

Elie Wiesel: "The Most Authoritative Living Witness" of The Shoah?

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By Carlo Mattogno

On 27 January 2010, the tenth "Holocaust Remembrance Day", Elie Wiesel was invited into Montecitorio Hall, the seat of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Republic where he had the opportunity to give a brief speech. The president of the Chamber, Gianfranco Fini, introduced him as "the most authoritative living witness of the horrors of the Shoah among the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps".[1] But is he really a witness?

Is Elie Wiesel an impostor?

On 3 March 2009, a Hungarian website published an article entitled *Még mindig kísérti a haláltábor* (The extermination camp is still tempting)[2] and outlining important revelations by Miklós Grüner, a former deportee to Auschwitz. The article was translated and appeared the following day under the title *Auschwitz Survivor Claims Elie Wiesel is an Impostor*[3]. The text reads as follows:

«In May 1944, when Miklos Gruner was 15, he was deported from Hungary to Auschwitz-Birkenau with his mother and father as well as both a younger and an elder brother. He says that his mother and his younger brother were immediately gassed after their arrival in the camp. Then he, his elder brother and their father had an inmate number tattooed on their arms and were sent to perform hard work in a synthetic fuel factory linked to IG Farben where the father died six months later. After that, the elder brother was sent to Mauthausen and, as the young Miklos was then alone, two elder Jewish inmates who were also Hungarians and friends with his late father took him under their protection. These two protectors of the young Miklos were the Lazar and Abraham Wiesel brothers.

In the following months, Miklos Gruner and the Wiesel brothers became good friends. Lazar Wiesel was 31 years old in 1944. Miklos never forgot the number Lazar was tattooed with by the Nazis: A-7713. In January 1945, as the Russian army was coming, the inmates were transferred to Buchenwald. During the ten days this transfer took, partly by foot, partly by train, more than half of the inmates died and amongst them was Abraham, the elder brother of Lazar Wiesel. In April 8, 1945, the US army liberated Buchenwald. Miklos and Lazar were amongst the survivors of the camp. As Miklos had tuberculosis, he was sent in a Swiss clinic and therefore was separated from Lazar. After recovering, Miklos emigrated to Australia while his elder brother, who also survived the war, established himself in Sweden.

Years later, in 1986, Miklos was contacted by the Swedish journal *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* in Malmo and invited to meet "an old friend" named Elie Wiesel... As Miklos answered that he doesn't know anyone with this name, he was told Elie Wiesel was the same person Miklos knew in the Nazi camps under the name Lazar Wiesel and with the inmate number A-7713... Miklos still remembered that number and he was therefore convinced at that point that he was going to meet his old friend Lazar and happily accepted the invitation to meet him at the Savoj Hotel in Stockholm on December 14, 1986. Miklos recalls:

"I was very happy at the idea of meeting Lazar but when I confronted the so-called 'Elie Wiesel', I was stunned to see a man I didn't recognize at all, who didn't even speak Hungarian or Yiddish and instead he was speaking English in a strong French accent. Therefore our meeting was over in about ten minutes. As a goodbye gift, the man gave me his book entitled 'Night' of which he claimed to be the author. I accepted the book I didn't know at that time but told everyone there that this man was not the person he pretended to be!"

Miklos recalls that during this strange meeting, Elie Wiesel refused to show him the

tattooed number on his arm, saying he didn't want to exhibit his body. Miklos adds that Elie Wiesel showed his tattooed number afterward to an Israeli journalist who Miklos met and this journalist told Miklos that he didn't have time to identify the number but... was certain it wasn't a tattoo. Miklos says:

"After that meeting with Elie Wiesel, I spent twenty years of research and found out that the man calling himself Elie Wiesel has never been in a Nazi concentration camp since he was not included in any official list of detainees".

Miklos also found out that the book Elie Wiesel gave him in 1986 as something he has written himself was in fact written in Hungarian in 1955 by Miklos' old friend Lazar Wiesel and published in Paris under the title "Un di Velt hot Gesvigen", meaning approximately "The World Kept Silent". The book was then shortened and rewritten in French as well as in English in order to be published under the author's name Elie Wiesel in 1958, under the french title "La Nuit" and the English title "Night". Ten million copies of the book were sold in the world by Elie Wiesel who even received a Nobel Peace prize for it in 1986 while – says Miklos – the real author Lazar Wiesel was mysteriously missing...

"Elie Wiesel never wanted to meet me again", says Miklos. "He became very successful; he takes 25 thousand dollars for a 45 minutes speech on the Holocaust. I have officially reported to the FBI in Los Angeles. I have also complained to governments and media, in the US and Sweden with no result.

I have received anonymous calls telling me I could be shot if I don't shut up but I am not afraid of death any more. I have deposited the whole dossier in four different countries and, if I died suddenly, they would be made public. The world must know that Elie Wiesel is an impostor and I am going to tell it, I am going to publish the truth in a book called "Stolen Identity A7713".»

Miklós Grüner's declarations have been repeated many times, but have not caused any major research effort. We will thus scrutinize them critically but soberly.

First of all, some biographical data on Elie Wiesel:

Born on 30 September 1928 at *Sighet* in Romania, the son of *Shlomo* and *Sarah* Frig, the daughter of *Dodye* Feig, deported to Birkenau on 16 May 1944.[4]

The most important point to be verified is the reliability of the accuser. What can be considered established on the subject of Miklós Grüner is the fact that he was at Buchenwald in May of 1945. In a "Concentration Camp Inmates Questionnaire" of the Military Government of Germany, we have an entry giving his name, and the date of his birth – 6 April 1928 – also conforms. The ID number is handwritten in the upper left hand corner: 120762.[5]

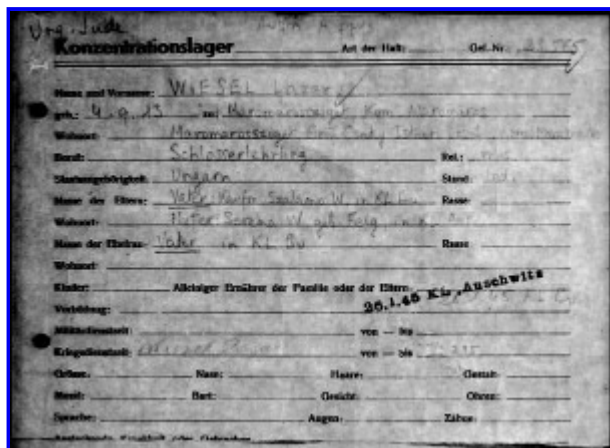
The image shows a document titled "MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY" and "FRAGEN FÜR INSASSEN DER KONZENTRATIONSLAGER" (CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES QUESTIONNAIRE). The document is dated "6 May 1945" and is for the "Buchenwald" camp. The name "Miklós Grüner" is written in the "Name" field. The birth date "6 April 1928" is written in the "Date of Birth" field. The birthplace "Sighet" is written in the "Place of Birth" field. The document is handwritten in German and Hungarian. The ID number "120762" is written in the upper left corner. The document is signed by "Miklós Grüner" in the "Signature" field.

[1]

Document 1: Questionnaire concerning Miklós Grüner. Buchenwald, 6 May 1945. (Click on

the picture to view it in full size).

However, the key person here is Lázár Wiesel. Fortunately, the file card concerning his stay at the Buchenwald camp also exists and allows us to verify Miklós Grüner’s assertions. This file card [6], has in its upper left hand corner the handwritten entry “Ung. Jude” (Hungarian Jew), in the center, “Ausch. A 7713”, i.e. “Auschwitz A-7713”, the former Auschwitz ID number, and, on the right, “Gef.-Nr.:123565”, (Detainee number 123565, the new Buchenwald ID number). This detainee was born on 4 September 1913 (Lázár Wiesel’s year of birth according to Miklós Grüner) at Maromarosziget and was the son of Szalamo Wiesel, who was at Buchenwald, and of Serena Wiesel née Feig, interned at KL Auschwitz. The stamp “26.1.45 KL. Auschwitz” indicates that Lázár Wiesel was registered at Buchenwald on 26 January 1945 coming from Auschwitz.



[2]

Document 2: Personal file card for Lázár Wiesel (KL Buchenwald). (Click on the picture to view it in full size).

Note: Maromarosziget [Máramarosziget in Hungarian], now Sighetu Marmăției (in Rumanian) is the same place which Elie Wiesel calls Sighet.[7]

The name “Szalamo” is the same as “Shlomo”, while “Serena” is phonetically close to “Sarah”.

The following table summarizes the results of the above verification:

	Lázár Wiesel	Elie Wiesel
Registration number	A-7713	A-7713
Date of birth	4 September 1913	30 September 1928
Place of birth	Máramarosziget = Sighet	Sighet
Name of the father	Szalamo = Shlomo	Shlomo
Name of the mother	Serena Feig	Sarah Feig
Domicile of the father in the beginning 1945	Buchenwald	Buchenwald

Miklós Grüner is perfectly right: Elie Wiesel has taken on Lázár Wiesel’s identity.

Another accusation levelled by Grüner concerns the origin of Elie Wiesel’s book “La Nuit” (in English “Night”). In the Hungarian version of the article mentioned in note 2, it is said that the book was published in Hungarian in Paris in 1955 by his friend Lázár with the name of Eliezer and the title “A világ hallgat” (And the world remained silent). In the English version of the article, mentioned in note 3, the title, instead, is in Yiddish and reads “Un di Welt hot Gesvigen” (And the world remained silent).

A search for the title in Hungarian gave no result, whereas the Yiddish book is, indeed, documented. It is registered in the *Bibliography of Yiddish Books on the Catastrophe and Heroism* [8], n. 549 a p. 81. The entry, in Yiddish, states: Eliezer Wiesel, *Un di Welt hot geschwign* (And the world remained silent). Buenos Aires, 1956. Central Association of Polish Jews in Argentina. Series *Das poillische Jidntum*, vol. 117, 252 pages. There is an English translation of this book, which corresponds to chapter VII of “La Nuit”. We will discuss it further along in this article.

Michael Wiesberg provides some noteworthy details on this subject:

«Wiesel has often mentioned the story of how this book came about. Naomi Seidmann has noted that Wiesel himself, in *Alle Flüsse fließen ins Meer* [*All rivers run to the sea*] has drawn attention to the fact that, in 1954, he gave the Argentinian publisher Mark Turkow the original manuscript of “*La Nuit*”, written in Yiddish. According to Wiesel, he never saw it again, but Turkow strongly denies this. This manuscript was published at Buenos Aires in 1955 under the title *Und di Velt hat Geshveyn* (And the world remained silent). Wiesel asserts to have written it in 1954 while on a cruise in Brazil. However, in an interview, he declared that it was only in May of 1955, after an encounter with François Mauriac [9], that he decided to break his silence. “And in that year [1955], in the tenth year, begins my story. It was then translated from Yiddish into French and I sent it to him. We were very, very good friends until his death”.

Naomi Seidmann, in her research on “*La Nuit*”, brought to light that there are considerable differences between the Yiddish and the French versions, with respect to the length, the tone, the argumentation and the topics treated in the book. She attributes these differences to the influence of Mauriac who can be described as a very particular person”»[10]

In this respect, hence, the least that can be said is that the origin of the book is quite uncertain and misty.

Is Elie Wiesel a false witness?

This having been stated, we have yet to establish whether Elie Wiesel is also a false witness on the subject of Auschwitz.

We will examine his “eye-witness account” as it is set out in his “masterpiece” (Fini), “*La notte*”.[11] As early as 1986 Robert Faurisson wrote an article entitled *Un grand faux témoin: Élie Wiesel* [12] (A prominent false witness: Elie Wiesel). More recently, Thomas Kues has written a further article entitled *Una donnola travestita da agnello* [13] (A weasel in sheep’s clothing). Both authors approach the subject in general terms; now the time has come for a more through analysis. We must stress that the overall tone of the account in question is that it tells a story rather than describing something factual; Elie Wiesel goes to great lengths to avoid any verifiable details and what he says about Birkenau, about Auschwitz, about Monowitz or about Buchenwald is so vague that his story might have taken place, just as easily, somewhere in Siberia or in Canada.

Quotes are from Elie Wiesel *Night, His Record of Childhood in the Death Camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald*, Penguin Books edition (Translated from the French by Stella Rodway), New York 1981.

a) Deportation

Elie Wiesel does not specify the date of his deportation to Auschwitz. His narrative starts, though, with reference to a specific date: “On the Saturday before Pentecost [“Shavu’oth” in the Italian edition], in the spring sunshine, people strolled, carefree and unheeding, through the swarming streets.” (p.22-23). In 1944, this festival fell on 28 May 1944 [14], a Sunday. The day in question was thus 27 May. The first transport of Jews left Sighet on the following day, hence, on 28 May. “Then, at last, at one o’clock in the afternoon, came the signal to leave” (p.27). Elie Wiesel then speaks of “Monday” (p. 29), the dawn (p.29), the day after tomorrow (p. 29) saying, at the end, “Saturday, the day of rest, was chosen for our expulsion” (p. 33) He then speaks about the traditional Friday evening meal and goes on to say: «The following morning, we marched to the station [...]» (p. 33, which means that the trip to Auschwitz began on Saturday, 3 June 1944.

The duration of the trip is not given, but transports from Hungary usually took three or four days to reach Auschwitz-Birkenau. Elie Wiesel spent the night at Birkenau and was moved to Auschwitz the following day where he was given the number A-7713, which was tattooed on his arm (p. 54). Yet, according to him, “it was a beautiful April day” (p. 51).

This schedule is pure invention. If he did leave Sighet on 3 June 1944 he could not have arrived at Auschwitz in April. Moreover, the ID number A-7713 was given out on 24 May, the day on which 2,000 Hungarian Jews were assigned the numbers A-5729 through A-7728 [15]. According to Randolph L. Braham, a Jewish transport left Máramarosziget on 20 May 1944.[16] Allowing four days for the journey, this was the transport of Lázár Wiesel who was assigned the ID number A-7713 precisely on 24 May 1944. But apparently, Elie Wiesel was unaware of all these things.

b) Arrival at Birkenau

Elie Wiesel writes:

«But we had reached a station. Those who were next to the windows told us its name: 'Auschwitz.' No one had ever heard that name» (p.37).

«Toward eleven o'clock, the train began to move. We pressed against the windows. The convoy was moving slowly. A quarter of an hour later, it slowed down again. Through the windows we could see barbed wire; we realized that this must be the camp» (p. 39).

«And as the train stopped, we saw this time that flames were gushing out of a tall chimney into the black sky» (p. 39).

«In front of us flames. In the air that smell of burning flesh. It must have been about midnight. We had arrived – at Birkenau, reception centre for Auschwitz» (p. 39).

From the geographical point of view, this tale is nonsense. The spur towards Birkenau left the main track at a station, (the so-called "old ramp") some 500 meters from the camp – as the crow flies – and then ran obliquely to the east of the camp fence. The spur was about 700 meters long.

There were four crematoria at Birkenau, named II, III, IV and V. The chimneys of the crematoria closest to the "old ramp" (II and III) were some 1,400 m away, in a straight line, and the other two (IV and V) about 1,800 meters. Over the last 400 m, the spur ran perpendicularly to the camp fence, which means that crematoria II and III could not be seen from the windows of the train, being situated straight ahead, as they were; the others were hidden behind at least 12 rows of barracks and had, moreover, two chimneys each.

As far as I know, no other witness ever spoke of having seen the chimneys of the crematoria from the deportation trains, and for good reason.



[3]

Document 3: Aerial photograph of the Birkenau camp, taken on 31 May 1944 (NA, 60PRS/462, D 1508, Exp. 3056). The circles mark the crematoria; (left to right) II, III, IV, V. The building in the shape of a "T", marked "ZS" is the Central Sauna. "EG" is the entrance building (*Eingangsbäude*). The arrow (at bottom) marks the railway spur. (Click on the picture to view it in full size).

Elie Wiesel's arrival at the camp is described only vaguely in his account; he takes great care to skirt any detail that might be verifiable. Aside from the "chimney" which will be discussed later, he speaks only of "barbed wire" (p. 39), then, inside the camp, of a crossroads (p. 40), a "ditch" (p. 43), "another large ditch" (p. 43), a "barrack" (p. 45), and "another barrack" (p. 48).

There is no mention of all the things which attracted the attention of the real deportees, as is shown in the photographs of the so-called *Auschwitz Album* [17] (which were taken a few days after the arrival of Lázár Wiesel's convoy: The entrance building (*Eingangsbäude*) with its archway through

which the trains entered the camp, the ramp (the so-called *Judenrampe* or Jewish ramp) with its three railway tracks inside the camp, the fences, the innumerable rows of barracks on either side, the long roads which split the camp lengthwise and crosswise, the drainage ditches, the watch-towers, the water basins for fire-fighting, or crematoria II and III at the far end of the ramp.



[4]

Document 4: Entrance building (*Eingangsgebäude*) of the Birkenau camp © Carlo Mattogno

Then the tale becomes a little more specific:

«A barrel of petrol at the entrance. Disinfection. Everyone was soaked in it. Then a hot shower. At high speed. As we came out from the water, we were driven outside. More running. Another barracks, the store. Very long tables. Mountains of prison clothes. On we ran. As we passed, trousers, tunic, shirt, and socks were thrown to us» (pp. 47-48).

This is pure invention: At the time, Birkenau had four disinfection and disinfection installations (*Entwesungs- und Desinfektionsanlagen*). The main one was the so-called *Zentralsauna* (*Entwesungsanlage*, BW 32) in the shape of a T near the western fence of the camp with its three hot-air disinfection chambers (*Heissluftentwesungskammern*), three steam autoclaves (*Dampf-Desinfektionsapparate*), shower hall complete with undressing room and dressing room, barbershop; there were two more such installations, designated as BW 5a and 5b, located in sectors BIb and BIa, similarly furnished with a shower hall, undressing room and dressing room, but one of them had a disinfection gas chamber working with Zyklon B, the other one had two hot-air disinfection chambers. Moreover, BIIa, the Gypsy camp, had 8 electrical disinfection devices (*elektrische Entlausungsapparate*).[18] In the first three installations, with their undressing rooms (*Auskleideraum*) and dressing rooms (*Ankleideraum*) all stages of the operation took place indoors. The disinfection procedure did not make use of petrol. But of all these things, Elie Wiesel did not have a clue.

We should also mention, at this point, the little tale of the “good” detainee who went around among the new arrivals, telling them to make themselves older or younger than their real age, in order to avoid being “gassed”. Elie Wiesel, who was not yet 15, was told to say that he was 18, while his father, who was fifty, was advised to say “forty” (p. 41) This is a foolish story, because each transport was accompanied by a transport manifest which contained, i.e., the last name, first name and date of birth for each of the new arrivals which means that any such pious lie would be discovered immediately upon registration. It is also nonsense from the point of view of the holocaust historians, because, according to a publication of the Auschwitz Museum, all children below age 14 were systematically gassed [19], whereas there was no age limit for adults. In the Auschwitz death registers (*Sterbebücher*) for 1943 we have 4,166 entries for persons between 51 and 90 years of age (no such registers are extant for 1944).[20]

c) “The” flaming chimney

Elie Wiesel had no idea of how many crematoria there were at Birkenau, what they were like and where they stood. Even though, at one point, he speaks of “six crematoria” (p. 78) he always talks about “the” chimney as if there had been only one, without identifying the crematorium. Actually, there were six chimneys at Birkenau: *which one* was spouting flames?

He dwells on a single strange phenomenon: «Do you see that chimney over there? See it? Do you see those flames? (Yes, we *did* see the flames.)» (My italics) (p.41). Now, at last, we know where the chimney was: “over there”!

The tale of the flaming chimneys was very popular in the 1950s, when Elie Wiesel wrote "Night" (1958). Nowadays, nobody treats the matter seriously, not even Robert Jan van Pelt who made an effort to prove that smoke came out of the chimneys of the crematoria... period.[21] Actually, there is no technical basis to this tale, as I have shown in a specific article.[22]



[5]

Document 5: A convoy of Hungarian Jews at the Birkenau camp – End of June, 1944. The arrows show crematoria II and III, without "flames" or smoke (from: *L'Album d'Auschwitz*, p. 51)

d) The "cremation pits"

We have here the most frightening part of his "eye-witness account":

«Not far from us, flames were leaping up from a ditch, gigantic flames. A lorry drew up at the pit and delivered its load – little children. Babies! Yes, I saw it – saw it with my own eyes... those children in the flames. (Is it surprising that I could not sleep after that? Sleep had fled from my eyes.)

So this was where we were going. A little farther on was another and larger ditch for adults.

I pinched my face. Was I still alive? Was I awake? I could not believe it. How could it be possible for them to burn people, children, and for the world to keep silent? No, none of this could be true. It was a nightmare... Soon I should wake with a start, my heart pounding, and find myself back in the bedroom of my childhood, among my books...

My father's voice drew me from my thoughts:

'It's a shame... a shame that you couldn't have gone with your mother... I saw several boys of your age going with their mothers...'

His voice was terribly sad. I realized that he did not want to see what they were going to do to me. He did not want to see the burning of his only son.

My forehead was bathed in cold sweat. But I told him that I did not believe that they could burn people in our age, that humanity would never tolerate it...

'Humanity? Humanity is not concerned with us. Today anything is allowed. Anything is possible, even these crematories...'

His voice was choking.

'Father,' I said, 'if that is so, I don't want to wait here. I'm going to run to the electric wire. That would be better than slow agony in the flames.'

He did not answer. He was weeping. His body was shaken convulsively. Around us, everyone was weeping. Someone began to recite the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I do not know if it has ever happened before, in the long history of the Jews, that people have ever recited the prayer for the dead for themselves.

'*Yitgadal veyitkadach shmé rabai...* May His Name be blessed and magnified...' Whispered my father.

For the first time, I felt revolt rise up in me. Why should I bless His name? The Eternal, Lord of the Universe, the All-Powerful and Terrible, was silent. What had I to thank Him for?

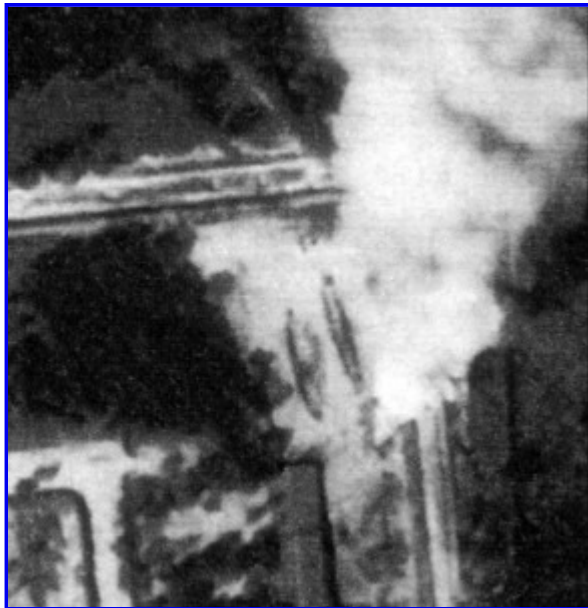
We continued our march. We were gradually drawing closer to the ditch, from which an infernal heat was rising. Still twenty steps to go. If I wanted to bring about my own death, this was the moment. Our line had now only fifteen paces to cover. I bit my lips so that my father would not hear my teeth chattering. Ten steps still. Eight. Seven. We marched slowly on, as though following a hearse at our own funeral. Four steps more. Three steps. There it was now, right in front of us, the pit and its flames. I gathered all that was left of my strength, so that I could break from the ranks and throw myself upon the barbed wire. In the depths of my heart, I bade farewell to my father, to the whole universe; and, in spite of myself, the words formed themselves and issued in a whisper from my lips: *Yitgadal veyitkadach shmé rabai...* May His Name be blessed and magnified... My heart was bursting. The moment had come. I was face to face with the Angel of Death...

No. Two steps from the pit we were ordered to turn to the left and made to go into a barracks» (pp. 43-45).

Where does all this take place? As usual, Elie Wiesel takes care not to furnish any kind of reference point as to the location. According to the holocaust historians, the "cremation pits" were located at two sites: one was outside of the camp, across from the *Zentralsauna* at the alleged "Bunker 2" [23] and another was in the northern yard of crematorium V. We must exclude the first site, because otherwise Elie Wiesel would have had to mention their leaving the camp and walking several hundred meters in open terrain.

What about the other site?

In the study *Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations* [24], I have shown, on the basis of an analysis of all available aerial photographs of Birkenau, that the story of the "cremation pits", as far as their *number*, their *size* or their *purpose* are concerned, is not borne out by the reality on the ground. The *only* documented site of any kind of cremation that may have existed at Birkenau was a space behind crematorium V, it covered an area of some 50 square meters – whereas, if we follow the holocaust propaganda, the alleged extermination of the Hungarian Jews is said to have required "cremation ditches" with an area of about 5,900 square meters altogether – as we can see from this photograph:



[6]

Document 6: Aerial photograph of Birkenau taken on 23 August 1944 – Northern yard of Crematorium V. The smoking site is very small, as can be seen from the size of crematorium V which was about 13 meters wide. (Click on the picture to view it in full size).

We must remember, moreover, that in order to reach this point it would have been necessary to pass crematoria IV and V which surely would not have escaped the eye of as acute an observer of chimneys as Elie Wiesel – there were four chimneys, after all. What is more, there were no barracks in the vicinity, there was only crematorium V. Finally, the nearest wire fence against which our witness wanted to throw himself (on the north side) ran along on the far side of a drainage ditch.

Wiesel's tale is not only historically unfounded, it is also absurd, because if Wiesel had really come within two steps of a real "cremation pit" – which would have had to be run at a temperature of about 600 degC to be effective – he would have been killed by the intense heat.

The scene of the truck unloading children into a "cremation pit" is also one of the ludicrous propaganda arguments of the post-war era. It was illustrated by one of David Olère's drawings in 1947 which was then to inspire a number of later "eye-witnesses".[25]

Wiesel's story thus turns out to be both false and absurd, but it is also a blatant subterfuge: if he and his father had really been "selected" for work, why were they taken anywhere near the "cremation pit"? So that they would discover the "terrible secret" of Auschwitz and spread their story to other camps?

It is obvious that we have here nothing but a simple trick used by Wiesel to style himself as an "eye-witness" of a horrific but purely fictitious event.

e) The transfer to Auschwitz

After a night spent in a barrack of the Gypsy camp, Elie Wiesel was moved to the Auschwitz main camp. Here too, the description is exceedingly vague:

«The march had lasted half an hour. Looking around me, I noticed that the barbed wires were behind us. We had left the camp.

It was a beautiful April day. The fragrance of spring was in the air. The sun was setting in the west.

But we had been marching for only a few moments when we saw the barbed wire of another camp. An iron door with the inscription over it:

'Work is liberty!'

Auschwitz» (pp. 51-52).

He does not even seem to have noticed passing through the archway of the Birkenau entrance building. Along the way, he notices nothing, neither the bridge across the railroad tracks, nor the long tree-lined road leading to the main camp. On the other hand, he immediately sees the inscription "Arbeit macht frei" (but does not render it in German), as could anyone who ever heard of Auschwitz.

Needless to say that he makes sure not to provide us with an even sketchy description of the new camp. On arrival, he was taken to *Block* 17 about which he does not tell the reader anything, for obvious reasons.

«In the afternoon we were made to line up. Three prisoners brought a table and some medical instruments. With the left sleeve rolled up, each person passed in front of the table. The three 'veterans,' with needles in their hands, engraved a number on our left arms. I became A-7713» (pp. 53-54).

Even this facet is false. I have already spoken of the fraudulent ID number. Here, Tadeusz Iwasko informs us that

«The new arrivals (*Zugang*) were taken to the bathhouses which, at Auschwitz I, were located in block no. 26».[26]

Elie Wiesel keeps quiet about all the preparatory operations prior to admission, which he is obviously unfamiliar with:

«Registration took place immediately after the bath and the consignment of the clothes; it involved the filling-out of a form (*Häftlings-Personalbogen*) giving personal data and the address of the nearest relatives. [...]. The detainee was then assigned a serial number which would be used instead of his name throughout his stay at the camp. Registration ended with this number being tattooed on his lower left arm».[27]

He goes on to speak of the evening roll call:

«*Tens of thousands* of prisoners stood in rows while the SS checked their numbers» (p.54) (my italics)

The Auschwitz camp strength, however, was far lower. On 12 July 1944, the camp held about 14,400 detainees.[28]

f) The transfer to Monowitz

After having spent three weeks at Auschwitz (p. 55), Elie Wiesel was transferred to the Buna camp (p. 59), also called Auschwitz III, at Monowitz. Here, again, we have no verifiable particulars.[29] What little details he gives us are all fanciful. He starts out right away with a contradiction:

«Our convoy included a few children ten and twelve years old» (p. 58).

Perhaps these youngsters, too, had told the Germans that they were eighteen years of age, so that they would be spared the gas chambers?

Then «[...] we were installed in two tents» (p. 58), as if Monowitz did not have the 60 barracks which Primo Levi told us about:

«Our Lager is a square of about six hundred yards in length, surrounded by two fences of barbed wire, the inner one carrying a high tension current. It consists of sixty wooden huts, which are called *Blocks*, ten of which are in construction. In addition, there is the body of the kitchens, which are in brick; an experimental farm, run by a detachment of privileged *Häftlinge*; the huts with the showers and the latrines, one for each group of six or eight *Blocks*. Besides these, certain *Blocks* are reserved for specific purposes. First of all, a group of eight, at the extreme eastern end of the camp, forms the infirmary and clinic; then there is *Block* 24 which is the *Krätzeblock*, reserved for infectious skin diseases; *Block* 7 which no ordinary *Häftling* has ever entered, reserved for the "*Prominenz*", that is, the aristocracy, the internees holding the highest posts; *Block* 47, reserved for the *Reichsdeutsche* (the Aryan Germans, 'political' or criminals); *Block* 49, for the *Kapos* alone; *Block* 12, half of which, for use of the *Reichsdeutsche* and the *Kapos*, serves as canteen, that is, a distribution centre for tobacco, insect powder and occasionally other articles; *Block* 37, which formed the Quartermaster's office and the Office for Work; and finally, *Block* 29, which always has its windows closed as it is the *Frauenblock*, the camp brothel, served by Polish *Häftling* girls, and reserved for the

When compared to this text, Elie Wiesel's non-description can only be qualified as pathetic.

When he spoke at Montecitorio, Elie Wiesel boasted of having known Primo Levi:

«At a certain point, both of us were assigned to *the same barrack*, but he was not there during the death-march towards the [railroad] cars which took us to Buchenwald, he stayed in the hospital» (my italics)[31]

However, Primo Levi was assigned to *Block 30* [32], then to *Block 45* [33] and finally to *Block 48*. [34] Which *Block* was Wiesel's? The answer is not as simple as that. Initially, Wiesel speaks of «the orchestra block» [35] which was, indeed, near the *door* of the camp (p. 60), then he mentions *Block 36* a couple of times: «with all my might I began to run to block 36» (p. 84), «I ran to block 36» (p. 87) without telling us whether he eventually stayed there, finally he says clearly that he stayed in *Block 57* (p. 96). In fact, Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi were never housed in the same barrack. A little white lie right in the middle of Montecitorio, right smack in the face of so many listeners!

The little tale of ripping out gold teeth from the mouths of living detainees (p. 63) and the ensuing closure of the dental station (*Zahnstation*) is unfounded. Gold teeth were removed from corpses and the *Zahnstation*, located in *Block 15* and run by the SS, was never closed down.

Elie Wiesel then goes on to tell us about a detainee "selected" for death in the "gas chamber":

«When the selection came, he was condemned in advance, offering his own neck to the executioner. All he asked of us was:

'In three days I shall no longer be here.... Say the Kaddish for me.'

We promised him. In three days' time, when we saw the smoke rising from the chimney, we would think of him. Ten of us would gather together and hold a special service. All his friends would say the Kaddish.

Then he went off toward the hospital, his step steadier, not looking back. *An ambulance was waiting to take him to Birkenau*» (pp. 88-89) (my italics)

Our "eye witness" had either forgotten that he was at Monowitz where there was no crematorium or had such a keen eye that he could see the smoke from "the chimney" (one of six, the choice is yours) at Birkenau, something that would be rather improbable in view of the fact that the two camps were 5 km apart as the crow flies and the town of Auschwitz stood between them.

Also, sending an ambulance to take a detainee to the gas chamber would really be an example of "*Sonderbehandlung*", a very "special treatment"!

On the subject of "selections", Elie Wiesel asserts that «the notorious Dr. Mengele» was present at one of them (p. 85); but Mengele was *Lagerarzt* of the Gypsy camp (BIIE) at Birkenau and certainly had other duties than to go to Monowitz and carry out "selections" there. Mengele, incidentally, is the only physician mentioned by Elie Wiesel, and is also the one who received him at Birkenau (p. 42); the name is very well known among those who never even came near Auschwitz.

Our eye-witness even mentions an occurrence that one can verify: an allied air-raid.

It took place «one Sunday» (p. 70), he remembers the day very well because he had decided «[...] to stay in bed late in the morning» (p. 70) «The raid lasted over an hour» (p. 72) and he comments: «To see the whole works (*la fabbrica* in the Italian edition, p. 62) go up in fire – what revenge!» (p. 72) (my italics).

In reality, the raid took place on 13 September 1944, which was a Wednesday, it lasted 13 minutes, from 11:17 through 11:30 (a.m.) and destroyed only part of the installations. Actually, at Monowitz there was not only one plant but quite a few.

We will not go into minor silly statements, such as the death sentence pronounced «in the name of Himmler [...]» (p.74) and move on to his stay at the camp hospital (probably inspired by Primo Levi's account). It took place «in mid-January» when his right foot swelled up because of chillblains and he had to be operated on. He had to move into the hospital and immediately noticed that «it was indeed true that the hospital was very small [...]»(p. 90). Actually, it consisted of only nine *Blocks*, two for recovery (13 and 22), two for surgery (14 and 16), one for internal medicine and dentistry (15), two for internal medicine (17 and 19), one for out-patients and reception(18) and one for infectious

diseases.[36]

g) The transfer to Buchenwald

We do not have to go into the motivations for Wiesel's decision to leave with the Germans rather than wait for the Soviets to arrive, because, in its literary context, it is psychologically explained by the (unjustified) fear that all those remaining behind in the camp would be shot.

Leaving aside the evacuation march itself and the ride on the train, we will consider the details of the arrival at Buchenwald, keeping in mind only the duration of the whole trip: three days' stay at Gleiwitz (p. 107), plus one day for the march from Monowitz, and «ten days, ten nights of travelling» (p. 111) for a total of at least 14 days. On arrival at Buchenwald we have the usual fogginess – no part of the camp can be identified in any way. Wiesel speaks of showers «On the third day after our arrival at Buchenwald» (p. 118) but avoids any kind of detail regarding the registration procedure. We have already seen that Miklós Grüner and Lázár Wiesel who really did go to Buchenwald were respectively assigned the ID numbers 120762 and 123565.

If Elie Wiesel had in any manner wanted to speak of the registration which he had to go through like everyone else, obviously, he would have had to say something about *two* ID numbers. Worse still, there is no record of a person by the name of Elie (or Eliezer) Wiesel in the Buchenwald files.

Let us take a look at the account of his arrival at Buchenwald to see whether it agrees with the documents.

He states that he went to have a shower «on the third day after our arrival at Buchenwald» (p. 118) and that this had occurred on «January 28, 1945» (p.123), which means that he left Monowitz on 11 January and arrived at Buchenwald on 25 January. Actually, there were three convoys of deportees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex which went to Buchenwald [37] in January of 1945:

Date of departure	Date of arrival	ID numbers	Number of detainees
18 January	22 January	117195-119418	2,224
18 January	23 January	119419-120337	919
18 January	26 Januar	120348-124274	3,927

No convoy left on 11 January, no convoy took longer than 8 days to arrive. The one arriving on 26 January had both Lázár Wiesel and Miklós Grüner on board, as we can see from the ID numbers assigned to them – 120762 and 123565.

As has been mentioned above, the original Yiddish text from which Elie Wiesel took chapter VII of his book (the account of the journey from Gleiwitz to Buchenwald) has been translated into English by Moshe Spiegel under the title "*The Death Train*"[38]. The two texts are very similar, except that in the first book the number of detainees loaded into Elie Wiesel's car is not 100 but 120.[39] Moreover, there is a mention here of the number of cars on the train: 25.[40] On the other hand, the number of detainees in Elie Wiesel's car still alive on arrival at Buchenwald is the same for both: 12 (p. 101).[41] This means that, in this car, there was a mortality of 88 or 90%, respectively. But the entire convoy would have had a similar death rate:

«The journey lasted ten interminable days and nights. Each day claimed its toll of victims and each night paid its homage to the Angel of Death».[42]

On the day of the arrival at Buchenwald, there were 40 deaths.[43]

Thus, initially, there would have been (25 x 100 ~ 120 =) 2,500 ~ 3,000 detainees altogether on this train, with most of them dying on the way.

On the other hand, it is known from the train manifests, that the transport which reached Buchenwald on 26 January comprised, on departure, exactly 3,987 detainees [44]; if 3,927 of them were registered at Buchenwald on arrival there were 60 deaths, or a mortality of 1.5 percent, along the way.

Taking all these aspects into account, one can see that the description given by Elie Wiesel for the journey from Gleiwitz to Buchenwald cannot be true.

In short, Elie Wiesel was never interned at Birkenau, nor at Auschwitz, nor at Monowitz, nor at Buchenwald.

As far as Elie Wiesel's father Shlomo is concerned, while his name [45] does appear in the *Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names* [46] at Yad Vashem, this information was provided on 8 October 2004 by Elie Wiesel himself!

One last remark: It is asserted that Elie Wiesel's presence at Buchenwald is borne out by the fact that he appears on a photograph showing a group of detainees at this camp:

«Photo by Harry Miller of slave laborers in the Buchenwald concentration camp after U.S. troops of the 80th Div. entered the camp. Taken on 16 April 1945. Miklos Grüner (Haft-Nr. 120762) is on the left at the bottom, while Elie Wiesel (Haft-Nr. 123565) is on the next row up, seventh along, nearest to the third pillar from the left».[47]

However, the interpretation that the face of the person shown on this photograph is Elie Wiesel's is based solely on his own statement to the effect that he recognized himself. As to "his" ID number – 123565 – that number belonged to Lázár Wiesel!

Carlo Mattogno [48]

[1] See the shorthand minutes in:

http://www.camera.it/cartellecomuni/Leg16/files/pdf/opuscolo_giorno_della_memoria.pdf [7]

[2] In: <http://www.haon.hu/hirek/magyarorszag/cikk/meg-mindig-kiserti-a-halaltabor/cn/haon-news-FCUWeb-20090303-0604233755> [8]

[3] In http://www.henrymakow.com/translated_from_the_hungarian.html [9]

[4] *Elie Wiesel*, section on "Early life",

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie_Wiesel [10]

[5] NARA, A 3355, RG 242.

[6] *Idem*.

[7] *Sighetu Marmației*, in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sighetu_Marma%C5%A3iei [11]

[8] YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, 1962.

[9] François Mauriac wrote a preface for Elie Wiesel's book.

[10] Michael Wiesberg, *Unversöhnlich – Elie Wiesel zum 80*. In: *Grundlagen*, Sezession 25, August 2008, p. 25.

[11] Giuntina, Firenze, 1986.

[12] In: R. Faurisson, *Écrits Révisionnistes (1974-1998)*, vol. II, De 1984 à 1989. Édition privée hors commerce, 1999, pp. 606-610. Online: <http://www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/archFaur/1986-1990/RF861017.htm> [12] (French); <http://www.ihr.org/leaflets/wiesel.shtml> [13] (English).

[13] *Elie Wiesel: la donnola travestita da agnello*, in: <http://andreacarancini.blogspot.com/2010/01/elie-wiesel-la-donnola-travestita-da.html> [14]

[14] <http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?year=1944&v=1&month=5&yt=G&nh=on&nx=on&i=off&vis=on&set=on&c=off&geo=zip&zip=&m=72&.cgifields=nx&.cgifields=nh&.s=Get+Calendar> [15]

[15] Liste der Judentransporte, Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, microfilm no. 727/27.

[16] R.L. Braham, *A Magyar Holocaust*. Gondolat Budapest-Blackburn International Inc., Wilmington, 1988, p. 514.

[17] *L'Album d'Auschwitz*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1983.

[18] These installations have been well described by Jean-Claude Pressac in: *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York 1989, pp. 53-85.

[19] *Auschwitz. Il campo nazista della morte*. Edizioni del Museo Statale di Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1997, p. 122.

[20] Thomas Grotum, Jan Parcer, "EDV-gestützte Auswertung der Sterbeeinträge", in: *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz*, State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Ed. K.G. Saur, Munich, New Providence, London, Paris 1995, vol. 1, p. 248.

[21] R.J. van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz. Evidence from the Irving Trial*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 2002, p. 504.

[22] «Combustion Experiments with Flesh and Animal Fat on cremations in pits in the alleged extermination camps of the Third Reich», in: *The Revisionist*, Vol. 2, Number 1, February 2004, pp. 64-72.

[23] But no photograph shows the presence of smoke in this area.

[24] Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2005.

[25] See also my study *Le camere a gas di Auschwitz. Studio storico-tecnico sugli "indizi criminali" di Jean-Claude Pressac e sulla "convergenza di prove" di Robert Jan van Pelt*, Effepi, Genoa 2009, p. 552.

[26] *Auschwitz. Il campo nazista della morte*, op. cit., p. 52.

- [27] Idem, p. 54.
- [28] D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*, Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1989, p. 821.
- [29] Except the mention of the barrack of the camp orchestra.
- [30] Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity* (re-titled edition of *If This Is a Man*), Collier, New York 1961, p. 27.
- [31] http://www.camera.it/cartellecomuni/Leg16/files/pdf/opuscolo_giorno_della_memoria.pdf ^[7]
- [32] Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, op.cit., p. 33.
- [33] Idem, p. 51.
- [34] Idem, p. 116.
- [35] The *Blocc* for the orchestra was not counted with the other barracks of the camp, numbered 1 through 60.
- [36] Irena Strzelecka, Piotr Setkiewicz, «Bau, Ausbau und Entwicklung des KL Auschwitz und seiner Nebenlager», in: W. Długobordki, F. Piper, *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslager Auschwitz*, Verlag des Staatlichen Museums Auschwitz-Birkenau 1999, Bd. I, p. 128.
- [37] Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis, *Auschwitz*, Deel VI, 's-Gravenhage, 1952, p. 39.
- [38] In: Jacob Glatstein, Israel Knox and Samuel Margoshes (Eds.), *Anthology of Holocaust Literature*, A Temple Book, Atheneum, New York 1968, pp. 3-10.
- [39] Idem., p. 10.
- [40] Idem., p. 9.
- [41] Idem., p. 10.
- [42] Idem., p. 5.
- [43] Idem., p. 10.
- [44] Andrzej Strzelecki, *Endphase des KL Auschwitz*, Verlag Staatliches Museum in Oświęcim-Brzezinka 1995, pp. 338-229. Reproduction of two pages of the original transport manifest.
- [45] He is listed there as Shlomo Vizel, son of Eliezer and of Nisel, born at Sighet and died at Buchenwald on 27 January 1945. The year of his birth is not indicated.
- [46] http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome ^[16]
- [47] *Elie Wiesel's identity crisis*, in: <http://christopherhitchenswatch.blogspot.com/2009/03/elie-wiesels-identity-crisis.html> ^[17]
- [48] The Italian original of this article, *Elie Wiesel: «Il più autorevole testimone vivente» della Shoah?*, dated 3 February 2010, is found online at: http://ita.vho.org/056_Elie_Wiesel.htm ^[18] (This English translation contains some minor revisions made for it by the author).

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- [9] http://www.henrymakow.com/translated_from_the_hungarian.html
- [10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie_Wiesel
- [11] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sighetu_Marma%C5%A3iei
- [12] <http://www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/archFaur/1986-1990/RF861017.htm>: <http://www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/archFaur/1986-1990/RF861017.html>

[13] <http://www.ihr.org/leaflets/wiesel.shtml>: **<http://www.ihr.org/leaflets/wiesel.shtml>**

[14] <http://andreacarancini.blogspot.com/2010/01/elie-wiesel-la-donnola-travestita-da.html>:
<http://andreacarancini.blogspot.com/2010/01/elie-wiesel-la-donnola-travestita-da.html>

[15] <http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?year=1944&v=1&month=5&yt=G&nh=on&nx=on&i=off&vis=on&set=on&c=off&geo=zip&zip=&m=72&.cgifields=nx&.cgifields=nh&.s=Get+Calendar>:
<http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?year=1944&v=1&month=5&yt=G&nh=on&nx=on&i=off&vis=on&set=on&c=off&geo=zip&zip=&m=72&.cgifields=nx&.cgifields=nh&.s=Get+Calendar>

[16] http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome: **http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome**

[17] <http://christopherhitchenswatch.blogspot.com/2009/03/elie-wiesels-identity-crisis.html>:
<http://christopherhitchenswatch.blogspot.com/2009/03/elie-wiesels-identity-crisis.html>

[18] http://ita.vho.org/056_Elie_Wiesel.htm: **http://ita.vho.org/056_Elie_Wiesel.htm**