

Transcript of the *Shoah* Interview with Gustav Laabs : Lettre Becker

Translation by Andrea Borde - Volunteer – Visitor Services – May thru July 2008

p.1

LAABS 9 Lettre Becker

In addition, I ordered that during all actions, our men stand as far as possible from the gas trucks so that their health is not jeopardized by any leaking gas.

On this occasion I would like to make the following remarks: Some commandos (units) had their own men unload the trucks once the gassing was finished. I noted to the commanders of these special units what extraordinary damage, both spiritual and physical, such work may cause our men, if not immediately, at least later on.

In German:

The men complained of a pain in their head that seized after unloading each. However, there was nothing to change this state of affairs because they were concerned about their employment for this job so they took the opportunity to escape. In order to protect our men, I ask you imperatively to give the necessary instructions. In addition, the gassing nowhere performs adequately so that action is completed as quickly as possible the driver supports a building on the accelerator pedal and gives all orders for gassing.

In so doing, the people executed die by suffocation instead of sleeping gently as it was planned. The instructions have demonstrated that with a fair push of the pedal, death occurs more and holds expeditious entry. In addition, there would be more twisted faces, and defecation, as we have to date now.

p.2

LAABS 9 Lettre Becker

Signed Doctor Baker. These were the concerns of the engineer Baker. This letter is addressed to Kiev in Ukraine, on May 16, 1942, to Obersturmbahnfuhrer Rauff, Central Security of the Reich in Berlin.

Engineer Baker, perhaps considered the inventor of the system of administering death by gas vans, and Obersturmbahnführer Rauff, now spending hopefully peaceful days in Latin America.

The death trucks "SAURER" (it was their brand) have been made in Kiev, Sinferopol, Tagorog, Stalino, Maripol, Minsk, Riga, and Kaunas during the second half of 1941 and throughout the year 1942.

They were used by the Einsatzgruppen, mobile units who followed the Wehrmacht in the invasion of Soviet territory, and were specifically responsible for producing immediate and massive liquidation on the spot of groups of Jews of the Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics.

However, we must note this: if they used the gas vans in the accomplishment of the extermination task with which they were charged (which was incumbent upon them), the Einsatzgruppen were repulsed by their employment on a large scale. They preferred executions with a military pistol and they were regarded as human, and military; "manly and militarily," they said. The gas trucks, on the contrary, they imposed, according to their own words, an intolerable burden of the soul; this typically Nazi expression is hardly translatable.

p.3 (same as p.1)

LAABS 10 Lettre Becker

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p.4 (mostly the same as p.2)

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You can not give an approximation: moral burden, moral persuasion. It is true that the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen claimed that they were intellectuals. They were lawyers, doctors, professors, and priests. In Chelmno on the Ner, in German, Kulmhof, in Poland, the Sonderkommando Bothman did not have these delicacies. 360,000 Jews, men, women, and children, were killed in Chelmno in a gas truck. We would not know another low means to administer death and whether the use of trucks created difficulties everywhere else, as they were successfully overcome, as testifies to this: another letter that I will now read.

p.5 (same as p.1)

LAABS 1 Lettre Becker

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p.6

LAABS 1 Lettre Becker

This letter is written on May 16, 1942 by the Dr. and Engineer Baker and addressed to Obersturmbahnfuhrer Rauff in Berlin.

Obersturmbahnfuhrer Rauff is the man in charge of the gas trucks. The Engineer Becker is the inventor.

The gas trucks operated from June to December 1941 in the Ukraine, Crimea, Belarus, the Baltics, and Chelmno, on a very very grand scale.

p.7 (some the same as p.1)

LAABS 2 coupe.

LAABS TROISIEME Lettre Becker

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In German, the formula is the following: I have made the commanding officers of the relevant Sonderkommandos aware of the huge damage to the souls of these workers and men – if not immediately then later.

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p.8 (some the same as p.1 and p.2)

LAABS 3 Lettre Becker

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This letter is written on May 16, 1942 in Kiev by the Dr. and Engineer Baker and addressed to Obersturmbahnführer Rauff in Berlin.

Dr. Becker was the inventor of gas trucks or more exactly the system that allowed the exhaust gas to kill when they were connected by a hose and a back inside the truck.

Dr. Becker, as seen here, explains what is the most adequate way to proceed.

The gas trucks were employed from June 1941 in the Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics. Hundreds of millions of Jews were killed in gas trucks but in Poland, at Chelmno (we say

in German: Kulmhof), the gas trucks have made the most considerable way.