

P7d

In the tracks of the former Jewish deportees, also called « Daimler-Benz Jews » or « Produktionshäftlinge ».

Secondary camps: Urbès in Alsace and Offenburg in Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

Hans-Peter Goergens' trip in Poland, May 2016.

Our German friend Hans-Peter Goergens from the Memorial of Offenburg-Rammersweier undertook in May 2016 a long trip through Poland in the tracks of former « Daimler-Benz Jews ».

He visited several Nazi camps and ghettos, like the ghetto of Rzeszow/ Reichshof, the camps of Auschwitz, Lublin/Majdanek and Treblinka, with the hope to find any traces or documents about the 462 [465] Jewish deportees from the camp of Urbès, where they were assigned end-August 1944 to manufacture diesel engines for DB-605 planes in favor of the Luftwaffe.

The 465 Jews had to work inside the tunnel of Urbès transformed in 1944 by the Nazis in a secret and underground factory.

Hans-Peter Goergens also hoped to find any information or document about the Jewish deportees interned in the camp of Offenburg, where they had to work mid-March 1945 for the “Reichsbahn” [the Railway company of the Reich].

These Jewish deportees were called « Daimler-Benz Jews » or « Produktionshäftlinge », because they had received a training course by the industrial group Daimler-Benz inside the ghetto of Rzeszow/ Reichshof and in collaboration with the Luftwaffe for the manufacturing of diesel engines for DB-605 planes.

From the inscription written on a wall inside the Urbès tunnel, « Here worked 462 Polish Jews » by a former Jewish deportee, Hans-Peter Goergens undertook researches about the origin and destiny of this Jewish group transferred to numerous camps and interned from 25th August to 12nd October 1944 in the Camp of Urbès.

It has been proven that before their transfer to Urbès camp these Jewish prisoners had been interned in the ghetto of Rzeszow, then registered at the main camp of Natzweiler-Struthof, after being moved for a relatively short time to other camps among which Plaszow, Wieliczka, Auschwitz and Flossenbürg.

After their transfer to Flossenbürg, the Daimler-Benz Jews were transported for a very short time to Colmar, under the name “Kommando A-10 Daimler-Benz GmbH, Kolmar” [GmbH= limited liability company] and finally to Urbès camp.

(Cf. Robert Steegmann, « *Struthof, le KL-Natzweiler et ses kommandos: une nébuleuse concentrationnaire des deux côtés du Rhin, 1941-1945* » edited by Nuée Bleue/DNA, 2005, p. 70-71).

Native origins of the 465 « Daimler-Benz Jews » : 11 German, 9 Soviet, 1 Czech and 444 Polish men.

3 of them died during their internment at the camp of Urbès.

When the liberators approached crossing the mountain pass of Bussang, the 462 Jewish prisoners were transferred to the KL Sachsenhausen (Germany) on 12th October 1944, while other inmates of the Urbès camp were urgently moved to Neckarelz (Baden, Germany) and some of them to the camp of Heppenheim (Hessen, Germany).

The search for lists of former prisoners from the camp of Sachsenhausen remains till now fruitless since many registers kept by the Nazis disappeared at the end of the war.

After investigating at the Public Records Office or « Bundesarchiv » in Ludwigsburg, Hans-Peter Goergens managed to find a document dating from the Nazi period concerning a former Jewish prisoner from Urbès whose name is **Kupferwasser Hersch**, alias **Cooper Harry**.

(see lesson P7c, List of the 465 « Daimler-Benz Jews » + document enclosed).

This precious document also proved the accuracy of the Jews' transfer to the camp of Sachsenhausen.

Hans-Peter Goergens also undertook researches on a Jewish family named **Nissenbaum** as well as on the family's deportation and internment into the ghetto of Rzeszow/ Reichshof (Poland) and later into the ghetto of Warsaw.

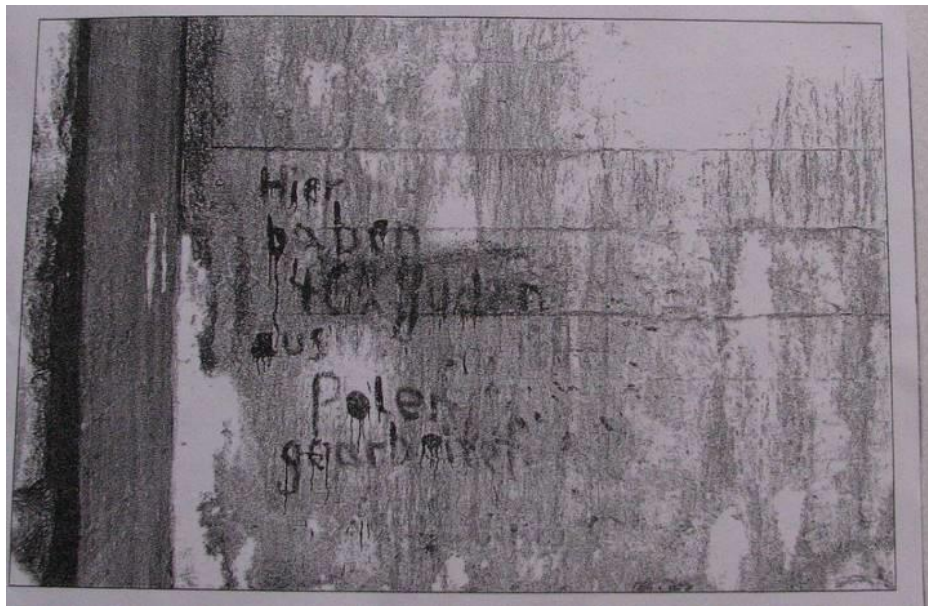
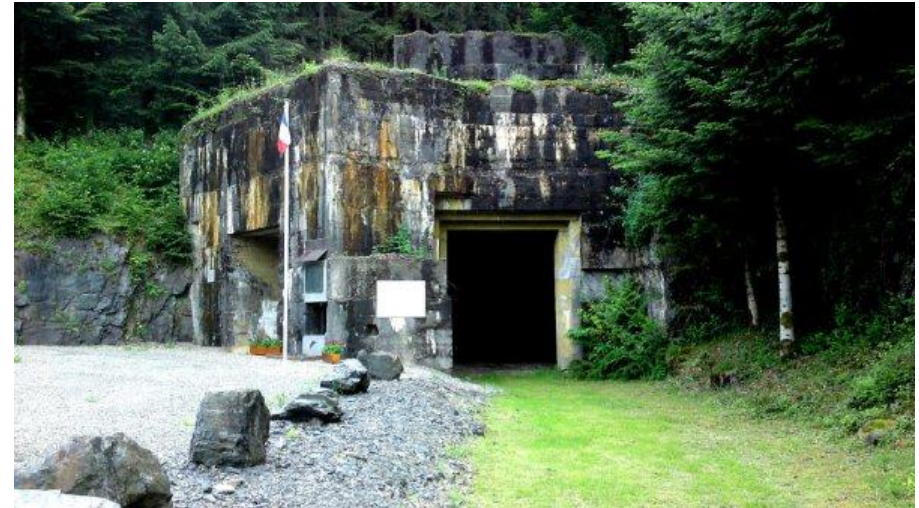
After the family's internment in Warsaw and later in the camp of Flossenbürg, the survivors of the family Nissenbaum were deported mid-March 1945 to the camp of Offenburg.

As the route of the 2 Jewish groups of deportees was the same, Hans-Peter Goergens could guess that they had been interned in the same ghetto of Rzeszow/Reichshof and trained for the assembling of diesel engines for DB-605 planes. Only later had they been separated into 2 different secondary camps: the first group to Urbès in Alsace in 1944, the second to Offenburg in Germany, in 1945.



Hans-Peter Goergens (left) during the inauguration of the Memorial in Urbès, on 11th September 2016, in presence of M^{rs}. Joseph Weiss-Gillen from Luxembourg (Ernest Gillen's son-in-law), of Marguerite Kubler and M^{rs}. Eve Gissinger.

The bunker at the entrance of the railway tunnel transformed in March 1944 in an underground manufactory and secondary camp of the Natzweiler-Struthof main camp.



The inscription inside the tunnel of Urbès, written by a Polish deportee
“Here worked 462 Jews from Poland”

Location of the different nazi camps mentioned.
Document Wikipédia, Internet.



Some information about the ghetto of Rzeszow/ Reichshof in Poland

The name of the city comes from the Yiddish word « Reische », which means « the little Jerusalem ».
The ghetto was created between December 1939 and January 1940.

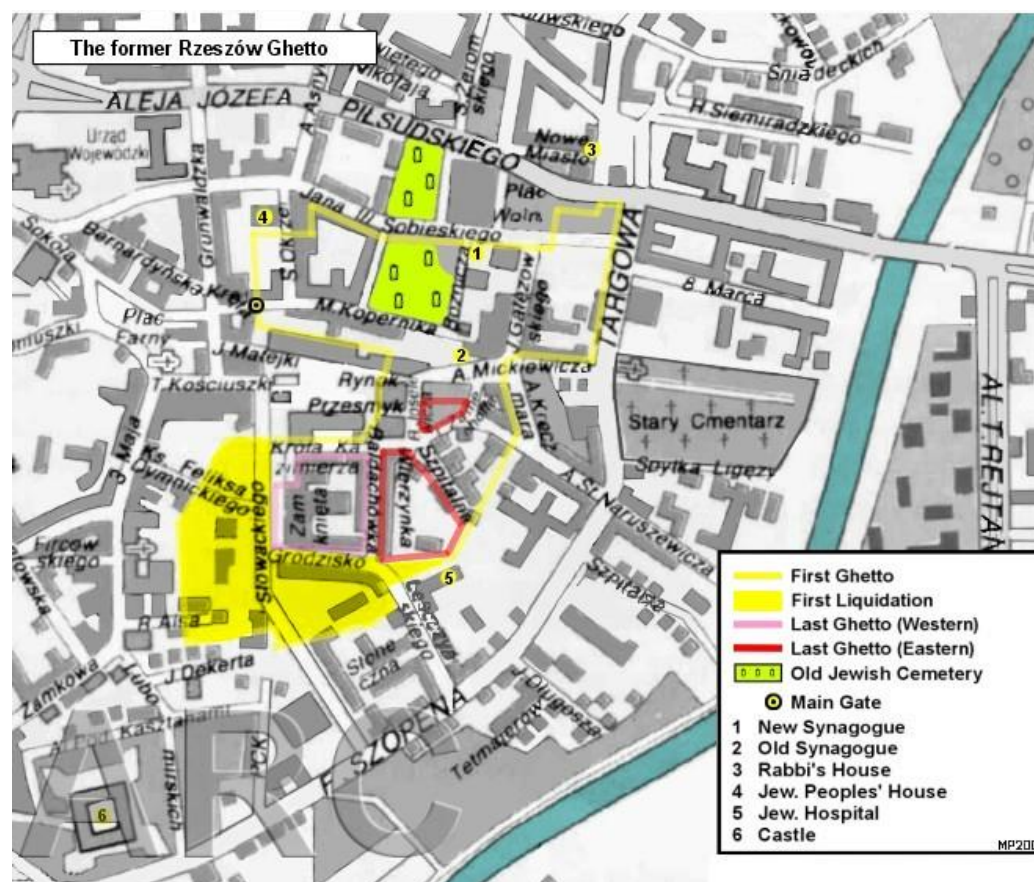
On 17th February 1941, the city was renamed « Reichshof » by the Nazis, who confiscated pre-war industrial buildings to install a major plant for the manufacturing of aircraft engines.

This industrial complex brought together the « Flugmotorenwerke Reichshof GmbH » owned by the German industrial group Henschel from Kassel and the « Mercedes Benz » factory of the Daimler-Benz group.

In 1941, the 2 German industrial groups used and trained nearly 2000 persons, among them more than 600 Jews.

(Source : Internet Webside, « le ghetto de Rzeszow-encyclopédie.bseditions.fr »)

The ghetto of **Rzeszow/ Reichshof**, at a distance of 150km in the East of Cracow.



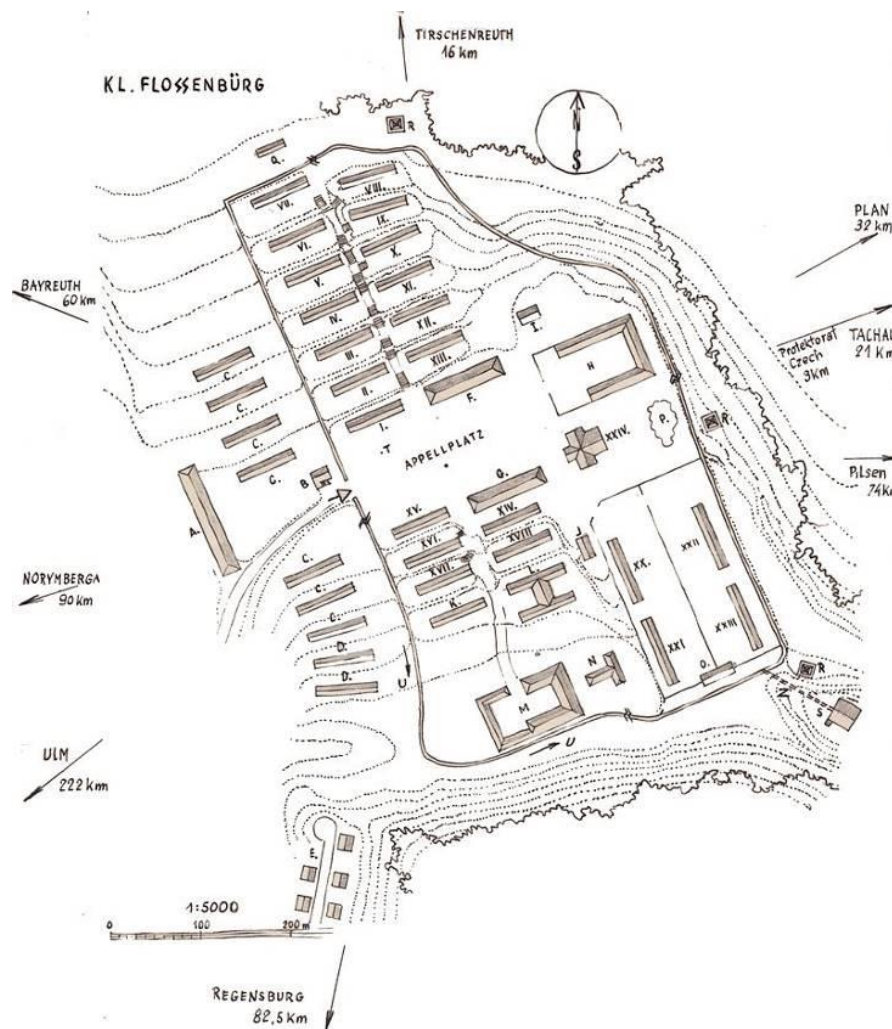
Some indications about the camp Flossenbürg :

Created in 1938, the Nazi camp near the Bavarian village of Flossenbürg immediately became a forced-labour camp managed according to the Nazis' precept of « **extermination through labour** ». About 96 000 prisoners were deported to this camp and 30 000 found death there.

2 pictures from Internet.



Photo of the camp, April 1945.



Website Wikipédia, Internet.

The activities of this hard labour camp were on the one hand the manufacturing of pieces for Messerschmitt fighters, Bf 109, for the benefit of the Messerschmitt group in Regensburg, and on the other hand the hard labour in granite quarries, the drilling of tunnels and the development of underground factories.

On 20th April 1945, the camp Flossenbürg had to be urgently evacuated, when the Allied Forces approached.

The prisoners had to undertake a death march of more than 80 Km towards Dachau in 4 lines of about 14800 people. 7000 exhausted and sick prisoners died on the way.

On 23rd April 1945, the 90th Infantry Division of the Third American Army liberated the camp. On the same day an American armored brigade company set free death march survivors on the way towards Cham and Pöding, 2 Bavarian towns.

(Source: Wikipedia Internet Website about the camp Flossenbürg).

Some indications about the Nissenbaum family and their detention in the secondary camp of Offenburg (Baden, Germany):

Erhard R. Wiehn, a former professor and doctor in sociology at the university of Constance (Lake Constance, Southern Germany) analyzed in his work entitled « *Kaddisch, Totengebet in Polen, Reisegespräche und Zeitzeugnisse gegen Vergessen in Deutschland* » - edited by Darmstädter Blätter Verlag, 1984 - not only the systematic extermination of the Jews from Eastern Europe in Nazi camps, but he also looked into the fate of the Nissenbaum family in particular.

Leib Nissenbaum and his family, just like numerous East European Jews or « Ostjuden », tried to survive in the Warsaw ghetto in spite of the dreadful living conditions which reigned there.

His 2 sons Joseph and Zygmund participated in the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943.

Nevertheless, the family managed to survive but was deported to the extermination camp of Treblinka.

The son Zygmund testifies about the inhuman conditions they experienced during the 3-day journey in cattle wagons, without food or water and in a suffocating summer heat.

Many people died during this trip towards the hell of Treblinka, before they even arrived there.

The mother and the daughter were gassed at Treblinka. On her way to the gas chamber his mother ordered Zygmund to survive at any cost so that he could later testify about the Nazi horror.

The barely 15years old son thus succeeded in escaping from the gas chamber by sneaking out through 80 men, including his father and his brother, who had been selected to work in a concentration camp.

In a first time, the 3 survivors of the family Nissenbaum had to work in a manufacturing workshop of tanks situated in the Chelmska street in Lublin.

Till March 1945, they worked in favor of the German Henschel group in the Flossenbürg camp.

After their internment in Flossenbürg, the Nissenbaum were transferred to the camp Offenburg, where they were assigned to work for the “Reichsbahn” [German Railway] till 12th April 1945.

Like 40 other deportees, the father, Leib Nissenbaum, died in Offenburg, after having been mortally wounded by nazi torturers, shortly before the liberation of the camp.

The 2 sons were liberated during their death march by the Americans not far away from Donaueschingen, Black-Forest.

Leib Nissenbaum and 70 other deportees rest at the cemetery in Offenburg.



Tombstone with the name of the other Jewish victims of nazism.

Photos made by Hans-Peter Goergens, 2016.



Supplementary documents from the Bundesarchiv in Ludwigsburg about the different deportation places of **Kupferwasser Hersch** (Urbès camp). So we can follow the location of the other « Daimler-Benz Jews » or « Produktionshäftlinge ». (Document from Hans-Peter Goergens).

Aktenvermerk:

Am 12.12.1968 wurden die Entschuldigungsakten ES 21977 beim Entschuldigungsamt in Stuttgart ausgewertet. Sie betreffen:

Cooper, Harry (früher: Kupferwaser Horach)
geb. am 15.9.1908 in Zaklikow/Polen,
wohnhaft (1964) in 1475 College Ave. Bronx 57, N.Y.

und enthalten folgende Inhaftierungsdaten:

1939 - 1942 Ghetto Zaklikow

1.12.42 - April 1944 KL Budzyn

KL Majdanek

April 1944-Juli 1944

KL Reichshausen

Juli 1944-Sept. 1944

KL Plaszow

KL Wieliczka

KL Posenberg

Sept. 1944-Nov. 1944

KL Urbis

Nov. 1944-März 1945

KL Sachsenhausen

KL Blumental/Ermen

März 1945-15.4.45

KL Bergen-Belsen.

Cooper gibt in seiner eidesstattlichen Erklärung (Bl. 61-63 der Entschuldigungsakten) an, daß jeden Morgen in KL Budzyn beim Appell Häftlinge ausgerufen wurden, die dann erschossen wurden. 100 m vom Appellplatz entfernt sollen die neuen Gefangenen immer aufgeschüttet worden sein. Cooper behauptet ferner, daß er in KL Budzyn wiederholt von SS-Oberst. Feika mit Gummiknüppeln und Stocken brutal misshandelt wurde. Im Winter 1942/43 soll SS-Oberst. Feika bei einem Rundgang seinen Revolver an den Kopf des bewusstlos erkrankten und im Bett liegenden Cooper gehalten haben. Nur auf Bitten des begleitenden jüdischen Arztes hatte Feika von der Erschießung Coopers Abstand genommen.

In KL Blumental wurde Cooper einmal mit einem eisernen Stock bewußtlos geschlagen.
Als Zeugen werden genannt:

- 1) Jagbornmann (früher: Leib) Louis,
wohnhaft (1961) in: 1655 B-hill Road, Brooklyn 23, N.Y.,
Mithäftling bis .. in KL Blumental-
eig. Entsch.-Antrag As. D/11054/19 in Darmstadt;
- 2) Hanfling, Heraz,
wohnhaft (1961) in: 181 East 93 rd. Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. - Mithäftling in KL Budzyn
eig. Entsch.-Antrag 10757/I/3543 BLEA München.

Verteiler:

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1 x Ref. 419

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Summary of the document, page 109 :

- From 1939 to 1942 : ghetto Zaklikow (20 km, in the south of Krasnik).
- From 1st December 1942 to April 1944 : camp/KL Budzyn and Lublin/Majdanek.
- From April to July 1944 : Ghetto Rzeszow/ Reichshof.
- From July to September 1944 : camp/KL Plaszow and Wieliczka (hard labour in salt mines). Short stop at the railway station of Auschwitz. Camp/KL Flossenbürg.
- From September to November 1944 [August- October 44] : Urbès camp.
- From November 1944 [October 44] to March 1945 : Camp/KL Sachsenhausen, then Neuengamme and Kommando Bremen /Blumental.
- From March to 15th April 1945 : camp/KL Bergen-Belsen.

Source : documents and photos from Hans-Peter Goergens.

Photos made by Hans-Peter Goergens, May 2016.

Memorial Flossenbürg.

Am 23. Januar 1941 erreicht ein Transport mit fast 600 polnischen Gefangenen aus dem KZ Auschwitz das Lager Flossenbürg. Am 6. Februar beginnt die gezielte Vernichtung eines Teils dieser Gruppe.

Im Zeitraum eines halben Jahres ermordet die SS über 200 polnische Jugendliche und Männer. Die zur Exekution ausgewählten Gefangenen werden nach dem Abendappell in den Arrestbau gebracht. Dort müssen sie ihre letzte Nacht verbringen. Am nächsten Morgen erschießt sie ein Exekutionskommando neben dem Krematorium. Der Anlass der Hinrichtungen ist bis heute unbekannt.

Seit der Ermordung dieser polnischen Häftlinge ist das KZ Flossenbürg ein Ort, an dem bestimmte Personengruppen planmäßig vernichtet werden.

On January 23, 1941, a transport of nearly 600 Polish prisoners arrived at the Flossenbürg camp from Auschwitz. On February 6, the SS began the targeted annihilation of part of this group.

Within six months, the SS had killed more than 200 Polish males, both youths and adults. After the evening roll call, the prisoners selected for execution were brought to the detention barrack, where they spent their final night. The following morning, they were taken next to the crematorium and shot by the execution commando. The reason behind these executions remains unknown.

Starting with the murders of these Polish inmates, the Flossenbürg concentration camp became a place where specific groups of prisoners were singled out for execution.



Memorial Flossenbürg.

Gradual extermination through hard labour.

Slavery work in the quarries.



Hans-Peter Goergens' trip to Poland, May 2016 + Some photos taken during nazi time found on Internet.

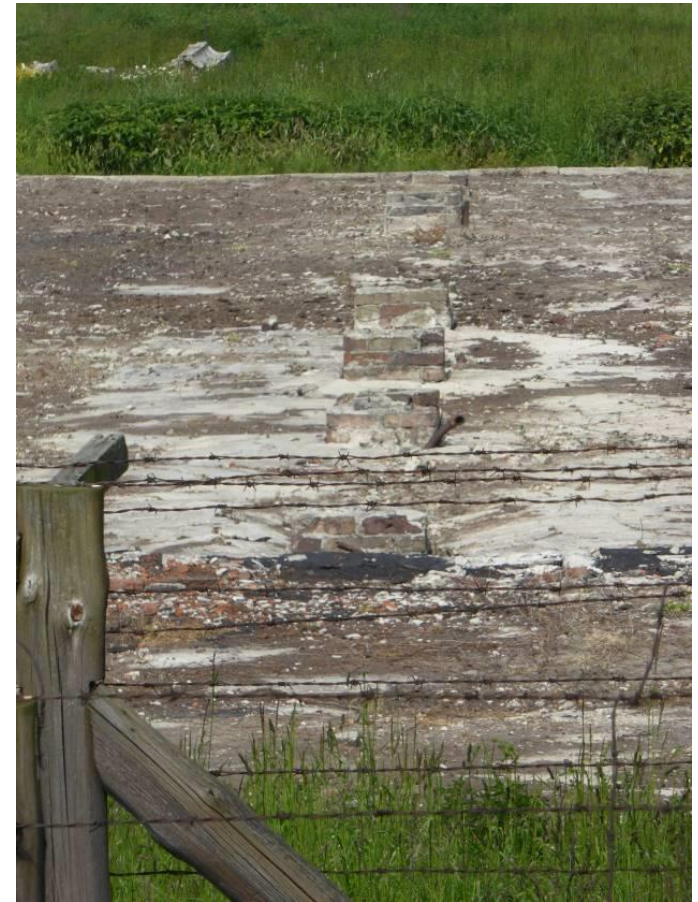
Majdanek camp,
(Pictures, Internet)





Vestiges of Majdanek camp.

Picture taken by Hans-Peter Goergens,
May 2016.

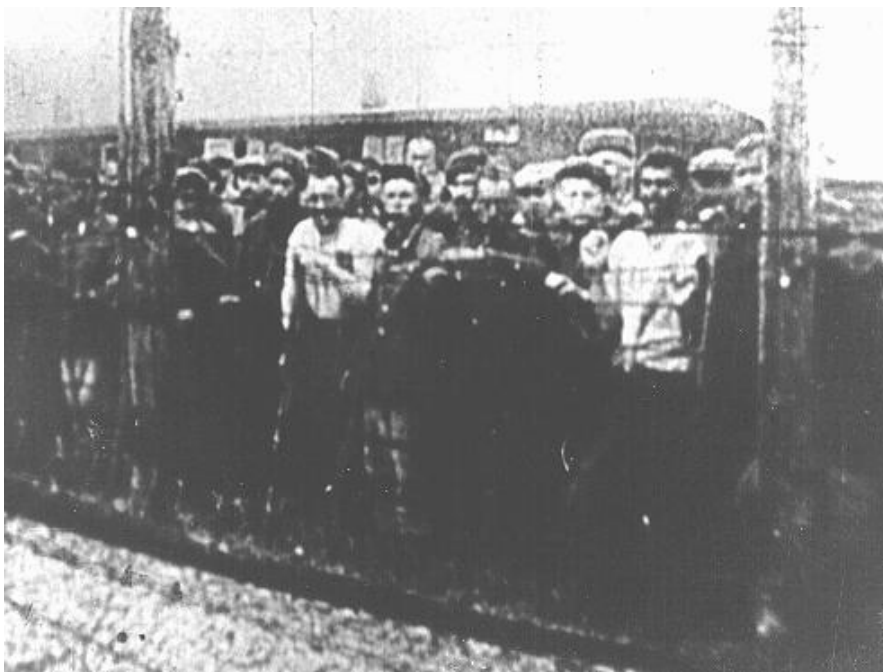


Ghetto Fighters' House



Picture, Internet.

A street in the Ghetto of Lublin.



Deportees in the Majdanek camp.
Picture, Internet.

Photo made by Hans-Peter Goergens at the Majdanek Memorial, May 2016.



Photo made by Hans-Peter Goergens at the Pawiak Museum of Warsaw, Poland, May 2016.

The Treblinka camp



The railway station in Treblinka.

(Pictures, Internet)



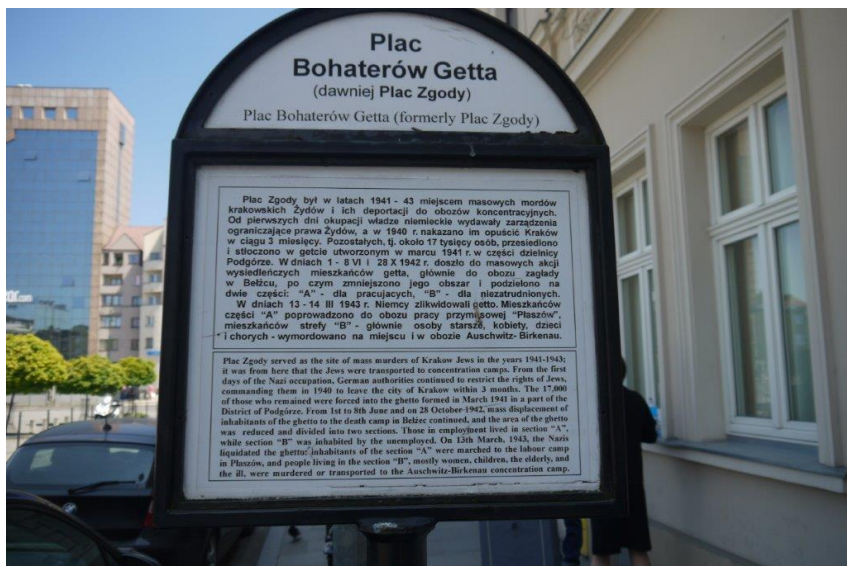


Pictures,
Internet.



Treblinka's Memorial.





Ghetto of Cracow, Zgody place.

Under the stones the ashes of thousands victims



The **Auschwitz/ Birkenau** camp.

(Pictures, Internet)

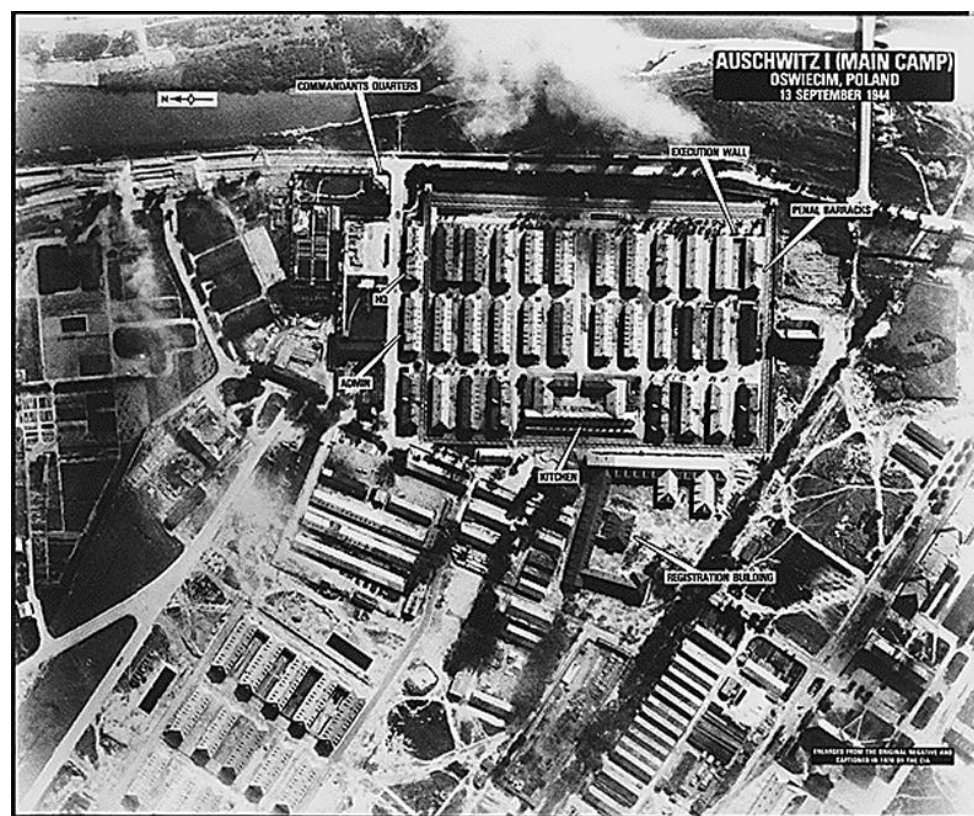
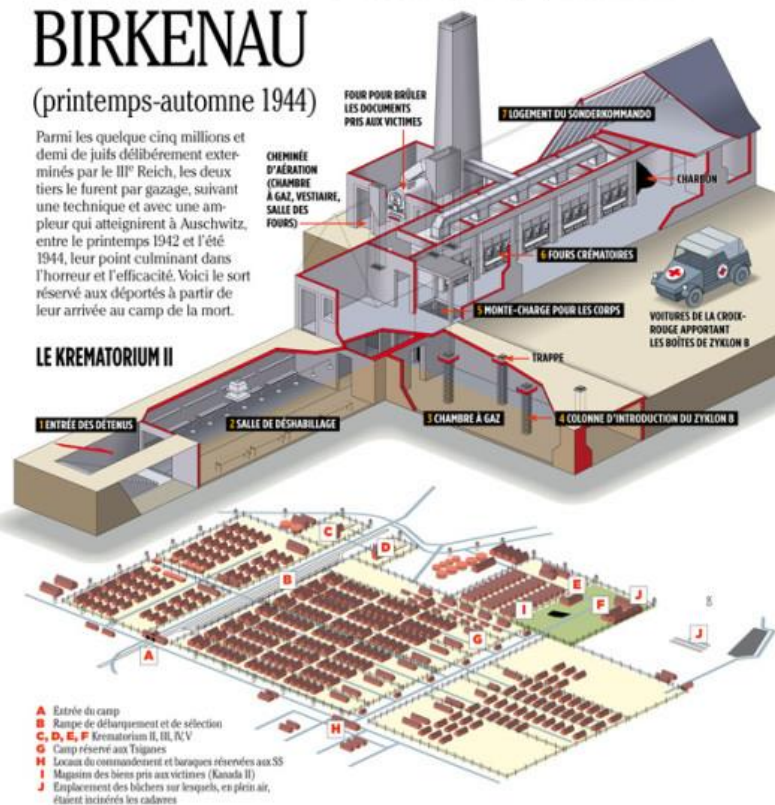


LE CAMP D'AUSCHWITZ II - BIRKENAU

(printemps-automne 1944)

Parmi les quelque cinq millions et demi de juifs délibérément exterminés par le III^e Reich, les deux tiers le furent par gazage, suivant une technique et avec une ampleur qui atteignirent à Auschwitz, entre le printemps 1942 et l'été 1944, leur point culminant dans l'horreur et l'efficacité. Voici le sort réservé aux déportés à partir de leur arrivée au camp de la mort.

LE KREMATORIUM II



Pictures, Internet.

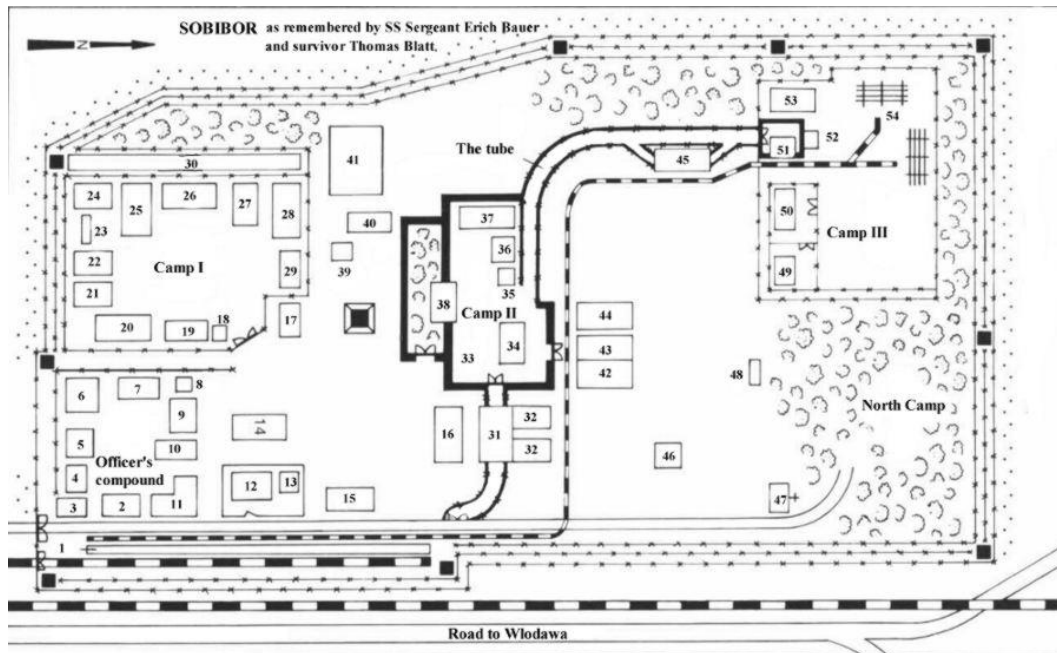


Pictures, Internet.





Pictures,
Internet



The railway station of Sobibor.



The Belzec camp.

Picture, Internet



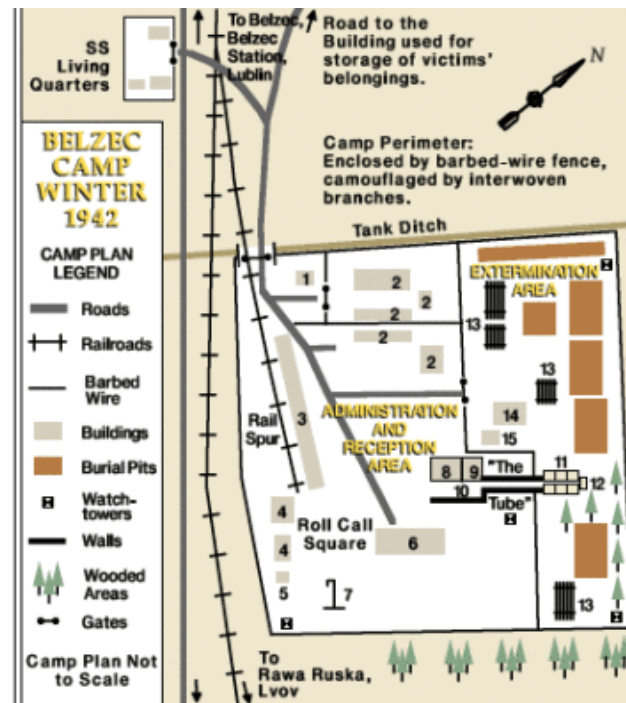
SELECTED FEATURES

ADMINISTRATION AND RECEPTION AREA

1. Main Guard House
2. Ukrainian Guards' Barracks and Camp Facilities
3. Railway Platform
4. Barracks for Jewish Prisoners
5. Kitchen and Laundry for Jewish Prisoners
6. Storage of Confiscated Belongings
7. Gallows
8. Barracks where Prisoners Undressed
9. Barracks where Women's Hair Was Cut
10. Fenced Courtyard

EXTERMINATION AREA

11. Gas Chambers
12. Engine Room for Gas Chambers
13. Cremation Pyres
14. Barracks for Prisoners Assigned to Work in Extermination Area
15. Kitchen



Pictures, Internet.



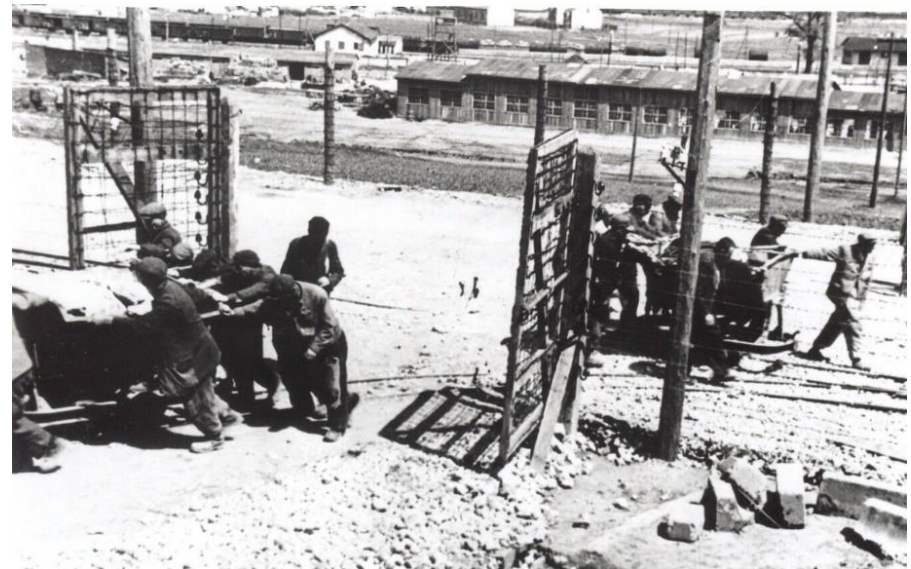
Pictures, Internet.



The Plaszow camp.



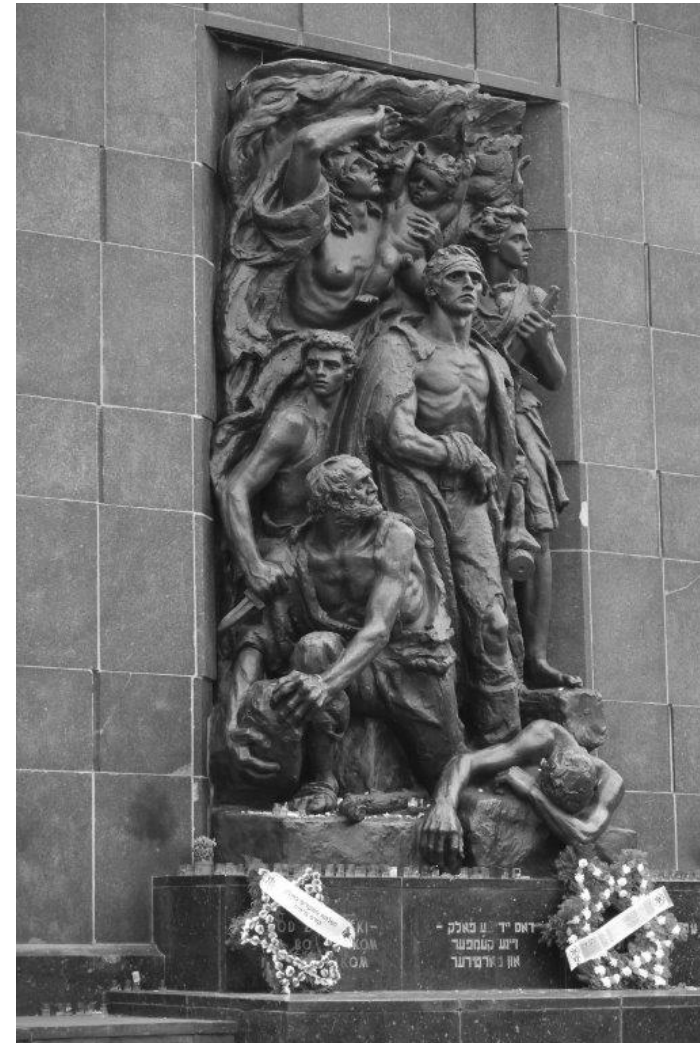
Pictures, Internet.



Some other pictures taken by Hans-Peter Goergens during his trip in Poland, May 2016.



Fresco and monument in Warsaw





Jewish cemetery in Warsaw.



Jewish tombstone in Treblinka



Typical Jewish tomb with stones.



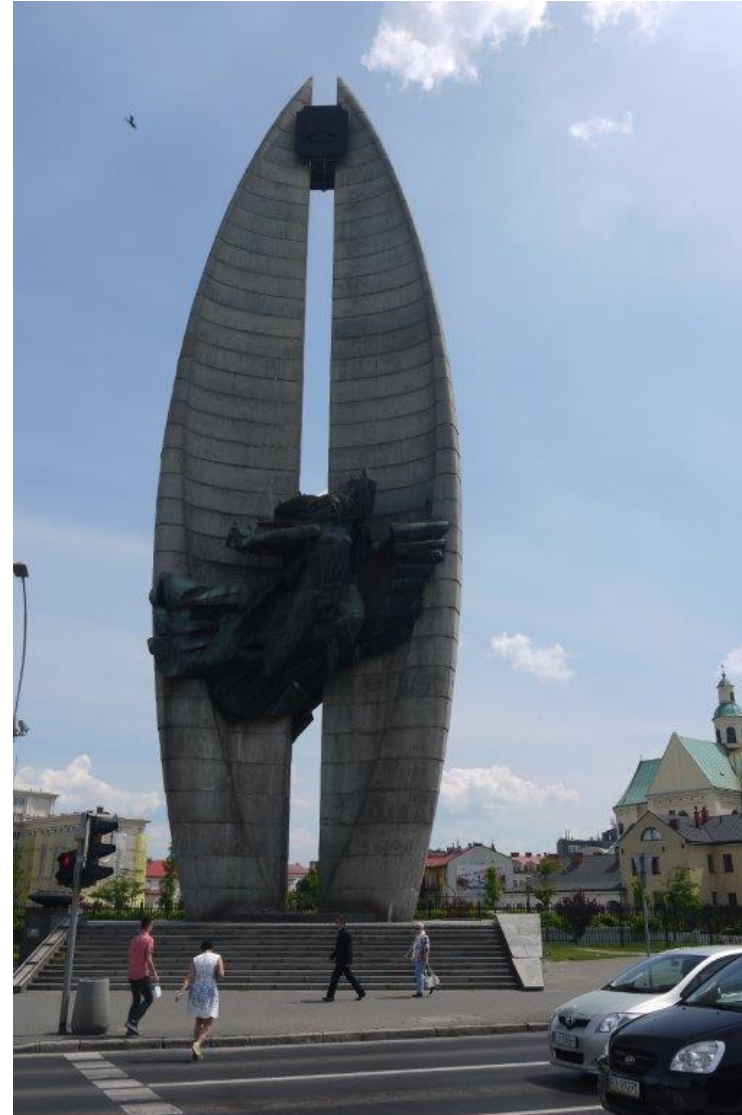
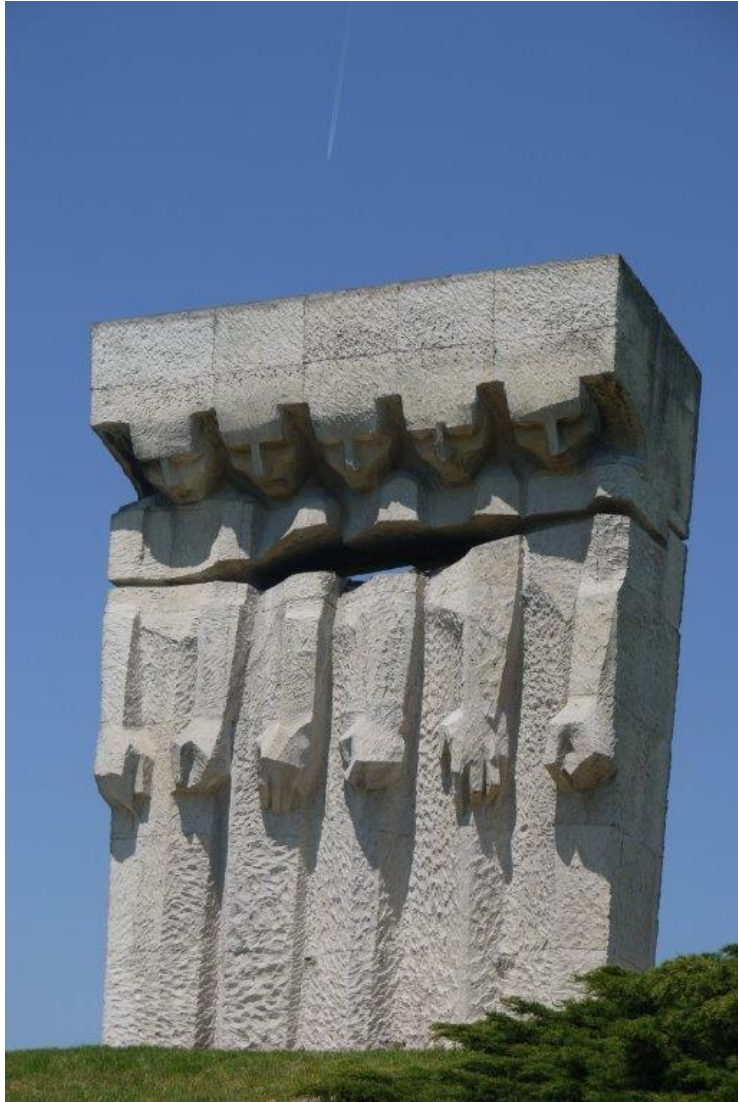
Mausoleum, Majdanek.



Memorial in Majdanek



School strike of pupils in Wresznia in 1902, Poland.
Museum of Lublin.



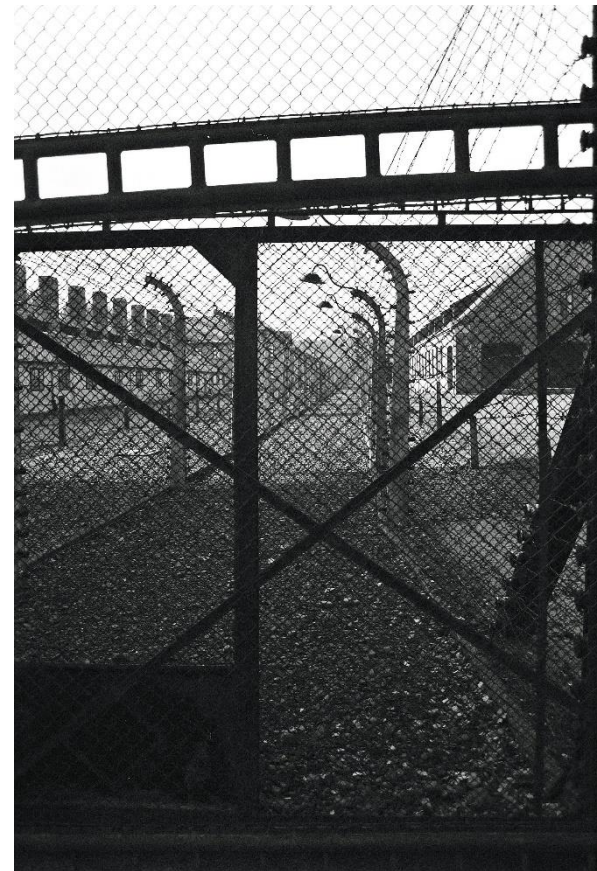
Memorial and monument in Plaszow.



Memorial in Rzeszow



Auschwitz





The ghetto of Warsaw.

Localization of the former ghetto wall.



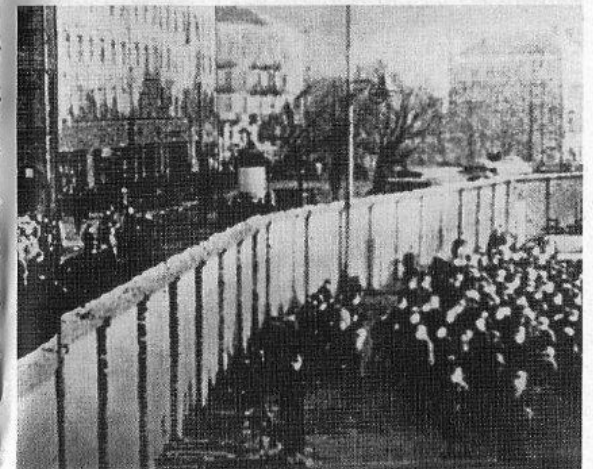
Running of the tramway outside the Warsaw ghetto.

Secret Transport of hidden weapons via the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw, shortly before the uprising inside the ghetto in 1943.

Testimony of Zygmund Nissenbaum in Erhard R. Wiehn's book already mentioned in this lesson.



«Mißhandlungen, wilde, bestialische »Vergnügungen« sind an der Tagesordnung.»



Die Mauer des Ghettos verlief teilweise mitten durch die Straßen der Millionenstadt Warschau. Das Ghetto wurde im November 1940 geschlossen.

Many thanks to our English teacher, M^{rs}. Isabelle Kupek for her rereading and correction.

High-School Scheurer-Kestner in Thann,

Class, Terminale Euro

2016 / 2017.

German teacher, Marguerite Kubler.

