

Auschwitz Notebook

Lids and openings

by Ditlieb Felderer

Let us now examine the various claims made about the "lids and openings" in the ceilings of the "gas chambers" and compare the allegations with the forensic reality, and with each other.

We notice first of all that here, as with other such matters, an evolutionary process is in progress. At first the allegations were vague and simple, and it was only later on that the descriptions became twisted and elaborated.

The earliest reference I can trace to lids is in Rudolf Höss' affidavit at Nurnberg of 5 April 1946, where he grunted his agreement to the following:

so when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz, I used Zyklon B, which was crystallized Prussic Acid which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening.

Note here that the very "architect of death" refers to Auschwitz (not Birkenau) and one small opening (not several). I will deal with these remarks in greater depth later. but just let me point out that today the Auschwitz "gas chamber" has not one hole in the ceiling, but several.

The next "testimony" we ought to examine is that of Kurt Gerstein, the sanitation officer who allegedly made several confessions about gassing before disappearing and/or killing himself, depending on which source one refers to. His "confessions" were introduced at the Nurnberg Trial, despite the fact that Gerstein himself could not be produced to attest to the authenticity of his affidavit, nor to be crossexamined. This gross infringement of normal jurisprudence and rules of evidence does not seem to bother the Exterminationist lobby, who delight in vaunting the Gerstein document as "proof" of gassings. Both the Revisionist Rassinier, and the Exterminationist Reitlinger are mistaken when they say that the Gerstein document was thrown out by the Niirnberg court. Butz reproduces it in his appendix A, and it is truly a wonder to behold. This "sanitation engineer" gives no description whatever of the actual mechanics of gassing operations.

Next, we turn back to Höss to see how he elaborated on his "small opening" in his supposed "autobiography" which was written in a Polish prison during the time of his own trial. The English version was translated by the Exterminationist Constantine FitzGibbon, the half-brother of the Revisionist Louis FitzGibbon.

Höss relates how the Auschwitz gas chamber was relocated from the basement of Block 11 to the mortuary of the crematorium adjacent to the hospital. (As Dr. Robert Faurisson points out, the so-called "Auschwitz gas chamber" is only a mortuary, with a few bits added to fool gullible tourists.) The reason for the re-location, we are told, is because the whole of Block 11 had to be ventilated after a gassing. We are not told by Höss why the whole of the mortuary-crematorium-hospital complex did not have to be ventilated after a gassing. Auschwitz guides claim that this was because there was mechanical ventilation at the new location, but there is no evidence of any such fixtures today.

Höss tells us now that "some holes had been pierced in the ceiling through which the gas could be discharged" (93: p 209). In other words, from the singular, small opening, we now have "some holes."

Now, there are so many discrepancies between the various language editions of Höss's "Autobiography" that we now have to refer to the German edition to get to the root of this next

problem. On page 50 of the 1978 German edition, published by the Auschwitz Museum, Höss attempts to describe the gassing operation. He says "dann wurden die Tiiren schnell verschraubt" {"then the doors were quickly screwed tight"). It is not clear whether he is talking about Auschwitz or Birkenau at this point; there is only one door at each of the two Birkenau "gas chambers," while that at Auschwitz proper does have several, plus one doorway to the crematoria with no door. {We are still trying to find out why the gasees did not just run out of this doorless doorway into the crematory and escape! Not to mention how come the gas did not just flow out and gas the crematory workers, or explode with the crematory heat!) None of the doors -- either at Auschwitz or at Birkenau -- exhibit facilities for "screwing tight."

He goes on to describe the "Offnungen in die Decke" ("holes in the ceiling") which were "mit einem Fallrohr verbunden" ("connected to a pipe/tube/shaft") "dass das Gas bis den Boden fiel" ("which allowed the gas (sic) to fall to the floor").

Here we have one of the few actual descriptions of the mechanics of the gassing operation. Needless to say, we could find no such tubes, pipes or shafts at any of the locations cited, nor any trace that such had been there.

Höss also tells us that the gas chambers were "furnished with showers and water pipes and gave a realistic impression of a bath house" (93, p 223). But again, none of the installations we have inspected have such dummy plumbing.

Höss's allegation about the plumbing is echoed by Eugen Kogon in *The Theory and Practice of Hell* (58), but with the variation that the shower-heads issued forth with the gas. It is not quite clear whether or not he means that the showerheads also sometimes functioned as real showers.

From the dressing-rooms the way led directly to the "bath" where hydrocyanic gas was admitted through the shower heads and ventilator outlets as soon as the doors had been closed. (58; p 237)

We will deal with this question of fake shower-heads in a later article. Bishop Neuhäusler of Munich has even alleged that Dachau had fake shower-heads, even though all the Exterminationists agree that no gassings occurred at Dachau

According to the so-called Holocaust expert (and wealthy art-dealer) Gerald Reitlinger (91), the "super gas chambers of Auschwitz" had openings on the roof with "mushroom-like concrete objects" spaced "at regular intervals." Inside there were "shafts" made of "sheetmetal" which looked like "columns" which were "perforated." Afier unscrewing the mushrooms on the roof, the Germans would tip the "amethystblue crystals" down the shafts, and the gas "escaped from the perforations in the sheetmetal." Filip Mailer describes basically the same structure inside the gas chamber.

Yet our own thorough investigations at both Auschwitz and Birkenau have produced no such "perforated sheetmetal columns" nor any trace that there had ever been such objects there.

Another interesting problem which confronts us is that we are told that the whole process went on in secret, and that the gasees were tricked into the gas chambers. But it is evident both from the models on display at the Auschwitz Museum, and from the physical layout of Birkenau itself, that the people entering the dressing rooms would have caught in full view the frightening sight of men wearing gas masks and rubber boots emptying the Zyklon B into the openings on the roof, where the "mushroom-like lids" had to be "methodically unscrewed."

The next "expert" we turn to is Edward Crankshaw (pseudonym?), who relates in *Gestapo Instrument of Tyranny* that:

Naked and shorn, the prisoners were marched to the gas-chambers. some of which were sunk in the ground, others on the same level as the crematoria which disposed of the corpses. It was all very clean and tidy. with a neat lawn all around, broken only by what might have been ventilation shafts, but which, in fact. were the orifices through which the blue crystals of Zyklon B were dropped into hollow columns of perforated sheet metal, which ran down to the floor of the chamber. There were douches in the ceiling to maintain the impression of a bath-house, but these were dummies. and there were no drainage channels in the floor. which was level and not sloped. it was through these perforated columns that the gas made its way into the chamber ... (5: p 200)

This excerpt opens up a whole new can of worms. If Crankshaw is correct that the hair was cut prior to the victims entering the gas chambers, then the Sonderkommando teams which processed the bodies afterward must have been shaving already bald heads! Furthermore, if the place had level floors with no drainage runnels (Martin Gray says the opposite in *For Those I Loved*) then it must have been nearly impossible to hose the place down. What about all the blood, vomit, excrement and menstrual fluid which many writers tell us was present after a gassing? How was this veritable cess pit cleaned out so that it looked "clean and tidy" and just like aspic and span "bath-house" in time for the next batch of victims?

Another "expert" in such matters is the American-Jewish newspaper reporter William L. Shirer who relates to us:

Up above where the well-groomed lawn and flower beds almost concealed the mushroom-shaped lids of vents that ran up from the hall of death, orderlies stood ready to drop into them the amethystblue crystals of hydro-cyanic acid, or Zyklon B ...

Moll ... would laugh, and the crystals would be poured through the openings, which were then sealed.

... but soon the inmates became aware that it was issuing from the perforations in the vents. It was then that they usually panicked, crowding away from the pipes and finally stampeding toward the huge metal door... (4: p 1263)

Here again, the fixtures just seem to crop up like... mushrooms, and disappear again, for there is no evidence today of mushrooms, perforated vents, pipes, or huge metal doors.

As for the official Auschwitz Museum line, they tell us that

We are able to reconstruct the process of extermination thoroughly, owing to the fact that the plans of the gas chambers and crematoria were saved from destruction, also thanks to the ruins of the buildings, used for exterminating and to the explanation proffered by ex-commandant Höss. (25: p 29)

This does not help us any at all, however, because the "ruins" and the surviving facilities contradict almost every single allegation at every stage. As for the "plans of gas chambers" these are not made available to the visitor at Auschwitz. They are exhibited, high up on a wall where one would need a ladder to examine them. Professor Faurisson did manage to obtain a copy, through impressing on one of the guards his gratitude, and found that he had been given a blueprint copy of... a mortuary!

The Auschwitz guide-book referred to also describes the same elusive door which was "screwed-up" and the gas being discharged through "special vents" (25: p 30).

In another Auschwitz Museum epic, AdoIf Gawalewicz relates:

In June 1941, the Camp Commandant Rudolf Höss was ordered by Himmler to undertake mass extermination of Jews, and instructed him to present within four weeks a detailed plan for building suitable installation ...

After the test already referred to as being carried out in September 1941 of Zyklon B gas as a means for killing, the next gassings were performed in the mother camp mortuary of crematorium No. 1, adapted for use as a gas chamber. At both ends were fitted gas-tight doors, and the Zyklon B was thrown in through openings in the ceiling ...

After the gas-tight doors were shut, the Zyklon B, giving off Prussic acid, was thrown in through openings in the ceiling. When some 15 to 20 minutes had elapsed, by which time victims in the gas chamber were suffocated, ventilators were turned on to clear the poisoned atmosphere ...

After the liberation, there were found in the camp stores several untouched boxes of Zyklon B and piles of tins which had contained the poison. Chemical experts reported the presence of Prussic acid in hair cut from women in the gas chambers, in zinc lids of the gas chamber ventilation holes, in metal hair pins and clasps. (3: insert pages 7-8)

It is questionable if A. Gawalewicz has ever been around his own museum. How can he speak about "gas-tight doors" at "both ends?" There are no such doors. At Auschwitz there is no door at all at one end; at the other end is a tacky wooden and glass door. At Birkenau there is only one door per chamber, hardly fitting the description of "both ends." Neither at Auschwitz nor at Birkenau are there any "zinc lids of gas chamber ventilation holes" so we wonder how it is possible to find any traces of Zyklon B there.

The supposedly definitive seven volume report of the International Auschwitz Committee (21) likewise is very unhelpful. There is next to no description of the actual construction, method, and administration of the gas chambers. A mysterious Professor Jan Olbrycht does make a few cursory references to "the pouring in of the poison into the chambers" which makes it sound like the Zyklon B was a liquefied gas! Even more strange is the confession given by one Johann Paul Kremer (21: p 229). We are told that he originally made this report before an examining magistrate "Judge S." who was representing the Extraordinary State Committee for the Investigation of the Crimes of the German Fascist Aggressors and their Allies, at the Supreme National Court in Cracow. The Kremer "confessions" are riddled with contradictions. He claims to be in Prague when he was also in Auschwitz. He claims to have administered at the gassings, but to have been nowhere near them. He claims that the victims were loaded onto trucks and taken to the "gassing huts," and yet there were "gas chambers" right next to the railroad ramp. He claims that the Zyldon B was thrown "through an opening in the side wall" of the gas chamber, whereas everyone else says it was dropped in through the roof. In any case, where is this side hole today?

Later in the same series we read another description of the gas chambers from a Dr. Antoni Kepinski of Cracow. Needless to say, his report presents a totally different description altogether. This time the victims know they are to be gassed (most writers say they had no idea; they had to be tricked); that the gas chamber was an "alleged bathroom" (whatever happened to Kremer's "gassing huts" and why bother with camouflage if the victims knew anyway?); that a head wearing a gas mask could be seen through the opening in the ceiling (what about those metal shafts that went frown ceiling to floor?) and so on and so on.

Let us now turn our attention to the actual forensic, tangible evidence at the camps today. Unfortunately, there is not a lot we can say about the alleged camps at Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Treblinka. There is nothing there today except green fields, usually with a hideous "monument" of communist origin.

Dachau

At Dachau, there is a row of disinfection chambers which after the war were dubbed "gas chambers" but nobody today claims that they were other than disinfection chambers. A picture of one chamber is shown in Dr. Butz's book (109), and also in Richard Harwood's excellent Nurnberg book (130),. The inscription on the metal door reads in German: "Caution! Gas! Mortal Danger! Do Not Open! Gassing times from 7.30 to 10.00."

Another room is labelled "Brausebad" ("Showerbath") above the door, and a modern sign beside it reads "This gas chamber whose construction had been started in 1943, was still not completed in 1945 when the camp was liberated. No one could have been gassed in it." The room does appear to have shower-heads, although recent visitors have reported that these have been partially torn out of the ceiling by persons unknown.

Stutthof

Stutthof, near Danzig (not to be confused with Struthof-Natzweiler in France) has a "gas chamber" on partial display, and it does appear to have a single opening in the ceiling. However, any further analysis is not possible because both entrance doors are sealed off from visitors by coils of barbed wire. The mystery deepens even further when we read one of the Polish government guides Genocide 19391945, (12), which tells us on page 70 that "owing to the fact that Stutthof had no gas chambers installations (sic) they were generally liquidated by bringing them in the shortest possible time to a 'natural' death." Stutthof does not feature prominently in the Exterminationists' litany.

Auschwitz I

If we stand on the roof of what is variously called the "gas chamber and crematorium 1" (25: inside front flap) and "the mortuary of crematorium I in Auschwitz" (same book; page 38), we can see 8 projections with lids sticking out of the roof. Two of them, the larger ones on the right, do not actually belong to the "gas chamber/mortuary" but to the crematorium room next door. These appear to be little chimneys or vents, and do appear to be genuine ventilation ducts, to evacuate excess smoke or heat from the vicinity of the crematory ovens.

Two of the other six vents open into the "gas chamber/ mortuary" near the glass door at the far end. They are about 10 cm x 10 cm, and appear to be genuine ventilators again.

But the remaining four openings are a different case altogether. These four are claimed to be the openings through which the Zyklon B was introduced. Their lids are made of wood, with wooden handles also. There is no provision for screwing tight, and they are anything but airtight. Needless to say, there are no "sheet-metal perforated shafts" connected to them underneath. When one lifts one of the lids, one can see visitors walking around in the "gas chamber/ mortuary" down below. My conclusion is that these four holes were made later -- and by a very clumsy craftsman -- so as to make the structure conform, at least a little, to the legend.

Auschwitz II -- Birkenau

There are two symmetrical structures at Birkenau which are variously termed "crematory/gas chamber 2 and 3." There are ante-rooms called "dressing/undressing rooms" which are frequently transposed by the Exterminationist "experts" who cannot agree which room served which function. Some books (25, and 10) put the gas chamber in one room, and the un/dressing room in another. Yet the models on display outside "gas chamber 2" and at the main Auschwitz museum put the rooms the other way around!

In a later article we shall look at the confusion surrounding the "dressing room"/"undressing room" debate, but for now let us just note that in many photographs on display at Auschwitz and elsewhere, the "gassed" victims are fully dressed, which would seem to indicate that the Sonderkommandos put the clothes back on the corpses after gassing!

To those who have read survivor tales of sliding doors, hermetically-sealed lids, portholes, perforated columns, and so on, gas chambers 2 and 3 will come as something of a shock. The structures resemble a basement storage for potatoes more than anything else. There are no such paraphernalia there.

Obviously the hoaxers have paid token heed to the legend here, and have chiseled out two holes in the roof of gas chamber 2. But the larger hole is so rough and sloppy that the reinforced steel bars at the concrete are visibly trajecting, and the mortar has obviously been chiseled. The "lid" appears to be an old manhole cover which has been drafted into this new role.

Gas chamber 2 is not open to the public, so I had to take a great risk and climb down into the "gas chamber" through the chiseled opening in the roof. I found none of the apparatus described in the various testimonies. I took many extremely valuable flashlight pictures in there to prove the point.

At gas chamber 3 next door, there was no opening in the roof, and no other access, yet the two structures are "identical" we are told.

In later articles we shall look at more Exterminationist confusion surrounding the doors to the various structures.

Bibliography

3. Marcinek (editor), Bujak, Gawalewicz, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Warsaw, 128 pp plus an appendix insert of 43 photo pages.
4. William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, Faw-cett, New York, 1968, 1600 pp.
5. Edward Crankshaw, Gestapo: Instrument of Tyranny, Put-nam, London, 1956, 275 pp.
10. Michalak, Oswiecim, Warsaw, 1977, 256 pp.
21. International Auschwitz Committee, Seven Volumes of De-scription (various titles), Warsaw 1970/72.
25. Smolen, Auschwitz 1940-1945; Guide-Book, Through the Museum, Oswiecim, 1976, 120 pp.
58. Eugen Kogon, The Theory and Practice of Hell, Berkley, 1971, 332 pp.
71. Bishop Johann Neuhäusler, What Was it Like in the Concentration Camp at Dachau?, Dachau, 1937, 80 pp.
91. Gerald Reitlinger, The Final Solution, Valentine-Mitchell, London, 1953, 622 pp.
93. Rudolf Höss, Commandant of Auschwitz, Pan, London, 1974, 288 pp.

109. Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, IHR, Torrance, 1979, 314 pp.

130. Richard Herwood, *Nuremberg and Other War Crimes Trials*, IHR, Torrance, 1978, 70 pp.

Bibliographic information

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Author: | Felderer, Ditlieb |
| Title: | Auschwitz Notebook Part 2: Lids and openings |
| Source: | <i>The Journal for Historical Review</i> (http://www.ihr.org) |
| Date: | Fall 1980 |
| Issue: | Volume 1 number 3 |
| Location: | Page 255 |
| ISSN: | 0195-6752 |