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The Concentration Camps Inside the Nazi System of Incarceration and Genocide

Part 3A: The Final Solution

This document contains historical images
of the Holocaust and the concentration camps.

Please be advised that some of these pictures
and descriptions are graphic
and may be disturbing to viewers.



The “Final Solution” was the euphemistic term for the Nazi plan to “purify” the German (Aryan) race and annihilate the Jewish people. It began with Nazi efforts to intimidate Jews into leaving Germany, but evolved into a genocidal campaign to murder all Jewish people.

Members of a Nazi-sympathetic Lithuanian militia force a group of Jewish women from Panevėžys, Lithuania to undress before their execution. *Photo credit: USHMM #25737.*



Nazi SS leaders Heinrich Himmler (front) and Reinhard Heydrich (center rear) during a trip to Estonia. *Photo credit: USHMM #60454.*

The Wannsee Conference was a January 1942 meeting between Nazi officials that helped organize the deportation and murder of Jews across Europe. It was chaired by Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the Reich Security Main Office and Himmler's chief assistant.



View of the walled entrance to the gas chamber in the main camp of Auschwitz I.

Photo credit: USHMM #50773.

Despite killing over a million Jews by the end of 1941, the Nazis implemented plans to exterminate its stated enemies at a faster rate.

By 1942, the Nazis built dozens of new gas chambers—as well as enlarged existing ones—at several large concentration camps. Auschwitz became the Nazis' largest killing center with the addition of 4 large gas chambers and crematoria at the nearby Birkenau (Auschwitz II) satellite camp.



In 1941, half of the 70,000 Jews living in Latvia were murdered by Nazi killing squads (Einsatzgruppen).

Remaining Jews were confined to various ghettos where they were subjected to forced labor and subsequently killed.

A group of Jewish prisoners marching towards forced labor in Liepāja, Latvia, August 1941.

Photo credit: USHMM #55155.



Jews move their belongings into the Grodno, Belarus ghetto. *Photo credit: USHMM #50349.*

In November 1941, approximately 25,000 Jews were forced into two ghettos in Grodno, Belarus.

There, thousands died in mass shootings or in the gas chambers of several extermination camps, including Majdanek, Treblinka, and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

By July, 1944, when Grodno was liberated by Soviet troops, just 200 Jews were still alive.



The Nazis murdered approximately 300 Jews in Częstochowa, Poland on September 4, 1939—a day known as “Bloody Monday.”

Nazi-German soldiers round-up a group of Jewish men on Strażacka Street in Częstochowa before their murder in September 1939. *Photo credit: USHMM #26824.*