

## **Photos from a Visit to the Site of the German Extermination Camp in Bełżec**

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The German extermination camp in Bełżec was a center for the mass murder of Jewish people, where approximately 450,000 individuals were killed between March and December 1942. Most of the victims were Jews from Poland, but also from Germany, Austria, the Czech lands, and Slovakia. The Museum and Memorial Site in Bełżec was established in 2004 as a branch of the State Museum at Majdanek in Lublin. In addition to securing the grounds of the mass graves, the project aimed to express the tragedy of those deported to the extermination camp through symbolic architectural structures.

The main goal of the memorial complex on the site of the former extermination camp in Bełżec is to honor the murdered Jews in accordance with Jewish tradition. Along the concrete paths surrounding the area, there are cast iron inscriptions bearing the names of towns from which people were deported to the Bełżec extermination camp. Made of raw, corroding metal, they are meant to symbolize the bloody tears of the victims. Among the towns we managed to find were Olkusz, Wolbrom, and Miechów.

On the grounds of the mass graves, the trees that witnessed the tragic events have been preserved. The surface of the graves has been covered with smelting slag. A large number of stones, in accordance with Jewish tradition, symbolize remembrance of each victim and serve as a testament to the uniqueness of this place.

Source: <https://www.belzec.eu/en>

### **Historian's Note:**

*The commemoration of Olkusz at Bełżec stems from a misinterpretation regarding the extermination of Jews from the pre-war Olkusz County. Bełżec was a death camp for Jews from the General Government, which included the eastern part of the pre-war Olkusz County. Jews from Wolbrom (along with Jews from Pilica and Żarnowiec) and from Skala were deported there, having been loaded onto trains at the station in Słomniki. Jews from Olkusz and Sławków, areas incorporated into the Third Reich, were sent to the extermination camp in Birkenau. (K. Kocjan)*

**MIEJSCE MĘCZEŃSKIEJ ŚMIERCI  
OKOŁO 500 000 OFIAR  
OBOZU ZAGŁADY ŻYDÓW W BEŁŻCU  
ZAMORDOWANYCH W OKRESIE  
OD LUTEGO DO GRUDNIA 1942 ROKU  
PRZEZ HITLEROWSKIE NIENY**

**ZIEMIO, NIE KRYJ MOJEJ KRWI,  
IŻBY MÓJ KRZYK NIE USTAWAŁ!  
KSIĘGA HIOBA 16,18**

**THIS IS THE SITE OF THE FOUNDER  
OF ABOUT 500 000 VICTIMS  
OF THE BELZEC DEATH CAMP  
ESTABLISHED FOR THE PURPOSE OF KILLING  
THE JEWS OF EUROPE, BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND DECEMBER 1942  
BY NAZI GERMANY**

**EARTH DO NOT COVER MY BLOOD,  
LET THERE BE NO RESTING  
PLACE FOR MY GRIEF!  
JOB 16,18**



















