

### Information Cards for Auschwitz – 1941

<p>Auschwitz was hugely affected by the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>	<p>Although far from the frontline, the radicalisation of the war in the East left its mark on Auschwitz.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>
<p>Hitler had said the war against the Soviet Union would be a war of annihilation. This proved true, especially for captured Soviet prisoners. More than 3 million would die from starvation or disease.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>	<p>“They never considered us humans. They could kill us or beat us up for no reason. Of course we were sure that it was unjust.”</p> <p>- Georgy Semenyak Captured Red Army soldier</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>
<p>In late summer 1941 the SS conducted a mass killing experiment in the basement of Block 11. Several hundred Soviet prisoners of war and Polish prisoners were killed using a powerful insecticide called Zyklon B.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>	<p>In the killing experiment, the SS experimented with the dose of Zyklon B needed to kill people rather than insects. Prisoners died in agony. The experiment was regarded a success, but Block 11 not a good location.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>
<p>The basement of Block 11 could not be sealed, so the Nazis searched the camp for another location to use as an improvised gas chamber.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>	<p>The new gas chamber was placed in the camp crematorium. Soviet prisoners of war were among the first to die.</p> <p><b>AUSCHWITZ 1941</b></p>

“Everyone was moaning and yelling because of the cold – it was an incredible sound, I never heard it before. Naked they enter the gassing chamber. It was a devilish, hellish image.”

- Jerzy Bielecki  
Auschwitz prisoner

**AUSCHWITZ 1941**

The gassing of Soviet POWs was only the beginning of a regime of systematic mass murder at Auschwitz.

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