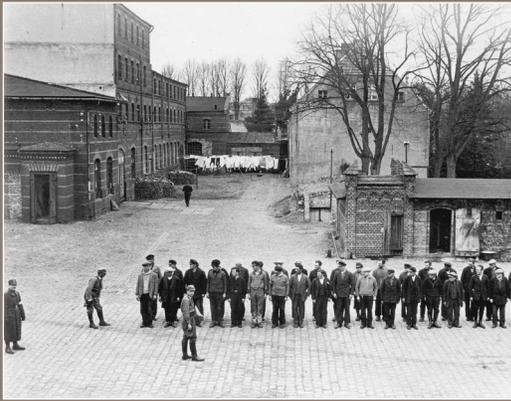


CONCENTRATION CAMPS



The first concentration camps were established in Nazi Germany after Hitler came to power in 1933. In the first few years of the regime, the concentration camps were instruments of terror, control, and punishment, used for the incarceration of political dissidents; later, people defined by the Nazis as “asocial elements”—including the homeless, beggars, Sinti-Roma, and hardened criminals—were also taken there. Beginning in the summer of 1938, many Jews were held in these camps. The number of incarcerated Jews in Germany itself reached its peak following the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*.

After the war broke out, the Nazi camp system branched out to many kinds of camps, and Jews, local resistance activists, and civilians whom the Nazis wanted to punish were incarcerated in them and generally were exploited as forced laborers. The cruel regime, lack of sufficient food, general conditions in the camps, brutal forced labor, and episodes of outright murder all led to a high death rate in most of the camps. The concentration camp system was not established as part of the “Final Solution,” but as the policy of murder took hold, they too played a role in it.

About Photos

Top: SA members guarding inmates who are standing in line in the camp in Oranienburg, Germany, 1933. Yad Vashem Photo Archive (4613/38)

Middle: Inmates at a roll-call, Dachau, Germany, 1938. Yad Vashem Photo Archive (3E01)

Bottom: A group of prisoners at a roll-call, Dachau, Germany, 1938. Bundesarchiv, Bild 152-21-06/ Friedrich Franz Bauer/CC-BY-SA