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The Concentration Camp at Majdanek (Konzentrationslager Lublin)

Camp located in the Majdan Tatarski quarter within the borders of the Lublin Stadthauptmannschaft — the capital city of the Lublin District (Distrikt Lublin) of the General Government (Generalgouvernement).

Its construction began in 1941 and it was to be a POW camp under SS administration (Kriegsgefangenenlager der Waffen-SS). It was officially transformed into a concentration camp only on February 16, 1943. During the war there was a plan to build a complex for 250,000 prisoners and POWs, but it was never carried out.

In chronological order the camp commandants were: SS-Standartenführer Karl Otto Koch (August 1941–August 1942), SS-Obersturmbannführer Max Koegel (August 1942–November 1942), SS-Sturmbannführer Hermann Florstedt (November 1942–November 1943), SS-Obersturmbannführer Martin Weiss (November 1943–May 1944), SS-Obersturmbannführer Artur Liebehenschel (May 1944–22 July 1944). In mid-February 1943 the camp for hostages (Aufgangslager der Ordnungspolizei in KL Lublin) became an autonomous part of the camp.

The first transport of about 2,000 Soviet POWs arrived at Majdanek in October 1941. Throughout the next year most new prisoners were Polish or Jewish. In 1943 the camp began to receive transports of prisoners from Poland, people captured during street round-ups in the GG, people from occupied territories of the USSR, and displaced persons from the Zamość region. In December 1943 the camp began to receive transports of prisoners from other concentration camps. During the functioning of the camp Poles made up 38 percent of the prisoners. The prisoners were employed in over 200 work units.

During 1941-1942 the sick Soviet POWs were murdered in mass executions. About 2,000 Polish Jews were liquidated in April 1942, while on November 3, 1943 all Jewish prisoners of the camp were murdered within the framework of the Operation Harvest Festival (Erntefest Aktion). In the fall of 1942 the prisoners began to be killed in seven of the camp's gas chambers. The murdered victims' bodies were burnt in the camp crematorium, which functioned from mid-1942. Similarly to Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka, the prisoners' bodies were also burnt on piles of timber. The camp's subcamps were organized in Budzyń near Kraśnik, in Lublin on Lipowa Street, in Puławy, Radom, and Warsaw on Gęsia Street.

In spring 1944 the Germans began to evacuate the prisoners to other camps located mostly in the Reich. The camp closed on July 22, 1944, the day before the Red Army arrived.

The total number of prisoners amounts to ca. 150,000, with 60,000 out of ca. 80,000 victims being Jewish.

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