

Handout

Auschwitz

Auschwitz was a complex of camps where Jews, Sinti and Roma, prisoners of war, and Polish resisters were imprisoned and forced to perform slave labor. In October 1941, it also became the site of the largest killing center built by the Nazis.

This photograph shows Jewish women and children from Ukraine walking toward the gas chambers at Auschwitz, where they would be murdered.



Primo Levi, an Italian Jew, described his first few days as a prisoner in Auschwitz:

Nothing belongs to us any more; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair; if we speak, they will not listen to us, and if they listen, they will not understand. They will even take away our name. . . .My number is 174517 . . . we will carry the tattoo on our left arm until we die. ¹

¹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 26.