

LECTURE/WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Greece, North Macedonia, Bulgaria - Kavala 2022

Speaker : Tal Bruttman

The Nazi killing centers

Almost half of the victims of the Holocaust were killed by the Nazis in killing centers. Those sites are, since the end of the Second World War, often confused with the concentration camps (KL in Nazi lingo, for *Konzentrationslager*) for several reasons.

By the spring of 1945 the Allied army discovered the core of the KL system and camps with dozen thousand prisoners – dead or hardly alive. It's those sites and those victims that were photographed or filmed, to show the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime. Among the victims found, thousand of Jews. The idea that Jews were sent to be killed in those concentration camps started thus to spread. But the "final solution" was never implemented through the concentration camps system. Jews were sent to killing centers – places where people are killed as soon as they arrive. Among those killing centers are Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor and, the most infamous one, Auschwitz.

Auschwitz is the main reason Jews were found in concentration camps. Contrary to other killing centers, the SS kept alive among the arriving Jews, for manpower purposes, a small portion, through the so-called "selection" process. Instead of being immediately killed, the "selected" men and women were sent into the camp and registered. By the summer of 1944, when the SS started transferring prisoners to other KL, the Jews still alive were scattered all over the concentration camp system. Those are the ones that were found by the Allies in the spring of 1945, leading to the idea the concentration camps were used in the "final solution".