

Trawniki

Forced Labor camp located southeast of Lublin. Trawniki was established in 1941; some 20,000 Jews passed through the camp during its two years of existence.

The first prisoners in Trawniki were Soviet prisoners of war and Polish Jews. In mid-1942 Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia arrived. Many died due to the harsh conditions, were sent to their deaths at the Belzec extermination camp, or were shot in the forest nearby.

In late 1942 the Germans transferred a factory to Trawniki from the nearby Międzyrzec Podlaski ghetto, and the camp's prisoners were forced to work there. After the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943 and the subsequent destruction of the ghetto, Warsaw factories were transferred to Trawniki, along with 10,000 workers (including ghetto archivist Emanuel Ringelblum and 33 fighters from the Jewish Fighting Organization). In May 1943 Jews from the Netherlands, Bialystok, Minsk, and Smolensk were brought to Trawniki.

In the fall of 1943 the Nazis carried out Operation Erntefest, in which some 43,000 Jews were exterminated, including 10,000 Jews from Trawniki. In the spring of 1944 the surviving prisoners were transferred to the Starachowice camp in the Radom district. Trawniki also served as a training camp for Soviet POWs who volunteered to become SS guards. (see also Jewish Fighting Organization, Warsaw.)