

Extermination Camp Majdanek

Majdanek was created by extending a prisoner-of-war camp for Poles and Russians that had opened in 1939 in the Lublin suburb of Majdan Tatarski. By the summer of 1942 it was an operating death camp. In February 1943 the Polish Red Cross expressed concern about the inmates' fate; in response, the Nazis permitted selected Polish prisoners to receive parcels, and required each recipient to send a post card acknowledgment. Almost 500,000 prisoners from 28 countries passed through Majdanek, and 360,000 of them perished. Majdanek's gas chambers, drums of Zyklon B cyanide poison, and crematorium ovens were intact when Soviet forces liberated the camp on July 24, 1944, giving the outside world its first opportunity to view the scale and efficiency of the Nazis' mass-murder machinery.

A January 17, 1944, parcel waybill for a food shipment to a Majdanek prisoner from the Polish Red Cross office at Lukow, and a censored January 14, 1944, prisoner's formular acknowledgment post card sent by a Majdanek inmate, with Red Cross marking.

