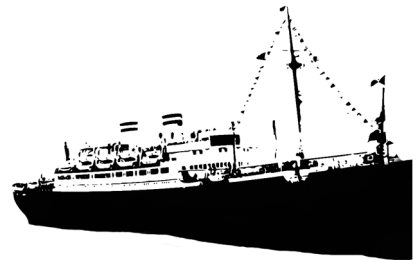


# Glossary





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<b>Concept and Execution</b>	<b>Dr. Tobias Ebbrecht, Deborah Hartmann, Dr. Noa Mckayton</b>
<b>Translation</b>	<b>Cassie Hirsh</b>
<b>Educational Advisor</b>	<b>Dr. Noa Mckayton</b>
<b>Historical Advisor</b>	<b>Prof. (emeritus) Dan Michman, Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research; John Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem</b>
<b>Production and Graphic Designer</b>	<b>Ami Sternschuss</b>
<b>Language Editor</b>	<b>Leora Pushett</b>

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## **Buchenwald**

One of the largest concentration camps established within Germany, Buchenwald was located in close proximity to the city of Weimar. Put into service on July 16, 1937, during its existence in excess of 240,000 political prisoners, homosexuals, Jews, Prisoners of War, resistance fighters, Sinti & Roma, and others, from 30 countries, passed through Buchenwald's gates. While fully accurate records were not maintained in this camp, it is known that over the course of its existence, more than 56,000 inmates were killed in Buchenwald. Of these, 11,000 were Jewish prisoners, and 8,000 were Soviet prisoners of war shot to death in a killing structure established specifically for that purpose.

In addition, the treatment of the prisoners was so bad that thousands died as a result of inhuman living conditions, brutal punishments, and slave labor (in armament factories, quarries, construction projects, etc.) which was a form of ongoing abuse.

With the advance of Allied troops, most of the camp prisoners were evacuated on a death march. 21,000 remaining inmates of Buchenwald, which included 4,000 Jews and 1,000 children, were liberated by US forces on April 11, 1945.

## **Death Marches**

Death marches were the forced marches of prisoners over extreme distances, under unbearable conditions. During these marches, the prisoners were abused by their accompanying guards and often killed. Those who fell behind or stopped to rest, even for a moment, were shot.

Most of the death marches were conducted towards the war's end, following the evacuation of concentration camps.

Throughout March and April 1945, as the Allies advanced and the war was drawing to a close, the Nazis evacuated camp after camp, sending thousands upon thousands of their 700,000+ remaining concentration camp prisoners on marches. Some lasted for weeks, causing thousands of deaths along the roads of western Austria and central Germany. Some of those marches lasted for weeks, causing thousands of deaths along the roads of western Austria and central Germany. Often, the prisoners would be marched on foot part of the way, and then crowded onto trains – 70 people to a car – where they were denied food and water.

In all, an estimated 200,000-250,000 concentration camp prisoners were murdered or died on the forced death marches that were conducted throughout the last ten months of World War II, a quarter to a third of them Jews.

## Emigration

After the National Socialists took power in Germany in January 1933, many German Jews considered emigration. Statistics show a clear increase in the number of Jews emigrating, first immediately after Hitler's accession to power, then after the passing of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, and finally after the November Pogrom (Kristallnacht) in November 1938. After the annexation of Austria to the German Reich in March 1938, many Austrian Jews also decided to emigrate. A last wave of Jewish emigration from Nazi Germany took place after the outbreak of war in September 1939.

The decision to emigrate posed a great dilemma for many German and Austrian Jews. Leaving one's homeland was a difficult step. Many felt too old to build a new existence in a foreign country whose language they did not know, or they did not want to leave family members behind. There were also many unknown challenges in the country of arrival, so mainly people who already had relatives abroad emigrated.

In the first years of Nazi rule, the main destinations of Jewish refugees were primarily the countries directly bordering Germany, such as France, Switzerland, the Netherlands or Czechoslovakia. But Palestine, which was under the British mandate at the time, the USA or South Africa were also preferred destinations for Jewish emigrants. In the face of growing repression in their home country (especially after the November Pogrom in 1938), many German Jews even fled to Shanghai and other faraway places for which they could obtain entry visas.

The more desperate the situation of the Jews in Germany and Austria became, the more difficult it became to find a country willing to accept refugees. This situation was not changed by a large conference held in Evian, France, in 1938, where representatives of 32 nations discussed how to support the emigration of Jews from Germany and Austria. Later Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir wrote about the Evian conference: "Sitting there and [...] listening to the representatives of 32 nations stand up one after the other and declare how terribly they would like to take in a larger number of refugees and how terribly sorry they were that unfortunately they could not do so, was a shattering experience. [...] Don't you know that these damned 'numbers' are human beings, human beings who will have to spend the rest of their lives in concentration camps or on the run around the globe like lepers if you don't take them in?"

Those who decided to leave their previous homes due to increasingly severe discrimination and persecution, found themselves facing massive bureaucratic and financial difficulties. In addition to the problem of finding a receptive country, a so-called *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (Reich Flight Tax) had to be paid when leaving the German Reich. With this compulsory tax for emigrants, the Nazis wanted to prevent the capital of German and Austrian Jews from migrating abroad. Until May 1934, only emigrants with assets of more than 200,000 Reichsmark were taxed, but on May 18, 1934, a decree came into force according to which assets of as little as RM 50,000 were taxable. The rate of the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* was 25%.

However, due to foreign exchange regulations and exchange rates, the emigrants were left with only a fraction of the remaining sum. In addition, the expenses for the journey itself, for example for the crossing by ship, had to be covered from this. As a result, most German and Austrian Jews had hardly any money left after they fled Nazi Germany and arrived in their new homeland. In October 1941, the Nazis changed their persecution policy and issued a ban on emigration for Jews. From that point on, at the latest, escape abroad was virtually impossible.

### **Evian Conference**

Held in Evian, France, from July 6-15, 1938, the conference was convened by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to deal with the Jewish refugee problem. After Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, Roosevelt called for an international conference to promote the emigration of Austrian and German Jewish refugees and create an international organization whose purpose would be to deal with the general refugee problem. The president invited delegates from 32 countries, including the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, six small European democratic nations, the Latin American nations, Australia, and New Zealand. When he proposed the conference, Roosevelt made it clear that no country would be forced to change its immigration quotas, but would instead be asked to volunteer changes. During the conference, it became painfully obvious that no country was willing to volunteer anything. The British delegate claimed that Britain was already fully populated and suffering from unemployment, so it could take in no refugees. His only offer consisted of British territories in East Africa, which could take in small numbers of refugees. The French delegate declared that France had reached "the extreme point of saturation as regards admission of refugees." Myron C. Taylor, the American delegate, allowed that the United States would make the previously unfilled quota for Germans and Austrians available to these new refugees. Other countries claimed the Depression as their excuse for not accepting refugees. Only the Dominican Republic, a tiny country in the West Indies, volunteered to take in refugees—in exchange for huge amounts of money.

The one thing accomplished at the conference was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (ICR). Its goals were to help safe haven candidate countries develop opportunities for refugee settlement, and to try and convince Germany to allow organized emigration. However, ICR member countries did not give the organization either the funding or authority it needed to make a real difference. Thus, whatever good the Evian Conference set out to do was buried in the sand—and the world's democracies had made it extremely clear that they were not willing to help European Jewry.

## **Forced Labor**

Forced labor is work which a person is forced to do under threat of punishment and/or violence and for which he or she is not paid or is paid inadequately. The systematic exploitation and physical extermination through forced labor was one of the central elements of the Nazi system of rule.

Various forms of forced labor existed in the Third Reich, especially after the beginning of the war: from forced labor for groups of people who were persecuted by the Nazis for social or racial reasons, to forced recruitment of foreign workers for use in the German Reich, to the systematic use of concentration camp prisoners in German industrial plants. Forced laborers were used in a wide variety of fields, but primarily in agriculture, construction projects, factory and manufacturing work, and, in the final years of the war, almost exclusively in the armament industry.

From 1942 onwards, it would hardly have been possible for the German Reich to continue the war without the forced laborers. In the late summer of 1944, some 5.9 million foreign workers, 1.9 million prisoners of war from 26 countries and 400,000 concentration camp prisoners were working for German companies.

Working conditions were usually inhumane. Extremely long working hours and heavy, often dangerous work, with inadequate food and housing, led to a high mortality rate among the forced laborers. Only for a small minority of skilled workers, who could not be easily replaced, were there slightly better working conditions. Conditions were particularly bad for Soviet, Polish, and especially Jewish forced laborers.

Jews were also forced to perform forced labor in various areas in the ghettos. In this way, the ghettos were used by the Nazis as an intermediate phase of their persecution policy to exploit the labor of Jews to the maximum before deporting them to the death camps.

## **Gustav Schröder**

Gustav Schröder (1885-1959) was the captain of the ill-fated crossing of the St. Louis, which was to sail from Hamburg to Cuba in May 1939 with more than 900 Jewish passengers on board. After crossing the Atlantic, the Jewish passengers were denied entry by both Cuban and American authorities. The St. Louis was forced to return to Europe. As a result, the passengers panicked and threatened mass suicide. Instead of heading directly for a German port, Captain Schröder refused to allow the ship to return to Germany until he could find a safe haven for the Jewish passengers. Finally, a solution was negotiated. The passengers disembarked in Antwerp on June 17, 1939, after Great Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands each agreed to take a certain number of passengers. However, during the German occupation of Western Europe, many of these former passengers once again came under Nazi control and were later deported to concentration and extermination camps.



It was thanks to Captain Schröder's courage and determination that over 400 of them were able to escape the Nazi death camps. On March 11, 1993, Yad Vashem posthumously recognized Gustav Schröder as a "Righteous Among the Nations." The Hanseatic City of Hamburg named a street after him. Since 1995, there has been a memorial plaque to Gustav Schröder and the passengers of the St. Louis at the Hamburg Landungsbrücken.

### ***Judenräte* - Council of Elders**

*Juden-* or *Ältestenräte* were administrative councils of the Jewish population in the territories controlled by the German Reich, established by the German order. The structure and tasks of the *Judenräte* differed depending on where and how they were established (whether nationwide, regional, or local in the ghetto). The *Judenräte* usually faced an insurmountable task, since on the one hand they felt responsible for helping all Jews, but on the other hand they were forced to carry out the Nazis' orders and anti-Jewish measures.

A few weeks after the beginning of World War II, the first Jewish councils were established in German-occupied Poland on the orders of Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the Reich Security Main Office, and Hans Frank, the governor general of occupied Poland. They were to be composed largely of rabbis as well as other influential and respected figures in the Jewish communities in order to minimize resistance within the Jewish communities.

Among the tasks of the *Judenräte* were to numerically register the local Jewish population, have apartments evacuated and then made available to the German occupiers, recruit forced laborers, confiscate valuables from the Jews and deliver them to the Nazis, and distribute food rations. The *Judenräte* often countered the massive supply problems in the Jewish communities by setting up their own substitute facilities. They attempted, although mostly lacking everything, to build infirmaries, old people's homes, orphanages and schools, in order to alleviate the inhumane conditions, especially in the ghettos.

With the beginning of the systematic murder of the Jews in the death camps, the task of the *Judenräte* in the ghettos increasingly consisted of compiling lists with the names of those who were to be deported. Therefore, large parts of the Jewish population regarded the *Judenräte* as collaborators, but overlooked the fact that the *Judenräte* were also victims of Nazi persecution policies and in no way had the power to decide the fate of the Jewish community.

Time and again there were efforts on the part of the *Judenräte* to counter individual orders or the deportations. However, these rescue attempts were usually unsuccessful: the ghettos were conceived by the Nazis only as a temporary solution, which was followed by the systematic deportation of all inmates to concentration and extermination camps, including the members of the *Judenräte* or *Ältestenräte*.

## Karl Rahm

Karl Rahm was born in 1907 in Klosterneuburg, Austria. After completing his apprenticeship as a machinist, he was unemployed for a long time before serving as a soldier in the Austrian army between 1927 and 1933. In terms of party politics, Rahm initially aligned himself with the Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party, but then in 1934 - again unemployed - joined the NSDAP and SS.

Between 1939 and 1940, he was employed at the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, where the forced emigration, and later the deportation of Austrian Jews were organized. In October 1940, Rahm was transferred to the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Prague and was promoted several times. From February 1944 until May 1945, Rahm was in charge of the Theresienstadt ghetto as its last commandant. The so-called beautification of Theresienstadt took place during this period. This was the term used by the camp administration to describe its efforts to prepare the ghetto for the announced visit of a commission of the International Red Cross. To create the space needed for this in the overcrowded camp, 7,500 people were deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz as part of the beautification campaign.

Rena Rosenberg, an inmate of the Theresienstadt ghetto, later recalled the beautification campaign: "A playground was built for the children with sandboxes and swings; a 'children's pavilion' was built and painted on the inside. There were large wooden animals as toys inside. There were a dozen cribs behind a glass porch. It was like a book - except that children were allowed into this little paradise exclusively on the day the Red Cross commission came.... That was it! A big bluff!"

For the visit of the commission, the inmates of Theresienstadt had to literally rehearse scenes and perform them for the inspectors:

"Everything was arranged, all events were prepared. (...) One also heard that a child had been instructed to run laughing towards Rahm during the inspection of the new children's pavilion and to call out: Here comes Uncle Rahm! Do you have candy for us again, Uncle?' Rahm is said to have smilingly pointed at the visitors and stroked the girl's (...) black curls. 'Morning, my darling,' he said, 'now uncle has a visitor.'"

Also the propaganda film "Theresienstadt. A Documentary from the Jewish Settlement Area," which became known as "The Führer Gives the Jews a City," was made under Rahm's command. Numerous residents of the ghetto were forced to participate in the film - as actors and extras. Even the director, Kurt Gerron, was a Jewish prisoner. The filming was strictly supervised, often by Rahm himself.

After the film was completed, almost all the contributors, including nearly all the children of the ghetto, were sent to the gas chambers of Auschwitz in October 1944.

After the end of the war, Rahm first fled to Austria, where he was arrested by the Austrian police in November 1945 and sent to the American internment camp in Glasenbach. On April 30, 1947, he was sentenced to death and executed in Leitmeritz (Litoměřice, Czech Republic).

### **Leo Baeck**

Leo Baeck was born in Lissa (now Leszno, Poland) on May 23, 1873, the son of Rabbi Samuel Baeck and his wife Eva, and grew up together with four sisters. In addition to attending high school, he was taught Jewish religion and culture at a young age. At the age of 18, he began rabbinical studies, first at the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, and later at the liberal Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, where he also studied philosophy, history, and philosophy of religion at Friedrich Wilhelm University. This change of university influenced Baeck's thinking, who now turned away from the traditional conservative view of Judaism and toward a liberal Jewish confession.

Baeck's view that Judaism had a universalistic message was also reflected in his work "The Essence of Judaism" (1905). In it, he particularly opposed the accusation that Judaism was an outdated law religion. In 1895 Beck accepted a rabbinical position in Opole, and in 1912 he became a community rabbi in Berlin and in 1913 a lecturer at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums there. During World War I, Baeck served as a field rabbi on the Western and Eastern fronts.

In the interwar period, Beck became the most prominent representative of liberal Judaism in Germany. He founded the Christian-Jewish Talks, whose goal was to promote interreligious and cultural understanding between Jews and Christians in Germany.

After the National Socialist takeover in 1933, Baeck became president of the "Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden" (Reich Representation of German Jews), which, as a representation of the interests of Jews in Germany, provided material and spiritual help for the oppressed German Jews. It was renamed Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland (Reich Representation of Jews in Germany) in 1935, since Jews were no longer allowed to call themselves German under the Nuremberg Laws. The Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935, marked a deep break in the lives of German Jews. In this increasingly worsening situation in the fall of 1935, Leo Baeck composed a prayer for the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, the solemnest Jewish holiday. In it he referred to the increasing isolation of the Jews. Baeck withdrew the request to read the prayer in all synagogues in Germany after being banned by the Gestapo, but copies of the prayer were made and distributed. Leo Baeck was arrested for a short time.

*"(...) We stand before our God. With the same force with which we confess our sins, the sins of the individual and those of the whole, we pronounce it with the feeling of disgust that we see the lie that turns against us, the slander that turns against our religion and its testimonies, deep under our feet. We profess our faith and our future. - Who has announced to the world*

*the mystery of the Eternal, the One God? Who has revealed to the world the sense of purity of lifestyle, of purity of family? Who has shown the world the commandment of justice, the social thought? The spirit of the prophets of Israel, the revelation of God to the Jewish people has worked in all of them. In our Judaism it has grown and it is growing. Any insult bounces off these facts."*

Although he could have emigrated several times, Baeck remained in Germany to stand by German Jews during the years of discrimination and persecution. In 1939, the Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland, by then renamed the Reichsverband der Juden in Deutschland, lost its independence. The Nazis transformed the Jewish lobby into an administrative body controlled by the Gestapo and subordinate to the Reich Security Main Office.

In 1943, Baeck and his family were deported to Theresienstadt. There he became a member of the Council of Elders. With lectures and sermons he tried to give moral support and hope to the camp inmates. Severely maltreated, he survived his time in prison and after his liberation in 1945 moved to London. Until his death in 1956, Baeck assumed various representative functions and worked at various universities in Europe and the United States.

### **MS St. Louis**

On May 13, 1939, the MS St. Louis, a liner owned by the HAPAG shipping company, departed Hamburg Harbor for Cuba. On board were 938 passengers, refugees trying to escape from Nazi Germany. Almost all of the passengers were Jews who had applied for an entry visa to the USA and wanted to stay in Cuba only for a short time until they could emigrate from there to the USA. For their interim stay in Cuba, the Jewish refugees had acquired both landing permits and transit visas that would allow them to disembark in Havana.

However, the passengers on the St. Louis did not know, until shortly before they reached the U.S. East Coast, that Cuban President Federico Laredo Brú had already declared the passengers' certificates invalid a week before the ship sailed. In order to disembark in Cuba as planned, the refugees, most of whom had spent their last money on the costly crossing, would now have had to pay a deposit of \$500 U.S., as well as present written authorization from the Cuban government.

When the St. Louis arrived in Havana harbor on May 27, only 28 passengers were allowed to disembark, including 22 Jews who held valid visas for the United States. The remaining passengers were denied to leave the ship. One passenger had to be hospitalized in Havana after attempting suicide. The dramatic situation of the emigrants, who had fled Nazi Germany and were now deprived of their hope for a safe country of refuge, received worldwide media attention.

After all negotiations with President Brú had failed, he ordered the ship to leave Cuban territorial waters. The St. Louis continued slowly toward Florida and eventually lay so close to

the coast that the lights of the city of Miami could be seen from aboard. In desperation, some passengers attempted to secure a landing by personally petitioning President Franklin D. Roosevelt to obtain permission. Roosevelt never responded to this appeal for help. The U.S. at the time had a strict country-quota immigration policy, under which applicants, who had to meet certain criteria, could acquire visas and then wait their turn for their number on the waiting list to come up. By 1939, however, even the waiting list for Germany and Austria was full, as thousands of German and Austrian Jews had already applied for immigration to the United States.

After no solution could be negotiated with the United States for the passengers on the St. Louis the ship was finally forced to turn away on June 6, 1939, and set course for Europe again. The German captain, Gustav Schröder, went to great lengths to bring his passengers to safety. When he was forced to steer the ship back to Europe, exposing the refugees to Nazi persecution again, he even considered provoking an accident off the English coast in order to force the English government to accept the castaways. However, this did not happen. At the last minute, Jewish organizations (especially the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) were able to negotiate a settlement with England, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, according to which the refugees were to be distributed among these four states. In England, 288 passengers were able to disembark, all of whom survived the war except for one, who was killed in an air raid. Of the remaining 620 passengers, 87 were later eventually able to emigrate before the Nazis occupied their country of asylum.

However, 532 passengers fell into the hands of the Nazis when they conquered Western Europe. Just over half of them survived the Holocaust, but 254 former passengers of the MS St. Louis perished.

### **November Pogrom/Kristallnacht**

On the night of November 9-10, 1938, violent attacks took place on Jews, Jewish businesses, synagogues and institutions all over Germany and Austria. The riots were initially described as a "spontaneous reaction" to the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a diplomat at the German Embassy in Paris. The assassin's family, Herschel Grynszpan, was among the so-called "Eastern Jews" who had no citizenship, had lived in Germany and had been expelled shortly before the pogrom. The attack, with which Grynszpan wanted to protest the fate of his family, only triggered the long-planned pogrom. Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels organized the riots and called for local party and SA groups to take violent action against Jews. Synagogues were burned, shops smashed and looted, private homes vandalized or damaged, people attacked. According to official figures, 91 Jews were murdered during the pogrom, however, the actual figure is probably in the hundreds, with many dying of their injuries in the days following. The pogrom continued into the morning of 10th November, now with the participation of the Hitler Youth and additional party members. About 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and brought to the Dachau,

Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald concentration camps. Many died as a result of this imprisonment.

After the pogrom, various anti-Jewish decrees were issued, e.g. the decree that the Jews themselves had to pay for the material damage caused to them, and the onus to pay one billion Reichsmarks as an "atonement tax." Jewish shops and handicraft businesses were closed and Jewish children were expelled from public schools. Jewish organizations, the Jewish press and Jewish publishers were dissolved. Finally, a central office for Jewish emigration was established in Berlin to force the Jews out of Germany and Austria.

### **Theresienstadt (Terezín) Ghetto**

In November 1941, the Nazis established a ghetto in Terezín, a garrison town in northwestern occupied Czechoslovakia, where Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, elderly Jews, and persons of "special merit" from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, as well as several thousand Jews from the Netherlands and Denmark, were interned. Although the ghetto, run by the SS, served de facto as a transit camp for Jews on their way to the death camps, it was used by German propaganda as a showcase ghetto, a model of a "Jewish settlement." In June 1944, the Nazis abused the visit of the International Red Cross to create a false impression of a vibrant Jewish community to the commission, thus deceiving the international community of states about the true situation of Jews in the ghettos.

Life in the ghetto was administered by the Council of Elders (*Judenrat*) under the leadership of Jakob Edelstein. Despite cramped conditions, food shortages and forced labor, there were a variety of educational and cultural activities in the ghetto that reflected the prisoners' will to live and their need for diversion. Inspired by the Council of Elders, the residents of the ghetto made special efforts to provide the children with a reasonably decent life despite the harsh conditions. Young children lived together with their mothers or were placed in homes, while adolescents lived in children's barracks separated for boys and girls. Although strictly forbidden in the ghetto, classes organized secretly by the inmates were an essential part of the children's lives. This task was entrusted to the most talented teachers and educators, who, in addition, together with the children, built up a varied cultural life with theater performances, lectures, children's and youth magazines, and other activities.

Of the approximately 8,000 children deported from Terezín to the death camps, only 474 survived the Holocaust. In total, 155,000 people passed through Terezín by the time the camp was liberated in April 1945, of whom 35,440 died in the ghetto and about 88,000 were deported to the death camps.

## **Westerbork**

Westerbork was a central transit camp established by the Nazi occupiers in the northeastern Netherlands. From here, most Dutch Jews were deported to concentration and extermination camps in Eastern Europe.

As early as October 1939, the Dutch government had established Westerbork as a central refugee camp to receive German Jews who had illegally fled to the Netherlands. After the occupation of the Netherlands in May 1940, the camp initially remained under Dutch control. At the end of 1941, however, the German occupiers decided to use Westerbork as a transit camp for the assembly of transports to the extermination camps in the East. On July 1, 1942, the Central Refugee Camp was officially transformed into the Kamp Westerbork Police Transit Camp for Jews. The German security police took over the management.

Mostly Jews were imprisoned in the camp, but also Sinti and Roma as well as Dutch resistance fighters. Between July 1942 and September 1944, approximately 107,000 of the 140,000 Jews living in the Netherlands were deported to the Nazi death camps. About 100,000 of them were transported from Westerbork to Auschwitz, Sobibor, Bergen-Belsen and the Theresienstadt ghetto. In mid-April 1945, the Allies liberated Westerbork and only found just under 900 prisoners left there.

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