

The Gas Chambers of Majdanek¹

CARLO MATTOGNO

Introduction

It was in August of 1944 that a Polish-Soviet investigation committee announced the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the Lublin concentration camp known as “*Majdanek*”. The Polish historians who were responsible for giving credence to ‘findings’ of that committee were confronted with some highly perplexing difficulties; for one thing, the gas chambers which are mentioned in the remaining documentation of the Central Construction Administration of the Majdanek concentration camp are invariably designated as “*Delousing Chambers*” or “*Disinfestation Chambers*”, and secondly, for all practical purposes, there are no eyewitness reports of human beings being homicidally gassed. Polish historiography ‘solved’ the first problem by presupposing the use of ‘camouflage’ language, which means that documents referring to delousing and disinfestation were said to be referring to homicidal gassings of human beings. Deliveries of Zyklon to the camp were interpreted in the same way.

As for the another problem, although it was not able to offer even one eyewitness to describe the alleged homicidal gassing process in a reasonably concrete manner, Polish historiography managed to cook up an atmosphere of homicidal mass gassings by means of short and extremely vague descriptions of (alleged) homicidal gassings. In this manner, a refined system of argument was created in which the decisive proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek consisted of merely the existence of locations which are alleged to have been gas chambers. This principal item of material proof is supported by two auxiliary proofs: eyewitness testimonies (in the sense mentioned above) and deliveries of Zyklon.

The material proof should in no way be underestimated, since the larger of the alleged homicidal gas chambers – and according to Polish historiography – the chamber most intensively used for criminal purposes, originally were authentic Zyklon B gas chambers. As a matter of fact, even today (or as of this writing) it can be easily proven that cyanide gas was used in these chambers as shown by the intensive blue staining of the walls. Two of the alleged homicidal gas chambers, contain special installations which appear to have been used for the diffusion of carbon monoxide (CO). The problem is therefore an extremely serious one and requires a thorough investigation of both the remaining documents, as well as of the locations concerned.

This present paper,² addressing this topic, is intended to provide a decisive answer to the question: **Were there homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek?**

¹ This article is an abridged and modified version of the chapter on “*The Gas Chambers*” in the book by Carlo Matogno and Jürgen Graf on the *Concentration Camp Majdanek. A historical and technical Study*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2003 (online: vho.org/GB/Books/ccm), translated and edited by Carlos Porter and Russ Granata.

² The anthology published by Ernst Gauss (ed.), *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte: Ein Handbuch über strittige Fragen des 20ten Jahrhunderts*, Grabert, Tübingen 1994, contains on pages 276-279, a contribution written by Germar Rudolf entitled “*The Gas Chambers of Majdanek*”. Rudolf has not, however, personally inspected the alleged extermination installation in that camp. His critical analysis is partly based on the conclusions drawn by myself during my investigations in July 1992, as well as on the photographs prepared by myself at that time, which I made available to Rudolf together with the necessary explanatory material, for the above-mentioned work. Five of the concerned photographs, as well as my most important comments, are reproduced in his article on pages 257-278.

1. The number and purpose of the gas chambers:
The Polish-Soviet expert report of 4-23 August 1944.

On August 4, 1944, hardly two weeks after the liberation (*i.e.*, the Allied military occupation) of Majdanek, a Polish-Soviet committee carried out their technical and chemical examination of reported mass homicidal gassing installations in that camp. The work was finished on August 23. The Polish-Soviet committee located seven gas chambers on the grounds of the camp, accurate drawings of which were prepared.³ The most important information on these premises are summarized in the following table:⁴

LOCALITY	POSITION & DESIGNATION	DIMENSION [M]	SURFACE AREA M ²
Chamber I	<i>Disinfestation installation</i> SE	4.50 × 3.80	17.1
Chamber II	<i>Disinfestation installation</i> NE	4.50 × 3.80	17.1
Chamber III	<i>Disinfestation/Delousing</i>	9.27 × 3.80	35.2
Chamber IV	Barracks 41 <i>gas chamber</i> adjacent to the shower room		72.2 ⁵
Chamber V	Barracks 28 Drying installation	11.75 × 6.00	70.5
Chamber VI	Barracks 28 Drying installation	11.75 × 6.00	70.5
Chamber VII	New crematorium, room between morgue and dissection room	6.10 × 5.62	34.9
Cell 14	<i>Disinfestation installation</i> cell fronting Chambers I and II	2.15 × 1.73	3.7

In their conclusions, the committee stated that Chambers I, II, III, IV and VII, were planned and built for mass homicidal extermination, while Chambers V and VI could have been used as disinfection chambers, but were used exclusively for murdered camp inmates' clothing disinfestation. Furthermore, in barracks used for stocking chemical products, the committee found the following 52 objects:

- a) five empty containers for carbon monoxide;
- b) one can with a carbon monoxide filter from AUER Company A.G. of Berlin;
- c) 135 Zyklon B canisters with a capacity of 500 grams each, as well as 400 cans, each with a capacity of 1500 grams; 90% of these cans were empty.

The committee also prepared a chemical report on these objects in order to establish what they actually contained. Chemical reaction tests showed that the contents did actually correspond to what the labels stated: carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide.⁶

This present paper is the result of documentation gathered by myself during my second visit to Lublin (with Jürgen Graf in June 1997) and takes my original conclusions, expands them, and corrects them as is necessary without reference to Rudolf's article. In so doing, I am not committing plagiarism or borrowing since this present paper is supported by my own investigation, and then has been evaluated by Rudolf with my permission. Since the *Rudolf Report* has gone beyond the earlier Leuchter Report, the famous Leuchter Report is not detailed herein. That report for the most part has been superseded in the light of discoveries made since its first appearance (Fred A. Leuchter, *An Engineering Report on the Alleged Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek, Poland*, Fred A. Leuchter Associates, Boston, Massachusetts USA, 1988, prepared for Ernst Zündel). The photographs published in this article were taken by myself.

³ Document 1 shows chambers I-IV, prepared by the Polish-Soviet Committee. Source: *Gosudarstvjennyj Archiv Rossiskoj Federatsii*, Moscow (henceforth GARF); 7021-107-9, p. 251.

⁴ The designations in italics are supported by documents.

⁵ Without vestibule (6.7 m²) or interior area (28.2 m²).

⁶ GARF; RF, 7021-107-9, 229-243.

2. Planning, Construction, and Purpose of the Gas Chambers

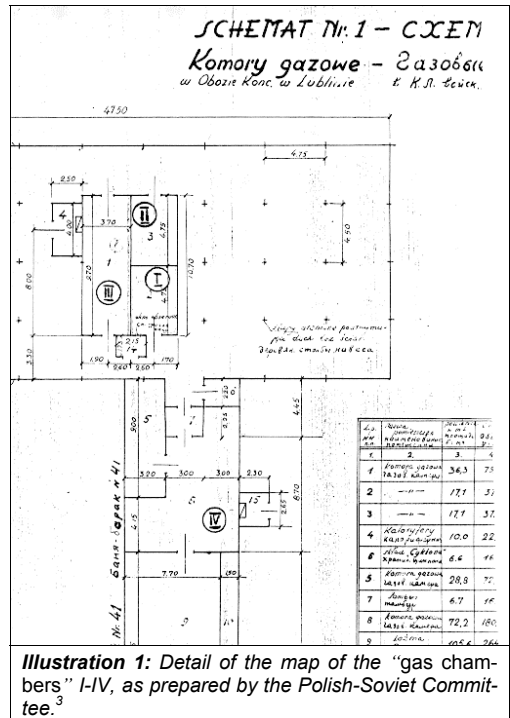
The remaining documents prove just the opposite to the conclusions put out by the Polish-Soviet Committee: the documents prove that the *actual* gas chambers of Majdanek concentration camp were planned and built only for sanitary purposes such as delousing chambers.

A blueprint of the Central Construction Office of March 23, 1942,⁷ provided for three delousing installations. One was an H-shaped installation in the center of the Majdanek concentration camp (Majdanek was originally known as a “*Prisoner of War Camp*” and was later called “*Lublin Concentration Camp*” after April 1943). The H-shaped installation was designated “*Delousing*” and is located next to the large laundry. A second one was a barracks, also designated “*Delousing*”, and was located outside the camp on the north-west side. The third was located in that part of the camp which was designated as “*Clothing Factory for the Waffen-SS*”, as may be seen from the detailed plans.⁸

The H-shaped installation in Lublin concentration camp was planned in October 1941, which was the month when the first prisoners arrived at Majdanek. The plan drawn up by the Hans Kori Corporation projected a large hygienic-sanitary complex which was to consist of two exactly identical delousing installations; one for the prisoners lay on the left wing; the other, consisting of eight clothing delousing chambers, stood on the right.

The inmate delousing installation appears on drawing J.-Nr. 9082⁹ which is dated October 23, 1941, and is prepared by the Kori Corporation. It is described in a letter that was sent by that corporation on that same date to SS-Sturmabführer Lenzer.¹⁰

As may be seen from the description and the annexed plan, the left wing of the structure was planned for inmate delousing, and provided for the following procedure: undressing room with acceptance of clothing – vestibule – shower room – drying room – vestibule – disinfestation. After complete disinfestation,¹¹ the inmates entered the right wing where they received de-loused clothing.



⁷ Józef Marszałek, *Geneza i początki obozu koncentracyjnego na Majdanku*, in *Zeszyty Majdanek* (Magazine of Majdanek, hereinafter ZM) I, 1965, “*Kriegsgefangenenlager Lublin*” (POW camp Lublin), camp map of 23 March 1942 (table without page numbers).

⁸ *Ibid.*, “*Bekleidungswerk der Waffen-SS Dachau Außenstelle Lublin*”, March 1942 (table without page numbers).

⁹ “*Entlausung und Krematorium*” (Delousing and crematorium), Drawing J. No. 9082 of the H. Kori corporation, Berlin, October 23, 1941. *Archivum Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku* (hereinafter APMM), sygn. VI-9a, vol. I, p. 9.

¹⁰ APMM, sygn. 9a, volume I.

¹¹ The disinfestation was carried out with water containing chemical substances in solution. See Walter Dötzer, *Entkeimung, Entseuchung, und Entwesung*, working instructions for clinics and laboratory of the Hygiene Institute of the Waffen-SS, Berlin. Published by the SS Standartenführer Dozent Dr. J. Mrugowsky. Verlag von Urban und Schwarzenberg, Berlin and Vienna 1943, p. 48 ff.

The delousing installation, which was projected as per the Kori letter cited above, was to consist of eight delousing chambers. Each of them were to be two meters wide, 2.10 meters high, and 3.5 meters long. They were to be heated by a coke-fueled air heater located behind the two outside walls between every pair of chambers. A warm air outlet was to be built into the upper part of every interior wall and linked to the air heater. In front of the opposite wall in the floor of every pair of chimneys, was to be a ventilation opening also linked to the air heater through an underground air shaft. These delousing chambers were planned only for the use of hot air and not for Zyklon B! However, this delousing installation planned by the Kori Corporation was never built.

A plan from the Central Construction Office of March 31, 1942, showing the “*Provisional Delousing Installation of Lublin Concentration Camp*”¹² shows eight delousing chambers of considerably smaller size and without air heaters. In all probability these are metallic disinfection devices such as were installed in the buildings at Birkenau.

This plan shows the eight small cells next to each other in a room measuring 13.5 m × 4 m inside one of the barracks designated as “*Delousing Installations*” measuring 40.76 m × 9.56 m. This cell block separated the “*clean*” side of the building adjacent to the showers from the “*unclean*” side facing the outside. The processing of the inmates provided for the following sequence: entry/registration – undressing/shower room – showers – dressing rooms – exit. Dressing involved the following cycle: the surrender of clothing – delousing (“*unclean*” → “*clean*”) – the acceptance of clean clothing. The shower room was designed for 40 showers; the hot water came from a boiler room. This is what the delousing installation located outside the camp looked like on the original plan dated March 23, 1942. As far as one can tell by looking through a window of the building, which has (otherwise) been made inaccessible to visitors, the plan – with a few modifications – was actually carried out in Hut 42 (BW XII).¹³ This building contained the boiler room as well as a chamber finished in concrete which is much bigger than the building shown on the plan.

According to a report from the Central Construction Office, BW XII was 40% completed on July 1, 1942. The report states:

*“BW XII Delousing and Bath – in addition to a second stable with showerbath installation built in the meantime”.*¹⁴

This second installation to which I will return in the following section, was Hut 14, which was built to the east, next to Hut 42.

On June 19, 1942, SS-Sturmabführer Lenzer, who was head of the Central Building Inspection Office of the SS-WVHA,¹⁵ forwarded a request dated May 27 from Office BII of the SS-WVHA, to the Building Inspection of the Waffen-SS and Police of the General Gouvernement regarding the construction of a delousing installation for the dressing building in Lublin “*according to the System of disinfection with hydrogen cyanide*”.¹⁶

On July 10, 1942, the director of the Central Construction Office sent all the administrative documentation to the Building Inspection of the Waffen-SS and Police of the General Gouvernement. The documentation included in particular: the initial assignment; the annotated report; the building designation A; the cost estimate; the camp plan scaled to 1:500, and the drawing of the disinfection barracks. The cover letter states:

¹² Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS u. Polizei Lublin/GG., *Prov. Entlausungsanlage K.G.L. Lublin*, March 31, 1942, *Wojewodzkie Archiwum Panstwowe w Lublinie* (hereinafter WAPL), Zentralbauleitung, 41, p. 5.

¹³ This barrack is closed off by a padlock, so the curious must peep through windows.

¹⁴ WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 8, p. 3.

¹⁵ Amt C/V, Zentralbauinspektion.

¹⁶ WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 141, p. 5.

*"The supplement to the building application for the construction of a disinfection installation as Building XII in the fur and garment workshops in Lublin for the sum of 70,000 RM (Reichsmark), with a request for approval and preparation of the means and raw material quotas is hereby enclosed in annex according to the scale of the order of 27 June 1942. The Polish entrepreneurial prices will be determined during the cost estimate."*¹⁷

Of the documentation accompanied by this letter, only the annotated report, as well as the cost estimate remain, which were both drawn up dated July 10, 1942, by the director of the Central Construction Administration. The first document, given here in its entirety, explains the purpose of the installation:

*"Explanatory Report
on the Construction of a Disinfection Installation
for the Fur and Garment Factories at Lublin.*

*A disinfection installation for the disinfection of all incoming fur and garment materials is to be built according to the plan forwarded from the SS Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt. The disinfection chamber, as may be seen from the enclosed diagram, will be built in a very solid manner with a reinforced concrete ceiling. A so-called landing deck will furthermore be built above this delousing chamber. The landing deck is to cover a surface area of 60.0 × 18.0 m in order to lay out and store disinfected materials. The oven, as well as other devices, will be made available by the BII Office. All other matters are to be guided by the diagram."*¹⁸

The "cost estimate on the construction of a disinfection hut for the fur and garment factories of Lublin" consists of 27 sections, and presents a total cost of 140,000 Zloty (Polish currency). Section 18 states:

*"Insert 4 pieces to be delivered by the client air-tight iron doors, [original: "einserne", misspelled in original] with the help of the locksmith, including all mortise and plaster work."*¹⁹

The original plan, of which a final finished drawing has remained – the drawing from the Construction Office "K.G.L. Lublin Disinfection installation, Building XII"²⁰ – shows a rectangular block measuring 10.76 m × 8.64 m × 2.45 m in size, containing two disinfection chambers measuring 10 m in length, 3.75 m in width, and 2 m in height. Every chamber has two adjacent doors measuring 0.95 m in width and 1.80 m in height, so that every one of the shorter sides has one pair of doors which are each three meters apart. Above the block with the two disinfection chambers there is a landing deck, also rectangular in shape and measuring 18 m × 60 m in surface area and divided in half in the middle into two large halves, equal in size, and corresponding to the "unclean" and "clean" sides. The "clean" half, on the smaller side of the block between the two doors of the disinfection chamber, contains a coke-fueled oven installation structurally resembling the Kori air heaters described above. The oven is sunk to a depth of 0.66 m, and on the lower part exhibits a filling door and firing door which is accessed by means of 4 steps. The smoke exhaust pipe has been installed in the upper part.

Since the disinfection installation utilized hydrogen cyanide, this oven warmed the air and sped up the circulation of the air-gas mixture.

Construction of the installation followed this plan, except for the heating system:²¹ the oven in the middle was replaced by two hot-air devices which were manufactured by the firm Theodor Klein

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7 and 8.

²⁰ Bauleitung des KGL Lublin, *Entwesungsanlage Bauwerk XII^A*, Lublin, August 1942. WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 41, p. 4.

²¹ The dimensions of the other rooms were also changed: the Polish-Soviet Committee gives them as 9.70 m × 3.70 m.

Maschinen-und Apparatebau Ludwigshafen, and were ordered by the Central Construction Administration on September 11, 1942.²² One was installed in the western exterior wall of the disinfection chamber (designated as Chamber III in the Polish-Soviet report); the other, as we shall see in the following section, is associated with the “gas chamber” in barracks 41.

The Klein hot-air apparatus was a coke-fueled air heater consisting of a furnace (*Feuerung*) with a steam belt (*Heizkammer*) located on top of it and containing a recuperator. The recuperator consisted of a series of vertical heating pipes fitted with ribs. The pipes were connected to the furnace room below, and to the air outlet channel above.

The steam belt²³ contained a fan on top of a chamber next to the furnace. A compressed air pipe led outward from the fan. The opening of the inlet pipe, equipped with an air throttle for regulation, was located in front of the fan. Both pipes – the compressed air pipe and suction pipe – were 31 cm in diameter. These pipes were connected to the location (*Lokal*) containing the air heater through two round openings in the wall. The device worked as follows: smoke from the furnace traveled through the pipes of the recuperator and gave off part of its heat to the pipes; the smoke then exited through the chimney into the open air. When the fan was in operation, the air which was forced out of the place through the air suction pipe, came into contact with the red-hot pipes of the recuperator and was heated. It was then pumped through the compressed air pipe into the place by the fan. This assured a constant circulation of hot air. The air heater was capable of generating heat at 80,000 Kcal/h, raising the air temperature to 120 degrees Celsius. The air temperature was regulated by the air throttle, as well as by specially designed air intakes, bringing cool air from the outside into circulation.²⁴

For delousing with Zyklon B gas, if the air temperature was adjusted to a lower level, the air heater fulfilled the same function as the DEGESCH circulation system.

An air heater very similar to the one described above was installed in the autumn of 1942 in BW 20 of the Auschwitz concentration camp (protective custody camp).²⁵

On October 22, 1942, the Director of the Central Construction Administration sent a report to the SS Economist of the Superior SS and Police Leaders (SS-Wirtschaftler des Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer] in the General Gouvernement on the state of progress of the work in the various construction projects at the camp. Among the completed construction projects at Lublin Prisoner of War Camp was the construction of:

“2 delousing huts with baths, built partly on wooden pilings and partly on solid foundations.”

With regards to the construction project for the fur and garment workshops at Lublin, the report presents “the construction of a disinfection installation” among the completed projects. The “installation of four disinfection chambers” is mentioned among the projects remaining to be completed after 1 November.²⁶ The disinfection facility was installed next to Hut 41 and consisted of two disinfection chambers, i.e., BW XII^A.

As may be seen from the previously quoted Central Construction Administration report on “completion of the construction in % [i.e., expressed as a percentage of completion] on July 1, 1942,” these two delousing huts mentioned among the prisoner of war camp construction projects involved

²² Józef Marszałek, “Budowa obozu koncentracyjnego na Majdanku w latach 1942-1944”, in *ZM*, IV, 1969, p. 53, footnote 117.

²³ Translators note: a steam belt is part of a vacuum evaporating system in which the liquid to be concentrated circulates through tubes surrounded by steam; also called a calandria.

²⁴ Instytut Technicki Ciepłej, *Ekspertyza dotycząca konstrukcji i przeznaczenia pieców zainstalowanych przy komorach gazowych w Obozie na Majdanku w Lublinie*, Łódź 1968, APMM.

²⁵ Rossiskii Gosudarstvennyi Vojennyi Arkhiv, Moscow (hereafter *RGVA*), 502-1-332, p. 46.

²⁶ WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 8, p. 22.

huts 42 and 41. However this document refers to Hut 41 as merely a “*stable with shower bath installation*”, which means that a delousing installation must have been installed there over the following months.

This installation is also referred to in a cost estimate dated November 18, 1942, from the Polish firm Michael Ochnik Construction Contractors Lublin for brick work on two large chimneys measuring $0.75 \text{ m} \times 0.70 \text{ m} \times 1.70 \text{ m}$ “*in the Gas Chamber*”, including piercing a hole (*aushauen*) in the concrete ceiling, for the fur and garment workshop at a cost of 285 Zlotys.²⁷

On January 8, 1943, the Michael Ochnik Company sent the Central Construction Administration a corresponding invoice relating to the Waffen-SS garment workshop in Lublin:

“[...] for brick work on the chimney and supply of flues^[28] on both sides of the chimney in the gas chamber inside the brick building. Piercing two openings in the cement ceiling, brick lining of chimney measuring $0.75 \times 0.75 \times 1.70 \text{ m}$. ”²⁹

In fact two openings measuring approximately $60 \text{ cm} \times 60 \text{ cm}$ and $40 \text{ cm} \times 40 \text{ cm}$, located 4 m apart, are still in existence in the ceiling of the above mentioned room (*Lokal*) today. According to the invoice mentioned above, two pipes were installed in these two openings; the pipes led to a central chimney measuring 0.75 m in diameter and 1.70 m in height.

The disinfestation chamber in BW XII^A obviously proved insufficient for the requirements of the fur and garment workshops, since, as already stated, the Central Construction Administration planned the construction of four additional disinfestation chambers for this same construction project. Two civilian firms, the above-mentioned Michael Ochnik Construction firm in Lublin, and *Polstephan Bauunternehmung GmbH* (constructing contractors), a Warsaw corporation, were assigned by the Central Construction Administration to complete the work, which consisted of converting an already existing building into a disinfestation installation.

Both firms presented a “*cost estimate for the construction of four disinfestation chambers in an existing building*”, presumably located in the area of the former airport. The cost estimate of the Ochnik firm is dated November 7, 1942, for a total of 8,855 Zlotys.³⁰ The invoice of the Polstephan firm is dated November 10, 1942, for a total of 10,345 Zlotys.³¹ It is clear from both documents that the four disinfestation chambers were to be equipped with “*iron gas[-tight] doors*”, and that the door openings were to measure $0.83 \text{ m} \times 1.93 \text{ m}$. Each chamber was to be connected to a “*disinfestation oven*” – also called a “*gas oven*” – to be protected by a pent roof.³²

3. The Use of the Gas Chambers for Homicidal Purposes

In the section above, I have shown that the actual gas chambers of Majdanek were planned and built exclusively for hygienic-sanitary purposes. It would of course have been theoretically possible to convert them to homicidal purposes at a later time. That possibility will be examined in this section from a technical point of view.

In his response to the Leuchter report, Jean-Claude Pressac provides a detailed and, in parts, a truly perceptive analysis of the gas chambers at Majdanek.³³ That analysis represents an excellent starting point for the discussion below. The following discussion will, however, adopt the number-

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 145, p. 13.

²⁸ “*Züge*” in German.

²⁹ WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 8, p. 14.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

³² *Ibid.*, sections 1, 3, 4, and 7.

³³ Jean-Claude Pressac, “*Les Carences et Incoherences du Rapport Leuchter*”, in *Jour J*, December 1988. Majdanek is discussed on pages vii-x.

ing of the premises used by the Polish-Soviet Committee, with the addition of Chamber IIIa. The term “*Chamber IIIa*” is intended to refer to the eastern delousing chamber in BWXII^A before it was divided into Chambers I and II.

a) Chambers I-III

Jean-Claude Pressac, who demonstrates no expert knowledge about the origins and development of this installation, presents historically unfounded hypotheses. He believes that the second air heater was initially installed in the other room of the disinfestation installation (*i.e.*, Chamber IIIa), and that both chambers originally functioned as hot air disinfestation chambers. They are assumed to have been converted into hydrogen cyanide gas chambers at a later time, due to practical difficulties in use.³⁴

As seen in the section above however, the disinfestation chambers of the installation adjacent to Hut 41 were initially designed “*according to the hydrogen cyanide disinfestation system*”, so that, in reality there was never any question of converting a hot air installation into an HCN installation, but rather, at most, the other way around. We will return to this question later.

According to J.-C. Pressac:

“A final conversion of the block led to the creation of gas chambers in which people were killed with carbon monoxide. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this installation served criminal purposes, since carbon monoxide is, of course, deadly to warm-blooded animals, including human beings, but it is totally useless in fighting lice.

Location B [= Chamber IIIa] was divided into two rooms equal in size, which I have called B1 [=Chamber I] and B2 [= Chamber II]. Only B1 possessed a system for the introduction of carbon monoxide. This system consisted of perforated metal pipes running along three sides of the room 30 cm above the floor. These pipes were originally connected to steel containers of liquid carbon monoxide. An exterior side room was built in the middle of the western [southern³⁵] side of the block. This room had two containers of carbon monoxide (the second container was intended for Room A [= Chamber III]), as well as a glass peephole protected by an iron grid. Homicidal gassings could only take place in Room B1. No corresponding installation was built in Room B2. An opening was made in the ceiling of both chambers, newly built in the above manner. The oven formerly used to heat Room B was now no longer needed, and was removed and re-installed on the southern [eastern] wall of Room C [= Chamber IV]. That this Room B was only divided after its use as a Zyklon B gas chamber is shown by the fact that its walls, one of which is divided in half by the partition, are saturated with blue stains. The partition itself exhibits no blue pigmentation at all.

Room A was also equipped for the diffusion of carbon monoxide from the second steel container located in the exterior room. The installation consisted of a pipe (smaller in diameter than in room B1), running along the southern wall [= eastern wall] and 30 cm above the floor. The gas flowed through perforated metal plates at both ends of the pipes, located in the corners of the room. No openings were made in the ceiling, and it was not possible to view the inside of the chamber from the side room.

Whether rooms A, B1, and B2 were used as hydrogen cyanide gas chambers for homicidal purposes, is a question which is difficult to answer and which must remain open. In rooms B1 and B2, the Zyklon B granules were supposed to have been poured through the openings pierced in the ceiling. In so far as I have been able to determine, no eyewitness has ever reported seeing an SS man climb up onto the roof by ladder. The ventilation of these two rooms, measuring 36 m², must have been very time-consuming due to the absence of any openings, apart from the opening in the ceiling, as well as the doors, and because of the absence of artificial ventilation. The introduction of Zyklon B into Room A would have in-

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. vii, viii.

³⁵ The east-west directions given by Pressac are incorrect.

volved difficulties, described by one historian of the Majdanek Museum as follows: 'The Zyklon was introduced, not through an opening in the ceiling as in the previous chamber [B1] – there was no such opening – but rather, through the doorways before closing the doors.' Frankly speaking, it is unrealistic to imagine an SS man wearing a gas mask and with a can of Zyklon B in his hand, sprinkling the granules in the 30 cm space between the heads of the victims and the ceiling (involving the risk of the granules falling on to the floor at the front of the room) while attempting to close the door, without causing desperate escape attempts on the part of the victims.

On the grounds stated above, I do not believe that Room A could be used for homicidal purposes using Zyklon B. In rooms B1 and B2, this does of course appear technically possible, but it is unlikely that these premises were really used for this purpose. It rather appears that the SS wished to have two different carbon monoxide gas chambers available (A and B1), which were used for different sized groups of victims: Chamber A (36 m²), for groups of 250 to 350 people, and Chamber B1 (18 m²), for groups of 125 to 175 people. These figures are repeatedly mentioned by survivors, indicating the strength of the transports sent into the gas chamber. Finally, the openings in the ceiling of building B1 and B2 would have served to accelerate ventilation, rather than for the introduction of Zyklon B. This assumption only applies to B1. B2, despite the opening in the ceiling, appears to have played merely a passive role as a 'dead room' in the division of the block for homicidal purposes.

Upon the liberation of the camp, the aircraft hangar protecting the block was partially damaged. The side room was empty. Zyklon B cans were initially piled up there to give the impression that their contents could have been emptied into the pipes of room B1 (instead of through the opening in the ceiling). Five steel carbon monoxide containers were found in the camp. After chemical analysis of their content, two of them were housed in the side room."³⁶

Let us stress once again that Pressac of course considers the use of Zyklon B for homicidal purposes to be possible in theory, but in practice however, he rules out this possibility for Chamber III and considers it dubious for Chambers I and II. I have no choice but to concur with Pressac's arguments, with the following additional considerations. If the camp authorities had wished to use both disinfestation chambers for homicidal purposes – as well as for the extermination of lice – they would have made an opening in the ceiling for the introduction of Zyklon B in both rooms. The absence of such an opening excludes utilization of Chamber III for such purposes on the grounds stated by Pressac. In Chambers I³⁷ and II, the existing openings are so small (26 cm × 26 cm and 29 cm × 33 cm respectively), that they could only have accelerated ventilation with difficulty, contrary to the view expressed by J.-C. Pressac. Furthermore, these openings were broken through the ceiling in an extremely unprofessional manner, especially in Chamber II,³⁸ where there is not even a wooden shaft for the introduction of Zyklon. Everything indicates that these openings were hastily broken through the ceiling simply for purposes of the Polish-Soviet Committee. It is highly revealing that the Soviet journalist Constantin Simonov, correspondent for the *Red Star*, who visited Majdanek immediately after the liberation, describes the openings in the ceiling of the delousing chambers in Hut 42 with great precision, but nowhere does he mention the opening in Chamber I, which he examined immediately afterwards.³⁹ The inevitable conclusion is that this opening did not exist at that time.

We must now turn to the alleged division of Chamber IIIa into two gas chambers), and the alleged conversion of Chambers I and III into carbon monoxide gas chambers. Pressac has no doubt as to their use for criminal purposes, but his certainty is based upon pure hypothesis – i.e., that the installation was actually utilized with carbon monoxide. The conclusion comes before the proof! The

³⁶ J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 33), pp. vii-ix.

³⁷ See illustration 2.

³⁸ See ill. 3.

³⁹ Constantin Simonov, *Il campo dello sterminio*, Foreign Language Publication House, Moscow 1944, p. 8.



Illustration 2 + 3: Openings in the ceiling of chambers 1 (top) and 2 (right) of the delousing facility of hut 41 in concentration camp Majdanek (cf. map, illustration 1). © C. Mattogno

statements of the Polish-Soviet Committee relating to the use of the premises for carbon monoxide gasings are not in fact based on any proof at all. Two facts quite clearly indicate the contrary.

First, in the immediate vicinity of the camp – as correctly emphasized by Pressac – there were no containers in the cell in front of both chambers, but rather, there were Zyklon B cans brought there by recently liberated inmates to give the impression that people had been murdered in these rooms by pouring Zyklon B through pipes. This will be discussed in detail below.

Secondly, two of the five steel containers found by the Soviets in the above-mentioned side room (cell) were later piled up in Hut 52. The report of the Polish-Soviet Committee alleges that these five containers were of CO. But one of the two containers visible in the side room (cell) today – to the right of the observer – bears the inscription CO₂, *i.e.*, carbon dioxide. This is quite visibly notched into the surface of the container.⁴⁰ It is well known that carbon dioxide is not a toxic gas.

These facts permit two important conclusions: first, if one of the five carbon monoxide containers really were of carbon dioxide, the suspicion arises that the other containers were of carbon dioxide as well, and that the Polish-Soviet Committee is guilty of deception on this point, just as on a number of other points.⁴¹ Secondly, even if the other containers actually contained carbon monoxide, there is still no proof that the installations involved were actually utilized for carbon monoxide gasings. This alone suffices to cast doubt on the alleged criminal use of these installations.

The Auer Filter found in the chemical stockpile by the Committee corresponds very exactly to the description of a carbon monoxide filter, with regards to both size and the manner in which it was stored. A specialist in the field of toxic gasses summarizes these matters as follows:

“A common defect of the various filters especially designed to provide protection against carbon monoxide gas lies in the remarkable hygroscopicity of the absorbing substances: their hygroscopicity alters the distribution of the filtering and absorbent materials in the filter, which restricts their use in a moist

⁴⁰ I was unable to read the inscription on the other container.

⁴¹ The most primitive deception is the technical report on the crematory ovens: the coke-fueled Kori five-muffle ovens, by means of a completely crack-brained series of calculations, are said to have possessed a crematory capacity of 1,920 bodies per day, nineteen times the actual capacity: GARF, RF, 7021-107-9 pp. 245-249.

environment and requires strict measures for the conservation of the filter itself to prevent premature clogging due to moisture. The filters must be kept in hermetically sealed boxes before use."⁴²

With regards to the filters under discussion here, these strict conservation measures appear to have been fully and entirely adhered to. They were kept in a hermetically sealed metal box with the following inscription (re-translated from Russian):

"AUER Filter No. 09903. Do not use after June 1944. Can be used for two years from date of first use. No more than 40 hours working life.

Initial use:

Date: Use: Hours:
From: To:

Attention: After each use, seal the box tightly, top and bottom. Store in a cool dry location."

Since the spaces for "Date", and "Hours" were left blank, we must assume that the filters were still unused. The camp doctor, who was responsible for the storage of anti-toxic gas protection material, would certainly never have permitted use of the filter without completion of the required information on the label.

On the other hand, this same type of carbon monoxide filter was versatile by nature, and provided protection against other gases as well, such as ammonia, benzene, chlorine, phosgene, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, and carbon tetrachloride. It could also be used to protect against hydrogen cyanide gas: the Degea CO filter could absorb 6 grams of HCN, and the Dräger CO filter 3.3 grams.⁴³ Thus, the presence of such a filter in no way proves that it was intended to provide protection against carbon monoxide.

Pressac's hypothesis appears unfounded, even viewed historically. He believes in particular, that the installation of the pipes in Chambers I and II took place at last after both rooms had first been used as hot air disinfection chambers, and were then used as Zyklon B delousing chambers.

But the pipes fastened along the entire length of the eastern wall of Chamber III are skirted by intensely blue-pigmented plaster,⁴⁴ as if they had acted, in a certain sense, as the catalyst for the formation of iron blue (ferric-ferrocyanide). In Chamber I, on the other hand, no traces of blue pigmentation are to be seen.

In Chamber II, blue stains are visible only on the eastern wall between the door and the interior partition in the middle [of the room], as well as on the lower part of the partition itself, *i.e.*, corresponding to the very places where the pipes are located in the adjacent room. This leads to the conclusion that HCN was used in Chamber III after the installation of the pipes, while no HCN was [ever] used in Chamber IIb at all. The iron blue stains are too small, and are only located at certain



Illustration 4: Unsealed opening with nothing more than a grate links Chamber I to the small attached room, hut 41, concentration camp Majdanek (cf. map, illustration 1). © C. Mattogno

⁴² Captain Dr. Attilio Izzo, *Guerra Chimica e Difesa Antigas*, Editore Ulrico Hoepli, Milan 1935, p. 183.

⁴³ Ferdinand Flury and Franz Zernik, *Schädliche Gase, Dämpfe, Nebel, Rauch und Staubarten*, Verlag von Julius Springer, Berlin 1931, p. 617.

⁴⁴ See ill. 5.

places in Chamber II; so that they are certainly the result of the phenomenon of cyanide diffusion, corresponding to the diffusion of cyanide to the outside of the northern wall.⁴⁵

Chamber IIIa was divided into Chambers I and II even before the disinfection installation was put into use, which shows that the air heater was not installed as planned. In fact, the eastern walls of Chambers I and II show no trace of the circular openings for the warm air outlet and ventilation intake, as found in the western wall of Chamber III.

From the above, it can be seen that Pressac's hypothesis as to the use of these areas for criminal purposes is based on fallacious premises from the very outset. It is also inexplicable on purely technical grounds. Despite the availability of two real hydrogen cyanide gas chambers which could have been converted for homicidal purpose by merely piercing holes in the ceiling for the introduction of Zyklon B, SS men are supposed to have put in an installation for homicidal gassings using carbon monoxide, and very early on, at that – but what for? If homicidal gassings with Zyklon B worked perfectly at Auschwitz, as we are told they did, then why use carbon monoxide at Majdanek?

From the technical point of view, Pressac's explanation, that Chamber IIIa was divided into two rooms to be used as gas chambers, one of them to gas small groups, and the other to gas large groups, is quite nonsensical. Not only did division of the chamber offer no advantages (groups of 125-175 victims could have been gassed quite easily in the larger chamber without wasting any gas), on the contrary, it would have rendered the gassing procedure much more difficult. First, the partition would have obstructed the natural ventilation of Chamber I and II after opening the doors, which are located opposite each other.

On the other hand, Chamber II, as Pressac himself had to admit, was demoted to a “dead room”. The small window in the southern wall of Chamber I raises additional, insoluble problems. In its present condition, it is barred by a grid, but there is no installation for hermetic sealing.⁴⁶ After the liberation of the camp, as reported by Simonov, as well as by the Polish-Soviet Committee, it was fitted only with a pane on the observer side of the cell. If this is true, the pane was not initially built in, but was rather merely shoved into the window, which shows no trace of a fixed frame, or attachment clamps for such a pane. The window was therefore not only incapable of being hermetically sealed, it was even capable of removal. Furthermore, it could have easily been smashed by the inmates since the walls are only approximately 40 cm thick. In particular, the grid is large enough to stick one's hand through. Finally, it is impossible to understand why such a window, if it was intended to permit observation of homicidal gassing victims, would have been necessary for Chamber I, but not for Chamber II.

Utilization of carbon monoxide may therefore be excluded. But it remains to be explained why the room was divided into two chambers. In the absence of any documents, we can only form one more hypothesis, but one which is incomparably more plausible than Pressac's hypotheses. Since one of the two containers is CO₂, and in view of the date of conversion, the following explanation appears far more plausible.

Starting in July 1942, ‘natural’ mortality in the camp was devastating, so much so that 2,431 inmates died in September, and 3,210 in October.⁴⁷ The “old crematorium” then in existence possessed only two (oil-fired) ovens, which could no longer handle the constantly increasing number of victims. There was also a petroleum shortage. As reported by crematorium director, SS-Oberschar-

⁴⁵ This phenomenon is also visible, but more intensely, on the outside walls of the disinfection chamber in BW 5a and 5b at Birkenau.

⁴⁶ See ill. 4.

⁴⁷ *Księga więźniów zmarłych na Majdanku w 1942*, APM, sygn. I-d-19; *więźniów zmarłych w obozie na Majdanku*, AGKBZH [Archivum Głownej Komisij Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce] 626 z/OL3. The figure for October is calculated by subtraction. The question of the number of deaths in the camp of Majdanek is discussed in chapter IV of the book cited in footnote 2.

führer Erich Mußfeldt, this finally lead to closure of the crematorium in November of the same year.⁴⁸ On the other hand, the morgue, BW XIV,⁴⁹ was a half-underground hut of rather modest size, measuring 11.50 m × 6.50 m on the outside,⁵⁰ so that it could store only a limited number of bodies at one time. In this desperate situation, the Central Construction Administration decided to convert the disinfestation installation adjacent to hut 41 into two additional morgues. One of these (Chamber III) was to be temporary, while the other (Chamber I) was to be permanent in nature. Pipes connected to a container of CO₂ permitted both rooms to be cooled⁵¹ to the desired temperature.⁵² CO₂ also has the property of retarding oxidation processes, thus delaying the decomposition of corpses.

When not needed as a temporary morgue, Chamber III could still be used for its original purpose – hydrogen cyanide gas disinfestation. That it was so utilized, is proven by the intense blue pigmentation, *i.e.*, the presence of high concentrations of iron blue in all the walls of this room.

As for the little window in the southern wall of Chamber I, there is no proof that it was built at the time of the installation of the pipes in Chambers I and III. Since their utilization as morgues diminished with the opening of the new crematorium in January 1944, a new purpose was no doubt assigned to them. Chamber III, in view of the chronic shortage of Zyklon B, was probably used as a hot-air disinfestation chamber, using the air heater. Chamber I was presumably used as a storage area for material requiring visual supervision (for example, weapons).

b) Chamber IV

Regarding this site, Pressac writes:

*“The use of this room for homicidal purposes is only conceivable under two sets of circumstances: removal of the little window, which could easily have been smashed by the inmates, and the incorporation of mechanical ventilation. After a delousing action, opening the two doors would have created a draught of air carrying toxic vapors into other parts of the hut. It was therefore indispensable that the door leading to the shower room remain hermetically sealed. But if the ventilation only took place in the area between the two upper openings and the door, such ventilation would have been both time-consuming and inefficient. If both doors remained shut, the room could only have been ventilated by pumping in hot air (using the fan on the oven). Cyanide gas is lighter than air, and could have been evacuated through the two openings in the ceiling, dissipating in the atmosphere. After a short time, the residue concentrations of HCN would have fallen to a level at which both doors could have been opened without danger. The draught of air would then have swept away the last traces of the gas and cooled the room. Site C [= Chamber IV] was therefore used as a disrobing room. For homicidal purposes, it would have been the ‘most efficient’ gas chamber in the camp if the window had been removed. The question of whether this was done at the time of the aeration of the camp, is decisive in determining whether or not the room may have been used for homicidal gassings; since I do not know the answer, I must reserve judgment.”*⁵³

As seen in the previous section, Hut 41 was built as a mere “stable with shower bath installation”, and is so designated on the blueprint dated July 1, 1942. If we compare a diagram of its final condition with the original blueprint for Hut 42 (“Provisional Delousing Installation KGL Lublin” dated March 31, 1942, we must conclude that the former was initially designed to be identical to the lat-

⁴⁸ Anna Zmijewska-Wiesniewska, “Zeznanie szefa krematorium Ericha Musfeldta”, in *ZM*, I, 1965, p. 140.

⁴⁹ On July 1, 1942, this building was already 70% finished, WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 8, p. 3.

⁵⁰ These data have been taken from the corresponding blueprints: K.G.L. Lublin, Leichenhalle, Bauwerk XIV, scale 1:100. WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 47, p. 14.

⁵¹ It is well-known that the expansion of a compressed gas in liquid form generally causes a drop in room temperature.

⁵² The door of room III shows an opening for the introduction of a thermometer.

⁵³ Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. ix.

ter, *i.e.*, identical to the central part of the building used for disinfestation, and would therefore have contained the following sectors (from north to south): vestibule/entrance – registration – hair-cutting room – undressing room – shower bath – dressing room – vestibule/exit. This is also shown by the fact that the four principal sectors of both buildings: entrance/undressing room – showerbath – distribution of clothing – boiler-room – dressing room, were of practically the same size.

At the end of September or the beginning of October 1942, a cyanide gas chamber with air-heater was built in Hut 41. The air-heater was connected to the eastern wall. On October 22, the work was finished, and the area was designated “*Delousing Hut with Bath*”. The area previously referred to as an undressing room was used as a gas chamber without any major architectural modification, which proves that it was a temporary installation.

As seen today, Chamber IV is very irregular in shape. It has two dead corners, is closed on three sides, and therefore very difficult to ventilate. This one, exactly identical to the hair-cutting room in hut 42, shows blue pigmentation on the ceiling and plaster of the northern wall. This blue pigmentation is also found in the plaster on the southern wall, but is on the outside of the wall of Chamber IV. An even more intense bluish pigmentation finally appears in the plaster of the eastern wall, in the vestibule.

This gas chamber probably involved ventilation problems, since, as was seen in section 2, the Central Construction Administration decided to install a ventilation chimney on the roof, and wrote in this regard to the above-mentioned Polish firm, the Michael Ochnik Corporation. The relating cost estimate, dated November 18, 1942, provides for the construction of two chimneys measuring $0.75\text{ m} \times 0.75\text{ m} \times 1.70\text{ m}$ in size, with the piercing of a hole in the concrete ceiling. However, according to the following invoice dated January 8, 1943, only one chimney was built on the roof of the gas chamber. The chimney is connected “*on both sides*” by “*flues*” connected to “*2 openings in the concrete ceiling*”. There is no doubt that these openings are ventilation intake and outlet openings. This is clearly revealed by the fact that both the openings on the roof of the gas chamber were pierced along the extended axis of the air-heater suction pipe.

The gas chamber was not designed for homicidal purposes. First, the chimney installation, as described in the above-mentioned invoice from the Michael Ochnik Corporation, could never have been used for the introduction of Zyklon B, because the HCN-saturated granules would simply have fallen onto the floor of the fireplace without entering the two parallel flues in the concrete ceiling. Secondly, the southern gas-tight door (the one leading to the shower room) did, of course, close from the outside; but the door opposite from it, closed from the inside. What this means, is that the disinfestation officer responsible for pouring out the Zyklon B granules, entered the room wearing a gas mask, closed the northern door, poured out the Zyklon, left the room through the southern door, and then needed to seal the chamber from the shower room on his way out. In homicidal gassings, it would have been impossible to open the northern door because of the pile of dead bodies lying in front of it, and if it was only possible to open one of the two doors, this would have greatly hindered ventilation.

The two openings visible in the ceiling of the room today measure approximately $60\text{ cm} \times 60\text{ cm}$ (the eastern opening),⁵⁴ and $40\text{ cm} \times 40\text{ cm}$ (the western opening).⁵⁵ Both led to a wooden shaft in which a small chimney made of planks had been built. This shaft was closed by means of a lid, also made of wood, on the roof of the hut. Measured from the ceiling of the room, the chimney is approximately 1.15 m in height. Its present condition (except with regards to the size and selection of raw materials), corresponds to the draft of the cost estimate dated November 18, 1942; so that the actual structure, as built, was modified later. This is shown by the fact that, inside the room, the

⁵⁴ See ill. 6.

⁵⁵ See ill. 7.



Illustration 5: and **Illustration 6:** Eastern (top) and western (right) opening in the ceiling of the delousing facility in hut 41, concentration camp Majdanek (cf. map, illustration 1). © C. Mattogno



Illustration 7: Blue staining around the pipe near the floor of the eastern wall of chamber III of the delousing facility in hut 41, concentration camp Majdanek (cf. back picture on back cover; cf. map, illustration 1). © C. Mattogno

Illustration 8: Window in the eastern wall of chamber IV, hut 41, (delousing gas chamber), concentration camp Majdanek (cf. map, illustration 1). © C. Mattogno

wooden shafts around the openings interrupt the Prussian blue staining on the plaster of the ceiling. The plaster was renewed in many places around the shafts, as may be seen from the snow-white color of the plaster. Finally, the shafts themselves show not the slightest trace of blue pigmentation, quite in contrast to the window frames.⁵⁶ Thus, it is incontrovertibly proven that the shafts were only installed at a time when Zyklon B was no longer being utilized in this room.⁵⁷ And the presence of blue stains on the window frames shows that the window existed *prior* to the liberation of the camp. Pressac's question, upon which his judgment as to the possibility of homicidal mass gasings in this room is made to depend, is thereby conclusively answered.

The above described modifications may possibly be explained on the assumption that the use of Zyklon B was abandoned, and that delousing actions in Chamber IV were conducted with hot air, using the air heater installed behind the eastern wall.

This assumption is supported by the constant shortage of Zyklon B, which was in particular short supply after the summer of 1943. At that particular time, a devastating typhus epidemic was raging

⁵⁶ See ill. 8.

⁵⁷ As Germar Rudolf has stressed, ferric-ferricyanide forms especially easily on moist walls (G. Rudolf, *The Rudolf Report*, Theses and Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, 2003, pp. 159-169); see his contribution on the Auschwitz gas chambers in this volume.

in Majdanek, and huge quantities of Zyklon were needed “*for camp disinfection*” (see section 5). The above described modifications could very well have been carried out at this time (from the summer of 1943 to the beginning of 1944). Since the small quantities of Zyklon allocated to the camp were needed to disinfect the huts, cyanide gas chambers III and IV were converted to hot air disinfection chambers.

The hypothesis stated above relating to the modification of Chambers III and IIIa, also provides an explanation for the installation of Gas Chamber IV. During construction of the disinfection installation, which was really planned for the fur and garment workshop building project, the Central Construction Administration decided to use two rooms of the installation as additional morgues: one (Chamber I), was used as a permanent morgue, and the other, (Chamber III), was planned as a temporary morgue.⁵⁸ This meant that the original Chamber IIIa could no longer be used for Zyklon B disinfection. To compensate for the loss of these areas, and to provide a substitute for Chamber III, which could no longer be used for the time being, another temporary cyanide gas chamber was installed in Hut 41, the surface area of which roughly corresponded to Chambers III and IIIa. From a technical administrative point of view, these buildings were part of the fur and garment workshops, even if they were located in a building inside the prisoner of war building project. The choice of Hut 41 for installation of the gas chamber was logical because the disinfected clothing could, by its very nature, be quite easily laid out in the “*clean*” sector, beneath the protective roof located over the original disinfection installation. The disinfection installation – which was already planned on October 22, 1942, and mentioned in the two cost estimates dated October 7 and 10, 1942 – consisting of four gas chambers, was finally allocated to the fur and garment workshop building project as a definitive installation.

c) Chambers V and IV.

The following fact should first be emphasized: there is no *material* proof that two Zyklon B gas chambers (which are alleged to have been used for the first homicidal gassings prior to the entry into operation of Chambers I-IV), were ever installed in Hut 28.

The description of the Polish-Soviet Committee – in particular, the diagram of the installation as drawn by that Committee⁵⁹ – far more resembles a drying installation for the laundry than a delousing installation. In the middle of Hut 28, there were in fact two chambers, each measuring 11.75 m × 6.00 m in size. Each of these chambers has an opening in the ceiling measuring 30 cm × 30 cm. These openings can be hermetically sealed. Both chambers led through two doors in the two opposite longitudinal walls to two locks (*Schleusen*) measuring 2 m × 12.15 m. Each lock contained an air heater which was connected to the chamber in question. These locks possessed two doors, located opposite the doors to the chambers, leading to two rooms measuring 7.50 m × 12.15 m, as well as to an access door in the side wall. This structure would have made ventilation of the two chambers very difficult. The air heaters moreover were connected to the rooms in question by means of one single pipe, which means that the air heaters were not used for circulation, but rather for the introduction of hot air flowing from the air-heater and exiting through the small opening in the ceiling. The air-tight lid was intended to keep the hot air in the rooms for longer time periods when the air heater was out of use; for example when drying clothing during the night.

This assumption is partly supported by the diagram prepared by the Polish-Soviet Committee itself. In it, the hut where the “*Gas Chambers V and VT*” are supposed to have been located is referred to as a “*Suschilka*”, which means drying installation.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ These two crematoria naturally became superfluous with the construction of the new crematorium.

⁵⁹ GARF, RF 7021-107-9, p. 251.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Jean-Claude Pressac knows nothing of all this, believes that both chambers were delousing chambers but excludes their use for homicidal purposes. He writes:

*"It is probable that these two improvised chambers were used for the delousing of personal belongings with Zyklon B (HCN). The proximity to the laundry is an additional argument in support of this assumption."*⁶¹

Homicidal gassings in these chambers are more than merely improbable. Polish historiography recently quit mentioning the alleged gas chambers in Hut 28, substituting one single gas chamber, the exact location of which cannot of course, be determined. In the official camp history, Józef Marszałek writes in this regard:

*"The concrete gas chambers built for utilization with Zyklon B at Majdanek were put into operation in October 1942. This gas had already begun to be utilized for the killing of Soviet prisoners of war in a provisional gas chamber using the experience accumulated at Auschwitz."*⁶²

Czesław Rajca, who has studied the "direct extermination" of the inmates, repeats this argument in an extensive work on Majdanek:

*"While construction of the [gas] chambers consisting of concrete was awaiting completion – which was the case in October – inmates were killed in a wooden gas chamber located near the bath [correctly: the laundry] using Zyklon B, and probably in a hut installed in intermediate Area I; the location, among other things, of the so-called small crematorium,"*⁶³

Since the first Zyklon delivery to Majdanek camp took place on July 30, 1942 – we will discuss the Zyklon deliveries in section 5 – then the gas chamber in question must have been in operation in September and October of that year, if not as early as August.

Yet the letter from the Central Construction Administration dated October 22, 1942, and mentioned in paragraph 2, contains not the slightest reference to this gas chamber, which must have been a Zyklon B disinfestation chamber. This means that it did not exist at that time.

d) Gas Chamber VII

J.-C. Pressac writes:

*"The representative Director of the [Majdanek] Museum writes that this gas chamber was used very little – very, very little; which means, speaking frankly, that it was not used at all. This fiction is maintained to avoid offending the popular superstition that every crematorium must contain a gas chamber (like the crematoria of Auschwitz-Birkenau. [...]) If it had been desired to kill people in that room with Zyklon B, its enclave-shaped location within the building, between the autopsy room, a corridor, and the lying-in-state room, would necessarily have required artificial ventilation, not the slightest trace of which exists. Natural ventilation by means of draughts of air would have required complete evacuation of the crematorium for a period of time which is difficult to estimate."*⁶⁴



Illustration 9: Opening in the ceiling of the alleged homicidal gas chamber in the new crematorium of concentration camp Majdanek.

© C. Mattogno

⁶¹ Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. vii.

⁶² Józef Marszałek, *Majdanek, the Concentration Camp in Lublin*, Interpress, Warsaw 1986, p. 140.

⁶³ Czesław Rajca, "Eksteminacja bezpośrednia" in Tadeusz Mencel (ed.): *Majdanek 1941-1944*, Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, Lublin 1991, p. 270.

⁶⁴ Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. ix.

These remarks are amazing and unobjectionable. This may be seen from the diagram of the crematorium drawn up by the Polish-Soviet Committee after inspecting the premises, as well as by a visual inspection of the ‘scene of the crime’. The room known as the “Gas Chamber” (“*komora gazowa*”) is, in reality, located between the dissection room and the morgue.

For my part, I should like to add the following considerations:

- a) the walls of the room in question show not the slightest trace of blue pigmentation;
- b) the opening broken through the roof⁶⁵ – measuring 26 cm × 26 cm – is not mentioned by the Polish-Soviet committee. In reality, the opening was crudely broken through at a later date, without even cutting the steel reinforcement rods, and without building a wooden shaft, as was the case in Chamber IV;
- c) there are two peep windows in the wall adjacent to the morgue. There is no way to close them, and none is mentioned by the Polish-Soviet Committee; this means that both peep windows are in the original condition. The gas would therefore have penetrated both the morgue and the oven room during any gassing action.

4. Homicidal mass gassings: origins of the accusation.

As established above, the installations in question were technically unsuited for mass homicidal exterminations and consequently, such mass exterminations did not take place. We must now examine the origins of the allegations of mass gassings in Majdanek concentration camp.

The first detailed eyewitness account appeared in 1944 without naming its author. It was published by A. Silberschein. The passages of greatest interest to the present topic are as follows:

*“The **oven hut** [emphasis added] was located in the area between the first and second huts, which measured 10 m.*

From the outside, these huts resembled the others, except that they had two massive chimneys, like factory chimneys.

This hut was divided into three parts, each of which was almost entirely sealed off. The first part was the undressing room (‘Wardrobe’ on the plan). The second was hermetically sealed. This is where the gas experiments were conducted (‘Gassing Room’ on the diagram). In the third room, stood three gigantic ovens. This hut was located between Area 1 and 2 [...].

The old and the sick were immediately ordered into the hut containing the ovens. In the first room, they were ordered to undress. In the second, they died of suffocation within two minutes. They were then transported from the second room to the ovens. A fire burned underground, the oven itself did not burn. But it collected hot air at 2,000 degrees. The dead bodies were thrown into the oven; the glowing heat sucked the fluids and moisture completely out of them. Only a few blisters remained, which were so dry, they crackled. Then special trucks carried the remains out of the city to pre-dug graves.

Throughout 1942, thousands of Jews were killed in the gas chambers every day. New masses were transported here every week, and that is the way it has continued until this very day.”⁶⁶

This eyewitness report is illustrated by a diagram of Majdanek, which, in the light of historical and architectural knowledge, enables one to trace the story of homicidal mass gassings at Majdanek to its roots.

The diagram consists of a truly precise drawing of “*Bath and Disinfestation Installation IP*”, Hut 42 complete with “*Undressing Room*”, “*Clothing Deposit*” (for the acceptance of clothing), “*Baths*” (showers), and the “*Distribution Room for Inmate Clothing*” (for the allocation of new clothing).

⁶⁵ See ill. 9.

⁶⁶ A. Silberschein, *Die Judenausrottung in Polen*, Fünfte Serie; “*Das K.Z. Lager Lublin*”, manuscript, Geneva 1944, pp. 14-16.

But although the report dates back to 1943, it contains no mention of “*Bath and Disinfestation Installation I*” – Hut 41 – which, according to the Polish-Soviet description, was the center of the entire extermination program, and where exterminations had allegedly already begun in October 1942.

As far as the extermination installation itself is concerned, the witness has patched together a collage of various buildings, which certainly existed, but not in the same place, and not at the same time. The “*Gassing Room*” is simply Hut 28, in which the eyewitness has (mistakenly) placed disinfestation Chamber III located in Building XII^A, or the gas chamber from Hut 41, both of which were equipped with air heaters. Even if we assume that Hut 28 – which only contained a drying installation in July 1944 – contained a Zyklon B delousing installation at an earlier date, this does not alter the fact that it was located approximately 110 m away from the crematorium, and that the laundry was located in between the two buildings.

The erroneous description of the crematory ovens appears full of riddles at first glance – but only at first glance. Let’s take the key sentences:

“A fire burned underground, the oven itself did not burn. But it collected hot air at 2,000 degrees.”

This description in fact does not refer to the crematory ovens at all, but rather to the coke-fired air heaters in Hut 28 and the delousing chambers III and IV. As shown in section 2, these installations are coke ovens whose furnaces were located beneath the floor, so it was true to say “*a fire burned underground*”. No combustion procedure took place in the upper part of the oven at all, so that “*the oven itself did not burn*”; instead it only “*collected hot air*”. The temperature mentioned by the witness – 2,000 degrees Celsius – would, of course, be far too high – not only for a hot air chamber, but for a crematory oven as well.⁶⁷ The reported number of victims – thousands per day – at another point – two million victims by the end of 1943⁶⁸ – are, of course, purely atrocity propaganda.

Constantin Simonov’s report is of particular significance because the unknown author who visited Majdanek right after the liberation was able to speak with former inmates who told him the story of the camp and explained the function of its installations to him. The Simonov report is based on eyewitness accounts and corresponds to the ‘official’ version of the camp history which was current among the inmates during July and August of 1944. It therefore pre-dates the version of the Polish-Soviet Committee. At several points, it deviates from the now-obligatory version of history as established shortly afterwards. It refers to an extermination installation which was then immediately forgotten and it makes no mention of a “*Gassing Room*” in the old crematorium and mistakenly locates the alleged homicidal gassings in the disinfestation installation adjacent to Hut 41. The killing technique described is rather peculiar:

*“Where does the little window lead? To find the answer to this question, we open the door and leave the chamber. Next to the chamber there is another small concrete chamber. This is where the little window leads. Here, there is an electrical light and a switch. From here, looking outward from the little window, you can see everything in the first chamber. On the floor are a few round, hermetically sealed cans labelled Zyklon B, and, in small letters: ‘For special use in the eastern territories’.”^[69] The contents of the cans was introduced into the adjacent chamber **through pipes** when the chamber was packed full of people.*

The naked people stood closely next to each other; they didn’t take up much room. 250 people were packed together into 40 square meters of surface area. They were driven inside. The steel door was shut, and the cracks stuffed with clay to provide a hermetic seal. A special team wearing gas masks introduced the Zyklon contents of the round cans into the adjacent chamber through the pipes. ‘Zyklon’

⁶⁷ In this regard, see our study drawn up in cooperation with Dr. Franco Deana “The Crematorium Ovens of Auschwitz Birkenau”, in this volume.

⁶⁸ Silberschein, *op. cit.* (note 66), p. 16.

⁶⁹ In fact, such a specially labeled Zyklon B never existed.

consists of small **blue** crystals, harmless in appearance. Upon contact with oxygen, however, it immediately begins to release poisonous gas, simultaneously affecting all the vital centers of the human body. **Zyklon was introduced through the pipes.**⁷⁰ The SS man directing the operation turned on the light switch; looking through the little window, the SS man watched the entire suffocation procedure, which, **as gathered from various eyewitness reports**, lasted between 2 and 10 minutes. Looking through the window, he could see everything without danger: the cruelly distorted faces of the dying, the gradual effect of the gas. The peephole for the executioners is located in just the right spot, at eye level. When the victims died, the observer didn't need to look down, since the victims didn't fall down after their death. The gas chamber was in fact, full to the brim, so that the dead stood standing motionless".⁷¹ [All emphasis added]

This description of the killing method, which is completely hare-brained from a technical point of view, proves that the former Majdanek inmates never saw a homicidal gassing. No witness told Simonov of SS men on the roof of a gas chamber wearing gas masks and carrying Zyklon B cans in their hands; no one told him that the victims were killed with carbon monoxide in two areas containing gas pipe installations. As J.-C. Pressac correctly says, the Zyklon B cans found by Simonov were placed in the side room in front of Chambers I and III to give the impression that the content of the cans was introduced into the chamber through pipes. This process by former inmates of setting the scene, proves *a fortiori* in any case, that the witnesses were never present during any mass homicidal gassing. There is no doubt that rumors of mass homicidal gasings were current in the camp and that former inmates crudely sought to provide these rumors with an aura of authenticity in order to take vengeance on their oppressors, but in reality, their statements show that no homicidal gasings took place.

It is also remarkable that Simonov has nothing to say regarding Chamber IV. It is quite obvious that the former inmates did not consider it to be a homicidal gas chamber.

Later eyewitnesses are so vague and contradictory that we can skip them for the present. It is highly revealing that the long-time director of the Majdanek Memorial, Józef Marszałek, only mentions gasings in two lines in his official history of the camp. In fact, he could think of nothing better to say about the gassing procedures at Majdanek than to quote the eyewitness account of SS man Pery Broad at **Auschwitz**:

*"The technique of killing with gas was described as follows by Perry [sic] Broad, an employee of the Political Division of Auschwitz camp. A similar technique was utilized at Majdanek."*⁷²

And that's it from the Memorial Director himself!

5. The Zyklon deliveries to Majdanek concentration camp

In Germany, Zyklon B was manufactured by two industrial factories, the Dessauer Werke für Zucker und Chemische Industrie A.G. in Dessau, and Kaliwerke A.G. in Kolin.⁷³ Distribution was controlled by the *DEGESCH* company (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung GmbH) which was the real manufacturer as holder of the patent and manufacturing license. DEGESCH did not market the product directly, but rather, through two main representative companies, Heerdt und Lingerl GmbH (*Heli*), a Frankfurt corporation, and *Tesch und Stabenow*, Internationale Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung (*Testa*), a Hamburg corporation. These two firms divided the market between them, Heli being active west of the Elbe, and Tesch east of the Elbe, exclusively in the

⁷⁰ Since Zyklon B is liquid HCN adsorbed on gypsum rather than a pressurized gas, it cannot be piped.

⁷¹ Simonov, *op. cit.* (note 39), 8, 9.

⁷² J. Marszałek, *Majdanek*, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 141.

⁷³ I.G. Farben produced only the warning substance, bromacetic acid methyl ester, as well as the stabilizer, chlor carbonic acid methyl ether.

TABLE I: ZYKLON B ORDERS AND DELIVERIES TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMP OF MAJDANÉK

ORDERS			DELIVERIES		
Date	Number of cans	Mass [kg]	Period of time	Number of cans	Mass [kg]
25.07.1942/ 22.08.1942-	1,474	2,211	30.07.1942	360	540
			20.08.1942	360	540
			September 1942	754	1,131
			<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>1,474</i>	<i>2,211</i>
22.05.1943/ 08.06.1943	3,000	4,500	16.07.1943	342	513
			September 1943	666	999
			October 1943 - June 1944	1,992	2,988
			<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>4,500</i>
19.06.1944/ 03.07.1944	(500)	(250)	July 1944	(500)	(250)
TOTALS:	4,974	6,961		4,974	6,961

Sudeten district, the General Gouvernement, the Reichskommissariat Ostland, and the Scandinavian states of Denmark, Norway, and Finland. Majdanek concentration camp was located in the territory of the General Gouvernement, and therefore received its Zyklon from Testa.

Extremely detailed correspondence has been found relating to the Zyklon deliveries between the camp administration on the one hand, and Testa and the SS institutions involved in Zyklon distribution for bureaucratic grounds, on the other hand. This correspondence⁷⁴ has been studied by Adela Toniak, who reproduced 37 of the 60 documents making up the exchange of correspondence, in a study.⁷⁵ The Polish author calculated that a total of 7,711 kg of Zyklon were delivered to the Lublin camp,⁷⁶ but her calculations contain two errors. Table I summarizes the Zyklon B orders, as well as actual deliveries.

Although the documents do not permit the slightest doubt that the administration of Lublin camp ordered Zyklon for disinfestation purposes to the exclusion of any other purpose, Adela Toniak prefers to stick to her homicidal theories, adducing historically groundless arguments.⁷⁶ Without entering into further detail, it should be noted that the correspondence between the camp administration and the Tesch-Stabenow firm repeatedly refers to the “*danger of epidemics*”, “*disinfestation of inmate housing and clothing*”, “*thorough disinfestation*”, “*disinfestation work*”, “*camp disinfestation*”, and “*disinfection gas*” (i.e., Zyklon B).⁷⁷ Since even Adela Toniak cannot conceal the fact that devastating typhus epidemics repeatedly ravaged Majdanek, and since Zyklon B was the most effective means of combating typhus as she also admits, there is no justification for the assumption that the Zyklon deliveries served any purpose other than the extermination of lice.⁷⁸

The attempt to attribute a criminal purpose to the Zyklon deliveries forms part of an outdated system of interpretation which dominated earlier decades to ill effect, but which has been definitively destroyed by Jean-Claude Pressac. Writing in 1989, Pressac stated that 97 to 98 percent of all Zyk-

⁷⁴ APMM, sygn. I, d. 2, vol. I.

⁷⁵ Adela Toniak, “*Korespondencja w sprawie dostawy cyklonu B do obozu na Majdanku*” in *ZM*, II, 1967, p. 129-170.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷⁷ The documents involved are discussed in detail in the book by Jürgen Graf and Carlo Mattogno cited in footnote 1.

⁷⁸ The only “*criminal trace*” is the alleged ‘camouflage expression’.

lon B delivered to Auschwitz, was used for disinfestation purposes and that only 2 to 3 percent was used for alleged homicidal gassing of inmates.⁷⁹

In fact, these 2 to 3 percent of all Zyklon delivered to Auschwitz would have sufficed for the gassing of the reported number of victims, so that Pressac's calculation is theoretically correct. But since 2 to 3 percent of all Zyklon deliveries is an amount too small to be statistically significant, the total amount of Zyklon B delivered does not prove any homicidal gassing claims. The same applies to Majdanek.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ J.-C. Pressac, *Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*. The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York 1989, p. 1988. Pressac expresses the same opinion in his second book (German edition: *Die Krematorien von Auschwitz*, Piper Verlag, Munich 1994). The passage in question appears on page 58 of that edition.

⁸⁰ Assuming a concentration of HCN 10 times higher than that which is immediately lethal – 0.3 g/m^3 – one 1,500 gram can of Zyklon in Chamber III would have enough to kill 3,000 people. This figure is calculated as follows: Chamber III is approximately 35 m^2 in surface area, with a volume of approximately 70 m^3 . Assuming, with Pressac, a maximum number of 350 victims per gassing action, and theoretically assuming a HCN concentration ten times higher than that which is rapidly lethal to human beings – 0.3 g/m^3 – the quantity of HCN required for one gassing procedure would be as follows:

- effective volume: approximately 50 m^3 (the bodies of the victims would occupy approximately 20 m^3).
- HCN concentration: $0.3 \times 10 = 3 \text{ g/m}^3$
- required quantity: HCN: $3 \times 50 = 150 \text{ gr}$.