

CHEŁMNO/KULMHOF

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In December 1941, when a typhoid fever epidemic broke out in the “Gypsy” camp in the Litzmannstadt ghetto in the Polish city now known as Łódź, 4,600 Roma were killed in gassing vans used to transport them to Chełmno/Kulmhof. Ten weeks after arriving in Łódź, all 5,007 Austrian Roma and Sinti were dead; 4,400 of them are buried in unmarked mass graves in the forests around Chełmno, together with 150,000 Jews and thousands of Soviet prisoners of war.

Did you know

... that when worried friends and relatives enquired about the deportees in March 1942 and asked for permission to visit them in Poland, the police said no visiting rights applied to people “resettled” in Łódź?

... that “gassing vans” were first used to murder patients in mental hospitals and asylums?

For you to do

What were the conditions like for the people living in the ghettos? What were the consequences of such living conditions?

The photo

A Magirus-Deutz “gassing van” of the type used in 1941 and 1942 to murder Austrian Roma on the journey from the Litzmannstadt “Gypsy” camp to the death camp in Chełmno/ Kulmhof. Yad Vashem Archives, doc. no. 1264/2, Jerusalem, Israel.