

Umschlagplatz

(transfer point), the departure point in Warsaw from which hundreds of thousands of Jews were deported to Nazi extermination camps.

The *Umschlagplatz* was actually the area that separated the Warsaw Ghetto from the Polish part of the city. It was the only official junction where goods could be transferred in and out of the ghetto.

When the Germans began mass deportations from the ghetto in July 1942, the site no longer served as a point of transfer between the ghetto and the outside; instead, it was used as the assembly site for the ghetto Jews who were to be deported. These Jews were arrested in the streets of the ghetto and marched to the *Umschlagplatz*. They were made to sit on the ground in the *Umschlagplatz's* courtyard or on the floor inside an empty building on the site, where they waited for the daily train to pull in. When it arrived they were packed in, 100--120 persons to a freight car. SS men, Ukrainian and Baltic troops, and the Polish police were all on hand to ensure that nothing went awry.

In 1988 a monument was dedicated at the *Umschlagplatz* to commemorate the more than 300,000 Warsaw Jews who were deported from there to their deaths.