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A Paper Eichmann. Anatomy of a Lie

AAARGH

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Introduction

I hesitated a long while before responding to the friendly request of Paul Thibaud, the director of the journal *Esprit* (and who was also, from 1960 to 1962, the editor of *Vérité-Liberté*, a documentary publication on the Algerian war), and writing these pages on the so-called revisionist movement, concerning a work whose publishers tell us without the shadow of a smile: "Faurisson's arguments are serious. They should be answered." The reasons for not answering are many, but differ in value. As a historian of antiquity, what was I to do in a period "not my own"? As a Jew, was I not too directly party to the issue, incapable of being completely objective?

Would it not be preferable to relinquish the business of responding to historians less immediately concerned? And finally, was not answering in itself tantamount to giving credit to the idea that there was indeed a debate, and thus giving publicity to a man all too eager for it?

The first argument does not impress me very much. Having always fought against the overspecialization of historical guilds, having always done battle for a history untrammelled by artificial divisions, I had a chance – and not for the first time – to practice the position I had advocated. Moreover, the subject is not so difficult as to preclude one's apprising oneself of it in short order. I reject, to be sure, the notion that a Jewish historian should abstain from treating certain subjects. But it is, alas, the case that, on the whole, the historians' guild in France has shown little interest in such questions. And they do indeed have a repugnant aspect that must be confronted. It is enough to consider the state of our major libraries. Neither at the Sorbonne nor at the Bibliothèque Nationale can one find fundamental documentation concerning Auschwitz, which has to be consulted, for the most part, at the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, which itself is far from possessing all that it should. A large number of historians signed the declaration published in *Le Monde* on February 21, 1979, (1) but very few set themselves to work, one of the few exceptions being François Delpech.

The final objection is in fact the most serious one. It is true that it is absolutely impossible to debate with Faurisson. Such a debate, which he persists in calling for, is excluded because his way of arguing – what I have called his use of the non-ontological proof – makes discussion futile.

It is also true that attempting to debate would amount to accepting the unacceptable premise of two "historical schools" – one "revisionist" and the other "exterminationist." There would be, as a tract signed in October 1980 by various "extreme left" groups dared to maintain, the "advocates of the existence of lethal 'gas chambers'" and the others, just as there are advocates of a higher or lower chronology for the tyrants of Corinth, or as there are at Princeton and Berkeley two schools of thought at loggerheads over what, at bottom, the Attic calendar was. When one knows how the "revisionists" work, the idea has something obscene about it.

But does one know? And can we proceed, in France, in our centralized society, as one does in the United States where the most skillful revisionist, Arthur Butz, peacefully teaches computer science at a small university in Evanston, Illinois, admired by a minuscule sect and completely unknown to those, from New York to San Francisco, who practice the historian craft?

For better and for worse, the French situation is not the same. From the day that Robert Faurisson, a duly certified academic teaching in a major university, was able to express his views in *Le Monde*, even though he was refuted immediately thereafter, the question ceased being marginal and attained a certain centrality. And those without any direct knowledge of the events in question, specifically young people, were right to ask whether there had not been an effort to conceal something from them. Whence the decision of *Les Temps modernes* and *Esprit* to respond. (2)

But how to respond since discussion is impossible? By proceeding as one might with a sophist, that is, with a man who seems like a speaker of truths, and whose arguments must be dismantled piece by piece in order to demonstrate their fallaciousness. And by also attempting to elevate the debate, by showing that the revisionist fraud is not the only one to adorn contemporary culture, and that not merely the how but also the why of its lie needs to be understood.

[THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPHS WERE ABSENT FROM THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE]

1. On Cannibalism, Its Existence, and How It Has Been Explained

Marcel Gauchet devoted his first column in the journal *Le Débat* (May 1980) to what he has called "inexistentialism." It is in fact a characteristic of contemporary "culture" to declare of a sudden "inexistent" social, political, intellectual, cultural and biological realities which were assumed to be well established. There have thus been relegated to nonexistence sexual relations, woman, domination, oppression, submission, history, the real, the individual, nature, the state, the proletariat, ideology, politics, madness, and trees. Such minor diversions, however sad, may indeed also amuse, but are not necessarily dangerous. The notion that sexuality and sexual relations do not exist hardly inconveniences lovers, and the nonexistence of trees has never taken the bread out of the mouth of a logger or a manufacturer of paper pulp. It is occasionally the case, however, that such a diversion ceases to be innocent. This situation maintains when what is called into question is no longer an abstraction such as "woman," "nature," or "history," but a specific individual expression of humanity, a specific painful moment of its history.

In the long undertaking of supplying a definition of man – in relation to the gods and to animals – the fraction of humanity to which we belong has chosen, at least since Homer and Hesiod in the eighth century before our era, to posit man, as opposed to animals, as he who does not eat his fellow creatures. Thus, in *Works and Days* does Hesiod say: "Such is the law prescribed by Zeus, the son of Kronos to men: that fish, beasts, and winged birds devour each other, since there is no justice among them." There are transgressions of the law, which are rather rare in practice, but more frequent in myth. There are above all transgressors, who are cataloged as such: there

are certain categories of barbarians, who are thus excluded from the ranks of humanity. A Cyclops is not a man.

Not all societies place the barrier at precisely that level. There are some that are neither less nor more "human" than Greek society or modern Western society, and which accept the ingesting of human flesh. There are, I believe, none that regard such a practice as an act commensurate with others: human meat does not fall into the same category as game meat or the meat of agriculturally raised animals. To be sure, such differences are not apparent to outside observers, rushed as they are to treat as non-human men who are simply other. Here, for instance, is the view of Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who was one of Cortez's companions in Mexico during the beginning of the sixteenth century, in his *True History of New-Spain* (1575):

I must say that most of the Indians were shamefully ridden with vice: ... they were almost all given over to sodomy. As far as the eating of human flesh is concerned, it may be said that they make use of it exactly as we do with butcher's meat. In every village, their custom is to construct cubes of huge wooden beams, in the form of cages, in order to enclose men, women and children in them, to fatten them up and dispatch them to be sacrificed when they are ready and then to delect in their flesh. In addition, they are constantly at war, province against province, village against village, and the prisoners they succeed in taking are eaten after first being sacrificed. We observed the frequency of the shameful practice of incest between sons and mothers, brothers and sisters, uncles and nieces. Drunks are numerous, and it is beyond me to depict the filthiness of which they are capable. (3)

The author of this narrative combines two different types of data: factual information, which meshes with other sources on human sacrifices and cannibalism; and a strictly ideological discourse intended to justify the Christian conquest. It goes without saying that the generalized incest that has just been evoked does not exist in any society.

Sorting out reality from fiction and attributing a meaning to each are the tasks of the anthropologist and the historian, whether the focus be anthropophagy, marriage rites, or the initiation of the young.

Anthropophagy, or (to use a word generalized from a Caribbean term meaning "blood") cannibalism, has provoked in recent years two different – and oppositely symmetrical – interpretive models. The first, which is "materialist" in tendency, has been proposed by Marvin Harris in a book intended quite simply to explain simultaneously "the origins of war, capitalism, the state, and male supremacy." If men eat human flesh, it is, in the last analysis, because they need protein: a perfect example of a totalizing explanation that, in fact, explains nothing at all. (4) How is one to account for the fact, under such conditions, that Aztec society disposed of ample sources of nourishment? And how account for an additional fact: the inhabitants of Mexico, besieged and starved by Cortez's men in 1521, sacrificed their prisoners, and them alone, but without consuming anything other than the bodily parts ritually permitted, none of which prevented them from dying of hunger? As Marshall Sahlins has written: "Clearly the cultural content at issue, this stupendous system of sacrifice is too rich, logically as well as practically, to be explained by the natural

need for protein by which Harris proposes to account for it. To accept his view, we have to make some sort of bargain with the ethnographic reality, trading away what we know about it in order to understand it. Or, at the least, it takes a heroic act of utilitarian faith to conclude that this sacrificial system was a way the Aztecs had of getting some meat." Posing the problem of human sacrifice and anthropophagy in terms of economic rationality and considerations of profit leads to incredible absurdities: the system was in no way profitable, and in fact partook of an economy of wasteful expenditure.

But what then are we to do with cannibals if they thought neither nourishment nor a maximization of profits? It is at this juncture that a second explanation intervenes: cannibals don't exist; in other words, they are a myth.

Let us open a parenthesis here: like many historians, my predecessors and contemporaries, I am interested in myths, in the history of imagination, believing that the imagination and its products are an aspect of reality, and that their history should be undertaken exactly as one attempts a history of grains or of marriage practices in nineteenth-century France. No doubt; and yet that "reality" is nonetheless plainly less "real" than what normally passes under that rubric. Between the phantasms of the Marquis de Sade and the Terror of the Year II of the Revolution, there is a difference of nature and even, to take things to the limit, a radical opposition: Sade was a rather gentle individual. A certain vulgarization of psychoanalysis has played its role in this confusion between phantasm and reality. But matters are more complex: it is one thing to account for the role of the imaginary within history, one thing, that is, to define, as does Castoriadis, the imaginary institution of society, and quite another, to declare in the style of J. Baudrillard, that social reality is composed only of imaginary relations. For that extreme affirmation entails another, which I will have to take into account: one decreeing a whole series of quite historical events to be imaginary. As a historian, I feel a measure of responsibility for the delusions I shall presently be discussing.

It is W. Arens who has bestowed on us this dazzling bit of evidence: there never were any cannibals. (5) As is the rule in this kind of discovery, Arens arrived at it through several stages, which he explains to us at great length. Convinced that anthropophagy was a rather common practice, he was surprised by the rather imprecise character of the anthropological literature. He then set out in search of decisive proof, and placed a personal ad in a journal, searching for an eyewitness. The responses were vague, but a young German researcher, Erwin Frank, told him that he had scoured the entire literature on cannibalism among Indians in the Amazon basin from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, and that he was unable to find a single instance of first-hand testimony concerning the act of eating a fellow human being. Little by little, he thus arrived at the bitter and joyous realization that there were no cannibals, and that anthropophagy was an invention of anthropologists on the basis of inconsistent testimony. The function of that invention was to justify the domination of conquered societies by their conquerors.

A few lines will suffice to establish the grotesqueness of such a theory: we will, no doubt, always be lacking the testimony of the victims, the on testimony capable of satisfying Arens's requirements, but there does exist a quite sufficient quantity of testimony and information for no doubt to subsist. Marshall Sahlins and others have

reminded us of as much, but the American anthropologist has had the singular merit of analyzing the logic underlying this kind of exercise, which is less in the order of research than of academic gamesmanship. In concluding, he also pointed out the inevitable connection with what will henceforth be the central theme of this essay.

It all follows a familiar American pattern of social science journalism: Professor X puts out some outrageous theory, such as the Nazis didn't really kill the Jews, human civilization comes from another planet, or there is no such thing as cannibalism. Since facts are plainly against him, X's main argument consists of the expression, in the highest moral tones, of his own disregard for all available evidence to the contrary [...]. All this provokes Y and Z to issue a rejoinder, such as this one. X now becomes "the controversial Professor X" and his book is respectfully reviewed by non-professionals in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The New Yorker*. There follow appearances on radio, TV, and in the columns of the daily newspapers. (6)

In other words, what we are confronted with in this manner of affair is neither truth nor science, but quite simply public relations and academic gamesmanship.

We may state things differently: take the case of a poorly known individual from ancient history, whose existence has hitherto being accepted without question – such as the Athenian legislator Cleisthenses, who lived at the end of the sixth century B.C. One fine day I decide that he did not exist and I prove it: Herodotus was in no position to know; Aristotle was repeating sources that were themselves untrustworthy. But my actual objective is different: to impose a split among historians on my own terms. I will call all historians preceding me "Clesthenians," while I and my followers will together constitute the anti-Clesthenians. Everyone will realize that my theory is absurd, but since I will have respected the rules of the game, my reputation will not suffer from it. Marshall Sahlins says rather harshly what should be said about such customs: "So the publishing decisions of academic presses and ultimately the nature of scholarly research are drawn irresistibly into the orbit of the average common opinion of the consumer public. It's a scandal."

2. On La Vieille Taupe and Cannibalism

If there exist, as we have seen, two extreme and opposite forms of delusion concerning cannibals – Harris's reductionist delusion and Arens's delusion of denial – we may expect to find the same two delusions concerning an event that is far more traumatic for our history than all past, present, and future cannibals combined: the massacre by Hitler's Germany of several million European Jews. It is always satisfying for the mind to observe a logic in action. It will thus be pleasing to see that the enterprise known as La Vieille Taupe (or the Old Mole) published at several years' distance two equally simplistic explanations of the Hitlerian genocide: a materialist reduction and – if it may still be called an explanation – a negation pure and simple.

La Vieille Taupe, it will be recalled, is a bookstore turned publisher of a tendency that might be characterized, for lack of a better term, as anarcho-Marxist. From Marxism it has retained neither its critical philosophy, which prevails in Marx and several of his disciples, nor the statist perversion of Lenin and Stalin, but the obsession with a total explanation of the world, whose strictly "ideological" cast is apparent. To a humanity

one day reconciled with itself, which is the hope of the future, are opposed all existent regimes. Whether bourgeois-democratic, Stalino-Brezhnevian, social democratic, Maoist, third world, or fascist, all such regimes represent so many forms of capitalist domination. More specifically, La Vieille Taupe opines that there was no fundamental difference between the two opposing camps in the Second World War, and thus no particular perversity characterizing Hitlerian National Socialism. It may be intuited that starting from such premises, La Vieille Taupe will be poorly equipped to appreciate the rather odd place occupied by the Jews in the history of our society since the triumph of the Christian dissidence.

Thus it was that in 1970 La Vieille Taupe published a brochure entitled *Auschwitz ou le Grand Alibi*, the reprint of an anonymous article which had appeared in 1960 in *Programme Communiste*, the organ of another Marxist sect (founded by Amadeo Bordiga). The "grand alibi" of the antifascists was the extermination of the Jews by Hitler. That crime alone establishes the distance separating the democrat from the fascist. And yet, according to the Bordigists, this is by no means the case. For the anti-Semitism of the imperialist era must be given the requisite economic and social explanation. "As a consequence of their prior history, the Jews today find themselves for the most part in the middle and petty bourgeoisie. But that class stands condemned in advance by the irresistible advance of the concentration of capital." (7) The reaction of the petty bourgeoisie to that condemnation lay "in sacrificing one of its segments in order to thus save ensure the existence of the others." The German petty bourgeoisie "thus threw the Jews to the wolves in order to lighten its load and save itself." Large capital, for its part, was "delighted by the boon; it could liquidate a section of the petty bourgeoisie with the agreement of the petty bourgeoisie." (8) As for demonstrating how the "petty bourgeoisie" was more threatened in 1943 than in 1932, the brochure does not choose to take up the question. But at least it attempts to account for the methodical nature of the endeavor: "In normal times, and when only a small number are at stake, capitalism can allow those it ejects from the process of production to die on their own. But this was impossible to do in the middle of a war and for millions of men: that much disorder would have issued in a general paralysis. Capitalism had to organize their death." But with what profit? "Capitalism cannot execute a man it has sentenced if it does not extract some profit from that very punishment." Profit will thus be sought through the exhaustion of workers, and those incapable of working will be massacred directly. But is it profitable? "German capitalism could resign itself to murder pure and simple only with difficulty (...) because it brought no revenue." (9) The authors of the brochure this expatiate on the famous mission of Joel Brand, who left Hungary with the blessings of Himmler, to exchange the Hungarian Jews slated for the "mill" of Auschwitz for ten thousand trucks. (10) The authors do not for an instant appear to notice that we are then in 1944, not 1942, that Himmler had good reasons to realize that the war has been lost, and that the time has come to attempt to make use of the legendary "Jewish influence" on the Western allies. The Jews, despite such attempts, were destroyed "not as Jews but as rejects from the process of production, useless for production." (11)

Was it the manifestly absurd nature of that explanation that led La Vieille Taupe to an inverse explanation, one denying the genocide? I do not know, but if mutation there was, it was a rather sudden one, for Pierre Guillaume informs us that as of 1970, "La Vieille Taupe shared in essence the theses of Paul Rassinier." (12) I shall return shortly to Paul Rassinier, to the two of his books republished by La Vieille Taupe,

(13) and to several others. We shall retain only the fact that from a "materialist" explanation a path has been taken to denial pure and simple (Rassinier, Faurisson) (14) or to a more or less methodical skepticism (Serge Thion). A formula of Serge Thion's effectively reveals how the unfulfilled dream of a "materialist" explanation lies behind current dissatisfactions: "There were, no doubt," he writes, "artisan-like gassings, but the question of industrial methods of extermination has not been treated in a manner responsive to all the questions appropriately raised with regard to the functioning of any other industrial enterprise, in any other context." What is being discussed here? Technology? But large-scale gassing does not pose problems essentially different from "artisan-like" gassing. Or are we dealing with an economically based interpretation of Auschwitz? But if such is the case, Thion would be revealing that he does not understand the Nazi undertaking any more than Marvin Harris understands cannibalism. For exterminating human beings, even with industrial methods, is not, in this century, quite the same as canning peas. Even as eating human meat and eating butcher's meat are not the same thing and are not similarly charged with the sacred. What is it that the "materialists" need and what are they dreaming of? Huge registers in which the entries are marked as living and the exits as dead? In point of fact, we are not so far, as we will see, from possessing them, once one makes the requisite effort of elementary decoding. Would they like a statistical chart showing the productivity of the gas chambers?

The quarrel over industrial rationality in fact hides a profound ignorance of what constitutes a totalitarian system. Such a system is not an organism functioning in unified manner under the leadership of its head. In Nazi Germany, for example, the Gestapo, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Occupied Territories formed as many clans that had neither the same interests nor the same policies. The juridical and police (or deportation) apparatuses did not function at the same pace. (15) For a long time, for example, Jews condemned under common law escaped deportation. It was possible for there to be, quite normally, at Auschwitz, both hospitals and extermination installations into which healthy people disappeared. Conflicts of interest between those concerned above all with killing and those who wanted above all to exploit workers (and even Jewish ones) are attested to by documents of the period, as well as by subsequent testimony. Beyond the oppositions between various clans and strata of society, one finds, however, in those doing the speaking, a common fear in the face of reality, a common masked language.

In point of fact, the mass murder encounters, in its executants themselves, such tenacious resistances that one finds Himmler, for example, resorting on occasion to straightforward (or almost completely straightforward) language: "The following question has been put to us: what is to be done with women and children? I have taken a decision and here too I have come upon an obvious solution. I did not feel I had the right to exterminate [literally, to extirpate: *auszurotten*] the men – say, if you like, to kill them or to have them killed – and to allow the children to grow up and avenge themselves on our children and descendants. It was necessary to take the grave decision to make this people disappear from the Earth [*dieses Volk von der Erde verschwinden zu lassen*]." (16) Himmler is there, if I may say so, at his most frank, even if a description of the actual process would be a thousand times more traumatic. But it also befalls him, even before an "informed" audience, to inject a sudden note of attenuation. Thus before the officers of the SS, on April 24, 1943: "It is with anti-Semitism as with delousing. Removing or distancing (*entfernen*) lice is not a matter of

world-view. It is a matter of cleanliness." (17) In this case it is the metaphor of lice which gives its true sense to "distancing." For does one in fact "distance" a louse? Finally, Himmler on occasion encodes matters and even over-encodes them; thus, upon receiving a report in April 1943 from the SS "Inspekteur für Statistik" R. Korherr, he informs him briefly that he hopes that it in no place makes mention of the "special treatment" (*Sonderbehandlung*) of the Jews. (18) And one recalls that "special treatment" was already a coded term meaning extermination. (19) All this is obvious, sadly obvious, but can one expect the "materialist" Serge Thion to have opened up Jean-Pierre Faye's massive volume on *Langages totalitaires*? (20)

3. On History and Its Revision

Barely did the war come to an end when historical work on the world of the concentration camps began: modest work establishing details, as well as syntheses associated with such well-known names as Gerald Reitlinger, Martin Broszat, Raul Hilberg, Léon Poliakov, Olga Wormser-Migot, and a few others. The work was difficult since it entailed both knowledge and experience.

Michel de Boüard, a historian and a former deportee, concluded his admirable sketch of Mauthausen as follows: "When the survivors of the deportation will have disappeared, the archivists of the future may dispose of a few more documents, which still remain hidden today, but they will lack the principal source: the living memory of the witnesses." Great books on the deportation have been written by deportees: David Rousset, Eugen Kogon, Germaine Tillion. A book like Paul Rassinier's *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* should be mentioned at this juncture: excellent as testimony by the author of what he experienced, interesting when criticizing other witnesses of Buchenwald and Dora and revealing those in charge of a political apparatus run principally by communist deportees, it becomes frankly absurd, even heinous, when dealing with what the author had no knowledge of: the extermination camps, and principally Auschwitz. As it has come to be written, that history has meaning, if not a meaning. It has its zones of opaqueness and its progressive logic: (22) "euthanasia" (partly by gassing) of the mentally ill from 1939 to 1941 and of communist "commissars" in occupied Soviet Union from 1941 to 1942; the organization, then the rationalization, of the extermination by gas (carbolic oxide first, then Zyklon B) of Jews, Gypsies, and certain groups of Soviet prisoners in specialized centers in Poland, then, for the most part, in Auschwitz; cessation of the policy of exterminating the Jews on orders from Himmler at the end of October 1944, but the use of certain exterminatory techniques in camps in Austria, Germany, and Alsace (small gas chambers at Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, and Struthof). (23)

That history, to be sure, like all historical narratives, is in need of criticism. The critique can and should be conducted at several levels. First of all, a vast sub-literature representing a truly obscene appeal to consumption and sadism should be pitilessly denounced. (24) Equally deserving of elimination is whatever partakes of fantasy and propaganda. The task is not always easy, since fantasy and propaganda are largely based on reality. But clear cases do exist, such as one that has eluded the ardor of the revisionists, that of a Protestant theologian, Charles Hauter, who was deported to Buchenwald, never saw any gas chamber, and who went on to rave about them:

An obsession with machinery literally abounded when it came to extermination. Since it had to occur quite rapidly, a special form of industrialization was required. The gas chambers answered that need in a very different way. Some, rather refined in conception, were supported by pillars of porous material, with which the gas formed and then seeped through the walls. Others were more simple in structure. But all were sumptuous in appearance. It was easy to see that the architects had conceived them with pleasure, devoting great attention to them, gracing them with all the resources of their aesthetic sense. These were the only parts of the camp that had truly been constructed with love. (25)

Concerning propaganda, we may mention the report on Treblinka by the Soviet journalist V. Grossmann, in which everything is distorted and monstrously exaggerated, from the number of victims, which is multiplied by more than three (from about 900,000 to 3,000,000) to the techniques used to inflict death. (26)

It goes without saying that the testimony, all testimony and documents – whatever one may read in Faurisson (*Vérité*, p. 210, n. 45), the archives of the Third Reich are accessible to researchers, unlike the archives of France and the Soviet Union – should be criticized (as they already are, and it is true that some are completely fictitious) according to methods that have been used for centuries. That means, of course, that nothing in this matter is untouchable. The figure of six million Jews murdered, which comes from Nuremberg, is neither sacred nor definitive, and many historians have arrived at a figure which is slightly lower. (27) Similarly, Serge Klarsfeld, through the detailed work characterizing his *Mémorial*, has reduced by about 40,000 the figure habitually given for the deportation of the Jews of France (from 120,000 to a little more than 76,000). (28) Who would not approve of such research? Who would object to a proliferation of theses and studies on the subject – which is not the case? (29)

Finally, it is plain that the mass murder has to be resituated within the larger realities of which it is a part: the whole of Hitler's policies, first of all. (And even here, one should compare only what is comparable: the only "counterpart" to the genocide of the Jews is that of the Gypsies and, to a relative extent, that of a fraction of the Polish and Soviet populations.) The whole of the Second World War, next: it is clear that a history can not be written by the victors alone. The massacre of Katyn, the bombing of Dresden, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the "return," in frightful conditions, of the Germans fleeing from eastern Europe, the camps established near Perpignan by the Third Republic and the French state, and the delivery to the Soviets of the Russian prisoners seeking refuge in the West are as much a part of it as Auschwitz and Treblinka. But here too the comparison must be honest. It is a bold-faced lie to compare the Hitlerian camps to the camps set up, in a perfectly scandalous decision, by the Roosevelt administration to house Americans of Japanese origin (*Vérité*, p. 189). The last context is planetary, that of our contemporary world so fertile in massacres (the Armenians in 1915, the victims of the colonial wars) and in populations exploited to the limits of survival (the third world). Here too an elementary measuring stick is called for: thus, the expulsion of the Palestinians can not be compared with the Nazi deportation, and the massacre of Deir Yassin by the men of the Irgun and the Stern gang (April 9 and 10, 1948) can be compared with Oradour, not Auschwitz.

Finally, it remains for historians to withdraw the data from the hands of the ideologues that exploit them. In the case of the genocide of the Jews, it is clear that one Jewish ideology, Zionism, exploits the great massacre in a manner that is on occasion scandalous. (30) But the fact that an ideology has seized on a fact does not do away with its existence, as the entirety of Thion's book seems intent on demonstrating, for reasons more applicable to his personal approach than to that of those he would attack. Since when, to take an extreme example, does the fact that Hitlerian propaganda revealed to the world the Katyn massacre do away with its reality? Why can it not be the case that LICRA (International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism) might both speak the truth about Auschwitz and make use of the services of a racist buffoon like Paul Giniewski (*Vérité*, pp. 152-153)? Conversely, it is incredible that one might accept simply as "an individual who has always spoken his mind openly" a recently rallied supporter of Faurisson named Vincent Monteil, a relentless (and perhaps paranoid) partisan of the most extremist Arab theses concerning Israel and the Jews (*Vérité*, pp. 130-131).

The program I have just sketched is in the order of historical research. It is not entirely accomplished, and like any historical research, it can never be completed.

Is such the critical vision brought to us, even in excessive form, by the literature of "revisionism"? (31) Not by any means. The contribution of that literature concerns, for the most part, not the history of the war of 1939-1945, but the study of the contemporary mentalities, above all since the 1960s. One of the very rare bits of information to be derived from Thion's book, for example, besides his bibliographies, is Faurisson's demonstration that Anne Frank's Diary, as it was first published, is, if not a "literary hoax," at the least a document that has been tampered with (*Vérité*, pp. 213-298). Thion, who is for once lucid, notes as much: "This does not diminish in any way the tragic fate she (Anne Frank) knew." On the scale of Hitler's genocide, that modification is equivalent in importance to a comma. (32)

In point of fact, the idea that one would have to oppose a "revisionist" school to an exterminationist" school is an absurd idea that is naturally a creation of the alleged "revisionists," an idea taken up for his own ends by Thion. There exist historical schools that confront others when new problematics, new types of documents, or new "topographies" (in Paul Veyne's sense) surface. Everyone can bring examples to mind. But would one say that there is one school maintaining that the Bastille was taken on July 14, 1789, and another one claiming it was taken on the 15th. We are at this point on the terrain of positive history, *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, as things actually transpired, according to Ranke's nineteenth-century formula, a formula in which truth is opposed to falsehood, independently of any interpretation.

There are, to be sure, historical schools claiming to be "revisionist." Taking the opposite tack from what is taught is a slightly perverse habit, however salutary the reflex from which it springs. One might explain, for instance, that Stalin possessed no more than a shadow of power at the end of the 1930s, (33) or that the US government, and it alone, was the origin of the Cold War (works by Joyce and Gabriel Kolko), (34) which is all the more easy to demonstrate in that the American archives are accessible, and the Soviet archives are not. These are eminently contestable works, but which all the same partake of the historian's ethic and practice. There is

nothing comparable in the case of the revisionists of the Hitlerian genocide, in which it is simply a matter of replacing the unbearable truth with a reassuring lie.

4. On the Revisionist Method

To all appearances there is more than one room in the revisionist house. Serge Thion presents a moderate – indeed antifascist – version, one capable of bringing tears to the eyes of Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit. At stake is only a limited operation, aimed at eliminating from the list of Hitler's crimes one that, once submitted to critical reflection, seems impossible. "Let us reduce the question to its central articulation: striking a major crime from the catalogue of Nazi ignominies would be tantamount to rehabilitating the Third Reich, warping it 'leftward,' making it comparable to other political regimes. This proceeds from a confusion: one attributes to authors casting doubt on the gas chambers the intention of casting doubt on all the other horrors, which are far better known and documented. But that is merely a polemical ploy" (*Vérité*, p. 91). (35) The "revisionists," in fact, all more or less share several extremely simple principles.

1. There was no genocide and the instrument symbolizing it, the gas chambers, never existed. (36)

2. The "final solution" was never anything other than the expulsion of the Jews towards eastern Europe, their "repression," as Faurisson elegantly puts it (*Vérité*, p. 90). Since "most of the Jews of France came from the East," it may be concluded that it was never anything more than their repatriation, a bit as when French authorities repatriated Algerians, in October 1961, in their "native douars." (37)

3. The number of Jewish victims of Nazism is far smaller than has been claimed: "There is no document worthy of the name which has figured the total loss of the Jewish population during the last war to be more than 200,000... We may also add that included in the total number of Jewish victims are cases of natural death," the German lawyer Manfred Roeder writes calmly, which would mean that demographically the death rate among Jewish communities was exceptionally low. Others, in their generosity, go as far as a million (Rassinier, Butz), (38) attributing a large fraction of those deaths to Allied aircraft. Faurisson, for his part, (almost) divides the million in two: a few hundred thousand deaths in uniform (which is a fine demonstration of valor) and as many killed "in acts of war" (*Vérité*, p. 197). As for the death statistics for Auschwitz, they "rose to about 50,000" (ibid.).

4. Hitler's Germany does not bear the principal responsibility for the Second World War. It shares that responsibility, for example, with the Jews (Faurisson in *Vérité*, p. 187), or it may even not bear any responsibility at all.

5. The principal enemy of the human race during the 1930s and 1940s was not Nazi Germany but Stalin's Soviet Union.

6. The genocide was an invention of Allied propaganda, which was largely Jewish, and specifically Zionist, and which may be easily explained by the Jewish propensity to give imaginary statistics, (39) under the influence of the Talmud.

Anyone can verify, through recourse to the relevant sources, that I am not inventing anything. Moreover, the revisionists convened a Los Angeles congress in September 1979, which allowed them to offer a reward of \$50,000 to anyone capable of proving the existence of a gas chamber for the purpose of killing Jews. (40) It may be assumed that they themselves constituted the jury. They now possess a periodical, the *Journal of Historical Review*, whose first issue (Spring 1980) I have before me, and which features several of the masters of this ideological movement, notably Arthur Butz and Robert Faurisson. It contains the proceedings of the Los Angeles congress.

Here, for example, are several of the principles evolved by Dr. Austin J. App, a German-American who has taught in numerous colleges, both Catholic and secular:

The Third Reich wanted to get Jews to emigrate, not to liquidate them physically. Had they intended liquidation, 500,000 concentration camp survivors (an imaginary statistic) would not now be in Israel to collect fancy indemnities from West Germany. Absolutely no Jews were "gassed" in any concentration camp. There were crematoria for cremating corpses who had died from whatever cause, including especially also the genocidal Anglo-American air raids. The majority of Jews who died in pogroms and those who disappeared and are still unaccounted for fell afoul in territories controlled by the Soviet Russians, not in territories under German control. Most of the Jews alleged to have met their death at the hands of the Germans were subversives, partisans, spies, and criminals, and also victims of unfortunate but internationally legal reprisals. (41)

The various components of this ideological discourse can be easily discerned: German nationalism, neo-Nazism, anticommunism, anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism. These ingredients are to be found in differing forms and proportions, depending on the author (it is clear, for example, that German nationalism plays no direct role in the work of the French pacifist Paul Rassinier). The share of anti-Semitism – of a pathological hatred of the Jews – is enormous. The operation's aim is obvious: it is a question of depriving, ideologically, a community of what represents its historical memory. For here we find ourselves forced, in the last analysis, to prove what happened. We who, since 1945, know find ourselves obliged to be demonstrative, eloquent, to use rhetorical weapons, to enter into the world of what the Greeks called *Peithô*, persuasion, which they had made a goddess who is not our own. Is there a realization of what this means?

But let us return to our "revisionists." It will be suspected that – to parody the formula ascribed to Colonel Bigeard (since then a general and a minister) – one does not arrive at such historical results by resorting to the procedures of a choirboy. What then are the rules of revisionist method? All things considered, they are rather simple. Let us pass over the most obvious tactics: out and out lies, (42) forgeries, the appeal to imaginary documents. Those are common practices, but if need be a revisionist could make do without them. We shall mention, instead, since Butz (not without reticence, pp. 119-120, 128-130), Thion, and Faurisson (pp. 70, 88, 105-106, 156, 212n) make him one of their witnesses, the report written by Th. Christophersen, who was growing dandelions (for the production of synthetic rubber) in 1944, on a state farm, three kilometers from Auschwitz, a very real – but different – place. Nothing is missing, neither an imaginary "finding by the United Nations" explaining that "the

undeniably regrettable losses of the Jewish people during the Second World War went as high as 200,000 and not six million" (*Mensonge d'Auschwitz*, p. 15), nor the idyllic description of a camp, or rather a vacation resort in which women wore makeup and put on weight. It may be observed, since such a witness has been invoked, that the "revision," like the revolution of days gone by, is a block.

The principles of revisionist method can in fact be summarized as follows:

1. Any direct testimony contributed by a Jew is either a lie or a fantasy.
2. Any testimony or document prior to the Liberation is a forgery or is not acknowledged or is treated as a "rumor." Butz and Rassinier, for example, are totally unaware of the documents written by members of the Auschwitz Sonderkommando, which were hidden by them and then rediscovered after the war, documents giving a precise description and agreeing in all respects with what is known from other sources about the functioning of the gas chambers. (43) Faurisson is satisfied with an allusion (*Le Monde* of January 16, 1979) to "manuscripts – miraculously – rediscovered," and whose inauthenticity he does not even attempt to demonstrate.
3. Any document, in general, with firsthand information concerning the methods of the Nazis is a forgery or has been tampered with. Thus Faurisson summarily categorizes as belonging to "forgeries, apocryphal, or suspect" works (*Vérité*, p. 284) the heroic "chronicle" of the Warsaw ghetto, which was kept by Emmanuel Ringelblum and a team of whom I know one member personally. Upon inquiry, one discovers that the chronicle was indeed truncated – above all in its Warsaw edition of 1952 – but the cuts consisted for the most part of a few passages damaging to Polish national pride. (44) They in no way modify the validity of the documents concerning Nazi policy.
4. Any Nazi document bearing direct testimony is taken at face value if it is written in coded language, but unacknowledged (or under-interpreted) if it is written plainly, as in the case of such speeches of Himmler as that of December 16, 1943: "When I was obliged to give orders in a village to march against partisans and Jewish commissars – I say this to this audience, and my words are indented solely for those present – I systematically gave orders to kill the women and children of those partisans and commissars"; (45) or this entry in Goebbels's *Diary* for May 13, 1943: "Modern people thus have no other solution than to exterminate the Jews." (46) On the other hand, any manifestation of wartime racism in the Allied camp (and they were not lacking, as may be imagined) is taken in the strongest sense.
5. Any Nazi testimony after the end of the war – in trials either in the East or in the West, in Warsaw or Cologne, Jerusalem or Nuremberg, in 1945 or 1963, is considered as having been obtained under torture or by intimidation. I shall return to this important point, but note at this juncture that it is a bit surprising under such conditions that no SS officer has denied the existence of the gas chambers. More precisely, Rassinier "is of the impression" (*Ulysse trahi*, p. 132) that the last commandant of Auschwitz, Richard Baer, "declared that there had never been any gas chambers at Auschwitz under his command." But Baer died, providentially, to be sure, in his prison cell in June 1963.

6. A vast pseudo technical arsenal is mobilized to demonstrate the material impossibility of mass gassings. Concerning the validity of Faurisson's "chemical" arguments, a chemist's observations have been appended below. As for his considerations on gas chambers used for the execution of those sentenced to death in certain of the United States and the precautions surrounding their use (*Vérité*, pp. 301-309), they in no way prove that mass gassings are impossible. They amount to comparing realities that are incommensurate, as far from each other as the voracity of a starving man and a dinner at Maxim's. The act of gassing, like that of eating, can be performed under vastly different conditions.

7. Formerly, God's existence was proven by the notion that existence was contained in the very concept of God. Such was the famous "ontological proof." It may be said that for the "revisionists," the gas chambers did not exist because nonexistence was one of their attributes. Such is the non-ontological proof. For example, the word *Vergasung* does indeed mean gassing when it appears in the negative in a letter from the historian Martin Broszat to *Die Zeit* (August 19, 1960): "*Keine Vergasung in Dachau*" ("no gassing in Dachau"); but *Vergasungskeller* means "carburetion chamber" in a document of January 1943 cited by Georges Wellers (Faurisson, in *Vérité*, pp. 104, 109).

8. Finally, anything capable of rendering this frightening story acceptable or believable, of establishing its evolution or furnishing terms for comparison is either unacknowledged or falsified. Not a line in Faurisson and Thion recalls the exploits of the Einsatzgruppen (the famous ravine at Babi Yar, for instance). Not a line in Thion and Faurisson recalls that mentally ill Germans were exterminated from 1939 to 1941 and that certain of those in charge of the operation (e.g., F. Stangl at Treblinka) would soon try out their talents on the Jews. (47) Was that episode an invention of the psychotic international? As for Butz, he is satisfied to affirm that there is nothing in common between the euthanasia of the mentally ill and the pseudo-extermiation of the Jews (*The Hoax*, pp. 174-175). There are but a few lines in Butz (pp. 124, 130, 220) about the presence of Gypsies at Auschwitz. He does not even make an effort to refute what is taught in other quarters about their extermination. As for Faurisson, he limits himself to affirming that the Gypsies were interned not "for racial reasons, but for reasons of vagrancies and 'potential delinquency,'" which is quite simply false. (48) He specifies that numerous Gypsy children were born in Auschwitz, without saying what became of them (they were exterminated), and maintains that it was members of the Resistance who were responsible, when such was the case, for the disappearance of the Gypsies (*Vérité*, pp. 192, 212 n. 53).

It will perhaps now be better perceived what such a historical method signifies: in our spectacle-oriented society, it is an attempt at extermination on paper that pursues in another register the actual work of extermination. One revives the dead in order the better to strike the living. Eichmann crossed Europe to organize the train transport system. Faurisson does not have trains at his disposal, but paper. P. Guillaume describes him for us: "a man thoroughly in possession of his subject (200 kilograms of working documents, representing research on several tons of texts)" (*Vérité*, p. 139); the worst part is that it is true, that Faurisson has indeed spent an incalculable number of workdays in the French or German archives in search not, as he pretends, of the truth, (49) but of falsehood, in quest of a way to destroy an immense system of indestructible proof, and which is indestructible precisely because it constitutes a

system, not, as the attempt has been made to have us believe, a sheaf of suspect documents.

5. Moscow, Nuremberg, Jerusalem

S. Thion has written the following statement, which takes us to the heart of the false problem he is intent on debating:

What is thus most incredible for anyone preoccupied with this question is - given the enormity of the facts and the generality of their representation - the narrowness of the sources, once one is willing to eliminate the crowd of hearsay witness who in fact did not see. It is literally stupefying to observe that the centerpiece is the set of confessions before Allied tribunals by the heads of the German camps. Once one is prepared to imagine the situation of those defeated men, gambling with their own lives between the hands of their jailers, a paltry game in which truths and lies are the basic tokens in a tactic of survival, one will not be prepared to accept all their declarations as valid currency. (*Vérité*, pp. 33-34)

The analogy, for the "revisionists," is with the Moscow show trials (*Vérité*, pp. 29, 63, 82, 161) or with witchcraft trials, to which the Moscow trials are in fact compared (*ibid.*, pp. 82, 183). We find distilled here the quintessence of the revisionists' paralogisms. It is quite simply false. There is much more testimony, many other documents than the confessions of camp directors. I have enumerated some and I could cite many more. I have before me, for instance, a particularly moving booklet that was published in Geneva, in 1944, by the World Jewish Congress; it contains documents concerning Auschwitz and Treblinka (spelled "Tremblinka") that served as the basis for an American publication, in November 1944, by the Executive Office of the War Refugee Board. (50) It contains nothing that is not in essential agreement with both the documents of members of the Sonderkommando and the testimony of SS officers. I daresay as well that "hearsay witnesses which in fact did not see" also have something to teach us. When, for instance, a man is separated from the rest of his family and learns from former detainees that exit from the camp is by way of the smokestack, when there exists an immense amount of analogous testimony, when one knows that the interested parties never reappeared, such testimony is, all the same, deserving of some attention. But for the moment, the heart of the matter is not there. There is a confusion, under a single rubric, of witnesses who are in fact quite different. Kurt Gerstein, for instance, a principal witness of the extermination process at Belzec in 1942, a Christian anti-Nazi wearing an SS uniform, can not be compared with the commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Hoess. Yet his testimony, which was called into question for a variety of reasons, not all of which were bad (the manifestly erroneous nature of his statistics, the mediocre quality of his first publications) has victoriously survived the test. It was even confirmed by the Nazi professor W. Pfannenstiel, not only during his own denazification trial, at Darmstadt in June 1950, but, quite remarkably, during a visit he paid to Paul Rassinier in person. The fact that the confirmation was delivered in ignoble anti-Semitic terms does not in any way diminish (quite the contrary) its validity. (51)

But we must proceed further. To reason as though only lies and falsehoods could emerge from Moscow or Warsaw is to lapse into a fundamental error. If it is true that

the Hitlerians could speak the truth about Katyn, it is no less the case that the Soviets can speak the truth about Auschwitz. It cannot be claimed, moreover, that they were particularly forceful in denouncing the Jewish dimension of the massacre, and it was not even through them that such reports began to circulate from 1942 to 1944. As for the share of the camp archives that they seized during the Liberation, it has not, if I can believe my informants in Poland, reappeared since.

Concerning Poland, from 1945 to the present, a country, that is, whose satellite status, however real, has not penetrated in any depth, a country whose intelligentsia has retained its backbone, with a flourishing historical school, it is sheer absurdity to present the scholars working at the Oswiecim Museum as so many forgers. Their works are carefully executed and their publications – despite several perfectly obvious blind spots of a political nature (the U.S.S.R., the Communist party, Polish nationalism) – would do honor to any historical institute in the West. (52) And if the historian Michel Borwicz, a Polish Jew who emigrated to the West, is credible for Faurisson in a case involving forgery (*Vérité*, p. 284), his testimony and historical analyses, which are based in large part on Polish publications, are equally valid when what is at stake is affirming the truth. (53)

But the essential question is not even there. Is there something in common between a Moscow trial (or one in Budapest, Prague, Sofia, or Peking) and two major (but not exclusive) sources of documentation such as the Nuremberg trials (1945/1946) and the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem? Is there something in common between the confessions of Hoess at Heide and Minden (English zone), at Nuremberg and Cracow, where he wrote his autobiography while awaiting execution, and the confessions of Bukharin, since that rather unfortunate comparison (54) has been made by militants close to La Vieille Taupe (*Vérité*, p. 148), or, better still, of Slansky? The Stalinist trials were a literary genre obeying extremely strict rules. The author of these pages, who took the trouble – in 1949, approximately at the time of the appearance of a memorable article by F. Fejtö in *Esprit* (November) - of deciphering, which his friend Charles Malamoud, the official record of the Rajk trial, believes he knows them rather well. Plainly, a show trial is easier to stage if the accused, the police, and the magistrates have in common what Dan Sperber calls a "shared knowledge," (55) that is, if they are all communists, but that is a condition, with the invariable use of torture, which is not indispensable. The first rule is that the accused adopt entirely the language of his accusers; but that rule, if characteristic of all trials of the Moscow sort, is valid for them alone. The second rule, which is fundamental, is that absolutely everything that the accused says, either during the official investigation or publicly at the trial, must be politically significant, in accordance with party policy. The signification may not be immediately apparent; it may, for instance, augur a future trial, or the possibility of a future trial, but it always exists.

In the documentation on Auschwitz there is testimony that gives the impression of having adopted completely the language of the victors. Such is the case, for instance, of SS Pery Broad, who wrote, for the English in 1945, a report on Auschwitz, where he had been part of the *Politische Abteilung*, that is, the Gestapo. (56) He speaks of himself there in the third person. But is it the case of the memoirs of Hoess? (57) Eichmann's lawyer in Jerusalem, Servatius, claimed as much: "Hoess's testimony is characterized by the fact of his total submission," (58) but I doubt that any other reader of the autobiography would have that impression. Hoess proliferates

autobiographical details, insignificant but authentic facts, personal comments, the most varied political commentaries (including a denunciation of the Soviet camps), anti-Semitic and anti-Gypsy accusations. Nothing in it suggests either fabrication or dictation. (59) Upon being arrested by the Allies, Hoess was beaten (and why should we disbelieve him?) several times; he disavows his first signed statement (p. 244); he was also mistreated by his Polish guards at the beginning of his incarceration in Cracow (p. 247). At Nuremberg, on April 15, 1946, he was first called as a witness for the defense by Kaltenbrunner's lawyer, Kauffmann, a fact which Faurisson, normally so garrulous on the subject of Hoess, omits mentioning. (60) "Is it the case," the lawyer asked him, "that you can not give the exact number of victims, since you were forbidden to count them?" The reply was affirmative and renders futile any speculation on the numbers given by Hoess. The most absurd cases, moreover, deal not with the figures for his victims, but with the number of Jews that he claims would have arrived at Auschwitz had Hitler's reign continued (for example, four million Romanian Jews, two and a half million Jews from Bulgaria (p. 287)). Hoess's testimony is, to be sure, valid only for what he saw. It is also deserving of criticism. (61) Faurisson makes a great deal out of an error, copied over several times, which, in testimony collected by the British, had him speaking of an imaginary camp called "Wolzek near Lublin" (most probably a confusion – and repetition – between Belzec and Maidanek). I fail to see what can be derived from such arguments. Errors, confusions, and even absurdities are to be found in all kinds of testimony, and even in many celebrated writers who were not forced to confess. Here is an example of a confusion at least as serious as the error of "Wolzek." A French author, speaking precisely of Hoess, tells us (p. 43) that he was incarcerated at the prison in "Krakau," and on the next page, places him in "Cracovie." But Krakau is the German name of the city called Cracovie in French. The author is Rassinier in his book *Le Drame des Juifs européens*. (62)

As for the Nuremberg trials, the principal target of the revisionists, it is possible to discover every imaginable fault in them: they were trials by the victors, who could also be reproached for war crimes. The statutes adopted in the inter-Allied agreement of 1945 present certain ambiguities, to the extent that the high court is placed partially under the authority of the controlling council of the four occupying powers. Article 21 requires the court to consider "as authentic evidence the document and official reports of governments of the United Nations." Article 19 not only affirms, as Faurisson has said (*Vérité*, pp. 29, 71, 180), that "the Tribunal will not be bound by technical rules relative to the administration of evidence," but explains: "It will adopt and apply, insofar as possible, an accelerated and non-formalist procedure and will allow all means which it will judge to have probative value," which is tantamount to saying that it is master to decide what constitutes evidence and what does not.

But in point of fact, the statutes were of little importance. (64) The only question that counts, historically, is the following: according to which of the two competing models of jurisprudence did the tribunal function, the liberal (and primarily Anglo-Saxon) model or the Soviet model? The answer is not in doubt. The Soviets, who had detained Supreme Admiral Raeder and H. Fritzsche (a collaborator with Goebbels), who was subjected to Moscow-style interrogation, did not impose their law. They could neither impose the inclusion of the crime at Katyn among those attributed to the Nazis nor prevent a German lawyer (despite censorship of his arguments) from shedding a bit of light on their 1939 pact with Germany, nor prevent three acquittals

(including Fritzsche's). The prosecution was far from always triumphant over the defense, and the principle of *Tu quoque*, which was officially forbidden, occasionally triumphed in practice, as when the German admirals were able to show that the American fleet under Admiral Nimitz had done exactly what they were being reproached with. The principle of collective guilt, which was officially in effect, was not retained in practice, and the tribunal did not make use of the concept of "crimes against humanity" – such crimes were treated as war crimes – and abandoned the notion of a conspiracy. (65) That the raw material accumulated and stocked at Nuremberg was not always of very good quality is a certainty. That a certain amount of sifting must be done is obvious. But sifting does not mean rejecting en bloc and speaking of witchcraft trials in a situation involving defendants who, in the immense majority of cases, contested point by point the charges against them, frequently pleaded ignorance or innocence, but never denied what was not deniable. As for the Jerusalem trial, it too was deserving of serious criticism, (66) but no such criticism, I believe, has ever called into question the administration of evidence. Eichmann presented himself as a second-rank bureaucrat, a kind of chief railway conductor, making the trains run; he above all tried to free himself from the crushing weight of the accusations lodged against him – in the hope of exculpating themselves – by his comrades in the SS; questioned according to Anglo-Saxon procedure by Captain Less, he specified that he had had direct and personal knowledge of the death trucks at Chelmno, the executions at Minsk, the gas chambers at Auschwitz (*Eichmann par Eichmann*, pp. 111, 115, 139). What force in the world – since he was not tortured – what "shared knowledge" with the German Jew questioning him could have constrained him to utter these sentences: "We were deep into the summer of 1941 when Heydrich asked me to come see him. 'The Führer has given the order to do away with the Jews.' Those are the exact words he uttered upon receiving me; and to confirm the effect produced, contrary to his custom, he paused for a long moment. I still remember it quite well." (67)

As for works written on the Hitlerian genocide, Eichmann, who was in a better position to judge their historical validity than the "revisionists," "often referred to the works of Léon Poliakov as an authority and the best source for the events" (A. Less, *Eichmann par Eichmann*, p. 12). Thus the true question raised by those who are troubled by the "revisionist" arguments – and some of those who are troubled are in good faith – is not that of the validity of one trial or another. In the last analysis, they would be willing to reject all such trials. What is difficult for them to admit is that the official truth, sanctioned by the decisions of the highest courts, by the discourse of chiefs of state, in both the West and the East, should also be, exceptionally, the truth pure and simple. There lies the true difficulty, which obliges us to look a bit more closely at the works of the true cultural hero of revisionism, a hero, moreover, who died in 1967: Paul Rassinier.

6. The Fantastic Calculations of Paul Rassinier

I am not here to "judge" Paul Rassinier. Lucien Febvre once assembled two studies "against the surrogate judges of the Valley of Josaphat." (68) Thion speaks of the "incredible slander whose victim he has been" (p. 60). He concedes "that there are verbal excesses and, occasionally, debatable affirmations to be found in his writings," but concludes: "One day, it will indeed be necessary to rehabilitate Paul Rassinier" (p. 165). As for Faurisson: "An authentic revolutionary, an authentic resistance fighter, an

authentic deportee, (Rassinier) loved the truth as it should be loved: quite strong and above all else" (*Vérité*, p. 195). It will be appreciated that such praise, with that insistence on the love of the truth that characterizes all forgers, is not exactly of the sort to win my own sympathy. (69)

There is, in fact, something tragic in the fate of Paul Rassinier; not so much a discontinuity in his career (of which there are many: Mussolini, Doriot) but a rift within his very being. What happened at the time of his death (July 28, 1967) symbolizes rather well his destiny. In Paris, the eulogy at his funeral was pronounced by Maurice Bardèche; in Bermont, near Belfort, where he was buried, a representative of the pacifist group La Voie de la Paix was the speaker. (70) A grade-school teacher, then a history and geography professor in a Collège d'Enseignement général, Rassinier was a Communist, then a Socialist, initially of the Marceau Pivert tendency, then of the Paul Faure tendency. A number of the militants of that tendency eventually made the transition to a pro-Vichy and anti-Semitic stance after 1940 (the emblematic Jew being Léon Blum). This was not the case for Rassinier. In favor of the Munich pact, he was nonetheless a member of the Resistance, arrested by the Gestapo in October 1943, and deported to Buchenwald, then to Dora. His experience as a deportee was less that of a political militant than of a petty convict. It was that experience which accounts for the value of *Passage de la ligne* (Crossing the Line) (1948), the first part of *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* (Ulysses's Lie) (1950), and of his critique of the concentration camp bureaucracy and literature. *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* also denounces French and colonial arbitrariness. It was prefaced in 1950 by an anarchist of the extreme right, Albert Paraz, an anti-Semite and a friend of Céline's. The foreword to the second edition of *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* (1954) features a striking tribute to Maurice Bardèche (p. 235 n6), who had begun his political campaign in 1948 with *Nuremberg ou la Terre promise* (Nuremberg or the Promised Land). It is worth while reading that "admirable book" (Rassinier, *Véritable procès Eichmann*, p.43). At the time Maurice Bardèche had not yet discovered that Hitler's genocide did not exist: "There was a will to exterminate the Jews, for which there is copious evidence" (p. 187). But that extermination does not concern us: "What transpired at Auschwitz, Maidanek, and other places concerns the Slavs; as for us, our business is the West" (p. 115). Thus the real question for him is: "How many Frenchmen were at Auschwitz and Treblinka?" (p. 162). "There was no deportation of the French, but a deportation of the Jews; and if certain Frenchmen were deported along with them, it was because they had accepted or seemed to accept the defense of the Jewish cause." The book closes with a pithy formula: "Our choice is between having the SS on our side or in our homes." As of 1955, Rassinier was published by extreme right-wing firms, Les Sept Couleurs and La Librairie Française, which was run by the professional anti-Semite H. Coston. Today La Vieille Taupe declares: "Those who reproach Paul Rassinier for allowing himself to be published by an extreme-right firm are those who would have preferred that he not be published at all." (71)

Are those publications, and his writings for *Rivarol*, the result of a heroic "compromise," such as that, which some have advanced, of Lenin, who made his way back to Russia by way of an imperial Germany at war? Not quite. There are to be found in Rassinier's publications the wherewithal to assemble an anthology of the most stupid and shopworn clichés of anti-Semitism. In that endeavor, moreover, he was aided by quotations from an extremist Zionist of insane bent, Kadmi Cohen.

Jewish power as the center of commerce and the world bank is to be dated to ancient times. Saul, David, and Solomon did in their day what Israel does today: the "counter-state" situated "along the most important commercial arteries of the modern world"; Saul, David, and Solomon, then, "attempted to install the Jewish people at the intersection of the two great commercial arteries of their time." The result was that at the end of ten centuries, "all the gold" of the Roman world was placed "periodically on galley-boats heading for Judea." Rassinier does not specify, however, whether those shipments were organized by the bank under the sign of *rubrum scutum*, "red shield" in English (in German, Rothschild). "If, on two occasions, Rome sent Titus (70 A.D.), then Hadrian (135 A.D.) to destroy the kingdom of Judea and to disperse its inhabitants throughout the Empire, among other reasons, there was the following one: the retrieval of what it considered to be its gold. Until Titus, it had been extremely well-disposed toward the Jews, the Berenice affair proves as much" (*Drame*, pp. 128-129). Is a historian of antiquity obliged to specify that all this, in its entirety, is grotesque? As for the idyll between Titus and Berenice, it occurred, in its essential phase, after the taking of Jerusalem. But all that concerns antiquity: Jewish greed remains a threat in the modern world as well. Should the international Zionist movement get its "hands on Wall Street," "the principal Israeli way station in the Diaspora would become not only the commercial roof of the Atlantic world, but (thanks to the oil factor) the command-post of all its industry as well." Thus, however imperfectly, would the Biblical prophecy be realized: "The women of Israel would continue, to be sure, to give birth in pain, but their men would win their bread and that of their children through the sweat of other people's brows" (*Drame*, p. 129). Mere "verbal excesses," as S. Thion would say. Need we specify that, according to Rassinier, Léon Blum's positions in 1938, which the author, who was a socialist at the time, deems pro-war, "were inspired by the frequently repeated stands of world Jewry." (72) Rassinier, in fact, is literally obsessed by the theme of the international Jewish conspiracy. The Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC), the quite peaceful location of a library and archives in which Faurisson could work until 1978, becomes the Centre mondial, or World Center, de documentation juive and an "enterprise for the falsification and fabrication of historical documents" (*Drame*, p. 8 and *passim*), and that error compounded by slander crossed the Atlantic and is to be found in Butz (*The Hoax*, p. 248). The alliance of Jews and communists is a permanent datum of world politics. In 1950, Moscow, Tel Aviv, and Warsaw entered into coalition against a renascent Europe and the result was publications such as Poliakov's *Bréviaire de la haine* (Breviary of Hatred) (1951).(73) "Since then," according to Rassinier, "it has not stopped" (*Drame*, p. 9).

Rassinier's glory lay in being the first to demonstrate systematically that there was no genocide and in exonerating the Nazis of "the horrendous and libelous accusation" (*Drame*, p. 107). For the "drama of the European Jews... is not that six million of them had been exterminated as they claim, but only in the fact that they have made that claim" (*Drame*, p. 12). Rassinier's friends are on solid ground, to be sure, when they claim that what counts is not an author's sentiments but the scientific validity of his statements. I agree with them in theory, even though anti-Semitic paranoia is perhaps not the best preparation for a study of Hitler's policies toward the Jews. As Thion says, "It is important that such matters remain the concern of decent and honest people" (p. 45). Vouching for the scientific validity of Rassinier's work we have Serge Thion, a sociologist, a member of the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, who holds a doctorate, and who must, then, know how to read. He tells us that, in *Le*

Drame des Juifs européens, Rassinier "shatters the most solid statistical study of the number of those who disappeared from the Jewish communities of Europe, that by the American Hilberg" (*Vérité*, p. 164). Let's take a look. I am not a specialist in historical demography, but I am nevertheless capable of following an elementary argument. I shall not say anything here about the number of those who disappeared, noting simply that according to the previously mentioned report by Richard Korherr, who was an SS inspector for statistical matters (and who is not mentioned a single time in Thion's work), by the end of March 1943, more than two and a half million Jews had already been "evacuated, which means, without any doubt, in the majority of cases, killed, and that that figure did not include "those deaths occurring... in the front zone," which may exclude from it victims of actions by the *Einsatzgruppen* (Wellers, *Mythomanie*, p. 43). (74) Rassinier, for his part, estimates the number of Jewish losses at around one million, more or less (*Drame*, p. 212). But how does he reason?

I must confess some slight astonishment at this juncture: for Rassinier does not reason, or, more precisely, he pursues the following argument: I take an ink pad (pâté), add some lark pâté (with the habitual amount of horse) and finally one city block (pâté) of houses, and I arrive at the precise figure of 3,268,471 Jews allegedly exterminated by Hitler, but in fact having survived the war. How does Rassinier arrive at that figure? By adding up data of extremely different kinds. The crux of the problem is obviously the considerable mass of Jews living in Poland, a country partitioned in 1939, the Baltic states, the Ukraine, White Russia, and Bessarabia: more than five million human beings. (75)

In order to save, on paper, the majority of these Jews from extermination, Rassinier makes use of a single source: an article by the Soviet Jewish journalist David Bergelson, who, in a Yiddish newspaper in Moscow, *Die Einheit* of December 5, 1942, an article quoted, according to Rassinier, in a German news paper in Buenos Aires, *Der Weg*, in January 1953,(76) affirmed that "a majority (80%) of the Jews of the Ukraine, of Lithuania and Lettonia were saved," thanks to the Red Army, we are to assume (*Drame*, p. 125). But the geographical dimensions of the rescue are expanded a bit later in the book, since we learn of "Polish, Baltic, and Romanian Jews who, in the years 1941-1942, were evacuated to central Asia, and who, if we are to believe the Jewish journalist David Bergelson, would have numbered between 2 and 2.2 million in 1942" (*Drame*, p. 218). As Thion says (p.33), "there are good sources and poor ones, the trick being to gauge them well." It happens that this source is worth nothing at all, and those who speak at every turn of war propaganda should have been able to perceive that we have in this case a rather typical example (cf. Wellers, *Mythomanie*, p. 38). Bergelson was a writer who belonged to a Jewish committee created by the Soviet authorities precisely for propaganda purposes, and for targeting American Jews in particular. After the war, in 1952, his mission accomplished, he was executed. Rassinier does not mention this, and not for a moment does he wonder how Bergelson might have been informed and how the Red Army, surprised and trapped, would have been able to save so many Jews. It did save, to be sure, a few. How many? We do not know.

With that much established, it is futile to pursue the analysis and demonstrate how Rassinier "saves" another million and a half Russian Jews. As he himself writes (*Drame*, p. 221), "A demographic study could only be technical in nature." But a bit alarmed by the results of his own calculations, Rassinier proffers this disarming

observation: "If they are no longer in Europe and not in Israel, these 3,268,471 Jews [not one less, not one more] who were quite alive in 1945 all the same have to be somewhere else – along with however many more they have naturally increased their numbers by!" (*Drame*, p. 217). For, as a songster put it after the Liberation in France, "the ovens were then only incubators." What is to be done with those excess Jews? They can, of course, be temporarily installed in central Asia, but they can't stay there indefinitely. Rassinier comes up with a solution. Between 1945 and 1961, (77) a clandestine escape network allowed more than a million of them, "at a great cost in dangers incurred,... to leave central Asia for the American continent" (*Drame*, p. 218), that is, by crossing China and the Pacific Ocean. In brief, "they are necessarily in the United States" (*ibid.*).

But other surprises are possible. Given the quarrel between Khrushchev and Mao Zedong (Rassinier was writing in 1963), it goes without saying that Mao will help the Jews leave Soviet territory. "In that case, it is possible that the presence of a large number of Jews would suddenly come to light, one day, in all the countries of North and South America, perhaps in Israel as well" (*Drame*, p. 214). In the seventeenth century it happened that gazettes suddenly announced the reappearance of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Rassinier has carried off an exploit of the same type. But as he puts it, "We are dealing here only with conjectures, not certainties: a working hypothesis needed by all scholars as a starting point for their research" (*Drame*, p. 219). And it is on the basis of arguments of this sort – and there are many more – that Rassinier feels fully justified in writing of the Hitlerian genocide that is, in truth, "the most tragic and most macabre hoax of all time." (78)

7. The Jewish War

Serge Thion, in the nuanced evocation of him that he gives (p. 14), notes in Faurisson "a certain propensity (which he shares) to side with the defeated, with those who have received the short end of the stick." But who are the defeated? The Germans, and more precisely the Nazis? To be sure, they were defeated, and the German people has suffered, frightfully, as have other peoples who were not defeated – the Russians, the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Czechs, and the Greeks. The Jews, in Eastern Europe and in several other regions (in Holland, in Greece), were not defeated; they were annihilated. It is not always easy to comprehend what that means. One can feel it almost physically in the immense Jewish cemetery of Warsaw, near the ghetto where "the Marxist Brandt," as Butz calls him, one day came to kneel (*The Hoax*, p. 244): the gravestones suddenly disappear around 1942 only to reappear on an infinitesimal scale in 1945. Richard Marienstras has tried to articulate this: "Those whose civilization – whose respiration – was entirely defined by *Yiddishkeit*, those for whom every vital relation depended on the Yiddish world, those people, following the disappearance of their culture, can not modify and displace their allegiance to what no longer is and which can exist only in an obsessive and terrified memory. For them, there is no project and no deliverance; they do not forget when they say they have forgotten; they do not hope, even if what they have substituted for hope is strident – its stridency reveals the despair and the unhappiness of which it is made." (79) It was necessary to attempt to articulate what can barely be said, and if there are those who feel "redeemed" by the military victories of Israel, I, for my part, can only pity and even despise them.

It was not a war and, as I have already said, the State Council of the Polish Republic which, in April 1967, conferred military decorations on the victims of Auschwitz for having died "while struggling against Hitler's genocide" revealed that it had not understood or had not wanted to understand what had happened. (80) But, we are told, a war is precisely what it was. An Englishman, Richard Harwood (the pseudonym of the neo-Nazi Verrall) explained it to us in his famous pamphlet, which provoked the just outrage of P. Vianson-Ponté and prompted Faurisson to reenter the battle (*Le Monde*, July 17, 1977, and *Vérité*, pp. 65-92):

On September 5, 1939, Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist Organization (1920) and the Jewish Agency (1929), who later became president of the republic of Israel, had declared war on Germany in the name of Jews the world over, specifying that "the Jews stand by Great Britain and will fight on the side of the democracies.... The Jewish Agency is prepared to take immediate measures to make use of Jewish manpower, Jewish technical competence and resources, etc." (*Jewish Chronicle*, September 8, 1939)

It is of little consequence, to be sure, that Weizmann had no power to speak in the name of Jews throughout the world, nor that he had no intention of doing so. (81) A Zionist leader with strong ties to Great Britain, despite the conflict provoked by the British policy of ceasing immigration to Palestine, he spoke, as did Ben-Gurion during the same period, in the name of his own followers and of a minority ideology. The feelings of American Jews, for example, were not in doubt, but no one could declare war in their name. Not content with merely repeating "Harwood," Faurisson adds a rather significant error: "In the person of Chaim Weizmann, the President of the World Jewish Congress,... the international Jewish community declared war on Germany on September 5, 1939" (*Vérité*, p. 187, repeated on p. 91). The president of the World Jewish Congress at the time was the American rabbi Stephen Wise. But, given the impossibility of invoking the spokesman of international Jewry, the best thing is to invent him. The "declaration of war," Faurisson specifies, was the consequence of the economic boycott of Nazi Germany decided on by "the international Jewish community in retaliation for the anti-Semitic measures taken by Hitler." It is all quite simple: "That fatal machinery was bound to lead, on both sides, to a world war" (*Vérité*, p. 187). (82) Once the wine has been poured, it will have to be drunk: the war came; "the German soldier engaged in fierce combat against the partisans,... including, if need be, against women and children mingling with the partisans." But, Faurisson specifies, "the army gave the most Draconian orders that no German soldier was to participate in excesses against the civilian population, including the Jews." Better yet: it may be said of the Wehrmacht, including the SS, "that it was, in certain respects, far less threatening for non combatant civilians than many other armies" (*Vérité*, pp. 187 and 211n45). Apparently, the *Einsatzgruppen* did not exist.

From this point on, it becomes possible to explain and justify everything. The Jewish star? A military measure. "Hitler was perhaps less concerned with the Jewish question than with ensuring the safety of German soldiers" (*Vérité*, p. 190). (83) Many Jews spoke German and were suspected of practicing "espionage, terrorism, black market operations, and of arms trafficking." Children wearing the star at age six? Faurisson has an answer for everything: "If we remain in the framework of military logic, there are today a sufficient number of stories and memoirs in which Jews recall that already

as children they were engaged in all sorts of illicit or resistance activities against the Germans" (*Vérité*, p. 190).

And on that same page, which one would do well to feature in an anthology of the obscene, Faurisson shows us, through a precise example, that the Germans were quite right to be distrustful: "They feared what was, moreover, about to take place in the Warsaw ghetto, where, suddenly, right behind the front, in April 1943, there was an insurrection. To their stupefaction, the Germans then discovered that the Jews had built seven hundred bunkers. They put down that insurrection and transferred the survivors to labor and concentration camps. This was a tragedy for the Jews." It is useful to read this page a bit more closely. All footnotes have charitably disappeared, but note 48 on page 211 allows us to learn Faurisson's source and to see him at work. His "informant," as the anthropologists say, is Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler himself, and more precisely his speech at Poznan on October 6, 1943: "I cleaned up large Jewish ghettos in territories of the rear. In a ghetto in Warsaw, we had street-fighting during four weeks. Four weeks! We demolished about seven hundred bunkers." (84)

Faurisson has commented on this text and that event on several levels, first of all by adding to Himmler's indication "in territories of the rear (*in den Etappengebieten*)" the little words "right" and "front," which make it coherent with his military logic. The reader may thus forget that the "front" was at the time quite distant, more than a thousand kilometers away, rather astonishing changes from someone as obsessed with footnotes and precision, (85) but the "front," after all, is a rather ambiguous notion. Concerning the event itself, which occurred at a time when the ghetto was already emptied of three-quarters of its population by massive deportations, the reader will learn nothing. Here, too, Faurisson's master is Himmler, who, on June 21, 1944, at Sonthofen, attempted to make the German generals assembled believe that he was forced to confront, in Warsaw, not a handful of insurgents, but "more than five hundred thousand Jews," whom he was obliged to liquidate "in five weeks of street fighting" (*Geheimreden*, p.170). There is a similar silence concerning the immediate context of the speech of October 6, 1943, which had Himmler protesting against the same economic tyranny so often invoked by the revisionists: "The ghetto manufactured fur coats, clothing, etc. Earlier, when one wanted to enter, one was told: 'Halt! You're interfering with the war economy! Halt! This is an arms factory!'" (*Geheimreden*, p. 170). Silence is maintained about all this, but there is a warning to the reader (in the same note 48, p. 211) concerning *Geheimreden*: "This work is to be used with precaution, particularly in its French translation." Why that precaution? We already know, from reading the speech at Poznan, that the reader might learn, on the preceding page, that Himmler had given the order to kill (*umbringen*) the men, women, and children of the Jewish people. It is clear that in that war, Himmler was not defeated.

8. On the Art of Not Reading Texts

If there is not, in the scientific sense of the term, a "debate" over the existence of the gas chambers, it is a fact that the "revisionists" claim that such a debate exists, or rather that it does not exist, since they are persuaded – with any necessary reservation for the acts of one or two madmen in the SS – that no such thing existed. But gas chambers did not exist in and for them selves; they were the endpoint of a process of

triage which, upon entry into a camp or at a camp, summarily sorted out men and women whom the SS deemed capable of working from the rest.

The process is known both through Nazi administrative documents and the accounts of deportees. Here, for example, is a telegram addressed from Auschwitz to the central economic administration of the camps at Oranienburg on March 8, 1943. The document enumerated various convoys, including the following: "Transported from Breslau, arrived 315143. Total: 1,405 Jews. Put to work: 406 men (Buna factories) and 190 women. Subjected to special treatment (*sonderbehandelt wurden*): 125 men and 684 women and children." (86) The sum is precise. Will anyone dare claim that these individuals were being brought to a rest camp ?

As for the deportees, the tale has been told a thousand times and it is practically identical for all witnesses, (87) a fact that unfortunately does not mean that they were plagiarizing each other. The testimony of Primo Levi, at the time a young Italian chemist, is particularly austere. He left on February 22, 1944 in a train containing 650 deportees. Upon their arrival in Auschwitz, about ten SS officers "interrogated those disembarking with some indifference. 'How old? In good health? Sick?' In less than ten minutes, we, the healthy males, were regrouped. What happened to the others – women, children, and the aged – we were not able to ascertain, neither at the time nor thereafter: they were purely and simply swallowed up by the night." Sometimes, adds Primo Levi, who was forced to learn quickly, things were even simpler. Those who left the train on one side of the tracks were enrolled, "the others went to the gas chamber." (88) Such was the functioning of SS rationality. Auschwitz was, as has been repeated in every key (Butz, Faurisson, Thion) a great industrial center, specializing in the production of synthetic rubber. But no one has ever explained why babies were slated to go there, and no one has ever told us what became of those babies. The absolute inability of the "revisionists" to tell us where those who were not registered in the camp (and whose names nonetheless appeared on the convoy lists) went is proof of the mendacious character of their affirmations. (89) It is not for lack of effort on their part. Christophersen, the revisionist witness, writes calmly: "When, at roll call, detainees were asked whether they were prepared to accomplish the task at hand (in this case, the planting of rubber-yielding dandelions), and whether they had ever done anything comparable previously, volunteers were almost always too numerous. Thus there was a selection; subsequently, that selection process has been completely distorted. It was natural to want to keep the detainees occupied and they did not ask for anything better. The selection process had no other purpose than to make use of them according to their tastes, talents, and relative health" (*Mensonge d'Auschwitz*, p. 22). A. R. Butz, normally so adroit, slips up and is content more or less to note that "industrial and other activities required that selection procedures take place for various purposes" (*The Hoax*, p. 111). His rather unique argument against the usual interpretation is that there were a large number of Jews in the hospital. This amounts, once again, to resorting to an imaginary rationality.

The heart of the question lies in knowing what happened during the "selection process" upon entry into the camp or, later on, during operations aimed, according to the going interpretation, at separating those who were still capable of working from those who were not. Might one, during the selection process, be rejected and show up subsequently? At Dora, Rassinier had a comrade who was selected and who did reappear. But there was no gas chamber at Dora, and the man had been sent to Bergen

Belsen, a so-called hospital-camp, though in fact a death camp, from which he had the good fortune to return (*Mensonge*, p. 170). Faurisson triumphantly published a photo of Simone Veil, who was alleged to have been gassed and who was quite alive. The mechanism of his error is extremely simple, and the indications furnished by Faurisson (*Vérité*, p. 328) allow one to reconstitute it easily. According to the Polish historian Danuta Czech, who set about reconstituting the camp calendar for the series *Hefte von Auschwitz*, convoy 71, arriving from Drancy (April 16, 1944) was treated as follows: 165 men were registered; the rest of the convoy was gassed (*Hefte von Auschwitz*, 7, 1964, p. 88). The camp archives, which are incomplete, did not include the names of women who were registered. The error has been rectified by Klarsfeld in his *Mémorial*: "The Auschwitz calendar does not mention any woman who was selected, but this is erroneous, since in 1945 seventy female survivors from the convoy were counted. There were also thirty-five male survivors."

Nevertheless, "good use" can also be made of the notion of selection, for instance, for argumentative ends. An optimist, as is known, says a glass is half full and a pessimist that it is half empty. One can also choose to see only the "positive" aspect of selection, if the word be permitted. Such was the tack of Hans Laternser, who was the lawyer of the German general staff at Nuremberg and defended, in Frankfurt, from 1963 to 1965, several defendants in the Auschwitz trial. Given the fact, he explains, that the aim of Himmler and Hitler was the annihilation of the Jews, those who selected the Jews to gain them entry into the camp were thus posing an obstacle to the final solution." (90)

Such is not, it will be agreed, the interpretation of Robert Faurisson. He has nevertheless been led, at first spontaneously, then by the devastating objections of G. Wellers, to attend to another aspect of the selection procedure, that of the separation between sufferers from typhus and the healthy, since that is how he ultimately interprets the "special actions" and the selections.(91) The decisive text on this subject is a document whose authenticity has been contested by no one (even if Butz chooses boldly to maintain strict silence about it). From August 30 to November 18, 1942, Professor Dr. Johann Paul Kremer served as an SS physician in the camp at Auschwitz. The British arrested him in August 1945, and confiscated a diary in which he noted the different events of his life, including the "special actions" he participated in at Auschwitz. That diary has been published in part. (92)

In order to interpret it, (93) I shall appeal exceptionally to a rule of exegesis posited by Faurisson. He has formulated it in various ways with reference to literary texts. Here is one of the oldest: "For one not to search for a meaning and a single meaning in an utterance, whether in prose or poetry, in high or low literature, grave reasons, which have yet to be discovered, would be called for." (94) And, more schematically: "One must look for the letter before looking for the spirit. Texts have only one meaning or they have no meaning at all" (*Nouvelles littéraires*, February 10 17, 1977; *Vérité*, p. 54). With reference to poetry, which Faurisson interprets professionally, the principle is palpably absurd: poetry perpetually plays on polysemy; but the rule has value when referring to plain language such as: I am going out to buy a French bread.

Kremer's *Diary* is incontrovertibly of the latter sort. His observations inform us of the physician's personal and professional life. Thus, on October 9, 1942: "I have sent to Munster a first package containing nine pounds of soap worth 200 RM. Weather

rainy"; on September 21: "I wrote today because of Otto to the Police Headquarters in Cologne (the judiciary police service). Duck shooting in the evening. Dr. Meyer informed me of the hereditary transmission of a trauma (nose) in his father-in-law's family." Many of the remarks bear on life in the camp, the illnesses present there, and the precautions taken. For example, on September 1, that is, two days after the doctor's arrival: "I have ordered in writing from Berlin an SS officer's hat, a belt, and suspenders. In the afternoon, I was present at the disinfection of a block in order to delouse it with a gas, Zyklon B." From the day of his arrival, Kremer was struck by the importance of exanthematous typhus; he was vaccinated the following day, revaccinated on September 7 and 14. The tone does not change when it is a question of extracting experimental matter from the prisoners; for instance, on October 3: "Today I proceeded to preserve living matter taken from the livers and spleens of men as well as from the pancreas." Nor does it shift when Kremer is present at physical punishments or executions. Thus, on September 9: "Later in the morning I attended as a physician the administering of blows with a stick to eight detainees and one execution with a small-calibre firearm." There is a similar calm on October 13 and 17, even though the executions are far more numerous: seven Polish civilians in the first case, eleven victims in the second: "I was present at the administering of punishment and at eleven executions (*bei einem Strafvollzug und 11 Exekutionen zugegen*)."

The tone changes only in a single series of circumstances, and then occasionally (not always) to take on an emotional cast that is quite remarkable. I refer to what the text calls special actions (*Sonderaktionen*). Kremer attended eleven of these operations, which he numbered and that took place, on occasion, twice a day. In seven cases – September 5 (the second action); September 6 and 10, September 23 (two actions), September 30 and October 7, the tone remains commonplace. In the four other cases, which include the first and last "actions" in the series (showing that Kremer never quite managed to acclimatize himself) Kremer shows signs of violent emotion and even a certain fear. On September 2: "I attended a special action for the first time, outdoors, at three o'clock in the morning. In comparison, Dante's *Inferno* seems almost a comedy to me. It is not for nothing that Auschwitz is known as an annihilation camp (*Umsonst wird Auschwitz nicht das Lager der Vernichtung genannt*)." (95) On September 5 (first action): "Today, at noon, I was present at a special action in the FKL (96) (Muslims): the epitome of horror. *Hauptscharführer* Thilo was right to say to me today that we were here at the anus mundi. " "On October 12, after noting that as a result of a vaccination against typhus he had a fever, Kremer added: "Despite this, I attended during the night a special action for people coming from the Netherlands (1,600 persons). Frightful scenes in front of the bunker! It was the tenth special action." October 18: "This Sunday morning, in very cold rainy weather, I attended the eleventh special action (Dutch). Horrid scenes with three women begging to save their lives."

This coincidence between the coded terms (special action) and the emotional language is, all the same, remarkable. A second observation should be made: Kremer, in five out of eleven cases, gives several specifics concerning those targeted by the "special actions." In three cases (2, 10, and 11), we are dealing with Netherlands, in two others (1 and 9), respectively with male and female "Muslims" and with persons coming from outside (*Auswartige*). We will not be departing unduly from the letter of the text if we recall that in the argot of the camps "Muslims" were detainees who had

arrived at the final stages of debilitation. But perhaps this would constitute too serious a contradiction of "witness" Christophersen?

The customary interpretation of these texts consists of affirming that a "special action" corresponded to a selection, a selection for arrivals coming from without, and also a selection for exhausted detainees. Each, when sent in the "wrong" direction, would take the path to the gas chambers.

Faurisson has contested this interpretation, (97) and proposes the following one, which I shall quote in its entirety:

The physician Johann Paul Kremer's diary should be quoted correctly. It will thus be observed that when he speaks of the horrors of Auschwitz, it is an allusion to the typhus epidemic of September-October 1942. On October 3, he wrote: "At Auschwitz, whole streets have been annihilated by typhus." He himself would contract what he calls "the Auschwitz disease." Germans would die of it. The sorting out of the ill from the healthy was the "selection" or one of the forms of the "special action" performed by the physician. The sorting out took place either within buildings or outdoors. Never did he write that Auschwitz was a *Vernichtungslager*, that is, according to a terminology developed by Allies after the war, an "extermination camp" (by which we are to understand a camp endowed with a gas chamber). In reality, what he wrote was: "It is not for nothing that Auschwitz is called the camp of annihilation (*das Lager der Vernichtung*)."(98) In the etymological sense of the word, typhus annihilates those whom it strikes. Another seriously mistaken quotation: for the date of September 2, 1942, Kremer's manuscript reads: "This morning, I was present, outdoors, for the first time, at a special action." Historians and magistrates customarily suppress the word "outdoors (*draussen*)" in order to have Kremer say that the action took place in a "gas chamber." (99) Finally, the atrocious scenes in front of the "last bunker" (this was the courtyard of Bunker 11) were executions of prisoners sentenced to death, executions the physician was obliged to attend. Among those sentenced were three women who had arrived in a convoy from Holland." (100)

Georges Wellers has observed that Faurisson made use of Kremer's confession in 1947 to interpret the notations in his diary for October 18, 1942 as though they referred to only three executions, but that he pretended to be unaware that on the same day in 1947 Kremer spoke of the gas chambers at Auschwitz (*Le Monde*, February 21, 1979; *Vérité*, pp. 332-334). To which Faurisson retorted that he retained from Kremer's confession only what was credible, and not what was not. Since Kremer had once said that the gas chambers were reopened "a moment" after the death of the victims, his statement constitutes, he tells us gravely, "a flagrant physical impossibility" (*Vérité*, p. 112).

Let us leave aside what, in this interpretation, is to be attributed to pedantry or subjectivity (what is a moment ?). It comes up against a series of absolutely decisive objections:

1. There is not a single passage in the *Diary* in which Kremer speaks about typhus in connection with the "special actions."

2. One is hard put to understand why typhus outbreaks would necessarily coincide with arrivals from outside the camp. (Was there at the time a typhus epidemic in Holland?)
3. It is hard to understand why an execution, a commonplace occurrence for Kremer, and also everything concerning typhus, should suddenly take on a tragic aspect when connected with a special action.
4. The fact that Auschwitz was the Lager der Vernichtung has no relation to typhus epidemics. Indeed, Faurisson, who is so concerned with precision when it comes to translation, did not perceive that Kremer, in speaking of typhus, did not use the verb vernichten. He wrote on October 3: "In Auschwitz whole streets have been stricken down by typhus (*In Auschwitz liegen ganze Strassenzuge an Typhus darnieder*)." The difference in verbs (darniederliegen instead of ernichten) is significant, and Faurisson allowed himself to be fooled by the translation of the Polish publisher. Finally, a detail which I mention to show how Faurisson reads texts: it is false that Kremer had typhus and that what he called the Auschwitz illness is typhus. The indications in the diary for September 3, 4, and 14, show clearly that the Auschwitz illness is diarrhea with a moderate fever (37.8 degrees C. on September 14). Kremer was, in fact, vaccinated against (exanthematic) typhus and against typhoid fever. Faurisson's interpretation is thus not admissible, and the explanation – so dear to those revisionists, like Butz, prepared to admit that there was a lot of dying at Auschwitz – of the death rates at Auschwitz by typhus stands condemned along with it. One must return to what is to be learned from the camp archives and from Kremer's confessions: that the "special actions" corresponded to the arrival of convoys of deportees (who were, as a rule, duly registered in the camp archives); that deportees not enrolled in the camp were gassed in the bunkers of Birkenau (small houses located in the forest); (101) that those suffering from illnesses in the camp (and specifically from typhus) as well as male and female "Muslims" were also gassed; and that at the last moment, there were occasionally painful scenes, such as that of October 18, 1942, with the three "young and healthy" Dutch women who "did not want to enter the gas chamber and cried to save their lives" and who were shot, (102) scenes that disturbed the SS imposed order.

When Kremer spoke of the camp of annihilation, he was not, it is true, referring to a juridico-administrative concept, which did not figure, as is also true, on the official rolls of the Third Reich. He was simply speaking about what he saw. On the level he most cherishes, that of philological precision and accurate translation, Faurisson's interpretation is incoherent; on the level of intellectual ethics and scientific probity, it is bogus.(103)

9. On Plato, Lies, and Ideology

Arthur Butz has referred to historians who have attempted to reconstruct the progress of the genocide as "mythologists of extermination" (*The Hoax*, p. 248 and passim). In forging that expression, it is clear that he has defined what he himself and the other "revisionists" have accomplished: a discourse replacing reality by fiction. Rejecting on principle all firsthand testimony and accepting as decisive only the testimony of those who, by their own admission, saw nothing at all, such as the delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross, is thus an unmistakable sign. (104)

Replacing history by myth is a procedure that would hardly be dangerous if there were an absolute criterion allowing one to distinguish at first sight between the two. It is the distinguishing feature of a lie to want to pass itself off as the truth. To be sure, that truth may not always aspire to universality. It may be the truth of a small sect, a truth not to be placed at everyone's disposition. Such is the case of the publishers of Christophersen's "testimony," who must have few illusions concerning the credibility of their witness, since they have appended an epigraph from Theodor Storm: "Never conceal the truth. Even if it brings you suffering, it will never bring you remorse. But since it is a pearl, make sure not to cast it before swine." (105)

There are "truths" that are just as deceitful, but more elaborate; and if a prize for mendacity were to be given, I would say that Butz's tome, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, represents, at times, a rather hair-raising success: the reader is persuasively led by the hand and brought little by little to the idea that Auschwitz is a tendentious rumor that skillful propagandists have gradually transformed into a truth. Such are the "good tidings" whose clumsy evangelist Faurisson has become. It is Butz and not he who might be defined in Zola's terms as the "diabolical craftsman of the judicial error." Ought one to refute Butz? It would be possible, of course, and even easy, assuming one knew the archives, but it would be long and tedious. As was just observed with a few precise examples, to demolish a discourse takes time and space. When a fictitious account is well prepared, it does not contain elements allowing one to destroy it on strictly internal grounds.

This is an old story that could be traced, should one so choose, to ancient Greece. The poets knew that they could speak both truth and falsehood and combine one with the other by virtue of their resemblance. The Muses, "truthful daughters of great Zeus," address Hesiod as follows: "We know how to tell lies entirely similar to realities; but when we want to, we also know how to proclaim truths." (106) That proximity, that disquieting resemblance was fought by philosophy, then being born, which separates and confronts truth and appearance. History, too, intervenes in the debate.

Whereas in Israel it appears as the expression of human ambiguity, (107) in Greece it plays on the opposition between truth and falsehood. "I write," says the first historian, Hecataeus of Milet, "what I believe to be true, for the words of the Greeks, it appears to me, are numerous and ridiculous." But from Hecataeus to Herodotus, and from Herodotus to Thucydides, each generation of historians attempts to disqualify the preceding one, as the truth might disqualify the mythical and mendacious. With Plato, philosophy itself enters into the fray and advances matters decisively. For although Plato retains from Parmenides the opposition between appearance and reality, his discourse deals primarily with the world of men, and thus with appearance, an appearance that surrounds the truth on all sides and serves as its counterpoint and deceptive imitation. Between the sophist and the one he imitates, there are resemblances, "as between a dog and a wolf, indeed as between the wildest beast and the tamest pet. In order to be certain, it is above all against resemblances that one must be on perpetual guard. It is indeed an extremely slippery genre" (*Sophist*, 231a). The entire dialogue of *The Sophist* is a meditation on the virtual impossibility of distinguishing the true from the false, and of the necessity, if one is to ferret out a liar, of according to nonbeing a certain form of existence. But he who disposes of the truth is also he who has a right to lie. Plato, in *The Republic*, produces a theory of the beautiful lie. In Book III of *Laws*, he writes a historical fabrication from Athens, in which the battle of Salamis, since it was waged on sea by the democratic sailors, is

eliminated from the narrative of the second Median war. In the prologue to the *Timaeus* and in the *Critias*, he achieves his masterpiece in the genre: inventing out of thin air a lost continent, Atlantis, the adversary of an ancient and perfect Athens. It is a truthful story, Plato says and repeats, an emblematic falsehood in reality, which the philosophical reader can easily learn to decipher. But Plato's affirmations concerning the reality of Atlantis, after more than twenty-three centuries, still create dupes (and those who profit from them) today.

Such a discourse, to be sure, becomes dangerous only when it gains support from the power of a state and achieves monopoly status. Plato did not impose laws in any Greek city-state, but it is true that the Lower Empire, whether pagan or Christian, from the time of Diocletian on, became, in its own manner, Platonic. Let us allow the centuries to elapse. At present we are living in an "era of ideology." (108) How would Auschwitz elude the conflict of interpretations, the devouring ideological rage? But even then, the limits of that permanent rewriting of history characteristic of ideological discourse should be marked. "Zionists and Poles already give us quite divergent versions of Auschwitz," according to Faurisson (*Vérité*, p. 194). That is true. For the Israelis, or at least for their ideologues, Auschwitz was the inevitable and logical culmination of life in the Diaspora, and all the victims of the death camps had a vocation to become citizens of Israel (which is a twofold lie). As for the Poles, it is not always easy to distinguish in their writings what is in the order of "obligatory truth" – for example, reverence toward the official decisions of the Soviet Investigatory Commission following the Liberation – from what is (above all nationalist) ideology. The Polish historian Danuta Czech writes the following (which is rather surprising): "Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau served to achieve the program of the biological extermination of populations, above all the Slavic populations and among them particularly the Polish people and the peoples of the U.S.S.R., as well as the Jews and those considered Jews according to the Nuremberg decrees." (109) But neither the Poles nor the Israelis, to be sure, transform in any profound way the reality of the massacre.

What occurs with the works of Butz, Faurisson, and the other ideologues of "revisionism" is of an entirely different nature: a total lie, as is to be found in abundance among sects and parties, including, to be sure, state parties. If the *History of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party* of Stalin's time is a lasting monument to the most murderous of historical lies, there exist as well liberal and scholarly versions of Stalinist history. *The Great Conspiracy Against Russia* by M. Sayers and A. E. Kahn (110) was a model for the genre, with its play of references and bibliographical notes, using on occasion works forbidden in the Soviet Union, such as *My Life* by Trotsky, but in the service of an entirely orthodox view of Russian history, with, for example, pearls, such as the following: "The death of Leon Trotsky left only one living candidate for a Napoleonic role in Russia: Adolf Hitler" (p. 112). Immediately following the war and the popular front among states, I witnessed the effectiveness of this kind of discourse.

In France, the Dreyfus Affair gave birth to even more consummate successes. In 1905, "Henri Dutrait-Crozon" (the pseudonym of two members of Action Française, F. Delebecque and Colonel G. Larpent) published, with a preface by Charles Maurras, a "revisionist view" of the first two volumes of the history of the Dreyfus Affair by J. Reinach, (111) which, as a literary genre, strikes me as being at the origin of

contemporary "revisionism." All its formulations (or almost all) were not inaccurate; it was the whole alone that was mendacious, the false (such as the "confession" of Dreyfus) being accepted as true. That historical enterprise would nonetheless result in a genuinely scholarly book of more than 800 pages, with thousands of references, and which for an entrenched sectarian minority of French public opinion was to represent scripture concerning the captain's guilt. It matters little that new documents appear (such as Schwartzkoppen's Notebooks), which reduce that thesis to ridicule; they too are digested and integrated: "But what is the value of such testimony? It is a question that very few have taken the trouble to research." (112) And, to be sure, it was demonstrated, irrefutably, that for clear physical, moral, and intellectual reasons, such testimony could only be false.

Anyone can observe this kind of discourse functioning in his environment, and Thion's book, like several other works of similar style, offers a particularly refined example of it. Thion, taking up the title of a lecture by Rassinier, (113) opposes "historical truth" and "political truth." The first, I assume, is the result of faithful inquiry, the second was imposed, as demonstrated by Rassinier, Butz, and Faurisson, starting in 1942 by a Zionist and communist pressure group which ended up mobilizing all the resources of the Allied propaganda apparatus. The whole process ended with the creation of the state of Israel and reparations payments by Germany. The process constituting this "truth" is the opposite of the one just described. Take the case of Thion. Like a number of militants of Third World causes, he undoubtedly encountered among his adversaries representatives of Zionist ideology, and even of the state of Israel, and it is that confrontation that he has transposed into the past, without realizing that the "Zionist lobby" was far from having the power ascribed to it, but transforming today's "political truth" into yesterday's historical truth.

A caricatural example of such insane reasoning is furnished by the Australian John Bennett, the former secretary of the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties, who participated in the Los Angeles Colloquium and whom Thion has quite properly cast as one of the leading figures of "revisionism" abroad (*Vérité*, pp. 160-162). Bennett started out with an entirely legitimate struggle against the control exercised by Zionist circles over the dissemination of information, and specifically against their attempt to forbid a radio station broadcasting Palestinian positions. Harking back from the present to the past, he allowed himself to be convinced by Butz's book that the Australians had been "brainwashed." He undertook to denounce that lie and the support given to Israel, whose consequences he regarded as politically and economically dangerous: "Uncritical support of Israel by the West has led to a six fold increase in oil prices; it has alienated eight hundred million Muslims, and could lead to a world war.... Until the West can appraise Israel on its merits, unclouded by Zionist Holocaust propaganda, our economies will be threatened by further oil price rises, and our very survival will be threatened by world war." (114)

As may be seen, "historical truth," in this case, is the pure product of "political truth" – or, rather, economic truth. But what is most extraordinary is that Bennett, in developing his argument in a long memorandum, (115) has placed at the beginning of his text George Orwell's famous line: "Whoever controls the past controls the future. Whoever controls the present controls the past." There is no better condemnation of his own reasoning.

And yet, beyond all ideological insanity, there is the sheer enormity of the fact, the immensity of the crime, with its technical dimensions, the work not (as in the genocide of the Armenians) of a presumably backward state but, on the contrary, of a state governing a hypercivilized, hypercultivated nation. Unbelievable? Yes, it is true. On the subject of witchcraft trials and the criticism they began to receive in the seventeenth century, Lucien Febvre liked to quote an admirable formula of Cyrano de Bergerac (which was, no doubt, inspired by Montaigne): "One should not believe all things concerning a man, because a man can say all things. One should believe of a man only what is human." And Lucien Febvre commented: "A fine text, a bit late: it is from 1654. But it allows us to salute – at long last – the birth in France of a new sense... the sense of the impossible." (116) The human? Impossible? The whole question is to determine whether those two words still have a meaning.

10. Living With Faurisson?

It is not easy to conclude. If the "revisionist" endeavor in general, and Faurisson's enterprise in particular, are in the order of a fraud, of an apologia for a crime in the form of a concealment of that crime, we have not yet finished explaining it by establishing the fraud. First, because no demonstration, however rigorous it may be, will completely convince everyone (there are still anti-Dreyfusards); and then, because we will have to pose the question of the meaning of the phenomenon and of its explosion in France at the end of 1978 and 1979. The only ones to be astonished, it is true, are those who will not have understood the commotion surrounding Holocaust, the last stage in the commodification of Auschwitz. (117) That it is possible to do something different and better is beyond doubt. There is still research to be done, men to be questioned, and I hope that Claude Lanzmann's film will be commensurate with its immense subject. (118)

But that is not the question, for we are observing a transformation of memory into history, and, as a film by Resnais and Jorge Semprun put it, "the war is over." My generation, now fifty years old, is more or less the last for whom Hitler's crime still remains a memory. That one must fight against the disappearance – or, worse yet, the debasement – of memory seems to me obvious. Neither a statute of limitations nor a pardon seems conceivable to me. Can one imagine Dr. Mengele visiting the Auschwitz Museum or presenting his card to the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine? But what are we to do with this memory, which is ours, and not the memory of all? Legal action against the surviving perpetrators of the crime seems to me simultaneously necessary and ludicrous. So many crimes have occurred since then! There is really no common measure between the crimes of France in Algeria, of the United States in Vietnam, and actual genocides, those of the Armenians, the Jews, the Gypsies, the Khmers, the Tutsis of Rwanda; but, to restrict myself to the case of France, if Messieurs Lacoste, Papon, Massu, and Bigeard are petty criminals compared to Eichmann, they are not paper criminals. The Israelis killed Eichmann, and they did well to do so, but in our spectacle-oriented society, what are we to do with a paper Eichmann?

It is not easy for me to expatiate on this point. I grew up with an exalted – some will say a megalomaniacal – conception of the historian's work. That is how I was raised, and it was during the war that my father had me read Chateaubriand's famous article in the *Mercure* of July 4, 1807: "When, in the silence of abjection, all one can hear is

the slave's chains and the traitor's voice, when all tremble before the tyrant and it is as dangerous to incur his favor as to fall from his grace, the historian appears, charged with the vengeance of peoples." I still believe in the necessity of memory and attempt, in my own way, to be a memory man, but I no longer believe that the historian is charged with the vengeance of peoples. It must be admitted that the war is over, that the tragedy has been, in a way, secularized, even if it entails for us, by which I mean us Jews, the loss of that discursive privilege that we have in large part enjoyed ever since Europe discovered the great massacre. And that is not in itself bad, for if there is anything that is unbearable, it is surely the pose of certain individuals who, draped in the grand sash of a major extermination, believe they in that way elude the banal pettiness and cowardices that are part of the human lot.

For reasons of principle some have rushed to Faurisson's defense. A petition, circulated abroad and signed by several hundred, among the first of whom were Noam Chomsky and Alfred Lilienthal, has protested the treatment Faurisson has received – as though he had been interrupted by persecution in the middle of his historical research: "Since 1974, he has been conducting extensive independent historical research into the 'Holocaust' question." Following which he would have been denied access to public libraries and archives. What is scandalous about the petition is that it never raises the question of whether what Faurisson is saying is true or false, that it even presents his conclusions or "findings" as the result of a historical investigation, one, that is, in quest of the truth. To be sure, it may be argued that every man has a right to lies and falsehood, and that individual freedom entails that right, which is accorded, in the French liberal tradition, to the accused for his defense. But the right that the forger demands should not be conceded to him in the name of truth.

As for the "bans" whose victim Faurisson has been: the fact that the staff of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, challenged in its fundamental activity, that of the memory of the crime, should – after years of forbearance – refuse to serve Faurisson seems perfectly normal to me. But can we proceed a step further? Neither illusion nor fraud nor mendacity are foreign to academic and scientific life. What an extraordinary anthology one could prepare of Stalin's U.S.S.R. as a place where contradiction had disappeared, under the tutelage of professional historians and geographers, some of whom, moreover, were far from mediocre teachers. There is something paltry and base in the way in which the Faurisson affair has been treated both within and without academia. For the university to have claimed that he did not publish anything – if indeed it did make that claim and was followed by the cabinet (119) – strikes me as deplorable. Faurisson's publications are what they are – try reading Nerval in Faurisson's "translation" (120) – but they exist and are situated within the order of the university. No one is forced to speak to him.

To live with Faurisson? Any other attitude would imply that we were imposing historical truth as legal truth, which is a dangerous attitude available to other fields of application. Anyone can dream of a society in which Faurissons would be unthinkable and even attempt to work toward its realization. But they exist just as evil exists – around us and in us. Let us be happy if, in this grey world that is ours, we can accumulate a few parcels of truth, experience a few fragments of satisfaction.

Appendix

"ZYKLON B"

by Pitch Bloch

Text published as an appendix to *A Paper Eichmann*

Ask those around you. I did, including a number of more or less young Jews and even orphans of deportees. Practically half of them had never heard of Zyklon B; others recalled the name in connection with the gas chambers (they had seen Holocaust on television or had read the relevant articles in *Le Monde*), but none knew exactly what kind of product it was.

Let them look it up in the dictionary, then: neither Cyclon nor Zyklon are to be found in *Le petit Larousse illustré* (1979 edition), *Le petit Quillet-Flammarion* (1963 edition), or even in the three-volume *Larousse* (1965 edition) or the twenty-volume *Encyclopaedia Universalis* (1968-1975 edition).

This, of course, makes the task of those who would like to deny that gas chambers existed in the Nazi concentration camps far easier. A Paul Rassinier can pinpoint "contradictions": "an insecticide: no gas had then been planned for exterminating" (!) and further on: "Zyklon B appears in the form of blue granules from which the gas emanates"; or: "This famous gas which has, until now, been presented to us 'in tablets from which the gas emanated upon contact with the air,' 'upon contact with water vapor,' in fact existed in the form of bottles filled with a highly volatile liquid." (1)

A Robert Faurisson is free to wax ironic on "gas crystals," (2) or to insist repeatedly on the fact that Zyklon B adheres to surfaces and is difficult to ventilate, etc. (3)

The following note will attempt to clarify matters by explaining, among other things, the indispensable chemical terms.

I first thought it necessary to research the definition of Zyklon B in a classic work of industrial chemistry, which was published in Germany in 1954. (4)

Hydrocyanic (or prussic) acid is a powerful poison for the blood of all higher animals. The DL(50) (lethal dose in 50 percent of cases) for human beings is as high as 1 milligram per kilogram of body weight. In Germany, the most common application of hydrocyanic acid is Zyklon B, a mixture of liquid hydrocyanic acid with chloride and bromide derivatives as catalytic agents and silica as a support.

There follows a chart of the principal properties of several gases and vapors used as insecticides, in which the following may be read: "Blausauere – Formel HC – Kp 25,6 C – Dichte (Luft=1) 0,93," that is: "Hydrocyanic

acid – (Chemical) formula HCN – Boiling point 25.6s Centigrade – Density(Air=1) 0.93."

It will thus be seen that:

* Hydrocyanic acid is an extremely volatile liquid, since it boils at 25.6s Centigrade under atmospheric pressure and its "vapor tension" is already 360 mm of mercury at 7s Centigrade and 658.7 mm of mercury at 21.9s Centigrade. (5) The characteristics of hydrocyanic acid may be envisaged by considering a more common and less toxic substance: ordinary ether, for example, boils at 34.6s Centigrade; try opening a flask of it on a table and you will see how easily such a "liquid" is transformed into a gas.

* But hydrocyanic acid has a higher boiling point than certain other gaseous insecticides mentioned in the same chart; thus sulphur dioxide (SO₂) boils at-10s Centigrade, methyl bromide at 3.6s Centigrade, or ethylene oxide at 11.6s Centigrade (Faurisson mentions the last compound under the name of Cartox; cf. *Vérité*, p. 310). It will thus be understood why Degesch, a Hamburg firm, speaks of the "long-lasting volatility" of Zyklon B.

* Finally, hydrocyanic acid is used in Germany in "adsorbed" form on a solid support ("Diatomit," which is a kind of siliceous soil). And that explains why a number of witnesses could speak of "solids used in the 'gas' chambers."

R. Faurisson's principal "technical" arguments in support of his thesis of the nonexistence of gas chambers in the deportation camps are: (6)

1. It is impossible to fit 2,000 persons in an enclosure of 210 cubic meters (or 236.78 cubic meters according to the documents).
2. Working crews intervened without gas masks.
3. In order to insert Zyklon B from outside, the SS guards would have had to ask their future victims to kindly open the windows, and then to close them carefully.
4. It would have been impossible to enter the gas chamber to remove corpses without having first ventilated them.
5. Finally, since Hydrocyanic acid is an inflammable explosive, it could not be used in proximity to a stove.

Now it happens that one of the first written documents that I had the opportunity to read about the gas chambers – it was in Switzerland in 1944, where I was privileged enough to begin my studies in chemistry – was a rather precise description of the gassing process and of the precautions taken after gassing (ventilation, etc.). I believe it useful at this juncture to quote it almost in extenso: (7)

At the end of February 1943, at Birkenau, the new gassing installation and its modern crematorium, whose construction had just been completed, were inaugurated.... (There follows a description of the A crematoria and the B preparation hall.) From there, a door and a few steps led to the gas chamber,

which was narrow and very long, and was situated at a slightly lower level. The walls of the chamber were covered with curtains, producing the illusion of an immense shower room. Three windows opened on the flat roof, and could be hermetically closed from without. Rails ran across the hall leading to the oven chamber. Here is how the "operations" took place: The unfortunates were brought into Hall B and told that they were to take a shower and that they were to undress in the room in which they were. To persuade them that they were actually being taken to the showers, two men dressed in white gave each of them a piece of soap and a towel. Then they were pushed into the gas chamber. About two thousand persons could fit, but each disposed of no more space than was necessary to remain standing. To get such a mass into the room, there were repeated gun shots in order to force those who' were already inside to squeeze still closer. When everyone had entered, the heavy door was bolted. There were a few minutes of waiting, probably for the temperature in the chamber to reach a certain degree; then SS guards, wearing gas masks, climbed onto the roof, opened the windows, and threw in the contents of several tin cans: a preparation in powder form. The cans were marked "Zyklon" (insecticide); they were manufactured in Hamburg. The contents were probably a cyanide compound, which turned into a gas at a certain temperature. In three minutes all the inhabitants of the room were killed. Until now, upon reopening the gas chamber, there has never been a single body showing any sign of life, something which, on the contrary, occurred quite frequently at Birkenwald because of the primitive methods used there. The room was thus opened and ventilated, and the Sonderkommando began transporting corpses on flat carts towards ovens, where they were burned."

I will not say that I was not "shocked" at reading this, but it was at a human level and not for reasons of technical plausibility. On rereading it today, I find it, on the one hand, remarkably consistent with the characteristics of Zyklon B mentioned above and, on the other, virtually a "reply" to Faurisson's arguments: people squeezed together; SS guards wore gas masks; the windows were on the roof and could be hermetically closed from without; the room was ventilated before the Sonderkommando entered; and the gas chamber was separated from the incinerating ovens since carts on rails were used to join the two.

I will add that this report by two young Slovakian Jews who had escaped from Birkenau (8) was published in Geneva in 1944. It was, that is, neither "a late addition," nor "composed under the surveillance of Polish jailers," nor "vague and brief," nor "miraculously rediscovered" – as Faurisson claims of all the testimony with which he is confronted.(9) It strikes me, on the contrary, as astonishingly precise and written without passion by individuals from whom, at the time, a certain lack of composure might have been forgiven.

Let us examine now a bit more closely other "scientific" affirmations by R. Faurisson. I shall take only two examples:

1. Concerning corpses transformed into soap during World War I, he writes: (10) "This absurd legend (ask any anatomist, chemist, or specialist about it) was taken up anew, but without great success, concerning the Second World War." I shall not

debate the truth or falsity of this "legend" (11) in this forum, but I fail to see its "absurdity." Since soap is regularly prepared from beef or mutton fat and from pork lard,(12) why not from other higher animals?

2. On the subject of gas emanating from Hydrocyanic salts upon contact with water, he writes: (13)"For the first time in the history of chemistry, a salt added to water gave off a gas." Without being "historians of chemistry," many readers, I take it, know (and may even have seen) how a commonplace acetylene generator works, in which calcium carbide (a "salt" and a solid) is decomposed by water and produces a gaseous form of acetylene. (14)

In conclusion, I would like to refer to an incident which unfortunately occurred quite recently in Switzerland: (15) on the night of May 15, 1980, there were a number of graves covered with swastikas and graffiti, one of which read: "Mehr Zyklon B fur Juden (More Zyklon B for the Jews)." Its author must not yet have read the works of R. Faurisson.

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Notes of the Appendix

1. Rassinier, *Ulysse trahi par les siens*, p. 111, 155.
2. Robert Faurisson, "Le problème des chambres a gaz," *Défense de l'Occident*, June 1978; also in *Vérité* p. 86.
3. *Ibid.*, p.88, as well as articles on December 29, 1978 (in *Vérité*, pp. 104-105), on January 16, 1979 (pp. 110-111), and on March 29, 1979 (p. 112), and an interview with Faurisson in *Storia Illustrata*, (August 1979; pp. 175-176,203-204).
4. K. Winnacker and E. Weingaertner, *Chemische Technologie Organische Technologie II* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954), pp. 1005-1006.
5. Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité, *Acide cyanhydrique:Fiche Toxicologique No. 4* (revised ed., April 1969).
6. *Vérité* pp. 88, 104-105, 110-111, 174-177, 203-204, 319-321.
7. L'Extermination des Juifs en Pologne V-X: depositions by eyewitnesses; Third Series: "Les Camps d'extermination" (Geneva: C.J.M., 1944), p. 59-60.
8. They have subsequently been identified as R. Vrba and F. Wetzler; cf. G. Wellers, *Mythomanie*, pp. 14-15.
9. *Vérité*, pp. 87, 110, 175.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 202, n. 1.

11. To my knowledge, this was indeed a myth [P. V.-N.].
12. Winnacker and Weingaertner *Chemische Technologie*, p. 276
13. *Vérité*, p. 312.
14. $\text{CaC}_2 + \text{H}_2 \rightarrow \text{C}_2\text{H}_2 + \text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$; see, for instance, G. Champetier, *La Grande Industrie chimique organique*, coll. "Que sais-je?," no. 436 (Paris: P.U.F., 1950), p. 65.
15. *Jüdische Rundschau Maccabi*, 23 (June 5, 1980):5.

ENDNOTES

1. "La politique hitlérienne d'extermination. Une déclaration d'historiens."
2. The texts published by *Esprit* in September 1980 dealt with Cambodia as well as with Auschwitz. At stake was the possibility of linking a totalitarian system and a practice of murder. I refer the reader to the issue, specifically to the responses of P. Thibaud and S. Thion.
3. Translation by Jeffrey Mehlman.
4. Marvin Harris, *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Culture* (New York, Random House, 1978); the phrase in quotation marks is taken from Marshal Sahlins's admirable review of the book in the *New York Review of Books*, November 23, 1978. Note that Harris would account not only for the masculine supremacy but for the Oedipus complex (pp. 57-66).
5. W. Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). A review by Rodney Needham, "Chewing on the Cannibals," may be found in the *Times Literary Supplement* of January 25, 1980; the February, March, and April issues returned on numerous occasions to the alleged debate. Marshall Sahlins had already said what he had to say in the *New York Review of Books* of March 22, 1979.
6. *New York Review of Books*, March 22, 1979, p. 47.
7. *Auschwitz ou le grand alibi*, p. 5. The italicized passages are underlined by the authors. This document was republished by its authors at the beginning of 1979, after the scandal provoked by Darquier de Pellepoix's statement to the effect that the only victims gassed at Auschwitz were lice (*L'Express*, October 28, 1978). A new preface clarified the position held at the time by the "Bordiguistes." I quote from the Vieille Taupe edition, and it is insofar as it expresses the Vieille Taupe position that the brochure interests me in this context.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
10. For the history of Joel Brand's mission, see the (quite personal) testimony of André Biss, *Un million de Juifs à sauver* (Paris: Grasset, 1966) and the analysis by Y. Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp. 94-155.
11. *Auschwitz ou le grand alibi*, p. 11.
12. Serge Thion, ed., *Vérité historique ou vérité politique?* (Paris: La Vieille Taupe, 1980), p. 139. Future references to this work will be under the title *Vérité*.

13. *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* (sixth edition, 1979); *Ulysse trahi par les siens, Complément au Mensonge d'Ulysse*, a new and considerably enlarged edition.
14. One has to be unable to read in order to write, as has J.-G. Cohn-Bendit (*Libération*, March 5, 1979, and *Vérité*, p. 133): "The mass murder occurred, something which neither Rassinier nor Faurisson call into question."
15. On this virtual polycracy of totalitarian systems, we at last have in French the crucial work of F. Neumann, *Béhémoth: Structure et pratique du national-socialisme* (Paris: Payot, 1987). It has taken forty-four years, and sixteen to translate Martin Broszat's *L'Etat hitlérien* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), which insists – perhaps excessively – on such polycracy.
16. Speech delivered at Posen before the Reichsleiter and Gauleiter on October 6, 1943; Himmler, *Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen* (Frankfurt, Berlin, and Vienna: Propyläen Verlag, 1974), p. 169. The edition is introduced by J.C. Fest and edited by B.F. Smith and A.F. Peterson.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
18. Materials on the Korher report may be found in G. Wellers's excellent booklet, *La Solution finale et la Mythomanie néo-nazie*, edited by B. Klarsfeld and S. Klarsfeld (Paris, 1978), pp. 41-84.
19. One is embarrassed to have to recall this fact in the face of Rassinier's (and then Thion's, p. 164) denials. For published details, see the document signed personally by Himmler on January 6, 1942 (instructions for executions) in *Eichmann par Eichmann*, edited by P. Joffroy and K. Königseder (Paris: Grasset, 1970), pp. 257-258. As a matter of course, documents from Auschwitz combine two categories of death, "natural death" and S.B. (*Sonderbehandlung*): cf. *Dokumenty i Materialy z czasów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, I, Obozy (Lodz: N. Blumenthal, 1946), p. 118. *Sonderbehandlung* could also have a perfectly benign sense.
20. J.-P. Faye, *Théorie du récit: Introduction aux "Langages totalitaires"*, (Paris: Hermann, 1972); *Langages totalitaires*, (Paris: Hermann, 1972).
21. "Mauthausen," *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* 15-16 (July-September 1954):41-80.
22. This was a principal point of the declaration by historians published in *Le Monde* (February 21, 1979), which I initiated and composed along with Léon Poliakov. A similar objective motivated the articles by O. Wormser-Migot (*Le Monde*, December 29, 1979) and F. Delpech (*Le Monde*, March 8, 1979, and "La persécution nazie et l'attitude de Vichy," *Historiens et Géographes* 273 [May-June 1979]:591-635).
23. There were gas chambers which were not put into service, whatever certain deportees and investigators may claim: such was the case for Dachau. I see no reason to doubt the existence of those of Ravensbrück, Struthof and Mauthausen. Concerning the last named camp, P. S. Choumoff's demonstration, *Les Chambres à gaz de Mauthausen* (Paris: Amicale des déportés de Mauthausen, 1978), convincingly refutes

the few pages on the subject by O. Wormser-Migot (*Le système concentrationnaire nazi*, pp. 541-544) and has effectively convinced historians such as P. Renouvin and J.-B. Duroselle. (This study has subsequently been continued by the same author in two articles in *Le Monde juif* 122/123 [April-June and July-September 1986]; the retraction of Michel de Bouïard – an author who, in the study mentioned in n. 21, had spoken of a gas chamber at Mauthausen – which appeared in *Ouest-France*, August 2-3, 1986, have not yet taken the form of a demonstration.) Concerning Ravensbrück, see G. Tillion, *Ravensbrück* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

24. Everyone can fill in what I have sketched here. The names of Christian Bernadac, Sylvain Reiner, and Jean-François Steiner come immediately to mind. See Cynthia Haft's beautiful article, "Ecrire la déportation: Le sensationnel, avilissement du tragique" in *Le Monde*, February 25, 1972, and the conclusion of her book, *The Theme of Nazi Concentration Camps in French Literature* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973), pp. 190-191. See also R. Errerra, "La déportation comme best-seller" in *Esprit* (December 1969): 918-921. I myself have denounced one of the most infamous of such falsifications, Sylvain Reiner's *Et la terre sera pure* (Paris: Fayard, 1969; see *Le Nouvel Observateur*, December 8, 1969), and contributed, along with Roger Errerra, to the banning of that book for its pirating of *Médecin à Auschwitz* by M. Nyiszli. On the other hand I fell into the trap laid by J.-F. Steiner's *Treblinka* (Paris: Fayard, 1966); cf. my article in *Le Monde*, May 2, 1966, whose substance I do not retract.

25. C. Hauter, "Réflexion d'un rescapé" in *De l'Université aux camps de concentration: Témoignages strasbourgeois* (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1954), pp. 525-526.

26. V. Grossmann, *L'enfer de Treblinka* (Grenoble and Paris: Arthaud, 1945, repr. 1966); for a serious study, cf. A. Ruckerl, *NS Vernichtungslager in Spiegel deutscher Strafprozesse* (Munich: DTV, 1979) or A. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka* (New York: The Holocaust Library, 1979); I know only through the public praise it has received from R. Hilberg Y. Arad's book, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

27. R. Hilberg arrives at a figure of 5,100,000 victims; see the concluding charts in *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), p. 767.

28. S. Klarsfeld, *Le Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*, (Paris: Ed. Klarsfeld, 1978). A supplement has been published subsequently. This work is based for the most part on German police records; it calls for a number of rectifications, and will certainly call for others in the future, but it constitutes a good starting point. For a more recent treatment, cf. G. Wellers, *Le Monde Juif* (July-September 1980): 75-101.

29. Faurisson (*Vérité*) presents the numerical results of the investigation of the Comité d'histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale concerning the total number of racial or nonracial deportees as inaccessible. Concerning the latter category, their total number may be found in J.-P. Azéma, *De Munich à la Libération* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), p. 189: 63,000 deportees, of which 41,000 were members of the Resistance. Returning full steam in a brochure written to answer me (cf. *infra*, no. 81), Faurisson (p. 31) gave the estimated figure of the Comité pour les Juifs: 28,162. Having consulted the *Bulletin*

du Comité d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale 205 (May-June 1973), 206 (July-August 1973), 208 (November-December 1973) and 212 (August-September 1974), the committee realized that it had arrived at an absurd figure. One more hoax, then.

30. There are not only ideologues. Nazi persecution is occasionally exploited by run of the mill con men; cf., for example, C. Lipsky, *L'Affaire* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1977), pp. 53 and 76. This administrator of "Le Patrimoine foncier," a crooked firm, compares himself to Tristan Bernard saying after his arrest: "Until now we have lived in fear; now we shall live in hope."

31. Thion (*Vérité*, p 341) has given only a very incomplete list of this literature. For a listing of such publications, see my "Theses on Revisionism" in *Assassins of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). I still consider N. Fresco's devastating article, "Les redresseurs de mort" (*Les Temps Modernes*, June 1980, pp. 2150-2211) a study that I had read in manuscript before writing my own, to offer an excellent ironic perspective on the phenomenon of revisionism.

32. For the case of *The Diary of Anne Franck*, cf. "Theses on Revisionism", n. 94.

33. G. T. Rittersporn, "Staline en 1938: apogée du verbe et défaite politique," *Libre 6* (1979):99-164, in which references to other works of the author, who was a sponsor of the publication of Thion's book, may be found.

34. G. Kolko, *The Politics of War* (New York: Random House, 1969); J. Kolko and G. Kolko, *The Limits of Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).

35. It is bitterly grotesque to read the commentaries the line has received from Faurisson in person (*Vérité*, p. 91), S. Thion: "a sentence which is at the least maladroit, since it is ambiguous" (p. 72), or P. Guillaume, the man who was to cure Faurisson of his paranoid symptoms: "a sentence which is strictly true, even if Hitler did not in practice give a damn about what happened to the Jews" (p. 139).

36. In *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* (pp. 170-171), Rassinier nevertheless admitted the plausible existence of a few gas chambers, perhaps due to "one or two madmen in the SS" and to "one or two concentration camp bureaucracies eager to please them," or vice versa.

37. Preface to T. Christophersen, *Le Mensonge d'Auschwitz* (Paris: FANE, 1973), p. 8.

38. Concerning these works, cf. *infra*.

39. A. R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, 4th ed. (Torrance, Calif.: Noontide Press, 1979), pp. 245-248. It goes without saying that if the Talmud contains imaginary statistics, such is the case for all ancient literatures.

40. See *Spotlight*, September 24, 1979, and concerning the congress, the previously mentioned article by N. Fresco. At present such congresses take place annually and

their proceedings may be read in successive issues of the *Journal of Historical Review*; cf. also *Assassins of Memory*, p. 138.

41. *Journal of Historical Review* 1:57. I have slightly abridged the text.

42. Faurisson writes (*Vérité*, p. 111) and Thion confirms (p. 38, n. 21) that no expert evaluation of a gas chamber has been performed. This is false: I have before me an expert analysis performed at Cracow in June 1945 concerning the ventilation openings of the gas chamber at Birkenau (Crematorium No. 2), twenty-five kilograms of female hair, and metallic objects found in that hair. The analysis – which makes use, I am told by G. Wellers, of classical methods – revealed compounds of hydrogenated cyanide in that material. To which response will be made by invoking the trial of Marie Besnard, a famous case of alleged poisoning, and the Stalinist cast of Poland in 1945.

43. These key documents are four in number and were collected and published in a German translation (the originals are in Yiddish and, in one case, French) in *Hefte von Auschwitz* (Editions of the Museum of Oswiecim, Sonderheft, 1, 1973). There are also several other cases of testimony by survivors of the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando*, such as that of D. Paisikovic, reprinted in L. Poliakov, *Auschwitz* (Paris: Julliard, 1964), pp. 159-171. The most detailed case of such testimony is that of Filip Müller, *Sonderbehandlung* (Munich, 1979), which has been incompletely and imprecisely translated into French (I am told by Claude Lanzmann) as *Trois ans dans une chambre à gaz à Auschwitz* (Pygmalion, 1980), with a preface by Lanzmann that makes the necessary comparisons. Lanzmann's film *Shoah* (1985) allowed the survivors to speak. In his *Mémoire en défense* (cf. infra, n. 103), Faurisson, for his part, has attempted to disqualify these texts (pp. 232-236).

44. See J. Kermisch's meticulous study, "Mutilated Version of Ringelblum's Notes," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 8 (1953):289-301.

45. *Geheimreden*, p. 201.

46. *Goebbels Diary*, edited by L. P. Lochner (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1948), p. 377.

47. Concerning this case, see L. Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1979), pp. 209-218. Concerning Stangl and several others, see, for example, Choumoff, *Mauthausen*, pp. 36-37, and G. Sereny's detailed account, *Into that Darkness: From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

48. Gypsy members of the Wehrmacht arrived at Auschwitz wearing their decorations; cf. for example H. Langbein, *Hommes et Femmes à Auschwitz*, translated by D. Meunier (Paris: Fayard, 1975), p. 27; in general, see D. Kenrick and G. Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London: Sussex University Press, 1972), pp. 59-184.

49. "I have analyzed thousands of documents... I have tirelessly pursued specialists and historians with my questions. I have searched – but in vain – for a single former

deportee capable of proving to me that he had seen a gas chamber with his own eyes" (*Le Monde*, January 16, 1979, and Vérité, p. 61).

50. Cf. Wellers, *Mythomanie*, pp. 14-15.

51. Thion offers (p. 345) a bibliography of the polemic; add the clarification by L. Poliakov and P. Vidal-Naquet (*Le Monde*, March 8, 1979) and a final series of documents presented by G. Wellers, "Encore sur le 'témoignage Gerstein,'" *Le Monde Juif*, January-March 1980, pp. 23-35 (minutes of the interrogation of Gerstein before a French military court). Rassinier recounts the visit he received from a Nazi witness of the extermination at Belzec in *Le Drame des Juifs européens* (Paris: Sept Couleurs, 1964), pp. 79-91. The absolutely certain identification of that visitor as Pfannenstiel is established by Wellers (*Mythomanie*, pp. 32-35); see as well, concerning his deposition, S. Friedlander, *Kurt Gerstein* (Castermann, 1964), p. 112. A "diplomatic" edition of the report composed by Gerstein in French is found at the end of P. Joffroy, *L'Espion de Dieu: La passion de Kurt Gerstein* (Paris: Grasset, 1969). Since these lines were written, the polemic around Kurt Gerstein has resurfaced. In Nantes on June 15, 1985, an old student of Faurisson's, Henri Roques, defended a doctoral thesis on the value of the Gerstein file. The text of this thesis, along with a particularly dishonest introduction, may be found in A. Chelain's volume, *Faut-il fusiller Henri Roques?* (Paris: Ogmios Diffusion, 1986). The jury was composed of members of dubious competence: J.-C. Rivière, J.-P. Allard (a medievalist), and a historian of Hitlerian leaning, P. Zind. Following a scandal, the thesis defense was annulled on July 3, 1986. The press accorded the affair copious coverage in May and June 1986. For a good critical account, see G. Wellers, *Le Monde juif*, January-March 1986, pp. 1-18. The most remarkable feature of the thesis was its failure to study the testimony of Professor Pfannenstiel.

52. I have discovered Rassinier's publications dutifully listed in a Polish bibliography devoted to the German camps.

53. *L'insurrection du ghetto de Varsovie*, coll. "Archives" (Paris: Julliard, 1966).

54. The comparison was unfortunate since Bukharin recognized practically nothing except his political defeat; those who were actually judged publicly, moreover, were only a minority. Certain others among them, such as Krestinsky or Kostov, retracted their confessions.

55. D. Sperber, *Le Symbolisme en général* (Paris: Hermann, 1974).

56. It may be found, translated into French, in the anthology *Auschwitz vu par les SS* (Oswiecim Museum, 1974), pp. 141-209.

57. Rudolf Hoess, "Autobiography of Rudolf Hoess," in *K.L. Auschwitz Seen by the S.S.* (Oswiecim Museum, 1974), pp. 33-137.

58. L. Poliakov, ed., *Le Procès de Jérusalem* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1963), p. 118.

59. I have not seen Hoess's manuscript, but H. Langbein maintains (*Le Monde juif*, 78, April-June 1975, p. 10) that there are photocopies of it in Vienna and Munich and

that, contrary to what the "revisionists" have written, the text "is in a regular handwriting and is perfectly legible." Rassinier makes one of his habitual blunders concerning this text: "Its authentication can only be attempted by experienced specialists, such as those working on Egyptian palimpsests" (*Drame*, p. 44). (A palimpsest is a medieval manuscript written over an earlier obliterated manuscript.) I should say that the few pages by Hoess I have seen in photocopy entirely confirm Langbein's judgment: the perfectly legible handwriting of Hoess is that of an honest functionary; see the reproduction of Hoess's text on the final solution in *Bieuletyn Głownej Komisji badania zbrodni Hitlerowskich w. Polsce* 13 (1960):86-120. I owe this document, as well as a number of other Polish documents, to my friend B. Bravo. I have also received several photographs of the same manuscript from the Oswiecim Museum.

60. Testimony and interrogations of Hoess in *Procès de Nuremberg*, vol. 11, pp. 408-433.

61. The Polish edition of the crucial fragment of the Hoess memoirs (*Auschwitz vu par les SS*, pp. 35-142) contains numerous critical remarks.

62. This is but an example of the numerous errors and absurdities to be found in Rassinier. I will not burden these pages with them (except, below, concerning demography), but I have composed a small anthology of them for my personal use.

63. The technical rules in question are those of the Anglo-Saxon procedure and are far more rigorous than those in use on the European continent. To write that the article "cynically authorized the use of forgeries" (Faurisson, *Vérité*, p. 71) is ridiculous.

64. Beyond the forty-two volumes of the official record, which I do not claim to have read, the bibliography is huge; for the juridical aspects, M. Merle, *Le procès de Nuremberg et le Châtiment des criminels de guerre*, preface by H. Donnedieu de Vabres (Paris, 1949); H. Donnedieu de Vabres, "Le Procès de Nuremberg," *Revue de science criminelle et de droit comparé*, 1947, pp. 171-183; for a German retrospective view, G. E. Gründler and A. von Manikowsky, *Nuremberg ou la justice des vainqueurs*, translated by H. Lugert (Laffont, 1969); a Soviet account is given by A. Poltorak, *Le Procès de Nuremberg*, translated by H. Lusternik (Moscow: Editions du Progrès, 1969); a convenient synthesis by L. Poliakov, *Le Procès de Nuremberg* (Julliard, 1971); see as well, since then, R. Errera, "Nuremberg: le droit et l'histoire (1945-1985)," in *L'Allemagne nazie et le génocide juif* (Paris: Gallimard and Seuil, 1985), pp. 447-463. The offensive against the trials, from a Nazi perspective was launched by M. Bardèche, *Nuremberg ou la Terre promise* (Sept Couleurs, 1948).

65. Cf. Merle, *Procès*, pp. 123-124.

66. The most lucid overall evaluation remains that of Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Viking, 1963). The most extreme "revisionist" point of view is given by Rassinier, *Le Véritable Procès Eichmann ou les Vainqueurs incorrigibles* (Sept Couleurs, 1962), a book it is impossible to take seriously.

67. *Eichmann par Eichmann*, p. 110, a text which I have verified by consulting the German original; it corresponds quite precisely to what Hoess says, but his

interlocutor is Himmler (*Commandant d'Auschwitz*, p. 261); see also Hoess's declaration at Nuremberg, vol. 11, p. 410.

68. *Combats pour l'histoire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1953), pp. 107-113.

69. My only personal contact with Rassinier was limited, in 1959, if I recall correctly, to a courteous exchange of letters on the subject of activities of the Maurice-Audin Committee (against torture) during the Algerian war. I knew nothing at the time of his work; I note this fact to observe that Rassinier, throughout his shifts, remained an anticolonialist.

70. H. Coston, *Dictionnaire de la politique française* (Paris, 1972), 11:560 (information supplied by E. Escobar, whom I thank).

71. Introductory note to *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* (1979).

72. *Les Responsables de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Nouvelles Editions latines, 1967), p. 191; the book contains some remarkable considerations on the Jewish influences that perverted Roosevelt and on the good reasons Hitler had to persecute men who themselves admitted that "they were foreigners in Germany" (p. 114).

73. An amusing detail: Leon Poliakov has told me that the translation of his book was used in 1954 by *L'Unità* in its campaign against the rearmament of Germany.

74. Lenifying interpretations of the Korherr report have been advanced (Butz, *The Hoax*, p. 113). The most serious objection is that the figure for the inhabitants of the Theresienstadt ghetto is combined with that for Jews subjected to "special treatment." But do not all such military statistics deal with the dead and the wounded? It should nonetheless not be forgotten that the Korherr report concludes that the Jewish population in Europe, between 1937 and the end of March 1943, diminished by four and a half million individuals, a figure that included emigration.

75. His method has been well analyzed by Wellers, *Mythomanie*, pp. 38-39, whose argument I develop and specify here.

76. The "revisionists" all use the same sources. The same article by D. Bergelson is quoted by R. Harwood, "Did Six Million Really Die?" translated from the English, Historical Review Press (1977):7; he adds a declaration by an American Jew in 1946.

77. At least that is how I understand the cryptic indications of *Drame*, p. 218. Perhaps one is to understand between 1947 and 1963.

78. *Le Véritable Procès Eichmann*, pp. 111-112.

79. *Etre un peuple en diaspora* (Paris: Maspero, 1975), pp. 10-11.

80. Preface to R. Marienstras, *Etre un peuple en diaspora*, pp. ii, iii; *Les Juifs, la mémoire et le présent*, I: 111-112.

81. I have made an effort to verify it: the declaration of war is more than novelistic. In the *Jewish Chronicle* of September 8, 1939, one finds: 1) a letter from Chaim Weizmann, dated August 29, and thus prior to the war, in his function as president of the Jewish Agency, which assures the British Prime Minister of the Jewish Agency's support for the cause of democracy: "The Jews stand by Great Britain and will fight on the side of the democracies"; 2) a declaration made at Jerusalem by the Jewish Agency assuring the British that – despite the White Book of 1939 – the Yishuv in Palestine would remain loyal and would fight for the victory of the British Empire. It is quite clear that Faurisson has not read the text he refers to. He has acknowledged as much since then (*Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet*, 2d ed. [Paris: La Vieille Taupe, 1982], p. 49), but has then gone on to repeat without significant change his argument or to base it on other equally representative "declarations of war," such as this headline of the *Daily Express* of March 24, 1933: "Judea Declares War on Germany" (from a tract given to me by Gilbert Brunet).

82. All this is dearly quite mythical; on the real process of the relations between the Zionist movement and Hitler's Germany, see E. Ben Elissar, *La Diplomatie du IIIe Reich et les Juifs, 1933-1939* (Paris: Julliard, 1969).

83. It is unfortunate that Faurisson did not list all the military measures that preceded and followed the yellow star, such as the decree published in Germany on May 15, 1942, which forbade Jews from owning domestic pets: dogs, cats, and birds (*Procès de Jerusalem*, p. 169). But it was no doubt a matter of preventing them from using carrier pigeons.

84. *Geheimreden*, p. 169.

85. See, for example (*Vérité*, p. 175), concerning Hoess's description of gassings: "One began to remove the corpses immediately"; note the word "immediately," in German: *sofort*.

86. *Dokumenty i Materialy* I, p. 110.

87. New testimony has just appeared, which entirely confirms all the rest: written in 1945 and confirmed in 1986, it comes from a non Jewish prisoner at Auschwitz from April 15, 1944 to January 18, 1945, General André Rogerie, recently deceased. See *Le Monde juif*, no. 125, January-March 1987, pp. 3-14 (annotated by G. Wellers). I made the mistake, in the first edition of this text, of seeking support in aerial photos recently released by the CIA (*Le Monde juif*, no. 97, January March 1980, p. 11); Georges Wellers is right to recall that on the days those photos were taken (June 26, August 25, September 13, 1944) no Jewish convoy arrived at Auschwitz; concerning the selection process, Rousseau, *Intact aux yeux du monde* (Paris: Hachette, 1987), pp. 114-115.

88. Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), pp. 13- 30; among much other testimony, see as well Marc Klein, in the anthology *De l'université aux camps de concentration: Témoignages strasbourgeois*, 2d ed. (Belles-Lettres, 1954), pp. 430-431.

89. Pierre Guillaume, whom I questioned on this matter, answered that these people were transferred at the station in Kielce, or rather, I was later told, in Kosel, 120 kilometers from Auschwitz. But why?
90. Hans Laternser, *Die andere Seite im Auschwitz-Prozess 1963-1965: Reden eines Verteidigers* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1966), pp. 185-186.
91. The elements of the case, including the articles published in *Le Monde* on December 29, 1978, January 16, and February 21, 1979, are to be found in *Vérité*, pp. 63, 106, 109-110, 332-334; La Vieille Taupe announces (*Vérité*, p. 338, n. 3) the forthcoming publication of a Faurisson text (intended for his legal defense in a lawsuit brought by LICRA) under a sensational title: Vous avez dit Kremer: un exemple de supercherie historique; see this volume, chapter 2.
92. The German text was published in *Hefte von Auschwitz*, 13 (1971), pp. 5-117, with an introduction and notes by J. Rawicz; a French translation appears in the anthology *Auschwitz vu par les SS*, pp. 211-299.
93. My demonstration takes up and develops the one sketched by G. Wellers (*Vérité*, pp. 332-334) and, following him, N. Fresco, "Les redresseurs de morts."
94. R. Faurisson, *A-t-on lu Rimbaud?*, followed by *L'Affaire Rimbaud* (La Bibliothèque volante, July 1971), p. 4.
95. I have occasionally corrected the Polish translation in order to remain closer to the text.
96. *Frauenkonzentrationslager*: a concentration camp for women, in other words: Birkenau; the context shows that the "Muslims" referred to are women.
97. "Nothing allows one to say that the 'special actions' crudely recounted in the diary seized on the person of the Auschwitz surgeon... were gassings" (*Vérité*, p. 63).
98. The translation in the Polish edition quoted by Wellers said: "It is not for nothing that Auschwitz is called the extermination camp."
99. The translation by the Oswiecim Museum, from this point of view, is irreproachable.
100. *Vérité*, pp. 109-110. Faurisson refers in a note to *Auschwitz vu par les SS*, p. 238, n. 85.
101. This practice did not in any way exclude other forms of murder, specifically injections of phenol; on the (assuredly considerable) role of typhus as a cause of death at Auschwitz, see A. Fiederkiewicz, "Le Typhus exanthématique et les Epouillages au camp des hommes à Birkenau; Contribution à l'histoire du K. L. Auschwitz," in *Problèmes choisis de l'histoire du K.L. Auschwitz* (Auschwitz Museum, 1978), pp. 237-265.

102. Minutes of the interrogation of Kremer at Cracow, July 30, 1947, German text: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, 13 (1971), p. 113, n. 69.
103. The book, which has since been published by Faurisson, *Mémoire en défense*, contributes nothing requiring me to change my evaluation. Instead of a falsification of a few lines, we have a falsification of almost 280 pages.
104. Cf. Butz, *The Hoax*, pp. 113-144 and *passim*. Faurisson, in *Vérité*, p. 105; on the September 1944 visit by representatives of the CICR to the Auschwitz commandant, cf. *Documents sur l'activité du CICR en faveur des civils détenus dans les camps de concentration en Allemagne (1939-1945)*, 3d ed. (Geneva, 1947). A British agent in the Teschen camp tried, through intermediaries, to obtain information as to what was being said of gas chamber-shower rooms. He was unsuccessful: the representatives themselves appear not to have asked any direct questions: "We have the impression that the mystery is kept quite secret."
105. Concerning the outrage of lawyer Manfred Roeder at the fact that his "truth" had been received by swine, cf. *Mensonge d'Auschwitz*, pp. 30-36.
106. Hesiod, *Theogony*, pp. 27-29; cf. M. Détiéne, *Les Maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris: Maspero, 1967).
107. P. Gibert, *La Bible à la naissance de l'histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).
108. Cf. Claude Lefort, "L'Ere de l'idéologie," *Encyclopaedia universalis*, "Organum," 17 (1973), pp. 75-93.
109. *Problèmes choisis de l'histoire du K.L. Auschwitz*, p. 53.
110. New York, 1946.
111. Joseph Reinach *Historien: Révision de l'histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus*, pref. Ch. Maurras (Paris: Editions A. Savaète, 1905).
112. H. Dutrait-Crozon, *Précis de l'affaire Dreyfus avec un répertoire analytique* (Nouvelle Librairie nationale, 1909); the third edition, published in Paris in 1938, contains an appendix concerning Schwartzkoppen, from which I have taken my quotation. It is regrettable that Philippe Ariès, in his beautiful autobiography, *Un historien du dimanche* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), did not tell us anything of the influence of this book on Action Française circles.
113. *Ulysse trahi*, pp. 82-120.
114. This quotation is from a letter by J. Bennett in the *Melbourne Herald* of October 26, 1979, p. 19; other texts by Bennett include one in *The Age* (March 15, 1979). On the issue of historical truth, a biting response from a specialist, John Foster, was published in *The Age*, March 23, 1979.
115. I quote a typewritten memorandum dated April 12, 1979 and bearing the same title as Butz's book. Thion refers to a first draft of this memorandum, which was

published in the *National Times of Melbourne*, on February 10, 1979. From my Melbourne colleague Charles Sowerwine, whom I thank, I have received a whole file of letters and press clippings on the John Bennett case and the campaign that led to his exclusion from the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties and to his rapprochement with the extreme right.

116. The final sentence of "Sorcellerie, Sottise, ou Revolution mentale," *Annales ESC* 3 (1948):9-15; for an elaboration, cf. R. Mandrou, *Magistrats et Sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1968; reprinted. Seuil, 1980).

117. I took a public position on the matter, *Esprit*, April 1979, pp. 119-121.

118. Indeed it was.

119. The decision by the Conseil d'Etat of October 20, 1978, which I have before me, does not allow any decisive clarification of the matter.

120. *La Clé des Chimères et Autres Chimères de Nerval* (Paris: Pauvert, 1976).