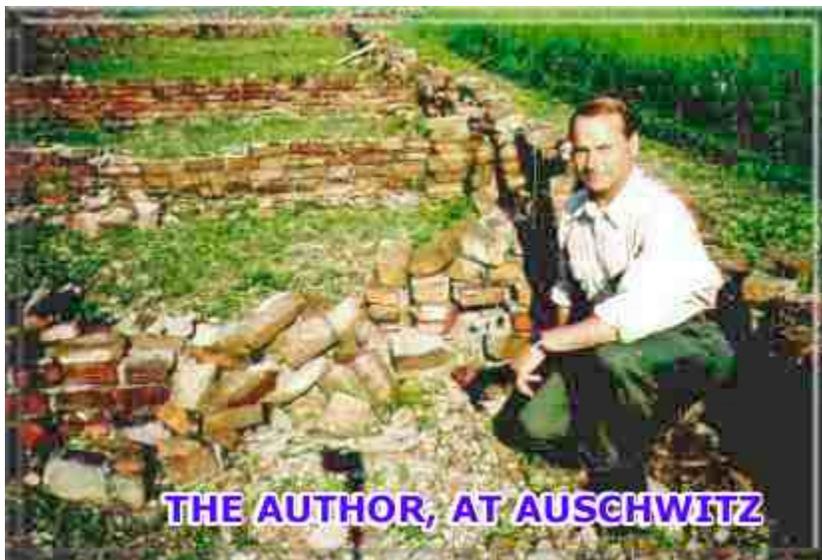


My Visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, May 30-31, 1996

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See companion article based on information gathered in this visit:
[**Kenneth Stern Versus THE LEUCHTER REPORT: A Critical Analysis**](#)

My introduction to this report is to advance the simple proposition that one cannot fully appreciate the alleged modus operandi of the Holocaust without actually visiting its setting and structure. I chose Auschwitz-Birkenau based on a keen study of the [Leuchter Report](#) but also the criticisms offered by his nemesis, Jean-Claude Pressac. I went both with training as a chemist and as a practicing engineer, without obligation to Revisionism or historical orthodoxy. My report follows.



I am aware that much fuss was made in the aftermath of the [David Cole/Franciszek Piper interview](#) whereby Auschwitz chief curator, Dr. Franciszek Piper, admitted Auschwitz's Krematorium I was an *Attrappe*, that is, a reconstruction made for tourists. Personally, I think Revisionists placed too much glee in that revelation. For the fact [Fred Leuchter's](#) analysis revealed detectable HCN residues suggests the interior surfaces of the facility, and hence its basic structure, are original. Either this, or one must suppose the building was fumigated once or several times after its "reconstruction."

Regarding the roof-ports, the alleged means by which [Zyklon B](#) was introduced for homicidal purposes, one can observe from inside that the ceiling near each of these has appreciable concrete chipped away, supporting the notion these openings were rendered after the fact of the building's original construction. Admittedly, however, this fact does not in itself substantiate when or why the openings were added. Dr. Piper^[1], has stated the original building existed before the war as a depot and was remodelled as a crematorium. This explanation would indeed allow the possibility the roof chards exist relative to modifications carried out in the Autumn of 1941, although the remodelling could just as well be a matter of what was admitted by Dr. Piper in his infamous interview with David Cole.^[2] On the other hand, we are told by eye-witness Philip Müller^[3], that these openings were bricked up in 1944 when the chamber was converted to an air-raid shelter. According to Herr Müller, there were supposed to be six. I observed, however, only four and none, at least to the naked eye, revealed any trace of dislodged brickwork when viewed from the inside.^[4] If, instead, the roof-ports were put in as part of post-war remodeling^[5], we are obliged to believe the Polish authorities were either inattentive to detail or else viewed their future visitors as sufficiently hostile towards everything German as to accept German shoddiness as the reason the ceiling blemishes were left uncorrected. And while this observation leads to no definite conclusions, it is nevertheless worth contemplating.

It was at this juncture, while still on the premises of Auschwitz proper, that I was offered the opportunity to conduct an interview with Dr. Piper.

Interview with Franciszek Piper 30 May, 1996

Q: Regarding Krematorium I at Auschwitz, what was the average number of persons gassed with Zyklon B per application? Further, what total number of persons perished in this facility?

A: This facility operated between autumn 1941 and autumn 1942. Between 600 to 800 persons were exterminated per application. Phillip Müller, an eye-witness stoker, cited that several tens of thousands of persons were killed there, however French pharmacist Jean-Claude Pressac claims that roughly only ten thousand were killed in this facility. It was, after all, an experimental gas chamber.

Q: What is the floor space of Krematorium I?

A: 78 square meters.

Q: Regarding the foregoing, this would mean approximately ten persons could be forced into an area of one square meter?

A: Yes. You must remember that the victims included women and children.

Q: And what quantity of Zyklon B gas was employed by the Germans to effect the extermination of the 600 to 800 persons in Krematorium I per application? How was the gas introduced into the chamber?

A: According to Auschwitz kommandant Rudolph Höss, 6 kilograms of solid Zyklon B pellets were employed per 1,400 persons. At Krema I, the pellets were poured through four roof-ports directly onto the victims inside.

Q: Were the pellets poured simultaneously by four agents through each of the four roof-ports, or sequentially by one agent acting alone?

A: There was typically only one person on the roof, and this person poured the pellets in all four roof-ports, one roof-port at a time.

Q: By what means was heating effected in Krema I, particularly during winter, to insure a minimum interior temperature of 25.7 degrees Centigrade necessary for gaseous HCN?^[7a]

A: There was no special heating for Krema I. Warmth depended exclusively on body heat.

Q: What was the total time per application that Zyklon B gas remained inside the chamber?

A: Twenty minutes.

Q: What were the means of removing the gas? Were there special ventilators?

A: In the case of Krema I there were no ventilators. The doors were opened and the gas was allowed to ventilate by convection.

Q: Regarding Krematorium II at Birkenau, what was the gas chamber floor area and number of persons exterminated per application?

A: 210 square meters; 1,000 - 2,000 persons were killed per application depending on the size of a given transport.

Q: And the quantity of Zyklon B gas employed was in the same ratio as per Krema I, that is, 6 kilograms per 1,400 persons?

A: Yes.

Q: How were the Zyklon B pellets introduced into Krema II?

A: As per Krema I, that is, through roof-ports and by pouring through one roof-port at a time, however, the pellets descended through a perforated spiral tube rather than free-falling directly from the roof aperture. This was also the means used in Krema III.

Q: Was there any special way by which heating was achieved in Krema II to maintain minimum necessary temperatures for gas-phase HCN?

A: Yes. In both Kremas II and III, heating was achieved by placing bins inside the chambers full of hot coke.

Q: Was the gas exposure time for Kremas II and III the same twenty minutes as per Krema I?

A: Yes. But for these Kremas the gas was removed via mechanical ventilation and was therefore much quicker.

Q: Was there any means of detoxifying the HCN gas before it was vented to the atmosphere?

A: No. It was vented directly to the atmosphere.

Q: Regarding Krematorium III, was its surface area and number of persons exterminated per application the same as for Krema II?

A: Yes. 210 square meters; 1,000 to 2,000 persons exterminated per application depending on transport.

Q: What were the total number of persons exterminated respectively for Kremas II and III?

A: There are no figures on this.

Q: Are there figures on the number of deaths associated with Krematoriums IV and V?

A: No. The total number of persons killed at Auschwitz and Birkenau as a whole is 1,095,190, which I cite in my book *Auschwitz: how many perished Jews, Poles, Gypsies*, based on transport figures from each of the German occupied territories.^[6]

Q: And how many of these were exterminated by Zyklon B gas in Kremas I - V?

A: About 90%.

Q: Regarding Kremas IV and V, what was the respective surface area for these chambers and the number of persons exterminated per application?

A: Both were 270 square meters and both exterminated between 1,000 and 2,000 persons per application depending on transports.

Q: And was the quantity of Zyklon B gas used in these facilities the same ratio as cited for the other Krematoria, i.e., 6 kilograms per 1,400 persons?

A: Yes.

Q: How were the Zyklon pellets introduced to Kremas IV and V?

A: Unlike Kremas I through III, the pellets were introduced through small windows on the side of the buildings.

Q: What was the gas exposure time for Kremas IV and V and by what means were they ventilated?

A: Twenty minutes, as per the other Kremas. There were plans for mechanical ventilation of the Zyklon B, but these were not put into effect. Evacuation of the gas was instead achieved by convection, that is, by merely opening the doors.

Q: What about means of heating for these chambers?^[7]

A: Open coke containers, as per Kremas II and III.

Q: In regard to Kremas I through V, were special building materials used for the inside surfaces of the gas chambers or were standard brick and mortar used?

A: Standard building materials.^[8]

Q: Regarding the delousing facilities, what was the concentration of Zyklon B gas used for this purpose and what was the gas duration per application?

A: According to former prisoners, the process of disinfection lasted 24 hours. Clothes were left on hooks and the Zyklon was left on the floor. I am not sure as to the quantity.

Q: How often was a given delousing chamber used?

A: Delousing chambers were in near continuous use at the camps, both here at Auschwitz-Birkenau and at Majdanek.

Q: Regarding the above subject matter, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. recommended: *Nazi Mass Murder: A Documentary History of the Use of Poison Gas* by Eugen Kogen, [*Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*](#) by Rudolph Höss, and *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* by Jean-Claude Pressac. Are there any others you might recommend?

A: There are not many books which deal with this kind of information because it has not been until recently that the technical aspects were in question or of much interest. In addition to what the Holocaust Memorial Museum recommended, I do suggest the recent book by Gideon-Greif Publishers^[9] dealing with testimony by six former Jewish sondercommandos now living in Israel who worked at Auschwitz and Birkenau. Shlomo Dragon is one of the six witnesses.

End of Interview

I must state for the reader that the above transcription, taken from notes I made during the actual interview, was later sent to Dr. Piper by registered mail for his concurrence. Given generous time for reply (3 July, the date of receipt, to 30 November 1996), with no changes specified, I maintain this exchange to be an accurate rendition of both the questions asked and, with the exception of the title of Dr. Piper's book, the answers given.

This same day, May 30, I proceeded to the Krematoria at Birkenau. The first thing I wish to set straight in regard to Kremas II and III is that the support pillars which one can still see relative to the alleged gas chambers are not what Fred Leuchter supposed in March 1988:^[10] they are not one and the same with what would have been the alleged gas introduction columns. These are described as being made of metal.^[11] The gas introduction columns, had these existed, would obviously be aligned with the alleged roof openings rather than coincidental with what was intended to provide structural support for the ceiling. Dr. Piper's description^[12] claims Allied aerial photographs taken in 1944 revealed a straight-line roof-port configuration for Krema II, whereas a staggered-pair arrangement on either side of the chamber's longitudinal axis for Krema III. However, one readily notices that the draftsman hired by the museum to provide the on-site schematic for the two crematoria apparently knew nothing of this: both schematics are drawn with the same in-line, four square-hole configuration. Given the dilapidation of the roof, I could confirm neither the actuality of these roof-ports, nor any



evidence of metalwork within the ruins. I must say this is rather surprising. For as I write this, I am looking at the print of an Allied aerial photograph of Krematoria II and III dated 25 August, 1944^[13] showing what appear to be huge, if irregular, dark squares, perhaps indeed, larger than life, and much larger, for instance, than the hole Fred Leuchter used to descend beneath the roof of Krematorium II.

I shall now pass to observations regarding Crematoriums IV and V. As per II and III, these were constructed as a matching pair but in this case, completely above ground and completely rectangular, save for one protrusion at their respective northeast corners. Like Kremas II and III, these sites are now merely ruins, with residual walls only some two to four feet in height throughout the premises. Here, evidence of plaster/mortar overlay on the interior of the existing brick is negligible to none, giving one the impression these walls - and most particularly the interior walls of the alleged gas chambers - were bare brick (with only interstitial mortar). Through site inspection of the actual premises and a study of the on-site schematic provided for both buildings, one can readily determine that Mr. Leuchter's draftsman unfortunately made some egregious errors. My own drawing, while approximate in terms of measurements, is an attempt to more accurately depict the actual interior layout.

It is to be recollected that for Krematoria I through III, the alleged method of introducing Zyklon pellets was by means of the roof-port. We further might note that a flat roof was the design in all three cases. Yet with Krematoria IV and V, we are obliged to conceive that if the Germans truly built these buildings for purposes of gassing, they somehow sacrificed the expediency of the flat roof and the associated roof-port for roofs which were slanted and consequently required less reasonable means of Zyklon introduction. In a word, form here did not follow function:

Instead of windows, the exterior walls of the gas chambers had openings 30 cm wide and 40 cm high, which were covered with gas-proof flaps. The preserved original plans indicate that the first chamber had three such openings, the second two, and the remaining smallest chambers one each... The part of the crematorium building that housed the gas chamber was lower and looked like an outbuilding.^[14]

Note that there are four rooms mentioned in this description rather than the three designated by the on-site museum schematics (exactly similar for both buildings). This perhaps gives a hint as to the fact the rooms alleged to be gas chambers have not remained constant over time. This, or else the official on-site schematics (as with those depicting the placement of the roof-ports for Krema III) are currently in error.^[15] The observation I wish to make however



regards the "openings... covered with gas-proof flaps." I ask the reader to look at either the drawing I have provided or else the photo of the official on-site schematic and then the photograph showing an external view of Krematorium IV (the photo of Krematorium V is blocked by trees, but recall that these

structures were architectural carbon-copies). You will readily see that the four smallest windows, those described as 30 cm x 40 cm, are actually located along the center part of the building - where the "undressing room" is currently said to be located. The larger windows beyond (further from the viewer) would approximate the locations of what Dr. Piper described as the Sonderkommando lodgings and the kitchen, and further beyond still, what the on-site schematics depict as the "gas chambers." Note in regard to this furthest section that it corresponds to what is described as "lower" (it is the roof indeed which is lower) and resembling an "outbuilding." One can see the door in this photograph, corresponding to one of the "gas chamber" rooms in the on-site schematic, but: where are the 30 cm x 40 cm openings? They are either hidden in the shadows of the over-hanging roof or else they are simply not there - mistaken for the openings actually corresponding to the "undressing room." And in actuality, one must ask oneself: why would the Germans design vertical openings if the premeditated intent was to pour substance through a horizontal plane? Not only do we not see the openings where they are supposed to be, but the concept as design - at least for the alleged purposes - does not make good sense.^[16] Whereas we might otherwise be persuaded to realize that in life, given human vagaries, such things which don't make sense are nevertheless true, under such circumstances we might especially insist on a correlation of evidence. Such correlation, in this case, does not exist.

ENDNOTES

1. *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, edited by Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1994, Chapter 7: "Gas Chambers and Crematoria," p.158.
2. "David Cole Interviews Dr. Franciszek Piper, Director, Auschwitz State Museum," transcript c 1992 by David Cole & Bradley Smith, published by Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, California.
3. *Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in the Gas Chambers*, New York, 1979, p.38.
4. The fact these openings are currently un-bricked, coincides either with the fact they never were, i.e., they were made after the war and never bricked, else it is as Franciszek Piper revealed to David Cole in September 1992 (see *The Journal of Historical Review*, Volume Thirteen, Number 2, March/April, 1993, p.9) that after the liberation of the camp, the "openings in the ceiling were made anew." Aside from these four openings (which are "sealed" by wooden coverings held in place merely by their own gravitational weight), there are also two small chimneys situated to the inside of the interior wall separating the alleged gas chamber from an adjacent room. It is likely these were the source of confusion for eyewitness Müller.
5. If indeed, it was a whole new roof, the "holes" would have been cast properly and without chards, to begin with.
6. The title of this work was not recorded at the time of the interview but obtained after the fact through inquiry to the Research Institute Library of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.
7. The importance of this question resides in the fact HCN, the lethal ingredient of Zyklon B, requires a minimum 25.7 degrees Centigrade in order to remain gaseous. [7a] Both CODOH and the author are aware that this statement is somewhat misleading. The boiling point of HCN is 25.7°C, and below that temperature condensation is possible, whereas above that it is not. Some amount of HCN will remain gaseous even at very cold temperatures.]
8. Had I already visited Birkenau at the time of this interview, I would have wished to ask whether the interior walls of Krematoria II through V were originally over-layed with

mortar. Although it appears they were, the amount of brick-work giving evidence of this is marginal.

9. Wir weinten tränenlos-- : Augenzeugenberichte der jüdischen "Sonderkommandos" in Auschwitz, K"ln, 1995.
- 10."Leuchter in Poland," on VHS tape, produced in March 1988, copyrighted and distributed by Samisdat Publishers, Ltd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- 11.*Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, edited by Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994, Chapter 7, p.167. The author of this particular chapter is Franciszek Piper.
- 12.*ibid.*, page 167.
- 13.As shown in *Auschwitz: A History in Photographs*, compiled by Teresa Swiebocka, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990, p.134.
- 14.From *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, p.169. Endnote #68 in regard to this claims "The description is based on accounts by two former Sonderkommando prisoners employed in crematoria IV & V, Shlomo Dragon and Alter Feinsilber; on conclusions of the Polish prosecuting bodies; and on plans, photographs, and the preserved foundations."
- 15.Franciszek Piper's description of the "gas chambers" in Kremas IV and V reads thus: "Near the crematorium entrance were lodgings of Sonderkommando prisoners and a kitchen." (this would have to be the relatively small rooms undesignated by the on-site schematics) "To the left of these structures sat three gas chambers: one with an area of 98.19 m² (11.69 x 8.40); the second 95.34 m² (12.35 x 7.72) and the third 43.25 m² (11.69 x 3.70). The combined area of the three gas chambers was 236.78 m². Sometime later, the smaller chamber was further divided into two, and gas-proof doors, nearly identical to those in the gas bunkers, were constructed." (from *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, p.169) The measurements should help establish which rooms are being spoken of, but I cannot reasonably correlate these with my own approximations.
- 16.The reader is perhaps reminded of the observation attributed to the Greek philosopher Parmenides, that "What is rational is real and what is real is rational." By this description, we would be obliged to conclude that although the windows are real, their alleged purpose, which does not appear rational, is also untrue.