

Inside a doomed ghetto: Chilling images of the Jews of Lublin captured on film by German soldiers

- These images of the doomed occupants of Lublin Ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland are on show for the first time since being taken 70 years ago
- Harrowing photographs were taken in 1941 as German forces expelled Jews from their homes in Lublin and forced them into a single area of the district
- Between 17 March and 14 April 1942, tens of thousands of Jews were transported from the ghetto to Nazi concentration camps
- Less than 300 Lublin Jews are believed to have survived the horrors of Nazi occupation

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Squeezed into a cattle truck under the watchful gaze of Nazi soldiers, this haunting photograph captures Polish Jews being expelled from their homes at the outset of what was to become the deadliest phase of the Holocaust.

Part of a collection that has come to light for the first time in around 70 years, the picture is believed to have been taken in 1941 as German forces established Lublin Ghetto in east Poland, confining the district's Jewish community of around 40,000 into a single, tightly packed area.

The following year the ghetto was 'liquidated' as part of Operation Reinhard, and tens of thousands of Lublin Jews were herded into trucks once more - this time bound for the Nazi death camp Belzec.



Doomed: The chilling photographs, revealed for the first time in more than 60 years, were taken as the Jewish occupants of Lublin Ghetto were herded on to cattle tracks to be transported to Nazi death camps

The chilling photographs of the resettlement of Lublin Jews have emerged after owner Raymond Krzyzewski sent them to a local historian in the city last week.

The pictures were smuggled from Lublin by Mr Krzyzewski's father, who had worked for the Jewish Central Welfare Committee in the district at the time.

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March 1941: Ernst Zorner, the district's Governor, proclaimed the establishment of a ghetto in Lublin.

October 1941: The Nazi administration began preparing the eventual expulsion of the Jews of Lublin - apart from the 25,000 working for the German Army, the S.S., and police.

Early 1942: Lublin Ghetto was divided into two sections, with Ghetto A housing unemployed Jews and Ghetto B the remainder

16 March 1942: Lublin Ghetto was surrounded by S.S., many sick and elderly Jews were shot in the street

Later, it was ordered that 1,500 people per day were to be deported 'to the east for work'

17 March 1942: The first of Lublin's Jews were deported to the Belzec extermination camp

By **14 April 1942** around 26,000 Jews had been sent to their deaths at Belzec from the ghetto. The remainder were sent to the nearby Madjan Tatarski Ghetto where many were killed, and others were sent to the Majdanek death camp.

The proximity of the photographer to the subjects in the chilling images has led historians to conclude they were taken by German troops.

Historian Jakob Chmielewski said: 'We received a collection of five images that are likely to have been taken between 10 and 13 March 1941 at the time the Germans were carrying out their expulsion of Jews from the Jewish quarter.

'They wanted to create a ghetto and rid Lublin of the Jews, which they did on March 24, 1941.

'We know that they are from before the liquidation of the ghetto in 1942 because that happened at night time, so these clearly aren't from then,' the historian said.

'Also, you can see that the Jews are clearly being prepared for deportation as they have the remains of their belongings with them.

'I think the photos were probably taken by other Germans, because of the proximity of the photographer to the soldiers.

'It seems that some of the Germans are posing and smiling - they seem quite at ease,' said Mr Chmielewski.

'And it's interesting to note that two of the photos show Jews posing. My guess is that these were to be used as propaganda.'

Lublin Ghetto was one of at least 1,000 established in German-occupied and annexed Poland and the Soviet Union alone.

In 1942, Lublin Ghetto became one of the first to be liquidated by the Nazis, with the majority of its prisoners deported to the Belzec extermination camp between March 17 and April 11 that year.



Jewish residents of the ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland can be seen holding their belongings as they were made to form a line under the watchful eye of German soldiers



The fact that the three elderly men are posing has led historians to conclude the photos were taken by German soldiers and used for propaganda purposes

The remainder were sent to the nearby Majdan Tatarski Ghetto, and were either killed there or sent to the Majdanek death camp.

Of the some 40,000 Lublin Jews, no more than 300 are thought to have survived the horrors of Nazi occupation.

Operation Reinhard was the name given to the Nazi plan to murder Polish Jews in the General Government area of the country during the Second World War.

The operation marked the introduction of extermination camps, and saw as many as two million people - almost all Jews - sent to Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka to be murdered.



Harrowing: Ghettos like Lublin were created by the Nazis for the purpose of isolating, exploiting, and then eradicating Jewish populations in territories they occupied



Death camps: A woman holds a child close to her chest alongside a man laden down with belongings as German troops herded residents into cattle trucks to deliver them to their deaths at Belzec or Majdanek