Subsequently, the dead bodies, or at least some of them, were stripped of clothes to be given to other prisoners and buried elsewhere in the citadel area.”*

Therefore, the mass graves at Bobruisk should have contained at least 12,750 bodies, if we follow orthodox Holocaust historiography.

The most important aspect of Stræde’s article concerns the mass graves. In this regard, he writes (*ibid.*, p. 25):

*“A map sketch drawn in January 1945 by a Soviet war crimes commission that investigated the atrocities committed by the Germans during their three years’ rule in Bobruisk shows the location of the mass graves 400 metres off the main road between Bobruisk and Slutsk next to the village of Kamenka. The map is not accurate and not all buildings were marked.”*

The Yad Vashem Archives are in possession of a copy of the drawing showing four mass graves,<sup>624</sup> one measuring 50 m × 3 m × 3 m = 450 m<sup>3</sup>, the other three 6 m × 4 m × 3 m = 72 m<sup>3</sup>, for a total of 666 m<sup>3</sup>, which would have contained 10,600 bodies. Assuming a cover layer of 20 cm (= some 4.5 m<sup>3</sup>), this would amount to a packing density of about (10,600 ÷ [661.5 m<sup>3</sup>] =) 16 bodies per cubic meter!

From the above we may deduce the reliability of this diagram. Stræde cites the testimony of a certain Pavel Fomichenko, who, in January 1944, made the following statement before the above-mentioned commission (Stræde, pp. 25f.):

*“I know of a site of mass murder of innocent Soviet citizens. The site is nine kilometers from the city of Bobruysk, 400 meters right of the road. For a few days before the killings, Russian prisoners of war dug three pits forty to fifty meters long, three meters wide and up to three meters deep. After a few days, the Germans brought the innocent citizens of Bobruysk there in closed trucks, and killed them*

<sup>624</sup> YVA, JM/2000.

*on the spot. On the third day of the murders, I visited the site and saw the pits filled with bodies.”*

Even if the data only fit together in part (there were three large graves measuring 40 to 50 m × 3 m × 3 m, instead of just one; in this fragment of the deposition a fourth grave is not mentioned), it seems that the drawing was redacted by Fomichenko, or on his instructions, as a simple sketch of the location of the mass graves, rather than as the result of a real forensic examination of exhumations, of which nothing else is known.

Stræde also mentions a “*Sonderaktion 1005 in Bobruisk*” in 1943, but without saying anything precise. Holocaust sources are in fact particularly random in this regard. Spektor, the primary source, limits himself to stating (Spektor 1990b, pp. 165f.):

*“Thus, the bodies of the Jews of Bobruisk and the surrounding district were burned in autumn of 1943 and the beginning of 1944,”*

and this is all, without even a reference!

Hoffmann, for his part, concerns himself with the matter in a footnote, referring simply to Spektor. He notes correctly that the Israeli historian writes “without source references” (Hoffmann, fn 18, p. 144).

Stræde then analyzes the few photographs of the mass graves at Bobruisk:

*“The Yad Vashem photo archive in Jerusalem holds a number of photos depicting the victims of the massacre as well as the everyday mass death by starvation and random violence by guards that occurred in the Dulag 131 POW camp of Bobruisk during Autumn 1941. Originally the photos were ascribed to the Kamenka massacre of the Jews of Bobruisk, but the fact that they display only dead bodies of men of military age, and that almost all of them are in a state of extreme emaciation, convinced the Yad Vashem archivists that the photos actually depict victims of the POW camp.”* (Stræde, p. 30)

He supplies an accurate description of the first photograph, which bears as reference Yad Vashem Photo Archive 143B03 (see Document II.8.18). The photograph shows “some fifty or more dead bodies,” which are compatible with the disastrous situation of the POW camp complex at Bobruisk in 1941, with a very high mortality rate due to starvation, hardship and killings (*ibid.*, pp. 30f.).

Although, as the author says, the photograph only shows part of the grave (in reality, the bodies are lying on a grassy surface) and his body estimate is generous, the general order of magnitude could be at most in the hundreds, certainly not thousands.

*“A second photo from the same series has obviously been taken close to the first spot and displays more or less the same topographic character. [...] The photo most probably depicts an intermediate stage between the immediate disposal of the bodies and their burial in mass graves.”* (*ibid.*, p. 31)

The related photograph is reproduced in Document II.8.19 in the Appendix. Here as well, the order of magnitude might be in the hundreds, but certainly not thousands.

Stræde then describes the last photograph :

*“A third photo depicts the burial itself. A larger number of similarly dressed POWs – some wearing fur hats commonly used by members of the Red Army – gather at the rim of a 3-4 metres deep and 2-3 metres wide mass grave that stretches 5-10 metres or more from the far end of the photo towards the camera standpoint.”*

And in fact, the grave that we see in the photograph reproduced here as Document II.8.20. belongs to the same order of magnitude.

But what about the graves with the bodies of Jews? No doubt these were not found by the Soviets. On the other hand, Holocaust historiography knows nothing about their elimination by any *Sonderkommando* 1005.

Stræde then offers us a bit of information of a certain interest (*ibid.*, p. 34):

*“In 1964, during excavations to the foundations of what is today the Belshina Tire factory in Jeloviki/Bobruisk, remnants of what turned out to be several mass graves were discovered. At this site the Germans had conducted a number of mass killings, mainly of Soviet POWs. A local Jewish man, Meir Zeliger, managed to gather a group of volunteers and get permission to exhume the bodily remains and move the skulls and bones to Kamenka where a modest memorial had been established early after the war. Here they were reburied in the mass graves where Jews had been buried in 1941, and which Aktion 1005 had emptied in 1943 and refilled with their ashes. A picture from a private photo album of his own shows Meir Zeliger in the middle of this reburial work that was barely tolerated, and only much later recognised, by the Communist authorities.”*

The associated photograph is shown in Document II.8.21. Here we see six or seven sacks full of skulls and other bones. Where are the bodies of the 12,750 Jews murdered at Bobruisk?

The Soviet investigatory commission which studied the “misdeeds of the German-fascist invaders and their lackeys” in the Bobruisk Oblast, declared:

*“For the purpose of concealing the traces of their misdeeds, the German bandits, over the course of the autumn of 1943 and at the beginning of 1944, exhumed the bodies buried by the place of mass execution in the villages of Kamenka, Eloviki and others, and also along the periphery of Bobruisk, placed the bodies in stacks and under threat of death forced Soviet prisoners to burn them, then destroyed the prisoners as well. Not having enough time to effect the cremation of all the bodies, the Hitlerites scrupulously camouflaged the graves, building roads over them, sowing grain crops over them, etc.”* (Beluga, p. 328)

Hence, the bodies were either cremated, which is not supported by any testimony, or were hidden so well that the Soviets did not find them.

## 8.6. The Brest Ghetto and the Bronnaya Gora “Extermination Site”

John and Carroll Garrard assert that the biggest execution of Operation Barbarossa occurred at Brest-Litovsk on 10 July 1941; their reconstruction of the event is

based on the “eyewitness testimony of a serviceman in the 307 Police Battalion, named Heinrich [Meier], who provided escort and supporting services to the shooters” (Garrard, p. 19). Regarding the number of victims, the witness first spoke of 10,000, then 6,000 (*ibid.*, pp. 21f.).

With reference to Brest, Arad writes that

*“in late June and early July, about 5,000 Jews were arrested and taken to the Kotelna suburb, where they were murdered by Sonderkommando 7b and Police Battalion 307. According to a policeman who participated in the action, ‘The site of the executions was south of Brest-Litovsk... Some 6,000 Jewish men were shot... The action ended at 4 p.m... The Jews in question went to their destiny in stoic silence and heroic behavior.’”* (Arad 2009, p. 163)

He does not indicate the source, but it is evidently taken from the same witness as mentioned above, Heinrich Meier.

Gerlach states on the same topic that

*“4,000 to 6,000 Jewish men roughly between 19 and 60 years of age were arrested, collected and driven to the pre-arranged execution site in trucks during a big raid on 6 July and during the following night by parts of the 162nd Infantry Division and by the 307th Police Battalion, which had arrived in the city three days before.”*

The first source mentioned in the associated footnote is a reference to the “testimony Heinrich M.[eier]” (Gerlach 1999, p. 547). Always the same witness!

Nevertheless, EM No. 32 dated 24 July 1941 reports:

*“With support from local deployment squads, the police liquidated 4,435 persons in Brest-Litovsk. Among them were 408 Russians and Byelorussians.”* (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 171)

The murdered Jews therefore numbered 4,026. If there were 408 “Russians and Byelorussians” among the victims, and if those selected were between 19 and 60 years of age, the execution must have been motivated by security considerations. Browning describes the context as follows:

*“Police Battalion 307, under the command of Major Stahr, arrived in Brest on July 2, and 2 days later, Major General Stubenrauch established himself as local military commandant (Feldkommandantur 184). On July 5, both Stahr and Stubenrauch sent alarming reports concerning the very insecure situation in and around Brest. There were many Soviet soldiers still roaming the area, the citadel and city still had to be cleared of weapons and ammunition, and both warehouses and some 500-600 train cars in the railyard were loaded with valuable goods that needed to be guarded.”* (Browning 2000, p. 119)

On 7 July, Rear-Security Division 221 forwarded the following request to the Higher SS and Police leader Russia Center:

*“Field HQ 184 in Brest reports that it had called on a company of the 307th Motorized Police Battalion, which was billeted in Brest, for assistance in the cleansing operation in Brest. The Division requests retroactive approval for this.”*

Approval was granted by von dem Bach-Zelewski the next day (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, pp. 178f., fn 6).

The German judiciary outlined the story of the event based on the testimony of ex-members of the 307th Battalion, among them that same Heinrich Meier. It is documented that this battalion reached Brest on 3 July 1941 from Biała Podlaska and was transferred to Baranowicze (Baranovich) on 18 July. Based on the testimonies, the most-probable date of the shooting was the 13th. 12 mass graves 10 meters long, 2.5 meters wide and 3-4 meters deep, each of which could contain 600 bodies, were dug for this purpose. As regards the number of victims, “the statements of participants in the shootings as to the total number of persons shot during these actions range from 6,000 to 10,000.”<sup>625</sup>

It does not appear that any *Sonderkommando* 1005 ever concerned itself with these 12 mass graves, nor that they were ever discovered by the Soviets.

The mass graves must have been even more numerous, because *Einsatzgruppe* z.b.V. shot 769 persons in the second half of August 1941 at Brest-Litovsk, according to EM No. 66 of 28 August 1941 (Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 364).

When the Brest Ghetto was set up at the end of 1941, the Germans adopted a highly singular procedure described by John and Carroll Garrard as follows:

*“And indeed the authorities did go to a considerable amount of trouble in issuing papers (with photographs) to all Jews fourteen years of age or older before ordering them to move into the ghetto. The process of issuing identity papers and photos began on 10 November 1941. Polish clerks took down each person’s name in a ledger of over 560 pages, adding his or her date of birth and parents’ names. Then each person signed acknowledging receipt of an ID, which included a photo and finger print of the holder. Even after Jews living in Brest had been issued their photo IDs and entered the ghetto, the authorities continued to issue the identity papers at increasing intervals until 5 June 1942.”* (Garrard, p. 27)

The authors of the article correctly note that this procedure was a reassuring one:

*“Why would the Germans order the Poles to create such a ledger – carefully ticking off each line when the pass had been signed for – if the people so methodically listed were to be annihilated?”* (*ibid.*, p. 28)

Andrea Simon comments, with equal clarity (Simon, p. 169):

*“The documents of the German administration between 1941 and 1942 provide evidence of the political attitude towards the Jews. From the beginning of the occupation, Jews were given special IDs and recorded by the Germans. This ‘passport registration book’ lists 12,260 Jews, including teenagers born before 1928, who were living in the ghetto from November 10, 1941, to June 5, 1942. This is the list of Jews known to have been taken from the Brest ghetto to Brona Gora.”*

The ledger was not destroyed by the Germans and still exists today; according to John and Carroll Garrard, it contains 12,465 names (Garrard, p. 28).

<sup>625</sup> Abschlusbericht. Das Polizeibataillon 307 und seine Teilnahme an Judenerschussungen und Judenaktionen im Osten, insbes. in Brest-Litovsk. YVA, O.54-41, pp. 115-123, text cited on p. 123.

On a list of almost 9,800 of these names (a little over 9,000 of them give the year of birth), registered over the period from 10 November 1941 to 5 June 1942, 932 were aged 65 or older, falling into the following age groups:

Year of birth	Age	Number of persons
1872-1876	66-70 years	397
1867-1871	71-75 years	309
1862-1866	76-80 years	152
1857-1861	81-85 years	57
1852-1856	86-90 years	14
1850-1851	91-92 years	3
	Total:	932

In the ghetto, there were, moreover, 380 boys aged 15 (year of birth: 1927), 128 aged 14 years (1928), 4 aged 13 years (1929), 1 aged 12 (1930), 1 aged 11 (1931), 1 aged 10 (1932) and 2 aged 9 (1933) (Chernoglazova 1997, pp. 274-378).

The original ghetto was called the “Big Ghetto” (Bolshoye getto), while the area added later was referred to as the “Small Ghetto” (Maloye getto). According to Arad, the two ghettos housed 18,000-20,000 Jews in the spring of 1942 (Arad 2009, p. 267). Based on the surviving documents, the number of Jews at work during that time, although constantly growing, was relatively small: 4,956 in January 1942, 5,490 in February, 5,843 in March, 6,722 in April, 7,248 in May. On 5 June, there were 7,994 Jews working, including 1,571 “qualified personnel,” 1,384 manual laborers and 5,039 women and boys (Garrard, p. 31).

Andrea Simon writes that “the statistics report for the Brest town council on the distribution of provisions indicates that from March 24, 1942, to April 23, 1942, four bakeries served 17,724 Jews from the ghetto” (Simon, p. 170). If the working Jews over these two months amounted to 5,843 and 6,722 respectively, the “useless eaters” in the two ghettos amounted to between 62 and 67% of the total.

Why were these Jews kept alive for all these months in the two ghettos?

Another enigma concerns the liquidation of the ghetto, since it is not known which German authority would have ordered the shooting of its inhabitants, and for what reason. At any rate, to carry out the shootings, the Bronnaya Gora site on the Brest-Litovsk railway line, 147 km from Brest, is said to have been selected. Nothing is known about this decision or this choice.

The number of alleged victims results from the population-movement register of Brest kept by the Brest city hall. In an entry for 15 October 1942, the total population is shown as 41,091 persons, including 16,934 Jews; this figure was written and then crossed out, because the Jews had “departed.” John and Carroll Garrard moreover inform us that

*“according to documents in the Brest archives, from late June to November 1942 a total of seven trains transported Jews to be executed at Bronnaya Gora. Three*

*of these trains are said to have carried people from Brest – two trains consisting of 40 and 13 cars in July, and a third consisting of 28 cars in October. How many Jews from Brest ghetto were transported in the three trains? If we say that close to 200 people were crushed into each car, then we arrive at a total of 8,000 people in the first train, 2,600 in the second, and 5,600 in the third,”* (Garrard, p. 33)

and the sum total – 16,200 persons – is practically identical to the total number of “departed” Jews, 16,934. But why were these latter removed from the Brest population register all together on 15 October 1942? John and Carroll Garrard hypothesize that “the SS Commandant did not confide in the Polish clerks but waited until the final liquidation of the ghetto and the third and last train had departed, then ordered that the figure for all Jews in the ghetto be erased” (*ibid.*, p. 33, fn 45), but this explanation is not very plausible. First of all, as Andrea Simon has discovered, statistical reports existed on the distribution of provisions on the basis of which the bakeries in the cities supplied the Jews with bread, so that, if there had been a decrease in the ghetto population of (8,000 + 2,600 =) 10,600 Jews in July, the Polish clerks would have noticed it immediately. In the second place, as we shall soon see, the reports from the 310th Police Battalion, which participated in the operation, mentioned exclusively October 15 and 16, 1942. It is therefore certain that the roughly 16,000 Jews in the ghetto of Brest were all evacuated in October, while only 5,600 were taken to Bronnaya Gora, if we follow John and Carroll Garrard’s hypothesis; but then, where did the others go?

Edward B. Westermann supplies further information in this regard in relation to the activity of the 11th Company of the 3rd Police Regiment 15 (310th Police Battalion; Westermann, p. 58):

*“The report also indicates that ‘all available men from the company were detailed to a special action (Sonderaktion) in the city of Brest’ on October 15. The report further states that the company returned from the ‘special mission’ (Sondereinsatz) on October 16. What the report fails to mention is that on October 15 and 16 police and auxiliary units summarily executed thousands of Jews in the Brest ghetto. Additionally, between 10,000 and 15,000 Jews were taken to the train station for transportation to execution sites in the area of Brona-Gora.”*

The “report” in question, according to the related footnote, is the “Lage- und Tätigkeitsbericht der 11. Pol. 15 für die Zeit vom 12. bis 18.10.42” (*ibid.*, p. 67, fn 98). The entries cited by Westermann are as follows:<sup>626</sup>

- 15 October: “All available forces of the company were sent to Brest to carry out a special operation”;
- 16 October: “The company returned from the special deployment Brest around 18.00 hours.” This entry continues as follows: “In Chernyany, a Jew was arrested who had been caught without identity documents. The Jew was shot.”

<sup>626</sup> YVA, O.53-13.1. This brochure contains copies of volume 412 of the Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltung von Ludwigsburg, USSR Collection, the source indicated by Westermann.



It is difficult to imagine that the author of the report, *Hauptmann* Pohls, after allegedly having shot thousands of Jews at Brest without saying a word, felt himself compelled to refer explicitly to the shooting of one single Jew.

The “War Diary” of the 310th Police Battalion (see Part One, Subchapter 1.5.) says explicitly:

- 15 October: “The Battalion is deployed at Brest to evacuate the ghetto”;
- 16 October: “A total of 16,000 Jews are being evacuated during the deployment in Brest.”<sup>627</sup>

There is also a “Activity and Situation Report for the time between 12 and 18 October 1942” headed “10./Pol. 15,” hence issued by the 10th Police Battalion. The following entry concerns Brest:<sup>628</sup>

- 15 October: “The company was deployed in an operation at Brest-Litovsk within the framework of the Battalion”;
- 16 October: “A part of the forces deployed for the operation in Brest-Litovsk returned to the bases today”;
- 17 October: “The rest of the men returned from the operation in Brest-Litovsk today.”

Finally, the “Situation Report of the District Police Leader Brest-Litovsk to the Police Commander in Lutsk” dated 8 Nov. 1942 states:

*“The Jewish operation was carried out in Brest-Litovsk on 15 and 16 Oct. 42. Subsequently the complete resettlement of the Jews in the county area of Brest-Litovsk took place as well. In total, 20,000 Jews are said to have been resettled by now. The population of Brest-Litovsk has been reduced from 52,000 to 33,000 as a result of the Jewish operation.”* (Hoppe, Doc. 221, p. 533)

In practice, there is no documentary evidence that the 16,934 Jews from the ghetto of Brest were shot.

It would be very useful to obtain detailed information on train traffic to Bronnaya Gora between June and November 1942: are these German documents? Are the precise departure dates indicated? If only three transports out of seven departed from Brest, where did the other four come from and who were the passengers? Incredibly, John and Carroll Garrard are completely uninterested in these essential questions.

According to the *Black Book*, to which I will return later, “from June to November 1942, the Germans shot more than thirty thousand peaceful Soviet citizens in the area of Bronnaya Gora” (Ehrenburg/Grossman 2002, p. 180). Gerlach cites a Bronnaya Gora Investigative Report dated 15 September 1944 which speaks of 50,000 victims (Gerlach 1999, p. 723, fn 1194). Nevertheless, the extermination site of Bronnaya Gora is practically unknown to orthodox Holocaust historians.

Lucyna Radlo dedicates a little over 10 lines to the matter (Radlo, p. 99):

<sup>627</sup> YVA, O.52-12.2, p. 385.

<sup>628</sup> YVA, O.53-14, p. 109.

*“Early in the morning on October 15, 1942, Nazi soldiers surrounded the Brest Ghetto. The entire population of the ghetto was rounded up at gunpoint, loaded into cattle cars and transported to Bereza Kartuska (a town northeast of Brest). Groups of Jewish men, women and children were unloaded and marched to an area (Bronnaya Gora) where a huge, long trench had been prepared. At the edge of the trench the people were ordered to disrobe. Naked, they were then pushed into the trench and machine gunned by the Nazi soldiers who surrounded them. The killings went on all day, trainload by trainload, and it is estimated that 50,000 Jews were shot and buried that day.”*

It is not clear how this description can be reconciled with the three trains mentioned by John and Carroll Garrard and the eight mass graves allegedly discovered by the Soviets.

In Petra Rentrop’s discussion of the “extermination sites” in Byelorussia, she deals with Bronnaya Gora in the following terms (Rentrop, pp. 384f.):

*“Another extermination site in occupied Byelorussia was the railway station of Bronnaya Gora near Bereza-Kartuska on the rail line between Brest-Litovsk and Baranovich. Here, hitherto unknown German agencies built a sort of ‘killing infrastructure’ (Christian Gerlach) in May and June 1942: local residents were forced to dig enormous pits.*

*The path from the railway station to these pre-arranged mass graves was allegedly fenced off with barbed wire. Between June and November 1942, at least 30,000, and possibly 50,000 people were brought in freight cars to Bronnaya Gora and shot there. Victims were Jews from Brest-Litovsk, furthermore a part of the Jewish residents of Kobrin, Antopol and Bereza-Kartuska. Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto were possibly among the victims as well. To date, it is uncertain whether the Brest-Litovsk branch office of the commander of the security police was in charge in Bronnaya Gora or the deployment staff of the police commander in Kobrin, and which agency provided the execution squad.”*

Longerich limits himself to stating (Longerich 2010, p. 352):

*“In the district of Kobrin, at a date that can no longer be precisely established, between 11,000 and 14,500 Jews from Kobrin Bereza-Kartuska, Antopol, Drogitschin (Drogichin), and other towns were shot. Some of the people were deported in railway trains to the vicinity of the town of Bronnaja (Bronnaya) Gora, where a shooting facility had been set up.”*

Yitzhak Arad is a little less succinct, but equally generic (Arad 2009, p. 267):

*“In the spring on 1942, the two ghettos in Brest-Litovsk housed between 18,000 and 20,000 Jews. [...] In early October 1942 large numbers of German, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian police forces congregated in the town. The ghetto was cordoned on the night of October 15-16, and the massacre began at dawn.”*

After having quoted a passage from a testimony, Arad concludes (*ibid.*):

*“No Jews remained in Brest-Litovsk after the October-November 1942 murder action.”*

It is highly symptomatic that this huge massacre is not mentioned in any archival source. Arad informs us that the material traces were eliminated (*ibid.*, p. 352):

*“In early April [1943], a subunit of the Sonderkommando 1005 Mitte was sent to Brest-Litovsk region, and the local authorities placed about 100 prisoners at its disposal. The body-burning operation began in Bronnaya-Gora, where 48,000 Jews from Brest Litovsk, Pinsk, and other towns had been murdered.”*

In Curilla’s voluminous work, only a few lines are dedicated to Bronnaya Gora, asserting that the Jews of Brest

*“were driven together, loaded onto trains destined to the railway station at Bronnaya Gora, immediately north of Bereza-Kartuska on the railway line from Brest-Litovsk to Baranovich, and murdered upon arrival.”* (Curilla 2011, p. 667)

As his sources, Curilla refers, incredibly, to the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* and the *Black Book* by Ehrenburg and Grossman (*ibid.*, fn 179).

Hence, there are practically neither documents nor traces. In fact, as Andrea Simon writes (Simon, pp. 189):

*“the official word on the Brona Gora massacre can be obtained from the 1944 report by the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate Nazi Crimes Committed on the Territory of the Soviet Union.”*

In practice, the propagandistic *Black Book* is the primary source for the Holocaust narrative relating to Bronnaya Gora. It is therefore worthwhile examining it more closely. “A Report on the Savagery, Plundering, Torment, and Destruction Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders in the Area of Bronnaya Gora in the Berezovsky Region of the Brest District Chaired by Arkady Ivanovich Tarasevich, the Commission consisted of Vasily Nikolaevich Bury, Chairman of the District Executive Committee; partisan representative Ivan Pavlovich Kashtelyan; and Comrade Novik from the Berezovsky Region” is dedicated to the Bronnaya Gora site in the book; the essential passages are as follows (Ehrenburg/Grossman 2002, p. 179):

*“The following is based on an examination of the sites of mass torture and shooting of Soviet citizens by the German-Fascist invaders and on a series of interviews with local citizens.*

*In accordance with plans previously drawn up by the German-Fascist invaders, in May-June 1942 the Germans began digging mass graves covering an area of 18,000 square meters; the graves were dug four hundred meters northwest of the Bronnaya Gora train station.*

*Each day the Germans mobilized six to eight hundred citizens from the villages in the Berezovsky region to dig the graves. In order to finish the job as quickly as possible, the Germans used explosives such as tolite.*

*Once the digging of the graves was completed in mid-June 1942, the Germans began transporting Soviet citizens to the Bronnaya Gora train station. These citizens were of various nationalities: Russians, Belorussians, Jews, and Poles, from infants to old people.*

*As the trains pulled into the station, special SD and SS Units escorted the cars. The cars came from various parts of Belorussia: from Bereza, Brest, Drogichin, Yanovo, and other places. Soviet citizens were also rounded up and brought to Bronnaya Gora on foot.*

*The cars in the arriving transport were extremely overcrowded, so that there were dead people among the exhausted citizens. As the transports came in they were directed to side tracks leading to military depots about 250 meters from the main line at the Bronnaya Gora station. The transports pulled up to mass graves; then the Germans unloaded the cars in a special area enclosed by barbed wire.*

*During the unloading people were forced to strip naked and toss their clothes into a pile. They were taken down a narrow barbed-wire corridor to the pits; after going down the steps into the pits, they were forced to lie faced [sic] down close to each other. Once the first row was ready, Germans in SD and SS uniforms shot the people with submachine guns. And so it went with the second and third rows, until the grave was full.*

*All this was accompanied by the heartrending screams of men, women, and children. After a transport had been completely unloaded and all the citizens shot, their clothing and belongings were loaded into train cars and sent to an unknown destination. The scheduling of transports going to and from the execution area was strictly controlled by Heil, the stationmaster at the Bronnaya Gora train station, and by duty officers Pike and Schmidt. (All three were German).*

*In order to hide every trace of the crimes committed in the Bronnaya Gora region, the Germans shot the entire civilian population – about one thousand people – living in the vicinity of the former military depots. Altogether there were eight mass graves in the area where the mass shootings took place. The first was 63 x 6.5 meters, the second 36 x 6.5, the third 36 x 6, the fourth 37 x 6, the fifth, 52 x 6, the sixth 24 x 6, the seventh 12 x 6, and the eighth 16 x 4.5. All the graves were 3.5 to 4 meters deep.”*

To sum up, Holocaust historiography is completely silent as to which German authority created the alleged extermination site and which unit or units carried out the executions, as well as where the clothing and personal effects of the victims were taken. I will deal with the question of the bodies further on.

Another question remaining open is that of the rail transports. The witness R.S. Novis, already mentioned in Section 6.6.7., drew up a detailed list of rail transports at Bronnaya Gora. According to this, five trains arrived at Bronnaya Gora in June 1942, made up as follows:

1. one train with 16 cars originating from ghetto “B” of Kartuz-Bereza (Bereza-Kartuska); each car carried 200 people;
2. one train with 46 cars full of deportees from Drogichin, Yanov and Gorodets; every car carried 200 people;
3. one train with 40 cars from Brest-Litovsk, “extraordinarily full” of persons;
4. one train with 18 cars full of deportees from Pinsk and Kobrin;
5. one train with 13 cars from Brest-Litovsk.

Upon arrival at the Bronnaya Gora station, the cars were shunted off onto a spur; in the unloading area there were six large mass graves 25-30 meters long, 10-12 wide and 4 meters deep. Here, the deportees were shot, and their bodies were thrown into the graves. The witness observed these activities from a distance of no more than 250 meters.

Moreover, in June 1942, 800 workers who had worked in military supply dumps were shot, in the month of September a train with 25 cars arrived from Kartuz-Bereza, at the beginning of October another train with 28 cars arrived from an unknown locality. In total, 186 cars arrived, carrying 48,000 persons (Beluga, pp. 231f.). Hence, every car is said to have carried on average 258 persons, a rather overabundant load.

It is a fact that, although the Jewish transports from the Greater Reich to Minsk are well-documented, there are no documents concerning transports to Bronnaya Gora.

It should be noted that this town is located some 100 km southwest of Baranovichi on the Brest-Minsk rail line, some 110 km northeast of Brest (by road). Now, the convoys that passed through Czeremcha and Białystok continued to Volkovysk and Minsk via Baranovichi. No document attests to the passage of Jewish transports from Brest to Baranovichi or vice versa, that is, in the direction of Bronnaya Gora (see Document II.8.23.).

If the transports from the Greater Reich were destined for extermination (as is alleged to have been the case with Maly Trostenets), it is hard to understand why, after arriving at Baranovichi, they were not shunted for some 100 km to the southwest to Bronnaya Gora, instead of continuing east for about 240 km to Minsk. The transports which passed through Czeremcha could then have proceeded more easily to Brest and would have reached Bronnaya Gora more rapidly. Since the Bronnaya Gora site, according to orthodox Holocaust historiography, was in operation starting in July 1942, the following transports could easily have been sent straight there:

- Transports Da 210-218, which departed Vienna between 10 July and 4 September, each carrying 1,000 Jews;<sup>629</sup>
- Transports Da 219-222, also carrying 1,000 Jews each, scheduled for the period between 16 July and 6 August from Theresienstadt and Cologne;<sup>630</sup>
- Transports Da 223-230, which left Vienna and Theresienstadt between 19 August and 7 October<sup>631</sup> for Volkovysk-Minsk.

This makes a total of 21 transports carrying a total of 21,000 Jews. If the Germans really shot 50,000 people at Bronnaya Gora without any difficulty, they could easily have shot another 21,000 just by digging a few more graves.

<sup>629</sup> *Hauptseisenbahndirektion Mitte, Fahrplananordnung Nr 40* of 13 May 1942. NARB, 378-1-784, page number illegible.

<sup>630</sup> Deutsche Reichsbahn. Reichsbahndirektion Königsberg. *Fahrplananordnung Nr. 62* of 13 July 1942. NARB, 378-1-784, page number illegible.

<sup>631</sup> *Hauptseisenbahndirektion, Fahrplananordnung Nr 62* of 13 August 1942. NARB, 378-1-784, p. 27.

Thomas Kues has observed that, despite the claim that many tens of thousands of Jews were deported from as far away as France, Greece, Macedonia and the Netherlands in order to be “gassed” *en masse* at Treblinka and Sobibór, for some inexplicable reason it never occurred to the German authorities to send even a portion of the hundreds of thousands of Jews still remaining in the western Ukrainian provinces of Volhynia and Podolia in the summer of 1942 to the Reinhardt Camps, despite the fact that the ghettos in this region were located only a short train ride from these camps (Mattogno/Kues/Graf 2013, pp. 648f.). This mystery has also been discussed by orthodox Holocaust historian Shmuel Spektor (Spektor 1990a, pp. 173f.):

*“The question arises, why weren’t the Jews of Volhynia sent to the extermination camps such as Sobibór, situated a few kilometers away across the Bug River, and Belzec – a distance of 60 kilometers from the border of Volhynia. The railroad distance between Rovno (the eastern end of Volhynia) and Sobibor was about 260 kilometers and between Rovno and Belzec (via Vladimir Volynski and Zamość) 250 kilometers. Central and western Volhynia were even closer. Thus, for example, Luboml was just 80 kilometers away from Sobibor (via Chełm). The natural frontier of the Bug River couldn’t have posed great difficulties. Neither was the transport of Volhynian Jews to the west a great problem, since the [troop transport] trains returned from the front empty.*

*The question of why weren’t the Volhynian Jews transferred to the extermination camps remains difficult to answer, as we know very little about the details of Heydrich’s plans. The liquidation was planned on a very large scale and it appears that a decision was taken to use a wide range of methods and ways of killing. It seems that the planners of the ‘Final Solution’ believed that in the Ukraine, whose population remained indifferent or hostile to the Jews and collaborated with the occupier, the slaughter could be carried out locally without any reactions or troubles. The killings and the Aktionen carried out in the initial phase of the occupation [of the Soviet territories] demonstrated to the Germans that liquidation on the spot fitted the local conditions. Consequently, the liquidation Aktionen employed the same methods as before, i.e., the removal of the Jews to a site nearby the ghetto and executions in the shooting pits.”*

Kues notes that the Jews of Brest could have been gassed at Treblinka, which is located less than 200 km away by road. He does not mention Sobibór, which is even closer; in fact, Brest is located some 70 km from Włodawa and about 80 km from Sobibór. The reason is that, at the time, this camp could not be reached by rail, because, as Jules Schelvis writes (Schelvis, p. 59):

*“although sufficient rolling stock was available at the time, the trains could not travel to Sobibór during the period between the end of July and the beginning of October since the tracks had sunk into the swampy soil in several places between Chełm and Włodawa and could not be used. The rail stretch between Lublin and Chełm was also not passable or only with difficulty until 1 November.”*

On second thought, this only accentuates the absurdity of the orthodox Holocaust narrative. The camp at Sobibór would therefore have been idle between July and

October 1942; for precisely this reason, and all the more so, it could have easily exterminated the Jews from Brest, who could easily have been unloaded at Włodawa Station (70 km from Brest) and transported the remaining 10 km by truck, or they could have been made to walk on foot; instead, notwithstanding this great extermination opportunity, they are said to have been transported 110 km away to Bronnaya Gora, in the opposite direction (see Document II.8.23. & 24.).

In this context the shootings of Jews at Domachevo and Tomashovka are even more incomprehensible. In this regard, Martin Dean cites a monthly report from the head of the *Gendarmerie* of Brest County, which states (Dean 1008, p. 259):

*“On September 19-20, 1942, an anti-Jewish Aktion was carried out in Domachevo and Tomashovka by a special commando of the SD together with the cavalry squadron of the Gendarmerie and the local police stationed in Domachevo, and in total, some 2,900 Jews were shot. The action took place without any disturbance.”*

Tomashovka is located 5 km east of Włodawa, with which it shares the railway station, and less than 10 km north of Sobibór; Domachevo is located some 25 km north of Tomashovka (see Document II.8.25.).

The period during which the shootings are said to have taken place, 19-20 September 1942, fits into the period of inactivity at Sobibór. Hence, although the Germans had an “extermination camp” with nothing to do in close proximity, they preferred to shot the Jews on the spot!

But there is another fact which is even stranger. Only a few months afterwards, between the end of January and the beginning of February 1943, four Jewish transports left Oranczyce Station on their way to Auschwitz. Oranczyce (present-day Oranchitsy) is located a few kilometers from Prużana (now Prużhany), for which it functions as a train station, on the Brest-Baranovich line, some 40 km from the station at Bronnaya Gora (see Documents II.8.22. and II.8.23). The transports, designated PJ (*polnische Juden* – Polish Jews) 99, 101, 103 and 105, departed on 29, 30 and 31 January and 1 February 1943, respectively, and traveled via Oranczyce-Brest-Siedlce-Warsaw-Skierniewice (Skierniewice)-Tschens-tochau (Częstochowa) to Auschwitz.<sup>632</sup> In the light of these transports, the decision to send the alleged victims to Bronnaya Gora seems even more incomprehensible from the orthodox Holocaust point of view.

The question of the mass graves and the bodies is no less enigmatic. First of all, as we will see shortly, the bodies were allegedly cremated. This presupposed that the mass graves were emptied and refilled with earth; they were then allegedly leveled, and over the area were “planted saplings” (see Section 6.6.7.). In this case, one must wonder how the Soviet commission, a few years later, could have located them with such precision, indicating their exact dimensions. The area of

<sup>632</sup> Deutsche Reichsbahn, Bahndiensttelegramm, Minsk, 27.1.1943; Deutsche Reichsbahn, Bahndiensttelegramm, Minsk, 28.1.1943; Reichsverkehrdirektion Minsk, Abschrift! Bahntelegramm! Minsk, 29.1.1943; Bahnhof Oranczyce, communications transmitted to the Reichsverkehrdirektion Minsk dated 29, 30 and 31 January and 1 February 1943. AYV, 053/1, pp. 176-186.

the emptied mass graves, witnesses and historians both assure us, were meticulously leveled and trees and bushes were planted over them.

The witness Novis moreover spoke of six graves, instead of eight, with completely different dimensions.

According to the Incident Reports, at Brest-Litovsk in July 1941 the police, in conjunction with *Einsatzgruppe B*, killed 4,435 persons (including 4,027 Jews).<sup>633</sup> The Commander of the Security Police and the SD Cracow killed 1,280 of them between 21 and 31 July,<sup>634</sup> and another 510 persons at the beginning of August.<sup>635</sup> 1,296 Jews were shot between 5 and 11 August,<sup>636</sup> 769 in the second half of August,<sup>637</sup> and 548 at the beginning of September.<sup>638</sup>

John and Carroll Garrard cite the testimony of a “serviceman in the Police Battalion 307, named Heinrich,” according to whom the July victims were buried in twelve graves 10 meters long, 2.6 meters wide, and 4 meters deep; the authors add that (Garrard, p. 20),

*“as far as can be ascertained, this massacre site has not been identified by local researchers into Nazi activities during the occupation of Brest. It was almost certainly located along a river bank where the sandy earth was easy to dig out.”*

The final statement implies a clear delimitation of the scope of research; notwithstanding this fact, the graves were not found. But there must have been at least twice as many graves, since the total number of bodies interred is supposed to have amounted to 8,838.

As far as one can tell, not even *Sonderkommando 1005*-Center ever succeeded in finding the slightest trace of these mass graves.

On the other hand, the police battalions operating in the region around Brest not only carried out shootings of Jews, they also participated in real evacuations or transfers. The war diary of the 1st Company of the 13th Reserve Police Battalion contains the following entry on 5 November 1942:<sup>639</sup>

*“As ordered, Squad Milejczyce had transported the Jews from the ghetto to Kleskale [Kleszczele]. The transport proceeded eventlessly.”*

The next day, the unit returned to its headquarters (p. 217):

*“Return of Squad Milejczyce. Following transfer of Jews to Kleskale, the squad returned to Wisokie.”*

Milejczyce is a small town south of Bielsk Podlaski, a few kilometers west of Czeremcha. Kleszczele is located 6 km east of Milejczyce (distance by road).

On 12 November, the division was involved in a transfer operation on a broader scale (p. 219):

<sup>633</sup> Mallmann 2011 *et al.*, p. 171. EM No. 32 dated 24 July 1941.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231. EM No. 43 dated 5 August 1941.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261. EM No. 47 dated 9 August 1941.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310. EM No. 56 dated 18 August 1941.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364. EM No. 66 dated 28 August 1941.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424. EM No. 78 dated 9 September 1941.

<sup>639</sup> YVA, O.53-15, p. 215; next four page numbers from there.



*“The company transported 2,500 Jews from the Wisokie-Lit. Ghetto to the train station. The operation began around 6<sup>00</sup> hours and was over by 9<sup>00</sup> hours. No particular incidents.*

*The transport with 2,500 Jews from Kamienec-Lit. [Kamjanec] arrived at Wisokie-Lit. after marching for 31 kilometers. The transport proceeded eventlessly..”*

Another Jewish transport was organized on 17 November (p. 220):

*“Transport of 1,000 Jews to railway station. Rest of the Jews loaded.”*

The entry dated 19 November says (*ibid.*):

*“Company deployment in Bielsk [Podlaski]. A transport of 600 Jews was transferred to Bialystok.”*

On 20 November, a *Kommando* “took over the transport of 3,600 Jews by rail from Bialystok to Malkinia [Treblinka]” (*ibid.*).

A report from the 3rd Company, 322nd Police Battalion, dated 15 August 1941, reports (p. 91):

*“The Jewish operation in Narewka-Mala was carried out by the 3rd Company on 15 Aug. 1941. In the process, 899 women and 162 children were resettled to Kobrin.*

*All males between the ages of 15 and 65 were shot. On 15 Aug. 1941 were shot:*

*1 Pole for looting*

*282 Jews.*

*The Jewish operation took place smoothly and without incident.”*

Hence, the 899 women and 162 children were actually really transferred.

## 8.7. A Mass Cremation in the Golta District?

As far as one can tell, in at least one case, the Rumanians anticipated the presumed “Aktion 1005.” The *Cartea Neagra* reports (Carp 2000, p. 198):

*“December 21, 1941*

*With the help of Lieutenant-Colonel Modest Isopescu, prefect of Golta county, the extermination of Jews in the camp of Bogdanovca is started. The first victims are chosen from among the sick and crippled. They are locked up in stables, which are filled with straw, then petrol is poured on before they are set ablaze. While the stables are burning with the people locked inside them, they take the other interned people (approx. 43,000) to the nearby forest in groups of 3-400, where they are killed with exploding bullets. The massacre continues on December 21, 22 and 23; it is stopped at Christmas time and restarted on December 28, and finished on December 29.*

*The corpses are put together in piles 4 – 5 metres long and 2 metres high so that they can be cremated. This terrible act is carried out by a group of 200 Jews for 2 months. Having finished with this work, 150 of them are shot dead.”*

Other sources permit the completion of the picture to a small extent. Dennis Deletant writes (Deletant, p. 181):

*“The massacre began the following morning. According to the prosecutor’s statement at the postwar trial, the intended victims were split into two groups. The first were the sick, elderly and infirm, who were crammed into stables. Hay was scattered on the stable roofs, doused with petrol and then torched. It was estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 perished in the inferno. The remaining 43,000 Jews were driven in groups to a nearby forest, stripped of their belongings, made to kneel at the edge of a ravine and shot in the nape of the neck. The murders took place over several days. On the orders of Isopescu the bodies were cremated. Such was the number of dead that the cremations continued throughout January and February 1942.”*

Radu Ioanid has supplied a few bits of additional information on this enormous cremation (Ioanid, p. 184):

*“In view of the large number (43,000-48,000) of people who were massacred, the accused, Modest Isopescu, gave the order to cremate the corpses, hoping to erase all traces of what had happened. For that, he chose the strongest two hundred men from among the inmates. The cremation took two months: January and February 1942.*

*The cremation took place as follows: they formed a layer of straw and wood, upon which they laid down the corpses, then they placed on top of them another layer of straw and another layer of corpses, so that the stacks were two meters tall and four to five meters wide. The corpses were set up in the following order: a thin corpse next to a fat corpse, so that the latter’s fat helped burn the thin corpse more quickly. That is how two hundred inmates spent their time trying to erase all signs of this crime for two months. Afterward 150 of those 200 inmates were executed, the pretext being that they had not carried out fast enough the cremation of the corpses.”*

These tales have all the characteristics for entering the Holocaust Fairy Tale Hall of Fame with full honors: here, even the witnesses are missing, and we do not know if any traces of this huge cremation were ever found. Since the above-mentioned historians did not even mention the discovery of any remains, we must conclude that they were meticulously pulverized and made to disappear, so that the entire operation was carried out in perfect “Aktion 1005” style.

In compensation, we learn that large numbers of “fat” Jews existed in the camp at Bogdanovca. The work done – 43,000-48,000 bodies cremated in two months – is not to be underestimated. It is amazing that the RSHA would have sent Blobel to Chełmno to carry out his mass cremation experiments. Wouldn’t it have been simpler to send him to school with Lieutenant-Colonel Modest Isopescu? The Rumanians were obviously far more intelligent and capable than Blobel, since they succeeded in cremating this enormous number of bodies without any preliminary experiment whatever: on 29 December 1941 he finished the shooting,

and at the beginning of January 1942 the cremations began. A true model of efficiency!

## Conclusion

The time has come to recapitulate what I have set forth in the present study.

The *Einsatzgruppen* in the occupied eastern territories performed many intelligence and administrative missions. The first concerned all the vital spheres of the occupied territories, namely the political, economic, social, cultural, religious and commercial sphere, among others, including the collection of important Soviet documents. The administrative tasks consisted on the one hand in the restoration of the administrative, social and economic structure in the regions devastated by the retreating Soviets or by the fighting, on the other in the search, identification and control of all those who were considered ideological or political enemies of Germany or who carried out acts hostile to the German troops or to the populations of the occupied countries, first and foremost the partisans. Most Jews tragically fell into this category. The *Einsatzgruppen* never received an order to exterminate the Jews as such, and the executions of Jews they perpetrated did not have a racial character; Jewry was rather considered the fertile breeding ground of Bolshevism, which was the primary enemy of the National Socialist regime, and as such the Jews were ruthlessly combatted in pursuance of that view.

Regarding the number of victims, over 40% of the approximately 728,000 killings listed in the *Einsatzgruppen* reports are not verifiable, and there is a serious possibility that many figures listed in these documents were exaggerated or even invented, as inflated numbers allowed the various commanders to receive kudos from Berlin as the destroyers of Bolshevism's breeding ground, hence as heroes who had thus inflicted a severe blow on the enemy regime.

After a thorough analysis, we find that the hypothesis of the deployment of "gas vans" in the occupied eastern territories is an unfounded and nonsensical fable, which further undermines the already-shaky foundations of the orthodox Holocaust narrative.

Regarding the alleged activity to exhume and cremate the execution victims, the following points can be established with certainty:

1) Orthodox Holocaust historiography has never proven that the authorities of the Reich planned and carried out a general plan on an institutional level to eliminate the bodies of the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and other associated units by means of a systematic operation of exhumation and cremation of bodies. The cutting edge of such historiography, Shmuel Spektor and Jens Hoffmann, have limited themselves to presenting, without the slightest critical sense, a mass of absurd and contradictory testimonies, very often issued many years after the alleged events. For these historians, no absurdity is absurd enough and no contradiction is

so contradictory as to require changing their opinions. This attitude of supine acquiescence and compliance renders them worthy disciples of Soviet propaganda.

2) Soviet propaganda proclaimed the discovery of innumerable mass graves and hundreds of thousands of bodies, but those which are documented, and may be considered real, are only a tiny fraction of these claims.

3) The same is true for the innumerable photographs of executions, mass graves and bodies, which document events of an order of magnitude relatively insignificant compared to what is asserted.

4) There is such an immense disproportion between the execution figures proclaimed in the various German reports and the corpses actually found that one can reasonably consider the proclaimed death toll to be greatly exaggerated.

5) There is no doubt that the Germans carried out individual cremation operations, but these left more than obvious traces on the one hand, and they resulted from local initiatives on the other hand.

It is permissible to doubt how much sense it would make, for the *Einsatzgruppen* and associated units, to exaggerate the number of executions, particularly with regard to the Jews. The principal motivation is probably the fact that the Jews were considered by the National Socialists to be the creators and sustainers of Judeo-Bolshevism and, by virtue of this conception, they represented the quintessence of Bolshevism, the enemy by antonomasia; consequently, so National Socialists thought, the more the Jewish element was destroyed, the more this would undermine the foundation of Bolshevism. Military considerations were intermixed here with ideological, political and career considerations.

As is shown in Chapter 1 of Part One, the compilation of the final reports handed down to us is comparable to a river made up of many small rivulets: various *Teilkommandos* sent reports to their superior units, who summarized them and transmitted them to the central command – from the *Teilkommandos* to the *Einsatzkommandos* or *Sonderkommandos* right up to the respective *Einsatzgruppe* – which sent them to Department IV A 1 of the RSHA, which reprocessed them. It was a chain in which every link could have an interest in exaggerating the figures to show its own efficiency, and this is even more true for the Gestapo.

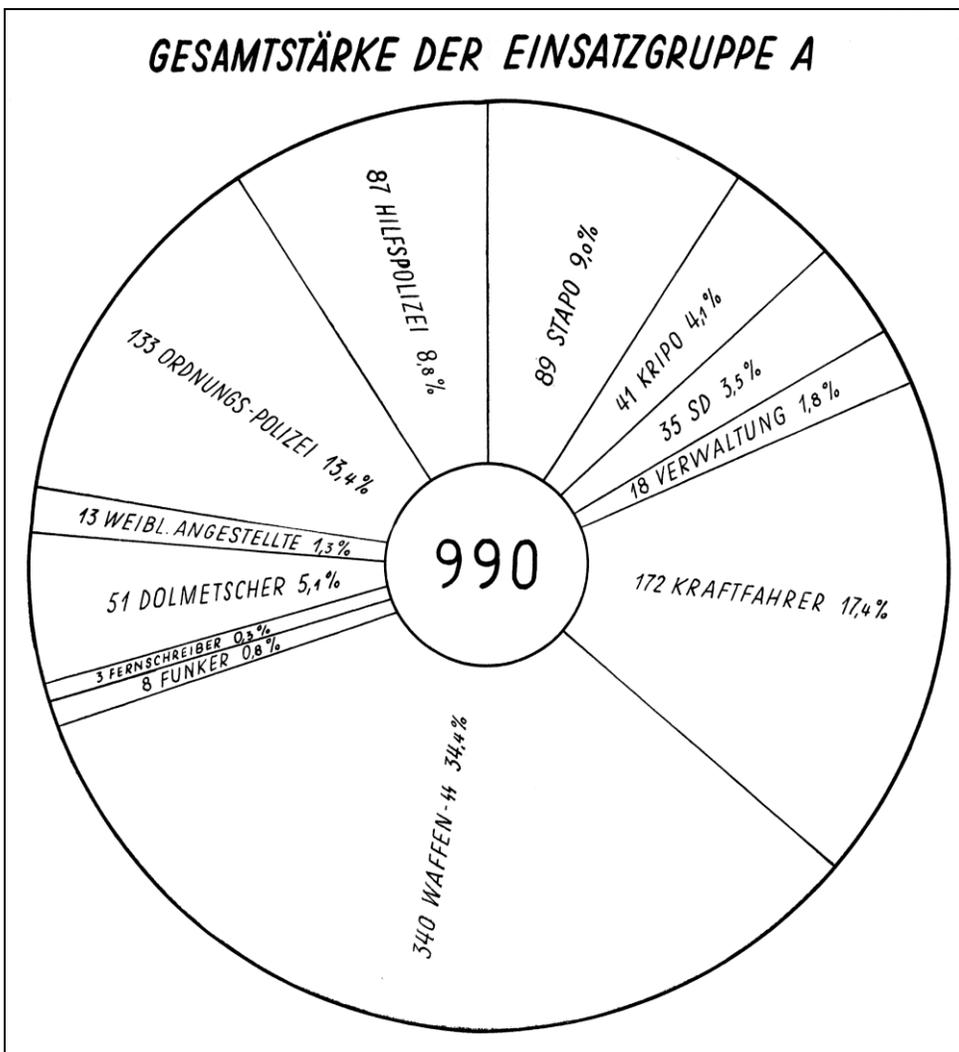
At the *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, a few former heads of these units spoke openly of such exaggerations in the Gestapo's final reports, but one cannot exclude the possibility that they had already received exaggerated or even invented figures from subordinate units.

## Appendices

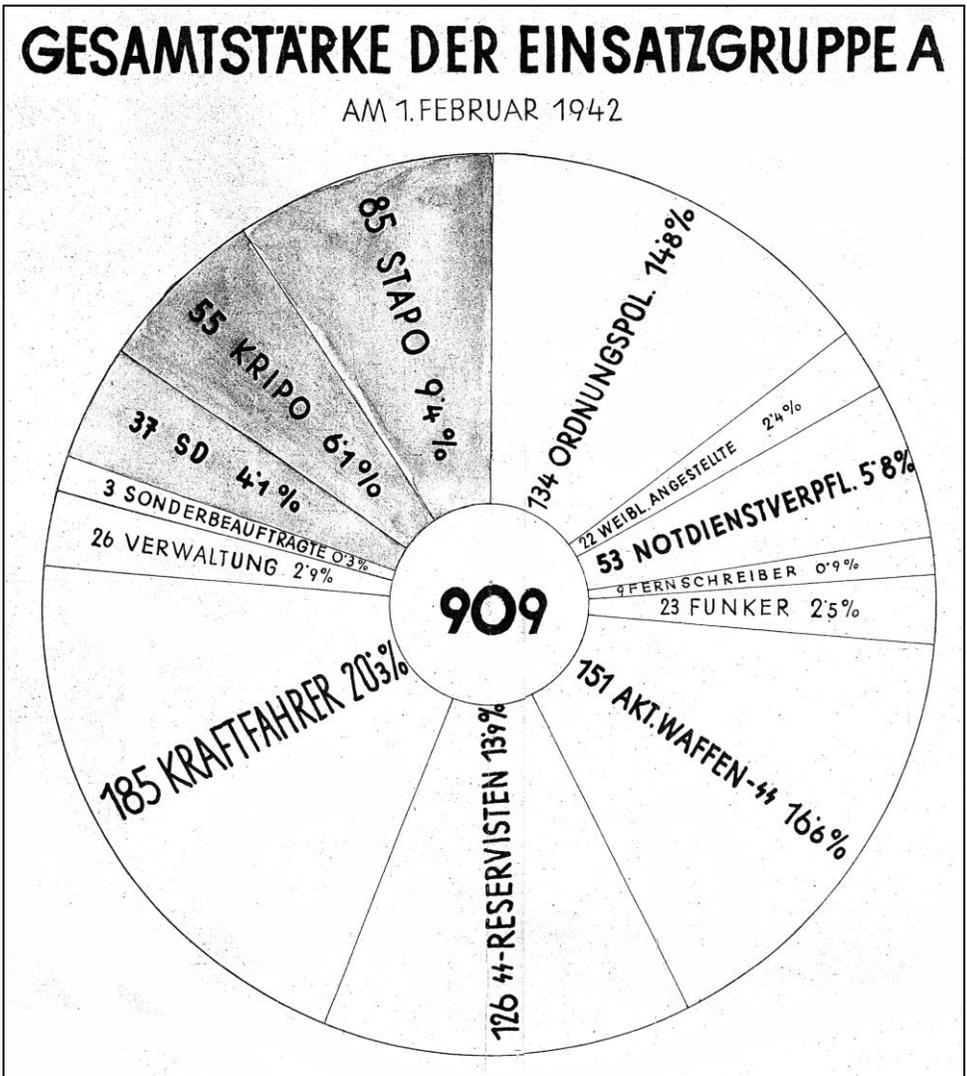
### 1. SS Ranks and U.S. Army Equivalents

SS	U.S. ARMY
SS Mann	Private
Sturmmann	Private First Class
Rottenführer	Corporal
Unterscharführer	Sergeant
Scharführer	Staff Sergeant
Oberscharführer	Technical Sergeant
Hauptscharführer	Master Sergeant
Sturmscharführer	First Sergeant
Untersturmführer	Second Lieutenant
Obersturmführer	First Lieutenant
Hauptsturmführer	Captain
Sturmbannführer	Major
Obersturmbannführer	Lieutenant Colonel
Standartenführer	Colonel
Oberführer	Colonel
Brigadeführer	Brigadier General
Gruppenführer	Lieutenant General
Obergruppenführer	General
Oberstgruppenführer	General of the Army

## 2. Documents

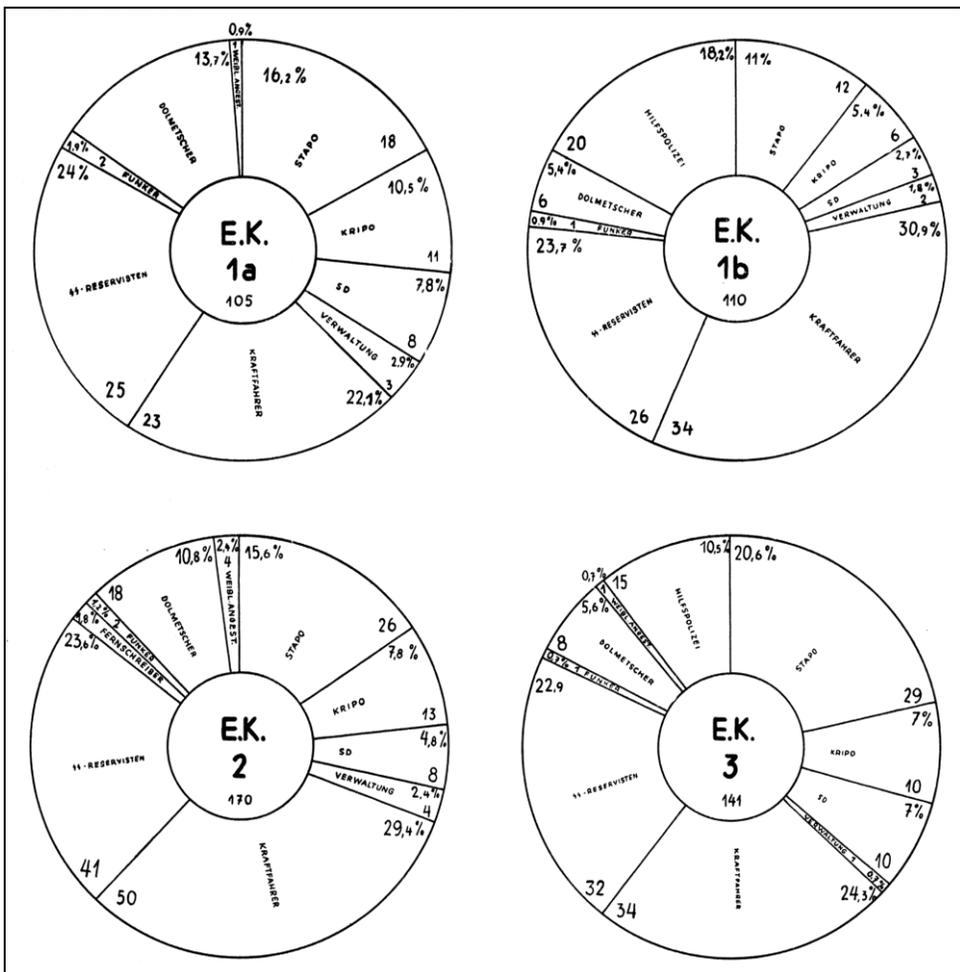


Document I.1.1. "Gesamtstärke der Einsatzgruppe A" ("Total Strength of Einsatzgruppe A"), 15 Oct. 1941, from: "Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941" ("Summary Report up to 15 October 1941"). From: RGVA, 550-4-93, Annex 1a



Document I.1.2. "Gesamtstärke der Einsatzgruppe A" ("Total Strength of Einsatzgruppe A"), 1 Feb. 1942, from: "Gesamtbericht vom 16. Oktober bis 31. Januar 1942" ("Summary Report of 16 October [1941] – 31 January 1942"), Stahlecker. From: RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 183.





Document I.1.3. "Verteilungsplan der Angehörigen der Einsatzgruppe A auf die Einsatzkommandos." From: "Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941" RGVA, 550-4-93, Annex 1b.



**LAGEZIMMER**

Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei  
und des SD

Berlin, den 17. Juli 1941.

- IV A 1 - B.Nr. 1 B/41.g.Rs.-

**Geheime Reichsache!**

34 Ausfertigungen

22. Ausfertigung.

Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr.25.

I) Politische Übersicht.

a) Im Reich:

Es liegen keine besonderen Meldungen vor

b) Übrige besetzte Gebiete:

Chef der Einsatzgruppe Belgrad meldet:

In der Nacht v. 13.7.41 auf den 14.7.41 wurde von kommunistischer Seite der Versuch unternommen, zwei Brücken in der Nähe von Obrenovac sowie den Eisenbahnviadukt bei Ritanj zu sprengen.

Außerdem wurden mehrere Telefonleitungen durchschnitten.

Größerer Schaden ist durch die Sabotageversuche nicht entstanden.

10 führende Kommunisten aus dem Ort Obrenovac wurden erschossen.

II) Meldungen der Einsatzgruppen und -kommandos.

Der Befehlshaber der Sipo u.d. SD Krakau meldet:

a) Einsatz im ehem. russ.-Polen.

Entsprechend der mir auf Grund meines

Reg.Rat Paefgen-oVIA-

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og. Rat Paefgen-oVia-

Verfügungsbüchlein 30. XII. 1941.  
Waffenkammer.

~~mit dem Gen~~

11<sup>h</sup> 44 Gr. S. Jastrow Berlin  
Regierung

Verfügung für LAH in  
Wien  
Kriegs- und Seemannsbull.

11<sup>h</sup> Berlin Verfügung

mit dem Kinder

13<sup>h</sup> 44 O. Gr. S. Geyhing Prag

Verfügung Dr. J. J. J. J.  
Ansch. F. J. J. J.  
Verfügung mit Berlin  
Dr. J. J. J. J.

18<sup>h</sup> Dr. J. J. J. J.

Telegramme an Hitler J. J. J. J.

18<sup>h</sup> 44 Gr. S. Jastrow Berlin  
Regierung

Verfügung J. J. J. J.  
Ansch. F. J. J. J.  
Verfügung J. J. J. J.  
Ansch. F. J. J. J.  
Verfügung J. J. J. J.  
Ansch. F. J. J. J.

Document I.1.6. Entries in Himmler's Dienstkalender dated 18 Dec. 1941. From: NARA, T 84-26.



## Versagen die UN?

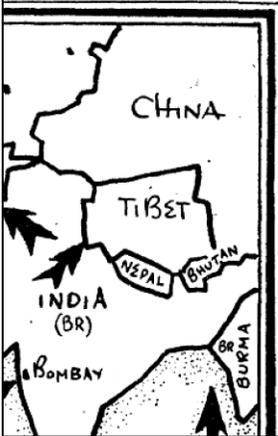
Von MAX BEER

Von dem ersten Völkerbund sagte vor etwa zwanzig Jahren ein bissiger Spötter, dass er "eine ausgezeichnete Einrichtung für die Zeit zwischen den Kriegen" sei. Wird man von dem zweiten Bund sagen, dass er nicht einmal in Friedenszeiten funktionierte?

Mit wachsender Sorge verfolgten in der Tat sowohl jene, die sich vor einem Jahre für die Charter von San Francisco begeisterten, als auch die Gegner der neuen Satzung die bisher ziemlich verunglückte Tätigkeit der "Vereinigten Nationen". Einige Optimisten meinen zwar, dass die aufsehererregende Ohnmacht des Sicherheitsrates sich aus den politischen Gegensätzen zwischen den Grossmächten erkläre, die man in diesem Umfange nicht vorausgesehen hatte und die nur eine vorübergehende Erscheinung bilden. Gründlichere, aber ebenfalls noch zuversicht-

(Fortsetzung auf Seite 27)

## ngen aus



# Leben eines SS-Generals

Aus den Nürnberger Geständnissen des Generals der Waffen-SS Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski

e. m. Einer der Kronzeugen der alliierten Anklagebehörde im Nürnberger Kriegsverbrecherprozess war Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS. Dieser hohe Offizier aus dem engsten Mitarbeiterkreise Heinrich Himmlers hatte im Krieg militärische und polizeiliche Posten von solcher Wichtigkeit inne, dass sie ihn in ständigen Kontakt mit dem Reichsführer der SS wie mit der Generalität der Wehrmacht brachten. Von dem Bach-Zelewski war der Reihe nach Oberabschnittsführer und Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer in Schlesien; Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer von Russland-Mitte; Chef der Bandenbekämpfungsverbände; Kommandeur der 1. motorisierten SS-Infanteriebrigade; Divisionskommandeur und Kommandant von Kowel; Kommandierender General von Warschau und Bevollmächtigter für Budapest; anschliessend bis Kriegsende Kommandierender General des XIV. SS-Korps, des X. SS-Korps und des Oder-Korps.

Von dem Bach-Zelewski, der übrigens, wie er in seinen Geständnissen offen zugibt, "jüdisch versippt" war und deshalb bei Himmler immer auf ein gewisses Misstrauen stiess, war also kein x-beliebiger SS-Offizier, sondern ein grosser Mann in der Privatarmee des "sanften Heinrich". Leben und Meinungen eines solchen Mannes sind daher für die forensische Beurteilung der SS, deren Prozess bekanntlich noch bevorsteht, hoch zu bewerten, da er Einblicke in das innere Gefüge und Getriebe der schwarzuniformierten Mord-Armee gewinnen konnte wie kaum ein zweiter. Leider hat die amerikanische Presse den Aussagen und Geständnissen des SS-Generals bei weitem nicht den Platz eingeräumt, den sie im Interesse der Weltaufklärung verdient hätten. Der "Aufbau", dem jetzt das volle Protokoll der Geständnisse von dem Bach-Zelewski zugänglich war, will dieses Versäumnis hier nachholen. Wir bringen heute einen ersten Auszug der von dem SS-General schriftlich niedergelegten Aussagen. Dieses Exzerpt lässt den Blutsäufer Heinrich Himmler in ebenso merkwürdiger wie ungewohnter Beleuchtung erscheinen, nämlich als einen Mann, dem bei einer Massenhinrichtung die Nerven vollkommen versagen.

General von dem Bach-Zelewski

betonte einleitend seine feste Überzeugung, dass die Vernichtung des Judentums in Europa sowie die gewaltsame Dezimierung der Polen keinem spontanen Entschluss während des Krieges — etwa als Folge des ungünstigen Kriegsverlaufs oder als Vergeltung für feindliche Kriegsmassnahmen — entsprang, sondern schon vor dem Kriege von Heinrich Himmler bewusst geplant worden ist. Ebenso ist er der Ansicht, dass Himmler ganz konse-

quent auf den Krieg hinarbeitete, um seine Pläne zu verwirklichen. Wie diese beschaffen waren, weiss man jetzt aus den Aussagen von Bachs: ein grossgermanisches Reich, im Osten bis zum Ural reichend. In diesem ganzen eroberten Raum sollte die SS als Blüte germanischer Edelmenschen, wie einst die Legionen Roms, befestigte Lager und Stützpunkte anlegen, kolonisieren und die neue Rasse des

(Fortsetzung auf Seite 2)

Document I.6. 1a. Section enlargement of the previous document.

2

Nazisolidarität erstreckt sich von Detroit und Chicago bis zu den südlichsten Gefilden Patagoniens. Ueberall ist man, genau so wie in den westlichen Zonen in Deutschland selbst, auf das Heftigste „auf den Tag“, der „des Führers grosse Träume doch noch wahr werden lassen wird“. Besonders richten sich aller Nazi Augen auf Argentinien, das ebenso wie Chile immer eine sehr aufsteigende Schicht deutscher Gesellschafts- und Industriellenkreise gehabt hat. Zu ihr sind in den letzten Monaten des Krieges, als die Naziführer in Europa das Ende kommen sahen, viele Tausende erprobte Agenten, Ingenieure und Militärs gekommen, die man unter dem Zusammenhalt retten wollte und als Wechselpferd der deutschen Republik in das Land sandte, in dem sie die besten Vertriebe und Aufstellungsmöglichkeiten finden konnten.

Um so wahrscheinlicher muss die Nachricht klingen, dass Argentinien laabschichtig, die zweihunderttausend Mann der politisch-reaktionären Anders - Armee samt ihrer Ausrüstung auszuliefern und eventuell auch alle jene Norweger, die wegen ihrer Dienste für die Regierung Quilino nicht mehr in ihrer Heimat willkommen waren, Argentinien, oder vielmehr Perons Pläne, sind sehr einsehend. Er träumt von einem grossen südamerikanischen faschistischen Block unter der Führung von Buenos Aires, und er ist fest entschlossen, die wirtschaftliche und politische Lage der Welt bis zum Ausserstehen zu seinen Gunsten auszunutzen. Es braucht nicht weiter erläutert zu werden, was eine kriegsgeübte Truppe von 200,000 dispersten und sich von den Demokrationen getriebenen fühlenden Veteranen für die Machtpolitik Argentinien, sagen wir einmal Chile und Uruguay gegenüber, bedeuten würde. Es kann nämlich eine solche Ueberwindung der Polen nur mit dem Willen Englands, das dessen Gebiet sie sich zur Zeit befinden, in Frage kommen. Aber das Spiel der englischen Diplomatie ist so komplex, entsprechend dem Ziel der Aufrechterhaltung und Erweiterung der englischen Weltbeherrschung, dass eine Abklärung der Vereinigten Staaten auf südamerikanische Fragen für bestimmte Phasen der Londoner Strategie ihr ganzlich so uneben erscheinen könnte.

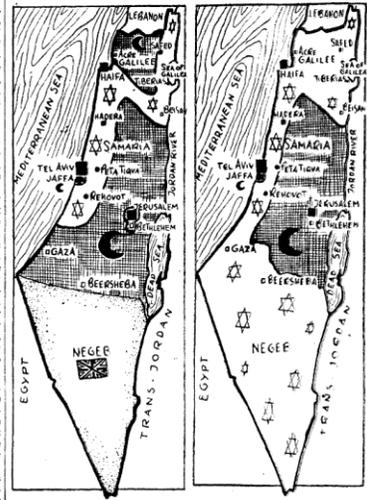
Die Presse hat sich sehr über die scheinbar so merkwürdigen Attentate Perons über zugehörige Komplotte geäußert, gegen ihn gewendet. Möglich, dass das Ende des bolivianischen Diktators an einem Laternenstängel ihm erschreckt hat. Viel eher aber dürften seine im Zusammenhang mit der von ihm geäußerten „Nationalen Einheit“ einer Einheitspartei für Argentinien verkündeten Warnungen an die Opposition die Verboten einer noch strafferen Zentralisierung der Regierungsgewalt sein. Vergessen wir nicht, dass seine intimsten Berater in der Schule Hitlers und seiner Reichstages-Brandstifter gross geworden sind. Sie sind es auch, die die Immigrationpolitik Argentinien beeinflussen. Im Gegensatz zu der Aengstlichkeit, mit der wir sowohl in auch Canada oder Australien die Aufnahme von Flüchtlingen, die sämtlich geschwehene Freunde unserer Demokratie waren, betrachten, steht Argentinien auf dem Standpunkt, dass es in relativ kurzer Zeit 5 bis 7 Millionen Einwanderer aufnehmen kann, ohne Wirtschaft und Stellungsmarkt zu schädigen. Aber Einwanderer, sagt Direktor Peralta will dabei genau jene Politik treiben, die seine Nazi-Verfolger weniger um Argentinien willen, als für ihre Pläne für günstig machen: nämlich die Einwanderer massenlos, die nach Neigung oder Vergangenheit faschistisch gesonnen sind.

Es erscheint uns notwendig, dass alle diese Dinge von unseren Ausenpolitikern geklärt werden. Alles wäre leichter, wenn wir in San Francisco auf der Unterschrift des inamerikanischen Solidarität sichernden Aktes von Chapultepec bestanden hätten, die wir uns für Argentinien Zulassung zu den UN eingesetzt hätten. Heute steht plötzlich Peron auf dem Standpunkt, dass die seinerzeit erfolgte Unterschrift der Administration Farrell Argentinien nicht binde, sondern dass der argentinische Kongress diese Konvention von Mexico City ratifizieren müsse. Bisher hat man nichts davon gehört. Man hat eben wenig davon gehört, dass Peron Herrna Ferre oder den übrigen Kreis seiner Naifreunde abgelehrt hat oder dass er den Wucherskandal, dessen Argentinien sich gegenüber der UNRRA schuldig macht, etwa abstellte. Statt dessen hat er uns mit „russi-

AUFBAU

Friday, August 23,

Der englische und der jüdische Vorschlag für die Neuordnung in Palästina



Der englische Vorschlag (links) nimmt den Juden ein grosses, das jüdische (rechts) ein kleineres, in der Gegend von Haifa, als Kernpunkt, an. Die jüdische Forderung ist, dass die jüdische Bevölkerung in Palästina konzentriert werden soll, um einen jüdischen Staat zu bilden. Der englische Vorschlag sieht eine getrennte jüdische und arabische Verwaltung vor, wobei die jüdische Bevölkerung in der Gegend von Haifa konzentriert wird.

sehen Verhandlungen“ und mit dem Peronblock in Südamerika zu drohen versucht. Nun, die Vorgänge in Paris und in Bolivien dürften diese beiden Luftballons 'dassay' zum Platzen gebracht haben. Die Gelegenheit ist günstig, wenn George Messersmith, der nicht umsonst den Ruf hat, einer unserer besten Diplomaten zu sein, jetzt zusehst und Peron jene Bedingungen amerikanischer Neutralität stellt, durch deren Erfüllung die 'amerische Gefahr' im entwickelten Staat Zentral- und Südamerikas von einem Alpdruck befreit werden. Dann wird sich nicht nur herausstellen, dass der vielfach so störrisch gegenüber der Spulle Bruden ein guter Verkäufer des Friedens auf dieser Erdhälfte gewesen ist, sondern auch, dass Washington manches von seinem Einfluss, von dem es in diesen Bezirken so viel verloren hat, wieder zurückgewinnen kann.

Leben eines SS-Generals

(Fortsetzung von Seite 1) deutschen Herrenmenschen züchten. Himmler will Hinrichtungen sehen. Um dieser sollte Himmler, der so hochfliegende Pläne im Russen- und sich wohl manchen als den kommenden Cisar geträumt haben mag, den seine SS- Legionen am Ural auf den Schild erheben würden, wenn die Stunde gekommen, entpuppte sich bei einer Massenhinrichtung in Russland, der beizuhelfen er selbst den Wunsch geäußert hatte, als ein „artzubelebter“ Schwächling, dem der „blutige Handwerk zuzuwenden“ ist. General von den Bach-Zelewki schildert diese aus Unwahrscheinliche grenzende Begebenheit folgendermassen: „Während meiner Mission: Tage erhielt ich den Besuch von Himmler, der auch Gruppenführer von Smolensk nach Minsk befohlen hatte. Himmler wirkte im Lein-

alle Zuschauer sichtlich Eindruck machte. Zwei Zwischenfälle sind mir unaußersächlich im Gedächtnis geblieben. Unter den Juden befand sich ein Jüngling von vielleicht 20 Jahren, der blond und blaue Augen war. Er stand schon von den Gewehrbindungen, als Himmler eingriff. Die Mündungen senkten sich wieder. Himmler trat zu den jungen Mann heran und stellte einige Fragen. „Sind Sie Jude?“ — „Ja.“ — „Sind Ihre beiden Eltern Juden?“ — „Ja.“ — „Haben Sie irgendwelche Vorurteile, die keine Juden waren?“ — „Nein.“ — Der Reichsführer stampte mit dem Fusse auf und sagte: „Dann kann ich Ihnen auch nicht helfen“, und liess das Toten-Portrait vollziehen. Bei der Erschiessung der Juden vertragen die Nerven des angegriffenen Polikona. Beide Frau-lingen waren nicht gleich tot. Der Reichsführer Himmler sprach selbst hinzu und schrieb den befragenden Wachmeister an: „Quellen Sie die Frauen doch nicht, los, schnell schießen!“ Ich hatte die ganze Zeit Himmler beobachtet, weil ich sein wahres Gesicht erkennen wollte und von dem erschütternden Erlebnis eine Wunde meines Entschlossens erhefte. Himmler war etwas nervös, er schien seinen Anstand verloren zu haben. Gesicht war kühllich, die Augen traten hervor. „Im Moment der Salve schaute er stets zu Boden.“

Nach auf dem Platze sprach ich Himmler darauf an, Ich sagte zu ihm: „Reichsführer, was waren nur Hammler?“ — „Was? — Was? — Was? — Ich antwortete: „Haben Sie in die Augen des Minors des Kommandos, wie tief erschüttert sie sind! Solche Männer sind fertig für ihr ganzes Leben. Was züchten wir uns damit für Gefolgsleute? — Entweder Korruption oder Verbrechen.“ Himmler war sichtlich ergriffen, ganz impulsiv lief er alle An-

wesenden um sich herum zu einer längeren Ansprache. Weil sie von dem Grand dankenverwirrung Himmler besten Eindruck vermüht die die „Führer“ Pflicht verlangen. Ihm wäre es nicht recht, wenn deutscher so etwas gern täte, wissen würde wieder darauf. Er allein trage vor Gott die Führer die Verantwortung was geschene müssen.

Sie würden bereits habe auch ihm diese blutige Heil zu wider wäre und in tiefen aufgerührt habe. Aber die stände unter dem höchsten der Pflichterfüllung und aus einer tiefen Einsicht Nettoworkheiten heraus. Was von der Natur anzuhaben all gab es nicht, nach dem die Natur, sondern nach Tier- und Pflanzenwelt. Wie kämpfen wollte, gebe die gründe. . . Der primitivste sagt zu: „Gib mir, was ich will! Was ist schlecht oder was ist gut. Die Distanzierung über Mensch und also, was ihm nützlich, alles ihm Schädliche aber als zu haben die Pflanzen, Käse, andere Umgebungen sind eine Lebensbestimmung zu. Und dennoch wären wir in man die Welt wäre, Nebe schuldigiger wehrten. . .

Anschliessend wurde die Minsk eine blutige Hinrichtung, in der die schwache, steckranken waren. Himmler neben ihm Befehl, diese beiden zu erschossen. In diese Zusammenlage war über die beste Tolesart zwischen ihm und dem diktator. Er sagte, das heilige Erleben ihn zu der Ueberzeugung, dass Erschiessen doch nicht mehr die Welt wäre, Nebe durch den Kopf gehen lassen auf Grund gesammelter Eindrücke einen Bericht einreichen, antwortete, er glaube, dass mit ein besserem Mittel sei. Er die Geisteskranken erstmal die Weise lösen zu dürfen, und ich wendete ein, die Kr seien doch keine Versuche, die Weise lösen zu dürfen. Nebe den Versuch machen Ich habe dann Nebe erst im Jahre 1942 in Berlin angesprochen. Er gab ein seinerzeit mit meinem Befehl hatte, der Versuch sichtlich gescheitert, die steckranken nicht gleich tot. Er würde jetzt ein viel „besseres“ Mittel angewandt. Ich wollte er nicht erzählen. Als die Gerichte über Perons stellen immer häufiger auch nahm ich an, dass sei die von dem er gesprochen hatte. Heinrich Himmler hat sich der strafenden Gerechtigkeit zuge. Er war eben, wie er sagte aus den Erklärungen Zulewskis erregt haben, ein „weiches Gemüt“. Der teid Sadist und Massenmörder hat der einen Hinrichtung in ein „weiches Gemüt“. Und die wäre ja seine eigene sein — das war er zu viel für „sein“ Heinrich.“ (Ein zweiter Artikel folgt.)

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## Leben eines SS-Generals

(Fortsetzung von Seite 1)  
deutschen Herrenmenschen züchten.

### Himmler will Hinrichtungen sehen

Und dieser selbe Himmler, der so hochfliegende Pläne im Busen barg und sich wohl manchmal als den kommenden Cäsar geträumt haben mag, den seine SS-Legionen am Ural auf den Schild erheben würden, wenn die Stunde gekommen, entpuppte sich bei einer Massenhinrichtung in Russland, der bezuwohnen er selbst den Wunsch geküsst hatte, als ein "zartbesaiteter" Schwächling, dem das "blutige Handwerk zuwider" ist. General von dem Bach-Zelewski schildert diese ans Unwahrscheinliche grenzende Begebenheit folgendermassen:

"Während meiner Minsker Tage erhielt ich den Besuch von Himmler, der auch Gruppenführer Nebe von Smolensk nach Minsk befohlen hatte. Himmler wohnte im Lenin-

Haus in Minsk. In Gruppenführer Wolfs und meiner Gegenwart fragte Himmler Nebe, wieviel Häftlinge zur Liquidierung er gerade in Haft habe. Nebe nannte eine Zahl um die Hundert. Der Reichsführer SS fragte weiter, ob es "besondere Umstände" mache, wenn diese Häftlinge am nächsten Morgen hingerichtet würden. Er wolle sich solche Liquidierung mal ansehen, um sich ein Bild davon zu machen. Mich forderte er auf, ihn mit Gruppenführer Wolf zusammen zu begleiten.

Die Füsiliierung fand am nächsten Morgen in einem Wald dicht bei Minsk nördlich der Rollbahnen Minsk - Borissow statt. Die Delinquenten waren durchweg Partisanen und deren Helfer, darunter ein Drittel bis zur Hälfte Juden. Auch zwei Frauen waren dabei. Die Durchführung der Erschiessung war militärisch exakt. Die Verurteilten gingen gefasst und in stolischer Ruhe in den Tod, was auf

alle Zuschauer sichtlich Eindruck machte.

### Zwei Zwischenfälle

sind mir unauslöschlich im Gedächtnis geblieben. Unter den Juden befand sich ein Jüngling von vielleicht 20 Jahren, der blond und blauäugig war. Er stand schon vor den Gewehröffnungen, als Himmler eingriff. Die Mündungen senkten sich wieder. Himmler trat an den jungen Mann heran und stellte einige Fragen. "Sind Sie Jude?" — "Ja." — "Sind Ihre beiden Eltern Juden?" — "Ja." — "Haben Sie irgendwelche Vorfahren, die keine Juden waren?" — "Nein." — Der Reichsführer stampfte mit dem Fusse auf und sagte: "Dann kann ich Ihnen auch nicht helfen", und liess das Todesurteil vollstrecken.

Bei der Erschiessung der beiden Frauen versagten die Nerven des angetretenen Pelotons. Beide Frauen waren nicht gleich tot. Der Reichsführer Himmler sprang selbst hinzu und schrie den befehligen Wachtmeister an: "Quälten Sie die Frauen doch nicht, los, schnell schiessen!" Ich hatte die

ganze Zeit Himmler beobachtet, weil ich sein wahres Gesicht erkennen wollte und von dem erschütternden Erlebnis eine Wandlung seines Entschlusses erhoffte. Himmler war *dissected nerves*, er stand *keinen Augenblick still*, sein Gesicht war *käsebleich*, die Augen *irrten umher*, im *Moment der Salve schaute er stets zu Boden*.

Noch auf dem Platze sprach ich Himmler darauf an, Ich sagte zu ihm: "Reichsführer, das waren nur Humilität!" — "Was meinen Sie damit?" Ich antwortete: "Sehen Sie in die Augen der Männer des Kommandos, wie tief erschüttert sie sind! Solche Männer sind fertig für ihr ganzes Leben. Was züchten wir uns damit für Gefolgsmänner heraus? Entweder Nervenranke oder Robbingel!" Himmler war sichtlich ergriffen, ganz impulsiv tief er alle An-

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5.

Himmler kommt für 24 Stunden nach Minsk.  
Befiehlt Hebe und mich mit sich,  
in Begleitung Himmlers Gruppenführer Wolff.  
Himmler wehrt einer Exekution von ca.  
100 Partisanen, darunter auch Frauen  
und 2 Frauen bei, die Hebe vor-  
führen soll, weil Himmler sich ein  
Bild machen will.

Himmler hält nach der Exekution  
eine längere Ansprache.

Anschließend Besichtigung einer  
kleineren Frauenanstalt bei Minsk.  
Himmler befiehlt Hebe die „Erlösung“  
der Jüdenkranken von ihrem Leiden.

Hebe soll eine humanere Tötungs-  
art anwenden. Hebe schlägt Dynamit-  
Explosion vor. Himmler befiehlt es.

7.) 1943 wird mir ein Anlauf eines gerichtliche  
gangsflüzes nach Mogilew, wo ich bei  
Generalmajor Kutschera Wohnung nehme,  
von Herren meines Staates gemeldet, dass  
eine Kommission von Zivilisten mit  
schriftlicher Vollmacht von Himmler  
(in Kombination erinnerlich wurde gesagt,  
die Herren wären von einer Hamburger Firma)  
meine Fabrikanlage in Mogilew haben  
wolle, um eine Bergbauanlage auszubauen.  
Ich ließ die Herren sagen,  
dass ich die Fabrikanlage selbst besitzen



*Document I.6.3. British gas van for police and civilian anti-gas training purposes from the 1950s. From: TNA, WO 88/2693.*



Document II.1.1. & 2: The mass grave at Busk (numbered inset added).  
From: "Les fusillades massives des juifs en Ukraine 1941-1944. La Shoah par balles," in: [www.memorialdelashoah.org/upload/minisites/ukraine/exposition5-desbois.htm](http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/upload/minisites/ukraine/exposition5-desbois.htm)

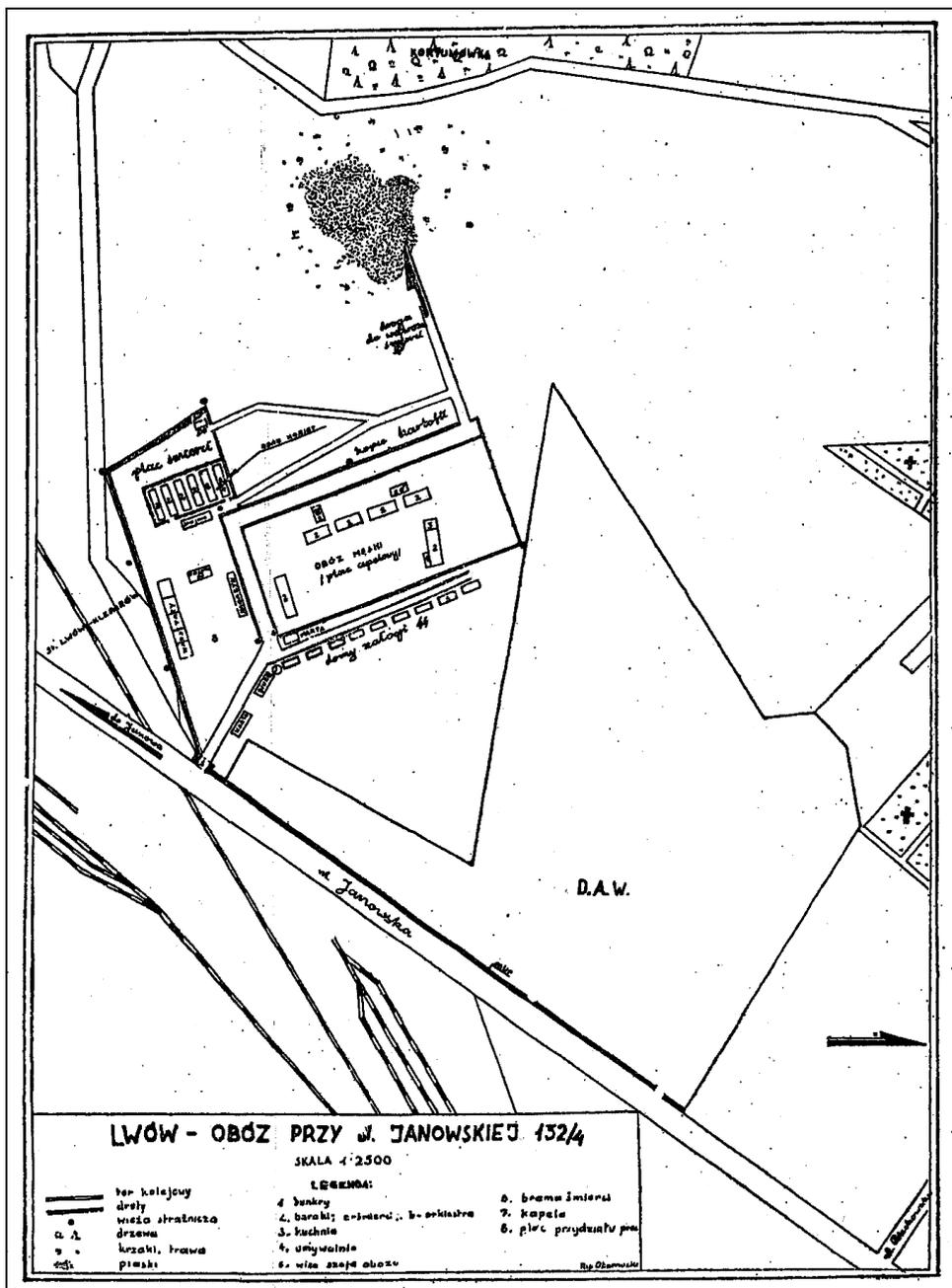


*Document II.1.3. One of the mass graves at Busk. From: The 2007 annual report of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, in: [www.ushmm.org/museum/press/annualreport/2007/report.pdf](http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/annualreport/2007/report.pdf)*



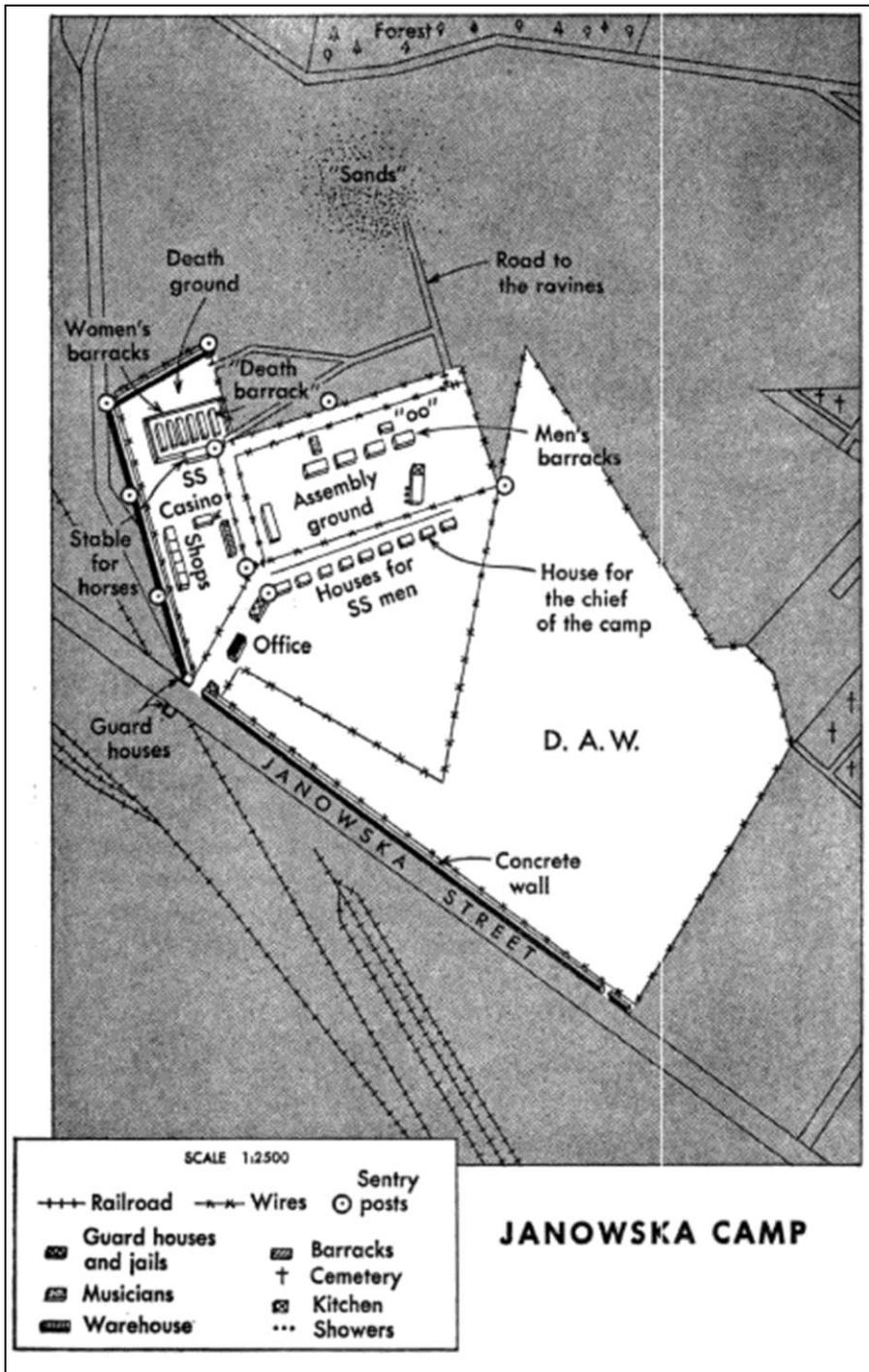
*Document II.1.4. The mass grave at Serniki. From: Wright, p. 99.*



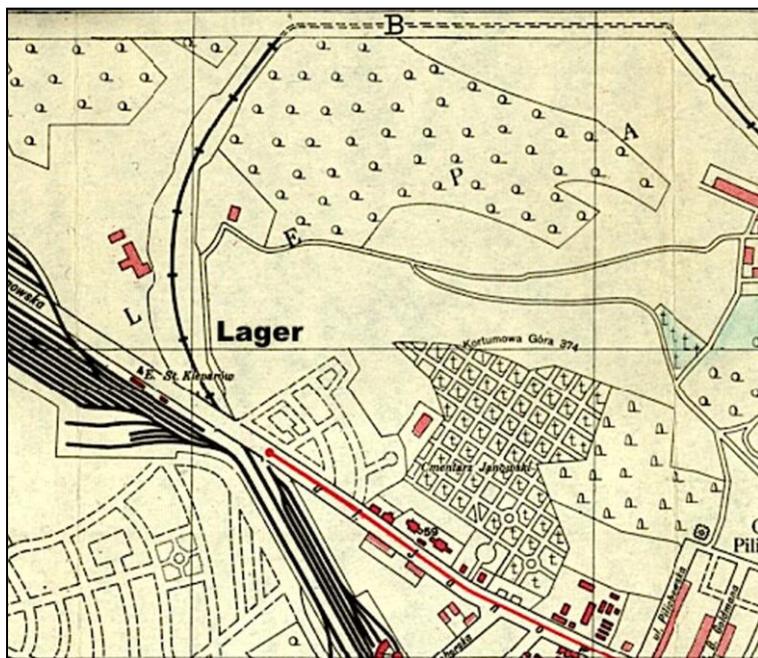


Document II.3.1. Diagram of the Janowska Camp. From: Weliczker, p. 129.

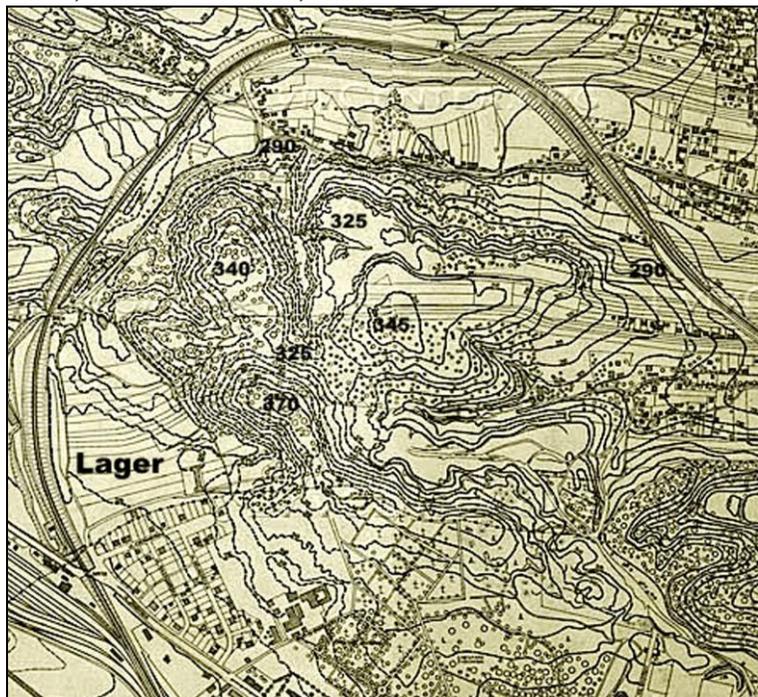




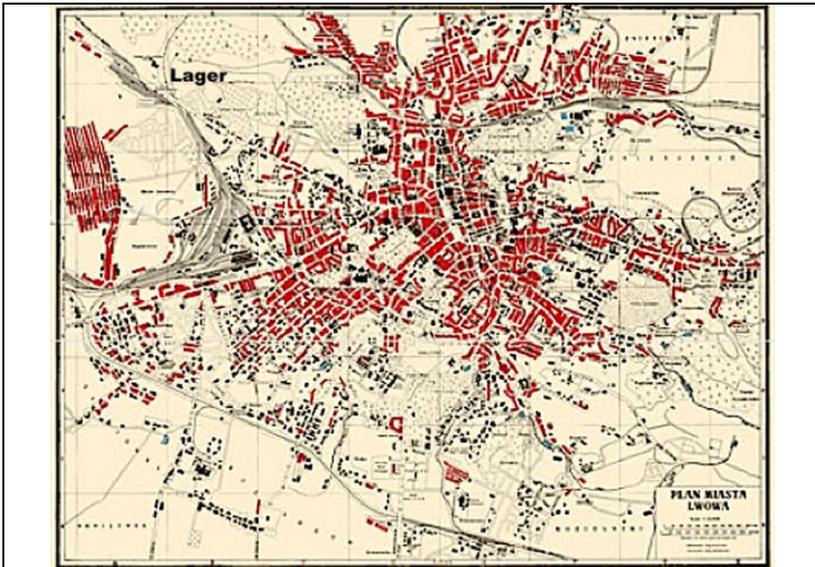
Document II.3.1a. Diagram of the Janowska Camp. From: Weliczker Wells, unnumbered page.



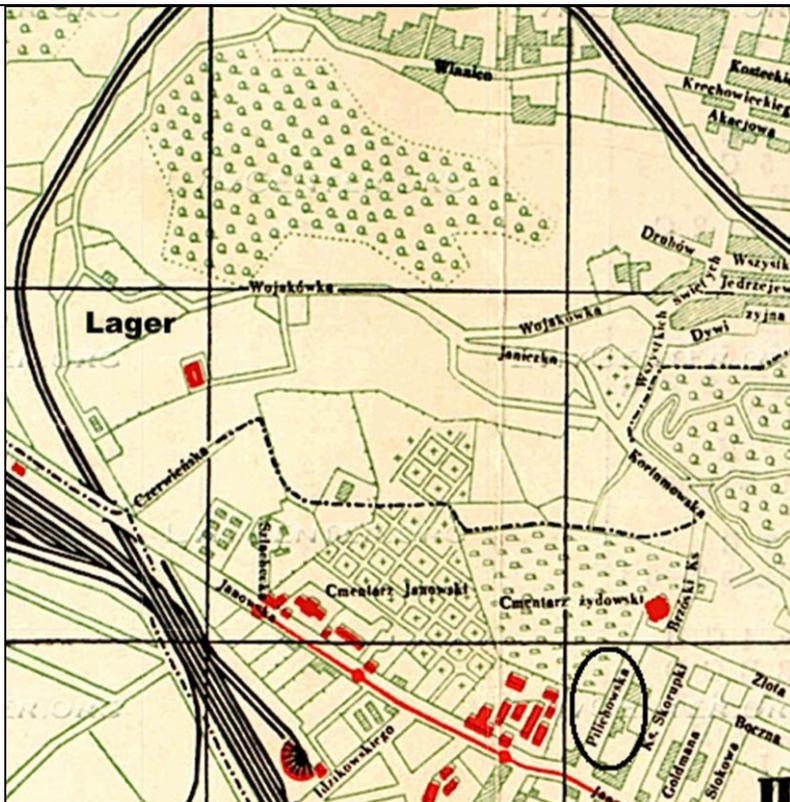
Document II.3.2. Detail of a diagram of the city of Lvov from 1943, on a scale of 1:15,000.



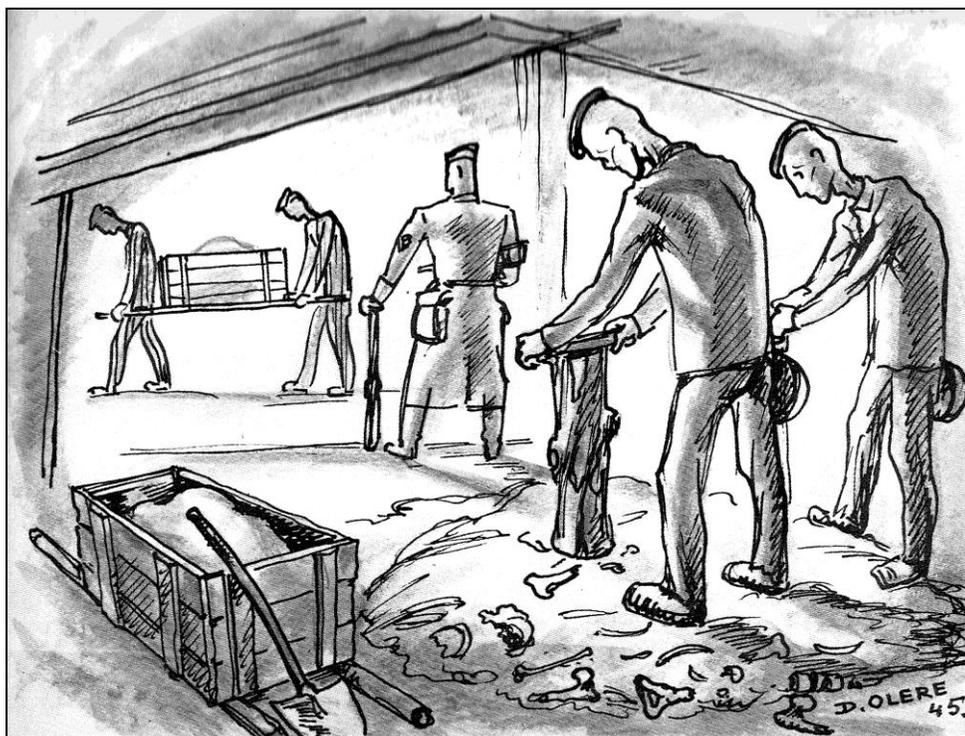
Document II.3.3. Diagram of the city of Lvov from 1936 on a scale of 1:10,000.



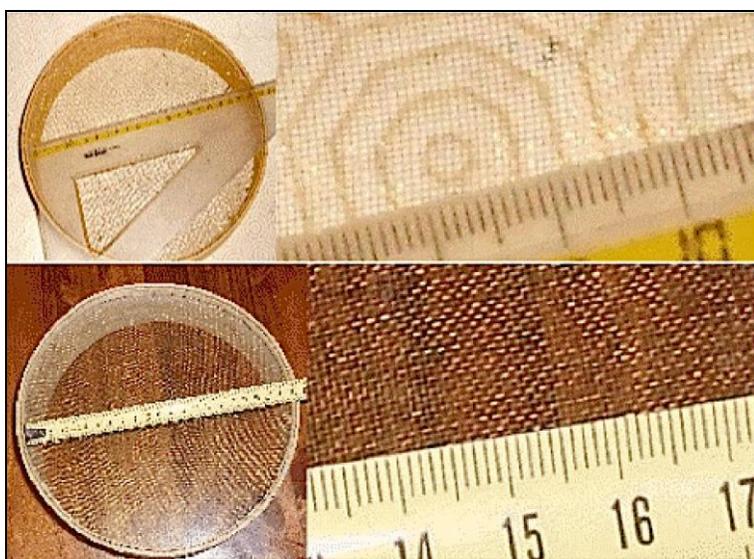
Document II.3.4. Diagram of the city of Lvov from 1943 on a scale of 1:15,000.



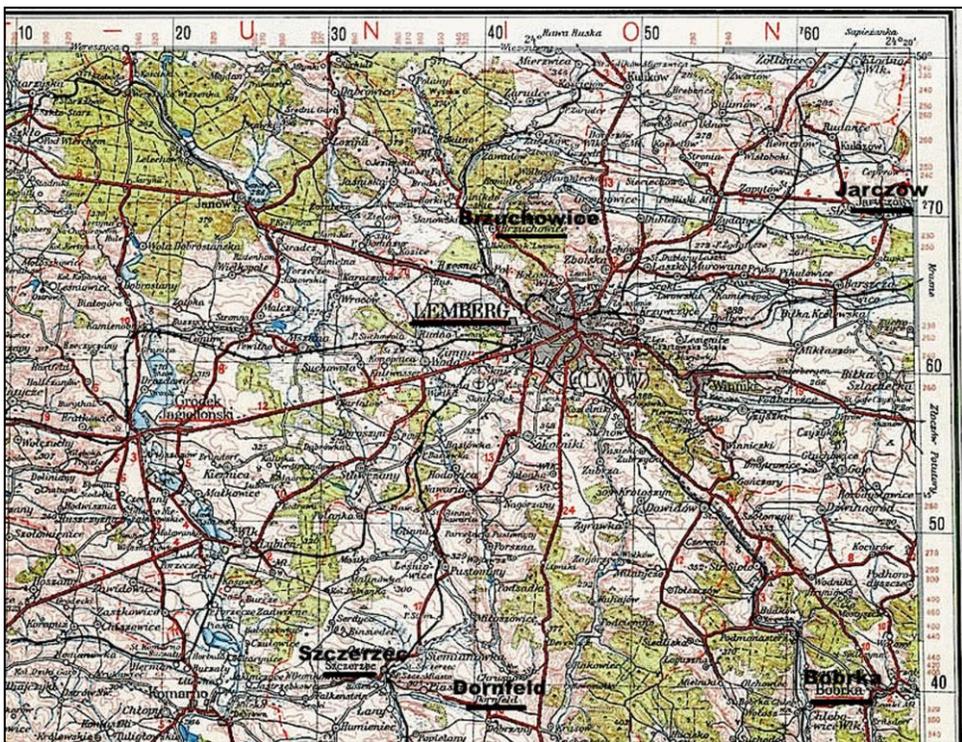
Document II.3.5. Diagram of the city of Lvov in 1937, on a scale of 1: 20,000. In the oval, Pilichowska Road.



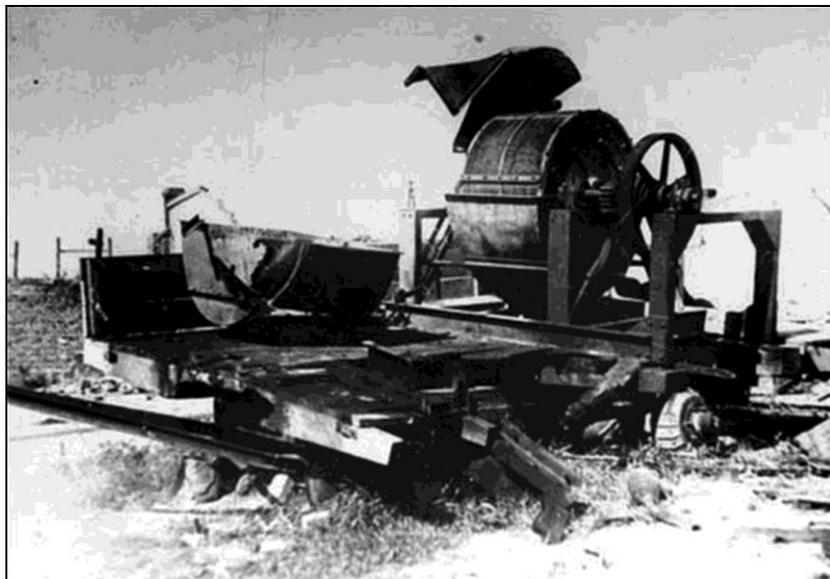
Document II.3.6. Crushing the osseous residues in Crematorium V at Auschwitzl. From: Olère, p. 77.



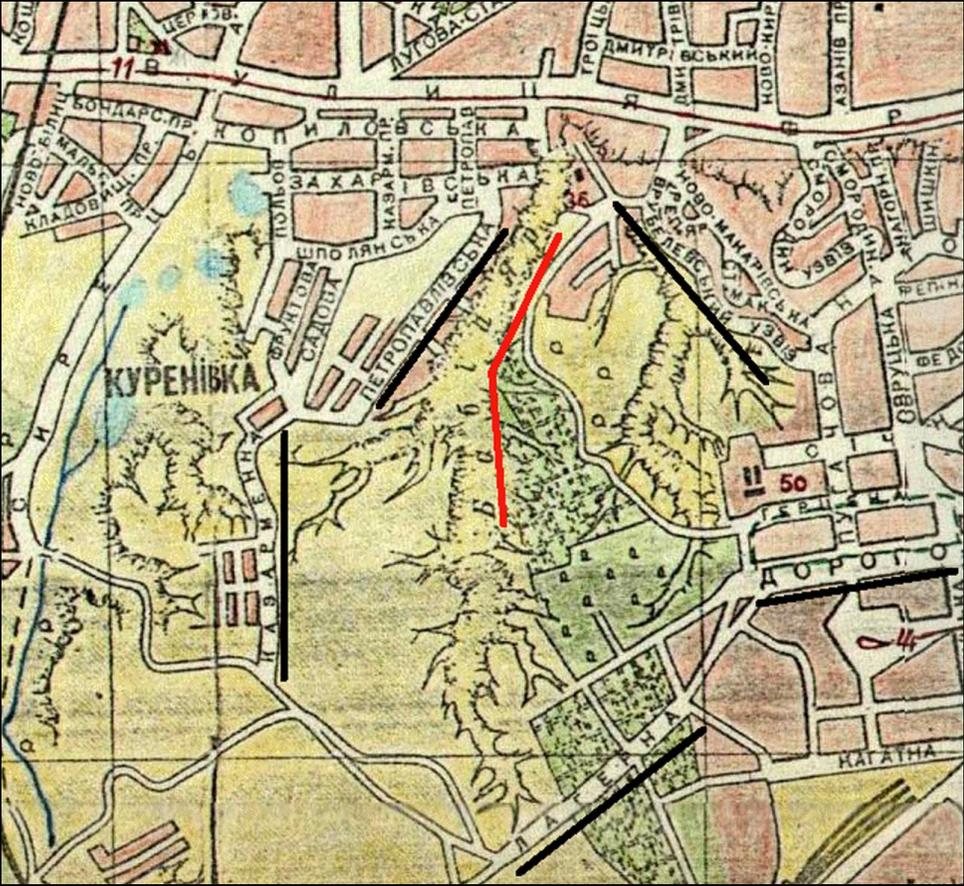
Document II.3.7. Two normal flour sieves.



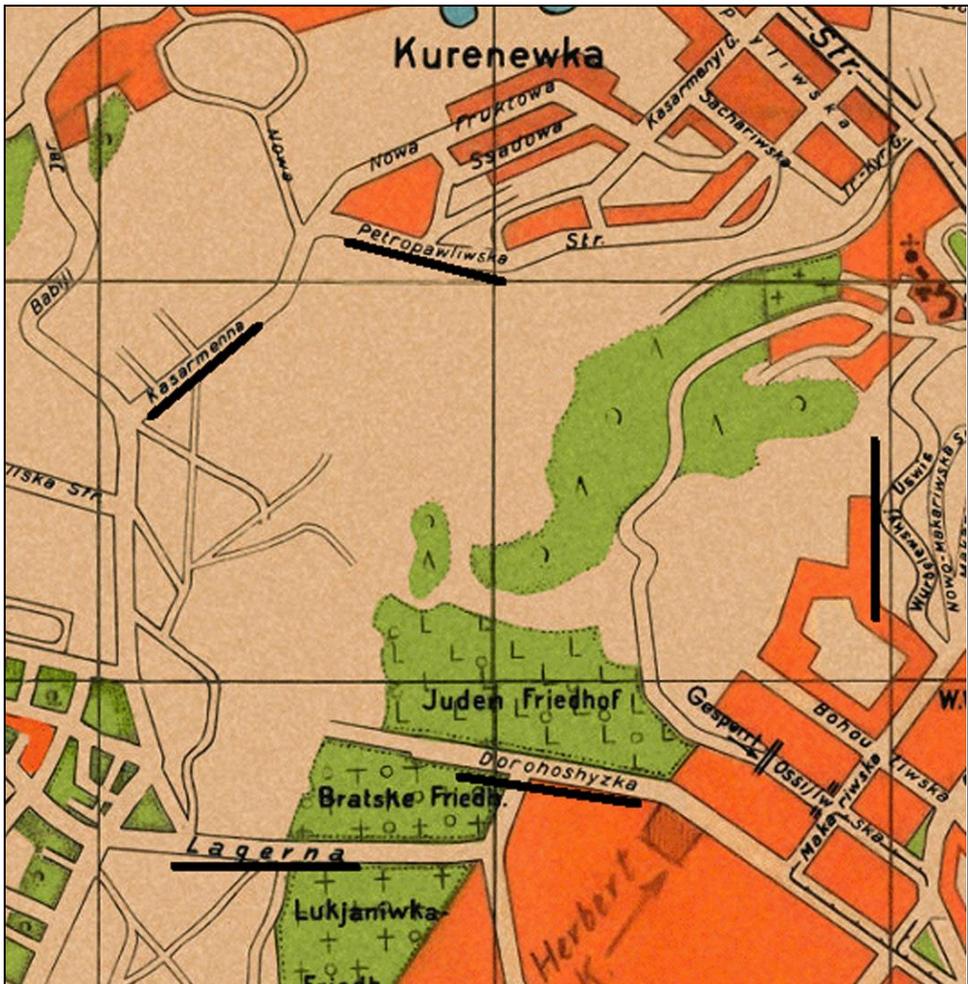
Document II.3.8. General map of Central Europe. Special Edition September 1940, 1:300,000, Lvov (Lemberg).



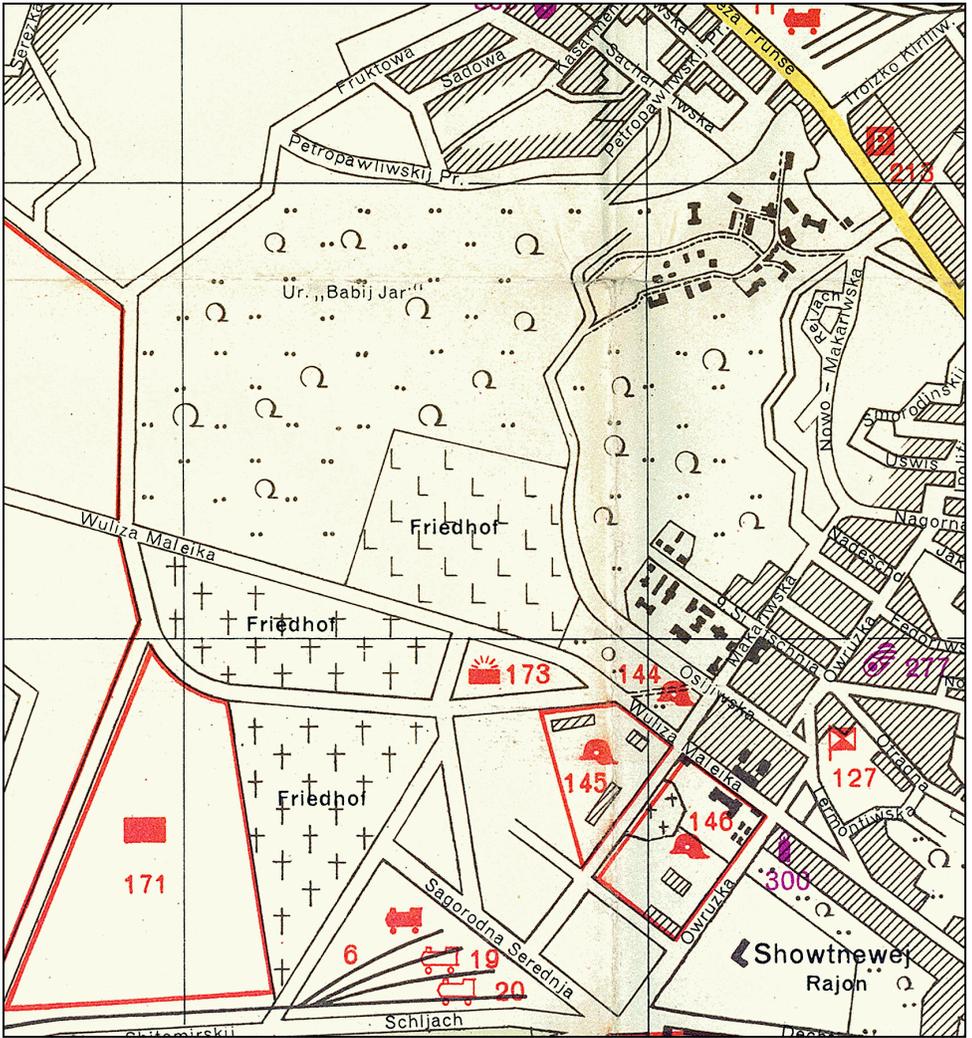
Document II.3.9. "Bone-crushing machine used to grind human bones in order to obtain fertilizer in the Janowska concentration camp. August 1944." From: USHMM, Photograph Collection, 69978.



Document II.4.1. Ukrainian diagram of Kiev; 1:1,500, 1947.



Document II.4.2. City map of Kiev. Scale 1:25,000. "Sonderausgabe A. Ausgabe Nr. 1, Stand: I. 1943."



Document II.4.3. Mil.-Geo.-Plan of Kiev. Scale 1:25,000. Special edition IV.41.





*Document II.4.4. Aerial photograph of Babi Yar of 26 September 1943 published by J. C. Ball, p. 153.*



*Document II.4.5. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken on 26 September 1943, No. 1979/104.*



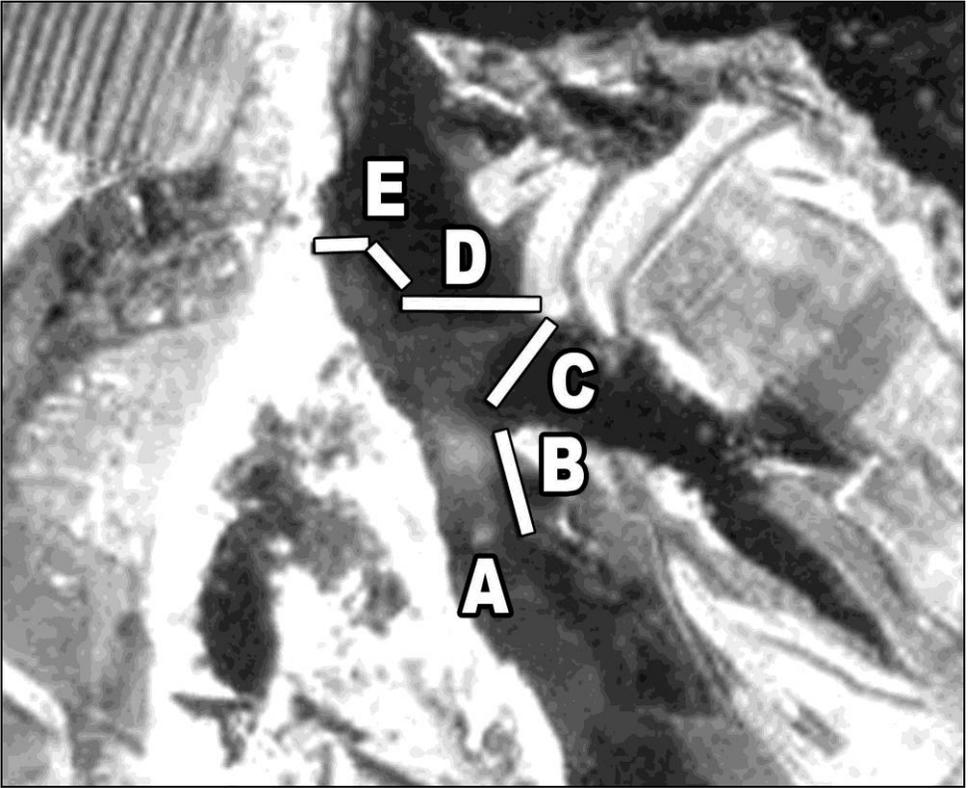
*Document II.4.6. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken 26 September 1943, No. 1979/105.*



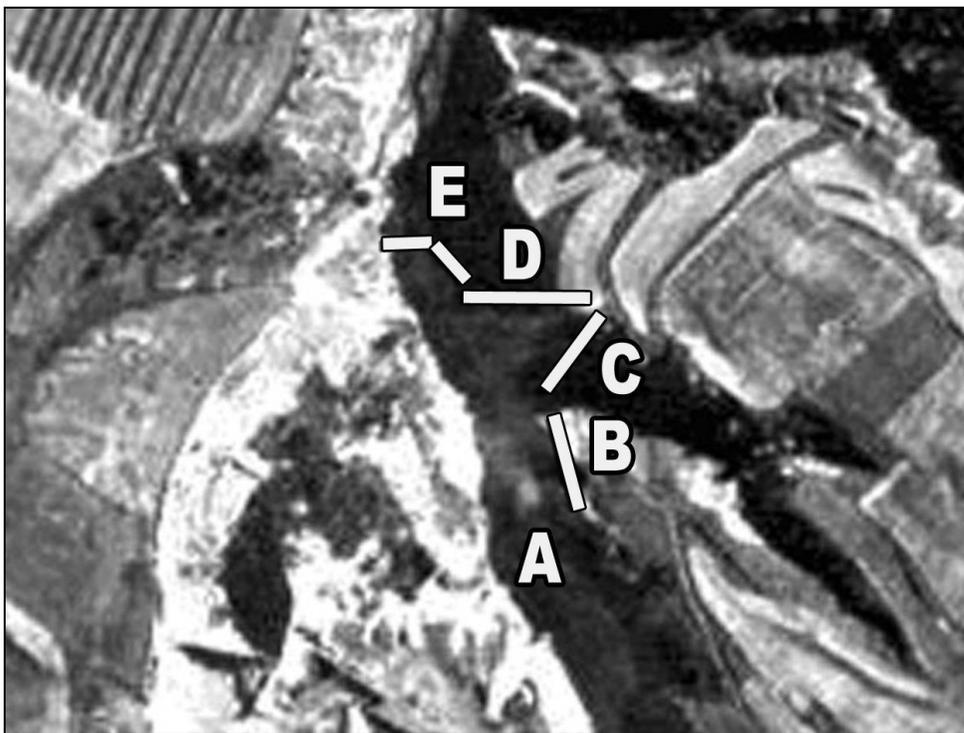
*Document II.4.7. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken 26 September 1943, No. 1979/104. Section enlargement Babi Yar.*



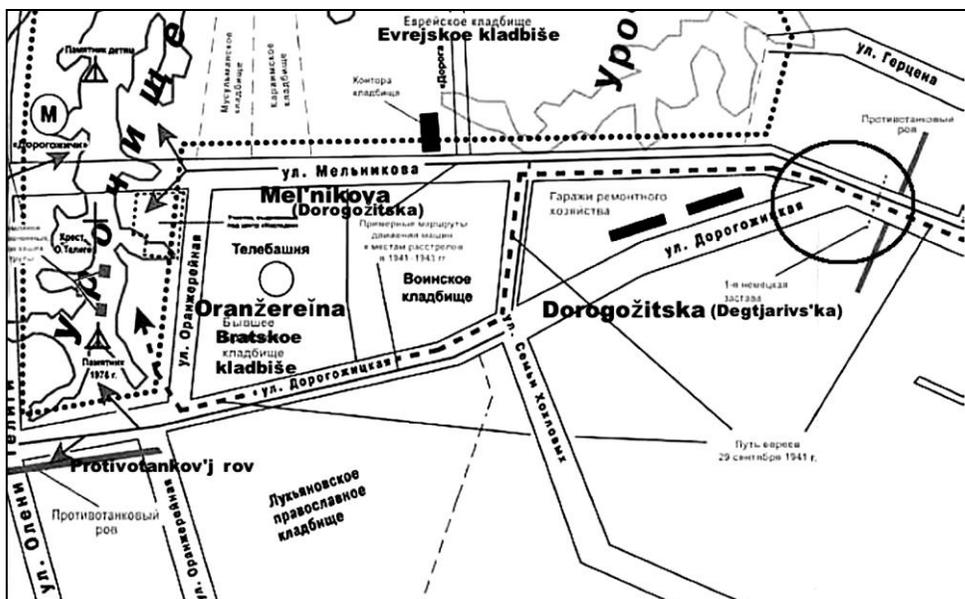
*Document II.4.8. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken 26 September 1943, No. 1979/105. Section enlargement Babi Yar.*



*Document II.4.9. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken 26 September 1943, No. 1979/104. Section enlargement of Babi Yar with greyish area.*



Document II.4.10. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken 26 September 1943, No. 1979/105. Section enlargement of Babi Yar with greyish area.

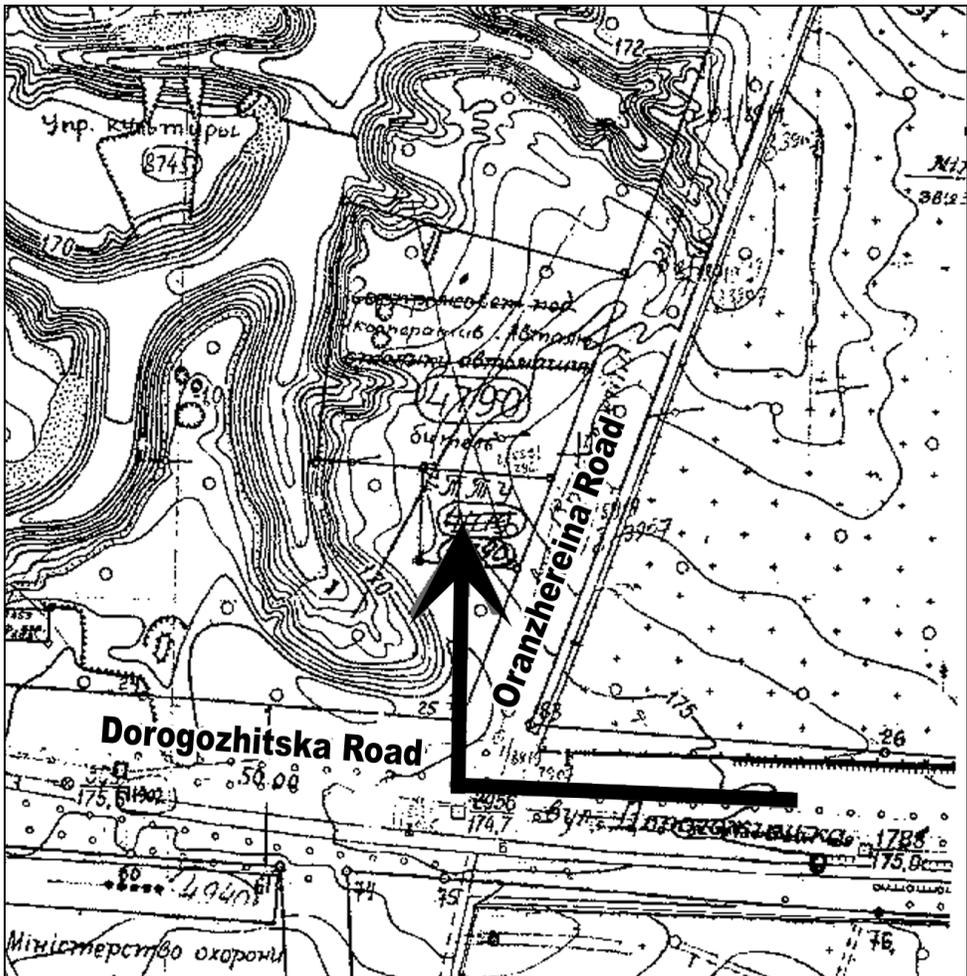


Document II.4.11. Pathway of the Jews to Babi Yar. From: Kruglov 2011, p. 28; Kruglov has discussed the diagram in Evstafyeva/Nakhmanovich.



Document II.4.12. and 4.12a: Pathway of the Jews to Babi Yar. From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/indexes/fund/archive5.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/indexes/fund/archive5.html), Allegati, No. 33.





Document II.4.12a: Section enlargement of the previous document.



*Document II.4.13. German aerial photograph of Kiev taken 26 September 1943, No. 1979/105. Section enlargement with alleged smoke (top ellipse), location of claimed initial mass execution and subsequent excavations and cremations (bottom ellipse), and entry point of victims of subsequent executions (split line with two arrows).*

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*Document II.4.14. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army. From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo1.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo1.html)*



*Document II.4.15. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army. From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo17.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo17.html)*



*Document II.4.16. A group of approximately 60 men marching in formation, four abreast, along a road escorted by four German soldiers. From: Kruglov 2011, p. 143.*

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*Document II.4.17. A group of 50-60 women with purses and bundles along a country road in a disorderly column. From: Kruglov 2011, p. 144.*



Document II.4.18. Dorogozhytska Road (now Melnikova road) at the height of the cemetery gate. From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo40.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo40.html)



Document II.4.19. "30,000 people turn out for a June 30, 1979 No-Nukes Rally in San Luis Obispo." From: [http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Diablo\\_Canyon\\_Blockade\\_Tales](http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Diablo_Canyon_Blockade_Tales)



Document II.4.20. "Babi Yar, September 1941: Jewish Soviet citizens above the ravine. Before the murder, they are forced to undress" (Klee/Dreßen, p. 125).  
From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo39.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo39.html)

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Document II.4.21. "Babi-Yar, September 1941: The murderers rummage through the victims' property" (ibid.).  
From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo38.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo38.html)

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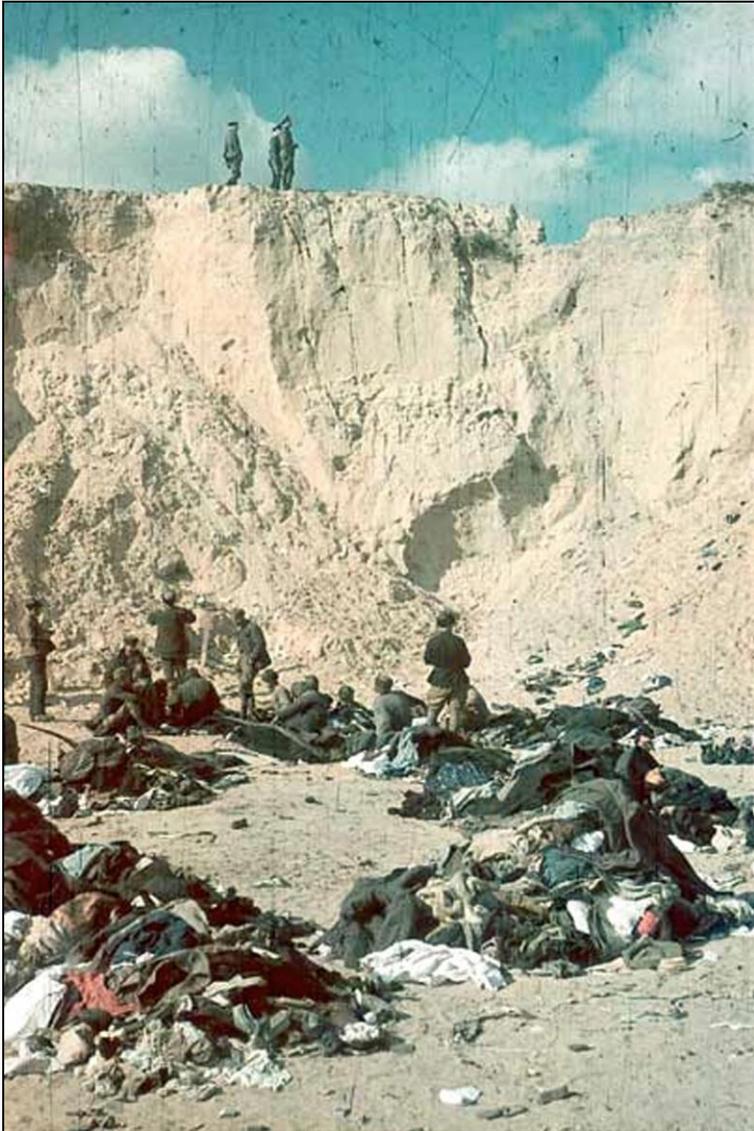


*Document II.4.22. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army.  
From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo4.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo4.html)*



*Document II.4.23. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army.  
From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo5.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo5.html)*





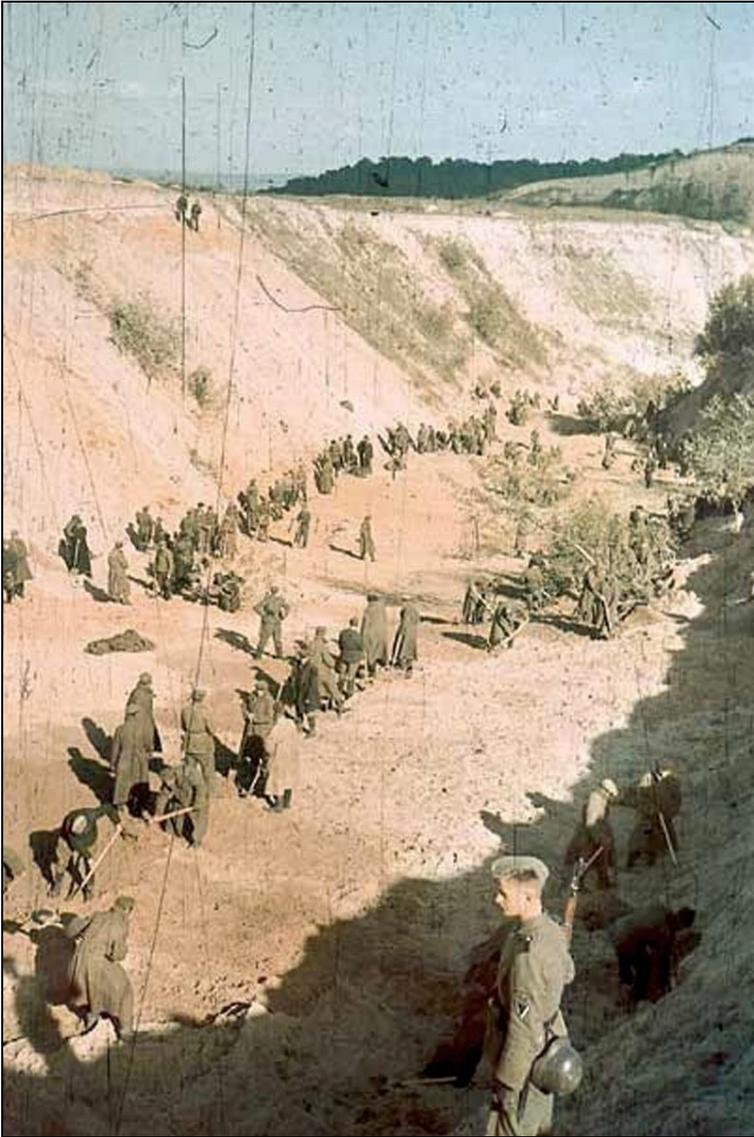
*Document II.4.24. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army. From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo6.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo6.html)*



*Document II.4.24a. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army.  
From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo15.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo15.html)*



*Document II.4.25. As before. From: Kruglov 2011, p. 146.*



*Document II.4.25a. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army. From: [www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo14.html](http://www.kby.kiev.ua/book1/illustrations/photo/photo14.html)*



*Document II.4.26. Photo by Johannes Hähle, military photographer, 637th Propaganda Company, German Sixth Army. From: Kruglov 2011, p. 146.*



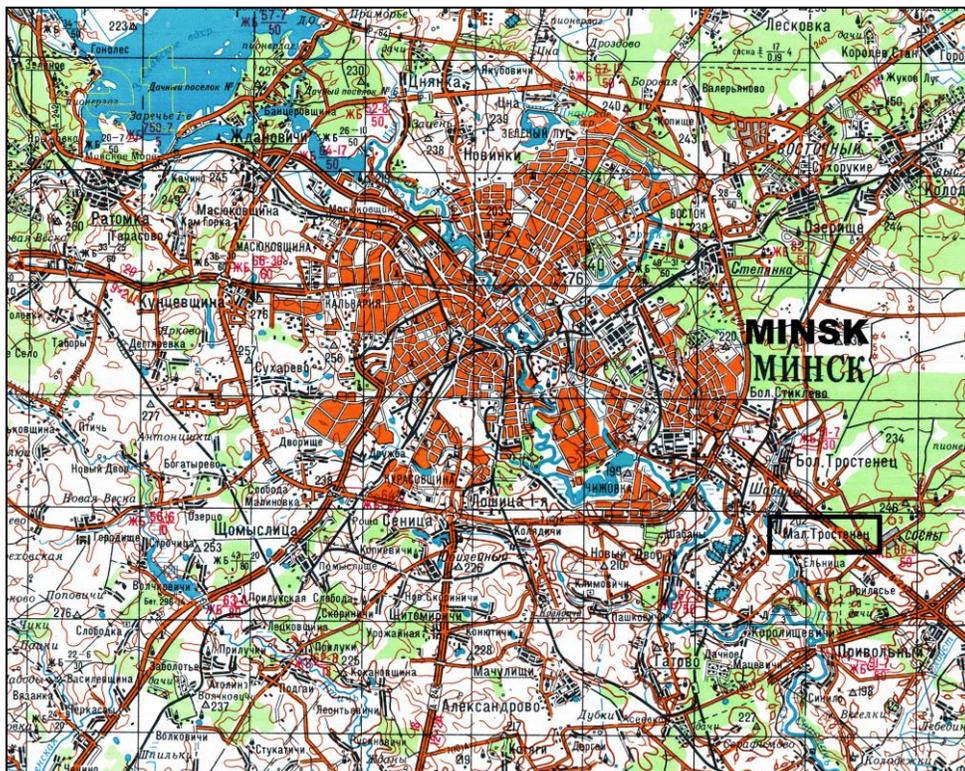
*Document II.5.1. Mass grave at Kamenets-Podolsky. From: YVA, Item ID 25416, Archival Signature 1627/1.*



*Document II.5.2. Mass grave at Kamenets-Podolsky. From: YVA, Item ID 26286, Archival Signature 1627/3.*



*Document II.5.3. Mass grave at Kamenets-Podolsky. From: YVA, Item ID 26286, Archival Signature 1627/3.*



Document II.6.1. Soviet map of the region of Minsk on a scale of 1:20,000 dated 1986. Table N-35-XXII. Detail.



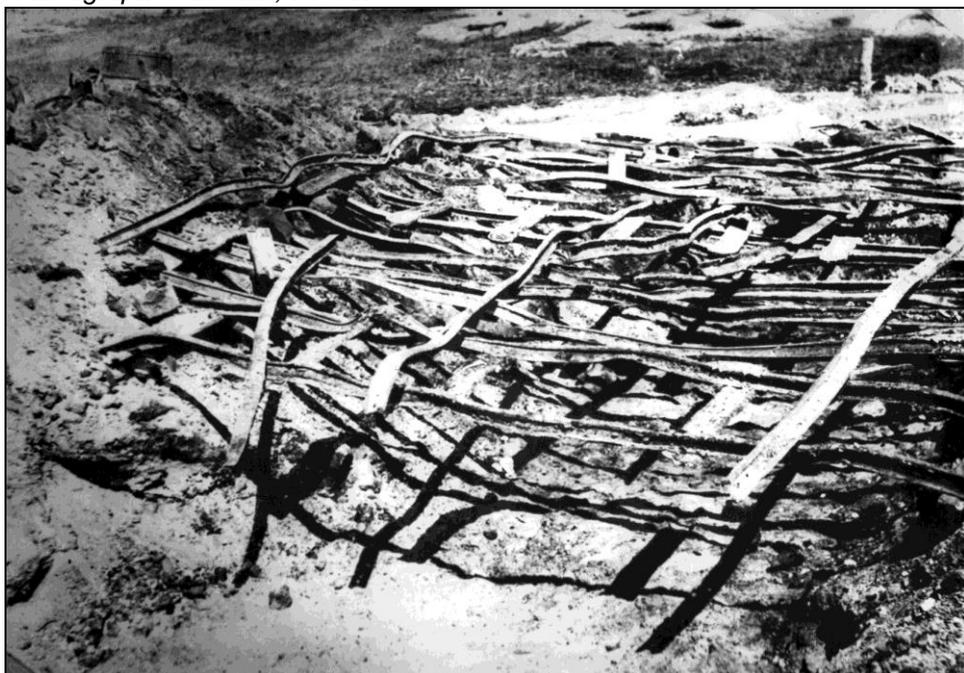
*Document II.6.2. Remains of a cremation at Maly Trostenets. From: USHMM, Photograph Collection, 71958.*



*Document II.6.3. Remains of a cremation at Maly Trostenets. From: USHMM, Photograph Collection, 71959.*

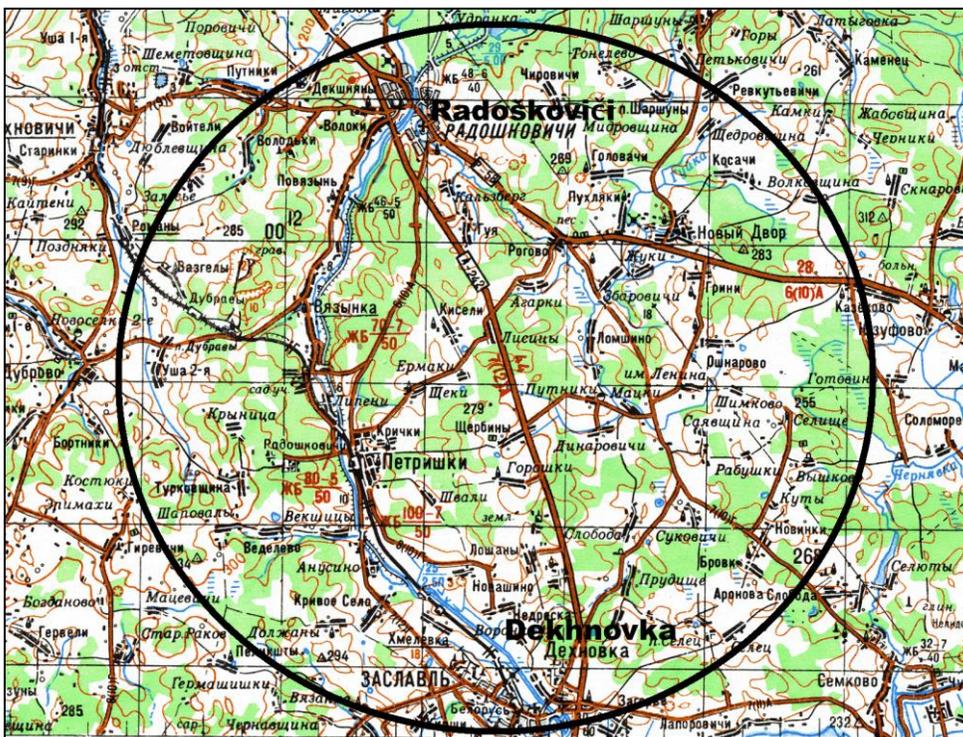


*Document II.6.4. Remains of a cremation at Maly Trostenets. From: USHMM, Photograph Collection, 71947.*

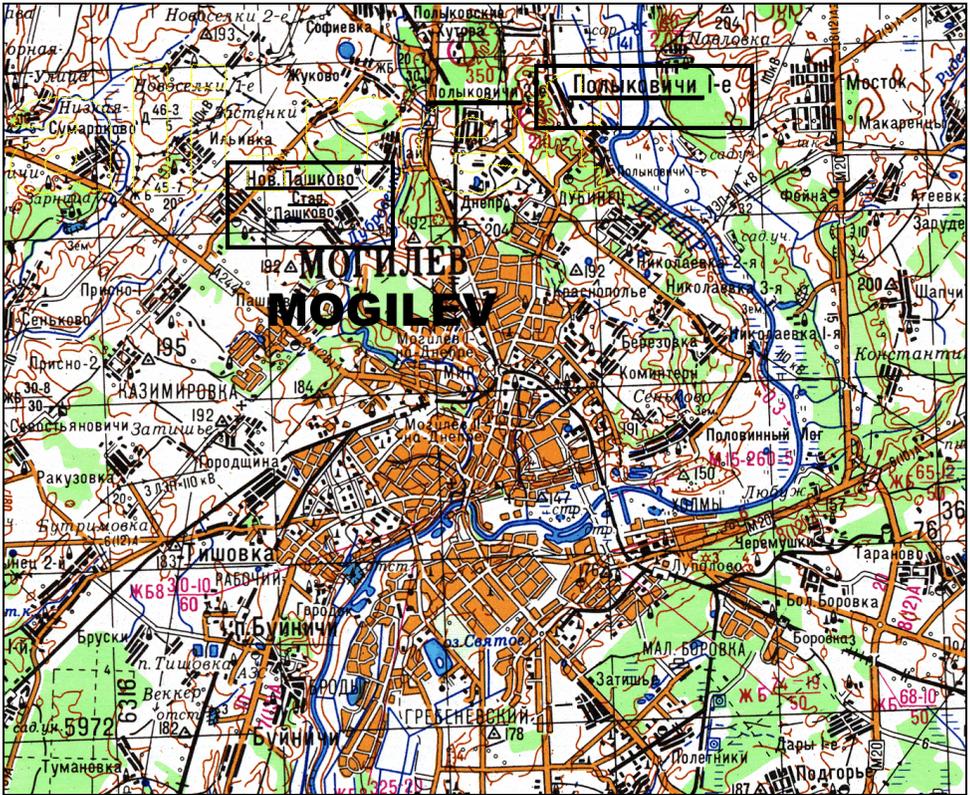


*Document II.6.5. Bent rails at an outdoor cremation pit at the Stutthof Camp. From: GARF, 7021-128-252, p. 14.*

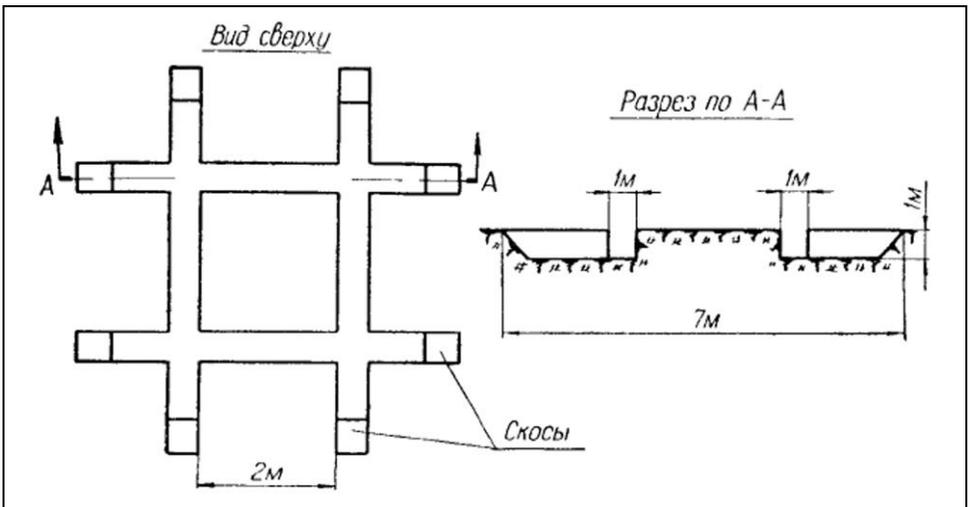




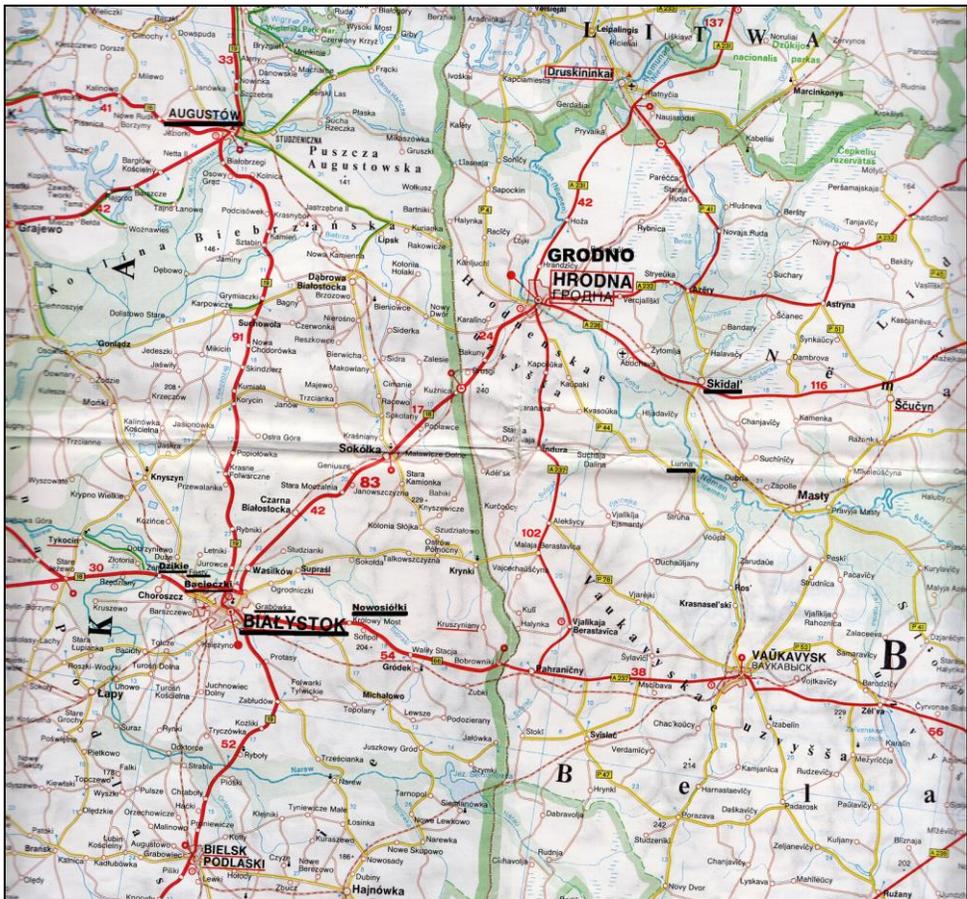
Document II.6.6. Soviet map of the region of Logosk on a scale of 1:20,000 dated 1993. Table N-35-XVI. Detail.



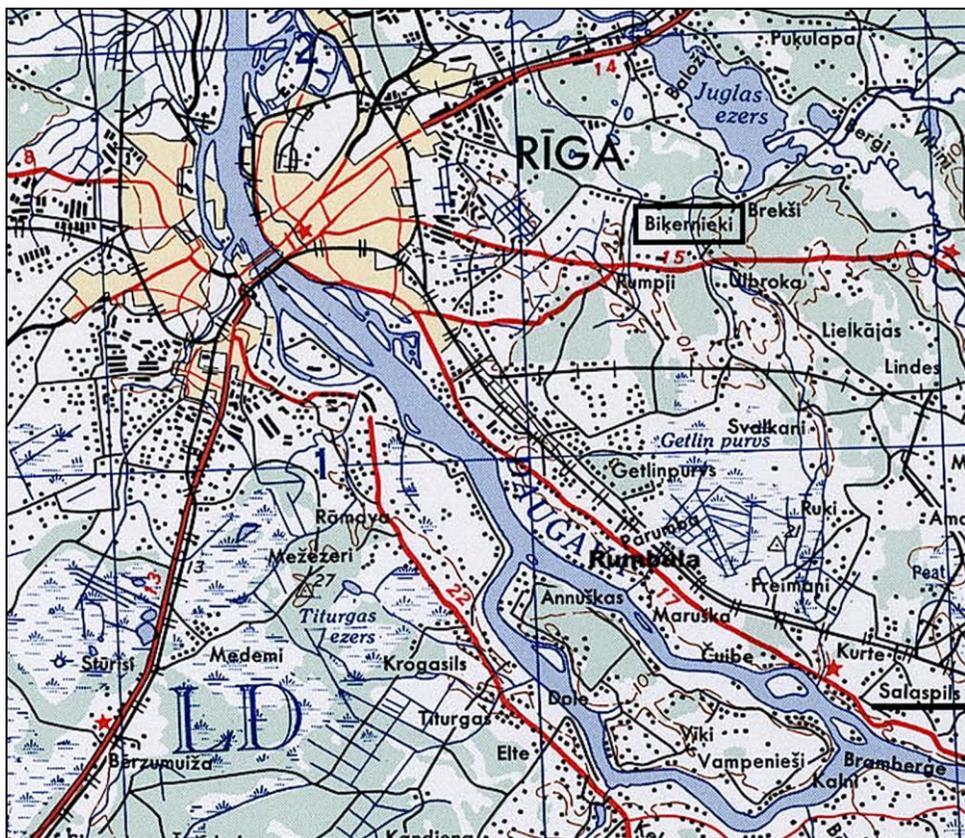
Document II.6.7. Soviet map of the Mogilev region on a scale of 1:20,000, dated 1997. Table N-36-XIX. Detail.



Document II.6.8. Structure of a "furnace" installation according to S.I. Pilunov. From: Beluga, p. 167.



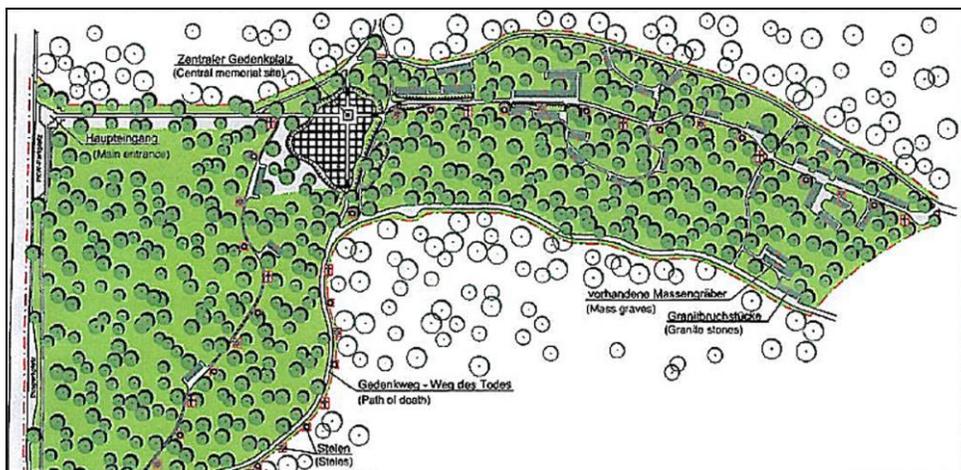
Document II.6.9. Map of Byelorussia on a scale of 1:75,000, 1996.



Document II.7.1. Map of the Riga region on a scale of 1:125,000 from 1954. Detail.



*Document II.7.2. Presumably a mass grave in the Bikernieki Forest. From: Deutsches Riga Komitee, p. 3.*

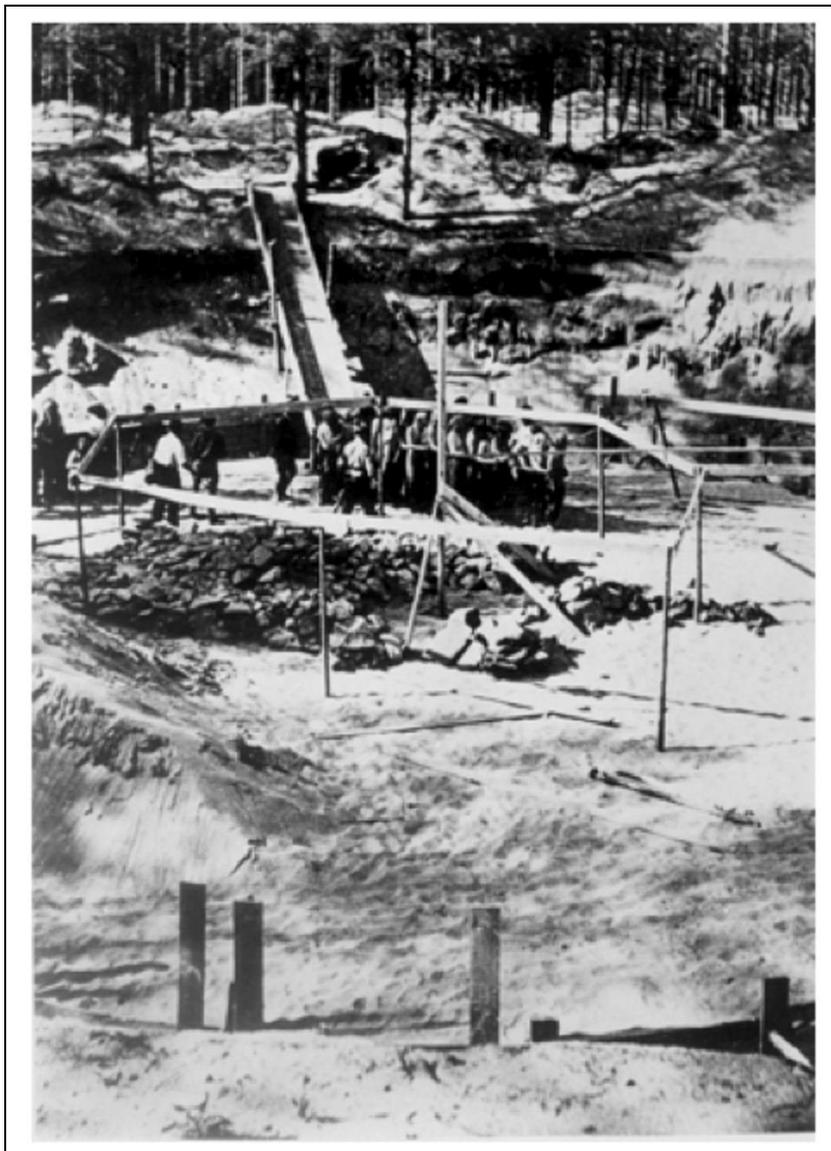


Document II.7.3. Map of the memorial and the presumed mass grave in the Bikernieki Forest. From: *Deutsches Riga Komitee*, p. 8.



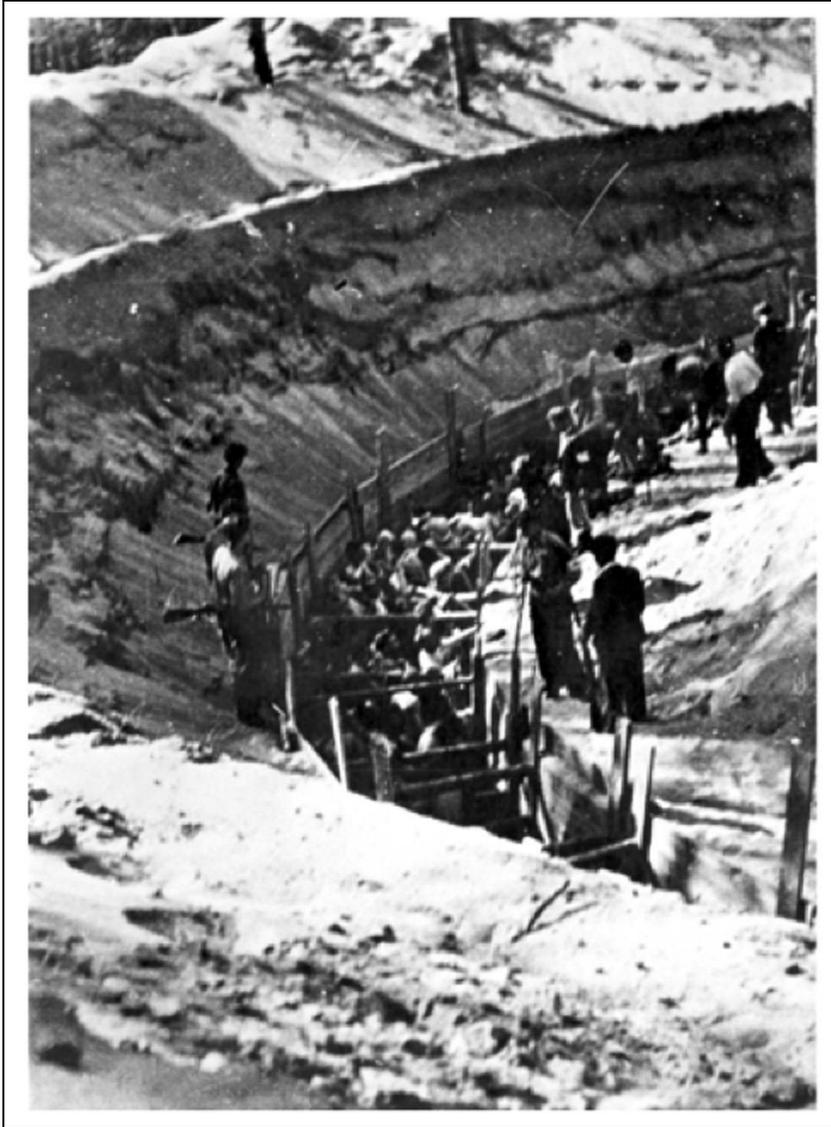
Document II.7.4. Drawing by Anatoli Garnik showing a corpse-burning pyre. From: *Faitelson 1996*, p. 238.





*Document II.7.6. Executions at Ponary. From: YVA, Item ID 26903, Archival Signature 4613/916.*

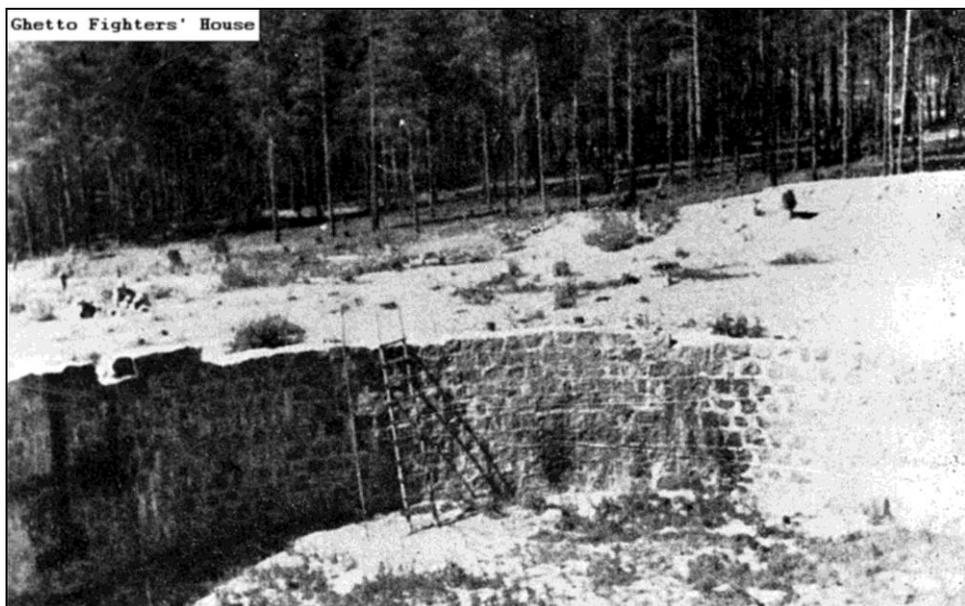




*Document II.7.7. Executions at Ponary. From: YVA, Item ID 22292, Archival Signature A2725/22.*



*Document II.7.8. Executions at Ponary. From: YVA Item ID 23577 Archival Signature 2725/23.*



*Document II.7.9. "A bunker at the Ponary mass extermination site, which housed the Jewish 'sonderkommando' men." From: GFHA, Cat. No. 5914, Registry No. 09220p.*



Document II.7.10. "A bunker at the Ponary mass extermination site, which housed the Jewish "sonderkommando" men." From: GFHA, Cat. No. 5915, Registry No. 30759p.



Document II.8.1. Bodies found by the Soviets at Kerch. From: Shneer 2015, p. 63.



*Document II.8.2. Bodies found by the Soviets at Kerch. "Kerch Resident P.I. Ivanova Found Her Husband, Who Was Tortured by the Fascist Executioners." From: Shneer 2014, p. 64; 2011, p. 101.*



*Document II.8.3. Bodies found by the Soviets at Kerch. "Residents of Kerch Search for Their Relatives. In the photo: V.S. Tereshchenko digs under bodies for her husband." From: Shneer 2011, p. 102.*



*Document II.8.4. Bodies found by the Soviets at Kerch.  
“Soviets Dig a Grave.” From: *ibid.*, p. 103.*



**Багеровский ров. Одна из ям, куда гитлеровцы сваливали расстрелянных ими жителей города Керчи.**

*Document II.8.5. Drawing of the bodies found at Kerch, published in the newspaper Ogonyok: “One of the mass graves where the Hitlerites threw the inhabitants shot by themselves from the city of Kerch.” From: YVA, Digital Collections, Archive Signature 5965.*



*Document II.8.6. Actual scene of the drawing of Document II.8.5. Section enlargement of Document II.8.1. From: Ibid., Signature 7265/175.*

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Document II.8.7. "Hitlerite atrocities in Kerch. Bodies of residents shot by Germans." From: Struk, p. 47.



Document II.8.8. Retouched photo of bodies allegedly found at the Drobitsky Ravine. GFHA, Cat. No. 8417.



*Document II.8.9. Bodies allegedly found at Drobitsky Yar. From: GFHA, Cat. No. 8418.*

*Document II.8.10.-17. Stills from footage shown during the documentary The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine. From: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4agw5\\_oiwUw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4agw5_oiwUw)*



*II.8.10: at 3:38*



*II.8.11: at 3:46*





*Il.8.12: at 3:50*



*Il.8.13: at 3:56*



*Il.8.14: at 4:01*



*Il.8.15: at 4:03*



*Il.8.16: at 4:06*



*Il.8.17: at 4:10*



*Document II.8.18. Dead Soviet PoWs in the PoW camp complex at Bobruisk in 1941. From: Yad Vashem Photo Archive 143B03.*

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*Document II.8.19. Dead Soviet PoWs in the PoW camp complex at Bobruisk in 1941. From: Yad Vashem Photo Archive 143B04.*

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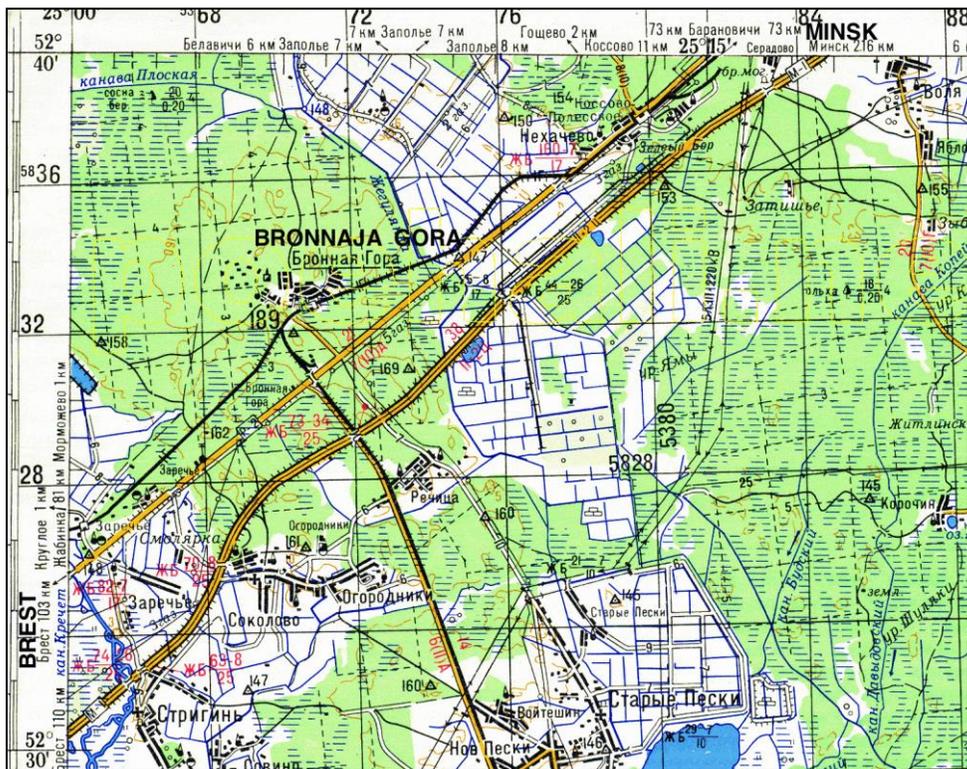


*Document II.8.20. Burial of deceased Soviet PoWs in the PoW camp complex at Bobruisk in 1941. From: Yad Vashem Photo Archive 143B02.*

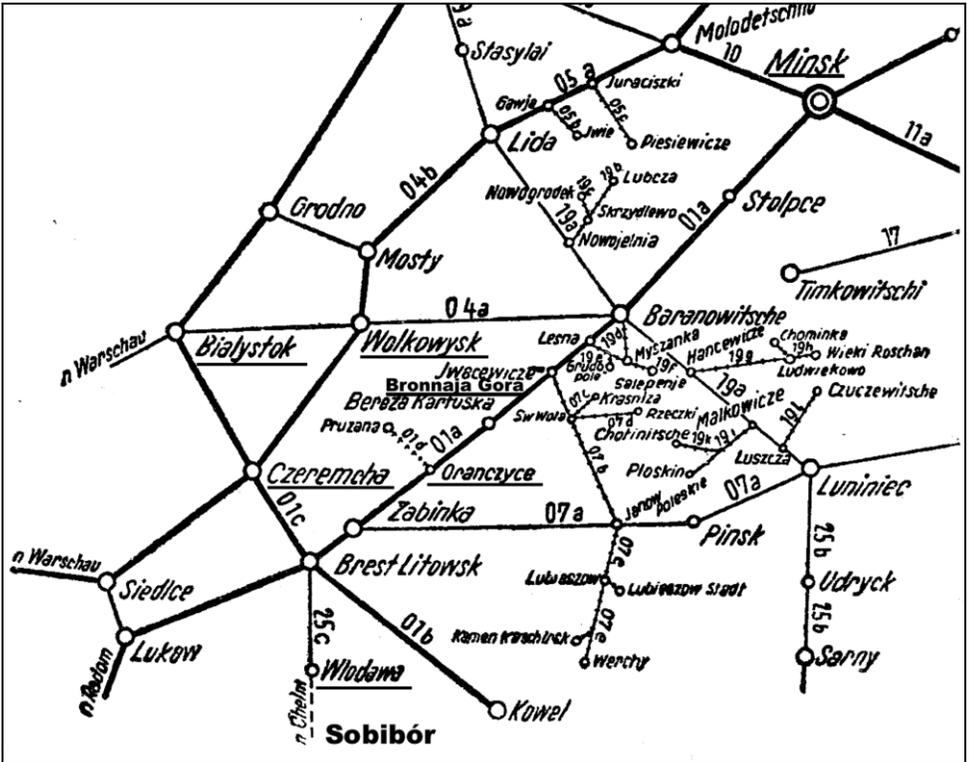


*Document II.8.21. Human remains recovered in 1964 from mass graves of deceased Soviet PoWs at the former PoW camp complex at Bobruisk. From: Yad Vashem Photo Archive, FA 372/6.*

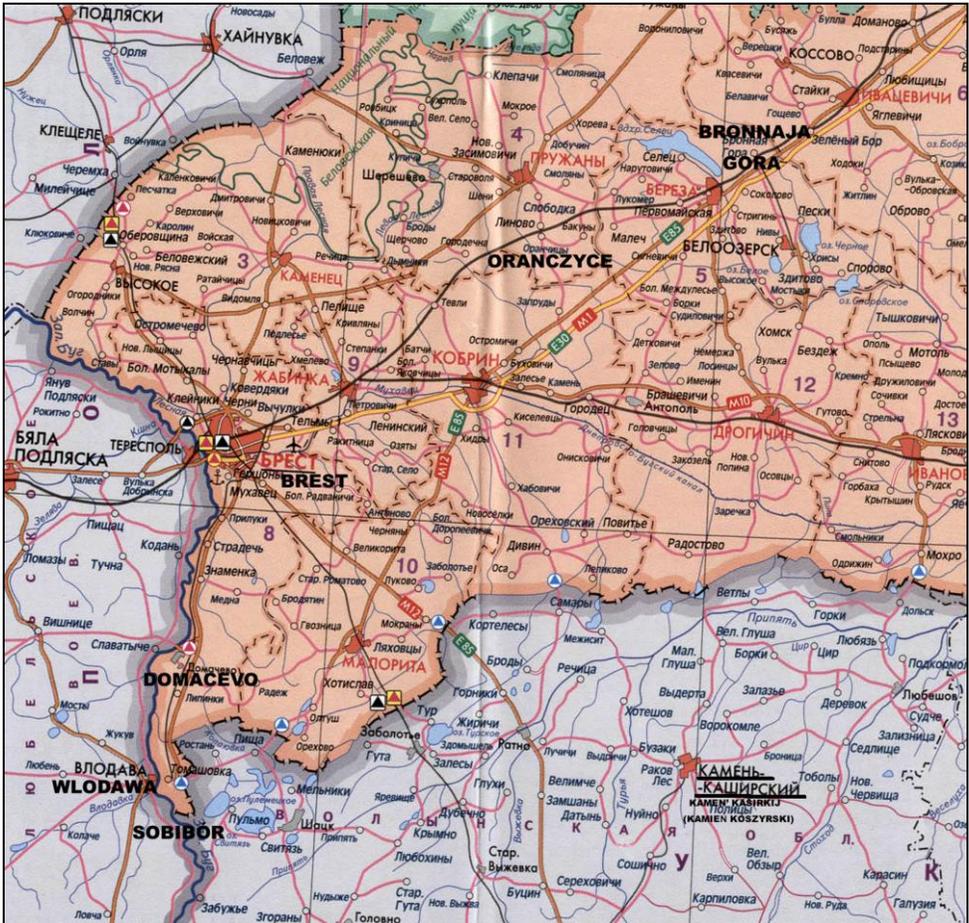
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Document II.8.22. Soviet map of the region of Bronnaya Gora on a scale of 1:20,000 of 1997. Table N-35-XXXII. Detail.



Document II.8.23. Reichsverkehrdirektion Minsk Reich (Traffic Management Minsk). Übersichtskarte der Strecken und Bahnhöfe des Bezirks der Reichsverkehrsdirektion Minsk (General Map of the Rail Lines and Stations of the Reich Traffic Management District of Minsk). From: Hilberg 1981, p. 256.



Document II.8.24. Map of Byelorussia on a scale of 1:1,000,000 (2005). From: [http://pravo2000by.narod.ru/belarus\\_map1.jpg](http://pravo2000by.narod.ru/belarus_map1.jpg)



Document II.8.25. Soviet map on a scale of 1:100,000 of the oblast of Brest (1977), M-34-VI.



### 3. Abbreviations

#### 3.1. Archives and Collections

- AGK: *Archiwum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* (Archives of the Central Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes against the Polish People – National Memorial), Warsaw
- AMS: *Archiwum Muzeum Stutthof* (Archive of Stutthof Museum), Sztutowo (Stutthof)
- APL: *Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie* (Lublin State Archive), Lublin
- CDJC: *Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine*, Paris
- DAKO: *Derzhavny arkhiv Khersonskoyi oblasti* (State Archive of the Kherson Oblast)
- DARO: *Derzhavny arkhiv Rivnenskoyi oblasti* (State Archive of the Rivne Oblast)
- ERA: *Eesti Riigiarhiiv* (Estonian State Archiive)
- GARF: *Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiskoi Federatsii* (National Archives of the Russian Federation), Moscow
- GDA SBU: *Galuzevy derzhavny arkhiv Sluzhby bezpeki Ukrainy* (Departmental State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine)
- GFHA: Ghetto Fighters' House Archive, Kibbutz Lohamei Haghetat
- IMT: Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal Nuremberg, 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946 (Blue Series); published trial protocols of the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg
- LCVA: *Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas* (Lithuanian Central State Archive)
- LVVA: *Latvijas Valsts Vestures Arhivs* (Latvian State Historical Archives)
- NARA: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.
- NCA: U.S. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (ed.), *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression: Collection of Documentary Evidence and Guide Materials*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1946
- NMT: Official Transcript of the U.S. Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, University of Georgia Law, Digital Commons
- TWC: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals, Nuernberg, October 1946 – April 1949* (Green Series); published trial protocols of the U.S. Military Tribunals at Nuremberg
- PAAA: *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts* (Political Archives of the German Foreign Office), Berlin
- PRO: Public Record Office, London; now: TNA, The National Archives
- RGVA: *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv* (Russian National War Archives), Moscow
- SNA: *Slovenský Národný Archív* (National Archive of Slovakia), Bratislava
- TNA: The National Archives, London
- TsDAVO: *Tsentralny derzhavny arkhiv vyshchyykh ograniv vladi ta upravlinnya Ukrainy* (Central State Archive of the Supreme Bodies of the Ukrainian Authority and Government), Kiev
- USHMM: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.
- VHA: *Vojenský Historický Archiv* (Archives of Military History), Prague
- YIVO: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York
- YVA: Yad Vashem Archives. Jerusalem
- ZStL: *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen* (Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National-Socialist Crimes), Ludwigsburg

### 3.2. Acronyms

AOK	<i>Armeeeoberkommando</i> [X] – High Kommando of Army No. X
BdS	<i>Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD</i> – commander of the Security Police and the SD
BW	<i>Bauwerk</i> – building, structure
DG	<i>Durchgangsstraße</i> – thoroughfare
EG	<i>Einsatzgruppe</i> – deployment group
EK	<i>Einsatzkommando</i> – deployment squad
EM	<i>Ereignismeldung</i> – Incident Report
GG	<i>Generalgouvernement</i> – Government General – German-occupied Poland
H.K.P.	<i>Heereskraftfahrzeugpark</i> – motor pool of the army
HSSPF (HSSuPf)	<i>Höherer SS- und Polizei-Führer</i> – Higher SS and Police leader
KdS	<i>Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei</i> – commander of Security Police
KL	<i>Konzentrationslager</i> – concentration camp
KTI	<i>Kriminaltechnisches Institut</i> – Institute for Criminological Techniques
NKGB	<i>Narodnyy Komissariat Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti</i> – The People’s Commissariat for State Security
NKVD	<i>Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del</i> – People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (1934-146)
MbO	<i>Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten</i> – Reports from the occupied eastern territories
Oflag	<i>Offizierslager</i> – PoW camp for officers
OKH	<i>Oberkommando des Heeres</i> – High Command of the Army
OKW	<i>Oberkommando der Wehrmacht</i> – High Command of the Armed Forces
OrPo	<i>Ordnungspolizei</i> – regular German police
RKO	<i>Reichskommissariat Ostland</i> – Reich Commissariat for the East
RKU	<i>Reichskommissariat Ukraine</i> – Reich Commissariat Ukraine
RMbO	<i>Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete</i> – Reich Minister for the occupied eastern territories, Alfred Rosenberg
RSHA	<i>Reichssicherheits-Hauptamt</i> – Reich Security Main Office
SchuPo	<i>Schutzpolizei</i> – Protective Police, police patrols
SD	<i>Sicherheitsdienst</i> – Security Services
Sipo	<i>Sicherheitspolizei</i> – Security Police
SK, S.Kdo.	<i>Sonderkommando</i> – special squad
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i> – Protection Squad
Stalag	<i>Stammlager</i> – PoW camp for soldiers and NCOs
Stapo	<i>Staatspolizei</i> – state police; German federal police
VK, Vorkomm.	<i>Vorkommando</i> – advance unit
VKM	<i>Vorkommando Moskau</i> – advance unit Moscow
WFSt	<i>Wehrmachtsführungsstab</i> – Wehrmacht Operations Staff
WVHA	<i>Wirtschaftsverwaltungs-Hauptamt</i> – Main Office of Economic Administration
ZAL	<i>Zwangsarbeitslager</i> – forced-labor camp

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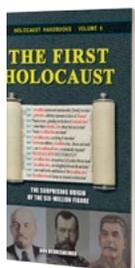
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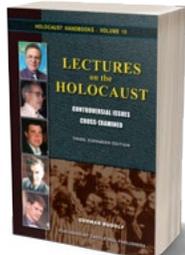
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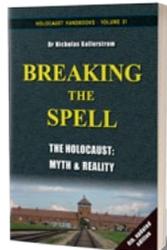
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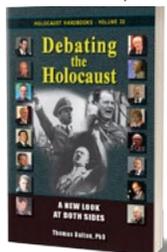
Pictured above are all of the scientific studies that comprise the series *Holocaust Handbooks* published thus far or are about to be released. More volumes and new editions are constantly in the works. Check [www.HolocaustHandbooks.com](http://www.HolocaustHandbooks.com) for updates.

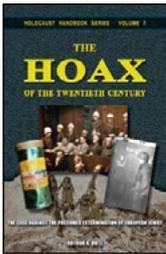
refutes the orthodox “Holocaust” narrative. It reveals that the Germans were desperate to reduce the death rate in their labor camps, which was caused by catastrophic typhus epidemics. Dr. Kollerstrom, a science historian, has taken these intercepts and a wide array of mostly unchallenged corroborating evidence to show that “witness statements” supporting the human gas chamber narrative clearly clash with the available scientific data. Kollerstrom concludes that the history of the Nazi “Holocaust” has been written by the victors with ulterior motives. It is distorted, exaggerated and largely wrong. With a foreword by Prof. Dr. James Fetzer. 4th ed., 261 pages, b&w ill., bibl., index. (#31)



#### **Debating the Holocaust. A New Look at Both Sides.**

By Thomas Dalton. Mainstream historians insist that there cannot be, may not be a debate about the Holocaust. But ignoring it does not make this controversy go away. Traditional scholars admit that there was neither a budget, a plan, nor an order for the Holocaust; that the key camps have all but vanished, and so have any human remains; that material and unequivocal documentary evidence is absent; and that there are serious problems with survivor testimonies. Dalton juxtaposes the traditional Holocaust narrative with revisionist challenges and then analyzes the mainstream’s responses to them. He reveals the weak-





nesses of both sides, while declaring revisionism the winner of the current state of the debate. 2nd ed., 332 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#32)

**The Hoax of the Twentieth Century. The Case against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry.** By Arthur R. Butz. The first writer to analyze the entire Holocaust complex in a precise scientific manner. This book exhibits the overwhelming force of arguments accumulated by the mid-1970s. Butz's two main arguments are: 1. All major entities hostile to Germany must have known what was happening to the Jews under German authority. They acted during the war as if no mass slaughter was occurring. 2. All the evidence adduced to prove any mass slaughter has a dual interpretation, while only the innocuous one can be proven to be correct. This book continues to be a major historical reference work, frequently cited by prominent personalities. This edition has numerous supplements with new information gathered over the last 35 years. 4th ed., 524 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#7)

**Dissecting the Holocaust. The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory.'** Edited by Germar Rudolf. *Dissecting the Holocaust* applies state-of-the-art scientific technique and classic methods of detection to investigate the alleged murder of millions of Jews by Germans during World War II. In 22 contributions—each of some 30 pages—the 17 authors dissect generally accepted paradigms of the “Holocaust.” It reads as exciting as a crime novel: so many lies, forgeries and deceptions by politicians, historians and scientists are proven. This is the intellectual adventure of the 21st century. Be part of it! 2nd ed. 620 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#1)

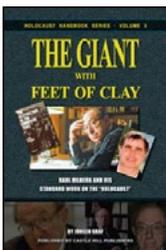
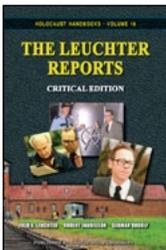
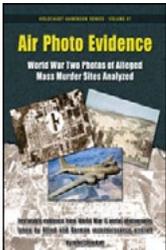
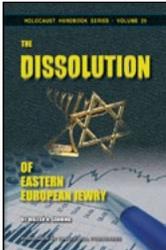
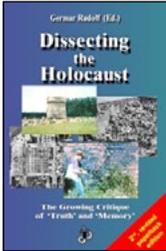
**The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry.** By Walter N. Sanning. Six Million Jews died in the Holocaust. Sanning did not take that number at face value, but thoroughly explored European population developments and shifts mainly caused by emigration as well as deportations and evacuations conducted by both Nazis and the Soviets, among other things. The book is based mainly on Jewish, Zionist and mainstream sources. It concludes that a sizeable share of the Jews found missing during local censuses after the Second World War, which were so far counted as “Holocaust victims,” had either emigrated (mainly to Israel or the U.S.) or had been deported by Stalin to Siberian labor camps. 2nd

ed., foreword by A.R. Butz, epilogue by Germar Rudolf containing important updates; 224 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography (#29).

**Air Photo Evidence: World War Two Photos of Alleged Mass Murder Sites Analyzed.** By Germar Rudolf (editor). During World War Two both German and Allied reconnaissance aircraft took countless air photos of places of tactical and strategic interest in Europe. These photos are prime evidence for the investigation of the Holocaust. Air photos of locations like Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Babi Yar etc. permit an insight into what did or did not happen there. The author has unearthed many pertinent photos and has thoroughly analyzed them. This book is full of air photo reproductions and schematic drawings explaining them. According to the author, these images refute many of the atrocity claims made by witnesses in connection with events in the German sphere of influence. 5th edition; with a contribution by Carlo Mattogno. 168 pages, 8.5"×11", b&w illustrations, bibliography, index (#27).

**The Leuchter Reports: Critical Edition.** By Fred Leuchter, Robert Faurisson and Germar Rudolf. From 1988 and 1991, U.S. expert on execution technologies Fred Leuchter wrote four detailed reports addressing whether the Third Reich operated homicidal gas chambers. The first report on Auschwitz and Majdanek became world famous. Based on chemical analyses and various technical arguments, Leuchter concluded that the locations investigated “could not have then been, or now be, utilized or seriously considered to function as execution gas chambers.” The second report deals with gas-chamber claims for the camps Dachau, Mauthausen and Hartheim, while the third reviews design criteria and operation procedures of execution gas chambers in the U.S. The fourth report reviews Pressac's 1989 tome *Auschwitz*. 4th ed., 252 pages, b&w illustrations. (#16)

**The Giant with Feet of Clay: Raul Hilberg and His Standard Work on the "Holocaust."** By Jürgen Graf. Raul Hilberg's major work *The Destruction of European Jewry* is an orthodox standard work on the Holocaust. But what evidence does Hilberg provide to back his thesis that there was a German plan to exterminate Jews, carried out mainly in gas chambers? Jürgen Graf applies the methods of critical analysis to Hilberg's evidence and examines the results in light of modern historiography. The results of Graf's critical



analysis are devastating for Hilberg. 2nd, corrected edition, 139 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#3)

**Jewish Emigration from the Third Reich.** By Ingrid Weckert. Current historical writings about the Third Reich claim state it was difficult for Jews to flee from Nazi persecution. The truth is that Jewish emigration was welcomed by the German authorities. Emigration was not some kind of wild flight, but rather a lawfully determined and regulated matter. Weckert's booklet elucidates the emigration process in law and policy. She shows that German and Jewish authorities worked closely together. Jews interested in emigrating received detailed advice and offers of help from both sides. 2nd ed., 130 pages, index. (#12)

**Inside the Gas Chambers: The Extermination of Mainstream Holocaust Historiography.** By Carlo Mattogno. Neither increased media propaganda or political pressure nor judicial persecution can stifle revisionism. Hence, in early 2011, the Holocaust Orthodoxy published a 400 pp. book (in German) claiming to refute "revisionist propaganda," trying again to prove "once and for all" that there were homicidal gas chambers at the camps of Dachau, Natzweiler, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Neuengamme, Stutthof... you name them. Mattogno shows with his detailed analysis of this work of propaganda that mainstream Holocaust historiography is beating around the bush rather than addressing revisionist research results. He exposes their myths, distortions and lies. 2nd ed., 280 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#25)

## SECTION TWO: Specific non-Auschwitz Studies

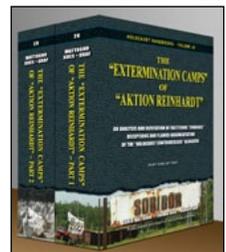
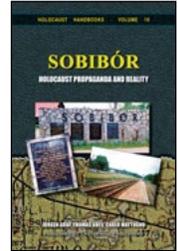
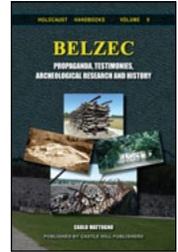
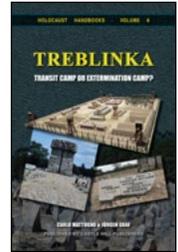
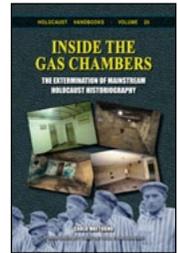
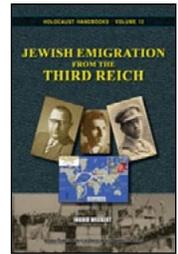
**Treblinka: Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?** By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. It is alleged that at Treblinka in East Poland between 700,000 and 3,000,000 persons were murdered in 1942 and 1943. The weapons used were said to have been stationary and/or mobile gas chambers, fast-acting or slow-acting poison gas, unslaked lime, superheated steam, electricity, diesel exhaust fumes etc. Holocaust historians alleged that bodies were piled as high as multi-storied buildings and burned without a trace, using little or no fuel at all. Graf and Mattogno have now analyzed the origins, logic and technical feasibility of the official version of Treblinka. On the basis of numerous documents they reveal Treblinka's true identity as a mere transit

camp. 2nd ed., 372 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#8)

**Belzec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research and History.** By Carlo Mattogno. Witnesses report that between 600,000 and 3 million Jews were murdered in the Belzec camp, located in Poland. Various murder weapons are claimed to have been used: diesel gas; unslaked lime in trains; high voltage; vacuum chambers; etc. The corpses were incinerated on huge pyres without leaving a trace. For those who know the stories about Treblinka this sounds familiar. Thus the author has restricted this study to the aspects which are new compared to Treblinka. In contrast to Treblinka, forensic drillings and excavations were performed at Belzec, the results of which are critically reviewed. 142 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#9)

**Sobibor: Holocaust Propaganda and Reality.** By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. Between 25,000 and 2 million Jews are said to have been killed in gas chambers in the Sobibór camp in Poland. The corpses were allegedly buried in mass graves and later incinerated on pyres. This book investigates these claims and shows that they are based on the selective use of contradictory eyewitness testimony. Archeological surveys of the camp in 2000-2001 are analyzed, with fatal results for the extermination camp hypothesis. The book also documents the general National Socialist policy toward Jews, which never included a genocidal "final solution." 442 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#19)

**The "Extermination Camps" of "Aktion Reinhardt".** By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. In late 2011, several members of the exterminationist *Holocaust Controversies* blog posted a study online which claims to refute three of our authors' monographs on the camps Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka (see previous three entries). This tome is their point-by-point response, which makes "mincemeat" out of the bloggers' attempt at refutation. **Caution:** The two volumes of this work are an intellectual overkill for most people. They are recommended only for collectors, connoisseurs and professionals. These two books require familiarity with the above-mentioned books, of which they are a comprehensive update and expansion. 2nd ed., two volumes, total of 1396 pages, illustrations, bibliography. (#28)





**Chelmno: A Camp in History & Propaganda.** By Carlo Mattogno. At Chelmno, huge masses of Jewish prisoners are said to have been gassed in “gas vans” or shot (claims vary from 10,000 to 1.3 million victims). This study covers the subject from every angle, undermining the orthodox claims about the camp with an overwhelmingly effective body of evidence. Eyewitness statements, gas wagons as extermination weapons, forensics reports and excavations, German documents—all come under Mattogno’s scrutiny. Here are the uncensored facts about Chelmno, not the propaganda. 2nd ed., 188 pages, indexed, illustrated, bibliography. (#23)

**The Gas Vans: A Critical Investigation.** By Santiago Alvarez and Pierre Marais. It is alleged that the Nazis used mobile gas chambers to exterminate 700,000 people. Up until 2011, no thorough monograph had appeared on the topic. Santiago Alvarez has remedied the situation. Are witness statements reliable? Are documents genuine? Where are the murder weapons? Could they have operated as claimed? Where are the corpses? In order to get to the truth of the matter, Alvarez has scrutinized all known wartime documents and photos about this topic; he has analyzed a huge amount of witness statements as published in the literature and as presented in more than 30 trials held over the decades in Germany, Poland and Israel; and he has examined the claims made in the pertinent mainstream literature. The result of his research is mind-boggling. Note: This book and Mattogno’s book on Chelmno were edited in parallel to make sure they are consistent and not repetitive. 398 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#26)

**The Einsatzgruppen in the Occupied Eastern Territories: Genesis, Missions and Actions.** By C. Mattogno. Before invading the Soviet Union, the German authorities set up special units meant to secure the area behind the German front. Orthodox historians claim that these units called *Einsatzgruppen* primarily engaged in rounding up and mass-murdering Jews. This study sheds a critical light into this topic by reviewing all the pertinent sources as well as material traces. It reveals on the one hand that original war-time documents do not fully support the orthodox genocidal narrative, and on the other that most post-“liberation” sources such as testimonies and forensic reports are steeped in Soviet atrocity propaganda and thus utterly unreliable. In addition,

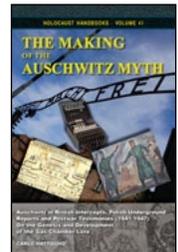
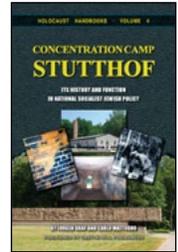
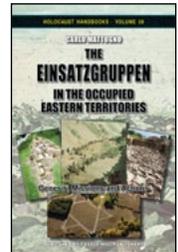
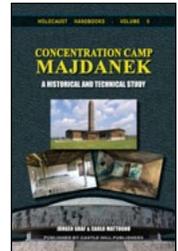
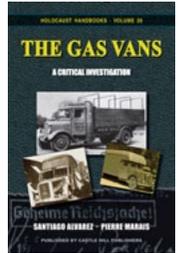
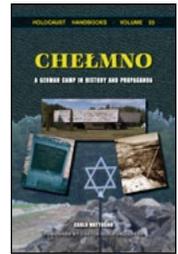
material traces of the claimed massacres are rare due to an attitude of collusion by governments and Jewish lobby groups. 830 pp., b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#39)

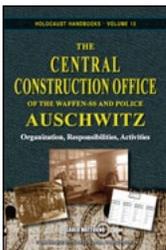
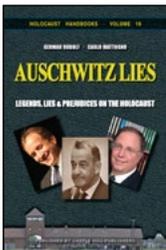
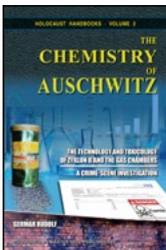
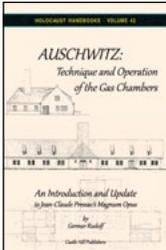
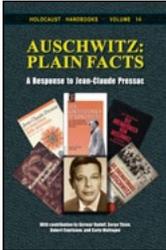
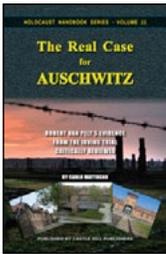
**Concentration Camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study.** By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. At war’s end, the Soviets claimed that up to two million Jews were murdered at the Majdanek Camp in seven gas chambers. Over the decades, however, the Majdanek Museum reduced the death toll three times to currently 78,000, and admitted that there were “only” two gas chambers. By exhaustively researching primary sources, the authors expertly dissect and repudiate the myth of homicidal gas chambers at that camp. They also critically investigated the legend of mass executions of Jews in tank trenches and prove them groundless. Again they have produced a standard work of methodical investigation which authentic historiography cannot ignore. 3rd ed., 358 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#5)

**Concentration Camp Stutthof and Its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy.** By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. Orthodox historians claim that the Stutthof Camp served as a “make-shift” extermination camp in 1944. Based mainly on archival resources, this study thoroughly debunks this view and shows that Stutthof was in fact a center for the organization of German forced labor toward the end of World War II. 4th ed., 170 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#4)

### SECTION THREE: Auschwitz Studies

**The Making of the Auschwitz Myth: Auschwitz in British Intercepts, Polish Underground Reports and Post-war Testimonies (1941-1947).** By Carlo Mattogno. Using messages sent by the Polish underground to London, SS radio messages sent to and from Auschwitz that were intercepted and decrypted by the British, and a plethora of witness statements made during the war and in the immediate postwar period, the author shows how exactly the myth of mass murder in Auschwitz gas chambers was created, and how it was turned subsequently into “history” by intellectually corrupt scholars who cherry-picked claims that fit into their agenda and ignored or actively covered up literally thousands of lies of “witnesses” to make their narrative look credible. Ca. 300





pp., b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (Scheduled for mid-2018; #41)

**The Real Case of Auschwitz: Robert van Pelt's Evidence from the Irving Trial Critically Reviewed.** By Carlo Mattogno. Prof. Robert van Pelt is considered one of the best mainstream experts on Auschwitz. He became famous when appearing as an expert during the London libel trial of David Irving against Deborah Lipstadt. From it resulted a book titled *The Case for Auschwitz*, in which van Pelt laid out his case for the existence of homicidal gas chambers at that camp. This book is a scholarly response to Prof. van Pelt—and Jean-Claude Pressac, upon whose books van Pelt's study is largely based. Mattogno lists all the evidence van Pelt adduces, and shows one by one that van Pelt misrepresented and misinterpreted each single one of them. This is a book of prime political and scholarly importance to those looking for the truth about Auschwitz. 2nd ed., 758 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. (#22)

**Auschwitz: Plain Facts: A Response to Jean-Claude Pressac.** Edited by Germar Rudolf, with contributions by Serge Thion, Robert Faurisson and Carlo Mattogno. French pharmacist Jean-Claude Pressac tried to refute revisionist findings with the “technical” method. For this he was praised by the mainstream, and they proclaimed victory over the “revisionists.” In his book, Pressac's works and claims are shown to be unscientific in nature, as he never substantiate what he claims, and historically false, because he systematically misrepresents, misinterprets and misunderstands German wartime documents. 2nd ed., 226 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary bibliography, index. (#14)

**Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers: An Introduction and Update.** By Germar Rudolf. Pressac's 1989 oversize book of the same title was a trail blazer. Its many document reproductions are still valuable, but after decades of additional research, Pressac's annotations are outdated. This book summarizes the most pertinent research results on Auschwitz gained during the past 30 years. With many references to Pressac's epic tome, it serves as an update and correction to it, whether you own an original hard copy of it, read it online, borrow it from a library, purchase a reprint soon on sale, or are just interested in such a summary in general. 144 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography. (#42)

**The Chemistry of Auschwitz: The Technology and Toxicology of Zyklon B and the Gas Chambers – A Crime Scene Investigation.** By Germar Rudolf. This study documents forensic research on Auschwitz, where material traces and their interpretation reign supreme. Most of the claimed crime scenes – the claimed homicidal gas chambers – are still accessible to forensic examination to some degree. This book addresses questions such as: What did these gas chambers look like? How did they operate? In addition, the infamous Zyklon B can also be examined. What exactly was it? How does it kill? Does it leave traces in masonry that can be found still today? By examining these issues, the horror of Auschwitz is meticulously dissected and thus becomes comprehensible. 3rd ed., 442 pages, more than 120 color and almost 100 b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#2)

**Auschwitz Lies: Legends, Lies and Prejudices on the Holocaust.** By C. Mattogno and G. Rudolf. The fallacious research and alleged “refutation” of Revisionist scholars by French biochemist G. Wellers (attacking Leuchter's famous report), Polish chemist Dr. J. Markiewicz and U.S. chemist Dr. Richard Green (taking on Rudolf's chemical research), Dr. John Zimmerman (tackling Mattogno on cremation issues), Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman (trying to prove it all), as well as researchers Keren, McCarthy and Mazal (how turned cracks into architectural features), are exposed for what they are: blatant and easily exposed political lies created to ostracize dissident historians. 3rd ed., 398 pages, b&w illustrations, index. (#18)

**Auschwitz: The Central Construction Office.** By C. Mattogno. Based upon mostly unpublished German wartime documents, this study describes the history, organization, tasks and procedures of the one office which was responsible for the planning and construction of the Auschwitz camp complex, including the crematories which are said to have contained the “gas chambers.” 2nd ed., 188 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary, index. (#13)

**Garrison and Headquarters Orders of the Auschwitz Camp.** By C. Mattogno. A large number of all the orders ever issued by the various commanders of the infamous Auschwitz camp have been preserved. They reveal the true nature of the camp with all its daily events. There is not a trace in these orders pointing at anything sinister going on in this camp. Quite to the

contrary, many orders are in clear and insurmountable contradiction to claims that prisoners were mass murdered. This is a selection of the most pertinent of these orders together with comments putting them into their proper historical context. (Scheduled for late 2018; #34)

**Special Treatment in Auschwitz: Origin and Meaning of a Term.** By C. Mattogno. When appearing in German wartime documents, terms like “special treatment,” “special action,” and others have been interpreted as code words for mass murder. But that is not always true. This study focuses on documents about Auschwitz, showing that, while “special” had many different meanings, not a single one meant “execution.” Hence the practice of deciphering an alleged “code language” by assigning homicidal meaning to harmless documents – a key component of mainstream historiography – is untenable. 2nd ed., 166 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#10)

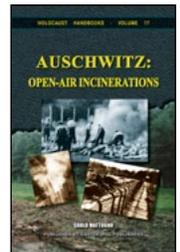
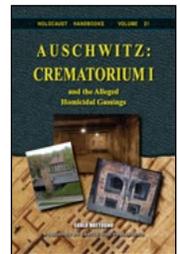
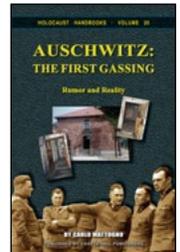
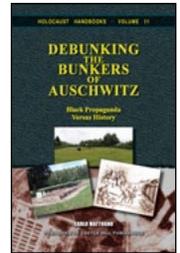
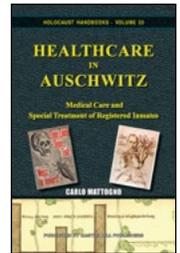
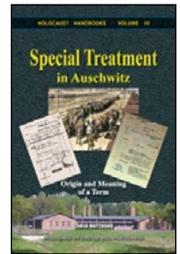
**Healthcare at Auschwitz.** By C. Mattogno. In extension of the above study on *Special Treatment in Auschwitz*, this study proves the extent to which the German authorities at Auschwitz tried to provide health care for the inmates. Part 1 of this book analyzes the inmates’ living conditions and the various sanitary and medical measures implemented. Part 2 explores what happened to registered inmates who were “selected” or subject to “special treatment” while disabled or sick. This study shows that a lot was tried to cure these inmates, especially under the aegis of Garrison Physician Dr. Wirths. Part 3 is dedicated to Dr. this very Wirths. His reality refutes the current stereotype of SS officers. 398 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#33)

**Debunking the Bunkers of Auschwitz: Black Propaganda vs. History.** By Carlo Mattogno. The bunkers at Auschwitz, two former farmhouses just outside the camp’s perimeter, are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically equipped for this purpose. With the help of original German wartime files as well as revealing air photos taken by Allied reconnaissance aircraft in 1944, this study shows that these homicidal “bunkers” never existed, how the rumors about them evolved as black propaganda created by resistance groups in the camp, and how this propaganda was transformed into a false reality. 2nd ed., 292 pages, b&w ill., bibliography, index. (#11)

**Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality.** By C. Mattogno. The first gassing in Auschwitz is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941, in a basement room. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts. This study analyzes all available sources about this alleged event. It shows that these sources contradict each other in location, date, victims etc, rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original wartime documents inflict a final blow to this legend and prove without a shadow of a doubt that this legendary event never happened. 3rd ed., 190 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#20)

**Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings.** By C. Mattogno. The morgue of Crematorium I in Auschwitz is said to be the first homicidal gas chamber there. This study investigates all statements by witnesses and analyzes hundreds of wartime documents to accurately write a history of that building. Where witnesses speak of gassings, they are either very vague or, if specific, contradict one another and are refuted by documented and material facts. The author also exposes the fraudulent attempts of mainstream historians to convert the witnesses’ black propaganda into “truth” by means of selective quotes, omissions, and distortions. Mattogno proves that this building’s morgue was never a homicidal gas chamber, nor could it have worked as such. 2nd ed., 152 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#21)

**Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations.** By C. Mattogno. In spring and summer of 1944, 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz and allegedly murdered there in gas chambers. The Auschwitz crematoria are said to have been unable to cope with so many corpses. Therefore, every single day thousands of corpses are claimed to have been incinerated on huge pyres lit in deep trenches. The sky over Auschwitz was covered in thick smoke. This is what some witnesses want us to believe. This book examines the many testimonies regarding these incinerations and establishes whether these claims were even possible. Using air photos, physical evidence and wartime documents, the author shows that these claims are fiction. A new Appendix contains 3 papers on groundwater levels and cattle mass burnings. 2nd ed., 202 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#17)



**The Cremation Furnaces of Auschwitz.** By Carlo Mattogno & Franco Deana. An exhaustive study of the history and technology of cremation in general and of the cremation furnaces of Auschwitz in particular. On a vast base of technical literature, extant wartime documents and material traces, the authors can establish the true nature and capacity of the Auschwitz cremation furnaces. They show that these devices were inferior make-shift versions of what was usually produced, and that their capacity to cremate corpses was lower than normal, too. 3 vols., 1198 pages, b&w and color illustrations (vols 2 & 3), bibliography, index, glossary. (#24)

**Curated Lies: The Auschwitz Museum's Misrepresentations, Distortions and Deceptions.** By Carlo Mattogno. Revisionist research results have put the Polish Auschwitz Museum under pressure to answer this challenge. They've answered. This book analyzes their answer and reveals the appallingly mendacious attitude of the Auschwitz Museum authorities when presenting documents from their archives. 248 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#38)

**Deliveries of Coke, Wood and Zyklon B to Auschwitz: Neither Proof Nor Trace for the Holocaust.** By Carlo Mattogno. Researchers from the Auschwitz Museum tried to prove the reality of mass extermination by pointing to documents about deliveries of wood and coke as well as Zyklon B to the Auschwitz Camp. If put into the actual historical and technical context, however, these documents prove the exact opposite of what these orthodox researchers claim. Ca. 250 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (Scheduled for early 2019; #40)

## SECTION FOUR: Witness Critique

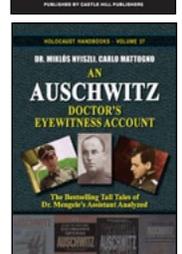
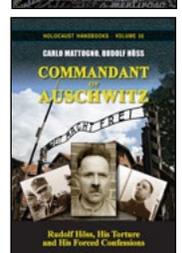
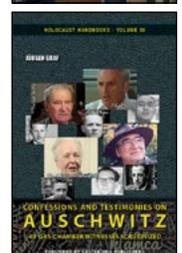
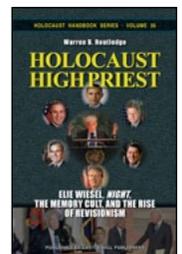
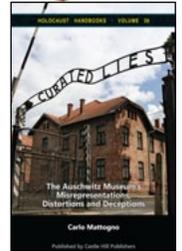
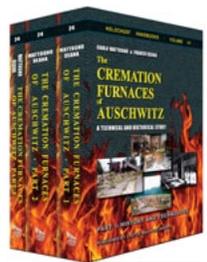
**Holocaust High Priest: Elie Wiesel, Night, the Memory Cult, and the Rise of Revisionism.** By Warren B. Routledge. The first unauthorized biography of Wiesel exposes both his personal deceptions and the whole myth of "the six million." It shows how Zi-

onist control has allowed Wiesel and his fellow extremists to force leaders of many nations, the U.N. and even popes to genuflect before Wiesel as symbolic acts of subordination to World Jewry, while at the same time forcing school children to submit to Holocaust brainwashing. 468 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#30)

**Auschwitz: Confessions and Testimonies.** By Jürgen Graf. The traditional narrative of what transpired at the infamous Auschwitz Camp during WWII rests almost exclusively on witness testimony. This study critically scrutinizes the 40 most important of them by checking them for internal coherence, and by comparing them with one another as well as with other evidence such as wartime documents, air photos, forensic research results, and material traces. The result is devastating for the traditional narrative. (Scheduled for late-2018; #36)

**Commandant of Auschwitz: Rudolf Höss, His Torture and His Forced Confessions.** By Carlo Mattogno & Rudolf Höss. From 1940 to 1943, Rudolf Höss was the commandant of the infamous Auschwitz Camp. After the war, he was captured by the British. In the following 13 months until his execution, he made 85 depositions of various kinds in which he confessed his involvement in the "Holocaust." This study first reveals how the British tortured him to extract various "confessions." Next, all of Höss's depositions are analyzed by checking his claims for internal consistency and comparing them with established historical facts. The results are eye-opening... 402 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#35)

**An Auschwitz Doctor's Eyewitness Account: The Tall Tales of Dr. Mengele's Assistant Analyzed.** By Miklos Nyiszli & Carlo Mattogno. Nyiszli, a Hungarian physician, ended up at Auschwitz in 1944 as Dr. Mengele's assistant. After the war he wrote a book and several other writings describing what he claimed to have experienced. To this day some traditional historians take his accounts seriously, while others reject them as grotesque lies and exaggerations. This study presents and analyzes Nyiszli's writings and skillfully separates truth from fabulous fabrication. 484 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#37)



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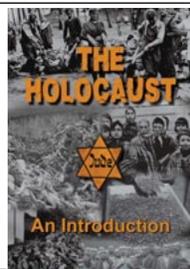
# BOOKS BY AND FROM CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS

Below please find some of the books published or distributed by Castle Hill Publishers in the United Kingdom. For our current and complete range of products visit our web store at [shop.codoh.com](http://shop.codoh.com).

## Thomas Dalton, *The Holocaust: An Introduction*

The Holocaust was perhaps the greatest crime of the 20th century. Six million Jews, we are told, died by gassing, shooting, and deprivation. But: Where did the six million figure come from? How, exactly, did the gas chambers work? Why do we have so little physical evidence from major death camps? Why haven't we found even a fraction of the six million bodies, or their ashes? Why has there been so much media suppression and governmental censorship on this topic? In a sense, the Holocaust is the greatest murder mystery in history. It is a topic of greatest importance for the present day. Let's explore the evidence, and see where it leads.

128 pp. pb, 5"×8", ill., bibl., index

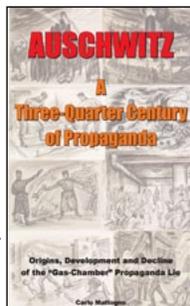


## Carlo Mattogno, *Auschwitz: A Three-Quarter Century of*

### *Propaganda: Origins, Development and Decline of the "Gas Chamber" Propaganda Lie*

During the war, wild rumors were circulating about Auschwitz: that the Germans were testing new war gases; that inmates were murdered in electrocution chambers, with gas showers or pneumatic hammer systems; that living people were sent on conveyor belts directly into cremation furnaces; that oils, grease and soap were made of the mass-murder victims. Nothing of it was true. When the Soviets captured Auschwitz in early 1945, they reported that 4 million inmates were killed on electrocution conveyor belts discharging their load directly into furnaces. That wasn't true either. After the war, "witnesses" and "experts" repeated these things and added more fantasies: mass murder with gas bombs, gas chambers made of canvas; carts driving living people into furnaces; that the crematoria of Auschwitz could have cremated 400 million victims... Again, none of it was true. This book gives an overview of the many rumors, myths and lies about Auschwitz which mainstream historians today reject as untrue. It then explains by which ridiculous methods some claims about Auschwitz were accepted as true and turned into "history," although they are just as untrue.

125 pp. pb, 5"×8", ill., bibl., index, b&w ill.

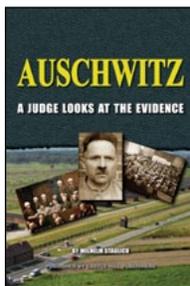


## Wilhelm Stäglich, *Auschwitz: A Judge Looks at the Evidence*

Auschwitz is the epicenter of the Holocaust, where more people are said to have been murdered than anywhere else. At this detention camp the industrialized Nazi mass murder is said to have reached its demonic pinnacle. This narrative is based on a wide range of evidence, the most important of which was presented during two trials: the International Military Tribunal of 1945/46, and the German Auschwitz Trial of 1963-1965 in Frankfurt.

The late Wilhelm Stäglich, until the mid-1970s a German judge, has so far been the only *legal* expert to critically analyze this evidence. His research reveals the incredibly scandalous way in which the Allied victors and later the German judicial authorities bent and broke the law in order to come to politically foregone conclusions. Stäglich also exposes the shockingly superficial way in which historians are dealing with the many incongruities and discrepancies of the historical record.

3rd edition 2015, 422 pp., 6"×9", pb, b&w ill.

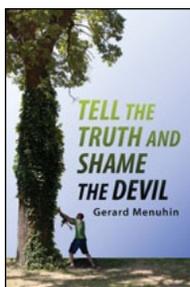


## Gerard Menuhin: *Tell the Truth & Shame the Devil*

A prominent Jew from a famous family says the "Holocaust" is a wartime propaganda myth which has turned into an extortion racket. Far from bearing the sole guilt for starting WWII as alleged at Nuremberg (for which many of the surviving German leaders were hanged) Germany is mostly innocent in this respect and made numerous attempts to avoid and later to end the confrontation. During the 1930s Germany was confronted by a powerful Jewish-dominated world plutocracy out to destroy it... Yes, a prominent Jew says all this. Accept it or reject it, but be sure to read it and judge for yourself!

The author is the son of the great American-born violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who, though from a long line of rabbinical ancestors, fiercely criticized the foreign policy of the state of Israel and its repression of the Palestinians in the Holy Land.

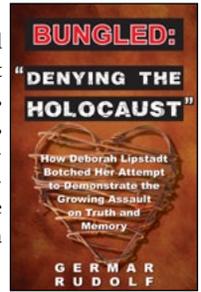
4th edition 2017, 432 pp. pb, 6"×9", b&w ill.



Germar Rudolf, *Bungled: "Denying the Holocaust"* How Deborah Lipstadt Botched Her Attempt to Demonstrate the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory

With her book *Denying the Holocaust*, Deborah Lipstadt tried to show the flawed methods and extremist motives of "Holocaust deniers." This book demonstrates that Dr. Lipstadt clearly has neither understood the principles of science and scholarship, nor has she any clue about the historical topics she is writing about. She misquotes, mistranslates, misrepresents, misinterprets, and makes a plethora of wild claims without backing them up with anything. Rather than dealing thoroughly with factual arguments, Lipstadt's book is full of *ad hominem* attacks on her opponents. It is an exercise in anti-intellectual pseudo-scientific arguments, an exhibition of ideological radicalism that rejects anything which contradicts its preset conclusions. **F for FAIL**

2nd ed., 224 pp., 5"×8", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.



Carolus Magnus, *Bungled: "Denying History"*. How Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman Botched Their Attempt to Refute Those Who Say the Holocaust Never Happened

*Skeptic Magazine* editor Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman from the Simon Wiesenthal Center wrote a book in 2000 which they claim is "a thorough and thoughtful answer to all the claims of the Holocaust deniers." In 2009, a new "updated" edition appeared with the same ambitious goal. In the meantime, revisionists had published some 10,000 pages of archival and forensic research results. Would their updated edition indeed answer all the revisionist claims? In fact, Shermer and Grobman completely ignored the vast amount of recent scholarly studies and piled up a heap of falsifications, contortions, omissions, and fallacious interpretations of the evidence. Finally, what the authors claim to have demolished is not revisionism but a ridiculous parody of it. They ignored the known unreliability of their cherry-picked selection of evidence, utilizing unverified and incestuous sources, and obscuring the massive body of research and all the evidence that dooms their project to failure. **F for FAIL**

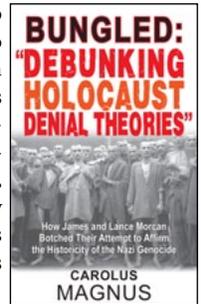
162 pp., 5"×8", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.



Carolus Magnus, *Bungled: "Debunking Holocaust Denial Theories"*. How James and Lance Morcan Botched Their Attempt to Affirm the Historicity of the Nazi Genocide

The novelists and movie-makers James and Lance Morcan have produced a book "to end [Holocaust] denial once and for all." To do this, "no stone was left unturned" to verify historical assertions by presenting "a wide array of sources" meant "to shut down the debate deniers wish to create. One by one, the various arguments Holocaust deniers use to try to discredit wartime records are carefully scrutinized and then systematically disproven." It's a lie. First, the Morcans completely ignored the vast amount of recent scholarly studies published by revisionists; they didn't even identify them. Instead, they engaged in shadowboxing, creating some imaginary, bogus "revisionist" scarecrow which they then tore to pieces. In addition, their knowledge even of their own side's source material was dismal, and the way they backed up their misleading or false claims was pitifully inadequate. **F for FAIL**.

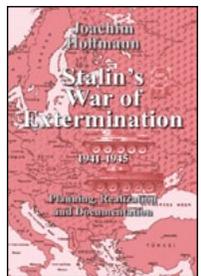
144 pp., 5"×8", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.



Joachim Hoffmann, *Stalin's War of Extermination 1941-1945*

A German government historian documents Stalin's murderous war against the German army and the German people. Based on the author's lifelong study of German and Russian military records, this book reveals the Red Army's grisly record of atrocities against soldiers and civilians, as ordered by Stalin. Since the 1920s, Stalin planned to invade Western Europe to initiate the "World Revolution." He prepared an attack which was unparalleled in history. The Germans noticed Stalin's aggressive intentions, but they underestimated the strength of the Red Army. What unfolded was the most-cruel war in history. This book shows how Stalin and his Bolshevik henchman used unimaginable violence and atrocities to break any resistance in the Red Army and to force their unwilling soldiers to fight against the Germans. The book explains how Soviet propagandists incited their soldiers to unlimited hatred against everything German, and he gives the reader a short but extremely unpleasant glimpse into what happened when these Soviet soldiers finally reached German soil in 1945: A gigantic wave of looting, arson, rape, torture, and mass murder...

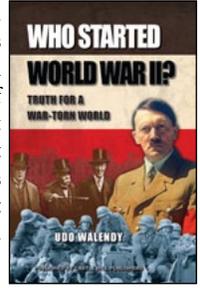
428 pp. pb, 6"×9", bibl., index, b&w ill.



## Udo Walendy, *Who Started World War II: Truth for a War-Torn World*

For seven decades, mainstream historians have insisted that Germany was the main, if not the sole culprit for unleashing World War II in Europe. In the present book this myth is refuted. There is available to the public today a great number of documents on the foreign policies of the Great Powers before September 1939 as well as a wealth of literature in the form of memoirs of the persons directly involved in the decisions that led to the outbreak of World War II. Together, they made possible Walendy's present mosaic-like reconstruction of the events before the outbreak of the war in 1939. This book has been published only after an intensive study of sources, taking the greatest care to minimize speculation and inference. The present edition has been translated completely anew from the German original and has been slightly revised.

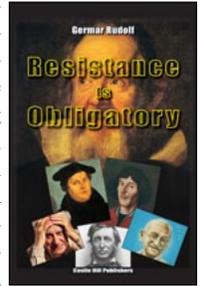
500 pp. pb, 6"×9", index, bibl., b&w ill.



## Germar Rudolf: *Resistance is Obligatory!*

In 2005 Rudolf, a peaceful dissident and publisher of revisionist literature, was kidnapped by the U.S. government and deported to Germany. There the local lackey regime staged a show trial against him for his historical writings. Rudolf was not permitted to defend his historical opinions, as the German penal law prohibits this. Yet he defended himself anyway: 7 days long Rudolf held a speech in the court room, during which he proved systematically that only the revisionists are scholarly in their attitude, whereas the Holocaust orthodoxy is merely pseudo-scientific. He then explained in detail why it is everyone's obligation to resist, without violence, a government which throws peaceful dissident into dungeons. When Rudolf tried to publish his public defence speech as a book from his prison cell, the public prosecutor initiated a new criminal investigation against him. After his probation time ended in 2011, he dared publish this speech anyway...

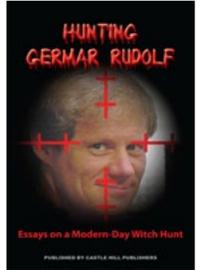
2nd ed. 2016, 378 pp., 6"×9", pb, b&w ill.



## Germar Rudolf, *Hunting Germar Rudolf: Essays on a Modern-Day Witch Hunt*

German-born revisionist activist, author and publisher Germar Rudolf describes which events made him convert from a Holocaust believer to a Holocaust skeptic, quickly rising to a leading personality within the revisionist movement. This in turn unleashed a tsunami of persecution against him: loss of his job, denied PhD exam, destruction of his family, driven into exile, slandered by the mass media, literally hunted, caught, put on a show trial where filing motions to introduce evidence is illegal under the threat of further prosecution, and finally locked up in prison for years for nothing else than his peaceful yet controversial scholarly writings. In several essays, Rudolf takes the reader on a journey through an absurd world of government and societal persecution which most of us could never even fathom actually exists...

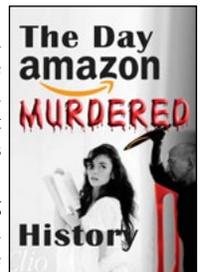
304 pp., 6"×9", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.



## Germar Rudolf, *The Day Amazon Murdered History*

Amazon is the world's biggest book retailer. They dominate the U.S. and several foreign markets. Pursuant to the 1998 declaration of Amazon's founder Jeff Bezos to offer "the good, the bad and the ugly," customers once could buy every book that was in print and was legal to sell. However, in early 2017, a series of anonymous bomb threats against Jewish community centers occurred in the U.S., fueling a campaign by Jewish groups to coax Amazon into banning revisionist writings, false portraying them as anti-Semitic. On March 6, 2017, Amazon caved in and banned more than 100 books with dissenting viewpoints on the Holocaust. In April 2017, an Israeli Jew was arrested for having placed the fake bomb threats, a paid "service" he had offered for years. But that did not change Amazon's mind. Its stores remain closed for history books Jewish lobby groups disapprove of. This book accompanies the documentary of the same title. Both reveal how revisionist publications had become so powerfully convincing that the powers that be resorted to what looks like a dirty false-flag operation in order to get these books banned from Amazon...

128 pp. pb, 5"×8", bibl., b&w ill.



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