

Concentration Camp Auschwitz

Just as in Germany and Austria previously, Nazi rule required concentration camps in Poland. Nazi leaders chose the peaceful agrarian village of Oświęcim, located along an important railroad line, as the location for the Auschwitz concentration camp. Auschwitz became synonymous with mass murder, the place where an estimated 1.6 million people were put to death in the Holocaust from 1941 to 1945. Its infamous commandant, Rudolf Höss, arrived to establish the facility on April 29, 1940, and the first transport of prisoners, consisting of 708 Poles and 20 Jews from Tarnów, arrived May 30. Auschwitz opened officially on June 14, 1940, and was liberated by the Red Army on January 27, 1945.

A February 28, 1941, formular envelope mailed by prisoner number 205 (first transport) to Tarnów. Boxed red censor mark on the back.



An unmailed post card published by the Auschwitz Museum after the war shows crematorium IV on March 22, 1943 just after its completion.



The inscription references a revolt in 1943 but current records only show a revolt by a small group of women on October 23, 1943 in the undressing room of crematorium II. A larger well documented revolt took place October 7, 1944 by Sonderkommando using gunpowder smuggled in by women to successfully blow up crematorium IV. The organizers were rounded up and were the last group publically hanged at Auschwitz.