

# [Auschwitz](https://assignbuster.com/auschwitz/)

Auschwitz
How could all this have happened? This
is one of the many questions associated with the Holocaust. The Third Reich
of no doubt on of the worlds largest and most feared empires. It could
have easily overthrown the Roman Empire and was the most worthy adversary
of the British Empire. The most overwhelming and terrifying aspect of the
Second World War has got to be the ghettos, concentration camps and of
course the death camps. The camp that stands out in everybodys mind has
got to be Auschwitz. Out of the 6. 8 million killed there were 6000 killed
at Auschwitz a day. What some people may not know is that Auschwitz was
actually three camps fused into one. The most potent and efficient way
of mass murder was the gas chamber. That is if you lasted the trip there.

But the most insulting part of the whole ordeal to the Jewish was being
burned in one of the many Crematoriums.

The Nazis established Auschwitz in April
1940 under the direction of Heinrich Himmler, chief of two Nazi organizations-the
Nazi guards known as the Schutzstaffel (SS), and the secret police known
as the Gestapo. The camp at Auschwitz originally housed political prisoners
from occupied Poland and from concentration camps within Germany. Construction
of nearby Birkenau (Brzenzinka), also known as Auschwitz II, began in October
1941 and included a women's section after August 1942. Birkenau had four
gas chambers, designed to resemble showers, and four crematoria, used to
incinerate bodies.

Approximately 40 more satellite camps
were established around Auschwitz. These were forced labor camps and were
known collectively as Auschwitz III. The first one was built at Monowitz
and held Poles who had been forcibly evacuated from their hometowns by
the Nazis. Prisoners were transported from all over Nazi-occupied Europe
by rail, arriving at Auschwitz in daily convoys. Arrivals at the complex
were separated into three groups. One group went to the gas chambers within
a few hours; these people were sent to the Birkenau camp, where more than
20, 000 people could be gassed and cremated each day. At Birkenau, the Nazis
used a cyanide gas called Zyklon-B, which was manufactured by a pest-control
company. A second group of prisoners were used as slave labor at industrial
factories for such companies as I. G. Farben and Krupp. Camp Commandant
Rudolf Hoess admitted to a minimum figure of 2. 5 million deaths at Auschwitz.

Reflecting back some years later on the experiments in the basement of
Block 11 and later in Gas Chamber and Crematorium 1, Hoess said:
" At the time I did not think about
the problem of killing Soviet prisoners of war. It was an order and I had
to execute it. However, I will say frankly that killing that group of people
by gas relieved my anxieties. It would soon be necessary to start the mass
extermination of the Jews, and until that moment neither I Eichmann had
known how to conduct a mass killing. A sort of gas was to be used, but
it was not known what kind of gas was meant and how to use it. Now we had
both the gas and the way of using it. I had always been concerned at the
thought of mass shootings, particularly of women and children. I was already
sick of executions. Now my mind was at ease."
Some prisoners survived through the help
of German industrialist Oskar Schindler, who saved about 1000 Polish Jews
by diverting them from Auschwitz to work for him, first in his factory
near Krakow and later at a factory in what is now the Czech Republic. A
third group, mostly twins and dwarfs, underwent medical experiments at
the hands of doctors such as Josef Mengele, who was also known as the " Angel
of Death." The camp was staffed partly by prisoners, some of whom were
selected to be kapos (orderlies) and sonderkommandos (workers at the crematoria).

Members of these groups were killed periodically. The kapos and sonderkommandos
were supervised by members of the SS; altogether 6000 SS members worked
at Auschwitz. By 1943 resistance organizations had developed in the camp.

These organizations helped a few prisoners escape; these escapees took
with them news of exterminations, such as the killing of hundreds of thousands
of Jews transported from Hungary between May and July 1944. In October
1944 a group of sonderkommandos destroyed one of the gas chambers at Birkenau.

They and their accomplices, a group of women from the Monowitz labor camp,
were all put to death. When the Soviet army marched into Auschwitz to liberate
the camp on January 27, 1945, they found about 7600 survivors abandoned
there. More than 58, 000 prisoners had already been evacuated by the Nazis
and sent on a final death march to Germany. In 1946 Poland founded a museum
at the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp in remembrance of its victims.

By 1994, about 22 million visitors-700, 000 annually-had passed through
the iron gates that bear the cynical motto Arbeit macht frei (work makes
one free).

German war interests required the maximization
of economic benefits from this cold-blooded murder. Before
the bodies were burned the victim's hair was cut off and fillings and false
teeth made of precious metals were removed. The hair was used for making
haircloth, and the metals were melted into bars and sent to Berlin. After
the liberation tons of hair were found in camp warehouses; the Nazis had
not had time to process it all. Proof that this hair came from victims
of gassing was provided by The Krakow Institute of Judicial Expertise,
whose analyses showed that traces of prussic acid, a poisonous component
typical of Zyklon compounds, were present in the hair.

In 1941-1944 prisoner of KL Auschwitz,
then of KL Gross-Rosen and KL Flossenburg-Leitmeritz, from which he escaped
in April 1945. After the war, journalist, author of many articles about
Auschwitz: active in many associations and organizations, acting, for example
as Secretary General of the International Auschwitz Committee and member
of the Main Commission for the investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.

Deniers acknowledge that some Jews were incarcerated in places such as
Auschwitz, but they maintain, as they did at the trial of a Holocaust denier
in Canada, it was equipped with " all the luxuries of a country club,
including a swimming pool, a dance hall and recreational facilities." Some
Jews may have died, they said, but this was the natural consequence of
wartime deprivations."