

SERGE THION

HISTORICAL TRUTH OR
POLITICAL TRUTH?

The Faurisson Affair
The Question of the Gas Chambers

AAARGH

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The E-mail of the Secretariat is: aaarghinternational@hotmail.com. Mail can be sent at PO Box 81475, Chicago, IL 60681-0475, USA.

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PART ONE

The How of the Why

"As far as truth is concerned, there are no impure sources."
Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Bulletin d'information sur le Cambodge*,
June 1978, no. 3, page 12.

Here is an individual who asserts that the gas chambers in German concentration camps have never existed, that they are essentially a myth born of the horrors of war. Scandal. It is said that this man is either mad or nostalgic for Nazism. That madmen go off their rockers or that Nazis try to whitewash Hitlerian Germany is quite normal. The opposite, even, would be surprising. On the one hand, there are more and more mad people because, it is said, of modern life. On the other hand, Nazis and other empty heads of the extreme right have never ceased dreaming of a millenarian Reich. If I trust my memory, their influence has seriously declined since the end of the Algerian war and the dismantling of the O.A.S. Therefore, no matter how this individual and his provocative assertions are classified, his case seems clear and devoid of the least interest.

But the strange thing is that this event spreads, takes unexpected proportions, and invades the press, despite the repeated desire to stop talking about it. Ministers comment on it, members of parliament question the government, one of them, from Giscard's block uses it to demand the ushering into France of *Berufsverbot*, the exclusion of "extremists" from professional ranks. Since October 1978, the press is no longer able to practice self-censorship, because of troubles at Lyons University, because, despite being showered with insults, the interested party puts up a struggle and bombards the newspapers asserting his right to reply, because of indictment by the press, because the affair has spilled over to the foreign media, and finally, because the antiracist movements, led by L.I.C.A. decide to crush the boor by bringing against him the charge – quite original under French law – of having "deliberately falsified the presentation of History."¹ Notice this capital H, and wait to see how justice will sort out this hypostasis.

When it is not printed in black and white, rumor is going around that the ideas of this Mr. Faurisson are unacceptable because they are the deeds of a Nazi, or a pro-Nazi, or

¹ Text subpoenaed by L.I.C.A.

an antisemite. The fact that he challenged these qualifiers and won a libel suit against *Le Matin de Paris* did not change his detractors' convictions, which are based not so much on what he says as on the more or less shady intentions attributed to him. It must be said that these trials of intention are not a credit to the censors, but this is not the question. It may certainly be said that Mr. Faurisson is a man of the right, and to be more precise, a kind of anarchist of the right. Nonetheless, it must also be stated that his students and many of his colleagues, until the outbreak of this affair, took him to be of the left. In any case, he stands alone. As to his political leanings, I don't find them particularly attractive except for the refusal of intellectual taboos and of a certain propensity, that I share, to take the side of the downtrodden, those who once and again find themselves on the losing side. This is not quite sufficient, in my opinion, to build moral politics, but it is a rather good vaccination against the illusions of power.

What must be challenged very strongly is the idea that any argument made by a political enemy be automatically considered false, null and void. I know people on the right who are, sometimes, capable of saying fairly sensible things, and people on the left who are likely to make such outrageous statements as to make one's blood curdle. Neither one has ever led me, or anybody else, to a change of political opinion. But they could tell me something, or change my opinion about a particular point; it is up to me to integrate it into my interpretation.

It is not enough to be contented with demanding freedom of expression for our enemies, were they even enemies of freedom, which is as essential as ours and from which it is indivisible; but we must further insist on the right to understand what they are saying, without being stupidly treated as their accomplices. Some of my friends and I realized, at a certain time, that struggles took place in the Algerian F.L.N. and that they were accompanied by bloody purges, assassinations, arbitrary measures, torture, etc. This was mainly reported in detail in the press of the extreme right, but from our side, we could only pick up some of their muffled echoes. This, however deplorable we may have found it, did not prevent us from pursuing our solidarity with the Algerian fighters because we wanted Algeria returned to the Algerians. Would it have been better to delude ourselves with a ridiculous illusion or, recognizing the validity of the fascist press, lucidly continue the struggle, while knowing full well that it had limits?

Conversely, did we have to accept, some years later, the Maoist rantings because they offered guarantees of the left? And, in retrospect, don't we want to see that even before the end of the war in Cambodia in 1975, only the American secret services said that the Khmer Rouge deported the population, ruled certain areas with extreme brutality and had military clashes with the Vietcong? To admit that the C.I.A. was right about these facts and that we were wrong at that time in not seeing in them other than propaganda – would that lead us to justify the American intervention and its trail of massacres, triggering a chain of atrocities? There are thousands of other examples.

Admitting that a mistake was made does not imply shedding tears of scorned innocence in the columns of the adversary press and selling cheaply one pitiful tale of naïveté after another. There are gangsters who become cops, Stalinists who become Chirac supporters and Maoists who dine with Giscard. There are even false renegades,

like those who claim falsely they have had a sympathy for the Khmer Rouge, in order to go around in sackcloth and ashes. All these people swap one mistake for another.

In my opinion, Faurisson is a man of the right. His thinking about the political significance of his assertions is of no particular interest to us. We have no reason to discuss his intentions. But he puts forward assertions concerning facts and realities of the recent past. That a more or less qualified individual writes anything about any subject is a statement of overwhelming platitude. It is enough to know something about some question by studying it closely, or to know some situation by having lived through it, to then realize that newspapers and library shelves are cluttered with ravings that cannot be distinguished from more serious works worthy of our esteem. The frightening tragedy of the deportation turns out to be a favorable subject of these fabrications, that only former deportees can identify at a glance. For us, it is more difficult.

To maintain that the gas chambers did not exist makes one think about this "whatever," the universal and tasteless ketchup that these times spice all our meals of the mind. The appearance of this scandalous person came in the wake of another clearly farcical affair: the interview of Darquier de Pellepoix, an old remnant of Vichy and an authentic antisemite with whom it was easy to lump our troublesome scribe. Most newspapers did not resist taking part.

A touching national unanimity arose to the forefront of these puny adversaries, effusive in their contempt for reality. Ministers, parliamentarians, all sorts of editorialists suspected the new generations of forgetting the past, and maybe not giving a damn about it. The broadcast of the American fiction-drama, *Holocaust*, was a hasty decision. *Le Monde* brought out the big guns with a solemn declaration signed by thirty-four of our best known historians¹. Following a reminder of Hitler's extermination policies, as they are usually known to us, the declaration ends with the following paragraph:

"To summarize: Everyone is free to interpret a phenomenon such as Hitler's genocide according to his own philosophy. Everyone is free to confront it or not, to compare it with other deadly past activities, present or future enterprises; at the limit, everyone is free to imagine or to dream that those monstrous facts did not take place. They have unfortunately taken place and nobody can deny their existence without offending the truth. It must not be asked how, technically, such mass murder was possible. It was technically possible because it happened. This is the compulsory starting point of any historical inquiry into this subject. It is our responsibility to reiterate this truth: There is no debate, and there will never be a debate, on the existence of gas chambers."

This is where I clinched: *Hic jacet lepus*. ("Here lies the hare," one of Marx favorite Latin phrases.) Professional historians say that we should not wonder how an event could have happened, for being convinced of its existence, the historians have no desire to reassess its reality. This is an unbearable limit on their own proper domain of historical research. The thought of it makes me dizzy: What reason could I give for

¹ "La politique hitlérienne d'extermination: une déclaration d'historiens", *Le Monde*, February 21, 1979.

any historical event, of whatever nature it may be (first economic, but also military, cultural, social, psychological, etc.) without wondering, at one moment or another, about its technical mode of existence, of the "how" of the "why"? I understand why so many distinguished historians signed this text. (I do not wonder why other equally distinguished historians did not sign it, nor why most genuine specialists in the subject refrained from signing it.) They did it for political and intellectual solidarity rather than because of real competence because, in general, they work in very different fields. They signed on trust. What seems to me to be the most striking aspect is exactly the fact that in order to make a political gesture, ban any debate about the existence of gas chambers, historians have lent their support to a text that expressly prohibits the research field from advancing beyond the previous generation. To a research professional like me, this is an unacceptable diktat.

An objection might be that the text is not intended to ban anything, that its wording is somewhat clumsy, and even ambiguous and that I chose to understand it in the least indulgent manner. It simply states that facts such as the extermination policies and the massive use of gas chambers are well known, that several perfectly convincing proofs are available to the public, and that it is absurd to want to deny the evidence. Writings that cast doubt on the physical existence of Jesus of Nazareth, Joan of Arc and Napoleon, etc., are recalled. I find this analogy amusing. I am told that I should not be worried, and that in the midst of a debate on the existence of gas chambers, "there should not be any debate." This is no small contradiction. Had I written that General De Gaulle never existed, I doubt whether *Le Monde* would have devoted several pages to refuting me. So if I am told that there are limits to a historical debate, I would agree. There certainly are assertions that are not worthy of being discussed. Memoirs claiming to demonstrate the quadrature of the circle are often submitted to the Academy of Sciences, which, quite rightly, has decided to dismiss them without examination.

However, basic facts must be clear to everybody, they must be more or less exhaustively studied, and the discussion on establishing the facts must be seen through to completion. Only then, the interpretations game can take place. What is a discussion here? It is the examination of arguments, their evaluation, their acceptance or rejection, according to explicit criteria: e.g., the analysis of their compatibility within the context of the existing situation.

The debate that took place in *Le Monde* is not a discussion in this sense (except partially in two articles by G. Wellers). The historians' "Declaration" shows its true colors: here is our interpretation of the facts; reality cannot be discussed since it has been excluded from our interpretation. The difficulty of responding to Faurisson (expected by some readers) is thus avoided because there is no reason to respond (which is expected by some other readers). It is not surprising that the conclusion of this declaration is clumsy and ambiguous. Had it not been so, it would have had to choose between two equally brutal positions: either "all this is silly because it does not square with our interpretation," or "for personal reasons, this is disturbing and moving to us, it touches the unspeakable, we cannot bear such a debate, which offends what we feel is the most sacred."

I will come back to this first implicit conclusion and will submit it to a critical appraisal. As for the second, it would be insulting to me to believe that I am not aware

of the perfectly understandable emotions this would stir up. I would mention, however, that the deepest emotion is felt by those who were not deported. The deportees that I know are aware that they only knew patchy aspects of the deportation and they are not always found in deportation literature. I would like to come back to the second implicit conclusion of the declaration because it puts the authors in the difficult situation of having to explain at length what they did not want to talk about, at least in a manner that deviates from orthodoxy. They would have preferred silence, dealing with this affair with contempt; and I am sure this attitude exists. I understand it and I can even approve of it. I do not see why one has to submit to fashionable reappraisals. It is possible to be ensconced in unshakeable convictions and politely refuse a debate deemed to be useless and painful. But if you decide to intervene, if you are tormented by the anxiety to convince, then you should be ready to talk through everything, to bear stinging critique, to be made mincemeat.

Summarizing his feelings about the meaning of this affair, one of the signatories told me: "Those who target what Jews consider the most sacred are antisemites," an allusion to the what is now called the Holocaust, a word borrowed from religious rites¹. Clearly, this assertion is totally unacceptable. Let everyone put the sacred wherever he sees fit. To require others to respect it as an article of faith, no. To a materialist, the sacred is nothing but a mental category among others, with a particular historical evolution. No one can pretend to be deferential to all the sacred proteans generated by the totality of human beliefs. It would not be wise to sort these out, either. To me, it is enough to respect individuals in flesh and blood and their material and moral freedom. At a time when the latest fashion is the return to religion and where ayatollahs and "Judeo-Christian" clearance sales are blithely blended, it may not be pointless to reassert that no belief is inherently respectable. Everyone has to make do with his and those of others. Neither god nor master. This is the least that can be required in a secular society. Let the idol worshippers be free not to listen to those who despise the idols. Some might say that from the lack of respect for someone's sacred idols to the act of banning some beliefs, there is only a thin line that can easily be crossed. In reality, idols are brought down only to be replaced by fetishes. And revolutions are expert at fulfilling, to their advantage, religious functions that they had previously tried to rid themselves of. Everywhere, it is said that man is a believer and maybe I am too, for I believe that he should not be.

There is another more contingent but definite reason for maintaining the aura of the sacred around the Nazi phenomenon. It is the passage of time. To those who reach adulthood now, the Algerian war is almost as distant as that of 1914. Yet, in front of our sad monuments to the dead, we see every November 11th those young former fighters quiver with the desire to emulate their predecessors. A second reason is also relegated to these antediluvian times. Sensibilities are no longer the same and reiteration of postwar discourse falls on deaf ears. The effect of broadcasting the *Holocaust* series seems to have been ambiguous. Multiple signals point in this direction².

I picked up an article in the press which reports on a recent German book about Hitler: "Young Germans born after the war have mixed feelings about Nazi politics.

¹ This term literally means "Sacrifice by fire offered by the Jews." The subsequent reversal of the meaning is based on a theological perspective.

² See the series of Gilbert Comte in *Le Monde*, May 29 and 30, 1979.

Their moving incomprehension when faced with the scope of Nazi horrors brought back to light by the broadcasting of the *Holocaust* series, combines with impatience and less and less dissimulated annoyance with their elders' silent and suppressed guilt. They want neither to accept nor to assume this guilt, which triggers a kind of remote and cold curiosity free of the complexes of a historical period they often know quite inadequately, but with which they cannot avoid being confronted. This is a curiosity for history."

"Condemnation is not enough except for a tiny minority of incorrigibles. It is an open and shut case. But it is necessary to be kept informed and to analyse in order to understand what happened, and especially how it could have happened."

This new type of questioning by our young neighbors does not calm the fears of those who worry about a surreptitious movement toward rehabilitation:

"The overall condemnation of Hitler is not affected by this tendency toward indifference and nonconformity. On the contrary, it makes the charges more convincing. It is not the result of some theory but of an analysis and an evaluation that firstly, erase none of the contradictory aspects, none of the incoherences and none of the apparent breakdowns that punctuate Hitler's life and his public actions and secondly, propose clarifying interpretations of what remains in many aspects fairly enigmatic".

I keep in store "all that remains enigmatic" and recall the title of the article: "To take Hitler seriously."¹ This work, which takes Hitler seriously, does not certainly come from the revisionist school that is home to Faurisson. But it seems to be related to it through its concern for the time that marks the birth of this period in history. This is precisely what is meant by "*history will judge*." It is because they are confused by the treatment of a past that is ultimately theirs, that so many intellectuals and politicians are up in arms against an evolution that overwhelms them. The temporality of their initiative and that of their surviving or disappeared relatives still reverberates in the collective consciousness long after the dust has settled on their tracks, imperceptible to those caught up in the future. Personally, I am amazed when I gauge the flood of changes since the high time of my participation in what made the news. And the souvenir reduces and distorts.

This digression will not be complete without dealing with another secondary objection: the specificity of the fate of the Jews, and mainly as it unfolded during the Nazi period. Maybe whatever applies to the fate of others does not apply to that of the Jews, because that was a unique phenomenon that the rest of humanity owes to the Jewish people. It must be said here that there is no fate for people or groups of people except as human beings. As for me, my only homeland is the archipelago of friendships and encounters which I have made on several continents, a human being is worth a human being. What they have in common is minor and is not worth much. Only the rich, tangled, juxtaposed and barely transmissible singularities form the fabric of our restless wandering. Speaking from experience, I don't think that there is

¹ *Le Monde dimanche*, October 7, 1979. Report by Erhard Friedberg of Sebastien Haffner's book, *Anmerkungen zu Hitler*, Munich, Kindler, 1978.

more glory or misfortune in being Jewish, or Zulu, or Melanesian, or Mnong. I do not like these generalizations that are launched like missiles. It is a shady business to put up any longer with these old wild dreams: You are this, I am that...

It is only through the price of a theological recourse, whether acknowledged or not, that a group can be singled out and assigned a distinctive role. This is how an ideology based on the notion of election predisposes to an affirmation of irreducible specificity. But every group of people is free to play out a theophany made out from an inner view which is not resembling any other. One may choose one or none.

Nobody denies that there is a kind of hesitation, even censorship, in any discussion about the Jews, or some Jews, or Zionism, or Israel, if it has not been in some sort or another *authorized*. To be listened to, it has to be known, so to speak, where one is coming from. Lacking appropriate sanction, a mark of legitimization, any discourse on this topic is subject to suspicion. It often happens that criticism of Zionism or of the behavior of some Jewish institutions is acceptable if made by a Jew, but is unacceptable if made by a gentile. This is agreed upon by Jews and non-Jews alike. Even the term "Jewish" is avoided in the vocabulary of the left. Authorization to deal with any aspect of Judaism requires an elaborate procedure of guilt deflection. This is done by transferring culpability from the guilty party (Nazis, their followers, and antisemites) to those who are not guilty but who nonetheless must bear the responsibility because they are part of the collectivity that generated the guilty party. The universal reference point is Auschwitz. It is the password, the symbol of redemption. Open any newspaper, any day, and you will find Auschwitz mentioned in relation to anything. It says everything.

And, of course, it says nothing. Suppose, as is usual and customary for me, I begin to question the conventional wisdom, I try to delve into the reality of what had been this dreary expanse. I attempt to understand the structure of what historically had been a gigantic industrial and political enterprise. Suppose that I am tempted to apply the usual methods of reasoning to facts concealed behind the symbol. Would I be a cold monster if I want to continue to think in the face of unbearable horror?

I know that for some things, there are no words. I saw one day in Danang, in Vietnam, some brave G.I.s line up about two hundred corpses of villagers that had been napalmed the previous night. I was with the Vietnamese crowd, looking at this, and stupefied. The Americans were having fun taking pictures to send home. What is there to say? How to say it? Let these visions disappear in the mist of bygone passions. The painful work of the reasoning process is left to those who want to know the HOW and the WHY. Others may not have the power to separate their painful emotions from a chilling, reasoned analysis: I understand them, respect their peace, and I do not expect to hear from them. In fact, to use a modern phrase, it is necessary to "trivialize," if trivializing means applying the same standards of judgment onto all sorts of events. But the historian invariably shocks the witness because he trivializes the unique experience of someone who has gone through it.

If the aim is to let the young generations know what had happened so that it will "never happen again," it is imperative to present the truth as closely as possible, to rid the deportation image of all the cumbersome myths, and to answer all questions as clearly as possible. This is the respect owed to those who have suffered. Indignation

that is not exclusively motivated by the pursuit of the truth – with all the doubts this entails – would certainly have a political aspect aiming at the present rather than the past, and would lead to a debate that abuses the suffering of others. For the moment, this political and, like it or not, polemical aspects of the debate run the risk of prevailing. In order to be somewhat methodical, I request that political judgment be suspended for the time being, so that we may wonder if there is the slightest reason to pose the problem of gas chambers in terms of *historical facts*.

Chapter I

The Historical Aspect

In my view, there is a very simple reason that nobody will reject: There existed and there still exist basic discrepancies among witness, among deportees, among Nazis brought before Allied courts, and among historians who attempted several syntheses of the history of the deportation, on the subject of the location, the functioning, and even the existence of certain gas chambers.

This is apparent from reading three pages (out of 667) that Olga Wormser-Migot devotes to "the problem of gas chambers" in her thesis on *Le Système concentrationnaire nazi, 1933-1945*.¹ She only discusses Mauthausen and Ravensbrueck. She points out that testimonies contradict each other, that many are crammed with unlikely tales, and that the camp commanders "seem to have added to the horror" (p. 540) during the trial where their "confessions" seemed "very odd" (pp. 543-4). Concerning testimonies about gas chambers at Mauthausen and Oranienburg, she writes, "these assertions seem to us of the order of myth." As for Ravensbrueck, where the gas chamber would have been a "wooden shack," (according to Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier), "it is pointed out that statements about the Ravensbrueck gas chamber date it to February, 1945, which is the arrival date of the Auschwitz evacuees" (p. 544). However, this latter statement is contested.

These passages from a book written by a historian who devoted many years to research had a painful effect on the reputed ethnologist Germaine Tillion, herself deported to Ravensbrueck for resistance activities. From the beginning of her stay at the camp and until after the liberation, she gathered whatever she could about the deportees and the functioning of the camp. Through meticulous work and cautious method, she reconstructed a good part of the history of this women's camp.² She shows, for example, that some specific memories were completely false or displaced in time and space. Several cross-checks are necessary in order to establish even a minimal fact. It is quite remarkable that she could prove that there was no doubt about the existence of the gas chamber – surely none for the camp SS during their trial – without even giving any indisputable proof, to the point of not showing this gas chamber on a rather detailed map of the camp (pp. 272-3). Reading this grave and moving book makes it perfectly understandable that she could not have imagined to provide proofs of what seemed to her obviously and necessarily true.

¹ P.U.F., Paris 1968, cf. pp. 541-4.

² *Ravensbruck*, Le Seuil, Paris 1973, 284 pp.

Professional historians, however, take the opposite side and consider this particular Ravensbrueck gas chamber as a myth. This is very disturbing. Looking a little further, we notice that there are testimonies on gas chambers recorded at Nuremberg and elsewhere, that most historians who were hostile to the idea of gas chambers have now discredited. The director of the very official Institut fur Zeitgeschichte of Munich, wrote in 1960 that there was no "massive annihilation of Jews by gas" in the "Old Reich" (Germany) but that there was such an annihilation in the occupied territories of Poland, mainly in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno, and Belzec.¹ I think that this is the consensus of historians. Some will object that this statement does not exclude "nonmassive" gassings of non-Jews, such as at Dachau where, it seems, that the proportion of Jews was small. But a letter from Broszat in response to a previously published article was published under the heading: "Keine Vergasung in Dachau." (No gassing in Dachau.)

If we accept the thesis that gas chambers functioned only in Poland, we have to eliminate them from the Nazi catalogue of infamies where they are mentioned and even attested to, in Dachau, Struthof (in Alsace), Ravensbruck, Mauthausen-Hartheim,² and many other places. In the first pages of his remarkable book, *Les jours de notre mort*, David Rousset talks about a gas chamber at Buchenwald that nobody pretends existed.³ In the Dachau camp, the authorities had to belatedly add a sign on a supposed gas chamber to specify that it was never used. However, Germaine Tillion cites the report of Mr. Albert Fribourg, the chemical engineer, captain and member of the French military mission in the U.S., who visited Dachau six days after the liberation of the camp in April, 1945 (pp. 249-251). He says that it was used.

What is to be believed? How can the layman extricate himself from all these documents, all convincing at first sight, and whose claims are completely contradictory? Can one trust these "second hand books that require of their authors a great deal of patience, time and merit? For in order not to be lost in this bloody blaze, one has to decipher innumerable and incredibly fastidious documents, the most important of which had been tempered with."⁴ What a labyrinth! All the authors admit that these falsifications exist, but they do not agree on their identification. To assess our knowledge of this so near and yet so distant frightening period, we will refer to Leon Poliakov, one of those who did most of the work on this question. In his forward to the 1974 reissue of his classic, *Bréviaire de la Haine*:⁵

"We notice a surprising state of affairs. On the one hand, the Hitlerian genocide has become one of the great myths of the contemporary world. Even today, it remains inseparable from any ethical or political stand involving the Jews. It is cited in very many different ways by churches, heads of State, Parisian students in revolt, and by moralists and novelists from every country.

¹ *Die Zeit*, August 9, 1969.

² See reply of Serge Choumoff to O. Wormser-Migot in *Le Monde* of June 7, 1969 and also in a pamphlet, *Les Chambres à gaz de Mauthausen*, 96 pp., published in 1972 by l'Amicale des déportés de Mauthausen.

³ Paris, Ed. du Pavois, 1947, 786 pp. Cf. p. 57. For this one, see the cited book of Germaine Tillion, p. 263. I am told that this book is a novel, which put in the same location, actions that in reality took place in several locations. Very well. But then this composite location should not have been called Buchenwald. It is a useless confusion.

⁴ Germaine Tillion, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Le livre de poche*, 1974, pp. 12-13 (first ed. 1951).

On the other hand, despite the steady public interest in the history of WWII, despite the Eichmann trial, and despite recent new historical works about Hitler himself, academic and other historians are still indifferent to its most specific aspect, whose mere mention is an insult. Consequently, in the past twenty years, our knowledge about the final solution of the Jewish question has progressed less than that about Saint Bartholomew [massacre of Protestants in 1572 France] or ancient Egypt.

"Why does this reticence of researchers have to complement public oblivion? Would not that be because of a vague sense of guilt that since 1945 has banned antisemitism or hidden beneath other terms? The same fear would make it censor the truth (for the psychologist, a symbol of repression) and advise against knowing what really happened to the Jews or how their executioners functioned, or why they became such. [May I underline this "how" and this "why"?] Such seems to be the link between the unpopularity of the subject and the proscription of the word, if not of the thing. Thus, the tendency not to dwell too much on this "bad side" of history, which was the suffering of the Jews, must be attributed to a reticence and censorship concerning the past."

It is quite surprising to see this same Leon Poliakov – who seems to hope and pray for new and deeper research free from this "vague sense of guilt" and ready to deal with the how and why – among the signatories of a Declaration of the Thirty-four, and even one of its promoters. With all due respect for this newly found harmony, a bitter dispute exists among authors who profess very similar principles. These are people whose job is to expose legends, false witnesses and "falsifications" which obscure factual questions. M. Planchais, who writes the cover of the historians' Declaration, says glibly: "Specialists and direct witnesses agree that there were no gas chambers in all the concentration camps, even in those where tourists and pilgrims are told that there were." That is false; either M. Planchais is not informed about the existence of dissensions, or he passes over them in silence.

If the contemporary research trend, ratified by the Thirty-four who ignore the above-mentioned debate, consists in pushing toward the East these symbols of mass murder through a distinction – which never existed in the German administration – between "extermination" camps and "concentration" camps (the only term historically testified to), is it then totally illegitimate to want to make sure that documents are not falsified, that witnesses did not make mistakes, that testimonies in court are in good faith? Is it excessive to require first, the order and seriousness necessary in the documentation of a seemingly elusive truth and, secondly, a method to distinguish between the false proofs concerning the existence of gas chambers in camps of the West and those, often of identical origins, concerning camps of the East? How can one be prevented from questioning the mode of operation of the Nuremberg Tribunal¹, whose statutes state that it "will require no proofs of facts of common knowledge, but it will take them for granted."² How can one avoid questioning the value of documentation produced by the Soviet side? "After the liberation of Auschwitz, the extraordinary State Commission of the Soviet Union for the Investigation of German Crimes,

¹ "Nuremberg had one defect: it was set up by the victors who judged the vanquished," said Jean-Paul Sartre in a report about the deliberations of the Russell Tribunal, *Le Monde*, May 10, 1975.

² Art. 19 and 21 of the statutes of the Allied Military Tribunal.

presided over by General Dimitri J. Koudriavtcev, went to work immediately."¹ In that period, the pinnacle of Stalinism, the best claim to fame for Soviet judges were the Moscow Trials. The same Soviet judges nearly succeeded in passing to the Nazis the responsibility for the massacre of Polish officers at Katyn, whose mass graves were discovered by the advancing German Army. Strangely enough on this point, even well warned people seemed predisposed to trust the Soviets and the Poles, whose well known antisemitism would guarantee their honesty, while the Nazis' antisemitism guaranteed the opposite. Is this serious?

And beyond these questions of act, isn't there ground for a fresh look? According to Paul Veyne: "Any historiography depends, on the one hand, on the problematic it sets out to deal with, and on the other hand, on available documents. And if a historiography is blocked, it is because there is either lack of documents or the problematic is fossilized. But experience shows that fossilization of the problematic always occurs before all the documents are exhausted: even when documentation is poor, there are always questions that we fail to ask."²

It seems to me that in the above-cited passage, Poliakov describes a phenomenon similar to a "blocked historiography."³ We might agree on the – historical – reasons for this blockage or rather its immobilization at what it had been in the immediate postwar period, of material as well as ideological reconstruction. We have to talk about the climate of this period, the monopoly claimed by the communists and their fellow travelers on everything that had to do with the war and the Resistance, the terrors and infamies that follow under the cover of purification. Read or reread *De la paille et du grain* and *Lettre aux directeurs de la Résistance* by Jean Paulhan, who was in the Resistance, but who was, above all, a critical mind.⁴

Common mortals believe, as I did for a long time, that we have a vast quantity of documents and verifiable information on the subject of the Nazi extermination policy. "Abundance of proofs" is the title of an article by Georges Wellers, an expert on the subject.⁵ Francois Delpech, who simplistically exhibits "The truth about 'the final solution'"⁶ talks about the "multiplicity of testimonies, documents, and works of all sorts." This is not the opinion of another expert, Leon Poliakov: "Only the campaign of extermination of the Jews, in its conception and in many of its essential aspects, remains in the dark. Inferences, psychological considerations, and third and fourth hand accounts enable us to reconstitute its development with considerable plausibility. However, some details will remain forever unknown. Regarding the real conception of a plan of total extermination, the three or four main actors committed suicide in 1945. No document remains, maybe ever existed. However boastful and cynical the masters of the Third Reich had been on other occasions, they shrouded their major

¹ Legend of a photograph inserted on pages 176 and 177 of *Auschwitz*, French ed., Interpress, Warsaw, 1978.

² *L'Inventaire des différences*, Le Seuil, 1976, p. 14.

³ For a more general discussion, see Pierre Aycoberry, *La Question nazie, les interprétations du national-socialisme, 1922-1975*, Le Seuil, Points-Histoire, Paris 1979, 317 pp.

⁴ Gallimard, Paris 1948 for *De la paille et du grain*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1952; reissued by J.-J. Pauvert, Paris, 1968 for *Lettre aux directeurs de la Résistance*.

⁵ *Le Monde*, December 29, 1978.

⁶ *Le Monde*, March 8, 1979.

crime in secrecy."¹ On what other subject will we be satisfied with psychological considerations and third and fourth hand accounts to qualify the reconstitution as plausible? Don't we even see a psychological implausibility in the last quoted sentence? I cannot be satisfied with this kind of assertion. It rests on sand: I do not say that Mr. Poliakov is wrong, or that he is right, but that he gives us all the reasons to consider as hypotheses what he later describes as conclusions. Since we are told that there are no documents, these hypotheses would have to be verified by other means – however difficult that may be – if they shed some light on the functioning of the German administrative machine.

However, another school that calls itself revisionist grew on the periphery of official institutions. It is a rather eclectic group whose common trait is the insistence on the fact that part of the image we have of Nazi Germany comes straight from the Allied war propaganda, which was not much more concerned about the truth than was the enemy it was fighting. Yet nobody will deny that this propaganda existed or that it could have had a misleading aspect. The "free world" has gotten us used to its very efficient disinformation campaigns during its imperial wars, the war in Algeria, the C.I.A. in Indochina, etc. Examples can be multiplied *ad nauseam*.² Everybody knows this, but may not be conscious that the effects of such propaganda may not always completely disappear with the event that brought it about. For a long time, I spread the idea that the Algerian war was the cause of one million deaths. Recently, some better informed friends told me that serious research put the number between one third and one half of that which I took, in good faith, from Algerian propaganda. As far as Nazi Germany is concerned, nobody seems to have taken the trouble to separate propaganda, inventions of witnesses, and official fabrications from provable facts. And yet, this work has been done for WWI and may serve as a model.³

This is not the place for an in depth discussion of this subject. I am not a historian of Germany, but the problem is that this current is not recognized, its existence is silenced by the press. The Faurisson Affair appears precisely as a sort of breakthrough of the revisionist school, all the more sudden and unexpected as it was suppressed for a long time. One needs to know it a bit in order to understand historian Francois Delpech's critique of it.

"All 'revisionists' use hypercritique, an old polemical method of proven efficiency. It consists in scouring the immense, necessarily unequal literature on Nazi persecution for errors or exaggerations, blowing them out of proportion and then trotting them out indefinitely to throw suspicion on the whole and denying it outright.

"Historians have repeatedly denounced exaggerated critique and consider true or probable any fact attested to by two independent and well informed sources, subject to subsequent verification. They gladly accept and even hope for

¹ *Bréviaire de la Haine*, p. 171, Calmann-Lévy, Paris. This book has certainly been written in 1951, but in its preface of 1974, the author realizes that there has been nothing new in a quarter of a century and that "serious works are equally lacking on questions of detail," pp. 11-12.

² See the file assembled by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Hermann, *The Political Economy of Human Rights*, 2 volumes, South End Press, Boston, 1979.

³ Jean Norton Cru, *Témoins*, 1929; *Du Témoignage*, 1930. This latter text has been partially reissued by J.-J. Pauvert in 1967. Cf. Marie Bonaparte, *Mythes de guerre*, P.U.F., 1950, 182 pp.

objections and questioning, provided the questioning is reasonable and based on serious arguments. This is not currently the case in the campaign to spread doubt about the reality of the Holocaust. It is, however, delicate to respond to hypercritique for there is a risk of drowning in the details and losing sight of the overall picture."

In principle, it can be said that the hypercritique method is rarely used because it is unstable and is even, in some ways, contradictory. If it is, according to the dictionary, a "meticulous criticism, a systematic exercise in doubt," there is nothing reprehensible about it. Descartes used it. If what is meant is that criticism is no longer criticism, and doubt is no longer doubt, because to deny the evidence is not a doubt but a certainty, the word has hardly any meaning.

It is amusing to see the naive image of journalistic ethics attributed to historians, with the story of the two independent sources that tie in together. Nobody works in this manner. There are good sources and bad ones, the trick is to size them up, for it is almost impossible to be sure that two sources are independent of each other. But I particularly like the "subject to subsequent verification." Subsequent to what? Isn't that an open door to questioning if, by chance, verification is a long time in coming, or proves to be impossible? Notice also the honesty that consists in hoping for "objections and questioning," based on "serious arguments." One might think that, in his eagerness to dispel any doubt, the historian will show that Faurisson's arguments are not serious, that they do not stand up to the test. But he states emphatically "that is not the case," because in doing that, he would run the risk of "drowning in the details." A good number of his colleagues found themselves unemployed for having made the mistake of going after the details. Thus, the hypercritique turns out to be a very valuable buoy, while the fish is condemned to drowning without the slightest hesitation.

To those concerned with the enormity of the facts and the generality of their presentation, the most incredible problem is the paucity of sources, when the crowd of witnesses who have not seen but who have heard, is removed. It is absolutely frightening to realize that the key document is the set of testimonies given in Allied Courts by the German managers of the camps. Imagine for a moment the situation of these defeated men at the mercy of their jailers, trying to save their skin, engaging in a little game where truths and lies are the basic elements of a survival tactic. Are we supposed to take their depositions at face value? But what is to be taken and what is to be rejected? There is no exhaustive study of the Nazi leaders' trials in Germany, Poland, USSR, France, etc. Not everybody can go to the archives, but everybody with a critical mind will shudder while reading the confessions of Hoess, one of the Auschwitz commanders. Oddities and incoherences become comprehensible if we keep in mind that he wrote in jail with the help of the Polish examining magistrate before his trial, and at the end of the tunnel, he faced the rope. Here is a little healthy exercise that anybody can do.¹

Other documents emanate from unwitting or occasional witnesses: the best known are Gerstein, Kremer, Nyiszli, etc. It is not for me to go straight to the point. I would only

¹ Rudolf Hoess, *Le Commandant d'Auschwitz parle...*, Julliard, Paris, 1959, reissued by Petite Collection Maspero, Paris 1979, 290 pp.

say that mysteries abound, that they are certainly known to those who based their theses on these testimonies, and that their supporting explanations are, in my view, arguable. So we must be able to discuss them. This is an important part of the debate which has not really taken place.¹

New elements from documentary sources are rare. Yet, as predicted by the American revisionist, Arthur R. Butz,² low level aerial photographs of the Auschwitz complex taken in 1944 are kept in the archives of the American intelligence services. C.I.A. analysts published a series of these photographs that they tried to check against historiographic elements provided by the Polish commissions of inquiry.³ The negatives are dated April 4, June 26, July 26, and September 25. According to Leon Poliakov,⁴ this is the period when the incinerations reached their highest levels: 12,000 to 15,000 per day in May-June, and even 22,000 according to Dr. Robert Lévy.⁵ The photographs show the areas around the crematoria deserted. No crowd, no visible agitation, not even any activity. We see once a group of inmates near a train, not far from the crematoria. The text states: "Even though survivors remember that smoke and flames came continuously out of the chimneys of crematoria and that they were visible several kilometers away, the photograph that we have examined offers no positive proof thereof." (p. 11) With the Polish text in hand, the two analysts did not evidently think of raising any doubts. They try to locate the items of information they have on the photographs, but curiously enough, the photographs show nothing. Furthermore, it can also be said that they do not confirm what is written about the use of the crematoria. Without being obsessive about hypercritique, one may wish that such contradictions be not left untouched.

If some are satisfied with the available elements, others seem to be convinced that there is still a lot to discover. We learn accidentally from *Le Monde* that President Carter has appointed a special commission "to assemble documentation on the genocide of the Jews during WW II." It was presided over by Elie Wiesel (formerly deported to Auschwitz). The commission sent a forty-four member delegation to Poland, the USSR and Israel. In Moscow, they met with the former Nuremberg prosecutor, who had become general prosecutor of the USSR: "According to Elie Wiesel, the meeting with Attorney General Roman Rudenko presented the greatest interest, keeping in mind the objective of the visit. In fact, the Soviets hold the richest archives on the extermination camps (their troops liberated Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, etc.). Up until now, Western researchers had no access to these archives. As a result of these talks, members of the American commission hope that the Soviets will allow them access to these archives."⁶ We [in 1979] entertain the same hope.

¹ See the somewhat embarrassed little note of Leon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "A propos du témoignage sur Kurt Gerstein," (should it be read "of" K. Gerstein?), *Le Monde*, March 8, 1979.

² *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, Historical Review Press, Southam, 1976, p. 150.

³ Dino A. Brugioni and Robert G. Poirier, *The Holocaust Revisited: A Retrospective Analysis of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Complex*, Central Intelligence Agency, National Technical Information Service, Washington, 1979, 19 pp.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 304.

⁵ In *Témoignages strasbourgeois*, Paris 1947, p. 433, quoted by Poliakov. On the same page, Poliakov states that according to a Polish source, the capacity of the crematories was 12,000 per day, and quotes Hoess who mentions a maximum capacity of 4,000. There is no comment on the complete incoherence of all these figures; it is as though he is not aware of any. It is up to the reader to manage.

⁶ *Le Monde*, August 8, 1979.

Chapter II

The Spirit of the Time

I must share with the reader some convictions I arrived at after a brief reading of this enormous file. One well established and firm opinion is that I doubt whether anything happened the way we are told it did. The version of the extermination history elevated to the rank of a universal principle suffers from very amazing weaknesses. It is based on the somewhat hasty work of the Allied Nuremberg Military Tribunal, which is not exempt from biases. It was taken up by Poliakov and innumerable other books, and from there, taken up again in Francois Delpech's article and the historians' Declaration. It has the appearance of a coherent hypothesis backed by selectively interpreted documents. Care was taken to leave the door open to other interpretations. But this version leaves too many questions unanswered, to be considered definitively acceptable by calm minds.

As far as the rest is concerned, I do not know. Were there gas chambers in Auschwitz and elsewhere? Faurisson and others do not think so. I know their arguments, I know those of the opposite side and I am incapable of reaching a conclusion. For even if we can make sure that it was impossible that events took place as told by testimonies that are of doubtful value, something else may have happened at a slower rate on a smaller scale. Given the current state of research, I don't see how, in good conscience, I could come to a conclusion. I think it will be the task of the next generation of professional historians.

There were enormous quantities of deportations and deaths whose numbers are only estimates. These are the subject of important disagreements. Due to the certainty that a great majority of Jewish deportees were gassed, no serious research was done on a global scale to find out what became of the deportees after their departure. Even the numbers of deportations are extremely inaccurate. We know, for example, that an official French institute refuses to publish them. As for other countries, it is not even known whether they have been collated. There were maybe isolated gassings, but the question of industrial extermination methods is not dealt with in a way that would answer all the legitimate questions that we have the right to ask about the functioning of any industrial enterprise, in any other context. This is what I have called the how of the why¹. All this converges toward a set of nagging doubts, which includes but is not

¹ As pointed out by Faurisson, no court has ever ordered a technical report on the gas chambers. It does not seem either that an opinion has ever been solicited from engineers or chemists on the complex

limited to the question of the existence of gas chambers. If I, as well as others, have the right to know, there better be no obstacles or prior conditions to inquiries that would some day dissipate the "fog" mentioned by Poliakov.

Many of my friends are scared. They tell me that whether we want it or not and with the noblest motivations, raising this kind of question amounts to calling into question the reality of the genocide, giving arguments to antisemites, and helping the Right. And those concerned about my well-being warn that I will be considered an antisemite.

In fact, these are heavy responsibilities and serious risks, if my friends are right. What can be done to avoid rumors or distortions, due sometimes to sincere indignation, sometimes to treachery with mixed feelings? I am not someone who resorts to courts. I would not want to fight. I am above engaging in an exchange of insults. I have no protection other than the common sense of others, the conviction that a misunderstanding can be cleared up with a little bit of good will, and especially, the assurance that it is possible to withstand disagreements, even with one's best friends. After all, there aren't many people of my political generation with whom I can always agree on everything. This is not very personal, but my writings speak for me¹. I also reject the idea that one can give arguments to the antisemites: these people don't need them. They have behind them a solid tradition of falsehoods, lies and slander. That is enough.

As for helping the Right, this is an objection worth examining. First of all, it is only an indirect aid. When the Faurisson Affair was in the headlines, Giscardian ministers and deputies were among the most aggressive. On the other side, all those who were at one time or another Gaullists probably consider that the present political legitimacy has its roots in the Liberation, when all guilt was dumped on Germany. It is not clear how they would react to an eventual revision. Farther right, there is a Petainist fringe that also accuses Germany of all kinds of sins, so as to highlight the benevolence of its Maréchal . There remains the fascist right and the conglomeration of what is called the "new right." I shall leave it to others to find out whether its instigators are wolves disguised as lambs, or simply some loosely regrouped old fascists. It seems that some of its roots go back to Hitlerism, but that its only chances of political success reside in a modernism that prevents it from appearing as a continuation of Nazism. Like the generals who are always ready to fight the last war, antifascism confronts only an extinct danger. What else is left? The veterans of Charlemagne division? A few admirers of the Fuehrer? They have no political significance. No aid can prevent these ghosts from finally disintegrate.

So the crux of the matter is that removing a major crime from the Nazi catalogue of atrocities is equivalent to rehabilitating the Third Reich or "banalizing" it, making it

functioning of "crematories-gas chambers" and their technical constraints. The use of cyanide gas as a disinfectant is rather well known; there are directions on its use in several armies and civilian administrations since well before the Second World War.

¹ In order to satisfy some malcontents, I may have to parade some medals and drone on about some titles. So, I refer to two titles, *Le Pouvoir pâle*, Seuil, Paris 1969, an essay on South Africa, and *Des courtisanes aux partisans*, Gallimard, Paris 1971, an essay on the Cambodian crisis; and to articles in *Le Monde*, *Le Monde diplomatique*, *Libération*, *les Temps modernes*, *Aletheia*, *Esprit*, and others in France and abroad. The list is available for the inquisitive minds. [See The Archive Serge Thion in progress at: <<http://www.abbc.com/totus>>]

comparable to other political regimes. This proceeds from the assumption that those who question the existence of gas chambers intend to question all other better attested to and known horrors. This is only polemical. All those who want to fight the brown plague have to decide on an effective method: either gather a huge number of horror stories and run the risk of exaggerations and even inventions, or determine a set of irrefutable truths that may be less striking to the imagination but that nobody can doubt.

I was surprised to find nowhere in the literature something I had heard thousands of times: the soap made from Jewish corpses. Yet, those bars of soap were seen. I was greatly relieved to find out that those repugnant objects are just as mythical as the nails on the cross, the hairs of the Prophet's beard, and the tooth of Buddha.

E. Le Roy Ladurie, one of the thirty-four signatories of the historians' Declaration, took up the figure of 17 million victims imputed to Stalin by a dissident Soviet demographer. It was a relief to learn that he discounted unreliable and unbelievable figures, such as those of Solzhenitsyn (60 million). By limiting the phenomenon to more realistic parameters, he makes it intelligible and thus lays a more probable foundation for a moral and political evaluation. It seems to me that nobody accused Le Roy Ladurie of wanting to "banalize" or rehabilitate Stalinism. It is rather known that he has recovered from it. On the contrary, what is involved here is the introduction of an indisputable piece of evidence in a case that has still to be made, for it was obstructed by Khrushchev's successors.

Double standard? I don't think so. The difference is that Le Roy Ladurie was expected to repeat the Solzhenitsyn pattern and add to the Soviet dissident figures. The fact that he reduced the current estimates was perceived as a proof of his concern for the truth. However, the revisionists' assertions concerning the gas chambers and the corresponding reduction in the number of deportation victims, are not generally attributed to a concern for the truth. They are assumed to be simple instruments, using documentation gaps in bad faith or exploiting the conjectural character of the generally advanced figures. (It is well known that the 6 million figure is a totally unscientific estimate, and it is disputed among advocates of the same historical tendency. Using an identical method, they arrive at appreciably higher and appreciably lower estimates. There is no reason to say, as some do, that we will never know, unless all the archives have been searched. This is far from being the case.) They are not trusted because lowering the number of victims seems to be politically advantageous to them, while the same thing seems to be a political liability for the Soviet dissident. It seems to me that this is unquestionable, if it concerns the right wing trying secretly to undermine the almost universal moral condemnation of Nazism. It is not only possible but even probable that some individuals or groups engage in this type of duplicity. Some revisionist writers (I have already mentioned that this "school" is heterogeneous) are ideologically Nazi. Others are not. But this is a secondary question if we make sure that the requirements of political profitability do not coincide with those of the truth of facts. To wrap up with this example, I would say that, obviously, Le Roy Ladurie does not have the means to verify by himself the Soviet demographer's figures, and he does not claim that he does. He only states them with the probability that they may be true, for neither he nor the dissident uses them to his own advantage. But as to the content, it is impossible to know if what is said is true. That we will change the current estimate and adopt that proposed by Le Roy

Ladurie is obviously vague, because of the political advantage criterion of its author. But in the meantime, we will accept this figure only provisionally. However, we cannot rule out any statement unless we are sure that it is not motivated by political interest. This would amount to rejecting any statement that reinforces an established viewpoint. Reality is much too ambiguous without insisting on the fact that it is not always possible to measure how much other people understand their own political interest. In post-independence Algeria, I had some curious conversations with people who did not understand my severe criticism of De Gaulle's policies. To them, a Frenchman whose political interest was on the side of Algerian independence was a reprehensible traitor to France. He was to be condemned, just like traitors to Algeria.

Propaganda arouses counter-propaganda and we lose our soul (now called credibility) in committing ourselves to the former or the latter in the name of an interest that is by nature changing. For some, myself included, truth is the only weapon that cannot be turned against whoever uses it. Whether or not political interest happens to coincide with it is a matter of circumstances, choice and political ethics.

Some political myths are like snowballs: the more they roll, the bigger they get. We have a fresh example right in front of our eyes. Having closely followed the situation in Cambodia for about ten years, I thought I was qualified to write the following: "The figure of two million dead appeared around the beginning of 1977 in the rightist American press. If we examine the facts on which this is based, we realize that this is a total fabrication. The two million figure put out by the American press was taken up by Hanoi's propaganda and suddenly, without any explanation, jumped to three million, and went straight out to the Western press (Antenne 2, *Le Monde*), which is usually not in such a hurry to repeat whatever Hanoi says. A myth is effective when it suits everybody."¹ And I added: "It does not seem unreasonable to say that since 1975, there were one million dead, maybe less, maybe more." I challenge the validity of all the Lacoutures and their absurd invention of "autogenocide," all the André Fontaine, who says that the three million figure is accepted by everybody, by prince Sihanouk, by the communist newspapers, etc. The next day, there was a small dispatch from A.F.P. in *Le Monde* at the bottom of the page, originating from those who possess the most ample means for information gathering: "According to the American State Department estimates, 1.2 million Cambodians have died from war and famine since 1975, which reduces the population of Kampuchea to about 5.7 million people."²

This simplistic estimate had no chance of making the headline of newspapers, despite the fact that it was the best in the eyes of some experts of the situation in Cambodia. It does not obviously affect any judgment that we can pass on such political regimes. One might think that it would put an end to inflation by the media. A few days later, on October 11, an Antenne 2 commentary in "Spéciale Cambodge" stated that "two years ago, there were eight million Cambodians; there are 4 million today" without even noticing that this means there were no deaths prior to 1977. The next day, J.-M. Cavada beat s the record on FR 3 by stating that there were 3 million Cambodians left out of 7 million. For *Libération* of the next day, there were 2 million left. For myself, who has spent months to obtain and scrutinize documents, to analyse interviews and

¹ *Libération*, October 4, 1979.

² October 6, 1979.

try to painfully reconstruct barely intelligible facts, who knew the country, the people and the gravity of the situation, I was made to feel like an idiot bombarded by these outrageous figures. And if I protested in the name of what I believed to be the truth, I was regarded with suspicion: could it be that he has a hidden sympathies for Pol Pot?

Do we want a current example? Some little devils start the noise: "Bokassa cannibalistic." A careful reading of a few good newspapers quickly reveals that it is a canard. Never mind, the myth is launched: a smoke screen that will later serve to justify a French military intervention in the Central African Republic. Public opinion, especially African, had to be anesthetized.

The mechanism of all of this is very simple: add some more, spice it up with some details that are all the more true, that they could not have been thought up spontaneously. The Hitlerians excelled at this little game, but the communists and the western democracies are just as good at it. If the intellectuals have some responsibilities in this world, it is deconstruction and not reinforcement. A painful, often unpleasant, and sometimes impossible search for the truth will not help political forces which base their domination on ignorance and lies. And if there are some unpleasant truths to be discovered in the history of the forties, would it be preferable that the Right should take credit for it and use it as a weapon, or the Left? And if there is nothing to be found, if we drain the abscess, and if we come up with more or less the same currently accepted conclusions, what would we have lost?

Many will finally agree with what has just been said. They will raise a last objection that they deem unacceptable: Now is not the time to pose this kind of problem; antisemitism raises its ugly head. Look at all the books that appear, the pamphlets, the attacks. My answer would be to stay calm, that no more things are happening now than in the past. That a certain unease is surfacing in the Jewish community is possible, but unease is surfacing everywhere. The idea of antisemitism has constantly been taken up since the war: there has never been a period when it is said that it declined. So it is a false idea, a matter of perspective. If we have to wait until it disappears, then we have to postpone indefinitely. We must not have illusions: the question of the existence of gas chambers was already asked twenty years ago, the question will still be whether we deal with it or not. Articles and books pile up and the only answer we get is that the question does not exist. In Germany, they are banned and their writers are punished. This is a very shortsighted tactic which does not augur well. There *should not be repression* in this affair. Yet this is exactly what a part of the Left thought had to be done. Besides, I have the following propositions:

1) Stop all proceedings against Faurisson (and others). The courts are in no position to solve anything. Furthermore, I do not find it honorable to attack a lone man under the pretext of his shocking opinions. It is not only too easy but stupid to hide behind the law. I am thinking of laws that the Popular Front enacted in order to suppress fascist propaganda, and that the Right made use of during the Algerian war, and even now against those who criticize or simply embarrass its policies (for example, the Alata Affair, the Mongo Beti Affair, etc. Books are banned because they characterize as dictatorships African states that are "friends" of France);

2) Open a debate of historical technique. Undoubtedly, this has to start with the examination of Faurisson's arguments and those of revisionists, without hesitating to

"be drowned in the details." It's the details that count. It would be desirable that a group of historians agree to get down to do this job. The place and format of the debate would be left to those who would want to participate;

3) Provide the means to widen the sources. Technical expert advice should be sought. In addition to this, there are archives that have not yet been explored, in particular, the German archives, that need to be inventoried in the United States, France, and, first and foremost, in the Soviet Union. It may be useful for governmental agencies to negotiate access with the Soviets in return for some coveted advantages;

4) Make the results of this research widely known but avoid giving them the character of official truth. It is important that these affairs remain in the hands of honest people, which means the noninterference of politicians, unionists and religious officials, etc.

I do not know if I am asking too much. It seems to me that this is the least that needs to be done.

October 14, 1979

PART TWO

"A conception of future society that would not include institutional provisions for free dissent – however radical it might be – could promote the development of a new form of repressive state."

Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *La Torture dans la République*, ed. de Minuit, p. 177

"Whereas gas chambers have existed, the simple act of wanting to insert in a daily newspaper an article whose author questions their existence undermines the respect of good moral standards."

First instance Court of Lyon, June 27, 1979

"The first generation of human rights is that of 1789 (political rights), the second dates to 1946 (social rights), the third begins today (the right to know)."

Pierre Drouin, "Le Rapport Lenoir. La fin de la société du secret," *Le Monde*, September 20, 1979

"It is not customary for justice to sleep with victors."
Sophocles

"I have a vague idea that truth must be in danger when error so easily accumulates, in its defense, public pronouncements about commemorations at the Sorbonne and gossips about fakes."

Jean Paulhan, *De la paille et du grain*, Œuvres complètes, tome IV, p. 337.

"If the actors in historical crises have the time and taste to observe, they will feel overtaken by what they see is happening; if they are not fooled by official explanations that are given to them or that they give to themselves, all that remains after the event is the amazement to have been put in such a state; they frequently believe what they say and what their theologians proclaim; this version, friendly to memory, becomes the historical truth of tomorrow."

Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, Le Seuil, p. 231

"French society is fragile because it refuses the truths that hurt or simply disturb. In wartime, foreign or colonial, our brainwashing reaches a degree that has always frightened the Anglo-Saxons."

And in peacetime?"

Jaques Fauvet, *Le Monde*, November 6, 1979

Chapter I

Has Anyone Read Faurisson?

This is not the first outburst of this professor of Humanities, Robert Faurisson. In 1961, when our currently dismal literary scene was full of valiant polemics, an article by Robert Faurisson appeared. It was devoted to an interpretation of Rimbaud's sonnet, "Voyelles" (Vowels)¹. It proposed to decipher this famous sonnet by showing that its true significance was of an erotic character and that it described the female body "*in coitus*."

At that time, the war in Algeria was dragging on. In the streets of Paris and its suburbs, Algerians were victims of the most scandalous racist attacks – both by the police and by the people. The police patrolled with machine guns in hand, "nigger hunting." The left whispered solemnly, "peace in Algeria," and believed fascism was on the rise, while leaving to De Gaulle and his agents the conduct of the war. While all this was going on, the press got carried away by the serious problem of the interpretation of a sonnet. Douce France!

This first Faurisson affair attracted neither my attention nor that of some of my contemporaries. But the literary world shook, down to its foundations. Proponents and opponents confronted each other behind closed doors. We witnessed violent arguments by Sabatier, Kanters, Pieyre de Mondiangues, Bonnefoy and Breton, who "approved in general" the daring interpretation of the rather austere little Humanities professor at the very prudish Vichy School for Girls, while the verdict of Etiemble came as a bolt: schizophrenia!²

I do not know if the debate abated, or how the famous sonnet is taught nowadays to schoolboys (or if "Voyelles" is in schoolbooks), but in any case, it went on until 1968 when Etiemble wrote a book against it.

Were it not for the insistence of my eminent colleague, Mr. Faurisson, I would undoubtedly have forgotten these disparate events. But how can I resist giving my opinion to somebody who became famous for having detected under each vowel one of the embellishments of coitus? According to him, I have not written enough about these verses. Will this volume assuage his hunger?

¹ *Bizarre* # 21-22, 1961.

² See beginning of this debate in *Paris-Presse* of 9 November 1961, *Combat* of 4 December 1961, *L'Observateur littéraire* of 28 December 1961, and 11 January 1962, *Rivarol* of December 1961, *N.R.F.* of January 1962, *le Figaro littéraire* of 13 January 1962, *le Monde* of 3 February 1962, *Lettre d'Etiemble* of February 1962 and of 24 February 1962 (reply of R.F.), *Les Temps modernes* of March 1962, etc.

This is on the book jacket!¹

Now, as in 1961, I don't feel I have to take sides in the quarrel. But from outside of the inner circle, we can appreciate the fine mechanics of Faurisson's proposition, while at the same time professing a high esteem for Etiemble's style, his enthusiasm and his courage. Due to the retrospective interest aroused today by other Faurisson writings, and while remaining above the fray, I would like to point out some other remarks of O. Mannoni that came just in the heat of the battle.²

The question of interpretation of the texts of Rimbaud has taken on a new life as a result of a courageous and radical attempt which may be good to consider – not necessarily to approve of it completely – but because it follows a clear path to its ultimate end and by so doing makes it into a model. Using correct methods, it consists of several approaches leading to a worthwhile enrichment of meaning, while at the same time exhibiting such fear of the properly poetic in Rimbaud's work, that some of the supposedly most profound interpretations seem so artificial as to be discounted.

He later adds a general remark pertinent to the future works of this rabid critic:

It is rather surprising to see the extreme passion with which several critics brandish their interpretations of these fourteen verses. They reveal an extraordinary intolerance. Where could such energy come from? It may be the simple classical anger that every true believer dreams of exterminating, in the person of his adversary, all of his own obscure doubts. Fanaticism seeks the help of unsteady convictions. Yet, it would seem that there is no reason to lose one's calm.

It was with another thunderbolt in the serene sky of our Humanities that Faurisson would launch a new debate in 1972, this time about Lautréamont. Here, too, we quote from the dust jacket of the book which is the copious file that was his PhD thesis.³

The work of Lautréamont has never been read for what it is: a brilliant, cheerful counterfeiting of pontificating moralism. *Les Chants de Maldoror* and *Poesies* are two buffooning fantasies. Isidore Ducasse appears successively as a Tartarin (or Fenouillard) of vice and virtue. He pretends to defy – notice this style – the "crab of debauchery" and the "boa of absent ethics." A flowering of priggishness and comical absurdities adds to the flavor of two entertaining satires.

But to reveal them, one has to read without prejudice, line by line, word by word, and all the text: an elementary precaution sometimes neglected by commentators, especially those of the New Criticism school.

There was a lot of praise for Lautréamont's surrealist genius. The real genius is that of the pompous stupidity expressed through the intervention of the two grotesque characters of the "bard" and the "poet." The works of Isidore Ducasse (1846-1870) are among the most prodigious literary mystifications of all time.

The viva was quite lively, as reported by Jacqueline Piatier, who variously described

¹ Le Sonnet des voyelles. De l'audition colorée à la vision érotique, Gallimard, Les Essais 139, 244 p.

² O. Mannoni, "Le besoin d'interpréter", *Les Temps modernes*, #190, March 1962, pp.1347-1361. Here pp. 1350 and 1354. Faurisson's writings on this subject are assembled in *A-t-on lu Rimbaud? (suivi de l'affaire Rimbaud)*, J.-J. Pauvert, reed. 1971. Latest republication : La Vieille Taupe, BP 9805, 75242 Paris cedex 05, where the book (203 p.) is still available (120 F.)

³ *A-t-on lu Lautréamont?* Gallimard, Les Essais 170, 1972, 433 p.

the author as sputtering, unperturbed, ironist, prophet and reckless archer. "But what is important is that we laugh."¹ By launching an attack on both the new and the old schools of criticism, Faurisson exposed their divergences in burlesque vein.

Critique of Text (Three Schools)

There are three ways to see a text. There are three ways to see things, people, texts. There are three ways to look at a ball-point pen and to talk about it.

1. – The old criticism declares: "This object is a Bic ball-point. Its function is to write. Let us set it back in its historic context: we recognize in this object the "style" of the Elders. Here it presents itself in a modern form: it is practical, easy to handle and transport; it has its autonomy. Let us see its socioeconomic setting: it follows the contingencies of industrial mass production. It is cheap; it is consumed and it is thrown away. Let us describe it (it is worth noting that the old criticism tends to delay this description, which should logically have preceded everything else; it would seem that it is afraid of reality, that it would only tackle at the end of a turning historic motion, which gives it a thoughtful cast): this Bic ball-point is made of a case, an ink canal, a cover, and a metallic point. The whole is mostly made of soft or hard plastic. The case is blue, white and gold. Its cross section is hexagonal; its form is elongated. Let us find out who is the author of this work and what he says about it. We discover that this object is manufactured in the factories of Baron Bich. This industrialist is well known. Let us see what *Paris-Mach*, *Jours de France* and *France-Soir* said about him: Baron Bich did not conceal how, why and for whom he had conceived and manufactured this product. He is its producer and therefore knows his business better than anybody else. He went so far as to tell the secrets of his product. He revealed all this thought. His intentions might be summarized in this: "First and foremost, I thought of workers, low-wage earners."

2. – The new criticism turns up and declares: "The old criticism no longer interests many people. Its views are rigid. They are the expression of a society that has fossilized around 1880-1900. All in all, weren't Taine, Renan and Lanson the upholders of Sainte-Beuve? Let us honor these old men; they are touching. But they are outdated. By whom? Of course, by us, in all modesty. This is what has to be understood. Things don't say what they are supposed to say, or even what they say. The same applies to people and to words. We have to look around, underneath and through them. This Bic ball-point [the name is flat and despicably circumstantial] is only incidentally this. It is... an arrangement of *structures*. Of form. Of context at the same time (but not: successively) historic, economic, social, aesthetic, individual. Here, all is in all and conversely. This object [ob-ject] is a set of scripted and scriptural structures, where different systems of bluish and translucent mat finish are conjugated. A shimmering gossamer reality that is to be captured in a maze of complexities and modulations. The tube is anaphoric [it wears its point in front]. The interior of the object [ob-ject] is registered inside the tube. The tube is the hinge element, thanks to which the internal extent of the work is articulated into a significant volume. Thus, every theme occurs at the same

¹ "Maldoror entre M. Prudhomme et M. Fenouillard", *Le Monde*, 23 June 1972.

time, under cybernetic [it moves] and systematic [it is constructed]. A psychoanalytic deciphering is in order. It is known that Baron Bich is very keen on sailboats. He is haunted by the America Cup that so far he has not been able to win. Well, look at this anaphoric point. It is clear that the baron has operated a transfer on the structure of the ball-point Bic. Notice this offensive manner of splitting the tides in the context of a society turned entirely toward production and consumption. What the baron does not succeed in, on the tides, he tries somewhere else. On another *level* of analysis, we might also talk about a phallic symbol. From this viewpoint, it is not uninteresting to notice that in order to baptize the object [ob-ject] in question, the baron undertook either to amputate the letter H [Bich became Bic] or to ablate this letter. The amputation may be interpreted in different ways, which we had better skip. As for the ablation, it may be understood as a discrete and moving sign of belonging to a "Homo" entity of the Balzac type, reinterpreted with such finesse by Roland Barthes in his *S/Z*. But other structural decipherings are possible: for example, according to the imaginative conscience of Bachelard, the perceptive conscience [or: a-thetic of self] of Merleau-Ponty, the ontologic sentimentality of Jean Wahl, the Marcelian meditation of the body, and more generally, the phenomenological intentionality." (N.B. All of this last sentence appears in *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, thesis of J. P. Richard, 1961, all of the ontologic gobbledygook of my new criticism can be found in the first pages of this work.)

3. – The criticism of all time is surprised by so much science and so little common sense. It goes straight to the point. This is its first move. Its first move is not to go around in circles. It does not want to know who, what, or where, or when. This is neither the author's name nor his declarations. No commentary, no philosophy. Show me this. It examines it at a distance and close up. It sees Reynolds. A priori, the object would be a ball-point made by Reynolds. Caution! Reality may not correspond to appearance. It is yet to be seen. Another examination of the object is in order. Could it be a fake? This appearance of ball-point may hide I don't know what: a weapon, a microphone, sneezing power. Everything is to be carefully examined. The test result may be that I am not able to tell. Consequently, I refrain from telling. And I will not pretend to have an explanation. I will not comment. I will <italic>shut up. The criticism of all time has formidable requirements: to think before speaking; to start at the beginning; to shut up when there is nothing to say. A good example of this criticism (always advocated but rarely practiced) is the story of the golden tooth, told by Fontenelle. The illustrious professors made fools of themselves while the anonymous goldsmith diagnosis was correct, straight and true.

Shocked by this "thèse hénaurme," Jacqueline Piatier's conclusion is not unfavorable:

Lautréamont is doubtless not as easy as he is made out to be by Mr. Faurisson, whose reasoning goes as follows: If the *Chants de Maldoror* are made to say a lot, then they must not say much. But even in his simplistic way, Mr. Faurisson cannot be dismissed, either. It cannot be denied that he put his finger on some of our ailments and that wherever he goes, he leaves a trail of good mental and verbal health that is quite pleasing to our youth. His thesis at the Sorbonne earned him a doctorate degree with distinction, while at the same

time, celebrated by our modern abstracters of quintessence and by Pierre Dac, a comic who dabbles in the logic of absurd, whom Faurisson thinks Lautréamont resembles, Isidore Ducasse attains true glory.

Here, too, the press would firmly fight for or against Faurisson's ideas¹. He explains what he calls his method, in an interview with *Les Nouvelles littéraires*².

A common point, among many, if not most, advocates of the new criticism, and the old criticism as well, is the repugnance to attack the texts directly and to talk about them in plain, everyday words. In order to analyse a text, the "Paleo" and the "Neo" need a whole set of historic, psychological, linguistic, or psychoanalytic considerations that seem to me to be pure alibis. "Paleo" and "Neo" are more or less in agreement, on disparaging the search for an original and veritable meaning. However, I am convinced that we are still inflicting false meanings and misinterpretations on French texts, as well as on Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Chinese texts. We must look for the letter before looking for the spirit. Texts have only one meaning, or there is no meaning at all.

It may be a double meaning (as in irony, for example), but this amounts to only one meaning. Often, it is not found. Sometimes, we imagine that we found it, and, a little later, we realize that it is not so. A word taken separately may have several meanings, but as soon as it is inserted into a sentence, it tends to lose this aptitude very fast. We must not confuse "meaning" with "feeling." The same text may inspire the most contradictory feelings: we then give this or that meaning, but this absolutely does not amount to saying that it has all these meanings at the same time! To attribute a quality to somebody does not mean that this person is endowed with this quality. I would like that literary criticism accept this hard law of meaning, just as physicists accept the law of gravity. As for the university, I reckon that some of its representatives teach people to read "between the lines." As for me, I first try to read the lines. This is already quite difficult.

– What do you teach your students?

I train them in the "critique of texts and documents" (literature, history, media, etc.) If, in a text reputed to be historical (but aren't these reputations prejudiced?), they find the words "Napoleon" or "Poland," I forbid that their analysis take into consideration what they think they know about Napoleon or Poland; they have to content themselves with what is said in the text. A text thus scrutinized by the blunt, naked eyes of a layman and without any clichés, takes on interesting depths. Furthermore, this is an excellent means to detect all kinds of falsifications and "fabrications." My students call this the "Ajax" method because it scrubs, cleans and shines.

I doubt that this method is sufficient to understand a text and satisfy all levels of curiosity that it arouses in me. And I will not a priori reject all other methods of

¹ Faurisson's next book, *La Clé des "Chimères" et "Autres Chimères" de Nerval*, J.-J. Pauvert, 1976, 140 p. did not stir the same passions. Public habit or Nerval's lesser prestige?

² 10-17 February 1977, "Je cherche midi à midi". Comments reproduced by Gérard Spiteri.

critique, keeping in mind that they may lead to grotesque priggishness. What is certain is that Faurisson's care in dealing with texts at the basic level could but lead him to work on literary or other texts related to cruel events of our era and to scour them with his "Ajax method." Whether or not we accept this method for entirely gauging or judging a text, simple common sense requires that it be considered as a precondition of obvious merit: we have to begin with reading what the texts say before interpreting them.

Thus, when the Faurisson affair broke out in 1978, several newspapers got hold of the assignment he gave his Lyon students: "Is the Anne Frank *Journal* authentic?" In the confusion and insinuations that followed, the thing would invariably take twists of antisemitic provocation. It was a question of context. The imputation was all the simpler (it was in the form of a question but the reader was supposed to understand that Faurisson's answer was negative) that he had not published anything on his research work, which needed finishing touches. As it turned out, the close analysis of the text attributed to the young Anne Frank clearly shows that it is a literary fake. Obviously, this in no way diminishes her tragic fate.

The best, here too, is to see for oneself¹. The reader is referred to the work itself in order to see why the statements of Mr. Nodot, vice-president of the Rhone Federation of L.I.C.A., are slanderous.²

Faurisson did not come up by himself with the libel against the journal of Anne Frank. The "promoter" of this abject affair is Ernst Roemer, an old Gestapo collaborator, who was fined 1500 marks for circulating a pamphlet on this subject. He appealed to the court in Hamburg. Anne Frank's father, still alive, presented to the court decisive conviction material: the original journal.

¹ This text will be given in the annexes, to be displayed soon on this site. The English translation has been published by the *Journal of Historical Review*, Summer 1982, 3, 2, p. 147-209. The French original version is visible at <http://abbc.com/aaargh/fran/histo/SF/SF1.html/histo/SF/SF1.html>

² *Le Droit de vivre*, February 1979.

Chapter 2

What The Faurisson Affair Really Is

The affair we are dealing with started in 1974 in quite a curious manner: the 17th of July a letter appeared in *Le Canard enchainé* addressed three months earlier by Faurisson to Dr. Kubovy, the director of Center of Jewish Documentation in Tel Aviv. Here is the text of the letter where the passages truncated by *Le Canard* are restored:

May I ask your feeling, your personal feeling about a particularly delicate point of contemporary history: Do the Hitlerian gas chambers seem to you as having been a myth or a reality? Would you be kind enough to eventually specify in your reply, what credit, according to you, should be given to the "Gerstein Document," to the confession of R. Hoess, to Nyiszli's testimony (should we say Nyiszli-Kramer?), and, in general, on what is written on this subject concerning Auschwitz, on the Zyklon B gas, on the acronym "N.N." ("Nacht und Nebel" or "Nomen Nescio"), and on the concept of the "final solution"? Has your opinion about the possibility of existence of these chambers changed since 1945 or is it the same today as it was twenty-nine years ago? Until now, I have not been able to discover photographs of gas chambers that seem to offer some degree of authenticity. Neither the Center of Jewish Documentation in Paris, nor the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich have been able to supply me with any. Do you have any knowledge of photographs to be added to the file of this question? I thank you in advance for your reply and maybe for your help. Please be assured of my highest consideration.

Le Canard picked up this letter from *Tribune juive Hebdo* (June 14, 1974), which had picked it up from the Israeli daily *Yedioth Aharonoth* (May 26, 1974), where it had ended up, the addressee having passed away. This was a letter similar to that which Faurisson had sent to several dozen people, historians and known specialists around the world.

Since June 25, the University board (Sorbonne nouvelle-Censier) where Faurisson teaches, has been talking about it. The letter had been written on University stationary.

The publication in the weekly *Tribune juive* of an article signed by Faurisson and which contains inadmissible doubts concerning the Nazi concentration camps, was referred to the president [Mr. Las Vergnas]. This article was written on our university (centre Censier) stationary. Therefore, the president

requests that he be authorized to send to this newspaper, in the name of the board, a total disclaimer of our colleague's allegations, since they implicate the reputation of our university. The board unanimously approved.

Robert Faurisson points out:

[...] that a *letter* is presented here twice as an *article*. A letter published without its author's consent is presented as an article submitted by him to the newspaper. *Questions* on the existence of *gas chambers* become *doubts* about the existence of *concentration camps*; then, these doubts are, in turn, described as *allegations*. These doubts, declared inadmissible, and these allegations requiring a total disclaimer, would implicate the reputation of the university.

- Since when is a person condemned without being permitted to defend himself (at least as an "invited observer," which was the case of the colleague who "referred this matter to the president")?
- Since when are a president and his board qualified to judge a professor's research about which they only have a truncated letter?
- Since when does the university contest the right to doubt and to research?

He posted these remarks at Censier in order to respond to circulating rumors and other harmful displays. His name is followed by "standing member of S.N.E.Sup," which would soon cause him to be excluded from this union, for his membership "would lead to the belief that the questions posed by Faurisson and what he presents as of an exclusively scientific nature, may have the endorsement of the S.N.E.Sup; for years a campaign is being waged to determine degrees in horror among Nazi crimes, while attempts at rehabilitating Hitlerism are developing, opening the door to political exploitation, the S.N.E.Sup. obviously refuses the least endorsement. The committee considers that the use of the acronym S.N.E.Sup. in this context is morally damaging to the union¹".

Let's limit ourselves to three remarks: one has to be particularly simpleminded not to realize that there has been degrees in horror. Next, nobody suspects a faculty union of endorsing the research of its members. The S.N.E.Sup. is not exactly a scholarly society. The only function of this little Jesuitism is to justify its abandonment of a longtime member in need of its support. The third point is interesting because it resurfaced in 1974, as in 1979, as it had resurfaced twenty years earlier, and hopefully will not resurface twenty years from now: the so-called "campaign to rehabilitate Hitlerism."

This is obviously a permanent campaign for those who participated in the enterprise (not all, there are repentants, too) and others, younger, who live in the nostalgia of the good Adolf. Since 1945, this campaign has never known other than pitiful failures. There is less protest against the rehabilitation campaigns of other criminal tyrannies, like that of the French royal family (see the recent gesticulations of the Count of Paris – who pretends to be the Pretender to the throne...) or of Mr. Bonaparte, on the

¹ S.N.E.Sup, conflict commission, deliberation of October 4, 1975.

occasion of his bicentennial anniversary, celebrated by the French State at the expense of taxpayers. That the Führer's birth be celebrated in two hundred years by an eventual German State, seems probable to me, the same causes produce the same effects. The fact of glorifying the "liberticide" dictator of the 18th of Brumaire does not imply ipso facto that our political regime resembles that of the famous precursor of Bokassa. We wish the same for the Germans of the XXII century. In addition, those who wish to rehabilitate Hitler, or Pétain, or Louis XVI or Trotsky say so openly. For their enterprise would never make any sense if they do not admit their goal loud and clear. Therefore, it is important not to have a wrong adversary and to stop this little permanent blackmail. It can, however, silence only those who precisely worry about being mixed up with the openly declared partisans of Hitlerism whose purpose is quite different.

Following this hijacking of correspondence, Faurisson was, not unexpectedly, showered with abuse and various threats (letters, phone calls, graffiti on his house, in a typically anti-Nazi style: "Faurisson, you will die like a beast").

This was the starting point of a long-lasting dispute between Faurisson and the Lyon II university administration where he had been teaching since 1974. He had reasons to think that hostile rumors generated by the publicity around his research topics had the effect of preventing his normal career development at the university. He had the ingeniousness to be offended. A long judicial procedure resulted in a judgment against the plaintiff in Council of State in October, 1978. The atmosphere at Lyon University was obviously somewhat affected and that he could not count on other than some rare and discrete support in facing hostile colleagues.

This did not prevent the author of the "Ajax method" from continuing to work. It is the reading of books by Paul Rassinier, a former deportee, that led him to this trail. We will talk later about Rassinier and the unbelievable slanders he was subjected to. Before his death in 1967, he wished that young researchers would take up the torch and contribute to shine more light on this painful period of the war and the deportation.

Faurisson built up a file, sent letters in all directions requesting documentation, assiduously visited reading rooms, like that of the Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris, sought the opinions of professionals in gas usage and cremation, traveled to Austria and Poland armed with a tape measure and a camera, questioned witnesses and archivists, and analyzed the texts. He drew conclusions. He tried to published them. Here is where nothing worked anymore.

In a letter published under "the right to reply," he briefly describes his approach¹:

Until 1960, I believed in the reality of these gigantic massacres in "gas chambers. Then, after reading Paul Rassinier, former deportee, resistant and author of *Lies of Ulysses*, I began to have doubts. After fourteen years of personal reflection and four years of relentless inquiries, I acquired the certainty, like twenty other revisionist authors, that I am confronted with a historic lie. I visited and revisited Auschwitz and Birkenau, where we are

¹ *Le Monde*, January 16, 1979.

presented with a "reconstituted gas chamber"(presented to tourists as being the original) and ruins of so-called "crematoria with gas chambers." At Struthof (Alsace) and at Majdanek (Poland), I examined the locations presented as "gas chambers in their original state." I analysed thousands of documents at the Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris: archives, stenograms, photographs, written testimonies. I tirelessly questioned specialists and historians. I searched but in vain for a single former deportee capable of proving to me that he had really seen with his own eyes one "gas chamber." I did not want an illusory abundance of proofs; I was ready to be content with one proof, a single proof. This proof, I never found. What I found instead were many false proofs, worthy of witchcraft trials and dishonor to the magistrates who satisfied themselves with them. And then, I found silence, embarrassment, hostility and finally, slander, insults and blows.

At the same time that Faurisson was "tirelessly questioning specialists and historians," he initiated a sort of guerilla warfare with the press, especially *le Monde*, in order to publish his views, and this since 1966, without any success. Here is a symptomatic example: Faurisson sent to Charlotte Delbo a letter similar to that which he sent to Dr. Kubovy, and which surfaced in *Le Canard enchainé*. Charlotte Delbo, a writer and author of several stories on the deportation¹, sent it to *Le Monde* together with some commentary. More correct than *Le Canard*, *Le Monde* asked Faurisson the authorization to publish this private letter – and he refused. It was, nevertheless, published with Charlotte Delbo's commentary, but Faurisson's name disappeared. The allusion was transparent to anyone who read *Le Canard enchainé* at that time. The headline of the article is "Demythify or Falsify²":

"Do the Hitlerian gas chambers seem to you to have been a myth or a reality? [...] Has your opinion on the possibility of the existence of gas chambers changed since 1945, or is it today what it had been twenty-nine years ago? So far, I have not been able to discover photographs of gas chambers that seem to have any degree of authenticity. Neither the Centre of Jewish Documentation in Paris, nor the Institut fur Zeitgeschichte of Munich has been able to supply me with any. Would you have any knowledge of photographs to add to the file of this question? I thank you in advance for your reply, and maybe for your help."

These may be considered strange questions when addressed to a witness like myself. Yet, they were addressed to me in a letter that I received recently.

Doubtless, this letter would deserve no more than a shrug, a pitiful gesture (poor, mentally sick person) or an ironic response (what, Sir, would you subject all history to doubt, up to the invention of Niepce? Would you deny the Saint-Barthélémy, the fall of la Bastille and the battle of Waterloo because a *Paris-Match* reporter was not there?) Yes, this letter would doubtless deserve nothing but that, had it not been written on a faculty of Humanities

¹ "The writer, Charlotte Delbo, has published four narratives on the deportation: *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, *Une connaissance inutile*, *Mesure de nos jours*, *Le Convoi du 24 Janvier* (ed. de Minuit) and one play: *"Qui rapportera ces paroles ?"* (Oswald)

² Charlotte Delbo, *Le Monde*, 11-12 August, 1974.

stationary and had the name of the signatory not been followed by his title, associate professor.

Here is a professor who sought documentation for only *a contrario* proof, proof against the truth, and he hopes that I would help him find these proofs. After all, how to suppose that R. Hoess, whose autobiography (*The Auschwitz commander speaks*) was published, and would have considered it his duty, even though it was painful to him, to focus his eye on the porthole of the gas chamber every time a batch went through it? Was it to give ammunition to the charge while he quibbled about the numbers: two million, eight hundred thousand of gassed Jews, according to him, rather than the four million figure upheld by the tribunal?

Do the gas chambers seem to me to have been a myth or a reality?... The question overwhelms me. So we would have struggled with the last energy to get out of Auschwitz, we would have struggled under such terrible conditions that our survival is a miracle, our will to survive was sustained by the will to be able to speak the unspeakable, we would have survived so that we would testify and keep the promise that we had made there: to say what it was like, and today, we are asked if the gas chambers were a myth?

No sir, the row of enormous chimneys from which thick black smoke came out, day and night, is not a survivors' invention. True, a photograph shows no difference between these chimneys and those of blast ovens, but the smell? The odor of burned flesh? The odor is not retained in the photography. Similarly, a photograph of a gas chamber shows a rather unremarkable shed. But I saw Jews from all of Europe flood into Auschwitz, where I arrived on January 27, 1943, whole populations that the S.S. were pushing toward this shed, and where they disappeared forever. Excuse me, Mister, at Birkenau, I was deprived of everything, even of a camera.

My opinion on the possibility of the existence of gas chambers? This is not an opinion that I have, it is the certainty to have seen them. And that this certainty could have changed in twenty-nine years... What a question! I was young enough then, so as not to be at the age of senility today.

Fortunately, I had a time margin. That I have to use this time margin to protest against a perverted mind drives me to despair.

To be there! To have gotten there! The nostalgic style that uses Nazism for an aesthetic purpose, romanticizes Hitlerism, gives it a double fascination, is more than a fashion unleashed by satiated and bored intellectuals with limited imagination. The danger is more serious. History is revised in order to revise its lessons. The truth is being erased so that a rebirth of fascism would not appear as a mortal threat. Weren't these S.S. beautiful in their uniforms, virile, passionate in love and invested with their supreme power: to inflict death? Isn't he a hero, this handsome S.S., a model to be offered to young people looking for an aim in life? Yes, the enterprise is more serious than it seems. Let an Auschwitz survivor request that we think about it.

Faurisson, feeling implicated (and who wouldn't be?) sent a reply where he said in particular:

Would gas chambers have functioned "somewhere in Poland and particularly at Auschwitz-Birkenau"? Mme. Delbo claims to have seen one. But what did she really see? She does not tell us. She blends crematory ovens (where corpses are burned) with gas chambers (where supposedly up to ten thousand people a day were killed). She says Hoess admits that he focused his eye on the porthole of the gas chamber. As for me, I read in the work she cites (*Le Commandant d'Auschwitz parle*, Julliard, 1970, p. 288) that Hoess looked at the interior of the gas chamber "through the keyhole of the door." This absurdity, added to a hundred others of the same sort, makes the "Confession" of Hoess a document of the same value as the confessions in the Moscow and Prague trials, or as is the case here, of the Warsaw trial. However, Hoess's manuscript is in fact unavailable and the circulating versions of it are gravely contradictory.

It is troubling that those detained at Auschwitz-Birkenau longer than three years maintain that they never saw a gas chamber there. Such is the case of Benedikt Kautsky, a Jewish deportee and leader of the Austrian Social-Democratic party. Nothing conveys that the "special actions" crudely related in the diary of the Auschwitz surgeon, Johann-Paul Kramer (*Cahiers d'Auschwitz* no. 13, 1971) were gassings. Finally, a question: Didn't the International Red Cross conduct a thorough inquiry, in September 1944, of prisoners of all categories, and hasn't it concluded the past and present nonexistence of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau, reported by the English radio?

The deportees died of hunger, cold, sickness, epidemics and maltreatment. They were sometimes shot or hanged. They were sometimes victims of allied bombings. They were decimated by unceasing transfers. Do the more abominable and perfectly demonic gas chambers have to be added to these horrors? I no longer think so. But the doubt does not prohibit research; on the contrary.

Pierre Viansson-Ponté, replies to this in a letter:

"Since you were not named, you have no right to reply. As to the initial letter, it was addressed to Mrs. Delbo and a letter, as you know, belongs to the addressee. Furthermore, it does not seem desirable to us to reopen a debate with no apparent outcome. Only new and important facts would justify that we inform our readers." (August 26, 1974)

Faurisson is not put off so easily. In a letter of June 20, 1975 to Jacques Fauvet, he proposes to explain:

The total number of prisoners who passed through Auschwitz, Birkenau and their sub-camps in the east is at most 500,000 (see, *Hommes et femmes à Auschwitz*, Hermann Langbein, Fayard, 1975, pp. 51-61). In the first confession that the Poles extorted from Hoess, he said that he had killed

1,500,000 people (see *J'ai tué seulement 1,500,000 personnes*, ed. de l'Amicale des déportés d'Auschwitz, F.N.D.I.R.P., s.d., 1947 [?].) In his second confession, the number is 3 million (see "Les âmes automatisées," Leon Poliakov, *Evidences*, no. 7, January 1950, p. 28). In 1975, the Television Channel TF1, June 18 at 13:10 gave the number of 4 million dead, according to the official truth of our time... In its evening broadcast at 20:30, the figure becomes 4.5 million dead. As for Max Gallo, the figures he gives in *L'Express* of June 16, p. 70, is 5 million victims.

These figures pretend to account for those gassed who were not "registered." Yet, the existence of seven gas chambers in Auschwitz suspected by many historians and lawyers of different nationalities, is frankly no longer tenable. This began to appear at the Frankfurt trial (1963-1965). Today, even a Hermann Langbein avoids any development on these chambers, though they form the core of the "genocide" enterprise.

Do the journalists of *Le Monde* care about being updated on the latest work concerning a historical topic so frequently treated in your newspaper (see the statements contained in the "Bulletin du jour" of June 10, 1975) and, in this case, would they grant me an interview where I could talk about my work on Nazism as seen by *Le Monde*?

To which Jacques Fauvet replies with the simple sentence: "Concerning the gas chambers, are you sure that the Germans did not destroy them in order to erase the traces of their crimes?" (June 24, 1975)

Three months later, Faurisson was up in arms against a review given by Jean-Marc Théolleyre, of a book by Hermann Langbein on Auschwitz¹. The least that can be said about this letter is that he does not try to cajole in order to convince:

May I ask you once more when will your newspaper decide to stop inflating the most "henaurmous" wimp of contemporary history: the so-called Hitlerian "gas chambers"?

The aforementioned article constitutes a second offense. Your journalist devotes 167 lines to the book of Hermann Langbein, *Hommes et femmes à Auschwitz*. It's just hot air which gives the impression that he did not read the book. (He writes Kapo, while the author takes the trouble to explain that the correct spelling of the word is Capo.) He never alludes to the main point: H. Langbein, a specialist known for his writings on Auschwitz since 1949, and a kind of professional witness in trials against "war criminals" (in the losers' camp), exhibits in his latest work a frightening discretion concerning the cornerstone, the keystone of the "extermination" edifice, namely, the famous "gas chambers" of Auschwitz and Birkenau. Not one of the thirty chapters deals with them! Better, not one section out of 268! According to a traditional method, the text is sprinkled with terms like "selection" (in the sense of selection for "extermination") and the verb "to gas" is encountered wittingly,

¹ Autopsy of Auschwitz, for the use of future generations. This is: *Hommes et femmes à Auschwitz*, Fayard, 537 p., *Le Monde*, May 19, 1975.

but nothing on the basics. H. Langbein, remarkably put in his place by Paul Rassinier (whom he tried to lecture to at the "Frankfort trial," prohibited to the latter), ended up by not responding, just like the Institut für Zeitgeschichte: "Zum Komplizierten Problem der Gaskammern." Too bad! Nowhere in the world is there a book or a study devoted to these so-called "gas chambers." On the other hand, H. Langbein proves unintentionally, in twenty places in his text (about the hospital, about births, about the training schools for children in prison...) that the extermination theory is untenable.

Do the specialists of *Le Monde* keep abreast of current affairs? Do they read the ever growing number of studies and testimonies about the "lie" or the "swindle" of Auschwitz? Do they know the statistics of S.I.R. (D-3548 Arolsen in Germany), issued by a biased organization? Do they know that the *Diary* of Anne Frank is a setup by Meyer Levin¹? Do they remember the alleged "Gerstein Document"? And the book of Miklos Nyisli (quoted by Langbein as if it were authentic)?

J.M. Théolleyre replies courteously, recalls that at Buchenwald, where he was interned, the custom was to write Kapo, and ends as follows: "I refer you to page 293 of Langbein's book. I read in it the following which is not by Langbein but by Hoess, commander of Auschwitz: 'I had to keep my cool when the mothers went to the gas chamber with laughing or crying children.'" (Letter of October 8, 1975). But this correspondence remained private. Faurisson remained unpublishable.

The following episode took on larger proportions: on the occasion of the release in French of a revisionist brochure (very probably translated, printed and distributed by people of the extreme right), Pierre Viansson-Ponté published the following chronicle (July 17-18, 1977):

The Lie

There is a brochure in the mail. Its big headline on red background is the question: "Did six million really die?" And above, by way of signature: "Historical Fact No. 1".

The presentation and printing are carefully done, the text – 36 pages of large format – is very tight and dense. The back of the document shows that it was published in England prior to its translation into French by a "Historical Review Press" located in Richmond, Surrey, and that its author is a writer by the name of Richard E. Harwood, "specialist in the political and diplomatic aspects of the Second World War," and who "currently works at the University of London."

It was soon found out that this brochure is fairly widely distributed, free, of course, and sent to a list of individuals, particularly journalists and writers

¹ There, Faurisson makes a mistake, a mistake that he will not pick up again in the *Diary of Anne Frank*.

whose names and addresses were, it seems, taken from different phone books. And doubtless, it was sent too to other categories of addressees.

"Did six million really die?" Six million dead: the figure is known. We soon guess who these dead are: the six million Jews, victims of the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis. However, we still hesitate to understand. Who would dare maintain that these six million victims are not "really" dead? None, really. This would be too enormous.

Well, yes! The only aim of the brochure is to "prove" that the Nazis did not exterminate six million Jews between 1939 and 1945, but only, at the most, "a few thousand." Still, those were not massacred, shot, executed, gased, burned, assassinated. They were victims, for the most part, of the typhus epidemic and other sicknesses that swept Germany during the last months of the war. Or they were decimated by hunger, epidemics and famine, whose responsibility falls entirely on the Allies, who crushed the Reich with their bombs.

Without undertaking to analyse in a detailed manner this insane "proof," let us summarize it: Since 1933, the Jews had "declared war" on Hitler, who had to defend himself against this internal enemy. He first "encouraged" Jewish emigration to neutral countries and to the United States, so that by 1939, there remained, in Germany, Austria and the European countries that were to be invaded by the German army, only three million Jews instead of the nine million ten years earlier. How, under these conditions, would it have been possible to kill six million? Furthermore, already in 1948, they were more numerous than in 1939.

Thus, we read in substance, that Hitler tried to find them a national home to "settle" in. He thought of Palestine, but the English refused. Then the war prevented him from pursuing the realisation of this project. Then in 1940, he thought about Madagascar, but France, even though defeated and occupied, did not want to talk about it. Then he decided to make the Jews "participate" in the German war effort by "settling" them in the East, in occupied Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia.

Hence, the concentration camps, the transfer of the Jews to the East, constituting what was called the "final solution" of the Jewish question. These camps were nothing but production centers, well organized and well kept. It is true that people there were compelled to work, but they were well treated, well nourished and well taken care of – except possibly in some of these camps towards the end of the war. None of them contained "gas chambers" or veritable crematory ovens. Nothing but lies and slanders are all the fabricated tales, rigged photographs, books and films that represent these camps as places of extermination, torture and death.

The proof: a swirl of quotations mingle incoherently: the International Red Cross, the newspaper *Die Tat* of Zurich, January 19, 1955, etc. It comes out that "300,000 people died in prisons and concentration camps between 1939 and 1945, victims of racial or religious political persecutions." Yet, "all these

victims were not Jewish." Thus, the brochure reaches "the most precise estimate."

The proof seems methodical. It is packed with numbers, supported by quotations from known, unknown, obscure or imaginary authors. The testimonies that run counter to this thesis are heavily refuted: Thus, all the confessions of Nazis, for example, were extorted by torture, systematically practiced by the Allied after the defeat of the Reich. There is a mass of impressive references, obviously unverifiable, and those that exceptionally may be, are crudely rigged. As is classic in matters of propaganda, the harder it is to make assertions acceptable, the more categorically they are proffered and the more obstinately repeated. Then comes a minute detail of trompe-l'oeil which is supposed to authenticate the improbable.

An example: The brochure refers to the "eminent American historian, Harry Elmer Barnes" (?) who basically wrote in *Rampart Journal* (??) during the summer of 1967 – but the "quotation" is obviously given in quotes – "that there was no systematic extermination in the 'death camps'". Is there still any doubt? A little farther, here is a proof: "Berta Shirotshin (???) worked in the procurement service of the Dachau camp during all the war years. She said that until the beginning of 1945, and despite increasing privations in Germany, all working prisoners received their second breakfast regularly at 10 o'clock every morning. Yes, you read it: a second breakfast every morning.

All this seems so stupid, so fantastic, so hideously nonsensical, so ignominious that one is tempted to throw away this dirty brochure, repressing a sick feeling and thinking about it no more. Well, that would be a mistake!

In fact, one would like to believe that such incredible allegations can be taken seriously only by a reader blinded by racial hatred or foolish enough to swallow these outlandish enormities. However, the brochure is written and presented in such a way as to impress an ignorant person, truly very silly, maybe, but after all, the clientele of charlatans, quacks, and crooks of all shades is quite large in this century of enlightenment, that some reserve must be exercised concerning the gullibility and critical mind of our contemporaries.

But especially a "document" like this risks finding a certain audience – large, which is normal – among the very young readers, to the extent that they are naturally inclined to doubt the official history such as it is taught, to jump readily to the opposite of established views that we try to make them accept as truths. Lie, lie, something will always pass...

Thirty-two years have passed. Heads of families who were not yet born when the allied armies advanced into German territories revealing the horrors of deportation and extermination camps – today, they have children eight, ten and twelve years of age. If these children read such brochures, and if their parents are not up to immediately establishing the facts and straightening out the judgments, then what will be the outcome? At best, a lot of skepticism about Hitlerian atrocities that will build up the resistance of their minds

leading them to consider as excessive, or at least partially unjustifiable, all the denunciations of tortures, massacres and oppression of all sorts. At worst, a conviction that the lie is universal and permanent, that nothing must be believed – especially history – and that people are forever fooled, yesterday as today, and doubtless, tomorrow.

Faurisson jumps immediately to the occasion and writes a critique of the critique: "How does the journalist, Pierre Viansson-Ponté work?":

"The lie": such is the heading that Mr. Viansson-Ponté gives to his review of an English brochure (translated into French) where the true existence of both the Hitlerian "gas chambers" and the "genocide" of the Jews are denied.

The edition of this brochure in French has a clumsy heading and a misspelled word: *six millions de morts le sont-ils réel[l]emend?* The journalist says that it was published by "a 'Historical Review Press,' located at Richmond in Surrey and that its author is a writer by the name of Richard E. Harwood."

The review is on page 13 of *Le Monde*, dated July 17-18, 1977. It consists of 15 paragraphs.

Paragraph 1. The journalist says that this brochure "is marked by way of signature, Historical Fact No. 1."

Remark: This is not a signature, this format is to herald the heading! The signature appears on page 3a: "Richard E. Harwood."

Paragraph 2. The journalist does not give the reader a reference that would allow him to obtain the brochure, to read it and to form his own opinion of it. This reference is all the more called for that, even in the journalist's opinion, this publisher is not known. It is "a 'Historical Review Press'" (see above).

Complementary remark: Here is the address of "H.R.P.": 23, Ellerker Gardens, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6AA, England. (Address indicated in the brochure itself.)

Paragraph 3. The journalist says that "this brochure is fairly widely distributed, for free, of course."

Remark: The journalist does not explain the meaning of this "of course."

Paragraph 4. The journalist says that "six million Jews were victims of the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis." He adds that to deny it would really be "too enormous."

Remark: This number, this "genocide," this "enormity," the journalist states as obvious facts that do not allow any discussion.

Paragraph 5. The journalist says that, for R.E. Harwood, "between 1939 and 1945, the Nazis did not at all exterminate six million Jews, but at most "several thousand."

Remark: In fact, as the journalist states in the next sentence, R.E.H. says that no Jew was a victim of a will of *extermination*. As to the number of *Jewish losses* (like we say, for example, "Allied losses," or "German civilian losses") during the Second World War, R.E.H. gives only confused and contradictory estimates. Comparing, p. 8a, two American statistics, one from 1938 and the other from 1948, he concludes that these statistics allow a number only "in the thousands." But on p. 34a, he seems to put the losses around one million when he cites a maximum of 1.2 million calculated by Rassinier on the one hand, and on the other, 896,892 dead, found – pretends R.E.H. – by Raul Hilberg. Finally, on page 35, he estimates 300,000 the number of "persons who died in prisons and concentration camps between 1939 and 1945, victims of political, racial or religious persecutions." He adds that "all these victims were not Jewish." It is worth noting that R.E.H. attributes this statistic to the International Red Cross and that he refers the reader to *Die Tat*, of January 19, 1955 (Zurich). But once facts are verified, if it appears as possible that this figure comes from IRC, it must be said the *Die Tat* does not say explicitly so and that the figure of 300,000 concerns German victims including German Jews. (Remark concerning this figure: this figure is considerably exaggerated. The number confirmed by a process of registration – namely, to a historian, the only number of "victims of National-Socialist persecutions" that can be taken into account – amounted in December 1976 to 357,190 of which about 51,000 were from the camps and sub-camps of Auschwitz. See Service international de recherches, D-3548 Arolsen, Exhibit presented by A. de Coquatrix, director of S.I.R. at the Vienna Conference, April 12, 1977, 11 pages.)

Paragraph 5 (bis). The journalist adds: "Again, for R.E.H., these Jews have not been massacred, shot, executed, gassed, burned, assassinated." They were, like the Germans, victims of epidemics and famine, because of the Allies.

Remark: R.E.H. mentions in fact typhus, sicknesses or epidemics, hunger or famine. But he also cites Jews who died in partisan wars (p. 15a) or during "the dramatic uprising of the Warsaw ghetto" (p. 20b). He never says that Jews, through some kind of privilege, would have escaped the horrors of war (hostage taking, executions, attacks, bombings). What he says, on the other hand, (a point on which he insists and challenges anybody to refute him), is that Hitler never gave the order to kill anybody, because of his race or his religion. He adds that to talk, as it was once done, about an "oral order" or a "disguised formula" would amount to speculation. He insists that being Jewish may lead to imprisonment or deportation, but not to death. The crematory ovens existed: cadavers were burned there instead of being buried. The "gas chambers" are a total invention of war propaganda.

Paragraph 6. The journalist says that, for R.E.H., "in 1939, only three million Jews remained in Germany, Austria and the countries of Europe that were

going to be invaded by the German armies, instead of six million who lived there ten years earlier."

Remark: The historian is not talking about 1929 (1939 less ten years = 1929). He says that in 1933, there were 6,500,000 Jews in this part of the world, due to successive emigrations towards the West, the South, and especially, from 1941 onwards, towards the interior of the U.S.S.R., the number was reduced around this time to between three and four million (p. 35a: four million; p. 35b: three million).

Paragraph 7. The journalist is right, up to some details.

Paragraph 8. The journalist says that for R.E.H.: "The camps were production centers, well organized and well kept. It is true that people there were compelled to work, but they were well treated, well nourished and well taken care of, except possibly, in some, towards the end of the war."

Remark: The journalist is right, in substance. The historian minimizes the suffering of some deportees in some camps. He quoted only the testimonies that support his point of view. He wanted to show that there were colossal exaggerations in the description of life in the camps. Taking into consideration what seemed to him as thirty years of horror propaganda, he recalls some points from the declarations of Margaret Buber (-Neumann), of Charlotte Bermann (p. 25b), of Dr. Barton (p. 29a-b) and of "some statements made under oath for the Nuremberg trials" but not highlighted (p. 28b). Concerning Bergen-Belsen (most horror photographs concern this camp, part of which is a hospital), he talks of "chaos" at the end of the war (p. 28b).

Paragraph 8 (bis). The journalist says that for R.E.H., no concentration camp "has ever contained a 'gas chamber' or a veritable crematory ovens."

Remark: R.E.H. says that there did not exist even a single one of these monstrosities baptized "gas chambers." On the other hand, he unequivocally says that cadavers were burned in these crematory ovens, authentic crematory ovens, instead of being buried. He writes: "Christophersen (author of *Le Mensonge d'Auschwitz*, 1973), admits that there must have certainly been crematory ovens at Auschwitz because 200,000 lived in this camp and there are crematory ovens in every city of 200,000 people" (p. 20a). He also writes, referring to the only crematory oven of Dachau: "[He was] similar to crematory ovens currently in use in all cemeteries; it was simply used to incinerate the cadavers of persons who died at the camp of several natural causes, especially infectious diseases. This fact was conclusively proved by the archbishop of Munich, Cardinal Faulhaber. He told the Americans [after the war] that thirty thousand people were killed in Munich during the Allied bombings of September, 1944. At that time, the archbishop requested the German authorities to incinerate the victims' bodies at the crematory of Dachau, but he was told that this was impossible because there was only one oven and it could not incinerate so many cadavers" (p. 27a).

Paragraph 8 (ter). The journalist accuses R.E.H. of the following thought: "Lie, slanders, all these completely fabricated tales, rigged photographs, books and films that represent these camps as places of extermination, torture and death."

Remark: All through his brochure, the historian gives spectacular examples of this industry of fakes. The Nuremberg Tribunal [art. 19 of its statutes] cynically authorized the usage of fakes: It is decreed that "The Tribunal shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence" (p. 12a). There were fewer restraints manufacturing fakes since it was not possible to take legal proceedings against the use of these fakes. Business got involved. In some cases, even the Jews became concerned about the proliferation of these fakes. For example, *Au nom de tous les miens*, by Martin Gray (p. 25a-b). The historian considers as fakes all the testimonies, "admissions" or "confessions" that present the camps as places of "extermination." The examples he gives seem irrefutable (Hoess, Gerstein, Nyiszli, the astonishing photographic assembly on his page 30a, etc. etc.) In only one case, his argument is without merit: The *Diary* of Anne Frank. This *Diary* is a literary hoax easily proven by means other than those used by R.E.H.

Paragraph 9. The journalist says a "swirl of quotations mingle incoherently, the International Red Cross, the newspaper *Die Tat* of Zurich, January 19, 1955, etc."

Remark: one may wonder what this means. Is the journalist complaining that there are too many quotations?

Paragraph 10. The journalist says that R.E.H. supports his arguments with "quotations from known, unknown, obscure or imaginary authors."

Remark: The journalist, citing no example to support his argument, we do not know what he means by "*unknown*" and especially "*imaginary* authors."

Paragraph 10 (bis). The journalist says that for R.E.H., "all confessions of Nazis" were "extorted by torture systematically practiced by the Allied after the defeat of the Reich."

Remark: The journalist fails to say that the Americans themselves were honest enough to admit the systematic use of the most severe torture, in many cases. See prison of Schwabisch Hall, Trial of Malmedy, Sepp Dietrich, Jochen Peiper, Oswald Pohl, Simpson Commission, Judge Edward L. van Roden declaring: "Out of 139 cases in our inquiry, 137 of these German soldiers (in the Malmedy affair only) received kicking in the testicles that left them with incurable wounds. It was a standard method used in these interrogations by these Americans [...] Strong men were reduced to human wrecks ready to mumble any confessions demanded by the public prosecution." (p. 13a-b). The historian evokes a good many other patently obvious cases of torture practiced by the Allies, especially by the Poles and Soviet (Wisliceny, [Ohlendorf], Rudolf Hoess). In order to explain these extravagant cases, as those, for example, of officials "admitting" the existence of "gas chambers" in camps

where Allies themselves came to admit that no such "chambers" ever existed, the historian does not limit these explanations to explanations by torture. He also talks of "confessions" "under pressure," "or because reduced sentences were promised [to the accused]." See p. 16b, the Bach-Zelewski affair. The threat to hand over the accused to the Poles or to the Soviets, the blackmail of abolishing ration cards given to the families of the accused, the retaliatory measures brandished against the soldier if the officer does not "confess," and vice versa, the tremendous moral pressure exerted on the accused by the justice and judicial apparatus of the victors, the heroic effort required to be witness for the defense of presumed "criminals" with no right to appeal: All these elements and many others either have to be clearly stated by the historian, or are obvious, when we keep in mind what he says about other subjects that are explained by these "confessions" and "testimonies."

Paragraph 10 (ter). The journalist says that the R.E.H. brochure contains "a mass of impressive references, obviously unverifiable, and the exceptions are crudely rigged."

Remark: The journalist does not give any example to support this statement (see our remark on "An example" in the following paragraph). It might be good to know what an "unverifiable" reference is (did the journalist mean "incomplete"?) and especially an "*obviously* unverifiable reference."

Paragraph 11. The journalist writes: "An example: the brochure refers to the eminent American historian, Harry Elmer Barnes" (?) who basically wrote in *Rampart Journal* (??) during the summer of 1967 – but the "quotation" is obviously given in quotes – that there was no systematic extermination in the 'death camps'."

Remark: Harry Elmer Barnes was a historian of international reputation. His publications were numerous in his thirty year university career. A tribute to him by his former students and disciples was just published in a book. It has 884 pages (hardback ed.). *Rampart Journal of Individualist Thought* is not a fictitious publication. The reference "summer 1967" is exact (vol. 3, no. 2). The article of H.E.B. is called "The Public Stake in Revisionism" (pp. 19-41). Nowhere does R.E.H. pretend to quote "basically" H.E.B. and then to quote him "in quotes"! From the start, he wrote H.E.B. in quotes. As to the quoted passage, it does not have the meaning that the journalist finds in it. This passage, of major importance, shows that immediately after the war, the victors attempted to pass off some camps in the West not as simple concentration camps but as extermination camps (Dachau, Buchenwald, etc.) Then when it was proved that the accusation was untenable, it was transferred to the camps in the East. However, as pointed out by R.E.H., these camps, and especially, those of the Auschwitz complex, were not possible to visit for many years after the end of the war. Therefore, the quoted passage has the value of a warning and a salutary reminder to anyone who would forget this "mistake" of the immediate postwar period when Buchenwald beat Auschwitz in the horror propaganda.

Paragraph 11 (bis). The journalist places one question mark after the name of H.E. Barnes, two question marks after *Rampart Journal*, and then three question marks after the name of Berta Schirotschin.

Remark: It cannot be held against the historian that all the names of all the detainees at Dachau be universally known. By quoting Ernst Ruff, Jan Piechowiak and Berta Schirotschin, he was careful to indicate the kind of work each one of them did in the camps.

Paragraphs 12 to 15. These last four paragraphs do not call for any remarks. For this is where the journalist expresses his own opinion about a brochure, which, as we have seen, he very superficially skimmed. He expressed his judgment in the following terms: "stupid," "fantastic," "as hideously nonsensical as ignominious," "this dirty brochure," "nauseating," "incredible allegations," "blinded," "foolish," "outlandish enormities," "ignorant," "very silly," "charlatans, quacks and crooks of all shades," "lie, lie, something will always pass." To conclude, the journalist renews his act of faith in the horror of the concentration and extermination camps.

This was at the time when Faurisson was writing a brief report on his research entitled "The Problem of Gas Chambers," that nobody seems to want to publish. His insistence brought him a new reply by Pierre Viansson-Ponté from the editorial staff of *Le Monde* (August 6, 1977):

I did nothing to you, except to keep your fiery lampoon out of our newspaper. I don't understand why you can talk about "the damage I caused you" and demand reparations.

One of two things: either you consider yourself a supporter of Nazism, being charged by some providential decree of the mission to dispense justice and homage to it by writing and proclaiming outrageous absurdities. And in this case, I cause you harm by refusing to play this game, which I consider rather disgusting.

Or you are really anti-Nazi, as you write, uniquely concerned about historical truth. In this case, I am ready to listen to you.

However, one condition seems normal to me: You invoke unknown "witnesses," revoke testimonies that do not support your argument, make assertions without any proofs. In turn, I have the right to raise doubts, as I shall do in the light of a specialist or a scholar, as you say you are. Bring me the testimony of one person whose human qualities and historical knowledge of the subject in question are unanimously recognized, who accepts to take your affirmations into consideration – I am not saying to approve – and then, I will publish them. And since you constantly refer to her in your texts, I designate as arbiter and guarantor, Mme. Germaine Tillion, whose integrity, knowledge and experience in the subject are above all suspicion. Let her tell me or write me that you are not wrong, and I will give in.

I will even go further. If Mme Tillion is not available, I will equally accept the opinion of another person to whom you make reference, Mme. Olga Wormser-Migot, historian, too, and a specialist in the system of concentration camps, which was the subject of her doctoral thesis and of many of her books, and she is equally worthy.

It goes without saying that, without the guarantee of one or the other of these recognized and honest specialists, in whom I have complete confidence, I will consider you a falsifier and a dangerous maniac. And then I will make the necessary arrangements to prevent you from continuing to slander me.

A kind of honor jury, that is what Viansson-Ponté proposes. This is obviously quite meager to resolve a historical problem but it might be sufficient to clear Faurisson of the burden of accusations. So the latter went about duly explaining his situation to Mme. Wormser-Migot (August 18, 1977).

Dear Madame,

Three years and one week have passed since opening the newspaper *Le Monde*, I discovered a "testimony," where a former (lady) deportee, pointing out but without naming me, called me a "falsifier," "insane," and with a "perverted mind." And this because I dared to doubt the existence of Hitlerian "gas chambers." During a meeting at your residence on September 24, 1974, you let me know that you expressed your disapproval toward this "testimony"; you even communicated it to the interested person, namely, Charlotte Delbo.

That same day, you offered to intercede with Mr. Raymond Las Vergnas to tell him that you disapprove of the statement issued by la Sorbonne Nouvelle that condemns my research.

Still the same day, you predicted all kinds of problems for me if I persisted. You confirmed to me what I already knew about the serious problems brought upon you by your three pages on "the problems of gas chambers."

You were not mistaken. Here is a brief account of the troubles I have encountered:

– A press campaign originated in Israel in 1974, *Tribune juive-Hebdo*, *Le Canard enchainé*, *Le Monde*, *Le Droid de vivre*, *L'Humanité* (I am told), the Grand Rabbi Kaplan on television; they pointed me out; they gave my name; they published my home address; I received a flood of letters and threats, sometimes signed by their authors and on their stationary; offensive graffiti on my house; abuse over the phone; my daughter insulted; my wife insulted.

– [The University of] Sorbonne Nouvelle, deforming the spirit of research of which it actually knows absolutely nothing, has condemned Faurisson and has gone so far as to say that he is not on its faculty.

– My condemnation was carried out in an outrageous manner; I was neither heard, nor informed. Everything took place behind my back. I learned of my condemnation after the fact.

– *Tribune juive-Hebdo*, having suggested that my place is no longer in the S.N.E.Sup (I belonged to the S.N.E.S., where I had been section secretary, and later to the S.N.E.Sup for twenty years), I was dismissed from my union; there too, I was neither heard nor informed; I learned of the sanctions by chance and after the fact. I demanded to be heard. It was a waste of time. I filed a paper with the "commission of litigations," which dismissed my case without a trial.

– Lyon 2, my new university, took an unprecedented decision: It decided not to consider me for the position of untenured professor that I had solicited. You know that when a university wants to block the career of an associate professor, it does not act in this manner. It is sufficient to put the name of the candidate at the bottom of the classification list. To act differently, to act as it has done in my case, is to take a very serious initiative, which can only have a very serious motive, even so serious as the candidate ought at least be heard, and then, once a decision is taken, be notified of this decision. I may yet be asking too much, given that my case had no precedent. However, here too, I learned of this decision only by chance and thanks to an indiscretion. But you see how, later, they took their liberties with the truth. I succeeded in pushing the university administration against the wall, and this, thanks to the district court of Lyon and to the State Council. First, I was accused of being a Nazi, on the grounds that I denied the existence of the concentration camps, or the "gas chambers," *ad libitum*. The prosecution file: press clippings from *le Canard enchainé*, *Le Monde*, etc. The second time I was accused not of being a Nazi but of being crazy on the same grounds supported by the same prosecution file. The third time, they went even further. The two previous accusations were totally abandoned on the following grounds, filed this time with the district court: "Mr. Faurisson has never published anything, and this by his own admission." The file, this time, is a letter of mine. In this letter that I had addressed to the president of my university expressing my surprise at the accusation of Nazism, I wrote indeed that, since *I had published nothing*, I did not see upon what this accusation was founded. It goes without saying that this phrase means that *I had never published anything...* which would lead to thinking that I was a Nazi. This phrase was excerpted from my letter to make me into an associate professor who had never published a single book or article. The charge was the more cynical that my application file had a page long list of my publications, some of which are fairly known in France and abroad.

I will not go into three or four other contemptible acts that I could add to this list.. I will not dwell on the fact that my life has become more difficult. I will not dwell on the fact that, having no money, I must pay the attorneys. I will not dwell on the fact that my wife has suffered from a serious nervous breakdown, to which so many troubles are, unfortunately, not unrelated.

But, you see, I feel clean and I know that quite a few people got sullied. I am taken for a "Nazi" as, at other times, I was taken for an "Angliche" and as, had

Hitler won the war, I would have been taken as playing into the hands of the "judeo-Marxists."

I am heading straight on this path. I might seem naive to you. Between us, I think that I am about as naive as Voltaire. Voltaire was naive, and in good French, he was courageous, by fits and starts, but without great continuity. In the final analysis, I prefer to compare my work to that of Jean Norton Cru who, despite the insults, carried out his task to the end, never despairing of men.

I came to the conclusion that the Hitlerian "gas chambers" never existed. My inquiry goes back a good many years. When I went to see you, I already knew a great deal about the question. Because you were friendly to me, because I did not want to hurt your feelings, and also – frankly – because this is my way of inquiring, I did not reveal to you, at the time, what I knew precisely about the Hoess or Gerstein "documents" and about the "testimonies" of Nyiszli and his ilk. I did not tell you that I could recite the two "depositions" of Dr. Bendel. Remember what I later wrote to you about "document" No. 365: an example, among many others, of the dishonest presentation of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation.

You sent me a photograph of the "gas chamber" at Majdanek, the more so precious, you told me, that it predated the "museographic frenzy that presided over the transformation of the site" (I am quoting from memory). This is the photograph of a shower room. As to the site, I visited it in 1975: As a rude hoax, it can't be any better. It is *laughable*. I visited Auschwitz and Birkenau in 1975 and 1976. I have a wealth of photographic documentation on everything related to the "gas chambers" of the two camps. I have copies of particularly interesting plans that everybody is wary of publishing.

I have a lot of "documents," "testimonies," "affidavits" of NO, of NI, of NIK, of PS, etc. culled from the I.M.T., the N.M.T., the "Frankfurt trial" or other trials. I studied court reports of the "Jerusalem trial." I also read works of the Hilberg-Reitlinger school or the Rassinier-Butz school.

I wonder what trail I could have left unexplored.

My first visit to the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation goes back to 1967. From the beginning of 1974 to July 1977, I spent hundreds, thousands of hours in this same C.C. J.D. even though the utmost was done to make my visits and work conditions more and more difficult. I explored in depth the "extermination-gassing" file and many other documents not listed in this file. I had some discussions with Mssrs. Wellers, Rutkowski and especially with Mr. Billig who, in a letter addressed to me in 1974, expressed his surprise that, despite many proofs, one could still doubt the existence of "gas chambers." He ended up admitting in front of me in May 1977 that, after all, he was incapable of providing **one** proof for the existence of **one** "gas chamber." And as I insisted upon learning if he knew one person who was capable of providing such a proof, he answered that he really did not know such a person. He added, I must say, that in his opinion, if there had not been "gas chambers,"

there must have existed some industrial means – he did not know precisely which – to commit a gigantic massacre, a "genocide."

I would have a lot to say about this fallback position, but let's not dwell on it.

During our meeting of September 24, 1974, you told me: "You shouldn't attack the deportees. I ask one thing of you: promise me to write nothing." My answer was: "An article of mine may come out. I'm working on it." You then said: "Send it to me."

That is what I am doing today. This article is called, "The problem of gas chambers." I sent it on July 26, 1977 to the newspaper *Le Monde*, which is hesitating to publish it. *Le Monde* owes me reparations. It insulted me on August 11, 1974 and refused me the right to reply. Sooner or later, I will get this reparation in one way or another. P. Viansson-Ponté takes me for a Nazi sympathizer, can you imagine! He complains that, in my letters to J. Fauvet or to others of his colleagues, I insulted him. He probably sees there the sign of I don't know what frenzy. He forgot that he hurt me on August 11, 1974. I told him that, in addition, he had seriously distorted the content of R. Harwood's brochure in his article of July 16-17, 1977. I said that I, in turn, did not want to be given the same treatment (be the object of distortions, falsifications, adulterations, etc.) I told him that in the text of Harwood, there were things that were very good, others very bad, etc. etc. He wrote me a furious letter. He told me that he was ready to listen to me provided that Germaine Tillion or – if she is not available – Mme Olga Wormser-Migot tells him or writes to him that I am not mistaken in my thesis about "gas chambers." I told him that I have no confidence in G. Tillion, given her testimonies on the alleged "gas chamber" of Ravensbrueck. I said: "I agree about Mme Olga Wormser-Migot. Let's have a discussion, you, her and me, together. She gracefully received me at her home in 1974. She doesn't know my files. But in twenty minutes she will see what they are worth."

You said to my colleague Delpech – whom I don't know well since I met him mostly at the C.C.J.D.: "Be careful, Faurisson is not a Nazi. Don't give him troubles." I wonder if, deep down, this suspicion of Nazism is not the same stumbling block for P. Viansson-Ponté. See, if everything else fails, you could reassure him on this point.

Is my article Nazi? violent? aggressive?

I am telling you that, if this affair of "gas chambers" and of genocide has to be defused, this article may do it. Things are moving fast now, very fast.

And then all this is very simple. They have to answer my question: "If the 'gas chambers' did not exist, do we have to reveal it or to hush it up?"

I told you straight out. Answer me the same way.

The reply is dated November 7, 1977:

[...] I don't want to write you a volume, but I only want to make my position clear.

No. 1. Your visit moved me from all points of view. I thought above all about this uninterrupted persecution against a man of good faith.

No. 2. The first difference between my positions and yours, and you know it, is that I believe in the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz and at Majdanek, and also the "experimental chamber" (1 m by 2 m by 3 m) of Struthof.

No. 3. Last and main difference: Given the feelings of deportees, deeply traumatized by suffering, it is obvious that your attitude cannot but hurt them. There are cases when History must wait until Time allows a study devoid of the aggressiveness of certain horror problems.

Listen to me – and you know that I believe your research to have no other motive than historical truth – from the time when your thesis was contested and your defense of it placed you more and more in opposition of the deportees, your stubborn attitude gave rise to confusion.

In fact, the more arguments you put up in support of your comments, the more you assert its truth, the more you **seem** in the eyes of some to clear Hitler of one of the accusations against him and his camps.

For me, dear sir, such a problem cannot be dealt with in the general context of Nazism. Tortures, experiments, genocide, crematorium ovens and mass graves, horror carried to the extreme, tell me if in all this the existence or nonexistence of gas chambers is to the history of these infamous years of such "additional" importance, so capital as to persist in still wounding the deportees and to expose your own existence to misery?

I reminded you that on a similar occasion – when in my thesis *Le Système concentrationnaire nazi*, as you know, I expressed more than doubt about the existence of gas chambers at Ravensbruck and Mauthausen – and subsequent to the stubbornness of historians that served only to poison things, I added a correction explaining the deportees' position on this subject. Because for me, the deportees always come first.

Rest assured, dear sir, that I am ready to help you as much as I can so as to clear your life of accusations so hurtful to you, your work and your family. But please try to understand the spirit of this letter.

That is the reason why I cannot accede to your desire to meet M. Viansson-Ponté in my presence: controversies about this subject must not continue. I am writing to him, too.

I still insist on the necessity of a realistic state of mind on your part. I am ready to write to whomever you want, to apprise them of the futility of accusations against you. **But exclusively in the spirit of this letter.**

So the arbitration demanded by P. Viansson-Ponté did not take place. As a last resort, Faurisson tried against to plead his cause with *Le Monde*, his right to free opinion, meaning, the right to make his opinion known. A sizable nuance (October 14, 1977):

To Mssrs. Fauvet and Lauzanne,

Despite the extremely unpleasant tone of his letters, I tried to talk things through and get along with M. Viansson-Ponté. Total loss. It is impossible to talk with somebody who is clearly in the habit of skimming through. Moreover, M. Viansson-Ponté hits, and runs. In 1974, he dealt me a terrible blow with this article of Mme. Charlotte Delbo, whose consequences on both the professional and family levels I tried again to explain to him on August 19, 1977. Had anybody other than a "Nazi" been subjected to a single one of these consequences, it would have sparked off articles and debates in the columns of your newspaper. M. Viansson couldn't care less about what he calls my "wrangles" and refuses to assume any responsibility for them. He goes so far as to say that I was "neither named nor designated" in the 1974 article. But this article, which was a part of the media campaign, started with a long quotation. This quotation had appeared in *Yedioth Aharonoth* (May 26, 1974), in *Tribune juive-Hebdo* (June 14) and in *Le Canard enchainé* (July 17): The author was named and his address was given and even repeated. It was about Faurisson, associate professor at the Sorbonne. These same newspapers and others went back over this affair.

On May 14, your collaborator had asked my permission to publish this text.. His exact words were: "I ask you **if you have any objection to its eventual publication.**" I answered him on May 21 that I was **opposed** to the publication of a **personal** letter. Yet, on August 11, precisely at the height of a media campaign, I saw the text appear under the responsibility of M. Viansson-Ponté. In it, Mme. Delbo called me a "poor mad" professor whose research consists uniquely in finding "Proofs against the truth" and who has a "perverted mind." According to the headline of this "testimony," I was simply a "falsifier."

Any honest man would, I think find these practices unworthy of a great newspaper. I find them the most despicable among the other publications that attacked me. And this is *Le Monde* that behaved in this manner. This is unacceptable. Frankly, neither one of you two has any excuse. Your newspaper owes me reparations that I have been claiming for three years. I have been straight with you. I did not give in to any excesses of language. I seek redress because my reply of 1974 (on "The right to doubt and to research") and my reply of 1977 (on "The problem of gas chambers") are of a very different tone than the harmful article inserted in your newspaper, following, maybe, months of reflection by M. Viansson-Ponté.

On August 6, 1977, the latter sent me a strange letter in which he tells me that he would not agree to publish my article on "the problem of gas chambers" unless Mme Germaine Tillion or Mme Olga Wormser-Migot took my assertions into consideration. Even though I do not believe for a moment in either an authoritative argument or in the value of patronage or recommendation, I accepted, in a spirit of reconciliation, to open my files to Mme Wormser-Migot. As for Mme Tillion, who has a lot of credibility among journalists, she has, in my view, discredited herself by her reiterated "testimonies" on the Ravensbruck "gas chamber" which, – historical institutes ended up admitting, – never had a beginning of existence (see Martin Broszat, *Die Zeit*, August 19, 1960). In response to my acceptance of August 11, 1977 concerning this subject, your collaborator wrote to me that he asked Mmes. Tillion and Wormser-Migot and added: "both told me that, according to them, your thesis is absurd, your stubbornness is maniac and there is no reason to open a debate where there is none and which the pro-Nazi propaganda [M.V.-P. curiously says "*counter propaganda*"] will not fail to take advantage of. Further on, he wrote: "... send me a letter of recommendation by Mme. Wormser-Migot..."

This is taking people for fools. This is, once more, being evasive. M. Viansson-Ponté wrote, in the same manner, an insulting review of the Richard Harwood brochure. He started by providing the readers and judges with no reference that would allow them to find this brochure and form their own opinion of it. Then, realizing the vast reactions sparked off by this affair, he led you to believe, according to a July 22 letter to M. Lauzanne, that he would come back to the problem and cite the reactions it provoked. In fact, nothing happened.

Is all this clear and straight? M. Viansson-Ponté is better pen in hand behind a desk than under the sunlights of television. In full direct light, it is more difficult to evade an eventual response to an extreme or insulting comment. I have noticed that, on television, polemicists are unrecognizable, they don't take responsibility for half of what they wrote.

I assume full responsibility for my "free opinion" on the fraud of the "gas chambers." By its silence on the question for thirty years, or rather, by its bombardment of war propaganda with no possibility of an historical critique, the mass media in general, and, unfortunately, *Le Monde* in particular, have undertaken a frightening responsibility. Time is ripe to correct such mistakes. I urge those who hold an anti-establishment view of official history, especially *Le Monde*, to recognize a right other than the right to silence on this crucial point of "gas chambers." On the one hand, there is the popularity of the legend, and then, on the other hand, there is the duty to be true and the difficulty of being true. *Le Monde* has to finally respect the freedom of opinion on this matter and give the accused the right to present his defense. Let there be a truce of censorship! This is an elementary right in democracy: the right to doubt, to research, to free opinion; **the right to reply**. Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my confidence in your judgment and in your courage.

All this leads nowhere. The heresy is too serious for democracy to get involved with it. It's through letters to the editors of some popular history magazines that he attempted to start a discussion, but in vain.

In *Historama* (November 1975, p. 10):

[Nacht und Nebel]

I would like to point out an error and an omission on pages 87 and 88 of your July 1975 issue.

Error: the *Nacht und Nebel Erlass* is of December 7 and not December 12, 1941. It is true, to the best of my knowledge, that the text of this ordinance has not been found, and that what is always quoted, as was the case in the big Nuremberg trial, is the text of December 12, which uses it as a reference.

Omission: more serious, at least for anyone who does not like to confuse history with propaganda or journalism: *Nacht und Nebel* is an invented explanation of the initials N.N. commonly used in the German administration (and Italian, too) to designate either genuine or imposed anonymity. In the first case, it means *Nomen Nescio* (unknown name), in the second, it means *Nomen Notetur* (censured name). The French equivalent would be *Inconnu*, or *X*, or *sans autre renseignement*. Reference: *Deutsches Woerterbuch* de Jakob Grimm et Wilhelm Grimm, 1889, entry N.

The book by Walter Goerlitz on Keitel, translated by R. Moreigne (Fayard, 1963) says on p. 247, without further explanation, that the translation of N.N. by *Nuit et Brouillard* (night and Fog) is only customary.

Don't you think, like me, that it is important to review some customs and get to the truth by going back to the sources? We all make mistakes, and very often, but don't you think that, from rectification to rectification, *Historama* could appear as a magazine that, unlike others, is in search of the truth?

In *Historia* (August, 1977, p. 132), the letter is preceded by a brief introductory paragraph:

Following the publication of our special issue, "Les médecins S.S.," M. R. Faurisson, Associate professor at Lyon University, takes issues with us in a long letter, extracts of which we decided to publish, not without some hesitation, because it expresses a current of an originality as rare as it is provocative. This current tends to deny the German attempt to exterminate the Jews.

Among its pioneers is the French former deportee, Paul Rassinier, who wrote in 1962: "The extermination of Jews in gas chambers is a historical lie." Since then, the American, Arthur Butz, published in the same spirit, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, and the British, R. E. Harwood wrote, *Did Really Six Million Die? (The Imposture of Gas Chambers.)*

"I have the honor to launch a protest against this special issue of *Historia* dedicated to "S.S physicians".

"How can you believe for a moment the authenticity of the "gas chamber" of Struthof of which you cannot show a photograph? Have you wondered why no book on Struthof, including the *novel* of Allainmat, does not have a photograph of this "gas chamber" that is shown to visitors in its "original state," as the inscription on it says? How could you reproduce a photograph of the exterior with this kind of chimney? . . ."

"Did you know that Kramer [commander of Struthof and later of Bergen-Belsen N.D.L.R.] is the author of this confusion about the "gas chamber," whose vagueness and absurdity exceeds by far all the "confessions" of the Moscow, Cracow (Hoess) and Prague trials?

"How have you been able to reproduce the photograph of p. 45? Haven't you read Harwood's book, *Did Six Million Really Die?* And especially, the work of Udo Walendy, *Bild "Dokumente" fur Geschichtschreibung*, where this photograph is analyzed on pp. 74 and 75?

"By the way, I would like to mention to you that your photograph is a *montage* of a *montage*. Look at the way the head of the first person from the left is positioned on "his" shoulders [...]

"And the photograph on p. 93: the woman with bare breasts! How haven't you been able to detect that, there too, there was montage. Look at the head of "Photomaton"! (See Walendy, *ibid*, p. 23.) [...]

"How can you approve of such a propaganda that prepared the Nuremberg trial? Don't you remember the astounding article 19 of the statutes of the Tribunal: "The Tribunal shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence"? Isn't that a frightening cynicism? Shouldn't it cause the awakening of every honest man?

"I have been fiercely anti-Nazi. I cannot support fascism in any form. But [...] I beg you to always keep in mind the witch trials. Remember the "confessions," the "proofs" and the "testimonies." A witch is not going to say to the court: "You know very well that all this is false, that the witching hour is a fabrication and the encounters with the devil another fabrication." She would have encountered total disbelief. And yet, she would have told the truth. In order to defend himself, under the still prevailing old law, one had to plead the plausible and not the true.

"I had the occasion to tell you, and I will repeat here, that I am ready to open to you any of my files on this imposture of genocide. Many books are appearing on this question. The times are ripe."

Editorial staff comment:

It is possible that, in the vast iconography of the concentration camps, there were photographs truncated by montages or deformed by the accompanying legends. It is equally possible that fewer than six million Jews were exterminated in these camps. It is true that legends indicated gas chambers in several camps where there was none. But, had there been "only" two or three million victims, had there been no gas chambers in camps other than in Poland, the tragedy and the horror remain the same. And to compare countless testimonies, confessions and documents that prove the genocide to proofs that served to send witches to burn at the stake, is a challenge that we have neither the inclination nor the need to take up. (F.X.V.)

In the end, it's an extreme right publication, *Défense de l'Occident*, managed by Maurice Bardèche, an acknowledged fascist, that welcomed, in June 1978, the paper that Faurisson had been trying to publish for a long time. As he says in a note, "he obviously does not support the political opinions of his publisher."

The "Problem of Gas Chambers" (a)

By Robert Faurisson (b)

"The Tribunal shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence [...]"
(Article 19 of the Statutes of the International Military Tribunal.)
[In reality: the Inter-Allied Military Tribunal) at Nuremberg.]

"The Tribunal shall not require proof of facts of common knowledge, but shall take judicial notice thereof [...]" (Article 21 of the Statutes.)

No one, not even among those individuals who regard the Third Reich with nostalgia, denies the existence of concentration camps under Hitler. Everyone recognizes also that certain camps were equipped with crematory ovens. Instead of being buried, corpses were reduced to ashes. The repeated occurrence of epidemics made cremation necessary, especially for those who had died of typhus (see the photos of mass graves at Belsen *et cetera*). What is, however disputed, by numerous French, English, American and German authors is the existence of "extermination camps" in Hitler's Germany. This expression is used by history writers to refer to those camps which are supposed to have been equipped with "gas chambers." These "gas chambers" were different from the American gas chambers in that they were allegedly used to kill masses. The victims were allegedly men, women and children that Hitler who were exterminated because of their race or religion. This is called "genocide." The principal means for carrying out this "genocide" were slaughterhouses for humans called "gas chambers" and the gas employed for this purpose would have been generally Zyklon-B (a pesticide based upon prussic acid or hydrocyanide acid.)

The authors who contest the "genocide" claim and the existence of the "gas chambers" are called "Revisionists." Their argument runs approximately as follows:

"It suffices for both of these problems "genocide" and "gas chambers") to apply the customary methods of historical criticism, to see that one is confronted here by two myths which are inseparable. The criminal intentions which are attributed to Hitler have never been proven. As far as the weapon for this crime is concerned, no one has actually seen it. Here one is confronted by an extraordinarily successful war and hate propaganda campaign. History is full of frauds of this kind, beginning with the religious fables of sorcery and witchcraft. What distinguishes our time from earlier epochs, is the frightening power of the media and the propaganda *ad nauseam* which is made for what must be called "the hoax of the century." Let him beware, whoever might after 30 years get the idea to try and expose this hoax. He will learn – depending upon the situation – through imprisonment, fines, assaults and insults. His career can be shattered or endangered. He will be denounced as "Nazi." Either his thesis will be ignored, or else it will be distorted. No country will be more unrelentingly ruthless toward him than West Germany.

Today however, the silence is about to be broken about those men who have dared to write responsibly that Hitler's "gas chambers," (including those of Auschwitz and Majdanek) are only a historical lie (c). That is a great advance.

But what insults and distortions an Exterminationist historian such as Georges Wellers allowed himself when, more than ten years after Paul Rassinier's death, he decided to "expose" the minutest part of the arguments of this ex-inmate of a concentration camp who had had the courage to reveal the lie of the "gas chambers" in his writings!

[A whole literature and press, of sex-shop Nazism (even a newspaper like *le Monde* (d)) was used to spread the idea that the new Nazis would dare deny the existence of *cremation ovens*. Better: these neo-Nazis would dare pretend that *no Jew was gassed*. This last formula is clever. It leads one to believe that the new Nazis, without contesting the existence of "gas chambers," push the cynicism to the point of pretending that only the Jews benefited from the privilege of going to the "gas chamber (e)"!] [This paragraph is missing in the *JHR*. Ed.]

The best way in which a historian may inform himself regarding the actual claims of the disciples of Paul Rassinier is to refer to the work of the American A. R. Butz entitled *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* (f).

For my part, I take the liberty of making only a few observations specifically for the serious research-oriented historians.

I call their attention to a paradox. Although the "gas chambers" are, in the view of the official historians, absolutely central to a picture of the Nazi concentration camp system (and furthermore, as proof for the totally perverse and devilish character of the German concentration camps – in comparison to all previous and more recent concentration camps – it ought to be meticulously shown how the Nazis proceeded to invent, construct and operate these fearsome slaughterhouses for humans), one must be thoroughly astonished that in the impressive bibliography of the concentration camp literature there is not

a single book, not a single brochure, not a single article on the "gas chambers" themselves! One must not be misled by some very promising titles; rather one must ascertain the contents of these writings for oneself. I regard as "official historical writing" those publications which are written about the concentration camps by institutions or foundations which are partly or wholly financed from public funds, such as, for example, in France: the Committee of the History of the Second World War, or the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation and, in Germany, the Institute of Contemporary History of Munich.

One must wait until page 541 of the thesis by Olga Wormser-Migot on the system of Nazi concentration camps, before one finds a passage about the "gas chambers." However, for the reader there are still three other surprises:

- The passage in question covers only three pages.
- It carries the title: "The Problem of the Gas Chambers";
- This "problem" consists of trying to determine whether the "gas chambers" at Ravensbruck (in Germany) and of Mauthausen (in Austria) really existed; the author comes to the conclusion that they did not exist; however she does not examine the problem of the "gas chambers" of Auschwitz or any of the other camps, probably because in her mind they do not represent a "problem".

At this point, the reader probably wants to know why an analysis which concludes that "gas chambers" did not exist in certain camps is suddenly discontinued as soon as, for example, Auschwitz is discussed. Why, on one hand, is the critical spirit awakened *here*, and then, on the other hand, it is allowed to collapse into lethargy *there*? After all, as far as the "gas chamber" of Ravensbruck is concerned, we have available lots of points of "evidence" and "undeniable eyewitness accounts", beginning with repeated and extensive eyewitness accounts by Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier, or Germaine Tillion. It gets even better. Several years after the war, before both *British* and French *tribunals*, camps officials of Ravensbruck (Suhren, Schwarzhuber, Dr. Treite) repeatedly confessed to the existence of a "gas chamber" in their camp! They even vaguely described its operation! Eventually they were hanged because of this alleged "gas chamber," or else they committed suicide. The same confessions were given prior to their death by Ziereis for Mauthausen (Austria) and by Kramer for Struthof (Alsace). Today, one can see the alleged "gas chamber" of Struthof and in the same place one can also read the unbelievable confession of Kramer. This "gas chamber" which is designated as an "historical monument" is a complete fraud. The slightest amount of critical spirit will be sufficient to convince oneself that a gassing in this small room, without any sealing whatsoever, would have been a catastrophe for the executioner as well as for the people in the vicinity. In order to make this "gas chamber" (which is guaranteed to be in its "original condition") believable, someone has gone so far as to clumsily knock a hole into the thin wall with a chisel, and thereby break four tiles. The hole was so arranged that Joseph Kramer would have dumped through it the mysterious "salts" (about which he could give no further details and which, when mixed with a little water, killed

within one minute!). How could salts and water make gas? How could Kramer have prevented the gas from coming back out of the hole? How could he see his victims from a hole which would have let him see no more than half the room? How did he ventilate the room before opening the rudimentary door, made from rough-cut lumber? Perhaps one must ask the civil engineering firm in Saint-Michel-sur-Meurthe (Vosges), which after the war altered the place which today is presented to visitors "in its original condition"?

Even long after the war, prelates, university professors, and some ordinary citizens, gave eyewitness descriptions regarding the terrible reality of the "gas chambers" of Buchenwald and Dachau. With regards to Buchenwald, the "gas chamber" gradually disappeared from the mind of the people who had previously maintained there was one in this camp.

Dachau

With regard to Dachau, the situation is different. After it has been firmly established – for example by His Eminence Bishop Piguët, the bishop of Clermont-Ferrand – that the "gas chamber" had been especially useful in gassing Polish priest (g), eventually the following official explanation came to pass:

This gas chamber whose construction had been started in 1943, was still not completed in 1945 when the camps was liberated. No one could have been gassed in it.

The small place presented to visitors as "gas chamber" is, in reality, perfectly harmless, and while all imaginable architectural plans for the construction of "Baracke X" are available, it is hard to see which document or which technical report would indicate our "unfinished gas chamber."(?)

No official historical institute has done more to accredit the myth of "gas chambers" than the Institute of Contemporary History of Munich. The director, since 1972, is Mr. Martin Broszat. Collaborator of this institute since 1955, Mr. Broszat would become a celebrity through the (partial) publication of the supposed memories of Rudolf Hoess in 1958. Yet, on August 19, 1960, this historian announced to his astounded compatriots that after all is said and done, there has never existed any "gas chamber" in all the Old Reich but only in some "selected places," first of all (?) in some places in Poland, including Auschwitz-Birkenau. He announced this surprising news in a simple letter to the weekly *Die Zeit* (p. 16). The title of his letter was oddly restrictive: "Keine Vergasung in Dachau" (no gassing in Dachau). Mr. Broszat gave no proof to support his affirmations. Today, close to eighteen years after his letter, neither he nor his collaborators have yet furnished the least explanation of this mystery. It would, however, be most interesting to know:

– How does Mr. Broszat prove that the "gas chambers" of the Old Reich are fakes;

– How does he prove that the "gas chambers" of Poland were real;

– Why the "proofs," the "certainties," and the "testimonies" assembled about the camps that are geographically near us, suddenly have no more value, while the "proofs," the "certainties" and the "testimonies," assembled about the camps in Poland remain true.

Through some kind of tacit agreement, no official historian has publicly raised these questions. How many times in "the history of history," the pure and simple affirmation of a single historian is accepted?

But let's consider the "gas chambers" of Poland. The existence of "gas chambers" at Belzec and Treblinka is essentially based on the "Gerstein" report. This document of an S.S. who succumbed to "suicide"(?) in 1945 at the Cherche-Midi prison (h) swarms with such absurdities that it has long been discredited by historians. Yet, this report has never been published, even in the Nuremberg Military Tribunal documents, except in inadmissible forms (with truncations, adulterations, rewritings). It has never been published with its aberrant annexes (the "rough draft" in French, the "Ergänzungen" or "complements" in German).

Concerning Majdanek, a visit is in order. It is, we might say, even more conclusive than that of Struthof. I shall publish a file on the question.

For Auschwitz and Birkenau, we essentially have the memories (i) of R. Hoess, written under the surveillance of his Polish jailers. Only a "rekonstruiert" place and ruins are found on the scene. An execution by gas has nothing to do with an accidental or suicidal asphyxiation. In the case of an execution, the gas operator and his encourage have to avoid all risks. Americans use a sophisticated gas for their executions, which take place in a small airtight space. After its use, the gas is aspirated and neutralized. The guards have to wait more than an hour to enter the small space.

One wonders how at Auschwitz-Birkenau, for example, 2000 men could be put in a 210 square meter room (!), then pour (?) on them granules of the very potent insecticide Zyklon B; then instantly after the victims' death, send a team, without gas masks, into this place saturated with cyanide acid, to extract the gassed corpses. Two documents (j) of the German industrial archives listed by the Americans at Nuremberg tell us that Zyklon B adheres to surfaces, could not be ventilated by forced ventilation, and needed 24 hours of airing, etc. Other documents found on the scene, kept in the archives of the Oswiecim State museum (k) and which were described nowhere, show that this 210 square meter room, in a state of ruins today, was nothing but a rudimentary morgue ("Leichenkeller"), buried (to protect it from heat), and provided with one modest entry and exist door.

There is an overabundance of documents on the Auschwitz crematoria (as there is, in general, on all the camp), including bills, up to the Pfennig. In contrast, there is nothing on the "gas chambers": no construction order, no study, no command, no plan, no bills, no photograph. In a hundred trials, nothing of this kind could be produced.

"I was at Auschwitz and I can assure you that there is no 'gas chamber' there." Defense witnesses who have the courage to pronounce this phrase are barely heard. They are taken to court (1). Even today, in Germany, whoever testifies in favor of Thies Christophersen, who wrote *The Auschwitz Lie* (m), risks a sentence for "outrage to the memory of the dead."

Right after the war, the Germans, the International Red Cross, the Vatican (which is very well informed on Poland) all declared piously, with many others "The 'gas chambers'? We knew nothing."

But, I would ask today, how can one know about things that did not exist?

There has not existed one single "gas chamber" in one single German concentration camp. This is the truth.

This nonexistence of "gas chambers" is to be welcomed as good news that would be wrong to keep hidden. To denounce "Fatima" as a hoax, is not to attack religion; so too, to denounce the "gas chambers" as a historical lie, is not to take it out on the deportees. It is the duty to be true.

(a) [We reproduce here the English translation that appeared in the *Journal of Historical Review*, 1, 2, Summer 1980, p. 103-114. Ed.] Expression used by Olga Wormser-Migot (*Le Système concentrationnaire nazi, 1933-1945*) thesis, P.U.F., 1968, p. 541.

(b) Associate professor of the University of Lyon 2 (critique of texts and documents). Mr. Faurisson warns us that he obviously does not support the political opinions of his publishers.

(c) See several press articles uniformly hostile or insulting. A study by Hermann Langbein appeared in *Le Monde Juif* of April-June 1975 ("Coup d'œil sur la littérature néo-nazie," pp. 8-20). Hermann Langbein was interned in Auschwitz camp. He has testified at several trials. He holds high positions of responsibility in the world of former deportees. One of his recent works has the French title, *Hommes et femmes à Auschwitz* (Men and Women in Auschwitz) (Fayard, 1975, VII-529 pp.) Not one of the thirty chapters of this book is devoted to the "gas chambers"! On the contrary, there is always the question of "selection for the gas chamber," of "hair of the gassed," and "survivors of the gas chamber," etc. See also a study by Georges Wellers in *Le Monde juif* of April-June 1977 ("La 'solution finale de la question juive' et la mythomanie néo-nazie," pp. 41-84). Also see a study by Ino Arndt and Wolfgang Scheffler in *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte* (a publication of the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, director Martin Broszat), April 1976 ("Organisierter Massenmord an Juden in Nazi Vernichtungslagern," pp. 105-135).

(d) See *Le Monde* of 16-17 October 1977, p. 3. "Des centaines de tracts néo-nazis..."

(e) The worst distortions in this respect seem to have been reached in a report by M. Pierre Viansson-Ponté. See in *Le Monde* of 17-18 July, 1977, p. 13, his article on the French translation of *Did Six Million Really Die?* (by R. Harwood, H.R.P. Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6AA [G.B.] Address at Richmond: 23 Ellerker Gardens [Historical Review Press]. First edition in 1975, 28 pp. [dble. col.]) Those who have vindicated or justified the assassination of F. Duprat, distributor of this brochure, have adopted the false accusations of M. Viansson-Ponté (see *Le Monde*, March 23, 1978, p. 7 and April 26, p. 9).

(f) Same editor as for R. Harwood. First edition in 1976, 315 pp. Price 2 pounds, 50 pence. The book has an exceptional scientific value.

(g) *Prison et déportation*, edition Spes, 1947, p. 77.

(h) See the reflection of the coroner related by Pierre Joffroy in *L'Espion de Dieu – la Passion de Kurt Gerstein*, p. 262, Grasset, 1969.

(i) *Kommandant in Auschwitz, Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen*, von Rudolf Hoess. Eingeleitet und kommentiert von Martin Broszat, Deutsche Verlag Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1958, 184 pp. See on gassings, pp. 126 and 166. The entrance of the team in the "gas chamber" is done "sofort" i.e. "immediately" (p. 166).

(j) These two long documents, of major importance, were not used, it seems, during the trial of Gerhardt Peters (director of Degesch), are labeled NI-9098 and NI-9912. They completely demolish the "confessions" of Hoess on the "gas chambers."

(k) Photos neg. 6228 sq.

(l) The case of Wilhelm Stäglich, for example (see the book by Butz s.v.)

(m) "Die Auschwitz-Luege" No. 23 of *Kritik*, 2341 Kalberhagen; Post Mohrkirch (RFA), 1974, followed by "Der Auschwitz Betrug," no. 27 (Das Echo auf die Auschwitz Luege.)

Robert Faurisson followed this article by a photocopied "complement" that he sent with the text to different personalities.

A. Conclusions (of thirty years of research) by revisionist authors:

1. The Hitlerian "gas chambers" have never existed.
2. The "genocide" (or, the "attempt of genocide") of the Jews has never taken place, never did Hitler give any order (nor admitted) that anybody be killed because of his race or of his religion.
3. The alleged "gas chambers" and the alleged "genocide" are one and the same lie.

4. This lie, which is essentially of Zionist origin, has allowed a gigantic political financial swindle whose main beneficiary is the State of Israel.
5. The main victims are the German people and the Palestinian people.
6. The colossal power of the official media has, so far, assured the success of the lie and censured the freedom of expression of those who denounce this lie.
7. The followers of the lie know now that their lie is in its final years; they deform the meaning and the nature of revisionist research; they call "resurgence of Nazism" or "falsification of history" that which is nothing but a legitimate return to the concern for historical truth.

B. My publications and an official lecture.

1. A letter to *Historama* (Nov. 1975, p. 10) on the expression "N.N." (which does not mean "Nacht und Nebel" = "Night and fog," but "Nomen Nescio" = "Anonymous," in practice, a ban, imposed on some deportees, to send or receive mail).
2. Fragments of a letter to *Historia* (August 1977, p. 132): "L'imposture du genocide."
3. On January 1978 at the "Colloque national de Lyon sur: Églises et chrétiens de France dans la Deuxième Guerre mondiale," lecture on the hoax of the "gas chambers" (see *Rivarol*, Feb. 16, 1978, p. 5).

C. Some of my technical files:

1. Bibliography of the "problem of gas chambers."
2. My inquiries at Struthof (1974), at Majdanek (1975) and at Auschwitz (1975 and 1976): 120 photographs.
3. Years of research at the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris.
4. Consultations of specialized historians.
5. Trials of "war criminals." Stenography minutes of the "Eichmann trial."
6. The "Zyklon B" insecticide.
7. The "Wannsee Protocol."
8. "Final Solution" means "pushing back to the East."
9. A visit in September 1944 to the Auschwitz camp by the representative of the International Red Cross: distortions of all kinds of the original report.

10. The "Gerstein report," and Leon Poliakov or Georges Wellers.
11. The *Memories* of R. Hoess: "Oeuvre" by J. Sehn, reviewed and corrected by Martin Broszat.
12. The "gas chambers" visible at Majdanek: A "crime weapon" never appraised (*idem* for all the visitable "gas chambers").
13. The "confessions."
14. "Six million assassinated or "five hundred thousand war dead"? The Comité d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale (Henri Michel and Claude Levy) refuses to publish the global results of its own inquiry on the deportees of France, "for fear of the associations of deportees."
15. The *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* by Serge Klarsfeld: a belated work, hasty and devoid of scientific guarantee; one quarter of the Jews of France were "deported" or "pushed" toward the East, the author did not seriously try to determine the number of deaths. He dares declare "dead" or "gassed" all the deportees of France (most came from the East) who did not return since 1945 (!) to declare that they are alive either to our services (the figure of the veterans ministry is "unofficial"), or to the official Belgian services!!! The newspapers present this "memorial" as a "directory of death," a "monument to the dead." The author did whatever is needed to maintain the ambiguity...
16. The political-financial fallout of the "genocide".
17. The French press in the face of the right to doubt and research.
18. How Pierre Viansson-Ponté, the journalist at *Le Monde* works.
19. The "genocide" on French Television.
20. The French university and the tradition of witchcraft trials.

[Warning]

Reading these pages, some might interpret my ideas as an apology for National Socialism.

In reality – for reasons that I do not have to go into here – Hitler's personality, ideas or politics seduce me as much as those of Napoleon Bonaparte. I simply refuse to believe the winners' propaganda to whom Napoleon was "the ogre," while Hitler was "Satan" or "Amalec."

It must be clear to everybody that, in my research, I am only driven by the truth. I call truth the opposite of error and lie.

I consider a defamation any accusation or insinuation of Nazism.

Consequently, any physical or moral person, in a public or private capacity, through statements, lectures, writings or actions, is requested to think before compelling me to have recourse to the law.

Copies of these pages will be sent to judges, administrators, newspapers, groups and associations.

June 16, 1978

The famous phrase "Hitler has never given an order," written by Faurisson on several occasions, has created an undeniable malaise in many readers. It was blown out of proportion and serve to reject all of Faurisson's arguments. It has, of course, sparks off passionate discussions including discussions by those who were ready to take Faurisson's arguments into consideration, but it remained unacceptable to many of them. In 1979, Faurisson sent an explanation to some of them:

"Hitler never ordered nor admitted that anyone was to be killed because of his race or his religion (a)."

Explanation of this phrase:

Hitler has always considered the Jews as his enemies, and he treated them accordingly.

Hitler and the Nazis said: "the Allies and the Jews want our annihilation, but it is they who will be annihilated."

Similarly, the Allies and the Jews said: "Hitler and the Nazis want our annihilation, but it is they who will be annihilated."

For one side as for the other, what mattered first was to win the war, at the same time against the military and against the civilians (men, women, the old, children all together).

Even though the winners' camps of the last war, took a series of coercive measures against German or Japanese minorities (considered dangerous during the war or undesirable after the war), even though the winners undertook mass internments, legal (according to laws of the winners) or arbitrary executions, criminal and administrative proceedings against the losers and this for 34 years after the armistice of 1945, even though they proceeded with huge deportations or "displacements" of civilian populations in horrible conditions, yet never did the Allies order or admit that anyone was killed because of his belonging to these enemy minorities, deemed dangerous or hated (b).

Having said this, people who believe that in history, one can pass judgment on the responsibilities of one or the other, are justified to say this: In the eyes of morality and history, both Hitler and the Allies bear the entire responsibility of all the wrongs, all the persecutions, all the deaths sustained by civilian minorities in all the countries at war from 1939 to 1945.

(a) I think this shocking sentence conforms to the truth. I call truth the opposite of error or lie. I believe that the truth must be accepted by each one of us, irrespective of the opinion of whoever professes it. Scientific history neither professes opinions, nor supports principles. Principles are the personal business of each one of us. In this domain, let us not hide behind scientific history and make it talk: it is speechless.

(b) September 5, 1939, the president of the World Jewish Congress, Chaim Weizmann, declared war on Germany. For Hitler, the Jews were representatives of a hostile, belligerent nation.

This sentence seems awkward to me because it is ambiguous. Even if it can be proved that it conceals a certain formal truth, it nonetheless remains more than probable that Hitler, together with other political and military leaders, must easily admit that Jews and other non-hostile and non-belligerent minorities such as gypsies and homosexuals, died in great numbers due to persecutions. This type of cynicism is obviously not the prerogative of one type of regime. People continue to die every day because of racial, religious, sexual and political persecutions. In my opinion, more could be done to prevent such deaths.

But, let's go back to the Faurisson affair.

Is the nail riveted? Certainly not. The medium is not good. The extreme right offers no credibility as to research, doubt or concern for the truth. In the fall, Pierre Viansson-Ponté, in his program "Au fil de la semaine" (week in review), resumes his attacks against the school called "revisionist": "It is surprising that those responsible for these infamies are not identified and pursued: they fall under the law that punishes incitement to racial hatred¹." One can certainly wonder what legal confusion led to this connection, and even wonder whether it is the duty of the journalist to call for the denunciation of whoever holds views opposite to his; but one must admit that not knowing much about Faurisson's writings, he doesn't dare denounce him by name².

¹ "Le Mensonge (suite)" September 3-4, 1979. On this occasion, Viansson-Ponté questions "this falsifier of Rassinié," the result of which was the entry on the scene of Rassinié's followers on the extreme left. See later, p. 128.

² If I am strict toward a journalist whose disappearance I deplore, it is because of the high esteem I have for his writings. I considered him the best journalist on internal French politics. To me, the passion he showed in this affair is perfectly comprehensible. I have shared in it for a long time and find it honorable. One, however, may try to see beyond the often narrow limits of an irrational passion.

Chapter 3

The Outbreak of the Affair

It was the interview in *L'Express* of Darquier, former commissioner in the Jewish Questions division of the Vichy regime, that brought things to a head. For Faurisson, "the moment has come; the time is ripe." The first of November, 1978, firmly grounded in his research, he dispatched to several newspapers a rather provocative letter:

I hope that the remarks which the journalist Philippe Garnier-Raymond has just attributed to Louis Darquier de Pellepoix will finally lead the general public to discover that the alleged massacres in "gas chambers" and the alleged "genocide" are one and the same lie, unfortunately sanctioned so far by official history (that of the victors) and by the colossal power of the mass media. Like the French Paul Rassinier (former deportee member of the Resistance), like the German Wilhelm Stäglich, like the English Richard Harwood, like the American Arthur Butz (author of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, a work so remarkable that so far nobody has been able to respond to it), like many other authors passed over in silence or invariably slandered, I proclaim here, just as I did at the Lyon national colloquium on "Churches and Christians of France during the Second World War" (January 27-30, 1978): "The massacres in alleged "gas chambers" are a historic lie." Hitler never ordered nor accepted that anybody be killed because of his race or his religion. I am not trying to offend or rehabilitate anybody. Until proven otherwise, I believe that I have conducted my research according to the customary methods of historical critique. I am ready for any debate on the question of "gas chambers" and of the "genocide," for any confrontation, for any duly registered interview. I have already stated this in writing to several authorities, to several publications (*Tribune juive-hebdo*, for example), to several information organs for the past four years, and I repeat it here today. The light will come from neither the "docudrama" Holocaust, nor from the L.I.C.A., nor from the nth outcry; it can only come from an examination, on equal terms, of the existing theses. As for me, I like the light."

At *Le Monde*, nobody blinks. They know the man and they are terrified at seeing him turn up trying to corner an editor in order to lecture him. Nobody at *Le Matin de Paris* knows anything about the affair and the editors in Paris put Claude Régent, their reporter in Lyon, in charge of contacting Faurisson. They met, armed with cassette recorders, at the Sofitel Hotel on November 8. According to the recording, the interview went as follows:

R.F. I am granting you this interview on the understanding that the conditions agreed upon over the phone will be honored. The first is that, after all, it is a written interview. We are going to chat a little bit today, and then you ask me questions. I will write down these questions. And then, I will try to bring you answers tomorrow [...]. However, for *Le Matin*, I have some conditions to lay down. My conditions are the following: It is a publication in extenso or no publication. It is for you to decide. In your opinion, how many pages should this interview be?

C.R. Very short. I haven't really decided yet.

R.F. We must be very precise on this point. It must be complete or it won't be. This means that, for example, if I give you sixty typed lines, they are these sixty typed lines with title and subtitle.

C.R. That I cannot promise.

R.F. Well. You can promise to run the whole piece, no matter how short or how long it is, or you run nothing.

C.R. I absolutely cannot make this commitment, for it is not possible.

R.F. I do not want an interview which will be cut. I refuse this absolutely.

C.R. I was asked to come and see you because you have written to *Le Matin*. *Le Matin* wants to know what you have to say. That is all. It is as simple as this. I have come to see you in order to ask you what you have to tell us.

R.F. I already told you that whatever I want to say to you, I will do it in writing. And you know why: the subject is very delicate. I even told you that I want to behave like Mitterrand, who will give interviews only in writing. It is obvious that what I am afraid of is not to have to talk freely about the subject, and if I want it in writing, it is because I am afraid of distortions. The first distortion I am afraid of is a cut, a shortening. Well, I don't want that! I want nothing that might distort my idea. The subject is very serious. I understand very well, you are very kind, you came to see me, you say that you cannot assume this responsibility. Well, I think that had I been living in Paris, I would have gone to see your editor and maybe we could come to an agreement. Maybe you could yourself – this is only a suggestion – contact him and inform him of the situation. The subject is extremely serious, you know, it is not a matter of a dog having been run over.

C.R. I can't say "fine, granted" before I know what you are going to say.

R.F. That is not it. If you understand me, this is not what I am saying. I am saying that you do not have to decide in advance.

C.R. I can tell you, for example, that you are going to write about two precise questions, say a typed page, 25 typed lines. I absolutely cannot tell you that this will run in its entirety.

R.F. Listen. What I can do is provide the text. You understand. I provide the text and I say: "But this text is to be published only in full." At that moment, you decide. You decide according to the content, you do not decide a priori. When you have in hand these three typewritten pages, well, at that moment, you make your decision, and it will be either all or nothing!

C.R. This means that you provide the text first and then it will be decided whether or not it will run.

R.F. Exactly, this text is, of course, your questions and my answers. And the title is extremely important. You will know why. I will explain to you. I want to be responsible for the title.

C.R. Then you are defying the customs.

R.F. Well, too bad for me, and I'm sorry for you. I often defy many customs like this. The title is a crucial thing, it could, for example, be insulting. In the polemical climate shaping up around this interview with Darquier, anything is possible. Any slander, any malicious gossip, any defamation are possible, starting with the title. I could give you examples of titles that would be purely scandalous.

C.R. The title is not up to the interviewed person to make a decision about the title.

Believing that some sort of agreement was established, Faurisson thought it proper to introduce himself:

[...] My name is Robert Faurisson, I am half British. As a child, during the war, I was called the "Angliche" and on my desk, I did not carve the word "liberty" as Eluard requested us to do. I carved "Death to Laval" and I wrote like this any time I could, for I was brave, "Hitler Dreck." I did a little German, with a lot of "resistance," to my German professors, but I wrote "Hitler Dreck." That means "shit." Then, one of my classmates named Barbot or Barberot, that I would like to find today, and who was pro-German, was very happy the day I had to dismantle my desk and went kicking that desk where "Death to Laval" was marked. He was happy that day in front of all my little classmates. I was made ashamed of "Your Englishmen who run in the desert like rabbits." You know, the phrase, I still have it. And this Barbot or Barberot, a few days after the landing of the Anglo-Americans in North Africa, when people began to feel that things are turning around, came towards me, extended his hand to me, and said (excuse me; these are his words, I think that I remember these words), "This time they are in trouble." I

said to him (but I refused to shake his hand, I am tough!): "But who are you talking about?" "Well, the Boches." "What? You, Barberot, about the Boches?" And the little chap answered, for we were learning Latin, and I think that he had heard it the night before from his father: "Errare humanum est, perseverare diabolicum." Do you know that that means "To err is human, to persist in the error is diabolical." I am convinced that Mr. Barberot, the father, had joined the Resistance later, a true or false resistance member. And I can say that until the end, I was molded by this hate that was infused in me by my family, by the radio. Not only did I hate Laval, but also Darlan, I don't know why, pet peeve, and it was like this until the end. And I can tell you another thing that is not honorable. I was on vacation in August, 1944 in a small village of Charente called Laperuse. I was leaning on my elbows in the window, and next to me was my brother, a little younger than me, and my brother and I were looking at a topless fellow in the village street behind an F.F.I. with a bayonet. I turned toward my brother and said: "What are we waiting for to bump this bastard?" There was no need for an argument, a gesture. Since he was behind an F.F.I. bayonet, he was a collaborator. A collaborator was a bastard, he is to be struck down. That's how I was. And I think that one has to be very hard in life, during the struggle, but when it's over, it's over (and Nazism is dead, it died April 30, 1945 and it is finished). I would almost take the side of the serf. That's how I behave in sentimental and political matters. And I will tell you what I did during the Algerian war. You can check that. I contributed to Maurice Audin Committee, but I later defended a comrade who was suspected of being O.A.S. This is how the true British behave. I know that this is a little difficult to understand sometimes. And I am horrified by spitting on a corpse, and I always wonder about the reasons why people spit on a corpse. I find this unanimity about the Darquier de Pellepoix affair very troublesome. Darquier de Pellepoix is the kind of man I would have been happy to see killed during the war. I was happy to learn that Phillippe Henriot was killed during the war. When I would hear the English radio whose words I lapped up: "4000 tons of bombs on Hamburg," I would say: "Wonderful, why not 8000?" When women, the elderly and children were roasted in phosphorus, I found that very good. Oradour (625 dead) I found outrageous. Dresden, where there were probably 135,000 dead, a hospital city, a museum city, the Florence of the Elbe, I found that normal, I found that very good.

There was obviously no words of this self-portrait in the article of the journalist. Faurisson then set about to explain the reasons for his research as well as for his conclusions. The journalist is shocked (which is understandable) and he starts to sneer (which is less understandable):

C.R. Then the people who were at Vel-d'Hiv, went for a walk and they all came back.

R.F. You have to ask me the question in a different tone.

C.R. Who do you want to convince? What do you want to prove? That there were no Jews who were deported, who were....

R.F. Then I have to continue. But first you have to talk to me nicely, otherwise I will not be able to answer you. Let that be clear! Otherwise we will stop right now. Then I say this: I think of the deportees, what thought of them, for example.... I do not want to name names because this will point right away in a bad direction. Here is what I think. Look at what is true among all kinds of suffering. There is the fact that people were persecuted because of their racial or religious origin. For some, it may have been an awful drama: the loss of a job. For others, internment. For others, separation from family. For others, deportation. For others, deportation, then internment very far from their countries and work under conditions often very hard and often malnourished and stricken by all sorts of epidemics. There were tremendous ravages due to typhus at Bergen-Belsen, these famous piles of corpses that are shown to us. There were all these things. However, one must not forget also all these facts of war which may be that a man takes risks through his action, he joins the resistance. He becomes a fighter. As for me, you know, I would've had to be two years older.

C.R. How old were you then?

R.F. I was 15 in 1944. All these things are true, and are sufficiently terrible. So what am I going to say in order to answer your question (that I would have liked it to be in a less aggressive manner)? What I want is this humble thing which is called the search for the truth, and which is called exactness, because I think that it is not good, it's not good to lie, it's not good to manufacture this sort of sex-shop Nazism that you see at this moment and for a long time. The curiosity about Adolf is an absolutely unhealthy curiosity. He no longer interests me. I'm no more interested in Adolf's person or ideas than those of Napoleon Bonaparte. Stalin was not a god, Hitler was not a devil, just like that, all of a sudden. No! What interests me is this, and I think that I am doing healthy work.

C.R. Then is it true or not that Hitler killed Jews?

R.F. Hitler never gave an order to kill. And listen to me, the words that I am going to say are important. Hitler never gave an order to kill people because of their race or their religion. He said ten times: "The Jews want our death, it's us that we will have theirs...."

C.R. That's already not bad.

R.F. Oh well...

C.R. But the "final solution"?

R.F. The "final solution" since you ask me the question....

C.R. Yes, that doesn't exist?

R.F. The "final solution" exists absolutely.

C.R. What is the "final solution"?

R.F. The "final solution" (*Endlösung, Gesamtlösung*), the overall solution is that Jews be deported. First to Madagascar. You know, this is what was called the Madagascar Projekt. I have its text. Then, since the war was in Europe, this project was abandoned. For the moment, it was to put the Jews the farthest possible from Europe, in some corner there; in the meantime, put to work those of them who can work. But you have Hitler's comments, if Hitler's comments are taken into consideration. (You can always say to me that Hitler tells stories. Oh well, if he tells stories in one direction, would he tell in another?) He said, "I will force them to found a national State" and this date, if I recall, was September, 1942.

C.R. Then what were they doing in these camps, where they were dying, where....?

R.F. They did not all die in the camps, because there are numerous associations of former deportees. Concerning this, I would like to tell you something that I missed and which is very important, it deals with the number. Well, you know the Second World War History Committee. You know it is a service attached directly to the prime minister. It is managed by Mr. Henri Michel and Mr. Claude Lévy. An investigation was opened on the deportation a long time ago, more than twenty years, I believe. Well, it is scientific work, department by department. This investigation was completed at the end of 1973. The results were never made public, and now I'll tell you why. This committee publishes in duplicate and puts out a bulletin with a confidential circulation. This bulletin should not be confused with the *Revue de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*. Here is what Mr. Henri Michel said in this bulletin (number 209 and 212, dated January and April 1974): "The overall results of the investigation" (which lasted several years and employed several people) "will not be published," the reason being "the fear of incidents with some associations of deportees." In other words, "to avoid discourteous reflections for the deportees."

C.R. So how many disappeared?

R.F. You come back to this question and I tell you that personally, I am not in a position to answer, but I tell you that there are people you should ask and that they should publish the results of their investigation in France.

In the course of the conversation, the journalist casts the Darquier hook (it is useful, he must wonder about such a title as "A Darquier model," it is good for sales).

Answers R.F.: "Monsieur Darquier de Pellepoix does not interest me, he is even the type of man that I would fight all my life."

That doesn't bite. Another title must be found. The interview ends quite badly.

[...] My students are going to read *Le Matin*. Unfortunately, they will not read it, because I only want a written (as it was clearly stated) interview. Do you agree?

C.R. Not at all!

R.F. What?

C.R. Not at all. You talked to me. I told you nothing to start. I'll use it, you told me so.

R.F. No, no, you told me that you agree on the following point – or else it will be very serious, sir – that you were granting me a written interview. I don't accept this.... Yes, this was a conversation between us.

C.R. I did not say that, you can check.

R.F. Well, listen Monsieur, you are cheating me and what you are doing is very bad, very serious and you don't have the right to do that.

C.R. I will not speak ... for me.

R.F. I talked to you in confidence, like that, between us. What you are doing....

C.R. Do you think that I am going to waste an hour talking with you and not do an article, no this is ... not ... possible....

The *Le Matin* article justified Faurisson's fears¹. The abstract began thus: "Darquier is not alone. Some describe his comments about the Nazi extermination camps as 'insane.' Robert Faurisson, a teacher in Lyon, supports him." The same abstract ends with an allusion to a meeting with Claude Régent during which "a two hour interview was recorded. Later, Faurisson demanded that it not be published. Undoubtedly, he was afraid of the enormity of its comments." The journalist is not frightened by the futility of his comments. Not pleased enough with his deformations, he adds pure and simple lies: he says that Faurisson "occupies the position of historic advisor of Baucens publishers in Brussels. The titles of some of their published works are explicit: *Le Mensonge d'Auschwitz*, *Le Protocole des Sages de Sion*, *La Vérité sur l'affaire Joachim Peiper*." Claude Régent was careful not to ask Faurisson about it. Other newspapers picked up this slander, and others, such as Bernard Schalscha of *Libération*, who hastily copies the previous day's article of *Le Matin*, made Faurisson the author of the above mentioned works². To cap it all, *Le Matin* said that before 1969, when he was teaching at Clermont-Ferrand, "Robert Faurisson received an official warning following antisemitic remarks."

To pull in the reader, the phrase "the *Journal* of Anne Frank, is it authentic?" (which has nothing to do with the subject under discussion) is used four times (title, abstract and twice in the body of the article) and brought in the fifth time, in different form, under Anne Frank's photo, without a single comment to clarify the meaning of this question. What is poor Anne Frank doing in *Le Matin de Paris*? To make Margot cry,

¹ November 16, 1978.

² *Libération*, November 17, 1978. He ends his article with typical hypocrisy: "Were there other than the usual students of the twentieth century French literature course to listen to Mr. Faurisson in Faculté du quai Claude-Bernard, room 12 on Monday at 2 P.M.?" Bravo, *Libé*. Identical remark for *Le Quotidien du peuple*, 18-20, November 1978.

to distract attention from what is being said. I had been told that this was a socialist newspaper; this must be a mistake.

The rest of the article consists of considerations by the president of Lyon 2, Mr. Maurice Bernadet, of partially falsified extracts from the program of Faurisson's courses¹, and in a disjointed menu of texts by Faurisson under the headline, "the problem of gas chambers." In all this, there is no single word of what Faurisson said in the course of the interview.

This article and all its little fantasies was taken up as is in the rest of the mass media. Faurisson dispatched immediately a reply. But a socialist newspaper such as *Le Matin de Paris* does not bother with the right to reply. Then Faurisson appealed to the justice of his country. The court's grounds are partially based on the text of this reply²:

I only give written interviews. Your journalist was duly warned about that, he cut and pasted fragments of my writings which, moreover, were presented as those of an antisemite.

I am neither interested in national socialism, which has been dead since April 30, 1945, nor in nostalgic neo-Nazism, nor especially in the pervasive sex-shop Nazism peddled by the media and even by official historians.

Four years of reflection about the thesis of Paul Rassinier (an authentic and courageous resistance fighter and deportee) and four years of personal research, including in Struthof, Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek, convinced me that the Hitlerian "gas chambers" did not exist. Should that be hushed up, or should the good news finally be announced?

And the court drew the following conclusion:

Whereas the editor of *Le Matin* had the right to refuse the publication of a reply in which the author accused of having cut and pasted fragments of Faurisson's writings was insulted; and whereas the latter abused this right by trying to impose on the newspaper the publication of a text in which he stresses the "pervasive sex-shop Nazism peddled by the media and even by official historians," all these considerations have no direct link with his being implicated by the journalist.

Thus, a journalist is insulted by the exact description of what he has done: cut and pasted texts. It's a good thing to know. Nonetheless, *Le Matin* was sentenced for defamation, the official warning for antisemitic remarks being "very probably," as they pretend "without any justification." But the amazing thing is that the publication of the verdict, which is routinely done upon request, was prohibited by the court "because of the particular circumstances of the case." Here is a newspaper that slanders an individual, the fact is recognized by the court, but the individual is denied the right to public acknowledgment for what the verdict qualifies as an infringement

¹ In talking about A.R. Butz book, *The Hoax of the 20th Century*, C. Régent says that it was translated into French by Francois Duprat, a recently assassinated extreme right leader. Pure invention. The book is not translated.

² Judgment of the supreme court (1st chamber, 1st section), May 2, 1979.

"on honor and consideration." What are these "particular circumstances" other than the common desire of the newspaper and the court that Faurisson's public image remain attached to this accusation?

With unintended humor, *Le Matin* published at the bottom of the page an article headlined, "Comment avoue un innocent" (Confessions of an Innocent). To anybody who dives into this nightmarish affair, the question of past confessions by Nazi leaders is of crucial importance. Any reflection, in this regard, about the value that can be attributed to past confessions under conditions of extreme coercion, must be taken into consideration. This article reports that a team led by R.P.R. deputy Pierre Bas studied the problem posed by capital punishment, decided to conduct a hearing of some "important witnesses" including Gilles Perrault, Mgr. Fauchet, bishop of Troyes and abbé P. Toulat. Gilles Perrault gave a report on the fragility of evidence, "How can an innocent confess?," with reference to Arthur London. I quote from the text: "A testimony is not worth more than a confession. The conclusions duly supported by precise experiments conducted by a group of researchers from Columbia University are appalling on this subject. Until then, it was believed that the human eye functioned like a camera, the memory restoring the film more or less completely, but faithfully. In fact, not only the memory, but the sight would be selective. The eye would see what it expected to see, what it likes to see, what is logical to see." There is no need for a university researcher to know all this. But try to transpose these considerations from the penal level to that of historical events... What does Mr. Badinter think about that?

It would be fastidious to search the media for reactions to this affair. We would only find that beyond the condemnations and the indignations, there is no information, no spontaneous discussion¹. Faurisson's letter to *Le Monde* serve to keep the ball rolling.

First letter, December 16, 1978.

Never deny! For having denied the existence of Hitlerian "gas chambers," Paul Rassinier and many other revisionist authors have been called "Nazis," "crazy," "Savonarola," "Jesuit," and "harmful" persons by the highest university authorities. But before 1974, I was officially considered to be a "very brilliant professor," "very original researcher," a man endowed with an "exceptional personality," a "teacher with remarkable intellectual and pedagogical qualities"; my publications had "made a lot of noise" and my thesis defense at the Sorbonne was considered "brilliant."

On November 16, 1978, a newspaper that was granted an interview by Mr. Bernadet (president of my university) published abominable slanders about me as a preface to a collection of "declarations" I had made about the lie of "gas chambers." Mr. Bernadet immediately posted the article accompanied by a notice inviting my dear colleagues to sign a register of protest against my "declarations." He told another newspaper that my "intellectual equilibrium" may be "affected" and he could no longer assure my security. First in a statement and then in a press release, he denounced the "scandalous character"

¹ As noted by Mr. René Frank, president of the Committee of Teachers, Friends of Israel: "One can't improvise when talking to neo-Nazi scientists about Nazism," (*Le Figaro*, May 18, 1979).

of my "affirmations," which, in addition, "rested on no serious foundation and deserved only contempt."

In agreement with the superintendent, Mr. Bernadet issued a suspension order against me. Neither one of them informed in time and I fell into a veritable trap. Elements from outside our university entered my office. Mr. Bernadet did nothing despite the fact that he was close by and knew about the comings and goings of these frenzied people, and about my presence on the premises. A small group from them insulted me and chased me down the university hallways. They caught me at the exit. They thrashed me on the sidewalk. Then they chased me and beat me up again along with one of my students. For the past three years, thanks to Mr. Bernadet, I am an associate professor for whom there is no possibility for promotion because – official reason – other than that I reside two hours from Lyon, it seems I have never published anything in my life, and this by "my own admission"! As grounds for his accusation, Mr. Bernadet took out of context a sentence from a letter where I express my surprise at my being called a "Nazi" while I have published nothing that might lead one to believing that I was one (letter of December 12, 1975 that he refers to). This frightening accusation would subsequently be confirmed by my minister, then more recently by the Council of State, in whose eyes, the invoked motives against me are not "materially inaccurate" (though the list of my publications was part of my file)! I will not enter into a discussion here with Mr. Bernadet and I will not point out in his letter other serious inaccuracies, maneuvers or omissions. I am waiting for a public debate on a subject that is manifestly avoided: that of "gas chambers." For four years, I have been soliciting *Le Monde* in this direction. I demand to finally publish my two pages on "The Rumors of Auschwitz." The moment has come. The time is ripe.

Finally, with all the mental restrictions of some kind or another, the time is getting ripe for some discussion, or a semblance of such, to be opened:¹

"The Problem of Gas Chambers (a)" or "The Rumor of Auschwitz"

Nobody contests the use of crematory furnaces in some German camps. The frequency of epidemics, in all of Europe in wartime, required the cremation of corpses of typhus victims.

It is the existence of "gas chambers," real human slaughterhouses, which is contested. This dispute has been increasing since 1945. The mass media are no longer ignoring it.

In 1945, official history maintained that "gas chambers" had functioned in the old Reich as well as in Austria, in Alsace as well as in Poland. Fifteen years

¹ *Le Monde*, December 29, 1978.

later, in 1960, it revised its judgment: "At first" (?) "gas chambers" functioned only in Poland (b). This heart-rending revision of 1960 reduced to nothing a thousand "testimonies," a thousand "proofs" of alleged gassings in Oranienbourg, in Buchenwald, in Bergen-Belsen, in Dachau, in Ravensbrueck, in Mauthausen. Before French or English judicial authorities, those in charge of Ravensbrueck (Suhren, Schwarzhuber, Dr. Treite) had admitted the existence of a "gas chamber" whose functioning they even described, somewhat vaguely. Comparable scenario for Ziemeis in Mauthausen or for Kramer in Struthof. After the death of the guilty, it was discovered that these gassings had never existed. Fragility of testimonies and confessions!

The "gas chambers" in Poland – as was finally admitted – too, have never existed. Information about them was given by Polish and Soviet judicial authorities (see, for example, the incredible confession of R. Hoess: *Commandant à Auschwitz*).

The actual visitor to Auschwitz or Majdanek discovers, instead of "gas chambers," places where any gassing would have ended up in a catastrophe for the gassers and their surroundings. A collective execution by gas, assuming it was practicable, could not be identified with an accidental or suicidal gassing. To gas one single prisoner, with wrists and feet tied, the Americans use a sophisticated gas in a small space where, after its use, the gas is sucked up to be neutralized later. Also, for example, in Auschwitz, how could two thousand (and even three thousand) men be put in a space of 210 square meters (!), then have poured on them pellets of the common and violent insecticide called Zyklon B; and finally, right after the death of the victims, send, without gas masks into a place saturated with cyanide acid, a team with the mission of removing corpses contaminated with cyanide? Little known documents (c) show that: 1) This place that the Germans blew up before they left was only a typical morgue (Leichenkeller), buried (to protect it from heat) and provided with only one small door for both entry and exit; 2) That Zyklon B cannot be evacuated by accelerated ventilation and that its evaporation required at least twenty-one hours. While there are thousands of documents dealing with the Auschwitz crematoria, including invoices up to the Pfennig, concerning the "gas chambers," which, it seems, flanked these crematoria, there is no construction order, no study, no plan, no invoice, no picture. In a hundred trials (Jerusalem, Frankfurt, etc.), nothing could be brought forward.

"I was in Auschwitz. It does not have a "gas chamber"." Witnesses who dare pronounce this phrase are barely listened to. They are hounded by the courts. In 1978, anybody in Germany who testified in favor of T. Christophersen, the author of *The Auschwitz Lie* risked condemnation for "insult to the memory of the dead."

After the war, the International Red Cross (which conducted an inquiry about "the rumor of Auschwitz") (d), the Vatican (which was very well informed about Poland), the Nazis, the collaborators, all stated with many others: "'The "gas chambers"? We knew nothing about them." But how can things that never existed be known?

Nazism is dead, dead and buried, with its Fuehrer. Today, truth remains. Let's dare proclaim it. The nonexistence of "gas chambers" is good news for poor humanity. It is too good to keep hidden any longer (e).

(a) The expression is by Olga Wormser-Migot (*Le Système Concentrationnaire nazi*, thesis, P.U.F., 1968.)

(b) "Keine Vergasung in Dachau", by Dr. Martin Broszat, director of the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich (*Die Zeit*, August 19, 1960, p. 16).

(c) Photographs of the Auschwitz museum (neg. 519 and 6228); Nuremberg documents (NI-9098 and NI-9912).

(d) C.I.C.-R., *Documents sur l'activité du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge en faveur des civils détenus dans les camps de concentration en Allemagne (1939-1945)*, second edition, Geneva, June 1946, series II, no. 1, partial reproduction (I copied the whole confidential text) of document no. 9925: *Visite au commandant du camp d'Auschwitz d'un délégué du C.I.C.-R* (September 1944), pp. 91 and 92. An important sentence of this document has been skillfully amputated of three words by Marc Hillel in *Les Archives de l'espoir*, Fayard 1977, p. 257, and the most important sentence ("the prisoners themselves said nothing about it") has disappeared.

(e) Among some twenty authors who deny the existence of "gas chambers," we mention Paul Rassinier, former deportee (*Le Véritable procès Eichmann*, Les Sept Couleurs, 1962, distributed by M. Bardèche, 5, rue Rataud, Paris 5e) and especially, the American A. R. Butz for his remarkable book on *The Hoax of the 20th Century*, distributed by Historical Review Press, 23 Ellerker Gardens, Richmond, Surrey, TWIO 6AA (G-B).

The same page contains a refutation by a specialist, Mr. Georges Wellers:

Abundance of Proofs

Mr. Faurisson issued a challenge: "I challenge anyone to show me the beginning of a proof of the existence of a gas chamber" in Nazi concentration camps.

It must be known that the gas chambers in the camps where Jews and Gypsies (Auschwitz, Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka) were destroyed by the Germans before the end of the war, with the only exception of Majdanek.

Having said this, the question is not at all "the slightest beginning of a proof," but rather the abundance of proofs which are of three kinds: a) German archives; b) testimonies of former S.S.; c) testimonies of former prisoners.

For example, in the case of Auschwitz, in the correspondence among industrial builders of four gas chambers at Auschwitz II (Birkenau) designed

to replace those small-scale chambers put up in the spring of 1942 ("bunker" in the camp jargon), there is a question of "the installation of a gas chamber (*Bestellung einer Begasungskammern*), etc. So, it is grotesque to pretend that there were no gas chambers in Auschwitz as the "witness" Christophersen does and as it is obviously done by Mr. Faurisson, who went to look for them, in 1944, in Auschwitz I, in Raisko, and in Bielitz, where they did not exist. As for Birkenau (Auschwitz II), where they existed behind fences prohibited to any stranger, he went once to take charge of a hundred prisoners allocated to Raisko, and he saw nothing. This is the basis of his "testimony" of 1973!

The question is to find out whether these chambers were used for humans, or for "lice", as Darquier says, and as Mr. Faurisson seems to think, when he states that Zyklon B is a violent insecticide (his emphasis).

As far as lice are concerned, there is no positive proof. On the contrary, as far as humans are concerned, proofs abound.

Here is, for example, what can be read in the journal of S.S. physician professor Kramer, discovered August 12, 1945, at his house, going back to the period when the latter was at Auschwitz and where he participated in the selection for the gas chambers (*Sonderaktion*): "2-9-1942: This morning at 3 o'clock, I witnessed a *Sonderaktion* for the first time. Compared to this, Dante's inferno looks like a comedy. It isn't for nothing that Auschwitz is called an extermination camp." "10-12-1942: I witnessed a *Sonderaktion* during the night (one thousand six hundred people from Holland). Terrifying scenes in front of the last bunker." "10-18-1942: I was present at the eleventh *Sonderaktion* on the Dutch in cold humid weather. Terrible scenes with three women pleading to be left alive." Was it a matter of lice or humans?

By comparison, the same Kramer notes: "9-1-1942: I witnessed this afternoon the disinfection of a block by Zyklon B so as to eliminate lice." Here there is no question of either "*Sonderaktion*," or Dante's inferno, or terrifying or atrocious scenes, or extermination...

January 29, 1943, in a letter sent by the Auschwitz construction chief to the head of the S.S. central administration in Berlin on the construction progress (*Bauzustand*) of Krematorium II in Birkenau, there is a question of a cremation furnace, of a place for corpses (*Leichenkeller*) and a place for gassing (*Vergasungskeller*). All this for lice?

In July 1945 and in March or April 1946, two important Auschwitz S.S. (Pery Broad, in charge of *Politische Abteilung* and Auschwitz commander Rudolf Hoess) gave detailed descriptions of gas chambers and of their functioning at Birkenau. These were independent descriptions given by the first, to British authorities and by the second, to the International Tribunal and before that to the "Polish and Soviet judicial authorities." Later, during several Auschwitz S.S. trials in German courts, eight S.S. members interrogated as witnesses, admitted having seen, with their own eyes, functioning gas chambers in Birkenau. None among some dozen accused denied their existence, but only his personal participation in their use.

Five Auschwitz escapees in 1943 and in 1944, among them a non-Jewish Polish officer, gave a description of the Birkenau gas chambers and their report was published under the auspices of the Executive Office of War Refugee Board of the President of the United States in November, 1944, during the war, stating that "the office has every reason to believe that these reports offer an exact picture of the horrible facts that are taking place in these camps."

On the other hand, four manuscripts were found during searches conducted on Birkenau grounds, where, before they died, their authors, all members of the Sonderkommandos charged with the clearing of gas chambers and the evacuation of corpses toward the crematoria, had buried them at different times. All these missives from beyond the grave point to gas chambers and their functioning. After the end of the war, fourteen rare survivors, among the Sonderkommandos of Birkenau, gave identical descriptions of these chambers. It remains to add that the threat to end one's life in a gas chamber in Birkenau was part of the discipline arsenal of the camp and of its Kommandos, and was instilled in every prisoner.

All these descriptions are perfectly corroborating as far as the topographic location of these gas chambers in Birkenau, their number, the time when they were put "in service," their functioning with "Zyklon B" gas, and of course, their use to kill people, were concerned.

Nonetheless, Mr. Faurisson, the seasoned specialist on the assassination of millions of human beings in gas chambers, says that their use "would have led to a catastrophe for the gassers and their surroundings" where they were sent "without gas masks" immediately (his emphasis) after the death of the victims... in a place saturated with cyanide acid..." Because, he says, "... Zyklon B could not be evacuated by accelerated ventilation..."

All this is nothing but pretentious gossip of a specialist in the critique of literary texts, who takes himself for an expert in mass murders. Other specialists, infinitely better placed, are of a different opinion. For example, the letter of January 29, 1943 cited above, says: "The firm Topf und Söhne could not deliver the ventilation and exhaust device in time (*die Be- und Entlüftungsanlage*) ordered by the central construction administration, because of the unavailability of cars. After the delivery of the ventilation and exhaust device, its installation will start right away so that it will be operational by February 20, 1943." On the other hand, Pery Broad, Hoess and others say that the evacuation of corpses was done "after the gassing with the help of fans" (Broad); half an hour after [the gassing] (G.W.) the electric fan was turned on and the corpses were hoisted to the furnace with an elevator." (Hoess before the British), etc.

I don't know if Mr. Faurisson is antisemitic or a partisan of Nazism. He says he is not. But, what I say is that if he were, he could do neither more nor better than what he is doing to slander and hurt the Jews by treating them as impostors and to clear Nazism of its most horrible and revolting aspect.

My remarks are not addressed to fanatics, for there is no hope of persuading them of anything. They are addressed to men and women of good faith, ignorant of the facts and who, for this reason, risk lending an ear to the fallacies of the apologists of Nazism.

A long article with the heading, "The Final Solution," by Olga Wormser-Migot, appeared also in *Le Monde* the next day. It outlined the main points of the traditional argument. There was also a reply by the president of Lyon 2 University, Mr. Bernadet, together with testimony by Dr. Chrétien on the Struthof camp:

A Testimony

Dr. Hirt, anatomy professor and director of the Anatomy Institute of Strasbourg from 1941 to 1944, wanted to assemble a collection of Jewish skulls. In order to obtain skeletons in good condition, this scientist contacted Himmler about getting live Jews (the correspondence was found). The S.S. delivered to him, at the Natzweiler concentration camp, fifty-seven men and thirty women, who were put in block 13, separated by barbed wire from the rest of the camp. The French deportees of July, 1943 (numbers 4300 to 4500) saw them (all these French deportees are not yet dead, I was among them). One night in August, 1943, block 13 was emptied. The French deportees were then transferred to it. The camp nurses told us the secret that its occupants were sent to the Struthof gas chamber.

In fact, Mr. Henry Pierre, an Alsatian employee of the Anatomy Institute of Strasbourg, took delivery of eighty-seven corpses (and noted the Auschwitz numbers tattooed on their forearms) in August 1943. The scientist professor Hirt advised him to remain silent: "Pierre, if you don't keep your mouth shut, you'll be sent there too."

Times were tough, and the precious work of going through the flesh to expose the skeleton could not be done in time, and at the approach of the allies, the criminals panicked. Written documents show their concern about erasing the traces of this monstrous crime.

The French troops arrived. The corpses that had not yet been cut up were found. They were examined and photographed by professor Simonin.

Arrested at Bergen-Belsen, Joseph Kramer, commander of Natzweiler camp in 1943, described at length, before commander Jadin of the 10th region of the Military Tribunal, how, in August 1943, he himself, following instructions of eminent professor Hirt, assassinated by gas these eighty-seven wretched people in the specially equipped chamber in Struthof farm.

Other victims perished in this gas chamber: proofs of its use exist (writings, witnesses), among others, for experiments on Yperite...

But liars and falsifiers (instead of the questionable "right to reply," let them take me to court for insult and defamation: I'm waiting for them), have to be reminded that what the Nazis did on an (artisanal) small scale on French territory (Natzweiler-Struthof is in Alsace) they did on an industrial scale in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, etc.

The concentration camp survivors, the relatives of millions of victims who moaned in gas chambers, are slowly disappearing. Professor Hirt's disciples should not be bedecked with French academic titles.

Dr. H. Chrétien, prisoner number 4468, widower of Rachel Zacharewics, gassed at Auschwitz-Birkenau with the September 2, 1943 convoy.

R. Faurisson's reply came on January 16:

In my eighteen years of research, I read more than once the arguments sparked off by my brief article on "The Auschwitz Rumor." I do not question their authors' sincerity, but I say that these arguments are full of errors, pointed out to long ago by Rassinier, Scheidl, and Butz.

For example, in the letter of January 29, 1943 that was quoted (a letter that does not even have the usual mention of "secret"), *Vergasung* does not mean "gassing," but "carburation." *Vergasungskeller* designates a room underground where the gas mixture that feeds the cremation furnace is made. These furnaces, with their ventilation devices, came from the firm Topf & Son of Erfurt (No. 4473).

Begasung means the gassing of clothes in autoclaves. If the gas used was Zyklon-B – preparation of "B[lausaeure]", which means prussic or cyanide acid – it was called the "blue gas chambers." Nothing to do with the alleged "gas chambers - slaughterhouses"!

The *Diary* of the physician Johann Paul Kremer must be quoted correctly. Then it will be seen that when he talks about the horrors of Auschwitz, he is referring to the horrors of the typhus epidemic of September-October 1942. On October 3, he wrote, "In Auschwitz, entire streets are devastated by typhus." He himself contracted what he calls the "Auschwitz disease." Germans died from it. The sorting of the sick and the healthy was the "selection" or one of the forms of "special action" of the physician. This sorting was done either inside the buildings or outside. Kremer never wrote that Auschwitz was a *Vernichtungslager*, which means, according to terminology invented by the allies after the war, "extermination camp" (meaning a camp equipped with a "gas chamber"). In reality, he wrote: "It is not for nothing that Auschwitz is a camp of devastation (*das Lager der Vernichtung*)." In the etymological sense of the word, typhus devastates those it strikes. Another serious quotation error: at the date of September 2, 1942, Kremer's manuscript contains: "This morning at 3 o'clock, I witnessed outside, for the first time, a special action." Historians and judges remove traditionally the word "outside" (draussen) to make Kremer say that this action took place in a "gas chamber." Finally, the atrocious scenes in front of the "last bunker"

(meaning, the courtyard of bunker no. 11) are executions of those condemned to death, the physician had to witness these executions. Among those condemned to death were three women who arrived in the convoy from Holland. They were shot (a).

The "Kremas" buildings of Birkenau were perfectly visible (b) to all. Many maps and pictures prove it, and they also prove the radical material impossibility for these "Kremas" to have had "gas chambers."

If, concerning Auschwitz, I am given confessions, memoirs or manuscripts – miraculously – found (all documents that I already know), I want to be shown how their inaccurate precision differs from the inaccurate precision of all the documents that made the Allied Military Tribunals say that there were "gas chambers" where, in the end, they recognized that there were none: for example, in all of the old Reich!

I cited industrial documents NI -9098 and 9912. They must be read before confronting me with the "testimonies" of Pery Broad and R. Hoess, and why not, the "confessions," after the war, of J. P. Kremer. These documents establish that Zyklon B is not among the exhaustible gases, its manufacturers had to indicate that it is "difficult to ventilate, since it adheres to surfaces." One cannot enter a place treated with Z. B., even using a mask with "J" filter – the finest of all filters – until twenty hours had passed in order to conduct chemical tests on the presence of the gas (c). Mattresses and blankets had to be beaten and left in fresh air for an hour or two. But Hoess wrote (d): "Half an hour after the gas was hurled, the door was opened and the ventilation device turned on. Corpses started to be extracted immediately." Immediately (*sofort*)! In addition, the team in charge of manipulating two thousand cyanide contaminated corpses entered the place (still full of gas) and pulled out the corpses, while "eating and smoking." This means, if I understand it, without even a gas mask. It is impossible. All testimonies, no matter how vague or conflicting with the rest (e), agree at least on this point: The team opened the place either immediately or "a little" after the death of the victims. I say that this point alone is the touchstone of false witness.

In Alsace, the "gas chamber" of Struthof is interesting to visit. There, one can read the confession of Josef Kramer. It's a "hole" (*sic*) through which Kramer poured "a certain amount of cyanide salt," then "a certain amount of water": then a gas came out that killed in about one minute. The "hole" that we see today is crudely made with the strike of a chisel that cracked four squares of pottery. Kramer used a "faucet funnel." I don't see how he could prevent the gas from flowing back through this crude hole, or how he could accept that this gas, coming out of the chimney, would spread to the windows of his villa. Then go to the next room and there, explain to me this affair of corpses kept for professor Hirt in "formalin tanks" which are, in fact, tanks of sauerkraut and potatoes with simple wood flaps that are not airtight.

The most trivial weapon suspected to have killed or wounded, is the object of a judicial appraisal. We find out with surprise that these miraculous crime weapons that are the "gas chambers" have not been the object of an official

appraisal (judicial, scientific or archaeological) whose report we can examine (f).

Had the Germans unfortunately won the war, I suppose that their concentration camps would have been presented to us as reeducation camps. Contesting this presentation of the facts would undoubtedly have led me to be accused of objectively playing the game of "Judeomarxism". Neither objectively nor subjectively, I am neither Judeomarxist nor neonazi. I admire the French who struggled courageously against Nazism. They defended a good cause. Today, if I state that the "gas chambers" did not exist, it is because the difficult duty to speak the truth forces me to do it.

(a) *Auschwitz vu par les S.S.*, ed. du musée d'Oswiecim, 1974, p. 238, no. 85.

(b) A football field "was next to the Birkenau crematoria" (Thadeus Borowski, from H. Langbein, *Hommes et femmes à Auschwitz*, Fayard, 1975, p. 129).

(c) French regulations concerning the use of cyanide acid are as draconian as the German: see decree 50-1290 of October 18, 1950, Ministry of Public Health.

(d) *Kommandant in Auschwitz*, Deutsche Vertagsanstalt, Stuttgart, 1958, pp. 126 and 166.

(e) *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, University Press, Amsterdam, t. XIII (1975), pp. 134 and 135.

(f) General credibility doesn't require much: show us a door with a deadbolt (continental window catch) and here we are before ... "a gas chamber"!

[We publish Mr. Faurisson's text in accordance with the law of July 29, 1881. Any reply implicating him would entitle him to a new right to reply.]

Nonetheless, we do not consider closed the file opened by the declarations of Darquier de Pellepoix.]

G. Wellers replied without mentioning Faurisson.

Finally, in response to an advertisement of *Le Droit de Vivre* (The Right to Live), "Professor Faurisson is summoned by L.I.C.A. to appear before the courts¹." He sent the following text, only excerpts of which were published, maybe in order not to allocate to him more space than the incriminated ad (March 23, 1979):

For a True Debate on the "Gas Chambers"

Mr. Wellers, who calls me a "novelist," has evaded my arguments, and in particular, those having to do with the material impossibility of gassing. Had Zyklon B been used in this alleged 210 square meter "gas chamber" (in reality: a simple morgue), it would have adhered to the ceiling, the floor, and the four walls. It would have penetrated the victims' bodies and their mucous membranes (in fact, it penetrated the mattresses and the blankets that had to be disinfected and beaten outdoors in order to rid them of the gas). The team in charge of removing 2000 corpses out of the "gas chamber" would have been itself asphyxiated. It would have had to rush, with gas masks, into a bath of cyanide acid vapors to handle bodies saturated with this mortal gas. I am told that Hoess did not care about the health of his team. Fine! But how would these men have done their job? I don't see who would have evacuated this "gas chamber" to make room for new batches. As for the "ventilation and exhaust device," I repeat, it is for furnaces, as vouched for by document No. 4473. Moreover, Zyklon B is "difficult to ventilate" even in a vast space, and furthermore, it is explosive: cyanide acid is not used near a furnace!

When Kremer and his judges talk about three women shot at Auschwitz, they are saying nothing that is unlikely. But when the same Kremer tells his judges that he witnessed a gassing, from a distance, sitting in his car, I no longer believe him. In fact, he specifies that the reopening of the "gas chamber" took place "a moment" after the death of the victims (a). There is here a flagrant material impossibility that I will not comment on. And then, I notice that, in order to try to explain to us a "confession," that of Kremer, they have recourse to another "confession," and, it happens to be that of Hoess. The disturbing point is that these two confessions deny more than they confirm each other. Look closely at the description of the victims, the staff, the executioners and the mode of execution.

My request for an assessment of these "crime weapons" that would have been the "gas chambers" is found to be amazing. I am told that a gas chamber can be improvised in a minute in an apartment. This is a mistake. A bedroom cannot become a gas chamber. A coincidental or suicidal asphyxiation has no connection with a gas chamber. When one wants to kill a crowd of victims with any gas and especially with cyanide acid, without risking to be himself killed, or to provoke an explosion, etc., an extraordinarily complicated machinery would have to be put in place. It becomes more and more difficult to believe in the existence of these human slaughterhouses that these "gas chambers" would have been. Most recently, the aerial photos of Auschwitz and of Birkenau (documents of the Americans Dino A. Brugioni and Robert G. Poirier in 19 pages and 14 photographs) could very well have put to rest the

¹ Cf. *Le Monde*, March 29, 1979.

extermination legend. There already existed several "ground" photos of the "Kremas" of Auschwitz and of Birkenau, without counting the maps. The nature of the buildings and their location seems to exclude the possibility of any criminal use. The aerial photos confirm this impression. In 1946, the highest of what was called "the extermination period," the Americans admitted their surprise at not seeing the smoke and the flames that were said to have "gushed out of the chimneys of crematoria and been seen from a distance of several miles". They make this remark about the photo of August 25, 1944 – the day following the arrival of five convoys "to be exterminated" (b) – but it seems to also apply to other photos: those of April 4, June 26, July 26 and September 13, 1944. In 1976, the revisionist historian Arthur R. Butz had a premonition (c). He said that the Allies must certainly have in their archives aerial photos of the Auschwitz complex, since the Germans were conducting advanced industrial research there. He quickly added that, if the existence of these photos is not disclosed, it is probably because they do not furnish any proof in support of the accusations against the Germans.

Some French historians have just issued a condemnation of those who allow themselves to doubt the existence of homicidal "gas chambers". I have been prevented from lecturing at my university for four months. L.I.C.A. has summoned me to appear before the courts for "falsification of history" and has asked the authorities to "suspend my lectures (...) until justice is served (d)". But, as I can see, nobody dares confront, on an equal footing, the debate that I propose. Yet, my proposition is simple. Since any accusation must be proved, I ask that the accusation against Germany about the "gas chamber" topic be submitted to a routine historical analysis that would provide one single precise proof. For example, among all the "gas chambers" that pilgrims and tourists are directed to visit, let the accusers show me one, which, in their view, really served to kill people at any time.

In the meantime, I thank the increasing number of those who support me, especially among the youth. Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit wrote: "Let's fight to destroy these gas chambers that are shown to tourists in the camps and where we now know that they never existed (e)". He is right. Let's put an end to war propaganda. Real horrors are enough. It's useless to add to them.

(a) *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, University Press of Amsterdam, t. XIII (1975), p. 20.

(b) *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 8 (1964), pp. 60-61.

(c) *The Hoax of the 20th Century*, p. 150.

(d) *Le Droit de Vivre*, March 1979, p. 9.

(e) *Libération*, March 5, 1979, p. 4.

The open struggle went underground after Faurisson's January 19th warning to *Le Monde* that "any reply implicating him would, in turn, give him the right to reply." The attacks and controversies would henceforth target an anonymous, unnamable, but

known enemy. Time will tell whether the process was fair. The same goes for the rest of the press.¹

This was confirmed by his conflict with a Lyon newspaper that he reports as follows (July 1979):

November 17, then again November 18, 1978, Robert Faurisson, associate professor at Lyon 2 University is taken to task by the newspaper *Le Progrès de Lyon*. As "right to reply," he sends a letter to the newspaper. The newspaper refuses to publish his letter. R. Faurisson files a suit. The verdict is given on June 27, 1979 by the police court of Lyon. The (only) judge, Mme. Baluze-Frchet, dismissed the suit. In its June 30, 1979 issue, the paper summarized the affair as follows: 'The court dismissed Mr. Faurisson's suit on the basis that his letter to *Progrès* "contained affirmations in conflict with good customs and the moral order." This summary is exact. The professor is accused of undermining the good customs, meaning "the set of moral rules that society does not permit him to infringe on." He undermines the moral order, which is not to be confused with "the public order." One has to go back to the time of the Second Empire and the legislation enacted around 1850 in France to find mention of this "moral order." The proceedings against Baudelaire and Flaubert were taken more or less in the name of this order. At the beginning of the Third Republic, those who were still nostalgic for the monarchy gave the name "moral order" to the conservative politics defined by the duke de Broglie on May 26, 1873 that were supposed to prepare for the restoration of the monarchy. Supported by the Church, it led to anti republican measures (destitution of republican civil servants, etc.) This was the politics of Marshall de Mac-Mahon. In brief, "moral order" for a long time, has come to only designate a totally reactionary and retrograde politics. One no longer takes pride in being the defender of the "order" and still less of the "moral order." Mme. Baluze-Frchet blames Professor Faurisson for the following two sentences:

1) " ... Fourteen years of reflection and four years of meticulous inquiry ... led me to declare on January 29, 1978 to the participants in the colloquium of historians that was held in Lyon that the massacres in alleged "gas chambers" are a historical lie."

2) " ... The question is to know whether it is true or not that the Hitlerian "gas chambers" really existed."

Mme. judge declares: "These statements are in conflict with good customs." She adds, "... It is acknowledged that millions of people, particularly Jews, died in Nazi concentration camps, victims of different 'killing machines,' among which were the gas chambers." Mme. judge goes on to say: "The gas chambers existed and ... the simple fact of wanting to insert in a daily

¹ See, for example, the advertisement in *Le Progrès de Lyon* (November 17, 1978) titled "Un nom?" We obviously know the name of the person implicated by the group of deputies gathered at the National Assembly. So far, we have not revealed his identity to our readers because we refuse to offer, under the cover of information, a free ad to the latecomers of racism and antisemitism. I find the "under cover" particularly delightful.

newspaper an article whose author poses the question of their existence infringes on good customs."

Mme. judge goes much further. She reproaches the professor for having damaged "the honor of members of the cabinet, and mainly its head." This head is Mr. Raymond Barre, whose electoral fiefdom is situated in Lyon.

What did Robert Faurisson do to damage the honor of such worthy persons?

The answer is given by Mme. judge. R. Faurisson, whose colleagues felt free to lecture him, reminded them of two things:

a) By their own admission, they pressured the local press and, in particular, *Progrès de Lyon*, to give the silence treatment to R. Faurisson's declarations at the January 1979 colloquium in Lyon.

b) They all knew very well that the History Committee of the Second World War (of Mssrs. Henri Michel and Claude Lévy), directly linked to the Prime Minister, head of the government, has been hiding for the past five years the **real** number of the **real** deportees of France.

So R. Faurisson wrote to the pack of his detractors and those who lecture him: "I consider as cowards those who pretend to ignore this pure and simple withholding of documents." To the newspaper that joined its voice to those of the detractors (and which for 35 years entertained its readers with a mythical history of the last war), he addresses the following criticism: "I disapprove of your silence and your collusion with all sorts of official and unofficial powers for the past 35 years."

Faurisson also noted that the committee was financed by the taxpayers and that if this committee kept hidden the results of its inquiry for 20 years, it was, by Mr. Henri Michel's admission, in order to "avoid possible conflicts with certain associations of deportees" (*Bulletin* – confidential – No. 209) and because the publication of these results "would risk provoking discourteous reflections about the deportees" (*Bulletin* No. 212, April 1974). At no time did R. Faurisson talk about "the members of the government" (in plural). He only wrote: "This official committee is directly linked to the Prime Minister." This is written in big print on this committee's publications.

Finally, Mme. judge stigmatizes, in a general fashion, what she calls in the letter "the passages in conflict with the moral order" – the passages that were cited above and commented on.

Chapter 4

The Squalor of the Teaching Environment

We have seen the courtyard. Let us now have a look at the inner sanctuary of our good university, the Mother of the Arts. It would be interesting to stop for a moment in order to see how somebody with deviant opinions is treated in the heart of this bastion of university franchises in our advanced (?) ultra-liberal society.

The article appeared in *Le Matin* of November 16. The next day, Mr. Bernadet, president of the University Lyons 2, where Faurisson teaches, issues an order to "temporarily" suspend the latter's teaching and ban him from the campus as of the 20th. In Faurisson's letter to *Le Monde* (12/16/78), we have seen the incidents that took place that day at the university where Faurisson had gone to give his lecture, totally unaware of the ban. President Bernadet justified his decision in the following manner:

Considering on the one hand the emotion provoked in and outside of the university by the henceforth public character of the theses you express, emotion which may cause serious troubles if you came to the university to give your lectures, and considering on the other hand, that Mme. Chancellor of the University stipulated the opening of an investigation, and that it would seem desirable to take conservative measures in awaiting the results of this investigation, I decided...

To the Lyons faculty, this was not a matter of sanctions. Yet, it did not preclude the outcome of getting rid of a troublemaker and creating a sort of sanitary isolation. His colleagues were unaware of his research that he kept to himself and that led him to his convictions. Some of them talked, much later, of a "climate of fear" that prevented them from expressing their sympathy for the man who, all of a sudden, became the black sheep.

After the suspension period, Faurisson had to resume his literature course (about Proust) on January 8, 1979. The university administration had the graffiti: "Faurisson assassinates the dead" covered over. When he went to his classroom, he found it packed with about fifty protesters, which the press generally referred to as "Jews." In fact, it seems that, under the leadership of Dr. Aron (MD), coordinator of the Jewish organizations in Lyons, many of these protesters were members of l'Union des étudiants juifs de France (UEJF) (Union of Jewish Students of France). They distributed a leaflet: "Stop the lie and the hate," which is a curious title in view of the fact that their text was devoid of neither hate nor lies:

For how long do we still have to protest against violence, racism, and antisemitism, and every time come up against the same indifference, the indifference of someone who has not been touched in his flesh, in his being, or rather, who has not yet been touched in his individuality.

Silence is an accomplice wherever it comes from. But more serious is the silence of those who know and whose job is to teach. Worst of all is the silence of the intellectuals.

Thus in Lyons, a quiet professor of literature denies the gas chambers. Unbelievable but true, like those swastikas that proliferate everywhere, making racist violence a trivial daily reality.

But what? Let's not be oversensitive: Doesn't the Lyons professor Mr. Faurisson tell us, supported by pseudo-scientific arguments, that "never did Hitler order the death of one single man because of his race"? Can Mr. Faurisson explain so easily the fate of millions of victims, among them millions of deported or disappeared Jews? Unless "these millions of victims were also a Zionist invention" (*Libération*, September 18, 1978).

Mr. Faurisson denies being an antisemite or a partisan of Nazism, but his defamatory statements and his collaboration with publishers who, in a long tradition of antisemitism, edit, among others, *Le Mensonge d'Auschwitz* and *Le Protocole des Sages de Sion*.

It's not a matter of arguing with Mr. Faurisson or with anybody of his ilk, but we must draw the lesson of the recent antisemitic attacks, since Faurisson is not only a person whose madness can be shrugged off, he is a dangerous man.

It is appropriate that men and women of good faith not be victims of an apologist of Nazism who, abusing the platform offered to him by his profession, proliferates his fallacious affirmations.

That is why we demand his definitive exclusion from Lyons 2 University and his removal from the faculty.

Presidents Bernadet of the University and Claude Martin of the UER, having declared their inability to insure his physical safety, Mr. Faurisson took several precautions to leave the premises without a hitch. Disappointed, the protesters said that they only wanted to have "a discussion" with Faurisson, which could not have been expected from their flyer.

The following week, on January 15, Faurisson came directly to the office of the university president. The classroom was again filled with protesters from the UEJF and also from the Student's Union, the Communist League and the association of former deportees, who were joined by a MP, Hamel (UDF). They loudly declared that they wanted to "ask questions" and distributed the following flyer:

Last Monday, we were one hundred. Today, we come back. Why?

Because it is intolerable that R. Faurisson, this dangerous individual, be allowed to propagate, without impunity, a racist and pernicious ideology by declaring that "never did Hitler order the death of one single man because of his race," "the alleged massacres in gas chambers and the alleged genocide are one and the same lie";

Because, by accumulating pseudo-scientific affirmations, he tries to erase the historical truth;

Because he is an insult to the memory of those who disappeared and an injury to the living witnesses of these atrocities;

Because the presence of R. Faurisson at Lyons 2 University is an offense to the faculty;

Because he is an expression of the fresh upsurge of racism and antisemitism in France.

That is why, today, we demand that sanctions on the scale of his defamatory statement be taken.

We ask you to abandon the indifference which makes you an accomplice and to join us.

Union of Jewish Students of France, with the support of: AGEL-UNEF, ANACR, Cercles Barricades, Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organizations of Lyons, Comité d'union de la Résistance, FNDIRP, Impression, LCR, MAS.

Mr. Claude Martin and others advise Faurisson to go "answer questions, give explanations" but recognize very soon that they cannot assure "normal teaching conditions" or his safety. Not anxious to meet alone his muscular questioners, Faurisson leaves. He recalls with bitterness the beginning of his lynching on November 20, when one of those "brutes electrified with hate," according to his own words, shouted at him: "Now that we know your face, you've had it." According to a witness, some of the protesters wanted a discussion but were incapable of controlling themselves.

The following week, he received confidential information that some Jewish militants were coming from Paris and that there are risks for his life. He nonetheless went to give his lecture, but as he started, he received a warning that the protesters were coming. He left. They didn't recognize him until they passed him by. Then there was a chase through the hallways, then the streets until he got away by hiding in a construction site. In the evening, over the telephone, Claude Martin blamed him for trying to appear as a victim and to lie, in saying that the incidents started on campus.

The positions taken by Claude Martin, Faurisson's immediate superior, can be leisurely judged by a "document of the week" published by *Le Nouvel Observateur*¹,

¹ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 750, March 26, 1979.

text that "was not meant for publication" but that was nonetheless "addressed for information to LICA as well as to several Parisian dailies." In it, C. Martin explains at length the conditions surrounding R. Faurisson's appointment at Lyons in 1973 to the detriment of another candidate "whose work was recognized to have been largely superior." We learn from Faurisson's reply that the other unlucky candidate was M. Claude Martin himself¹. But every cloud has a silver lining, because during this affair, Mr. Martin would get himself elected first vice-president of Lyons-2. It is understandable that people in a hurry don't like to be sidetracked. Also, C. Martin tries to put as much distance as possible between him and his close collaborator. He tries, without compromising himself, to give credit to the idea that Faurisson was a long-time antisemite. He relates all the affair in great detail so as to show that it was impossible for responsible faculty members, like himself, to act differently, which means roughly to whisk off the troublemaker in order to avoid being criticized by the anti-Faurisson forces. We can skip over a little meanness, which is common currency among "dear colleagues" in order to pick up the main feature of a mentality which reveals itself so bluntly: a total intellectual deafness. It permits holding forth indefinitely and inventing arguments in order to refute them. Mr. Martin is steeped in rhetoric aimed at protecting his own rear.

His reply to Faurisson² is a complete distortion of reality, for he said, in *cauda venenum*³:

Suspended the 20th of November for a month, he later refrained from coming to the university, communicating through his attorney that he did not want to "run the risk of putting his physical integrity, even his life, in danger." Despite the guarantees that were given to him formally and officially from the university to insure (as it had done on January 22) his eventually threatened security. Mr. Faurisson did not show up for two and a half months. The regulations prohibit payment to another faculty for teaching the course that Mr. Faurisson continues to be paid for, the students are worried...

A new attempt to resume classes on May 7 ended in the same manner as the others. From Faurisson's point of view, the prestige of the university was tarnished by this affair. Nobody, or almost nobody, came to his defense in the name of freedom of thought. For the defenders of this freedom are trapped: if they put heavy emphasis on the principle, they risk being labeled as "partisans" of Faurisson, but if they allow him to be given a rough ride, they would look like cowards. They are left with a narrow course to maneuver: affirm that Faurisson has the right to think whatever he wants, but at the same time say that what he thinks is absurd, and suggest *mezzo voce* that he had better think quietly so as to avoid the strong reactions. There is obviously no attempt at any time to find out whether there is any grain of truth in what he says. There is a lot of talk, but no dialogue. How difficult conformism can be at times...

The rest of these events and their assessment pertain to a letter that Faurisson addressed to the Minister of Higher Education (a lady, at the time) on May 21, 1979:

¹ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 752, April 9, 1979, p. 31.

² *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *ibid.* pp 31-32.

³ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 756, May 7, 1979. "Le dernier mot de Robert Faurisson." C. Martin let it be known the following week that he no longer wished to respond.

The suspension of my rights followed my completely illegal suspension. This was warranted by an inability to insure the normal resumption of my classes. On January 29, 1979, the boss sent me a registered letter accusing me of cowardice (he said that I did not dare confront my "opponents") and letting me know that a university would guarantee my course "until the end of this year."

All these events were taking place at the time when a new president was to succeed our socialist boss as the head of Lyons 2 University. One of the candidates was my UER director with whom it was publicly known that I had excellent relations. But ambition may lead people astray. The new candidate to the presidency let it be publicly known that, in my affair, he holds the views of the outgoing president. He even went further. He published a long article in a weekly of socialist tendencies, then a text in reply to my reply, where I was presented as a mediocre man, as a teacher who had previously received not really a "warning" but – nuance! – "verbal reprimands" for alleged antisemitic statements. This pure fabrication was accompanied by a more perfidious and serious insinuation that I was a professor who had deserted his post and who was paid to do nothing.

I protested vigorously against this outrage. They proposed to let me give my last two lectures of the year on the 7th and 14th of May. I accepted immediately without regard for the risks I might once more encounter.

Unfortunately, due to a fact that I would like to have an explanation for, the protesters were informed of my return. Once more, on May 7th, they invaded the premises and moved around as though they were at home. As usual, there wasn't even an attempt to control their entry into my classroom, which I could not reach that day. On May 14th, the protesters came back. This time, however, for the last meeting of the year, they decided to exercise some control by checking student identity cards. I was able to give my lecture, but to only one student, for only one student succeeded in crossing the protesters' barricade. This new failure marked the end of an academic year where I was able to give only three lectures: the 6th and 13th of November and the 14th of May. As for other graduate courses, it is only secretly that I was able to teach them in the back room of a cafe, where a small group of courageous students assembled.

It is not you, Madame, that has to worry about defending me.

My attorney tried to submit the matter to your court when it became clear that the authorities at Lyons 2 were incapable of finding a solution. I believe that, at that time, the police informed you that I was in danger of death. You remained totally insensitive to several appeals for help. You let us know that we have to go through the normal hierarchical channels, which means through the superintendent. But you knew that the superintendent had already told us that because of the principle of autonomy of universities, he could not intervene in this affair.

All this is in the order of things. I see here neither a plot nor a conspiracy, but a hard as steel conformism. As long as I seemed to toe the line, I was, it

seemed, a "brilliant professor," a "very original researcher," an "exceptional personality." From the day I struck the "gas chambers" taboo, my professional situation became intolerable. Today, I see myself forced to respectfully request my transfer to teaching by correspondence.

Just before the start of the academic year, he was transferred to teaching by correspondence.

The only reassuring note is a petition signed by Professor Culioli, among others, which protests against the measures that befell Faurisson, asks for a public debate, while at the same time dissociating itself completely from his opinions¹. To ask for freedom for oneself is a normal thing. But to ask for freedom for others seems to be an extraordinary fact: that is, however, the minimum requirement of a democracy.

1. – The right, the left.

To judge by its press, from its confidential bulletins to the well known weekly *Minute*, the far right is obviously delighted. It doesn't try to look at Faurisson's arguments, since in its view, Nazism is slandered, probably by some Judeo-something conspiracy. It is worth noting that if it can use Faurisson's conclusions in the framework of its ideology, it did not use the man. He did not lend himself to anything.

More interesting are the reactions of the "world of politics," in other words, the parties that scour the parliament platform. A retrospective overview brings some surprises. By comparison with predictable rallies of associations of former deportees, Jewish organizations and anti-racist movements, the left has remained almost silent. The moderation of the PCF (French Communist Party), in particular² is remarkable. It has been a long time since it abandoned the myth of "the party of the 75,000 who were shot" and it no longer tries to make believe that the Resistance was itself and almost only itself. But it doesn't usually miss a chance, in every kind of situation, to promote its Rol-Tanguy (a Paris Liberation fights leader) and its harsh sounding brass-bearing peasants turned workers. This was apparent when Giscard canceled the May 8 celebrations. The P.S. (Socialist Party), which is very influential at Lyons 2, did not protest, either. All these people have obviously other fish to fry.

On the right, the Gaullist side, there is no movement either, except that Joel Le Tac says that "he saw the functioning gas chamber of Struthof."³ The Giscard followers are in the lead. In the name of the group of former resistance fighters and deportees MPs of the National Assembly, Pierre Sudreau (UDF) demands that an inquiry be

¹ *Le Monde*, December 2, 1978. "At a time when manifestations of racism are a daily occurrence, when the President of the Republic lays a wreath on ex-marshal Pétain's grave, the affirmations of M. Faurisson and others should lead to a public debate. In any case, the question is too serious for us to accept a hasty suspension which contributes to avoiding the debate and making a scapegoat out of M. Faurisson. We still have the weakness to believe, despite all, that the university must have a critical function. It is because of this, and because in general, such methods serve only to undermine democracy and to comfort racism, that we are against such arbitrary administrative measures, when they are directed against Faurisson."

² See *L'Humanité*, November 17 and 21, 1978. It seems that in East Europe, only the Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy*, devoted an article to the Faurisson affair, at the beginning of January, 1979.

³ *France-Soir*, November 25, 1978. He seems to say that a gas chamber held five people.

conducted about "the scandalous statements which are a true apology for war crimes."¹ Madame Saunier-Séité, the Minister of Education, replies that the "government shares the indignation expressed by Mr. Sudreau."² In a good position too, we find UDF deputy of Paris Jean Pierre-Bloch, who writes an article in *Le Matin de Paris*³. Mr. Hamel, UDF MP for the Lyons area, joins the strong arms who want to "question" Faurisson at the university and, declaring that "freedom itself is altered by indulgence towards serious falsifications of history," anxiously asks Madame Saunier-Seite what she is going to do. Alas! She says she is "upset" by her "helplessness."⁴ The first prize goes certainly to Dr. Gilbert Barbier, UDF MP for the Jura region, for his written question to the Prime Minister, asking, "concerning the internal troubles at Lyons 2 University" what are "the measures that he deems desirable in order to introduce into the positive French law a system of professional discharge." Strong and belated protest by *L'Humanité*, the Communist daily,⁵ prudent silence by Mr. Barre, another UDF MP luminary for Lyons.

At first sight, it may seem strange, and even paradoxical, that a political party, which is by tradition and heritage the least related to the Resistance and struggle against fascism, accedes to the highest power. In reality, these are practically the first people since the war who do not base their right to govern us on the services they allegedly rendered to the homeland during the dark hours of German occupation. We may remember that during his presidential campaign, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing recruited his bodyguards from among groups usually considered as fascists. During a televised debate, we heard Mr. Alain Krivine, a Trotskyite leader, criticize Mr. Poniatowski, political godfather of President Giscard, for having been an OAS informer, without provoking any reply other than a benevolent smile. (OAS was a clandestine terrorist group which opposed giving back Algeria to Algerians in 1960-62). I am not suggesting that the politics of the UDF was fascist – that would be stupid – but rather that these people never appeared to be obsessed with antisemitism. They are, however, the most violent in their attacks against the opinions held by Faurisson.

The only reason I see for this breach of political logic is their situation of men in power. Our political regime is based, as a religion, on the victory in 1945 of the forces of Good over those of Evil. No matter what we do (colonial wars, exploitation of poor countries, treatment of foreigners), we belong to the genealogy of the Good and our duty, our loyalty is to strike at the Evil as soon as it insidiously lifts its ugly head. This was told by J.R.R. Tolkien about a more gothic world. The holders of power have the implicit but indisputable responsibility to maintain this original purity. The tool for perpetuating this situation is indefinitely taken up in the tale of the origins, the

¹ *Le Monde*, November 18, 1978. When M. Sudreau says: "true apology," he betrays the embarrassment he feels in sharing views that nothing can justify, even Faurisson's arguments in *Le Matin*.

² She adds, according to *France-Soir* (November 19-20, 1978), "I invite university presidents to act within the framework of powers and responsibilities conferred on them by the law and in accordance with the tradition of humanism and academic freedom, to put an end to manifestations of totalitarianism and racism." And thus, Faurisson becomes an anticommunist alibi. How wonderful humanism is sometimes.

³ "La bonne conscience," November 22, 1978.

⁴ *Le Journal-Quotidien Rhone-Alpes*, May 24, 1979. Let's imagine for a second that she had the power to do something.

⁵ See the editorial of *L'Humanité*, May 18, 1979. Why didn't Andrieu discover this question of December 22 until three weeks prior to the European elections of June 10?

founding myths, whose repetition alone renews its effectiveness. Like the priests of the Pharaohs and of the Inca, like the storytellers of Sudanese emirs, a caste of clerks must watch over the orthodoxy of the recitation. How else would we believe that a small, quiet professor could, with a few sentences, arouse the ire of our modern vestal virgins in a vest?

2. – Farther left.

Normally, every manifestation of antisemitism gives rise to unanimous protests by the left. But there have been false alarms: some individuals and some groups realized that antisemitism was not at issue, that the problem was somewhere else and that some irrepressible questions can be easily shrugged off.

The newspaper *Libération* would serve for some time as the platform for this new kind of theater. It was already mentioned that the affair started in *Liberation* by a simple take-off from *Le Matin*, then by some articles in the same vein, on the fringes of the affair. Its editor's commentary strikes a different chord. Serge July sees Faurisson as a rather poor professor, pursuing a hobby, but he poses the question of the import of banning the expression of racism. There is here a rather new willingness to see things as they are¹:

From now on there would be a Faurisson affair named after the Lyons professor who shared his research about the "lie" of Nazi concentration camps with the academic hierarchy and with those of his students who showed an interest in the matter. This affair restates in the same terms the questions already raised by the interview with Darquier de Pellepoix published in *L'Express*: Did it or did it not have to be published, or does this professor have the right to express himself about what is obviously for him an obsession?

We have to be wary of unanimous opinions. Enough is enough, and if we believe the clamor, there are practically no antisemites in France, except for Darquier and this professor. France is a pure virgin and evil has many faces against which a national consensus has finally been attained. The national facade made out of communist, presidential, socialist, Gaullist and intellectual stones is immaculate. An excellent operation where each and everyone receives an absolution at a rather low cost: "Against racism? I already showed that at the time of the Darquier affair." And what if the unanimous condemnation of antisemitism is used to trivialize other manifestations of racism? Like a gigantic outlet, it is an operation through which our society hides from itself its cancers, its horrors and its perversions.

Of course, this can't be without intellectual terrorism. Robert Faurisson was portrayed by the press, and in particular by *Liberation*, as a dangerous antisemite. If we are to judge him by his letter (*Libération* of Tuesday 21), this professor invokes the image of hundreds or thousands in our higher education system who promote similar obsessions. Who, in the course of his studies, has not come across one of them, engaging in a daily pathetic show for students who are not fooled and who laugh at it all? Journalists know well this

¹ "La liberté d'expression des racistes," November 24, 1978.

multitude of paranoiacs who besiege their offices, voluminous files under their arms, and who are capable of spending hours recounting the plots of which they are the victims. And if Faurisson has no more importance than this? The asylum detractors who rightfully call for an open psychotherapy environment know well this type of situation. Yet, they are not the harbingers of racism or fascism. Did the University of Lyons do anything different by keeping Faurisson in his job?

In return, the manner in which "a whole affair" was made out of his statements proves, if still need be, a general will to find a practically caricatural antisemitism – which is obviously not very dangerous – that serves to rid a society of its fears.

The hierarchy of horror.

In the final analysis, is it worse to maintain that "Hitler did not kill one single man because of his race," as the professor from Lyons does – which is simply not true – or to maintain as Henri Krasucki, the number 2 man at the C.G.T. did during Mr. Kadar's visit to France, saying that the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was a counter-revolution, which seems to indicate that the Soviet repression was justified? Falsehood and falsehood: Six million dead against 25,000: Does the arithmetic impose a hierarchy of horror? Is the first affirmation unbearable but not the second? In the name of what?

Is it worse to sing the praises of the Cambodian regime, as some leftists do – which is just as unbearable as to extol a massacre – or to write about the Hai Hong refugees like this journalist of *L'Humanité* (November 16, 1978): "The wounded Vietnam, still bleeding from its wounds of war, cannot afford the luxury of a bourgeoisie created by foreign funds?" This recent editorial of *l'Aurore*, which likened René Bousquet and Jean Leguay's responsibilities in the deportation of Jews living in France under Nazi occupation, to "silliness," is he worse than such or such an editorial by Francois Brigneau on Arab immigration, or another weekly article on women by Jean Cau in *Paris-Match*?

The attacks and falsehoods against such and such a social, national, cultural or sexual category are our daily lot. Thousands of racisms, thousands of hatreds, some are more unjust than others, but all equally painful to their targets.

Modern hypocrites come from all parties and irrespective of their ideology, they almost all agree to ban these exhalations of hate and the right to self expression. According to their logic, a good part of French society should be tirelessly taken to court, many newspapers should be banned, starting with *Minute*, *L'Humanité*, *Le Quotidien du peuple*, *l'Aurore*, etc. Obviously unthinkable, and, of course, it would be intolerable. And endless. The basis of their argument is the refusal to look reality in the face, to hear these billions of daily words that echo a society deeply corrupt with all kinds of racism.

Do we definitely have to have recourse to the law, entrusting it with the management of all day to day social relations, of opinions and of thoughts?

The "Rule of Law" state is not far away. It's frightening when banning someone from his profession and when Germany are concerned, but not so when it comes to racism of any kind.

To prohibit the expression of racism is to argue in favor of repression, secrecy, retreat and conspiracy. And eventually, for more assassination attempts and more murders. The spiral of the Rule of Law state is endless, and it is well known that by becoming more widespread, prohibitions feed on violence and lead to more prohibitions. I don't see why violence would not become a substitute for speech, while this is accepted in the case of delinquents in large conglomerations, for example. In the current state of society, if we have a choice, we might as well opt for antisemitism and all racisms to be expressed rather than practiced.

When all is said and done, it looks like the supporters of prohibitions are afraid as a result of tolerance to discover to what extent our society is riddled with all categories of racism. In addition to their haughtiness, they would lose the illusion of a sanitized society, devoid of conflicts, risks, and truth, and with helpless citizens emasculated of all possibilities of rebellion.

Stop preventing us from seeing France as it is. This is the most reliable way to let racism proliferate underground, in the shadow of official uniformities of the moment. The price will be that generally paid by the sorcerer's apprentices of amnesia: general surprise and disappointment.

In many respects, this article is rather insulting and could have been felt as such by Professor Faurisson. Yet, it is interesting to the extent that, contrary to the usual commentaries, it examines the consequences of the freedom of expression, including the right to madness, and that it doesn't try to betray its principles at the moment when their application becomes difficult. The only hypothesis that the author remains incapable of confronting is precisely that there is something beyond madness in Faurisson's writings. As will be seen later, *Libération* left it there.

Coming back to Faurisson, we find a letter from two of his former students¹ that treats the press attacks with derision and ends as follows:

As for us, former students having been subjected to the teaching of the very vile Mr. Faurisson, we are rather against all imperialisms, all fascisms, all racisms, and for free debate, and the right to research and to doubt.

Moreover, the university authorities had to admit, on several occasions, that no student has ever complained about the professor² and that these poor naive students did not even seem to have ever suspected that their professor was so "harmful" (term used by Alice Saunier-Séité at R.T.L. on November 18, 1978). Even many (surely unaware) expressed their support and great respect for him.

¹ "Antisemite, did you say antisemite?" Dec. 9-10. See another letter by a student, March 13, 1979.

² For example, *Libération*, November 18-19, 1978. "Étonnant! Tenant!" observes Bernard Schalscha, which should have set him thinking. But he couldn't.

A new dimension of the affair appeared in a collective letter, published under the headline, "Connaissez-vous Rassinier?" (Do you know Rassinier?), in reply to J.-P. Pierre-Bloch (see note 4, p. 97), a letter triggered apparently by the renewed interest given to this question by the Darquier de Pellepoix and Faurisson affairs¹:

Connaissez-vous Rassinier?

The declarations of a particularly obnoxious idiot have relaunched the campaign about war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War – that is, Nazi crimes – since the Nazis and their accomplices are the only side that committed such crimes (!) But this Darquier de Pellepoix is so obnoxious and his "thinking" is so destitute that the necessary debate has been set from the outset at such a new pathetic level that there is no question to participate in it at this time.

Yet the article of J.-P. Pierre Bloch, UDF deputy of Paris (*Le Matin*, November 22, 1978) from which we quote the sentence, "a lie always leaves traces behind," who makes no distinction between Darquier de Pellepoix et Rassinier, author of several books and articles on the German concentration camps, forces us to respond.

In his personal conception of the world, Mr. J.-P. Pierre-Bloch has a perfect right to make no such distinction – which is revealing of his own conception of the world. On the contrary, he has no right to cover his assimilation with a lie, possibly in good faith, but we demand a correction.

In fact, Mr. J.-P. Pierre-Bloch wrote in *Le Matin*:

"This 'thesis' taken up again by Darquier de Pellepoix is that of the falsifier Rassinier whose terrible lies were clearly condemned by the justice of our country at the request of LICA. It is that of Faurisson, professor at Lyons 2 University..."

As far as R. Faurisson is concerned, we know nothing of his theses other than through hearsay and we are waiting for the row to subside, to get acquainted with them and discuss them, if they are worth it. As to Darquier de Pellepoix, if there was any possibility of becoming virulent again, it would seem to us highly desirable that all means be used to prevent him from being harmful.

As to Rassinier, the very equivocal formulation of J.-P. Pierre-Bloch gives the impression that he had been sentenced by the French courts for his books.

In fact, LICA has never "gotten that these abominable lies be clearly condemned by courts of our country" for the simple reason that it was Paul Rassinier who lodged a complaint for defamation against the director of *Droit de Vivre*, a publication of LICA, who referred to him as an "International Nazi agent." A very objective report on this trial can be found in *Le Monde* of October 7, 1964, where the plaintiff's witnesses "sang the praises of Mr.

¹ *Libération*, January 22, 1979.

Rassinier, the pacifist, anarcho-socialist and also 'obsessed with the truth,' according to Mr. Raymond Geouffre de la Pradelle." No proof was ever given of any collusion with old or neo-Nazis.

Yet Paul Rassinier's complaint was dismissed and the defendant, Bernard Lecache, released.

J.-P. Pierre-Bloch's statement is therefore completely false.

What credibility does he have in qualifying Paul Rassinier as a falsifier without any proof, without any quotation of falsification that Rassinier is guilty of?

Our careful and deeply moving reading of Paul Rassinier's work led us to detect no falsification whatsoever and nothing to justify the refusal to discuss his views.

According to the plaintiff's attorney plea in this trial: "We may question Mr. Rassinier's views, oppose them and even fight them, but we reject the language [of Mr. Lecache]" that J.-P. Pierre-Bloch used in the columns of *Le Matin* and also in a recent television program.

These assertions are all the more serious that they seem to come close to a real self-mystification campaign, since P. Viansson-Ponte states the same falsehood in *Le Monde* of 3-4 October, 1978, p. 9: "LICA had obtained in 1964 a judgment against one of its slanderers, P. Rassinier." This was totally denied by articles in *Le Monde* at that time.

Prior to undertaking an in depth debate, we simply recall that Rassinier was a militant revolutionary communist, an organizer of *Travailleur de Belfort* (Belfort Worker) before the war, broke away from Stalinism very early and that he was in contact with *La Révolution Proletarienne* of Monatte, Rosmer and Louzon as well as with the Democratic Communist Circles at that time, where he organized the Independent Communist Federation of the East. He founded, with Commandant Lierre and Georges Bidault, the first efficient network of the Resistance: The Libération-Nord movement, and worked particularly in helping persecuted Jews. He founded the clandestine newspaper, *La IV République*, echoed by Radio London and Radio Algeria. A Resistance deportee (19 months) at Buchenwald and Dora, 95% invalid as a result of his deportation, he was the holder of a Resistance fighter card, the purple medal of the French Resistance, and the rosette of the Resistance, all decorations he did not wear, as he said in a note in one of his books.

He was also a socialist, General Secretary of the Socialist Federation of Belfort region for fifteen years. He was a socialist deputy of the Second Constituent Assembly. From the fifties on, he leaned towards the pacifist and anarchist currents. After 1968, René Lefeuvre, editor of *Cahiers Spartacus*, says that he had met him several years earlier at the annual banquet of *La Révolution Proletarienne*. He describes him as revolted by the attacks against him and aware of the fact that his views had been used by extreme right

movements. And yet, he did not lose the slightest determination. We were unable to meet him at the time his book came to our attention. We learned of his death but we can't specify the exact date.

We do not subscribe to Rassinier's theses.

We maintain that they deserve to be known and discussed. The comparison between Paul Rassinier and a Vichy Commissar of Jewish Questions is intolerable.

Jacob Assous, Joseph Benhamou, Hervé Denès, Pierre Guillaume, Christine Martineau, Jean-Luc Redlinski, joined by Jean Barrot, Alain Caillié and Jean-Pierre Carasso.

All this did not prevent the in-house hack from reporting the very next day and in very defamatory terms, Faurisson's attempt to resume his classes¹. On February 17, *Libération* gave an ironic account of the manifest of "Thirty-four laborers of historical research": false debate, hackneyed, shameful ranting. The scribbler does not understand why all this high society has become restless.

Others do understand and they don't come from the leftist swamp. Member of the Resistance from the very beginning, long-standing Gaullist, tireless polyglot and distinguished specialist of Islamic cultures, Vincent Monteil, who has always been perfectly frank, be it in the army from which he was expelled, or the Gaullist regime that he lambasted at the time of the Ben Barka affair, Vincent Monteil pricks up his ears. He writes a letter to *Témoignage Chrétien* (January 29, 1979) where he points to a "trap" in the accusations against Faurisson:

I did not know Faurisson. But it seemed to me that his work on the deportation deserves the greatest attention. It is not by calling him antisemite and by comparing him to Mr. Ambre [a former Pétain supporter who sits on the municipal council of Lyons] that "justice and truth" will be served "at any cost." All that Faurisson asks – and that I ask for him – is that he be allowed to express himself, to explain.

The truth must be said. If there had been fewer Jews killed by the Nazis (certainly not six million!), if they had been exterminated by all possible means (like other deportees), and if Faurisson is in fact right about the "myth of the gas chambers," to me this will change absolutely nothing in the crimes of the Nazis and their accomplices. But it is not by lying, by rigging the facts, the photos, the numbers that "the return" of very real abominations can be avoided.

But this clarion call is quite isolated. So it was a painful surprise to some people when the Gaby Cohn-Bendit bomb exploded. His letter, titled "Question de principe" (a matter of principle) was refused by *Le Monde*, but it was read during the trial of the suit brought by Faurisson against *Le Matin de Paris*. According to witnesses, it silenced a gang that came to the court to hoot Faurisson²:

¹ "Kulturkampf," January 10, 1979.

² March 5, 1979.

Question de principe

by Jean-Gabriel COHN-BENDIT

There was a time, and still is, when every antisemite challenged a testimony or historical research by a Jew and qualified as sold to the Jews any research leaning in that direction (remember the Dreyfus affair). But today, we are beginning to witness the inverse phenomenon: every Jew, every left or extreme left individual challenges any testimony, any historical research done by an antisemite (which is already serious) and, worse, qualifies as antisemitic any research about the concentration camps that calls into question what has become the quasi official truth. This is unacceptable.

As a Jew of the extreme left and a libertarian, I want to affirm some principles that I value the more so today that all others I believed in, for twenty years, have collapsed one after the other (it is a long road that led me from the young communist in 1956 to libertarian ideas, passing through Trotskyism and the extreme left, my dose of skepticism increasing at each stage). Of all these principles, there is one that can be summarized in one sentence: the freedom of speech, writing, assembly and association must be total and without the least restriction. This means that the publication and distribution of the texts that are most revolting to me must not be impeded. No book should be banned, were it *Mein Kampf* (or tomorrow any text of Stalin or Mao), no meeting should be banned, were it of the Euroright, not even the distribution of a single leaflet should be banned, were it openly fascist or racist. This does not mean at all that we should remain silent and inactive. If the fascists had the right to distribute their leaflets on campuses, we could fight, even physically, if necessary, so that the Assas [Law] faculty does not remain their monopoly. The only effective way to fight the enemies of freedom is to give them the freedom that we demand for ourselves and to fight if they want to take it away. The famous "no freedom for the enemies of freedom" is in fact the harbinger of all totalitarian systems and not, as it was believed, the most effective defense against them.

No myth at all. No lie at all.

Let those who deny the existence of concentration camps and of gas chambers say it! It's up to us to prevent this lie from becoming credible. Weren't many years needed for the left to find the courage to fight the lies of the Communist Party about the existence of camps in the U.S.S.R.! In 1948, who dared to do it other than some isolated people of the extreme left, some liberals, and the right? If we want to be credible to the future generations, and all the more so that time goes by, we have to demolish the least myth, the least lie, the least error. Let's fight to demolish these gas chambers that are shown to tourists in camps where we now know they did not exist, at the risk that we are no longer believed about those we are sure of. The Nazis had model camps to show to the good souls of the Red Cross. Let's not do the opposite.

I don't want to get into a discussion of the gas chambers here: Was there any or not?

If there had been, in exactly which camp? Have they been the systematic or accessory instrument of the massacre? For to me, if this fact is important, I admit that I don't understand the attitude that consists in thinking that if this piece is partially or totally removed from the concentration system, all would collapse.

Would Nazism cease to be a horror? Would it become justifiable? Are the gas chambers the horror, and not the millions of dead? Without gas, there is no more horror, simply a serious distortion of legality, as our in-house Stalinists would say.

The same problem arises when we discuss the number of Jewish victims of Nazism. The difficulty of fixing a number, whether or not this shocks our sensibility, is clear to every historian and makes every number questionable. Here, too, I don't understand that we have to absolutely reach a certain threshold below which everything could become acceptable, and hence could play into the hands of fascism.

An absurd logic.

Having lived during this period and having seen part of one's family disappear, one may find it repugnant to discuss the mode of extermination and the number of victims. But a historian cannot dismiss this problem. I find this conclusion of a certain number of historians monstrous (*Le Monde*, February 21, 1979): "We should not ask how technically such a mass murder was possible. It was technically possible because it took place. This is the required point of departure of any historical inquiry into this subject. It is up to us to remind people of this truth: there isn't, there can't be any debate on the existence of gas chambers."

Despite the respect I have for the historians who signed this article, some of whom have even played a non-negligible role in my current positions, I wonder: "But what is this absurd logic?" It's exactly because this mass murder took place, which neither Rassinier nor Faurisson question, that we exactly may ask how, including technically, this could have happened. Logically, only those who deny the genocide do not have to ask how.

It would be too long, yet fundamental, to study all that had been justified, for the past thirty years, in the name of the struggle against Nazism, starting with late Stalinism: for example, the millions of dead Jews are constantly used as counter-argument to any criticism of Israeli politics.

As for me, I prefer, in their memory, to relentlessly defend the right to liberty, to prevent all attempts at witch-hunts, persecution of groups, minorities or individuals who think or act differently from me. What I refuse to do, including to neo-Nazis, I am not ready to agree to have done to men like Rassinier and Faurisson, who, I know, have nothing to do with the former, and

the suit filed against the latter reminds me more of the Inquisition than of a struggle against a return to the worst.

A letter arrives two days later from Pierre Guillaume, a former member of the group Socialisme ou Barbarie (Socialism or Barbarism), who became later, for a long time, the manager of a famous bookstore, La Vieille Taupe¹:

What do the French people know about the Sétif massacre?

by Pierre Guillaume

The televised film *Holocaust* is a crime against historical truth. Despite the good intentions of its zealots, it is a crime against the memory of the victims, all victims of the atrocities of all wars.

Millions of Jews were victims of abominable persecutions due to the simple fact that they were Jews. Hundreds of thousands of American nationals were persecuted and put in special camps due to the simple fact that they were of Japanese origin. Millions of Germans died because they were Germans, and millions of Russians, Poles, Ukrainians died because they were Russians, Poles, Ukrainians.

War always consists in killing people because they are on the other side, and invents the best reasons in the world to justify itself. This is the role of war propaganda, which is always to a large extent self-intoxication.

The Jews were in a particularly terrible situation due to the simple fact that their transnational community came into conflict with the internationalism towards which Germany was driven, and because their culture led them to resist totalitarian logic, even though most of them were totally integrated in German society.

The massive deportation of an annoying minority is not an exceptional fact in history. That was the case of Vietnamese of Chinese origin, even before the current conflict. Some manage by persuading themselves that they are members of the reigning bourgeois ideology!

Do the French know that during his visit in 1943, Eichmann was shocked by the living conditions of Jews in the Gurs camp (Pyrenées-Atlantique)? Do they know that this camp, created under the Daladier government, to accommodate Spanish republicans, had known conditions similar to those of German camps? Internees died of cold and hunger, according to the same inexorable and "involuntary" mechanism.

It is not historically established that Hitler ordered "the execution of a single Jew because of the simple fact that he was a Jew."

¹ March 7, 1979. In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king (N.d.E.)

Similarly, when he ordered the bombing of Dresden, useless from a military perspective, Winston Churchill did not order "the execution of a single German because of the simple fact that he was German."

What do the French people know about the Sétif (Algeria) massacres of May 8, 1945 and the repression in Madagascar? Neither more nor less than the Germans knew about Auschwitz. Are they collectively guilty? Neither less, nor more.

The morbid manipulation of bad conscience leads to nothing other than new crusades.

The Nazi war propaganda could manipulate so many atrocities committed by the enemies of Germany, in order to shore up the morale of the troops, the policemen and the camp guards. Similarly, allied propaganda could manipulate the atrocities committed by the Germans. Neither side deprived itself of propaganda. Exaggeration in the horrific description of the enemy is the thrust of wars which have become "democratic."

The Nazi-less anti-Nazism that pervades the world has become the outlet of a confused society that cannot bring itself to confront its real problems.

We cannot fight against the inexorable mechanisms of real oppression with clichéd images. Porno-horrific scenes do not promote the understanding of real mechanisms... except by the fact that the Holocaust presents in itself and is revealed as a crude attempt of an ideological power grab by the sacred union of licensed spiritual advisers.

This is what you have to think!

Look where this will lead you if you resist our lessons!

The manipulations of atrocities drive the sensitive spectator to stupor or generate a front of indifference, which is the best ally of any totalitarianism.

The reaction, "All this is from the past" or "Hitler? I don't know" is a healthy reaction.

The only durable result of the Holocaust screening is that of any war propaganda: To convince all those who participate in very concrete mechanisms of oppression that what they participate in is negligible by comparison with what the mythical enemy – the Nazis – has already done. The words and the intentions of the Holocaust zealots make no difference.

What do the French people know about the frightening repression of a demonstration by "French of North African origin" against the curfew, on October 17, 1961, in Paris and its suburbs?

What do the French people know about the living conditions of hundreds of thousands of Algerians of all ages, gathered in camps, and what would have

become of them had France been involved in an intensive war putting the existence of the nation at risk?

This was not the case, and the French bourgeoisie and its state managed to make peace without even compromising the standard of living of the French people. However, in this relatively benign context, M. Alex Moscovitch declared to the Paris Municipal Council: "Five million French people may be affected overnight in their life and property by circumstances they neither wanted nor initiated." To compensate for this threat, M. Moscovitch proposed a radical solution: "All enemy agents must be sent away from metropolitan France. We have been requesting the means to do that for two years. What we need is very simple and very clear: the authorization and enough boats. The problem of sinking these boats would not come, alas, under the Municipal Council of Paris." (a)

After seeing Holocaust, any French soldier who went to war in Algeria, even if he participated in "corvées de bois," [wood gathering, code for summary execution] will be persuaded that he remains radically different from the Nazis. He is different only from the image given of the Nazis, as the Nazis themselves are different from this image. In any case, he will tell himself: "After all, there was no gas chamber."

Yet, in the Oran region, in Algeria, several hundred Algerians were locked up in cellars and asphyxiated with carbon dioxide. Those who locked them up and crammed them into a tight space, didn't they know it? Didn't anything alert them during the agony of these poor people?

Nobody tried to find out. The perfunctory investigation was inconclusive. But had they been Germans, and particularly Nazis, nobody would have had the slightest doubt that they were guilty.

(a) *Bulletin municipal officiel de Paris*. Débats des assemblées, conseil municipal de Paris, séances du 27 Octobre, p. 637. It concerns a well thought out statement M. Moscovitch made on January 15, 1963 in a defamation suit filed against him: "I really regretted that the enemies of France had not been exterminated ... and I still regret it!" (*Le Monde*, January 17, 1963) Quoted by Pierre Vidal-Naquet in his remarkable and courageous book: *La Torture dans la République*, Petite Collection Maspero.

The inevitable reply came from a chap who undoubtedly believed that there was an error and that the article in left-wing *Libération* (March 8, 1979) was really addressed to right-wing *Minute*¹:

When Antisemitism Rises to the Surface

by Julien BRUNN

¹ *Libération*, March 8, 1979.

Alas! *Libération* has just won the first prize. The article it published yesterday about the Holocaust stinks, it perspires antisemitism. Its author, P. Guillaume, has the right to be antisemitic, consciously or not. But it is our right, and it should have been our duty, not to publish it. The more so that the author is himself the director of a publishing house, La Vieille Taupe, that publishes *Les Cahiers Spartacus*, so that he can publish his "opinions" himself. So by not publishing him, the freedom of expression would not be affected. This famous freedom of expression cannot in fact serve as a screen to hide the fact that this is not the first time that such an incident happens at *Libération*. From time to time, whiffs of antisemites emerge to the surface by clumsily hiding behind the veil of nonconformism.

It is not only a question of ideas: it's a question of tone. There has already been the Flatto Sharon affair: the objective was not to display antisemitic theories, but the tone was antisemitic. [A Jewish swindler who ran away to Israel for safety.] Then the VXZ 375 incident, which reviewed the new philosophers from only the point of view of whether they were homosexuals or Jews. Today, too, in the issue in front of you, Guy Hocquengheim comments on the debate in such a naughty and impish way that it really hurts. Whatever we think of the debate, there are times when antisemitism is suggested more than it is said, and this is the case with yesterday's article: "What do the French people know about the Sétif massacres?" This is really too much. Just as I have nothing to do with antisemites and nothing to discuss with them, I don't see what *Liberation*, my newspaper, may have to do or discuss with them. Minute might as well welcome them and we won't interfere.

There are two things in the above mentioned article in yesterday's *Libération* titled, "What do the French people know about the Sétif massacres?" First, there is the well known argument which consists in saying that Jews were not alone, and consequently, they get on our nerves by always claiming the first place in the "hit parade of horrors," as Guy Hocquengheim vilely says. We can discuss the argument and it has already been discussed during the debate of "dossiers de l'écran" [on TV]. The generalization of horror becomes suspect when its manifest object is to sink the fish, meaning the Jew. By putting everybody on the same level, by lamenting the multiple horrors of the world, by writing like Pierre Guillaume that "the deportation of an annoying minority is not an exceptional fact in history," by recalling that the Algerians of Sétif, the Germans of Dresden, and the Spanish republicans, the aim is not to talk about all this, the aim is that the Jews should shut up. For to such writers, whatever the Jews say is immediately branded as "propaganda," according to the already classical association: Jew/propaganda: "The morbid manipulation of conscience leads only to new crusades." And the trick is done: it is "manipulation." All this is still an opinion. But a closer reading of the text reveals that, in addition, there is a historical theory: "It has not been historically established that Hitler gave an order to execute one single Jew because of the fact that he was a Jew." Not only there were others that were exterminated, but also Jews were not exterminated "because they were Jews." This is the miracle of the leaking bucket argument: they will soon add that the Jews were not exterminated at all. I'll stop here. There is no point in arguing with P. Guillaume: this is not really a "free opinion." It is an assertion, an

affirmation, which is, moreover, false. We can think whatever we want about the extermination of Jews or Gypsies. But we cannot try to make believe, like Faurisson, that there had been no extermination, or, like P. Guillaume, that it may not have taken place (he talks only about deportation), and if it had, it was not according to the "Jewish" or "Gypsy" criteria. There was no reason for Liberation to publish this false free opinion. On the contrary, there was every reason, as I explained above, not to publish it. Freedom of expression is not the freedom to say anything, especially in our newspaper.

The censor's apprentice got put in his place by Jean-Pierre Carasso, which seems to have provisionally closed the public debate, since subsequently, nobody ventured to talk about it¹:

When Antisemitism Transpires Clear Conscience Aspires

by Jean Pierre CARASSO

It wasn't long ago that *Libération* had published – a matter of principle – Gaby Cohn-Bendit letter. Well, here it is, splash! It was not a flop, and it had to be done in Liberation itself! Our comrade Pierre Guillaume – whose service need not be flaunted before the newcomer Julien Brunn – utters the least discordant sound in the great concert of Holocaustic laments. The professional martyr does not miss it. The big words are dropped: he is an antisemite. Devious, the accuser takes the usual precautions: it's maybe an unconscious antisemite. Then, shit, this terrorism, this blackmail – and I weigh my words – must stop.

My name is Carasso, and if my father had not succeeded in convincing a complacent civil service employee in 1941 of the fact that Levi was the Muslim first name of his father!!!, my name would have been Levi-Carasso. Is this sufficient for the doctors of the law? May I speak?

I am a convinced supporter of the eradication of Judaism (hey! linguists, translate this into German, please) as well as of the eradication of Catholicism, of Christianity, of Islam, etc., including animism. When I read a headline in *Le Monde* (March 8), "New executions of homosexuals in Iran," I say Adolf must be laughing under the rubble of his bunker and my antireligious conviction is reinforced. When I hear – for I am not so vicious as to watch these farcical shows – that Mme. Veil said that the camps in the U.S.S.R. are not similar because the deportees were there for expressing a non-officially sanctioned opinion and the next day I realize that the antisemite Hersant ([the main press tycoon in France] notorious, this one, but it must be said, granted amnesty!!!) gives the minister a glowing report in the newspaper that he owns illegally, I say to myself, if only for decency's sake, there must be limits to the unbridled confusion which takes the place of ideology and of crutches in support of a moribund capitalism (yes, yes, wishful thinking).

¹ *Libération*, March 12, 1979.

I also agree with a famous antisemite buried in England (a) that "the genuine Gemeinwesen of man is man." ["community", "be-togetherness"] I believe that whatever stands in the way of the realization of this Gemeinwesen is the work of my enemies and when these enemies are Jews, it is precisely because I am not and I cannot be antisemite, that I am not afraid to point them out as enemies.

When Baron Guy de Rothschild writes that he feels as a stranger in Israel, the famous Nazi hunter couple, Beate and Serge Klarsfeld (after all, it's more exciting than hunting baby seals), will they declare him antisemite? Almost, in any case, for the baron retracted fast! Facing the uproar that he naively provoked.

Well! As for me, having the ambition to feel as a stranger nowhere, I would say that I feel as a stranger everywhere, dispossessed of my being and my humanity by the abject system that reigns over the entire planet, and that I demand, do you hear me Mr. Brunn, I demand for my friends and myself, as for everybody else, the right to proclaim that feeling without being bombarded with idiotic insults by those same people who profess to fight for a better world, as they say.

(a) Those who believe that the *Cahiers Spartacus* are published by La Vieille Taupe – poor René Lefevre! – would not have recognized Karl Marx. This letter was read and approved by ten people and yet was considered to be "not quite violent enough, not quite insulting enough."

At the same time, a discussion continues at *Libération*, even though it did not appear in its columns. At the same time that Brunn handed in his article to the newspaper, Pierre Guillaume submitted the letter reproduced below. It revealed some unexpected aspects of the affair, especially the fact that the text published on March 7th, "What do the French people know about the Sétif massacres?" was actually co-authored by Faurisson. This would have made possible the hypothesis that Faurisson was not crazy – a plunge *Libération* could not obviously take at that moment. So this letter was never published:

I thank you for publishing my article on the "opinion page." I regret a little the fact that you did not keep the title I had given it: Madness deconstructed or Atrocities: How To. This article is a story. And it is not finished. It exposes in a very cursory manner the classical theses of the revolutionary movement on war, war propaganda and Nazism. But it was not calmly written by a director of conscience who prescribes what one should think. It was written in a concrete and particularly tragic situation in order to find a practical solution for this situation.

I had met Professor Faurisson at the end of November. I found him a desperate man on the verge of sinking into a paranoid, though understandable, madness. I also found a man in complete possession of his subject (200 kg. of working documents, the result of going through several tons of texts) and whose work went far beyond, but in the same direction as, the theses of La Vieille Taupe

(briefly, since 1970, La Vieille Taupe shares essentially the theses of Paul Rassinier).

Consequently, it was imperative to run the risk of a new, almost irreversible, defeat by proclaiming:

1. The right to hypothesis and error in scientific work;
2. The right to be mad, so long as this madness does not concretely harm anybody else, and this, even if Faurisson had been crazy, antisemite or Nazi.

Fortunately, he is neither.

Yet, the less radical (in my opinion) faction of La Vieille Taupe was reluctant to cast its lot in a lost cause. The point was not to defend Faurisson but rather to defend our principles, in practice.

My energies are no longer enough for the job, especially my emotional powers (I was on the verge of a break down), it became crucial for the development of the situation to get the support and hence the agreement of everybody on the same text, without any concession or ambivalence.

So this text had to include the famous phrase which seemed to make Faurisson indefensible: "Hitler never ordered the execution of a single Jew because of the single fact that he was a Jew," showing that it was true, even if Hitler could not care less about what happened to the Jews.

In practice, this proved that I was ready to follow Faurisson to the end, and it proved that I would show him that we had reached the point where he could no longer be disinterested in the human significance of these scientific truths.

Incidentally, it was about proving to everybody that Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who led the anti-Faurisson crusade of historians in *Le Monde* of February 21, 1979, was not a crook, but that our long term objectives were the same as his.

This text was read and approved by La Vieille Taupe. It was subsequently read and corrected by Faurisson (the original version lacked sufficiently supporting figures) and approved without any reservation.

Feeling supported, Faurisson began to eat normally and his paranoid symptoms disappeared completely.

The text that you published is therefore a common text of Faurisson and La Vieille Taupe. It is the practical affirmation of what would allow a practical revolutionary theory: "Never reject what is true in the propositions of an adversary in the name of what is false in these same propositions." "Every man is right, in a certain way." (Reich, Introduction to *La Fonction de l'orgasme*, cited from memory.)

It is by going deeper and beyond partial truths that we can reach universality, and not by denying what is annoying or by making (political) compromises. I hope that I have not irritated you by my rigorous requirements.

P.S. La Vieille Taupe was a book shop, of which I was the founder. It was closed in 1972.

Historically, La Vieille Taupe belongs to nobody and is not a formal group. It is the movement that transforms existing conditions; this group includes all those who participate individually, under their own personal responsibility, in the development of a situation. The idea of a "faction" more or less "radical" is nothing but a joke, but not lacking in meaning.

Libération refused to publish this letter, which showed that the newspaper had published Faurisson without knowing it, a situation that created some turmoil such as the discreet departure of Pierre Goldmann, who claimed that he could no longer collaborate, even sporadically, with an organ where "antisemites" write. Then Pierre Guillaume and Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit submitted the text that follows to the "classified ads" service of Liberation, which refused it right away. *Le Monde* accepted to run it as an advertisement (1500 F), then changed its mind under pressure from the editorial board:

The support of Professor Faurisson by Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit and La Vieille Taupe has traumatized many people and created a situation with potentially incalculable developments. LICA accuses Professor Faurisson of being a falsifier. If anyone proves that Professor Faurisson stated one single falsehood, Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit and La Vieille Taupe undertake to immediately break off with Professor Faurisson and to dedicate as much effort to let this be known as the ones they exerted in his support

This offer of March, 1979, is, as far as we know, still valid.

It's finally somewhere else that this clarification enterprise continues, carried out by some elements of what may be called the ultra-left. A leaflet entitled, "Are the gas chambers essential for our happiness?" appeared in March in Lyons. After summarizing the beginning of the affair, it goes on like this:

Are the gas chambers essential for our happiness?

Professor Faurisson is a man alone.

No group, no organization, supports or has supported him. Among those who voiced their opinion in his favor, through various means such as letters to the press or testimonies, are antifascists or convinced antiracists (such as Jacob Assous, José Benhamou, J.-P. Carasso, J.-P. Chambon, J.-G. Cohn-Bendit, H. Denès, P. Guillaume, C. Martineau, V. Monteil, J.-L. Redlinski, etc.)

Isn't it time to think?

All those who took the trouble to inquire discovered that Professor Faurisson is virulently anti-totalitarian. They also know that he did nothing but to pursue

the work of rumor deconstruction started by Paul Rassinier (an irreproachable resistant) on the Buchenwald and Dora camps, where he was himself deported for 19 months (arrested in October 1943, tortured by the Gestapo for 11 days, returned 95% invalid) and by J. Ginsburg, on the Majdanek camp, where he was himself a racial deportee with his family.

All those who took the trouble to inquire know that Faurisson is genuine, and that he is convinced, like Rassinier and Ginsberg, that with or without gas chambers, the Hitlerian concentration camps reached the paroxysm of horror, a different horror, possibly a more basic, more radical horror than its sensational representation.

Then, if "the womb that gave birth to the foul beast is still fertile," does anybody really believe that the fight against the "return of the worst" consists in waging a risk-free fight against one man or desperately trying to unearth a fantasized Nazism, rather than attacking the womb itself, which has been destroyed nowhere on the planet and which continues to generate horrors and atrocities, obviously different from the fantasized or real Nazism, which will never be reborn in the same form.

In fact ... one atrocity may serve to hide another. Did the spectacular show of absolute horror serve to mask all other horrors?

There can be no official truth in history.

The principle of banning somebody from practicing his profession is worse than the evil alleged to be destroyed.

Persons Without Quality

Another leaflet was circulating: "Ultimate suggestion from the house of the dead following a long debate among Galileo, P. Rassinier, Jesus-Christ, K. Marx and C. von Clausewitz":

I, Robert Faurisson, son of the late Robert Faurisson, fifty years old, appear in person before this court and in front of you, most eminent and revered judges, assigned by Saint LICA and the Very Saint Associations of deportees and victims, the Great Inquisitors of all Humanity against Nazi perversity, the eyes on the Gerstein Report that I touch with my own hands.

I swear that I always believed, that I believe now and, with the Grace of Antifascism, I will continue to believe in the future that the apostolic and resistant Saint LICA holds true, preaches and teaches.

But because – after the Saint Television had notified me of the order to no longer believe in the false opinion that the existence of gas chambers to exterminate Jews is a simple conjecture based on rumors and contradictory confessions, some of which have been identified as false by Saint LICA herself; and not to maintain, defend, or teach, either orally or in writing this false doctrine; after having been notified that the said doctrine is contrary to

official Saint Thesis; because I have written and published several texts in which I exposed the condemned doctrine by presenting very convincing arguments in its defense, without a definitive solution; for this, I have been vehemently suspected of heresy, which means maintaining and believing that the gas chambers conceived expressly as industrial human slaughter-houses, have never existed.

Thus, wanting to erase from the mind of the Inquisitors and of every faithful Antifascist, this vehement suspicion, justly conceived against me, I recant from the bottom of my heart, and with sincere Antifascist faith, the errors, heresies, and in general any other error or heresy or enterprise contrary to the Saint Resistance; I swear that in the future, I will say nothing orally or in writing that will lead to similar suspicions about me, and if I will happen to meet a heretic or presumed as such, I will denounce him to this Tribunal, to Saint LICA, or to the Police of the resistance in my area.

I also swear to do and to strictly observe the penance imposed on me by this Tribunal, and if I contravene any of my promises or sermons, I will submit to all penalties and punishments imposed and promulgated by the Sacred Resistance and the other general and particular Constitutions against similar delinquents.

With the help of Saint Television and the original Gerstein document that I touch with my hands.

I, the undersigned Robert Faurisson, I recanted, swore, promised, and committed myself as above; and to vouch in good faith for the truth, I signed the present copy of my recantation with my own hand and I recited it word for word in Paris at the Palace of Justice, the....

The Bordiguists [Radical Communists] of the *Communist Program* reissue a 1960 article, "Auschwitz ou le grand alibi," with this prefatory note¹:

The article we are reproducing exposes the real roots of the extermination of the Jews, roots that have to be searched not in the domain of "ideas" but in the functioning of the capitalist economy and the social antagonisms it generates. And it also shows that if the German state was the butcher of the Jews, all bourgeois states share in the responsibility for their deaths, over which they now shed crocodile tears.

The foot soldiers of *La Guerre sociale* print a poster-tract with extensive excerpts from an article² preceded by a presentation for distribution in Lyons, in June 1979. Delving into the question, it is entitled:

Who is the Jew?

¹ *Programme Communiste* no. 11, 19 pp. reprinted as a brochure in 1979.

² *De l'exploitation dans les camps à l'exploitation des camps* ("From exploitation in the camps to exploitation of the camps"), *La Guerre Sociale*, no. 3, June 1979, pp. 9-31.

A few decades ago, Europe had fallen prey to a wave of antisemitism. Prior to the Nazis deportation of a part of the Jewish population, the Jews were threatened in their property and jobs. Jewish professors were prevented from teaching. If today everybody deplors these persecutions, at the time, there weren't so many people opposed to them.

Times seem to have changed. Any resurgence of antisemitism in Europe will quickly clash with the left, the academic circles, and the state. Thus, it is sufficient to hear that Professor Robert Faurisson of Lyons 2 University may share ideas similar to those of Darquier de Pellepoix, former Vichy Commissar for Jewish Affairs, for the schedule of his classes to be published in the press, for folks of good will to prevent him from giving his lectures on French literature, and for the university administration to suspend his teaching in order to preserve academic peace. Doubtless, he will end up being pushed out of the university this year or next year. Faurisson is not only attacked in his professional life, but also in his personal life, through his family, as a "dirty Nazi." Some find these methods deplorable, but after all, every opinion can't be defended with complete impunity. It is well known where this could lead. Fascism and racism passed once. They will not pass anymore. The Maginot lines will hold.

And if, as it is in their nature, the Maginot lines were turned around?

And if Faurisson had become the Jew?

Darquier de Pellepoix, who is spending the rest of his days quietly in Spain, organized the deportation of Jews. Robert Faurisson would be an emulator of Darquier de Pellepoix, but after all, had Faurisson recommended the deportation of anybody? No, Faurisson's crime is to maintain that, strictly speaking, there was no genocide, and that the "gas chambers" are a legend. This is, in fact, close to statements made by Darquier to a journalist of *L'Express*. But what should Darquier be blamed for: making statements like these or participating in the deportation of Jews? Faurisson and Darquier de Pellepoix may agree on some points, but this is not sufficient to make Faurisson an accomplice of Darquier.

At the root of all of this, there is the premise that the existence of "gas chambers" is an absolutely irrefutable fact. Any questioning of this absolutely irrefutable fact cannot have, directly or indirectly, other than a Nazi or an antisemitic origin. So Faurisson falls in behind Darquier, and if he is not more or less a disguised antisemite, it is because he is an oddball, and in any case, a dangerous oddball. From the start, they push aside the idea of questioning the existence of "gas chambers" may have at its origin, not the desire to hide atrocities and to vindicate oneself as is the case of Darquier, but rather the desire to find the truth.

Yet, it suffices to have a liking for the truth and to look into this question in order to know that the existence of gas chambers is a much less obvious fact than we have been told. The study of the technical requirements of such an operation and the contradictions in the S.S. confessions yield rather fragile

"proofs." Those who set themselves up as specialists and are supported by the media, know it, and that's why they try to prevent any debate.

The doubt about the existence of "gas chambers" did not originate in the extreme right. It was first expressed by Rassinier, who joined the Resistance early on, was arrested and tortured by the Gestapo, then deported to Buchenwald. The transition from the Darquier de Pellepoix affair to the Faurisson affair is instructive about the functioning of the mass media but not about the process of questioning the existence of "gas chambers." Darquier uses Rassinier to vindicate himself and the press uses Darquier to better discredit the truth rather than confront Rassinier's positions.

The legend of the "gas chambers" was given an official status by the Nuremberg Tribunal where Nazis were judged by the victors. Its primary function was to allow the Stalin democratic camp to clearly set itself apart from that of the Nazis and their allies. Antifascism and antinazism allowed them to justify their own acts of war and have since continued to justify many dreadful things by those who could have succeeded in protecting the world from barbarism.

The anguished times we are living through are similar in some ways to the prewar situation, and lacking the power to really confront the causes of the problems, there is a need to find scapegoats and acquire legitimacy. First, as a pretext for protection against a resumption, the war propaganda is revived against the old defeated barbaric enemy. But as capital sunk deeper in crises and felt the revolutionary danger, it tried to give people more concrete enemies and focus the responsibilities on certain internal and external groups.

Our position is to prevent as much as possible the conduct of stress tests and the installation of hate mechanisms. We have only one enemy: the capitalist relations of production that dominate the whole planet and not this or that social group. The bourgeois or bureaucrats themselves must not be attacked personally but only as they identify themselves with their function and their profit and defend class society.

Some wondered about who is manipulating Faurisson, and the extreme right was suspected. In any case, we who are revolutionaries plan to support him. And this is certainly not because of some general right to free expression. And neither because of some reflex of human solidarity, but because Faurisson is attacked for having tried to advance the truth.

But supporting Faurisson and his research, is not this allowing antisemitism to rekindle? The first imperative remains that of knowing the truth. And should this truth be left as a monopoly for the antisemite, in order to prevent a rise of antisemitism? These are suspicious and dangerous games. Truth or its pursuit could not be antisemitic.

Were it only for rumors in the press, the question of the existence of "gas chambers" could not be suppressed for a long time, and the doubt concerning the official truth would inevitably take hold. Concerning this situation, we

believe that we have to get things going. Evolution does not happen gently, from readjustment to rectification of details, as this has already started a few years ago, by smoothing over the lies of some, the good intentions of others, and allowing yet others to harbor some new philosophy. The issue is not really some particular lie but rather the functioning of its outcome that evolves and replaces untruths as they exhaust their usefulness. Then they have to prevent this from feeding antisemitism. The best lesson is not to leave it to the extreme right to show that Jews, too, defend what seems to them to be the truth, even if it infringes on the Holocaust mythology. We have to explain the real social mechanisms that produced antisemitism, deportation and the decimation in the concentration camps of Jewish and non-Jewish internees. We have to show that the struggle against any racism will quickly exhaust itself and remain superficial if it is not a direct struggle against capital.

Out of about fifty books on Germany in an ordinary public library, thirty deal with the 1939-1945 period, of which twenty are about deportation. The vision of the camps projected to the public is that of horror in its pure form, guided by a single logic, that of terror. It is based on an apocalyptic description of life in the camps and on historical analyses affirming that the Nazis planned the extermination of millions of people, in particular six million Jews. Some authors, like David Rousset, go even further: The Nazis wanted not only to kill, but also to degrade, to make "subhumans" aware of their condition by a measured degradation, and of their sub-humanity by and organized degeneration [...]

The main function of highlighting Nazi crimes is to justify the Second World War and more generally, the defense of democracy against fascism: The Second World War would not be so much a conflict among nations or imperialisms as a struggle between humanity on one side and barbarism on the other; the Nazi leaders, we are told, were monsters and criminals who seized power. Those who were captured after their defeat were judged by the victors at Nuremberg. It is crucial for this vision to show that the Nazis were bent on massacre. Surely, there are killings in all wars, but the Nazis wanted to kill. This is the worst and it is precisely what they are blamed for. With the help of moralism, they are not blamed for having made war, for any respectable state can do that, but for having been sadistic. The intense lethal bombardments of Hamburg, Tokyo, Dresden, the two A bombs, all those dead are justified as a necessary evil in order to avoid other massacres whose horror would have resulted from the fact that they would have been systematic. There is no possible comparison between the Nazi war crimes and the practices of the victors. To intimate the contrary is tantamount to being a conscious or unconscious accomplice in these crimes, and to allowing that they be repeated. The justification of 39-45 is no small affair. The unequal slaughter that resulted in tens of millions of victims had to be made some sense of: for could it be admitted that it was in order to absorb the economic crisis of 1929 and allow capitalism to rebound on a good footing? This justification stands for the antifascism of today and of tomorrow and so the left feeds on it as an excuse for its participation in the system. [...]

The victims of deportation are put forward to the detriment of millions of people who die of hunger every year throughout the world. Nannen, the chief editor of the German magazine, *Stern*, speaking of antisemitic persecutions, declares: "Yes, I knew and I was too much of a coward to oppose them." He tells us that, after seeing the images of Holocaust, his wife cried, remembering that she was barely twenty years old when she was served ahead of Jewish women standing in line. Today, there are still those who are served ahead of others and we can't avoid knowing it. Recently, Jean Ziegler in presenting René Dumont's book, *Paysans écrasés, Terres massacrées*, told us that "The world crop of cereal of 1977 – one billion four hundred million tons – would be sufficient to correctly feed five to six billion human beings. Yet, we are actually a little over four billion on earth, and everyday twelve thousand of us die of hunger."

We reproach the Nazis for having organized death in a scientific manner and for having killed in the name of science by conducting medical experiments on human guinea pigs, but these practices are not their monopoly. The day after Hiroshima, the headline in the newspaper *Le Monde* read: "A Scientific Revolution."

But ideology is not only about putting forward some facts in order to support the victors against the vanquished, past suffering against present suffering. The underlying concept of these justifications is the outcome of capitalist social relations, which tend to mystify their nature. This concept is quite common to democrats and to fascists. It reduces social divisions to a question of power and considers crimes as the cause of misery and horror. It is systematized by antifascist, antitotalitarian, but primarily counter-revolutionary ideas. More than the currently weak Nazi or fascist danger, it is the nonexistence of a revolutionary proletariat, which gives this ideology its force and allows it to reconstruct history to its own benefit. In fact, the staging and falsification of history are not a Stalinist monopoly. They, too, flourish in a democratic atmosphere of freedom of thought and expression.

Our problem is not to readjust, in a spirit of justice, the mistakes and the number of corpses and to blame everybody for Nazi crimes, which are really crimes of capital, the list of which is infinitely long, in the hope of better condemning the system. And neither is it an excuse for the crimes of the State, in the name of some socioeconomic fatality, so that perpetrators are accountable to nobody. We can't get out of this politico-judiciary vision by repeating that the main culprit is society, which means everybody and nobody. We have to show that the system, which also means politicians and intellectuals, uses the misery and horror it produces in order to defend itself against real criticism of this misery and this horror. [...]

To Read Rassinier:

The camps are a product of capitalism, not only in their origin but also in their functioning. The benefit of Paul Rassinier's books, and especially *The Lies of Ulysses*, is to provide a materialist conception of life, and hence of death, inside these camps.

Paul Rassinier (1906-1967) joined the communist party in 1922. He rallied the left opposition and was expelled in 1932. He was a militant to the left of the CP, then joined SFIO in order to take part in the Revolutionary Left, an organization led by Marceau Pivert. As the dangers increased, he defended pacifist theses. But as soon as the war started, he joined the resistance. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1943, tortured then deported to Buchenwald and Dora for nineteen months, he returned an invalid. After the war, Rassinier wrote in pacifist and libertarian publications, but also in extreme right magazines. His works on the concentration camps were published at the author's expense or by extreme right publishers. Those who use this as an argument against him, would have liked to see him never published. Most of Rassinier's books are out of print. La Vieille Taupe (PO Box 98, 75224 Paris cedex 05) has just reissued *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*.

In 1962, in the Introduction to *Le Veritable Procès Eichmann*, P. Rassinier wrote: "At the end of the hostilities, if there weren't at that moment but a few people who thought it necessary to sift through the horrors and responsibilities of the Second World War, it is remarkable that these people were mainly from the right and that their attitude was based on principles in whose name leftist intellectuals had refused Versailles twenty-five years earlier. The overwhelming majority of leftist intellectuals approved of and were elated by Nuremberg in the name of principles which they reproached, at the time of Versailles, for having the reactionary character of the right which had adopted them; this phenomenon is no less remarkable. In any case, there is here a rather curious interchange in the sector of principles and it is in this interchange that my personal drama lies." And he explained his approach: "Everything had to start again from point zero: take the facts one by one, study them in reality and finally place them back correctly in their historical context. I therefore started with a historical fact about which I thought I was the best informed, for the simple reason of having lived it: the concentration camp phenomenon. And since it was in the forefront of current affairs and since all the public debates led to it, I will be forgiven if I thought that the occasion will not be more favorable. So the *Lies of Ulysses* was my first faithful act to the principles of the left of 1919." [...]

The "gas chambers":

Rassinier is first of all known, or rather attacked, for having dared to deny that the "gas chambers" had not been the instrument of mass murder. It's out of the question to take up all the arguments here in order to definitively settle the question. Like everybody else, we took as an established fact the use of "gas chambers" for an industrial scale massacre. No matter how anti-establishment and how suspicious we might have been, the idea that such a bluff could have been organized on such a scale and about such a macabre subject did not come to us spontaneously. Yet, we were badly shaken by the reading of Rassinier. And we were shaken, too, by the debate that has recently taken place in the press, or rather by the manner in which it was prevented from taking place. [...]

They play on the respect of the dead and the suffering of the survivors. And on the fear of all to find themselves on the side of the killers. Some are even ready to kill in order not to cover up crimes. Common sense, in the words of Lenin, tells us that a lot of people can't be fooled for a long time. Is this common sense ready to admit that it may have been fooled by this affair of "gas chambers"? This is "too much" for either good or bad conscience.

But don't we have testimonies of deportees and confessions of executioners? Many people have "seen" "gas chambers," even where it is recognized that none existed. In fact, they mostly heard of them. The confessions, in themselves, are not sufficient. The S.S. were defeated, their illusions and their cause collapsed. A threat of execution weighed on them, and they tried to vindicate themselves by invoking orders that can't be found and a project that exceeded their power. Their indulgence toward their interrogators proved to be worthwhile in several cases. Yet, torture may not be sufficient to break men who still believe in their cause. But when this cause has collapsed, minor physical or moral pressures are sufficient to crush those for whom nothing is left but identification with the victors and the instinct of survival. What is accepted concerning Boukharine may very well be the case for Hoess, commander of Auschwitz, prisoner in Poland, and who was executed in 1947.

Rassinier took great care to show that the documents on which the faith in the existence of "gas chambers" and their extermination function rests, were suspect because of their origin and their contradictions. The most serious contradictions appear in their descriptions of "gassing" and the real contingencies of such an operation.

The rumor of "gas chambers" originated inside the concentration camps. It is understandable due to the extraordinarily high mortality rate, the frequent transfers from camp to camp, the practice of selection aimed at separating those unfit to work from the rest of the prisoners, and the confusion between crematoria and "gas chambers." Thinking that people were gassed because the location of showers had changed or because they were forced to go to the infirmary, prisoners' testimonies prove nothing. Then, this is confronted with the obviously shocking argument that those who had really been gassed are no longer here to testify. This rumor was systematically circulated after the war mainly for the members of the H.-Führung to vindicate themselves and to conceal its role [This is the body administering the internees, largely composed of prisoners].

But the ideological function of the "gas chambers" exceeds by far the particular interests of some people. And it is here that it may be useful to abandon the petty field of historical research in order to rise with Jean Daniel to the level of political philosophy.

According to the director of *Le Nouvel Observateur* in its editorial of November 6, 1978, "L'oubli interdit" ("Forgetting is forbidden"): "The campaign started in the 1950's with the meticulous book of Paul Rassinier, a French socialist member of parliament who spent – oh yes! – a short time in a camp." The style of J. Daniel is not burdened by meticulousness. It is rather

lyrical. And J. Daniel does not care about refuting Rassinier. It is enough to denounce the "crusaders of racism" who use Rassinier's arguments. Moreover, Rassinier is hard to refute, because, and this is what makes all the horror of the thing, the Nazis had succeeded in committing a perfect crime: "Devilish dream if there was one, conceived by a technocratic Lucifer in the highest scientific hysteria. The gathering of the damned, their transportation, the organization of the camps, the selection for extermination: nothing was left to improvisation. Nothing will leave a trace: It's the infernal process of the perfect crime. Its specificity is its perfection; its essence is its radicality; its magic horror is its aptitude to evoke nothingness and infinity. Racists have every reason to be afraid to be accused of it. It's an act without a precedent, born of nothing and going nowhere."

But, to believe J. Daniel, we were lucky, for France recovered its salvation: "There was in the mysterious collective unconscious an obscure feeling that no sooner did the belief in genocide crumble and torrential currents would be liberated not only of antisemitism but also of latent racism, whose victims may be any minorities, a racism which would plunge the spirit into darkness with the irrepressible movement of the black tides of the ocean." The poet, or better yet, the albatross, whose wings are still full of tar, transforms, through a daring reversal, the pollution that covers the mass media into a sudden burst from the depths of the social being.

A journalist, short of copy and of celebrity, interviewed, camera and microphone hidden, an old crass who had more or less succeeded in becoming forgotten. All the media got hold of the affair under the pretext of discussing the pedagogical benefit or harm from publicizing the racism of Darquier de Pellepoix. They obviously prefer to thrive on Darquier's statements rather than to seriously discuss Rassinier's positions. But, anyway, it is not clear where, in all these banalities, we can find the mysterious collective unconscious.

Jean Daniel's inversion buttresses another feather brain of his kind, Louis Martin-Chauffier, quoted by the archbishop of Marseille in his All-Saints homily – maybe to make people forget the Vatican's silence about Nazism. The archbishop tells us that Martin-Chauffier is the "author of one of the most beautiful meditations on the deportation: 'We must not respond to violence with hatred. But forgetfulness would amount to resignation. Forgetfulness is forbidden. We can't forget all that had been committed, for we run the risk of seeing it happen again.'"

For the understanding of economic and social conditions that led to the destruction of human beings on such a scale, they substitute the myth of a premeditated demonic plan. For the struggle against these economic and social conditions, they substitute the necessity to remember. It is enough to forget, for everything to start all over again. The collective unconscious, alias the mass media, would therefore be the guardians of this nightmare. The legitimization of this spectacle of horror, far from preventing anything, serves to only banalize the atrocity and to give the public the feeling of the impossibility of any intervention. It is past and it is far away, and anyway, everything takes place behind the television screen. But this is not simply

passivity and distance, there is also a complacency and a fascination with horror which are not completely devoid of good reasons.

This is because horror does not only exist on the periphery of our world and behind barbed wire where it is concentrated, it oozes out of our lifestyle through the images of a happy tranquility to gush out, at times, in the form of crime, from the stupid accident to pathological behavior. And this vaguely felt horror must be contained, given a meaning, and made into a spectacle in order to be controlled. Dismissing it as a death impulse, the fundamental expression of the collective or individual unconscious, will only serve to hide how this precise mode of production threatens men with permanent destruction. And we are not talking about nuclear weapons or any other more limited death threat but only of a vague feeling in people, who are cut off from humanity and reduced to a precarious social integration (the couple, the company) and are at risk of always being more or less superfluous. The crisis accentuates the economic and affective insecurity. Attempts are made to get rid of those who are supposed to assume positions of responsibility and to shift the blame to scapegoats.

If an unfortunate situation similar to that of Germany, which found itself in a paroxysm of crisis with seven million unemployed, were to happen again without the possibility of bringing down the capitalist relations of production, there is a great chance for a rebirth of a strong racism and even state racism. There is a great chance, too, that most of today's anti-Nazi intellectuals would be ready to look for and to find justification for this racism.

Hitlerian antisemitism is and must be presented as a unique fact of history, and then serve to make people forget and, especially, to mystify all the other horrors that our world produces. The particular conditions which presided over the advent of Nazism, are mentioned only to be better dismissed in the quest for the universal. Raymond Aron says (*France-Soir*, newspaper of the ex-antisemite Hersant, of February 15, 1979): "If we want to avoid barbarization, we have to insist on the fact that Nazism was unique. It alone conceived of the extermination of an entire population by the decisions of a few people. Maybe Stalin sacrificed more people. But it has been since the Hitlerian exterminations that we are frightened of men. We are all still terrified that this thing was possible. That is why, rather than trivializing, we must say that to some extent, we have all participated in this."

Jean Daniel tells us that this extermination has something Satanic about it. Raymond Aron says that since then, we are frightened of men, and that each one of us participated. Satan is inside each one of us: it's the return to original sin. [...]

History is itself historically produced. The image we have of the past is the result of the selection and of the interpretation of facts according to the nature of the opposing forces and the successive stages of the balance of power that was established. Thus, in France, history schoolbooks, from Vercingétorix to de Gaulle, emphasize the national character at the expense of the class struggle. General conventionality maintains that the historical science of today

has really broken away from the legend of origins in order to form a chronological sequence of established facts. But if the reconstitution of the past takes a scientific appearance, it also takes place more than ever before under the aegis of the state.

The vision of the Second World War and of the concentration camps projected by the full force of the mass media is there to legitimize the present, as this presence of capital tends also to immediately legitimize itself by the representation it constantly gives of itself through the mechanism of news production. This vision is rather likely to change. Capital will yield to the truth when it no longer needs a particular lie. A revelation that brings its "authors" serious trouble today, may be accepted by others, or posthumously when the time is ripe. But the problem for revolutionary theory is not only to denounce such and such a particular lie, but to dismantle the mechanisms that insure the production and the reproduction of the ideology and of its madness.

3. – LICA is what?

"The league against antisemitism brands as antisemites all those who utter the word "Jew" (unless it be in ritual speech to the dead). Does the league refuse any public debate, and does it reserve the right to decide without any explanation what is or is not antisemite?"

Gilles Deleuze

"Le Juif riche" (The rich Jew), *Le Monde*, February 18, 1977, p. 26.

The LICA hounds Faurisson for falsification of history. One has to have a very high moral authority in order to set oneself up as the jealous guardian of the truth. Having participated in 1963 in setting up an anti-apartheid committee, I subsequently found myself during several years in "working" relation with antiracist organizations. I have no recollection of having met on these occasions any of the people of LICA. But we were sometimes in contact with MRAP and I understand that relations between MRAP and LICA are not exactly those of honest camaraderie. This may explain the weakness of LICA during public actions against apartheid. I ignore the why of these antagonisms, and it doesn't matter. To learn more about them, I couldn't find a better way than to go through some issues of its monthly, *Le Droit de Vivre* (the right to live).

I winced at the review of the film, *The Deer Hunter* of M. Cimino, certainly not because the critic takes Ukrainians for Poles, but because he calls it "more than an excellent film. A monument!"¹ To me, it's a monument to stupidity and to racism. There's surely no need to have roved around in the Vietnamese rice field to realize it. The unbearable caricature of these shouting Asiatics, these "robotized and inhuman yellows," as the critic says, did not exactly escape him: "Michael Cimino does not take the trouble to understand the Vietnamese. Lack of interest? Outside of the topic? Racism?" It is not settled. This question mark is breathtaking. That the mass media says stupid things about these falsifications, that it flatters the good old idea of "yellow peril" revived by the fact that those yellows are reds, is quite normal. But that a journal, whose raison d'être is antiracism, is unable to identify and denounce the

¹ May 1979, p. 13.

very explicit racism of this super production, makes me really wonder. The critic even wishes that a film of the same kind be made about the Algerian war. We can predict racial attacks at movie theaters.

Second surprise, and this one is very important, is the presence on the staff of *Le Droit de vivre* of Paul Giniewski, in charge of literary criticism. He is a fervent Zionist whose ideas seem to agree quite well with the views expressed in this journal. That he is happy with books which want to prove that "antisemitism is consubstantial with leftist ideology," by making anarchists the precursors of Hitler and by claiming, against daily evidence, that "the left is anti Zionist by nature"¹, all this reflects political positions at least conservative. But there is another thing. I have already seen the writing of this scourge of the left about South Africa and I have had the occasion to take him to task for some treasures in one of his books². It must be said that the defenders of Apartheid are rare in France. At that time, other than a few extreme right militants, Giniewski was the only propagandist for Pretoria way before Jacques Soustelle. "We must help South Africa instead of attacking it" (p. 131 of the book cited in a footnote) for to him, apartheid (how everything falls together!) is a sort of "compulsory Zionism" for the return of "Bantus" to "national homes," these Bantustans for which he is a rabid partisan. South African supporters, like Mssrs. Soustelle and Giniewski, certainly will refuse the label of "racists." But who will deny that the politics they support is the most complete expression of contemporary racism and that one of its roots goes precisely back to Hitler's politics? That a journal whose raison d'etre is antiracism accepts on its staff a writer who puts his pen in the service of apartheid is a paradox beyond my understanding.

But if their antiracism is to be eclipsed, maybe the people of LICA are fussy historians, strict guardians of objectivity. Certainly, when mentioning the fall of Idi Amin³ described as a "worthy model of racist Nazism," it is not serious to forget to mention that he got to power with the active support of Israeli services, and that this support and help lasted for a long time. The same for Bokassa. Doubtless a simple oversight.

But when I saw a photo showing Arabs with the following caption, "Some of the 500,000 non-Jews who live in Israel under conditions of perfect civic equality," I thought that the enthusiasm for the truth gave way to other preoccupations. In the

¹ April 1979, "L'antisémitisme socialiste," p. 32.

² In 1967, I wrote, "It may be appropriate to point out, for whatever it is worth, the recent production of Paul Giniewski, apartheid's accredited eulogist in France: *Livre noir-Livre blanc*, presented as the "South-West African file." Some books are pleasing because we find in them what we expect: such is the display of ignorance and of stupidity in front of history and anthropology (the true people are the "chosen people" p. 26, "Nazism is as forgotten in Windhock as it is in Bonn," p. 46. The author makes sure to point out that he is not racist: the proof? He protests against racial stereotypes by explaining that "the large, flattened nose of the Bantou is not "uglier" than the pointed European nose. It is the means supplied by nature to breathe correctly in the swamps and humid undergrowth of his ancestors" (p. 185). M. Giniewski persists: in a recent article, "Esquisse d'une réponse juive à la nouvelle droite" (outline of a Jewish reply to the new right) (*Le Monde*, November 3, 1979, p. 2), he repeats the same phrase word for word. In thirteen years, the Bantou has become black and "nature" has become "evolution." Cf. *Aletheia*, No 6, April 1967, pp. 144-5. See also by the same Giniewski, "L'économie sud-africaine," *Le Mois en Afrique*, July 1967 and *Bantoustans*, Le Cap, Human and Rousseau, 1961; *Une autre Afrique du Sud*, Berger-Levrault, 1962; *The Two Faces of Apartheid*, Chicago, Regnery, 1965; *Livre noir-Livre blanc*, Berger-Levrault, 1966; *L'An prochain à Umtata*, Berger-Levrault, 1975.

³ May 1979.

article that accompanied the photo, I read the following¹: "To oppose to Zionism a political message of similar nature, they invented the myth of pan-Arabism founded on a supposed unity of the most diverse countries," and further on that the illusory notion of "Arab world is an insidious or declared racism." Then I realized that this is a Zionist propaganda organization, indifferent about historical truth. Yet we may conceive of a Zionism that would not need such crude propaganda. But, like all doctrinaires, these people of L.I.C.A. use history when it suits them, otherwise they deform it brutally. It's strange that this journal could call itself *Le Droit de vivre* (the Right to Live) and burn with such violent hatred toward the Palestinians who, after all, are only asking for the "right to live" at home.

This hate towards its enemies pushes L.I.C.A. beyond the limits imposed by laws. For example, this: "Francois Brigneau is harmful to a civilized society. Out of ecological concerns, it would be useful to deprive him of his right to write insanities"², which would obviously justify the aforementioned Brigneau, who writes in *Minute*, to formulate the same wishes towards L.I.C.A. They went even further: "Those who follow his footsteps [those of Darquier de Pellepoix] will never make old bones"³. And it is L.I.C.A. who assumes the right to designate those who follow Darquier's footsteps. I think that this is called death threats. It seems to me that the courts should crack down on this kind of offense.

As for me, I see very well what qualifies L.I.C.A. to set itself up as guardian of historic truth. It confuses it too much with political propaganda, and this mixture is certainly very unfortunate.

¹ Albert Staroi, "Le racisme contre la paix," March, 1979, p. 15.

² May 1979, p. 4.

³ A column by Raphael Jerusalmy, December 1978, p. 23.

Chapter 5

Revisionism Abroad

The Faurisson affair had repercussions abroad. But to appreciate its scope, we have to keep in mind that authors here and there have expressed fairly diverse points of view often labeled under the unique rubric of revisionism. Until an assessment of this very uneven literature becomes available¹, we can gather some facts about the conditions under which these "debates" or these "affairs" take place.

It is in Germany that these problems are most seriously considered. Some revisionist texts have been published, but many authors have been subjected to harassment and multiple abuses². Thies Christophersen had his house put on fire. Wilhelm Stäglich, a minor retired judge, had his pension reduced by a fifth for five years (??). Especially many books (those of Stäglich, the German translation of Butz, and others) are classified as "dangerous for the youth" (the *quod juventutem corrumperet* of our old Latin grammar). It's the ban, *Indizierung*. There are also people banned from exercising their profession (Udo Walendy, a history professor, and others), law suits, etc. This repression is exerted on current opinions, and not on what those people might have been in the past. All this seems to me rather surprising, if I contrast this with all that I read about Federal Germany, so eager to whitewash former Nazis, to forget the past, to want to forget, and so reluctant to try Nazi criminals³. Doubtless both aspects coexist: it is not clear why the German state (we should say, the German states, since the G.D.R. is in the same boat) would deprive itself of the services of all those who made up the administrative and economic backbone of Hitlerian Germany. Membership in the N.S.D.A.P., the Nazi party, was pretty much compulsory to pursue any public activity. Current governments may perfectly well use the services and experience of those people as in France, where a number of leading positions are filled with people who held allegiance to Pétain, such as M. Marcellin, an interior minister. And we are not talking about the followers of Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar, who are still close to positions of power. There is one condition for this continuity in the process of change: the appearance of a conversion to the beneficial effects of parliamentary democracy. Do we have to go into the details of the "denazification" farce imposed by the allies after the war?

¹ This is the subject of Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, Ph.D. thesis that he hopes to submit very shortly. [He never did, – 1998.]

² See references in our bibliography.

³ . See the Lischka affair and his assistant, Heinrichsohn, a well-liked village mayor, *Le Monde*, November 10, 1979.

What is hunted today in Germany, on the right as well as on the left, is free thinking. Germany cannot accept that former Nazis, S.S., or others get together to show their former combatant nostalgia, but it dreads opening a Pandora's box for fear of exposing the great myths of the present time. I can recall some articles that appeared in *Le Monde* a few years ago, where it was shown that some kind of a German malaise is caused by the fact that this country has the body of an economic giant and the head of a political midget. This is particularly convenient for other European powers. The Gordian knot of this contradiction is obviously the question of the collective guilt of the German people. A vast question I prefer not to get into at the moment. I would only say that it has not been clearly resolved in Germany and that it will not be out of moral considerations. Political opportunity, European military balance and economic evolution will relegate this question to the museum. The need to humiliate Germany as a central power in Europe will determine the political philosophy of a history that will justify the orientation of the future.

In the meantime, the debates are curbed. Here are two examples. The British historian, David Irving, wrote in German for a Berlin publisher of the Springer group a book entitled, *Hitler und seine Feldherren* ("Hitler and His Generals"). He found out, after the publication, that his text was seriously amputated and manipulated. It must be said that Irving, while not calling the Holocaust into question, found nothing in his research about the persons and the actions that would furnish a proof that Hitler was responsible for the massive extermination. That, he said. And he added that, since this extermination is a fact, the guilty must be found somewhere else. He concludes that it must be Himmler, who hid the fact from his Fuehrer. We wonder what will happen when he studies Himmler's career. The publisher obviously thought that Irving was an apologist for Hitler, and he took it upon himself to edit the text. The author protested, then published his book in English. In the introduction, he made the following remarks about the Berlin publisher Ullstein Verlag¹:

"The editor found many of my arguments appalling and even dangerous, and without informing me, he eliminated them, or changed them completely. In the printed text, Hitler did not tell Himmler that there should "not be liquidation" of the Jews (November 30, 1941); he told him not to use the word "liquidate" publicly in connection with the liquidation program. This is how history is falsified! (My faxed request to publish Himmler's note got no reply.) I forbade any new edition of the book two days after it came out in Germany. The Berlin publishers justified their action by maintaining that my manuscript expressed views that were an "affront to established historical opinion" in their country."

Hellmut Diwald is a well known historian in Germany. He is the author of a biography of Wallenstein² that has had a great success. He was in charge of an encyclopaedia of European history³, also very well received. He teaches at the university of Erlangen. In 1978, he published *History of the Germans*⁴ (and not an

¹ Page xvii. David Irving, *Hitler's War*, Viking Press, New York, 1977, xxiii-926 pages. The German edition is of 1975.

² *Wallenstein*, Herbig, 564 pp.

³ *Propyläen Geschichte Europas*, 1975.

⁴ This raging discussion in the German press could have been the topic of a few commentaries in the French press. Only *Le Figaro Magazine* of March 12, 1979 did, but did not mention the second edition. Nothing in *Le Monde* except a belated venomous and anonymous innuendo by Alfred Grosser: "A

impossible history of Germany) which is presented as going back in time. The first reactions are very good, among them that of Chancellor Schmidt. Then *Der Spiegel* attacks the work savagely: for a good reason. The author refuses the "criminalization" of German history. While recognizing the immensity of Hitler's crimes, he ascertains that the burden of collective guilt made Germany sick, and that the Allies bear the heavy responsibility to have dismembered Germany and to have uprooted it from its past in order to better exert their influence. These views are obviously quite debatable, doubtless with a right tinge. The polemic is quite violent and up to here, very normal. But the pressure is so strong that the publisher (who also belongs to the Springer group) withdraws the work from circulation and reprints it in February 1979, with three pages which deal with "the final solution" completely modified. Among the deleted phrases are the following:

"Since the launching of the accusation that Hitler would have given, through Himmler and the Security Services, the order to the S.S. to physically destroy European Jews, the Auschwitz problem remains protected by total obscurity, the more so that since the 1945 capitulation, Auschwitz still performs a basic function in the complete moral degradation of the Germans (p. 164). Based on no proof whatsoever, numerous writings have been published since 1945 where several assertions were made to cynically magnify the extent of the shame about these facts [the gigantic deportation of Jews towards the East] whose background was the horrible deprivation of Jews of their rights under the Third Reich. One of the most horrible events of modern time was exploited through deceptions, mystifications, and deliberate exaggerations with the intention of totally discrediting a people" (p. 164).

He later goes into some details of the Auschwitz-Birkenau history, details that were also eliminated to convey a different view. Accusations of censorship were vigorously voiced by the press of the right¹ and for good reasons².

Professor Diwald explained many of these subjects in an interview given to *Die Welt* between the two editions ("A people is made sick by the criminalization of its history," the question of collective responsibility, Adenauer and the division of Germany, German identity). It may be interesting to quote a question and the answer to it³:

whole set of far from brilliant events show that we have to continue to evoke the worst of the past so that it will not be justified and transfigured not only by fanatic militarists and passionate antisemites, but by a well known historian and a reputed publisher putting out a scandalous history of Germany." (*Le Monde*, July 5, 1979.) In biology, this theory is called fixation.

¹ "Why Professor H. Diwald must not write the truth," *Deutsche National Zeitung*, March 2, 1979.

² The new edition contains an additional photo showing rows of corpses in Nordhausen camp, with the caption: "at the end of the Second World War." Without imitating the Faurisson game, I found this photo almost identical to that in a book called *Déportation*, published by the National Federation of Deportees, Prisoners and Patriotic Resistants (295 pp., 1968) on page 227. The caption of this photo is: "At Nordhausen, bombed April 4 by the American air force, piles of corpses cover the courtyard of Boelke Kaserne (photo taken by the American services on April 15, 1945). Before their departure, the S.S. had finished off the wounded." It would therefore seem that the prisoners had first been victims of American bombs. The German book could have shown more photos of horror in the camps. But this one has the advantage of showing that a lot of prisoners had first been victims of the war. The German book omits this point.

³ *Die Welt*, November 20, 1978: "Deutschland – kein Wintermarchen."

Die Welt: You are of the opinion that basic problems of contemporary history are by no means as definitively clarified as it is generally believed. And even about the Jewish question, you write, "despite all the literature, some points remain unclear."

Diwald: We can't be satisfied with much of what has so far been published. We should reexamine entire subjects. In this regard, the question of documentation is decisive. The most important part of contemporary documents has not yet been made accessible to us, so there are still many surprises in store for us. The Russians have not yet published any document; the French also keep their archives closed. The Americans are extremely prudent in what they release to us. This is how we still remain under a really strange domination.

Exit Diwald, enter Bennett. The scene takes place in Australia. Since its foundation in 1966, John Bennett has been the secretary of the Victorian Council of Civil Liberties, a sort of human rights league, more active on a daily basis than ours. It is known that the Anglo-Saxons are more scrupulous than us in their conception and defense of individual rights, and Bennett, who is an attorney, has been very active in this domain. In Australia, he is considered to be on the left, and is known as such. This was confirmed by some of my Australian acquaintances. Towards the end of 1978, he circulated Butz's book among some academics and journalists, together with a memo, which soon became public¹:

1. Nobody was ever accused of murdering anyone of the two, four, six million (?) gassed; in other words, nobody was accused of opening the Zyklon B boxes;
2. There does not exist a photo of bodies in a gas chamber, even though it is said that there had been 10,000 gassings in different camps;
3. The Auschwitz "gas chambers" can't be examined because, according to Rassinier, the only one to explain what became of them, they were dismantled, and in another camp they "sunk into oblivion";
4. The major proofs of "gassing" given at Nuremberg were the depositions of Hoess and Gerstein, which are just as conclusive as the declarations of the Moscow Trials of 1936;
5. The Vatican, the Red Cross, the British and German intelligence services (like Canaris and Oster, who were also British agents) and the German resistance against Hitler (a sort of who's who of German society) were ignorant of or did not believe the rumors about gassings;
6. Nobody tried to answer Butz's arguments;

¹ *National Times*, February 10, 1979.

7. There is no reference to gassings in any captured German document: The Allies held warehouses full of Nazi documents and films, but they had to go on the "confessions" of Hoess;
8. It was said in March of 1943 that two million Jews had been killed and that four more million were going to be killed. It's a curiously exact prediction of the six million figure decided on at Nuremberg;
9. The photos used by the Allies to prove gassings were photos of people who died of typhus or malnutrition in Dachau and Belsen;
10. Zyklon B was used by the German armed forces in all the concentration camps as a disinfectant, in particular against typhus. The normal procedure for new arrivals in all the camps was the shower and the disinfection of clothes. Many people died in the camps and were incinerated to prevent epidemics;
11. The Auschwitz camp was not bombed by the Allied because they did not believe that it was an extermination camp. The Allies conducted tight surveillance of this vast industrial complex because it was the center where the most advanced synthetic rubber technologies were located. Since Pearl Harbor, the United States had needed synthetic rubber;
12. It is impossible to estimate the number of Jews who died because of Nazi policies, for the World Jewish Congress refused to conduct a census after the war. It's probable that 700,000 to 1,500,000 Jews perished because of bad treatment, malnutrition, typhus, destruction of the ghettos, reprisals, arbitrary assassinations and "medical experiments";
13. People like Simon Wiesenthal (*The Assassins are among us*) have tried to trace those responsible for the final solution by the evacuation to the East (for example, Eichmann) and Nazi doctors (for example, Mengele) but they have not tried to trace S.S. members who were the real assassins by gas of two to six million people, in particular, by Zyklon B in Auschwitz.

The Australians, who after all are not going to teach us what civilization is, have had the strange idea of debating this question in the press. Polemical articles and indignant letters were published in major newspapers¹. It seems that nobody had recourse to the courts in order to impose his views, which shows how backward is this kangaroo country.

In Italy, the Faurisson affair was extensively covered in the press. On April 19, 1979, the Swiss Italian television of Lugano invited Robert Faurisson and Pierre Guillaume to a big debate with Enzo Collotti (author of *Germania Nazista*, Turin, Einaudi), Wolfgang Scheffler (fellow at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, an expert consultant to German courts) and Mrs. Rolfi and Tedeschi (deportees in Ravensbrueck and Auschwitz). The debate was scheduled for an hour, it lasted two hours and fifty minutes and disrupted other programs. It aroused enough public

¹ *The Age*, 3, March 15 and 29, 1979. *The Australian*, May 26, 1979. *Nation Review*, June 7, 1979. *ABC TV*, April 25, 1979. *New Statesman*, September 7, 1979. *Quadrant*, September 1979, etc.

interest to be rebroadcast on May 6. The numerous articles in the trans-Alpine press were similar to those in the French press. It was after this appearance that Antonio Pitamitz, a contributor to *Storia illustrata*, published by Mondadori, proposed to Faurisson a written interview. It appeared in August and gave rise again to many commentaries. The debate continued over many issues. Could it be that Italians have a less burdened conscience than the French, and that it is that which makes it easier for them to allow a debate on this kind of question?

We finally mention that there is a petition circulating on some university campuses in the United States opposing any restrictions on Faurisson's right to pursue his research. Among the first signatures were those of Noam Chomsky and Alfred Lilienthal.

Dr. Robert Faurisson has served as a respected Professor of Twentieth Century French Literature and Document Criticism for over four years at the University of Lyons-2 in France. Since 1974, he has been conducting extensive independent historical research into the "holocaust" question.

Since he began making his findings public, Professor Faurisson has been subject to a vicious campaign of harassment, intimidation, slander and physical violence in a crude attempt to silence him. Fearful officials have even tried to stop him from further research by denying him access to public libraries and archives.

We strongly protest these efforts to deprive Professor Faurisson of his freedom of speech and expression, and we condemn the shameful campaign to silence him.

We strongly support Professor Faurisson's just right of academic freedom and we demand that university and government officials do everything possible to ensure his safety and the free exercise of his legal rights.

In view of the attitude of French universities toward this affair, we will only publish the original text without translation. No other signatures are solicited.

The original signatures were submitted to the court. They have the names and addresses of these signatories: 500 foreign signatures as of October 31, 1979.

Chapter VI

Of the Necessity of the Faurisson Affair

The Faurisson affair, or rather, to give it its real dimension, the question of knowing what really happened in some Nazi concentration camps during the war, is not the first act of this tragicomedy, which is the evolution of the **collective representation** of concentration camp life in the public opinion. In France, the prologue was written by Paul Rassinier in *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* ("The Lies of Ulysses") and in *Le Véritable Procès Eichmann ou les Vainqueurs incorrigibles* ("The Real Eichmann Trial or the Incurable Victors") and especially in *Le Drame des Juifs européens* ("The Drama of European Jews")¹, where he dissects some of the main testimonies on the gas chambers and where he demolishes the most solid statistical study by the American, Hilberg². Concerning the number of missing people in the European Jewish communities, Georges Wellers' belated polemic, *La "solution finale," et la mythomanie néo-nazie* (The "Final Solution" and the Neo-nazi Mythomania)³ supplies only very partial answers and remains tightly limited by conventional reading and interpretation of documents, which Rassinier precisely shows are not self evident.

Rassinier was violently attacked and driven to get published by the extreme right. As the publishers at la Vieille Taupe, which has just reissued *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, say: "Those who blame Rassinier for using an extreme right publisher are those who would have wished that he not be published at all." I admit that his writing contains extreme language and, sometimes, debatable affirmations. But to debate is neither to reject nor to revile. Rassinier should be rehabilitated, some day.

He wrote too early, it seems. Fifteen years later, does Faurisson still write too early? Times have not changed much. "Psychological taboos erected around Jews and Judaism" are disappearing, to the chagrin of some Jewish publications. The author of this article attributes "the fading away of Nazi genocide from collective memory and the progressive dilution of guilt feeling nourished since then by non-Jews. In a word, the genocide no longer pays and our poor dead no longer generate our moral right over the West which was six million times answerable to the punishment."⁴ It's a

¹ See bibliography. [Let's add, in 1998, that part of "The Lies of Ulysses" and the whole of "The Drama..." have been translated in English in a single volume, called *Debunking the Genocide Myth* and made available on this site. *The Real Eichmann Trial* has also been translated and published in 1976 by Steppingstones Publications, Box 612, Silver Spring, MD 20901, and Historical Review Press in England. The first of these two books has been reprinted under a new title: *The Holocaust Story and the Lies of Ulysses*. Both are available from the Noontide Press, PO Box 2739, Newport Beach, CA 92659, USA for \$11 and \$7.50 respectively.]

² *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1961, reprinted 1967.

³ *Le Monde juif*; Paris C.D.J.C., no 86, April-June 1977, pp. 41-84.

⁴ P. Gérard, "Requiem pour une idée acquise," *Information juive*, no. 288, Paris, January 1979.

truism: Why should the post-war generations feel guilty about attitudes and actions which are not theirs? Especially those who in most cases opposed them? Nazi crimes properly belong to the Hitlerians, and surely to their accomplices, but certainly not to those who were anti-fascists and anti-racists.

Another contributing factor to the progressive dissolution of these taboos has certainly been Israel's attitude towards the Palestinian question. Until and including the Six Day War, French public opinion had been imbued with a sort of transfer Zionism: The existence of a mythically fascist Israel with socialist leanings was a *de facto* reparation for the Auschwitz crime. The appearance of the Palestinian question, and especially the absolute and categorical refusal of Israelis and Zionists to consider even looking for a solution to the massive uprooting of the Palestinians, was revealing: militarism, intransigence, bombing of civilians, collective punishment, and political assassinations¹, all these aggressive attitudes gave Israel a completely opposite image from that owed reparation from Hitlerian Europe due to the wrongs it did to Jews. The oppressed has become the oppressor, *sic transit gloria*.

All this deserves, of course, more details. I simply note that subsequent to the crumbling away of certain taboos, a space for public discussion on Israeli policies and on Zionism has opened since 1967. In other words, the harmful accusations of anti-Semitism hurled at all critics of Zionism are no longer taken seriously and do not prevent debate.

In view of the reactions stirred up by the Faurisson affair, we wonder if there is a chance for a similar discussion on the reality, the details of the extent and the methods of Hitlerian persecutions. For the time being, everything is frozen, as a result of the efforts of those who want to embalm souvenirs and impose the respect of a historical image which is not particularly intelligible. Some are not far from believing that we are witnessing the birth of a new religion, that of the Holocaust, with its dogmas and its priests. As for me, I am convinced that there is a turning point here, that the possibility to find and to maintain the meaning of the victims' suffering under the tyranny is shifting to the side of those who are asking questions. The arsenal of celebrations, monuments and other memorials is nothing but a travesty of true memory.

There is an urgency for leftist intellectuals to assume their responsibility. The choice is very simple. Either reinforce established history by supporting all its gaps and dross, or allow a margin for critical evaluation of events in the recent past which serve as a foundation of the current state of the world. So far, the reactions are mostly negative. My experience can be summarized as follows: When the subject is broached with a new acquaintance, the first reaction is shock – that is what happened to me. Then, after some explanation which may vary, they concede that there may be a problem of historical knowledge, and that, after all, it might be legitimate to raise some questions. But the question gets immediately turned around: "Suppose we ask the question, have you thought about the consequences? If it is true, that will encourage the Neo-Nazis, it will revive the Jewish question, it will do this or that." In

¹ See *Dossier secret sur Israël – le Terrorisme*, Guy Authier, Paris, 1978, 404 pp., a remarkable report of Vincent Monteil on the activities of the Israeli special service, the Mossad, in Europe.

other words, the importance of the truth is entirely subordinate to the use – polemical or incantatory – it will be put to or the fear that others will put it to.

This is what the freedom to think is reduced to according to our clerics: a commodity whose value comes strictly from its use. While Faurisson's statements seem obviously provocative, the intelligentsia is quick to bargain its own principles. Newspapers, magazines, publishers and even printers disown their own ability to investigate because they are free – who denies that ? – to do it. I am not talking about fear because they all reject the idea that they might be able to get the debate started. Consequently, thanks to the prodigious liberty that we enjoy under the vigilant protection of the left, we have the choice to have recourse to the good old method of Samizdat.

We are also free to get published by our political enemies, who are endowed with inexhaustible funds, according to the imagination of the left... We decline this generous offer. Think about this situation and its outcome. Who could come out of it morally intact?

November 12, 1979