

Elie Wiesel

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.

From Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Bantam, 1982), p. 32. This quote also appears in the Permanent Exhibition of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Elie Wiesel was born in Sighet, Romania, on September 30, 1928.

A Nobel Peace Prize winner and Boston University professor, Wiesel has worked on behalf of oppressed people for much of his adult life. His personal experience of the [Holocaust](#) has led him to use his talents as an author, teacher, and storyteller to defend human rights and peace throughout the world.

A native of Sighet, Transylvania ([Romania](#), from 1940-1945 [Hungary](#)), Wiesel and his family were [deported](#) by the Nazis to [Auschwitz](#) when he was 15 years old. His mother and younger sister perished there, his two older sisters survived. Wiesel and his father were later transported to [Buchenwald](#), where his father died.

After the war, Wiesel studied in Paris and later became a journalist in that city, yet he remained silent about what he has endured as an inmate in the camps. During an interview with the French writer Francois Mauriac, Wiesel was persuaded to end that silence. He subsequently wrote *La Nuit* (Night). Since its publication in 1958, *La Nuit* has been translated into 30 languages and millions of copies have been sold. In *Night*, Wiesel describes his experiences and emotions at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust: the roundup of his family and neighbors in the Romanian town of Sighet; deportation by cattle car to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau; the division of his family forever during the selection process; the mental and physical anguish he and his fellow prisoners experienced as they were stripped of their humanity; and the death march from Auschwitz-Birkenau to the concentration camp at Buchenwald.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed him Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. In 1980, he became Founding Chairman of the [United States Holocaust Memorial Council](#). Wiesel is also the founding president of the Paris-based Universal Academy of Cultures.

Wiesel's efforts to defend human rights and peace throughout the world have earned him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Liberty Award, the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor, and in 1986, the Nobel Peace Prize. He has received more than 100 honorary degrees from institutions of higher learning.

Three months after he received the Nobel Peace Prize, Elie Wiesel and his wife Marion established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity. Its mission is to advance the cause of human rights and peace throughout the world by creating a new forum for the discussion of urgent ethical issues confronting humanity.

His more than 40 books have won numerous awards, including the *Prix Medicis* for *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, the *Prix Livre Inter* for *The Testament*, and the Grand Prize for Literature from the City of Paris for *The Fifth Son*. The first volume of Wiesel's memoirs, *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, was published in New York (Knopf) in December 1995. The second volume, *And the Sea is Never Full*, was published in New York (Knopf) in November 1999.

Elie Wiesel has been Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972-1976), and first Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in the Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982-1983). Since 1976, he has been the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University where he also holds the title of University Professor.

Induction

In his best-known work, *Night*, Elie Wiesel describes his experiences and emotions at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust: the roundup of his family and neighbors in the Romanian town of Sighet; deportation by cattle car to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau; the division of his family forever during the selection process; the mental and physical anguish he and his fellow prisoners experienced as they were stripped of their humanity; and the death march from Auschwitz-Birkenau to the concentration camp at Buchenwald, where his father died just days before American troops liberated the camp.

Well-known for his writing about the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel is also a champion of human rights and an outspoken advocate for awareness of past and potential acts of genocide. In recognition of this work, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. He served as chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust and was a guiding force in the establishment of the Museum, which awarded him the inaugural United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Award, the Museum's highest honor, in 2011 for the singular role he has played in establishing and advancing the cause of Holocaust remembrance.

The following bibliography is designed to guide readers to selected materials on Elie Wiesel that are available in the Library's collection. It is not meant to be exhaustive. Annotations are provided to help the user determine the item's focus, and call numbers for the Museum Library's holdings are given in parentheses following each citation. If you are unable to visit the Museum, you may be able find these works in a nearby public or academic library, or acquire them through interlibrary loan. Talk to your local librarian for assistance.

Note: Many of Elie Wiesel's works were originally published in other languages; this bibliography includes only items written in or translated into English.

Hungary before the German occupation

HUNGARY AFTER WORLD WAR I

Hungary had been on the losing side of World War I. After the announcement of punitive peace terms to be imposed on Hungary (which included the loss of 66 percent of Hungary's prewar territory) were announced in 1919, the postwar coalition government resigned. The reins of power fell to a Socialist-Communist coalition under Communist leader Bela Kun. Kun proceeded to establish a short-lived "Soviet Republic."

When the Kun regime collapsed following a Romanian invasion in June 1919, Admiral Miklos Horthy, who had been an officer in the Austro-Hungarian navy, came to power at the head of a conservative-nationalist coalition. This coalition undid most of the democratic reforms promulgated in Hungary immediately after World War I. Assuming the position of regent for the Habsburg king who would never return to Hungary, Horthy presided for the next 24 years over an authoritarian, almost feudal system of aristocratic rule, which nevertheless had a functioning parliament and permitted political opposition. Among those who opposed the conservative-aristocratic oligarchy were radical nationalists and fascists of middle-class and working-class origin. Many of these politicians called for more radical steps to be taken in "solving the Jewish Question."

INFLUENCE OF GERMANY

Pressured by domestic radical nationalists and fascists, Hungary fell increasingly under the influence of Germany as the Nazi regime consolidated itself in the 1930s. When Germany began to redraw national boundaries in Europe, Hungary was able to regain territory (with German and Italian help). This territory included southern Slovakia from [Czechoslovakia](#) (1938), Subcarpathian Rus from dismembered Czechoslovakia (1939), northern Transylvania from Romania (1940), and the Backa region from dismembered Yugoslavia (1941). In November 1940, Hungary joined the [Axis alliance](#). Hungarian troops participated alongside German troops in the invasion of Yugoslavia (April 1941) and the Soviet Union (June 1941).

JEWISH POPULATION

According to a 1941 census, Hungary, including the recently annexed territories, had a Jewish population of 825,000, less than 6 percent of the total population. This figure included 100,000 converts to Christianity who, under Hungarian race laws passed between 1938 and 1941, were classified as Jews. The Hungarian racial laws were modeled on Germany's Nuremberg Laws. They reversed the equal citizenship status granted to Jews in Hungary in 1867. Among other provisions, the laws defined "Jews" in so-called racial terms, forbade intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and excluded Jews from full participation in various professions. The laws also barred employment of Jews in the civil service and restricted their opportunities in economic life.

FORCED-LABOR SERVICE

In 1939, the Hungarian government, having forbidden Jews to serve in the armed forces, established a forced-labor service for young men of arms-bearing age. By 1940, the obligation to perform forced labor was extended to all able-bodied male Jews. After Hungary entered the war, the forced laborers, organized in labor battalions under the command of Hungarian military officers, were deployed on war-related construction work, often under brutal conditions. Subjected to extreme cold, without adequate shelter, food, or medical care, at least 27,000 Hungarian Jewish forced laborers died before the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944.

BEFORE GERMAN OCCUPATION

In the summer of 1941, Hungarian authorities deported some 20,000 Jews, most of whom resided in Subcarpathian Rus and none of whom had been able to obtain Hungarian citizenship. These Jews were deported to [Kamenets-Podolski](#) in the German-occupied Ukraine, where they were shot by Nazi [Einsatzgruppe](#) (mobile killing unit) detachments. In January 1942, Hungarian military units murdered 3,000 Jews and Serbs in Novi Sad, the major city in Hungarian-annexed Yugoslavia. When the German government began to pressure the Hungarians in 1942 to deliver Jews who were Hungarian citizens into German custody, however, Horthy's prime minister, Miklos Kallay, refused to deport the Hungarian Jews, despite significant pressure from the domestic radical right. Ironically, most Hungarian Jews were thus spared deportation prior to the German occupation in 1944, as the Nazis did not directly control the internal activities of their allies.

Hungary after the Occupation

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF HUNGARY

After the German defeat at Stalingrad on the eastern front in 1942-1943, a battle in which Hungarian units suffered tremendous losses, Admiral Miklos Horthy and Prime Minister Miklos Kallay recognized that Germany would likely lose the war.

With Horthy's tacit approval, Kallay sought to negotiate a separate armistice for Hungary with the western Allies. In order to forestall these efforts, German forces occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944. Horthy was permitted to remain Regent, but Kallay was dismissed and the Germans installed General Dome Sztojaj, who had previously served as Hungarian minister to Berlin and was fanatically pro-German, as prime minister. Sztojaj committed Hungary to continuing the war effort and cooperated with the Germans in their efforts to deport the Hungarian Jews.

GHETTOIZATION OF HUNGARIAN JEWS

In April 1944, Hungarian authorities ordered Hungarian Jews living outside Budapest (roughly 500,000) to concentrate in certain cities, usually regional government seats. Hungarian gendarmes were sent into the rural regions to round up the Jews and dispatch them to the cities. The urban areas in which the Jews were forced to concentrate were enclosed and referred to as *ghettos*. Sometimes the ghettos encompassed the area of a former Jewish neighborhood. In other cases the ghetto was merely a single building, such as a factory.

In some Hungarian cities, Jews were compelled to live outdoors, without shelter or sanitary facilities. Food and water supplies were dangerously inadequate; medical care was virtually non-existent. Hungarian authorities forbade the Jews from leaving the ghettos and police guarded the perimeters of the enclosures. Individual gendarmes often tortured Jews and extorted personal valuables from them. None of these ghettos existed for more than a few weeks and many were liquidated within days.

DEPORTATION OF HUNGARIAN JEWS

In mid-May 1944, the Hungarian authorities, in coordination with the German Security Police, began to systematically deport the Hungarian Jews. SS Colonel [Adolf Eichmann](#) was chief of the team of "deportation experts" that worked with the Hungarian authorities. The Hungarian police carried out the roundups and forced the Jews onto the deportation trains.

In less than two months, nearly 440,000 Jews were deported from Hungary in more than 145 trains. Most were deported to [Auschwitz](#), but thousands were also sent to the border with Austria to be deployed at digging fortification trenches. By the end of July 1944, the only Jewish community left in Hungary was that of Budapest, the capital.

SZALASI REGIME

In light of the worsening military situation and facing threats (from Allied leaders) of war crimes trials, Horthy ordered a halt to the deportations on July 7, 1944. In August, he dismissed the Sztojay government and resumed efforts to reach an armistice, this time with the Soviet Union whose army was on Hungary's borders. Horthy had begun final negotiations with Soviet army commanders by mid-October, when the Germans sponsored a coup d'etat. They arrested Horthy and installed a new Hungarian government under Ferenc Szalasi, the leader of the fascist and radically antisemitic Arrow Cross party.

During the Szalasi regime, Arrow Cross gangs perpetrated a reign of arbitrary terror against the Jews of [Budapest](#). Hundreds of Jews, both men and women, were violently murdered. Many others died from the brutal conditions of forced labor to which the Arrow Cross subjected them. In November 1944, the Arrow Cross regime ordered the remaining Jews of Budapest into a ghetto which, covering an area of 0.1 square miles, became temporary residence to nearly 70,000 people. Several thousand Budapest Jews were also marched on foot under Hungarian guard to the Austrian border during November and December 1944. Many who were too weak to continue marching in the bitter cold were shot along the way.

ARMISTICE AND LIBERATION

In January 1945, with Soviet forces already in the Pest section of Budapest, Hungary signed an armistice. Soviet forces liberated the Buda section of the city on February 13, 1945. Soviet troops drove the last German units and their Arrow Cross collaborators out of western Hungary in early April 1945.

Of approximately 825,000 Jews living in Hungary in 1941, about 63,000 died or were killed [prior to the German occupation](#) of March 1944. Under German occupation, just over 500,000 died from maltreatment or were murdered. Some 255,000 Jews, less than one-third of those who had resided within enlarged Hungary in March 1944, survived the [Holocaust](#). About 190,000 of these were residents of Hungary in its 1920 borders.

World War II in Eastern Europe, 1942–1945

Until the winter of 1942-1943, the German army was victorious in an almost unbroken chain of battlefield successes. Europe lay under German domination. After a successful German advance in summer 1942, the battle for the city of Stalingrad in late 1942 proved a turning point. Soviet forces halted the German advance at Stalingrad on the Volga River and in the Caucasus. After this defeat, German troops were forced on the defensive, beginning the long retreat westward that was to end with Nazi Germany's surrender in May 1945, some three years later.

Soviet forces launched a counteroffensive against the Germans arrayed at Stalingrad in mid-November 1942. They quickly encircled an entire German army, more than 220,000 soldiers. In February 1943, after months of fierce fighting and heavy casualties, the surviving German forces--only about 91,000 soldiers--surrendered. After Stalingrad, Soviet forces remained on the offensive for the remainder of the war, despite some temporary setbacks. A last German offensive at Kursk failed in the summer of 1943. The Soviets pushed the Germans back to the banks of the Dnieper River in 1943 and then, by the summer of 1944, to the borders of East

Prussia. In January 1945, a new offensive brought Soviet forces to the banks of the Oder, in eastern Germany.

THE BATTLE OF BERLIN AND THE SURRENDER OF GERMANY

From their bridgehead across the Oder River, Soviet forces launched a massive final offensive toward Berlin in mid-April 1945. The German capital was encircled on April 25. That same day, Soviet forces linked up with their American counterparts attacking from the west at Torgau, on the Elbe River in central Germany. In Berlin itself, heavy fighting took place in the northern and southern suburbs of the city. As Soviet forces neared his command bunker in central Berlin on April 30, 1945, Adolf Hitler committed suicide. Within days, Berlin fell to the Soviets. The German armed forces surrendered unconditionally in the west on May 7 and in the east on May 9, 1945. May 8, 1945, was proclaimed Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day).

Auschwitz

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View of a section of the barbed-wire fence and barracks at Auschwitz at the time of the liberation of the camp. Auschwitz, Poland, January 1945.

— *USHMM, courtesy of Philip Vock*

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The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was the largest of its kind established by the Nazi regime. It included three main camps, all of which deployed incarcerated prisoners at forced labor. One of them also functioned for an extended period as a killing center. The camps were located approximately 37 miles west of Krakow, near the prewar German-Polish border in Upper Silesia, an area that Nazi Germany annexed in 1939 after invading and conquering Poland. The SS authorities established three main camps near the Polish city of Oswiecim: Auschwitz I in May 1940; Auschwitz II (also called Auschwitz-Birkenau) in early 1942; and Auschwitz III (also called Auschwitz-Monowitz) in October 1942.

The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was subordinate to the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps. Until March 1942, the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was an agency of the SS Main Office, and, from 1941, of the SS Operations Main Office. From March 1942 until the liberation of Auschwitz, the Inspectorate was subordinate to the SS Economic-Administrative Main Office.

In November 1943, the SS decreed that Auschwitz-Birkenau and Auschwitz-Monowitz would become independent concentration camps. The commandant of Auschwitz I remained the SS garrison commander of all SS units assigned to Auschwitz and was considered the senior officer of the three commandants. SS offices for maintaining prisoner records and managing prisoner labor deployment continued to be located and centrally run from Auschwitz I. In November 1944, Auschwitz II was reunified with Auschwitz I. Auschwitz III was renamed Monowitz concentration camp.

Commanders of the Auschwitz concentration camp complex were: SS Lieutenant Colonel Rudolf Hoess from May 1940 until November 1943; SS Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Liebehenschel from November 1943 until mid-May 1944; and SS Major Richard Baer from mid-May 1944 until January 27, 1945. Commanders of Auschwitz-Birkenau while it was independent (November 1943 until November 1944) were SS Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Hartjenstein from November 1943 until mid-May 1944 and SS Captain Josef Kremer from mid-May to November 1944. Commandant of Monowitz concentration camp from November 1943 until January 1945 was SS Captain Heinrich Schwarz.

AUSCHWITZ I

Auschwitz I, the main camp, was the first camp established near Oswiecim. Construction began in May 1940 in an abandoned Polish army artillery barracks, located in a suburb of the city. The SS authorities continuously deployed prisoners at forced labor to expand the physical contours of the camp. During the first year of the camp's existence, the SS and police cleared a zone of approximately 40 square kilometers (15.44 square miles) as a "development zone" reserved for the exclusive use of the camp. The first prisoners at Auschwitz included German prisoners transferred from [Sachsenhausen](#) concentration camp in Germany, where they had been incarcerated as repeat criminal offenders, and Polish political prisoners from Lodz via [Dachau](#) concentration camp and from Tarnow in Krakow District of the Generalgouvernement (that part of German occupied-Poland not annexed to Nazi Germany, linked administratively to German East Prussia, or incorporated into the German-occupied Soviet Union).

Similar to most German concentration camps, Auschwitz I was constructed to serve three purposes: 1) to incarcerate real and perceived enemies of the Nazi regime and the German occupation authorities in Poland for an indefinite period of time; 2) to have available a supply of forced laborers for deployment in SS-owned, construction-related enterprises (and, later, armaments and other war-related production); and 3) to serve as a site to physically eliminate small, targeted groups of the population whose death was determined by the SS and police authorities to be essential to the security of Nazi Germany. Like many concentration camps, Auschwitz I had a gas chamber and crematorium. Initially, SS engineers constructed an improvised gas chamber in the basement of the prison block, Block 11. Later a larger, permanent gas chamber was constructed as part of the original crematorium in a separate building outside the prisoner compound.

At Auschwitz I, SS physicians carried out [medical experiments](#) in the hospital, Barrack (Block) 10. They conducted pseudoscientific research on infants, twins, and dwarfs, and performed forced sterilizations, castrations, and hypothermia experiments on adults. The best-known of these physicians was SS Captain Dr. Josef [Mengele](#).

Between the crematorium and the medical-experiments barrack stood the "Black Wall," where SS guards executed thousands of prisoners.

AUSCHWITZ II

Construction of Auschwitz II, or Auschwitz-Birkenau, began in the vicinity of Brzezinka in October 1941. Of the three camps established near Oswiecim, the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp had the largest total prisoner population. It was divided into more than a dozen sections separated by electrified barbed-wire fences and, like Auschwitz I, was patrolled by SS guards, including—after 1942—SS dog handlers. The camp included sections for women, men, a family camp for [Roma](#) (Gypsies) deported from Germany, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and a family camp for Jewish families deported from the [Theresienstadt](#) ghetto.

Auschwitz-Birkenau also contained the facilities for a killing center. It played a central role in the German plan to kill the Jews of Europe. During the summer and autumn of 1941, Zyklon B

gas was introduced into the German concentration camp system as a means for murder. At Auschwitz I, in September, the SS first tested Zyklon B as an instrument of mass murder. The "success" of these experiments led to the adoption of Zyklon B for all the gas chambers at the Auschwitz complex. Near Birkenau, the SS initially converted two farmhouses for use as gas chambers. "Provisional" gas chamber I went into operation in January 1942 and was later dismantled. Provisional gas chamber II operated from June 1942 through the fall of 1944. The SS judged these facilities to be inadequate for the scale of gassing they planned at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Four large crematorium buildings were constructed between March and June 1943. Each had three components: a disrobing area, a large gas chamber, and crematorium ovens. The SS continued gassing operations at Auschwitz-Birkenau until November 1944.

DEPORTATIONS TO AUSCHWITZ

Trains arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau frequently with transports of Jews from virtually every country in Europe occupied by or allied to Germany. These transports arrived from 1942 to the end of summer 1944. The breakdown of deportations from individual countries, given in approximate figures, is: Hungary: 426,000; Poland: 300,000; France: 69,000; Netherlands: 60,000; Greece: 55,000; Bohemia and Moravia: 46,000; Slovakia: 27,000; Belgium: 25,000; Yugoslavia: 10,000; Italy: 7,500; Norway: 690; other (including concentration camps): 34,000.

With the deportations from [Hungary](#), the role of Auschwitz-Birkenau as an instrument in the German plan to murder the Jews of Europe achieved its highest effectiveness. Between late April and early July 1944, approximately 440,000 Hungarian Jews were deported, around 426,000 of them to Auschwitz. The SS sent approximately 320,000 of them directly to the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau and deployed approximately 110,000 at forced labor in the Auschwitz concentration camp complex. The SS authorities transferred many of these Hungarian Jewish forced laborers within weeks of their arrival in Auschwitz to other concentration camps in Germany and Austria.

In total, approximately 1.1 million Jews were deported to Auschwitz. SS and police authorities deported approximately 200,000 other victims to Auschwitz, including 140,000-150,000 [non-Jewish Poles](#), 23,000 Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), 15,000 [Soviet prisoners of war](#), and 25,000 others (Soviet civilians, Lithuanians, Czechs, French, Yugoslavs, Germans, Austrians, and Italians).

New arrivals at Auschwitz-Birkenau underwent selection. The SS staff determined the majority to be unfit for forced labor and sent them immediately to the gas chambers, which were disguised as shower installations to mislead the victims. The belongings of those gassed were confiscated and sorted in the "Kanada" (Canada) warehouse for shipment back to Germany. Canada symbolized wealth to the prisoners.

At least 960,000 Jews were killed in Auschwitz. Other victims included approximately 74,000 Poles, 21,000 Roma (Gypsies), and 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war; and 10,000-15,000 members of other nationalities (Soviet civilians, Czechs, Yugoslavs, French, Germans, and Austrians).

On October 7, 1944, several hundred prisoners assigned to Crematorium IV at Auschwitz-Birkenau rebelled after learning that they were going to be killed. During the uprising, the prisoners killed three guards and blew up the crematorium and adjacent gas chamber. The prisoners used explosives smuggled into the camp by Jewish women who had been assigned to forced labor in a nearby armaments factory. The Germans crushed the revolt and killed almost all of the prisoners involved in the rebellion. The Jewish women who had smuggled the explosives into the camp were publicly hanged in early January 1945.

Gassing operations continued, however, until November 1944, at which time the SS, on orders from Himmler, disabled the gas chambers that still functioned. The SS destroyed the remaining gassing installations as Soviet forces approached in January 1945.

AUSCHWITZ III

Auschwitz III, also called Buna or Monowitz, was established in October 1942 to house prisoners assigned to work at the Buna synthetic rubber works, located on the outskirts of the Polish town of Monowice. In the spring of 1941, the German conglomerate I.G. Farben established a factory in which its executives intended to exploit concentration camp labor for their plans to manufacture synthetic rubber and fuels. I.G. Farben invested more than 700 million Reichsmarks (about 1.4 million US dollars in 1942 terms) in Auschwitz III. From May 1941 until October 1942, the SS had transported prisoners from Auschwitz I to the “Buna Detachment,” at first on foot and later by rail. With the construction of Auschwitz III in the autumn of 1942, prisoners deployed at Buna lived in Auschwitz III.

Auschwitz III also had a so-called Labor Education Camp for non-Jewish prisoners who were perceived to have violated German-imposed labor discipline.

AUSCHWITZ SUBCAMPS

Between 1942 and 1944, the SS authorities at Auschwitz established 39 subcamps. Some of them were established within the officially designated “development” zone, including Budy, Rajsko, Tschechowitz, Harmense, and Babitz. Others, such as Blechhammer, Gleiwitz, Althammer, [Fürstengrube](#), Laurahütte, and Eintrachthütte were located in Upper Silesia north and west of the Vistula River. Some subcamps were located in Moravia, such as Freudental and Bruenn (Brno). In general, subcamps that produced or processed agricultural goods were administratively subordinate to Auschwitz-Birkenau; while subcamps whose prisoners were deployed at industrial and armaments production or in extractive industries (e.g., coal mining, quarry work) were administratively subordinate to Auschwitz-Monowitz. After November 1943, this division of administrative responsibility was formalized.

Auschwitz inmates were employed on huge farms, including the experimental agricultural station at Rajsko. They were also forced to work in coal mines, in stone quarries, in fisheries, and especially in armaments industries such as the SS-owned German Equipment Works (established in 1941). Periodically, prisoners underwent selection. If the SS judged them too weak or sick to continue working, they were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and killed.

Prisoners selected for forced labor were registered and tattooed with identification numbers on their left arms in Auschwitz I. They were then assigned to forced labor at the main camp or elsewhere in the complex, including the subcamps.

THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

In mid-January 1945, as Soviet forces approached the Auschwitz concentration camp complex, the SS began evacuating Auschwitz and its subcamps. SS units forced nearly 60,000 prisoners to [march](#) west from the Auschwitz camp system. Thousands had been killed in the camps in the days before these death marches began. Tens of thousands of prisoners, mostly Jews, were forced to march either northwest for 55 kilometers (approximately 30 miles) to Gliwice (Gleiwitz), joined by prisoners from subcamps in East Upper Silesia, such as Bismarckhuetten, Althammer, and Hindenburg, or due west for 63 kilometers (approximately 35 miles) to Wodzislaw (Loslau) in the western part of Upper Silesia, joined by inmates from the subcamps to the south of Auschwitz, such as Jawischowitz, Tschechowitz, and Golleschau. SS guards shot anyone who fell behind or could not continue. Prisoners also suffered from the cold weather, starvation, and exposure on these marches. At least 3,000 prisoners died on route to Gliwice alone; possibly as many as 15,000 prisoners died during the evacuation marches from Auschwitz and the subcamps.

Upon arrival in Gliwice and Wodzislaw, the prisoners were put on unheated freight trains and transported to concentration camps in Germany, particularly to [Flossenbürg](#), [Sachsenhausen](#), [Gross-Rosen](#), [Buchenwald](#), [Dachau](#), and also to [Mauthausen](#) in Austria. The rail journey lasted for days. Without food, water, shelter, or blankets, many prisoners did not survive the transport.

In late January 1945, SS and police officials forced 4,000 prisoners to evacuate Blechhammer, a subcamp of Auschwitz-Monowitz, on foot. The SS murdered about 800 prisoners during the march to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. SS officials also killed as many as 200 prisoners left behind in Blechhammer as a result of illness or successful attempts to hide. After a brief delay, the SS transported around 3,000 Blechhammer prisoners from Gross-Rosen to Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany.

On January 27, 1945, the Soviet army entered Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Monowitz and [liberated](#) around 7,000 prisoners, most of whom were ill and dying. It is estimated that the SS and police deported at a minimum 1.3 million people to Auschwitz complex between 1940 and 1945. Of these, the camp authorities murdered 1.1 million.