



Who we are

Chemical Warfare Agents and Zyklon B

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Amorgana GmbH, based in Ludwigshafen, for this purpose. From 1941, one of its managing directors is the Ludwigshafen chemist Otto Ambros, Buna and poison gas expert at IG Farben, head of the inorganic department at the Ludwigshafen/Oppau works since 1938 and member of the board of I.G. Farben. He plays a leading role in the large-scale production of the warfare agents Tabun and Lost. The sarin plants in Dyhernfurth and Falkenhagen do not go into operation until the end of the war.



Zyklon B is a hydrogen cyanide-based poison gas that has been used in gas chambers in Nazi concentration camps since September 1941 for the systematic murder of well over a million people, most of them Jews. Originally developed as a pesticide, Zyklon B was sold by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung mbH (Degesch), founded in 1919, and by its sales companies from 1930/31.

IG Farben has held a 42.5 percent stake in Degesch since 1930. The Ludwigshafen “plant manager” Carl Wurster (1900-1974) has been a member of its Board of Directors since 1940. After the end of the war (1945) and particularly in the context of the Nuremberg Trials, the question is raised as to whether those responsible at I.G. Farben knew that Zyklon B was being used for the mass murder of people from September 1941. The answer cannot be given with absolute certainty. Based on surviving documents and witness testimony, the judges at the IG Farben trial in Nuremberg came to the conclusion that it could not be proven beyond doubt that the defendant Carl Wurster must have known about the misuse of the pesticide for industrial mass extermination. He was therefore acquitted on this and the other charges in 1948.

Historical research today assumes that rumors about the systematic extermination of Jews in gas chambers reached the IG Farben employees on site in Auschwitz soon after their initiation. They became more and more certain, and in individual cases, IG Farben supervisors are said not only to have spoken openly about the gassing, but also to have used it as a means of pressuring concentration camp inmates to work harder. In addition, the notorious selections of concentration camp prisoners “unfit for work” for gassing in Auschwitz-Birkenau were also initiated by IG Farben employees, for example when work performance declined or the sickness rate among concentration camp prisoners on the company's construction site was high. They even took part in carrying out the selections.

Due to the lively exchange of personnel and information between IG Farben and its plant in Auschwitz-Monowitz, rumors about the gassings are also said to have quickly spread to the main plants - including Ludwigshafen/Oppau. Even if no one from the top management of IG Farben was directly confronted with the death machinery, because the numerous visits to the construction site in Auschwitz-Monowitz did not include the extermination camp in Auschwitz-



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had been a member of the IG Farben Board of Management since 1938. In 1952, after BASF was re-established, he became its first Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors.



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