MAIDANEK MEMORIAL

POLAND

The guide was created as part of the "No Statute of Limitations: Routes of Memory to the Sites of Nazi Genocide Against Civilians in Russia and Abroad" project.

The project aims to preserve the truth about the crimes committed by the Nazis and their collaborators against civilians during the Great Patriotic War as manifestations of genocide policy, as well as to foster among young people a rejection of Nazism in all its forms by engaging with significant memorial complexes and sites of memory both in the Russian Federation and abroad.

As part of the project, travel guides and audio guides to memorial sites have been created in Russian, English, and German to facilitate their widespread use in tourism, education, and civic engagement:

1. Ravensbrück Memorial(Germany)
2. Maidanek Memorial (Poland)
3. "Krasny" Concentration Camp Memorial (Republic of Crimea)
4. "Dulag-100" Memorial (Pskov Oblast)
5. "Hatsun" Memorial Complex (Bryansk Oblast)
6. Zhestyanaya Gorka Memorial Complex (Novgorod Oblast)
7. Zmievskaya Balka Memorial Complex (Rostov Oblast)
8. "Peski" Memorial (Republic of Karelia)
9. Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery (St. Petersburg)
10. "Dulag-126" Memorial Complex (Smolensk Oblast)
11. Ksty Memorial Complex (Tver Oblast)

The project seeks to counter historical falsification and improve access to knowledge about the genocide of civilians perpetrated by the Nazis and their accomplices. Its practical novelty and value lie in the creation of unique audio and textual content that can be used not only within Russian society but also integrated into international discourse, influencing interpretations of World War II events in Western countries and the U.S. and exposing the true nature of Nazism.

The project was implemented by the Agency for Social Projects "Culture. Education. Science" with the support of the Presidential Grants Foundation.

MAIDANEK STATE MUSEUM

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1 Gate to the camp

People were usually taken to the camp by freight trains. Since there was no railway line in Lublin concentration camp, trains with prisoners stopped at the ramp 2 km from the camp, and from there the new arrivals were escorted to the camp by SS. It was connected directly to the detention area by a gravel road known as the "Black Road". In the years of the camp's operation, a warehouse of construction materials was located on the right, and a little further was the White House — a brick building of the pre-war construction, originally intended for the residence of a SS doctor, and later — for the accommodation of the camp commander. On the site of the former camp gates today stands the Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom.

The decision to open the camp was made during a visit to Lublin on 20 July 1941 by Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, who commissioned the SS and police chief of the Lublin District, Odilo Globočnik, to build a camp to hold 20,000–25,000 prisoners. Within two months, the SS Central Construction Directorate and the police in Lublin prepared technical documentation, and in September 1941, the Lublin County Governor Ernst Zörner granted the SS land near the Helm road.

Subsequently, the construction project has undergone several modifications to increase both the camp area and the prison population. On March 23, 1942, a general plan called for a camp of 150,000 prisoners and prisoners of war on 516 hectares.

However, difficulties in supplying construction materials and railway cars led to a significant reduction in the project. The camp, which eventually operated on the outskirts of Lublin in 1941, covered an area of 270 hectares. The maximum prison population in May 1943 was about 25,000. Thus, during the existence of the camp, only 1/5 of the original plans were implemented. A total of 280 premises were constructed for various purposes: barracks for holding prisoners, administrative and economic buildings, warehouses, workshops and devices for the destruction of people with gas and the subsequent cremation of corpses.

The Lublin camp was originally established as a prisoner-of-war camp, but on 16 February 1943 it became a concentration camp, the Konzentrationslager der Waffen-SS (KL Lublin). Due to its proximity to the Maidan district, the Tatar camp was named Maidanek.

Entrance gate to the camp with guard post. Maidanek State Museum

2 Administrative sector

The camp was divided into three sectors: an administrative sector with offices and barracks for SS garrison and guards; a sector for prisoners consisting of "fields" with barracks to house them, known as a preventive detention camp (*Schutzhaftlager*); and an economic sector with warehouses, workshops, baths, disinfection chambers, vegetable gardens and a farm supplying the camp with food.

The SS sector was completed in June 1943. It occupied the area between the Helm Road and the prisoner's camp. The buildings were used as barracks for SS officers and private guards, as well as for various administrative units of the camp and economic needs: a bath, a medical centre, a canteen, a warehouse of weapons and clothing — a total of 39 separate buildings. These barracks were dismantled in the 1960s as part of a new plan

for the museum. To date, only two of the wooden structures identified in Plan Nos. 38 and 39 have survived: the L-shaped building, which housed the accommodation of female prison guards, and the second one, the camp post office and office space for the management of the prison camp, including the office where personal files and records of the death of prisoners were kept.

On July 15, 1942, the order to open a women's concentration camp in Maidanek read as follows:

"According to an oral order of the Reichsführer, the SS should immediately organise a "camp for 5,000 women" in Lublin. I ask you to order its creation and report to the Reichsführer of the SS.

Near the POW camp in Lublin, the establishment of a women's camp is not difficult. It will be difficult only to find female guards and build more or less suitable housing for them."

The Frauenkonzentrationslager was opened in October 1942. The opening of the women's camp was most likely connected with the need to accommodate large numbers of Slovak Jews, whose deportation began in Auschwitz and Majdanek in the spring of 1942 and was proceeding at an accelerating pace. However, the first prisoners — 136 women — arrived in Majdanek only on October 1, 1942. Supervision of the camp, the discipline of prisoners and the implementation of labour standards was assigned to female guards who were not formally members of the SS, but were under its jurisdiction. In March 1943, the guards were quartered in the immediate vicinity of the camp, occupying Barrack 38.

Elsa Erich, formerly of Ravensbrück concentration camp near Berlin, served as the senior warden (the head of the women's camp). She was responsible for keeping records of prisoners and organising their work. She was assisted by colleagues in charge of prisoner employment and office workers. A total of 28 undisciplined female guards have served in the Maidanek women's camp since its inception, affecting the situation of the prisoners entrusted to them. For example, of the 19 female guards who were subordinated to Erich in 1943, more than half had previously been subjected to various forms of disciplinary punishment.

In October 1942, I was transferred from Ravensbrück to the Majdanek concentration camp. The camp's commandant at the time was Max Kogel. Here I worked Oberaufseherin (senior supervisor). There was not enough room for the prisoners, and I returned with a group of Polish and Russian female prisoners to the main camp, leaving the Jews in the former barracks No. 12 under the supervision of SS men.

Elizabeth Erich, Chief Supervisor (October 1942 — April 1944)

When we returned home, that is, to our barracks, each had its own room. We were exhausted and defeated. We had to write something, clean up our clothes and clothes. We were terribly oppressed by all this. We were glad to be alone for at least ten minutes to read a book.

Hildegard Lehert, Warden (October 1942 — April 1944)

As for Unit 39, it housed the office of the Chief of Unit III — Prisoners Section, Labour Distribution Bureau, Post Office and Camp Censorship as well as the General Camp Office. There were stored files, ordered by alphabet and numbers. They were regularly updated on the basis of reports provided by the offices of the men's and women's camps, to which the field and barracks offices reported. German-speaking prisoners were used to maintain and update the files.

As a rule, newly arrived prisoners underwent a standard registration procedure, with minor changes in the order of action. Transports with Jews were handled differently: the valuables and clothes seized from them were sent to the camp vaults without being entered in the files.

Division III defined the organisation of camp life and the treatment of prisoners. Working hours and weekends were set here. The most important issue for the prisoners was the issue of food, which was dependent on Anton Tuman, who inspected the kitchen and condoned the large-scale theft that took place there. Division III was also responsible for the selection of prisoners for transfer to other camps, overseeing the work of the main camp office. [...] The Employment Distribution Bureau, which was responsible for the employment of prisoners, was also part of Division III.

Jerzy Noak, philologist from Białystok, political prisoner (20 April 1943–22 July 1944)

Like most concentration camps, Majdanek was administered by the SS-WVHA (SS-General Administration and Economic Administration), although it was also closely associated with the SS police apparatus in the Lublin district. The Commandant directed the overall activities of the camp through six divisions:

Division I (Abteilung I — Kommandatur) is the camp commandant's office and the camp commandant's office. It was the main administrative body of the camp, responsible for all the key issues of the camp.

Division II — Political (Abteilung II — Politische Abteilung) (Camp Gestapo) — was not under the jurisdiction of the Commandant and disobeyed the orders of the Camp Commandant. The unit recorded all new arrivals and assigned numbers to them.

Section III — Prisoners (Abteilung III — Schutzhaftlagerführung) — directly engaged in the operational management of the camp and the affairs of prisoners: discipline, the use of forced labour of prisoners, etc.;

Division IV — Administrative (Abteilung IV–Verwaltung) or Administrative and Economic Department;

Department V–Medical (Abteilung V–Lagerarzt);

Section VI — Propaganda (Abteilung VI — Fürsorge-, Schulung- und Truppenbetreuung) — was responsible for social welfare, cultural, educational and ideological work and training of camp staff.

The position of Commandant was held consistently by:

Karl Otto Koch (from September 1941), famed for his extreme **cruelty as Commandant of the Buchenwald camp near Weimar. Max Kögel (August—September 1942)** was posted from Ravensbrück. **Hermann Flörstedt (November 1942 — October 1943)** served as chief of staff in Sachsenhausen, where he ruthlessly punished prisoners for the slightest offence before being transferred to Majdanek. **Martin Weiss (November 1943 — May 1944) was** transferred to Majdanek from the camp in Dachau. The last camp commandant was **Arthur Liebenheschel (May 1944–22.07.1944)**, who previously served in the same position in Auschwitz. It should be noted that all commandants who headed Majdanek were transferred there as a disciplinary punishment for certain violations. Karl Otto Koch was "exiled" to the East for financial fraud and unauthorised executions of prisoners in Buchenwald, and Arthur Liebenheschel for adultery.

Barracks of the administrative sector. Maidanek State Museum

3 Prisoner Camp

The prison camp, referred to in the Nazi nomenclature as the "Schutzhaftlager" (Preventive Detention Camp), was rectangular in shape with an area of 30.6 hectares. It consisted of five so-called fields measuring 360 x 150 m and two bands of land called interpoles. To isolate the prisoners and prevent them from escaping, the entire area was surrounded by a double barbed wire fence connected to a high-voltage electrical grid. Inside the fence was the so-called "zone of death" (Todeszone). Wooden barracks were built in two rows on each field to house prisoners, with kitchens and washing facilities in the eastern corners. The space between the rows of barracks formed a platform for roll calls. The area was covered with white gravel. Eighteen guard towers were located along the fence, where armed sentinels were on duty around the clock. During the day, posts were also displayed outside the camp, at the gates, warehouses and workshops in the farm area, as well as in bunkers on the southeastern border of the camp. There were 108 barracks built in the inmate fields (not counting the barracks in Field V, which were not used to house prisoners): Twenty barracks for prisoners were built in Field I, and 22 barracks each in the remaining fields. Residential

barracks with windows were built in Fields I, II and V, and primitive stable barracks were built in Fields III and IV. Most of the buildings of the POW camp were destroyed or demolished in the early post-war years. Only the buildings on section III remain.

The barracks on different fields differed in design. In the initial period and shortly before the closure of the camp, they accommodated between 100 and 200 people.

Inspection report of the SS concentration camp in the mountains. Lublin, 2-3 August 1944, reads as follows:

In residential barracks, all fields have a standard table with the list of inventory. On these tables the capacity of barracks - 180 people is indicated.

In 1943, when the largest transports arrived, there were an average of 500 prisoners in each barracks on Pål III, IV and V. At first, these buildings were completely empty. Prisoners slept on straw mats or on the floor. In the spring of 1942, three-tiered barracks began to be installed. Sanitation equipment was not available until the autumn of 1943.

"Every 200 metres, the road and borders of the camp were dotted with signs in German and Polish, warning them that entering the camp without permission was punishable by firing squad. They pointed the way to the "Camp Commandant's Office". Each plate showed a skull with bones [...] We were approaching the camp gate. They opened. We entered the camp shouting."

View of the camp. Aerial photography. Maidanek State Museum

Gas chambers 4

Gas chambers intended for mass extermination of prisoners were built in the late summer of 1942. They were equipped in a building made of ceramic brick with a reinforced concrete ceiling and a cement floor. This building, known as the bunker, was erected just behind the men's bath, which was located in Barracks No. 41. The bunker was fenced with barbed wire and a three-metre fence. Over the bunker and fence, a wooden shelter was erected, supported by poles attached to concrete pedestals. In 1946, it was damaged by a storm. Then the idea of its restoration was abandoned, and the gas chambers were connected to the bath barracks with wooden walls and a common roof.

There were six gas chambers in the camp, of which some were adapted to use carbon monoxide and some to be destroyed by Cyclone B. Since the liberation of the camp, 535 cans of Cyclone B granules and several cylinders containing carbon monoxide have been found in the camp grounds. Using all six gas chambers at the same time, up to 1,914 people could be killed at a time. The destruction in the gas chambers of Maidanek continued until September 1943.

The area of the first interpole near the bath was deprived of any vegetation. The Germans, with their characteristic cynicism, called it the "Rosengarten" garden of roses, of course withering. The newcomers were ordered to undress and were forced naked, in batches of one-and-a-half to two hundred men, into the washing room of the bath.

People destined for destruction in the gas chambers were ordered to walk from the washing room to another, allegedly also the washing room, to make room for the next batch. Behind the last room the door was closed tightly, made of thick boards with a hollow gap and three heavy iron bolts.

Saren Barutchev: doctor from Baku, prisoner of war (October 1943 — July 22, 1944)

During my stay in Majdanek I was in the gas chamber at the bath several times. The Germans also disinfected the clothes there, and working in this team, I took things there and took them after processing. In the days when people were gassed, the cells often had piles of corpses.

Janina Ludwiczak of Warsaw, Political Prisoner. (January 18, 1943 — April 19, 1944)

Standing in front of the Ekettenkammer (a barracks for confiscated prisoners' property), I often watched as prisoners were led into the bathhouse. There was a chimney-like hole on the roof. The warden brought the ladder, leaned it against the barracks and went up to the roof. He poured something out of the can into the hole. Later, I saw naked bodies being taken out of a barrack and loaded onto a wooden cart.

Unterscharführer SS **Rudolf Ettrich**, head of Ekettenkammer (1942–10 December 1943)

On 15 September 1942, 350 people, including women and children, were killed in the gas chamber. Their bodies were later burned. Oberscharführer Perschon, the head of the bathhouse and gas chambers, told me about it personally.

Rottenführer Otto Henschke, Head of the Sewing Workshop (15 July 1942–22 July 1944)

Gas chambers. State Central Museum of Modern History of Russia. GCMSIR SEC 31512/124

5 Burning places

The bodies of Maidanek victims were initially buried in mass graves. From mid-1942, they were burned in crematorium ovens, and from the spring of 1943 — in the open air, on fires laid out in the nearby forest and in the camp itself. To the right of the gas chambers, about 200 metres away, in a ravine located on the territory of the horticultural economy, one of the places for burning corpses was provided. The stacks were made up of lorry chassis. The bodies were laid on top of them, doused with methanol and set on fire. At one time, cremation of up to 100 bodies was possible. Ash was added to a compost used to fertilise the soil. After the war, the ashes mixed with the land were collected from the former camp and a mound was formed from it. In 1969 they were placed in the Mausoleum.

On the territory of the "Gartnerai" (garden farm of the camp), in a ravine, a shooting range was built. Prisoners saw wood being laid on iron rails and corpses being laid on top, then the Germans watered everything with a mixture of gasoline and alcohol and set it on fire. The day after the arrival of the transport, a tall, dark column of smoke always stood over the ravine — and as the wind blew toward the camp, the smell of burning bones, hair and fat was felt. This fire burned day and night, and new bodies were constantly thrown at the fire.

Jerzy Kwiatkowski, lawyer from Warsaw, political prisoner (26 march 1943–22 july 1944)

Human remains found at the site of the shootings. Maidanek State Museum

6 Prisoners' Field I

At the turn of 1941/1942, the first prisoners of Majdanek were held here: Soviet prisoners of war, Jews from Lublin and the surrounding area, residents of the Lublin Voivodeship. Most of them were peasants arrested as hostages for not carrying out mandatory food deliveries or in retaliation for their participation in the activities of the Resistance. In 1942, a camp hospital (the so-called revir) was organised in the northern row of the barracks. One of the barracks housed the main camp office (Lagerschreibstube), where a detailed record of prisoners was kept. From September 1943 to April 1944, a female

concentration camp (moved from Field V) operated in Field I. Later, the barracks in the field were again occupied by men, but several of them also housed a group of Jewish women brought from the labour camp in Blizina.

"A few days later [...] we arrived in Majdanek on November 27, 1941. At the time, the camp had eight barracks on Field I. We saw the first future patients working around Majdanek. They were Soviet prisoners of war, about 1500 people [...]. In the first days of January 1942, after a forced break due to illness, we began sanitary work in the blocks. Things were going on because the camp was being visited by Jews from the Lublin Ghetto, peasants who failed to deliver, and many other categories arrested under different circumstances. [...] At the beginning of March 1942, a large quantity of nads began to be delivered to the camp. This heralded some far-reaching change in our camp lives. [...] On the dirty days of March, long columns of Slovak Jews with suitcases, blankets and other things led along the muddy roads towards the camp. Thousands of them have arrived."

Tadeusz Kozlowski, physician from Byala Podlaska, political prisoner (27 November 1941–6 April 1944)

"A new commotion began in September. We're all being transferred to Field I. We're going in advance with the orderly to see the barracks that are meant for the hospital. They are dirty, littered with garbage and incredibly infested with fleas. [...] Only one extremely valuable piece of infrastructure was available: sewerage and running water. At the end of each barracks was a separate room with taps running into the trench, and a few primitive toilets."

Stephanie Perzanowska, physician from Radom, political prisoner (8 January 1943–15 April 1944)

View of the Prisoners I Field. Maidanek State Museum

Men's and women's baths 7

Room 41 was a men's bath.

From the spring of 1942, the newly arrived prisoners were sent to a bathhouse built next to the storage rooms. Until then, the camp had only one functioning well, and basic sanitation was lacking. Bath days were rarely held, usually once every few weeks. In front of the entrance to the shower room was a dressing room where men cut their hair. Concrete tanks for disinfecting prisoners were also installed in the showers. In a nearby room, fumigation (soda) of clothes was carried out using "Cyclone B" to destroy the lice. The prisoners were also given camp clothes (striped robe) or appropriate oiled civilian clothes.

Next, listen to eyewitness recollections:

At the time of arrival of the first transports with Slovak Jews, there was no bath. There was only a building with no doors, windows or floor, filled with construction debris. There, in the draft and the cold, stood several barrels of ice water and lysol. Prisoners took turns crawling into them, and the SS abused them by holding their heads underwater.

Tadeusz Kosibowicz, doctor from Benjin, political prisoner (27 November 1941–6 April 1944)

Bursting into the barracks, we immediately got into a small locker room filled with prisoners from our transport [...] Here bradobraiye started to work: they shaved our heads and all the hairy parts of the body. After that, we went to the shower room. Right at the entrance stood a small concrete tank filled with some disgusting disinfectant. Each of us had to get into it and dive in with our heads. The SS men were beating us with sticks and trying to keep our heads underwater. Then we had to line up under the showers, where we were first given hot and then cold water.

Czesław Skoraczyński, clerk from Lwów, political prisoner (2 February 1943–6 April 1944)

Behind the men's bath there was a women's bath, designated No. 42.

Since the autumn of 1942, this barrack has been used as a shower for women. On both sides of the shower room there were changing rooms. Near the boilers, four chambers were installed to disinfect clothes with steam. The shower room also served as a breeding ground for Jewish women and girls. From there, they were taken to gas

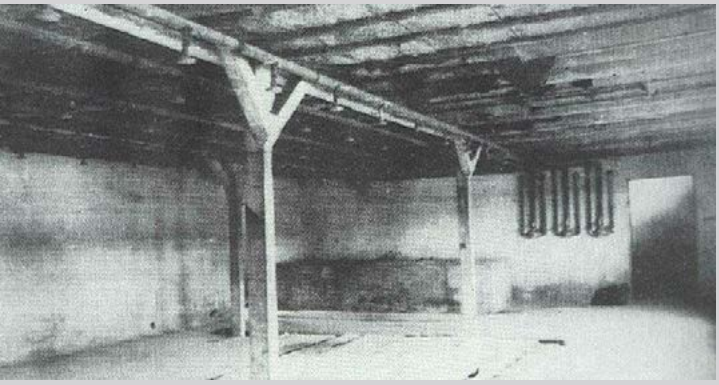
chambers located in the bunker behind the men's bath.

Two weeks after my arrival at the camp, word swept through the block that all prisoners who arrived with us must change into striped robes. In the dressing room, we put our clothes in paper bags, examined and disinfected our heads, and then washed under jets of hot and cold water. After the shower, we were taken to a room with clothes, where a German warden threw us things of the dead prisoners, regardless of the size of the clothes: it suits us or not.

Zofia Pavlovskaya, a teacher from Kolomyia, a political prisoner (February — August 1943)

Dr. Blancke arrived in Majdanek during a period of overcrowding in the women's camp. New transports arrived almost daily, many of them Jewish. Immediately after the arrival of the Jewish transport, the first selection was carried out in the bath. It was carried out by SS guards and Blanca. After the shower, the naked women were examined and separated: young and healthy — to the right (they went to the camp), old and exhausted — to the left (they were waiting for gas chambers). The selection was quick and efficient.

Stephanie Perzanowska, a doctor from Radom, a political prisoner (8 January 1943–13 April 1944)



Camp Bath. Marszałek J. Majdanek. Obóz koncentracyjny w Lublinie.

8 Area for breeding

Behind the women's bath (Barrack No. 42) was a breeding area, which among the prisoners was romantically named "Rosengarten" (pink garden) or "Rosenfeld" (field of roses).

From the autumn of 1942, this square became the site of a preliminary selection of Jews deported to the camp. The selection was carried out by an SS doctor in the presence of the head of the camp and the head of the crematorium. Women with children and persons unfit for work were sent to gas chambers. The remaining prisoners were first forced to undress, then driven through the bathhouse, registered in the file and housed in the camp.

All summer and autumn, deportations from the ghetto to Maidan Tatar continued, until the final liquidation of the ghetto on November 9, 1942. [...] As soon as they arrived in Majdanek, selection was carried out on the field of the camp. The elderly, young people and children were separated. Three women did not want to give up their children. [...] All these women were dragged aside, beaten to the point of blood and eventually beaten to death. Children taken from them by force faced the same fate as others. The elderly people stayed in the camp field and were told to wait. We, young and able to work, were sent to barracks. All the elderly were later killed.

Dora Mintz of Lublin, Jewish (9 November 1942–3 November 1943)

What happened to the transport of Jews from Warsaw? Men were immediately sent to work in the camp fields, and young women were also sent to work. The rest of the women, children, and elderly were led straight into the gas chambers. They waited on the field of roses. Screaming, crying and moaning broke the heart.

Synchia Turkeltaub, a Jewish woman from Lublin (9 November 1942–2 November 1943)

In mid-May, a new transport of Jews from Warsaw arrived. Several thousand people are men, women, children, even babies. [...] They arrived at night and were housed in the so-called "Rosengarten". This name sounds very romantic — but there was no garden or roses. Near the building of the bath and gas chamber there was just a piece of land surrounded by barbed wire. The vehicles were kept there in the open until the morning, and processing began in the morning. Men were separated from women and children in the first place. The Germans took their suitcases and parcels at the entrance to the bathhouse, ordered them to undress and shave their heads. The Jews were then taken to a commission, where they had to open

their mouths and raise their hands to see if they were trying to hide the jewels. The Commission separated the prisoners: healthy and young were sent to one bath, and elderly, sick and minors (except mothers) to another.

Jerzy Kwiatkowski, lawyer from Warsaw, political prisoner (26 march 1943–22 july 1944)

Area for breeding. Maidanek State Museum

9 Camp warehouses and workshops

In the immediate vicinity of the prison camp, facilities and production facilities were built. Four barracks were built along the fence, of which only barracks No. 1 (building No. 62 - to your left), intended for shoe workshops, remained. Nearby there was a sewing workshop, behind it there was a kitchen for camp staff and garages. The last two barracks were dismantled after the war. There were 19 barracks across the side of the camp street known as "Lagerstraße". Three of them housed workshops: carpentry (53), forge (54) and electrical (55). Building No. 45 housed a stables, two more were food warehouses, and the following were garment

Camp warehouses and workshops during construction. Maidanek State Museum.

warehouses (48, 49, 50) and equipment and tools warehouses (51, 52). Barracks Nos. 43 and 44 were used as storage facilities for prisoners' property (Effektenkammer). Barak No. 43 also served as a reception and registration point for newly arrived prisoners. The administration of the concentration camp also organised a jewellery workshop here, where they sorted jewellery stolen from Jews deported to the camp.

10 Barracks 43 and 44. Warehouses of personal belongings of prisoners

Barracks 43 and 44 had warehouses to store prisoners' personal effects. Currently, Barracks 43 has a permanent exhibition "Majdanek. Past and Present", and in Barracks 44 — "Lublin during the German occupation".

Construction of the warehouses for prisoners' belongings was completed in July 1942. Prior to this time, the prisoners' property was kept in barracks allocated for this purpose in the Field I. Barracks No. 43 also registered prisoners and issued numbers and stripes according to their category.

In May, June, and July 1943, the commandant of the SS and police ravaged the Warsaw Ghetto and interned part of its population in a concentration camp in Lublin. […] Each prisoner first went to the property barracks, where all his luggage, linen and clothes were taken from him. Valuables were thrown through a slit into a sealed chest without registration.

SS-Obersturmführer **Friedrich V. Ruppert,** Head of Technical Department (18 September 1942 — April 1944)

I was the deputy head of the warehouse at the Maidanek camp. Clothes and shoes from the exterminated prisoners were sorted here and everything that was best was sent to Germany. In 1944 alone, I sent over 18 waggons of clothes and shoes to Germany.

Rotenführer **Hermann G. Vogel,** Deputy Head of the warehouse

Gold and valuables were sent to Berlin very much.

SS-Obersturmführer **Anton Ternes,**

former camp financial auditor

I was shocked by the sight of a huge stock of a wide variety of items — shoe brushes, toothbrushes, combs, powder coats, glasses, suitcases full of silver, and thousands of other looted items. Prisoners loaded them into boxes destined for the Reich.

Danuta Brzozowska, a high school student from Warsaw, a political prisoner (16 January 1943–19 April 1944)

The worst thing I saw during the war was in Lublin, where there was a huge Majdanek concentration camp ten kilometres from the city. There were large barracks in the camp, which simultaneously held several hundred thousand prisoners. When our troops entered the city, the Germans hurried to escape from the camp...

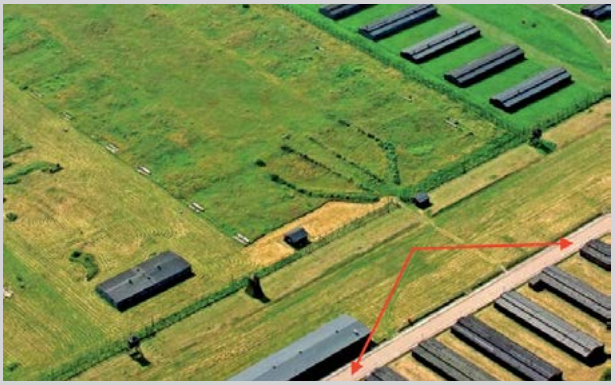
On its sides stood railway barracks — warehouses. At first, the prisoners were stripped of their outer clothing in the warehouses. They carried on. In the following depots, the suicide bombers were stripped of their underwear. Then there are the shoes. In each barracks sat a group of prisoners, who took apart the taken things. Nice clothes were sent to Germany.

Lavrentyev Andrey Ivanovich, driver, lieutenant

Warehouses of personal belongings of prisoners. Maidanek State Museum

11 Barracks Nos. 46 and 47 Food storage

In 1999, a multimedia exposition was opened in Barracks No. 47. We present to your attention Tadeusz Myslowski's art installation "Sanctuary — a monument to an unknown victim". The exhibition includes a symbolic composition of barbed wire balls, a memorial book, an oratorio, memories of prisoners and prayers of Poles, Jews, Russians and Roma.



"Lagerstraße" and administrative and economic buildings (warehouses and workshops). Maidanek State Museum

12 Barracks 48 - 55

Barracks No. 48–50 were used as garment warehouses

It housed prisoners' uniforms, underwear and used civilian clothes, which were given to the prisoners after their arrival at the camp.

Barracks Nos. 51 and 52

Warehouses of tools and equipment

These barracks housed tools and equipment for cleaning the barracks and caring for the camp grounds.

Currently, Barrack 52 presents the shoes confiscated from the Maidanek prisoners and Jews killed in the "Reinhard Action". The victims' shoes were collected in barracks on the VI field and on the territory of the old aerodrome (Flugplatz). About 280,000 pairs of men's, women's and children's shoes were found in the compound after the camp was liberated.

In Barrack No. 53 there was a carpentry workshop with a wood storage

The carpentry shop was equipped according to all the requirements of the present workshop. Workbenches, wall-mounted tool boxes at each workplace, joinery ovens, wood drying frame, two electric saws and shirts [...] In the workshop, we mainly made furniture, doors and windows for commandant apartments, as well as various chests and kitchen tables. The SS officer was

not a specialist. Weber's second young SS-Scharführer, who often replaced Weber, walked around the workshop with a piece of wood in his hands and beat the prisoners mercilessly on the heads. A few weeks later, Polish Jews, professional carpenters, arrived at the workshop.

Edward Karaban, a teacher from Ryashov, a political prisoner (1 December 1941–6 April 1944)

Barak No. 54 was a Forge and a metal working workshop

In the fall of 1942, I worked for several days on a repair team in the forge. There were about a dozen of us, Polish and Jewish prisoners. The barracks we worked in were at the end of a row of warehouses across from Field III. We were repairing transport — carts and trailers of lorries, which, as we learned from other prisoners, were used, among other things, for the removal of corpses from the camp to the Kreptsy Forest.

Finally, **Barracks No. 55** housed an electrical workshop

We started working at the Elektrokommando together with the Jews. From day one, the Jewish electricians were friendly to us and shared useful tips on the work [...] Our job was to repair lighting fixtures throughout the camp, install new equipment, fix camp loudspeakers that were used only by SS men, repair radio sets and other appliances that were brought to the workshop.

Vaclav Voida, electrician from Częstochowa, political prisoner (8 January 1943–6 April 1944)

13 Time Window

After Barracks 55 on the right of the Lagerstraße there is another museum exhibit, the so-called "Window of Time". Under the sturdy glass are fragments of cemetery Jewish monuments that were used by the Nazis to pave roads in the camp. This exhibit reflects not only the history of the camp, but also the fate of the Jewish population of Lublin during the years of occupation. Before the Second World War, the Jewish population in Lublin was 40,000. The Jewish community had three cemeteries. During the occupation, these cemeteries were destroyed and tombstones were used in the camp to pave roads.

14 Barak 62 Shoe workshop

Opposite Barrack 47, Barrack 62 housed shoe workshops.

The shoemakers, which were subordinate to the DAW (German manufacturing enterprises), were located in Barracks No. 62 and on Field VI. The shoes confiscated from the Maidanek prisoners and Jewish victims of the death camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka were used as raw materials for the repair and manufacture of leather shoes for the German army and institutions. Prisoners also worked in boot shops in the labour camps on Flügplatz and Lipova Street in Lublin.

After collecting several transports, we were taken to a large field and shown a large area, fenced with barbed wire. There was a selection. Various specialists were selected and assigned to labour camps, and the rest were sent to Majdanek. [...] The camp authorities were looking for shoemakers for workshops. My brother and son-in-law volunteered immediately, realising that as artisans they had a better chance of survival.

Nathan Zaheimver, Dental Technician from Warsaw (May — August 1943)

On November 4, 1943, as usual, a roll call was held, after which we dispersed on working teams. [...] We were sent to the boot workshop where we fixed army boots in relatively tolerable conditions. [...] In February 1944, several shoemakers and tailors were selected from our group, formed a new team and led to Lipova Street, where the branch of the Maidanek camp was located. [...] The workshop was divided into two parts. In the first, there were shoemakers, in the second, prisoners who made belts and leather accessories. In addition to the Poles, there were French, Italians, Belgians, and even Russians and Germans.

Marcin Gryta of Zacksuwek, a political prisoner (November 1943 — July 22, 1944)

Currently, the historical exposition "Prisoners of Maidanek" is located in block No. 62.

"Lagerstraße" and shoe workshop (marked with an arrow). Maidanek State Museum

15 Prisoners' Field II

Behind the shoemaker is the Prisoners' Field II. In 1942, 22 barracks were built on this field, identical to those on Field I. It held men, mostly Polish, Slovak and Czech Jews, as well as hostages from Lublin Voivodeship and Soviet prisoners of war. On July 14, 1942, 86 prisoners organised a successful escape from the camp — the largest in the history of Maidanek. In May 1943, a field hospital was organised in the barracks of Paul II for Soviet prisoners of war who were severely wounded and became disabled. As the Third Reich authorities intended to use the field hospital for propaganda purposes, it was excluded from the jurisdiction of the Lublin concentration camp administration, and the prisoners were given slightly better conditions than the prisoners of the camp.

The German doctors were not interested in treating the Soviet prisoners of war, nor were they planning to. By outsourcing treatment to Soviet doctors, without providing them with a material basis for it, the Germans wanted to: first, direct the discontent of prisoners of war for the shortcomings of treatment to Soviet doctors and, second, thereby preventing any claims against themselves. "Let me tell you what you're complaining about. You're being treated by your Soviet doctors!"

...

The supply of medicines was totally inadequate. The hospital, which had up to 1250 seriously wounded and sick, was given 150 tablets of albucide, prontozil (white and red streptocide) for a month.

Saren Barutchev: doctor from Baku, prisoner of war (October 1943 — July 22, 1944)

In the spring of 1943, we received secret information from Dr. Hett that a group of disabled persons who were injured during work in labour formations on the front lines, who collaborated with the Germans [...] were appointed as the Commandant of the field police secretary from Berlin Sowalski, and his deputy — an elderly feldwebel. Polish doctors headed hospital barracks, and Russian doctors and nurses became their assistants. In the office of the police secretary of Sowalski in the first barracks on the left were the office of Dr. Hett, living quarters for Polish and Russian doctors, operating rooms and other rooms.

Tadeusz Koskowski: Bydgoszcz doctor, political prisoner (27 November 1941–6 April 1944)

Until 21 May 1943, the population of Pole II was predominantly Jewish. When the number of Soviet prisoners of war increased, in August the Jews were transferred to other fields. Of the 22 barracks in Field II, eight were permanently set aside for the sick. The surgical ward, located in Barracks Nos. 15, 16 and 17, was the largest. Tuberculosis patients occupied barracks No. 3 and 12. The Therapeutic Unit was in Barracks 18, the Outpatient and Reception Unit was in Block 4, and the Insulator was in Barracks 15. In the 13 months the field hospital has been operating, the case fatality rate has reached 34 percent. Gvozdarev kept a record of all deserters and those who did not remain loyal to the Fatherland.

During the roll call, the bodies of the deceased were also taken out in a single day. According to the Chancellery, they were believed to be alive and had to stand with the others. During the evening roll call, the prisoners were not only counted, but also punished for breaking the rules.

Saren Barutchev: doctor from Baku, prisoner of war (October 1943 — July 22, 1944)

Prisoner Field II, serving as a hospital for wounded Soviet prisoners. Maidanek State Museum

16 Interpole I

Interpole I is the part of the camp separating Fields I and II. In the second half of 1942 there was a temporary crematorium, equipped with two ovens, working on crude oil. It was built by the German company H. Kön GmbH for the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and later moved to Majdanek. Here, the SS also carried out individual and group executions and murders of prisoners, most often by hanging. The bodies of the dead, brought by other Fields and gas chambers, were also stored here. In addition, the nearby barn served as a place of execution and a mortuary. In January 1943, a laundry and dryer was opened in Interpol I, where prisoners' clothes and looted property were washed. The building burned down in early 1944.

Jews who were unfit for work and did not fit in the gas chamber were sent to a barn near the crematorium. They opened the barn door, forced the Jews to undress and one by one to enter the next room. At the door stood two executioners with iron rods. Every entering Jew was hit several times on the head. When his legs were shaken, the next was summoned, and his body was dumped on the previous body.

Jan Kwiatkowski: Warsaw lawyer, political prisoner (26 march 1943–22 july 1944)

The small crematorium had two or three stoves for burning corpses, which looked like regular heating boilers. When we got there, the stoves were cold and not working, there were no staff, no prisoners, no SS

[...] We were ordered to remove the tags from the neck of each corpse when unloading at the crematorium and to write down the number on the chest of the deceased.

Andrzej Stanislawski: Political Prisoner from Warsaw (January 17, 1945—July 22, 1944)

I sorted laundry items. Army overcoats with bullet holes. The earflaps are probably Soviet. Trousers and drawers [...] taken from those shot or hanged. Women's dresses range from casual to ballroom. Children's dresses cut on the sides and back to remove from corpses. Every thing spoke eloquently of how its former owner died. I brushed my clothes at the table for a while, but I was exhausted and they transferred me to the dryer, a row of cabins with a temperature of 60 degrees. Under the ceiling there were crossbars on which washed clothes were hung.

Zofia Pokorska from Warsaw, children's magazine editor, political prisoner (18 January—July 1943)

Security system 17

The camp's security system was designed to isolate prisoners from the outside world and prevent them from escaping. For this purpose, a double barbed wire fence with a height of 2.2 metres was erected around the enclosures, to which high-voltage wires were connected. Along the fence, on the inside of the fields, passed the so-called "zone of death"—a marked strip of land, which was forbidden to cross. There were guard rooms at the entrance gate to the fields. Eighteen guard towers, equipped with mobile searchlights and machine guns, were also installed around the fence. 24-hour duty was provided by security. During the day, guard posts were also posted along the outer boundary of Maidanek and at the workplaces of prisoners, as well as at the gates, warehouses, workshops and bunkers located on the southeastern edge of the camp.

The wire fence of the fields was very different from the wire fence that we saw at the entrance to the camp. The very name "field" associated in our view with the expanse, sun, flowers, freedom, in Maidanek meant a rectangular area for prisoners, surrounded by a complex system of wire fences. It consisted of two

rows of barbed wire mesh fixed to posts three metres high. From the lower third of the outer row to the inner, from the top to the bottom, like strings of a kind of grandiose harp, at intervals of twenty centimetres, the same barbed wire was stretched as on the mesh, but firmly reinforced on the insulators. A high voltage current was passed through this fence system.

Saren Barutchev: doctor from Baku, prisoner of war (October 1943 — July 22, 1944)

Rows of barbed wire around the camp and between the fields. State Historical Museum. Inv. No. And XII 8973

Watch tower. Marszałek J. Majdanek. Obóz koncentracyjny w Lublinie.

In Field III, primitive stable barracks were built. The windowless walls were made of roughly fitted boards, with skylights in the roof being the only source of light. The first two barracks, Nos. 1 and 2, were set aside for repair shops for SS motorised units. The main camp office (relocated from Field I) was located in Barracks No. 12, as well as the block where severely ill and severely malnourished prisoners were kept in isolation before being destroyed in the gas chamber. From May 1942, Polish hostages for cooperation with the resistance movement were held here, and from the beginning of 1943 — political prisoners of different nationalities, mainly Poles and Jews from the liquidated ghettos in Lublin District, Warsaw and Białystok. In the summer, families evicted from the Zamoski region were kept in barracks for several weeks.

After the retreat of German troops from Lublin in August 1944, the NKVD used Field III to house a group of officers and soldiers of the Home Army and Peasant Battalions, who were later deported to the Soviet Union.

The barracks were numbered to the left of the gate: car repair shops occupied numbers 1 and 2. The Jews were in 3 and 4, and our transport was in 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 barracks. On the right, in the same order, there were: No. 12 — Schreibstube (Chancellery), No. 13 — Borststube (here lived prisoners-hairdressers), Jews — in numbers 14, 15, 16 and 17, and Nos. 20, 21 and 22 were partially empty, partly used for storing tools and lumber. The entire surface of the field, except for the buildings, was a trampled mud swamp, where we stood during morning and evening roll calls.

Felix Slepka: a trader from Warsaw, a political prisoner (January 17, 1943 — April 6, 1944)

As a staff officer of the 8th Division of the Home Army in Marianka near Minsk-Mazowiecki, I was disarmed by the Red Army in the Nedelka estate on August 6, 1944. Among those transported in 28 lorries to the Lublin barracks, I was imprisoned in Majdanek camp on August 8, 1944, along with eight other officers.

Leonard Statsevich from Novaya Vileyka (August 8 — August 27, 1944)

Prisoners' Field III. Maidanek State Museum

19 Prisoner Field III: Barracks 14 and 15, Column of the Three Eagles

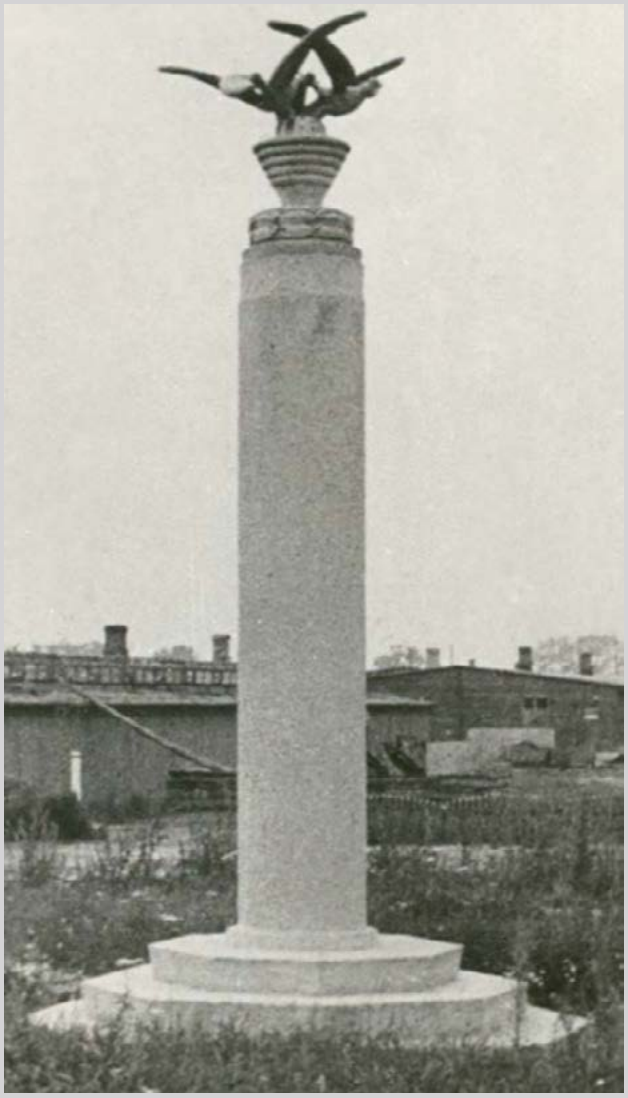
The area between the two rows of barracks served as an appellate, i.e. a square for roll calls. On the right, Barracks 14 and 15 are open for inspection, where an exposition on the conditions of detention of former prisoners is available.

At the end of Field III is the so-called "Three Eagles Column"

For propaganda purposes, the camp administration ordered prisoners to plant flower beds and decorate the grounds with sculptures. In May 1943, Polish political prisoners took advantage of this and erected a monument to the victims of Maidanek on the Third Field Square, designed by sculptor Albin Boniecki, who was also a prisoner of the camp. The eagles, set in the sky, symbolise freedom. The remains of the dead prisoners were secretly placed at the base of the column. SS officers, believing the monument to symbolise the German emblem, ceremonially opened it on May 1 — the Day of National Labour of the Third Reich.

I gave the birds the image of half-pigeons, half-eagles. A pigeon is a symbol of an innocent soul, and an eagle is a nation and a victory. I tied the birds together as a symbol of victory and embodied them as a trio of Men, Women and Child leaning their feet on the globe they defend.

Albin Maria Boniecki, prisoner of Majdanek, creator of the Column of Three Eagles



Column of three eagles. Marszałek J. Majdanek. Obóz koncentracyjny w Lublinie.

Prisoners' Field IV 20

Field IV was intended primarily for men. Construction of the stables on this field was completed in August 1942. A part of the barracks occupied a transit camp subordinate to the German police in Lublin, where hostages from the Lublin Voivodeship were held. In 1943–1944, political prisoners of different nationalities, mainly Jews from the Białystok Ghetto, as well as Soviet prisoners of war, were exiled here. Brush and basket workshops organised by SS company Ostindustrie, which managed the property of the victims of the "Reinhardt Action", were opened in the barracks on the southern side. Jewish prisoners worked there — not only men, but also women and children, and after the mass shooting of Jews on November 3, 1943, Poles, Russians and Ukrainians worked here.

After transfer to Field IV, all our transport was placed in the seventh block. Russians and Ukrainians lived in this block. The jobs vacated after the Jews were taken by Poles and Russians. Prisoners from Unit 7 worked exclusively in a basket-making workshop. Their task was to repair ammunition baskets supplied by the army. The workshop was run by a German civilian who showed little interest in the prisoners and spent most of his time in his office. Only occasionally did the camp-führer Pollman appear, choosing strong and healthy people. Those who could not do the hard physical work found shelter in a basket shop. There was also a large group of Soviet prisoners of war.

Prisoners' Field IV. Maidanek State Museum

Krasier Vrytsa, Senior Bloc, Political Prisoner (august 1943 — april 6, 1944).

Arrests in Poland, especially in the Zamość area, increased in late July and early August 1943. New transports, mostly carrying women and children, arrived in Majdanek. Women with children were taken en masse to our Field IV, where they sat on the parade ground, waiting for further decisions. They were very tired and hungry, and we had nothing to give them. I saw a very sad scene that I always carry in my heart and can not forget. On the parade ground in front of one of the blocks sat a young mother with two young children: one a few months old, the other about four years old. They were all very hungry. The mother pressed the youngest against her bare breast, trying to feed him or at least calm him down. The eldest child, sobbing loudly, tugged his mother by the hair and in a hoarse voice that spread all over the parade ground, shouted, "Mum, let me eat!" The baby was too young to know where they were. The mother herself was very hungry, torn by internal despair, with a heart broken by grief, and plentiful tears streamed down her exhausted face, falling on the sand of the parade ground.

Eugeniusz Nehada, a former resident of the village of Yama near Osipov Lubelski, a hostage (June 20 — September 3, 1943).

Interpole II 21

The so-called Interpole II was separated between Fields IV and V in July 1942. There was a coal and firewood warehouse. Hence the name of this part of the camp: "coal field" (Kohlenfeld). There was also a residential barracks for prisoners from a special team (Sonderkommando) who were forced to burn the bodies of camp victims in the crematorium. In the spring and summer of 1943, during mass deportations from the ghettos of Warsaw and Białystok, when the "Field of Roses" no longer had a place, hundreds of Jews were placed here by whole families. They waited outside for several hours to be admitted to the camp. From here, they were taken in batches to the baths, where they were selected for gas chambers.

Once a new transport arrived, so large that the Rosengarten could not accommodate everyone, and several thousand people were placed in the square between Fields IV and V, where coal was stored. From there, they were led in groups, carrying suitcases, to the bathhouse. Learning from the people of Field IV through barbed wire what awaited them, they tore and destroyed their banknotes.

Jerzy Kwiatkowski, lawyer from Warsaw, political prisoner (March 26, 1943 — July 22, 1944).

Immediately we were surrounded by a convoy of soldiers with rifles at work, and we moved forward, stumbling. We didn't know where they were taking us. The barracks could be seen in the distance. We were left in the square where the coal lay. [...] The next day is selection. The elderly prayed, knowing that they were going to die. Mothers were separated from their children. Some women managed to stay with their babies. The children were crying all around. And those eyes, full of tears and horror, will always remain in my memory. Death has sidelined me. [...] Here in the camp where I lost my son and every sense of my former life, I spent eleven weeks.

Ragna Finger, a Jewish woman born in Warsaw (May — July 1943)

We were taken to the middle field between the men's and women's camps, and we spent all night there until morning. Some people immediately approached the guards, begging them to shoot them. In the morning we were separated: women, men and children. [...] Several children were left alone, and their parents told them when they left, "I will be back soon."

Kunt Mauskatel: Jewish merchant from Warsaw (May — July 1943)

Interpole II. Maidanek State Museum

22 Field V

In early October 1942, a concentration camp for women was established on this field. The construction of residential barracks for the women's concentration camp was completed in September 1942. The first prisoners were residents of Lublin, as well as Jewish women from the ghetto in Belzhitsy and the Lublin ghetto in Maidan Tatar. In January 1943, large parties of Polish female political prisoners were sent here.

In March of this year, the first group of women and children who were victims of punitive operations carried out in the region in response to the activities of guerrilla groups arrived from Belarus. A month later, large numbers of Jewish families from the Warsaw Ghetto began arriving, and in August, from the Białystok Ghetto. The first two barracks on the left were used to hold young Jewish children, who were soon taken to their deaths in gas chambers. In September 1943, after the reorganisation of the camp, the women were transferred to Field I, and the barracks on Field V were taken under the male infirmary. An outpatient barracks was built in the centre of the field. After the transfer of most of the prisoners to camps in the depths of the Reich (May-July 1944), a forced labour camp of the Wehrmacht for civilians digging trenches in the city was located here. After the withdrawal of the SS, the territory of the camp was transferred to the disposal of the Soviet Army.

Barracks for Poles are still bearable. Russians are worse, Jews are worse. We have 320 women in our unit, and twice as many in Russian. I can't say how much in Hebrew.

Evgenia Deskur (Polka, political prisoner, May 5 — July 16, 1943)

There were about 1,000 women in our barracks. They slept on the ground. At night, when women went to the bathroom or to fetch water, they stomped on each other. Camp soup and contaminated water caused diarrhoea in most. [...] The toilets in Maidanek were open-air, next to barbed wire separating the women's camp from the men's. [...] Soon I also got diarrhoea! [...] We didn't have a change of clothes! [...] Every morning at dawn, the guards burst into the barracks and started beating us on the heads and shoulders with wooden sticks or whips, cursing and insulting us. They woke us up and chased us to the morning roll call. [...] We quickly realised that it was not safe to stay in the camp during the day because of the constant "selection". It is better to pull stones under a scorching sun or dig the ground than to tremble every time a whistle is heard in the camp.

Galina Grinstein from the Warsaw Ghetto, 14 years (May — July 1943)

A single barracks could hold 500 to 800 people. The three-tiered beds were covered with three thin blankets. If there was not enough space on the beds, people would lie down on the dirty straw in the corner. There are several people on one shelf. Fleas and lice did not give us peace day or night.

Valentina Isachenko from Belarus, 9 years (May — September 1943)

In Field V, I was responsible for Unit 22, located next to the crematorium. I saw the shooting on November 3, 1943. It was 20 or 40 metres from the place of

execution. Everything happened next to my block. On that day, the entire infirmary was transferred to Field III, and only Jews remained in Field V. [...] In what state did we find the blocks upon returning to Field V? Total chaos. The Jews who worked with us in the infirmary for months, and sometimes longer, with whom we got along well, our former colleagues and friends, now lay shot to death on the canopy. Some killed themselves. The Nars were inverted, and the clutter in the blocks was indescribable. It left a terrible impression. The prisoners' column was large, and there were Jews among us. When we stopped at the gate, the SS snatched our Jews. [...] It was awful. On the same day, after being shot, the infirmary returned to Field V.

Romuald Straba, doctor from Sosnowiec, political prisoner (18 February 1943–7 April 1944)

Field V. Maidanek State Museum

23 Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom

The monument was designed by sculptor Victor Tolkien. It consists of three elements: the Monument Gate, the Mausoleum and the Memory Road, connecting them into a single complex. The main part of the monument refers to the Gate of Hell from *Dante's Divine Comedy*. In front of it is a depression, symbolising the abyss of the camp. The dates of the *German occupation of Lublin (1939-1944) are carved on six commemorative candles.* On the outer wall of the monument, facing the so-called "black road", silhouettes of prisoners are visible. The mausoleum is located on the axis of the Memory Road, extending from the Monumental Gate along the fields where the prisoners were kept, to the crematorium. The mausoleum itself is

in the form of an ancient burial urn, in which the remains of the Maidanek prisoners are placed. On the frieze of the dome there is an inscription: "*Our fate is a warning to you*" - a line from the poem by Franciszek Fenikowski "Requiem". The monument was created in 1969 on the initiative of the Council for the Protection of the Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom.

Behind the Mausoleum is a monument to the victims of Operation Erntefest

In 1962, on the site of the mass execution of Jewish prisoners on November 3, 1943, a granite slab by the sculptor Stanisław Strzyżyński was installed. In 2003, it was replaced by a new sandstone monument with a granite slab in the form of a matzeva (Jewish tombstone), created by the sculptor Kazimierz Stasz.

Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom. The photo shows the Mausoleum and the Road of Memory. Maidanek State Museum

Crematorium 24

Following the closure of the crematorium, located between Camp Fields I and II, the camp command commissioned the German company *H. Kori GmbH to* build a new crematorium. Construction was completed in autumn 1943. The lower part of the building was brick, and the upper part was wooden.

Inside were five cremation ovens, two storage rooms, an autopsy table for the removal of valuables, a coal warehouse, and an office with a bathroom for the head of the crematorium. The SS used human ashes as fertiliser for the fields. In the brick hall, Polish political prisoners and hostages brought from Lublin Castle were shot.

Inspection report of the SS concentration camp in the mountains. Lublin, 2–3 August 1944 read:

In the cabbage vegetable gardens in the southern part of the camp town, on the surface of the ground among the cabbage is also a large number of burned bones.

On 22 July 1944, the SS garrison partially burned the building before fleeing the camp. The wooden part was restored in 1945, but the study and the door separating the bathroom from the hall with ovens were never rebuilt.

When he reached the gardens, he had to turn left to get to the crematorium. His square brick pipe rose high above the whole of Maidanek. She smoked day and night. The colour and amount of smoke taught experienced inmates about the load of cremation furnaces. Dark, almost black smoke was an ominous sign of the burning of numerous corpses.

Saren Barutchev: doctor from Baku, prisoner of war (October 1943 — July 22, 1944)

The crematorium team consisted of French Jews and later Jews from other European countries. They lived in isolation from the rest of the prisoners in a small barracks on the so-called "Coal Field" between Fields IV and V. These people knew they were going to the crematorium, and there would be no going back. They died soon after six weeks of work, and were shot by the Germans to avoid leaving witnesses to their crimes.

Andrzej Stanslawski, from Warsaw: political prisoner, 17 January 1943–22 July 1944

The interpreter warned us that we had barracks, that we were not allowed to move around the camp, and that we would only have one place to sleep and work. The next day, some of us were taken to the crematorium and told what we should do: unload the remains and put them in bags. The norm was fifteen bags that we took to the windshield wall, from where they were loaded into the waggons. I worked there from February 1943 until 1944, almost until the very end of the camp. As the Red Army approached, the Germans took away the young prisoners and deported them to the Reich. Some 200 people, including me, were chosen one day. We were ordered to load the remains into the waggons, and then we were sent in the same waggons. We reached Wuppertal, where we

were told to unload the remains.

Vasil Yurchuk from Ukraine (February 1943 — June 1944)

Kiln crematorium after the liberation of the camp. State Vladimir-Suzdal Historical, Architectural and Art Museum-Reserve. Inv. No. FT-425

Moats for Shooting 25

In the area where the Mausoleum and the Crematorium are today, moats were opened during the years of operation of the camp for the execution of prisoners. The prisoners were shot and buried behind Paul V. In the late autumn of 1941 and early 1942, the bodies of typhoid victims and executed Soviet prisoners of war were buried there. By the autumn of 1943, most of the bodies had been dug up and burned by the order of the camp authorities. On 3 November 1943, some 18,000 Jewish prisoners from the Majdanek concentration camp and the Lublin labour camps were shot in ditches dug near the crematorium during an operation codenamed "Erntefest" ("Harvest Festival"). It was one of the most brutal massacres committed by the Nazis in the camp.

In the autumn of 1943 and in 1944, Majdanek was visited by a group of Polish partisans and political prisoners from Lublin Castle. They were shot in a crematorium and moats, from where the bodies of the Jews were previously removed and burned. The last execution took place on 21 July 1944, two days before the entry of Soviet troops into Lublin. 700 people were killed that day.

All the Jews were driven to Field V, from where they had already transferred patients to Fields I and IV. The Jews were forced to undress in the washbasin and

leave all their belongings there […]. Then, through a narrow, specially prepared trench between the rows of barbed wire, they passed into the area next to the large crematorium. There they had to lie in layers, one on top of the other, into deep ditches. The SS men walked along the edges of the ditches with automatic weapons in their hands and fired long lines at people lying there. The next ones had to lie on top of the dead, and often the wounded. […] From the side of Paul V came the sounds of some German melody. At the same time, automatic weapons continued to fire almost continuously until 6 p.m. We also heard the roar of the crowd and the fragments of voices. We knew that we had witnessed the terrible drama that had played out next to us — the loss of thousands of lives.

Andrzej Stanislawski from Warsaw, political prisoner (January 17, 1943 — July 22, 1944)

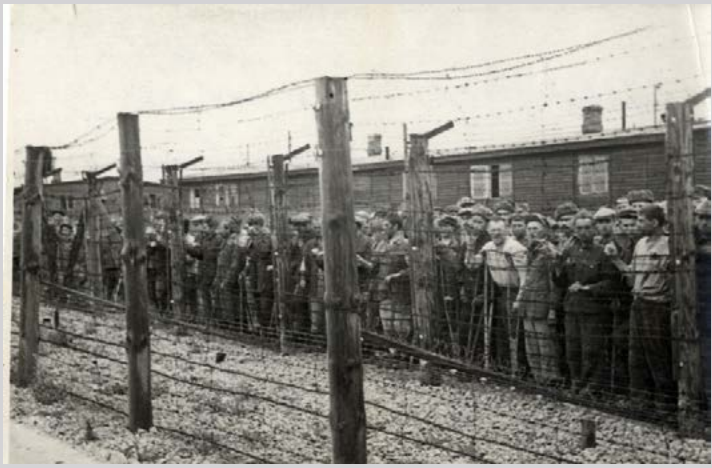
A pit with the bones and ashes of burned prisoners found in the camp grounds. State Central Museum of Modern History of Russia. 31512/137

Recently, grey buses, crowded with civilians, have begun arriving regularly at the crematorium. [] Prisoners working on the construction of Field VI are then recalled from work and locked in a barracks, but someone always hides and watches. The area around the crematorium can also be seen from the windows

of Blocks 21 and 22 on Field VI. My friends tell me that the prisoners are forced to flee in pairs to deep ditches, where the SS shoot them with automatic weapons. If only a few people are brought by the bus, they are taken to the crematorium and killed in the room where the bodies lie waiting in the stoves. Our intelligence confirms that buses usually transport prisoners from Lublin Castle, but there are also cases when people are brought from villages where a German was shot.

Camp liberation 26

Already in the summer of 1944, after the beginning of Operation Bagration, the Red Army was rapidly approaching the city of Lublin. On July 18 — August 2, 1944, the offensive Lublin-Brest operation was carried out by the forces of the 1st Belorussian Front. On July 21, 1944, parts of the 2nd Tank Army and the 8th Guards Army already broke through to Lublin, the next day occupied the north-eastern outskirts of the city. By July 23, the assault on the city began, and on the morning of July 24, the 60th Army (Lieutenant General P. A. Kurochkin) and the 7th Guards Cavalry Corps reached Maidanek.



Maidanek prisoners freed by the Red Army. State Central Museum of Modern History of Russia. 37553/1349

After clearing Helm, we went to the Bolshak leading to Lublin… We saw a cluster of buildings a few kilometres from the road, went there and when we saw towers and rows of barbed wire, it became clear to us that there was a concentration camp… We found the stoves still working, with piles and piles of dead camp inmates lying next to them, simple the germans did not have time to burn. We felt a sense of genuine horror, the fighters stood in a daze, unable

to move, some of them crying. And then, as if on command, everyone rushed to the barracks, to rescue those who were still alive... There were still people in the barracks, alive but exhausted to the limit, looking like skeletons, covered with skin...

Krasilshchikov Zakhar Evseyevich, scout

When our tanks broke into Majdanek, the camp guards started running in panic. The crematorium stoves were still warm...Stacking corpses. From the barracks came to meet us 12–15 prisoners — Jews, but these were living skeletons, not people. It was painful and frightening to look at them...

Vesterman Arkady Grigorievich, tanker

Prisoners released by the Red Army. GBUK and DO Moscow "Multimedia complex of actual arts". Inv. No. FII-19434

Then the Majdanek death camp was liberated... Barakov's there, I don't know how many. And the main thing is, what did they need all these shoes for? Whole warehouses. Terribly simple!

Kornev Grigory Sergeyevich, self-propelled driver

In conclusion, we will see an excerpt from the memories of Marshal of the Soviet Union **Vasily Chuikov:**

On the southeastern outskirts of Lublin, our units captured the fascist Majdanek concentration camp.

The word Majdanek is now known to anyone interested in the history of the Second World Warrior. At that time, it was one of the usual names. It has not yet reached the whole world, it has yet to be heard at the Nuremberg trials. Death camp... Not the camp! Death factory! An organised and state-of-the-art engineering technique with which fascists were sophisticated in killing people. I omit all the details that are now widely documented in many journals. But frankly, when I was told, when I saw the photos

taken by our officers, I didn't go there... My heart trembled. Millions burned in the furnaces. Millions! Men, women, children, old people... No one was spared! They hung the living on their hooks, killed them with batons, gassed them...

Post-war trials 27

On 27 November — 2 December 1944, the first trial in Lublin took place. Six people were on trial (four SS men and two capos), all sentenced to death. SS-Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm Gerstenmeier, SS-Obersturmführer Anton Ternes, SS-Oberscharführer Hermann Vögel, SS-Rottenführer Theodor Schölen, and Kapo Heinrich Stalp were hanged in public on 3 December 1944. Between 1946 and 1948, 95 SS men serving in Maidanek were tried. Seven of them (including senior warden Elizabeth Erich) were sentenced to death, the rest to various prison terms. Between 1975 and 1981, Düsseldorf was the site of the largest and longest trial in the history of the persecution of former Nazi criminals against 16 officers of the camp commandant's office. By that time, 108 of the 1,037 former members of the garrison had been tried, mainly in Poland. The Düsseldorf trial resulted in seven life sentences, five lengthy prison terms, and four acquittals.

Historians estimate the total number of prisoners who passed through Majdanek to be between 150,000 and 200,000 from more than 50 countries. The largest groups were Jews (41%) and Poles (35%). The difficulty of counting the prison population is compounded by the fact that Maidanek was not numbered as in other camps. When the number of prisoners reached 20,000, newly arrived prisoners not selected for immediate destruction in the gas chambers were given the numbers of deceased prisoners.

Due to the lack of complete archival data, it is impossible to accurately determine the total number of Maidanek victims. Remaining fragmentary records from the camp administration, reports from clandestine resistance groups inside the camp and eyewitness accounts put the number of casualties at around 80,000. Jews (about 60,000) are the most killed, followed by Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians and Russians.

Former concentration camp staff in the dock.
Marszałek J. Majdanek. Obóz koncentracyjny w Lublinie.

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