

### Information Cards for Auschwitz – 1943

<p>The spring of 1943 was a hugely significant moment in the history of Auschwitz-Birkenau: a combined gas chamber and crematorium was opened.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>	<p>Those selected unfit for work were told to enter a long rectangular underground room. In this undressing room, people would be told to take their clothes off because before being allowed into the camp they had to have a shower.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>
<p>Once undressed, men, women and children were hurried into the gas chamber. The process of gassing would take between 15 to 20 minutes.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>	<p>With the murder complete, bodies would be taken up to ground level to the crematorium. Here their bodies were burnt in ovens.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>
<p>The operation of the ovens was overseen by just a handful of SS.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>	<p>Much of the intensely disturbing and horrific work of the killing process was performed by the <i>Sonderkommando</i> – prisoners forced to help on pain of immediate execution.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>
<p>The <i>Sonderkommando</i> were responsible for cleaning the gas chambers, removing the bodies and operating the ovens.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>	<p>“Could you imagine what was done with the children and the families? They didn’t know what to do, scratching the walls, crying, you know, and everything else. They were killing for the sake of killing, that’s the only thing I can say.”</p> <p>- Dario Gabbai Auschwitz Sonderkommando</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1943</p>

In 1943 Auschwitz-Birkenau was evolving into a place that would be central to the Nazi vision for the future of Europe; a racially pure Europe that was “Juden Frei” – free of Jews.

**AUSCHWITZ 1943**

By the summer of 1943, a total of four combined gas chambers and crematoria complexes were in operation. Two of these had gas chambers on the same level as crematoria, making the killing process more “effective”.

**AUSCHWITZ 1943**

By the end of 1943 Auschwitz-Birkenau had a vast capacity to kill. In 1944 mass murder would be committed on an almost unimaginable scale.

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