



# Lessons from Auschwitz

Ella & Katie

# Holocaust Educational Trust

The Holocaust Educational Trust works to ensure that people from every background are educated about the Holocaust and the important lessons to be learned for today.



# How the Trust Makes a Difference

- Educates thousands of students across the UK
- Trains and supports hundreds of teachers every year
- Enables Holocaust survivors to share their personal testimonies
- Motivates future generations to speak out against intolerance
- Inspires individuals to consider their responsibilities to their communities
- Works with Parliament and the media to help spread understanding of the Holocaust



# Lessons from Auschwitz – the programme



- Taking part in two online seminars, led by experts in the history of the Holocaust and Holocaust education
- Hearing directly from Holocaust survivors, who will share their personal experiences, including during a live survivor testimony and Q&A
- Participating in a one-day Visit to Poland
- Considering the relevance of this history in today's world
- Sharing what they have learnt within their school and wider community.

# Pre war Jewish life

Prior to the war there were many Jewish communities thriving across the world.

The largest Jewish populations were located in Eastern Europe in places such as Poland, Germany and Russia.

Jews could be found in all walks of life, as farmers, tailors, seamstresses, factory hands, accountants, doctors, teachers, and small-business owners. Some families were wealthy; many more were poor. Many children ended their schooling early to work in a craft or trade; others looked forward to continuing their education at the university level.

Jewish communities were known for their spirit and welcoming nature to people from other communities



This is Berta Rosenhein and this is a photograph taken on her first day at a German school in 1929.

In the photo she is carrying a 'schultute' which is a tradition for the first day of school. It is a cone filled with stationary, sweets and small toys which are shared with classmates to make friends.



Our visit...

# Auschwitz I



**Auschwitz I was established in 1940 and included the camp administration. Also there, was the Black Wall, a gas chamber and a crematorium. To begin with, Auschwitz I had 22 pre-war brick barracks and gradually the camp expanded.**



# Auschwitz I

**Auschwitz I housed thousands of prisoners during the Holocaust. Jews and Roma and Sinti were taken from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II. Initially, these people would have had to walk but eventually trains were used to carry them into Birkenau. There were many who stayed as prisoners at Auschwitz I such as non-Jewish Poles and other prisoner of war.**



# Auschwitz I



This is the entrance sign to Auschwitz I saying 'arbeit macht frei' which means 'work sets you free'

These are pots and pans taken from the victims who believed they were going to start a new life and eventually get resettled.



# Auschwitz Birkenau(II):

-Auschwitz Birkenau is generally the most well know camp when talking about the Holocaust as it is the main one which is taught in schools.

-It is the largest out of over 40 concentration and death camps across Europe and it is located in the town of Oświęcim in Poland

-The camp was in use between 1940 and 1945 and once discovered by the allies the German soldiers fled and partially destroyed the camp to try to hide the evidence of what happened there



# Auschwitz Birkenau(II):

--The Nazis planned for the camps to have 4 sectors each with 6 subsections however construction stopped part way through the building of the 3rd sector of the camp and was never completed.

-Each barrack in the camp could hold around 700 people and there were 174 barracks meaning around 125000 people could be kept within the camp

-Prisoners of Auschwitz were brought to the camp by train and thousands of prisoners would be brought each time the train arrived

-Prisoners of Auschwitz Birkenau would have to lots of manual work during the day starting from 4:30 whilst having little sleep, food and being limited to 2 bathroom breaks every 24 hours.

-The camp had 2 main gas chambers which could hold up to 1,000 people at one time and these gas chambers were operational by 1942 and around 20,000 people were killed per day

-By the end of the war around 1.1 million people had been killed in Auschwitz II



This image shows the 'gates of death' and this was the first thing prisoners would see upon their arrival at Auschwitz.



# Map of Auschwitz Birkenau:

This part of the map shows the crematoriums of the camp. There were 3 which were located towards the back of the camp.

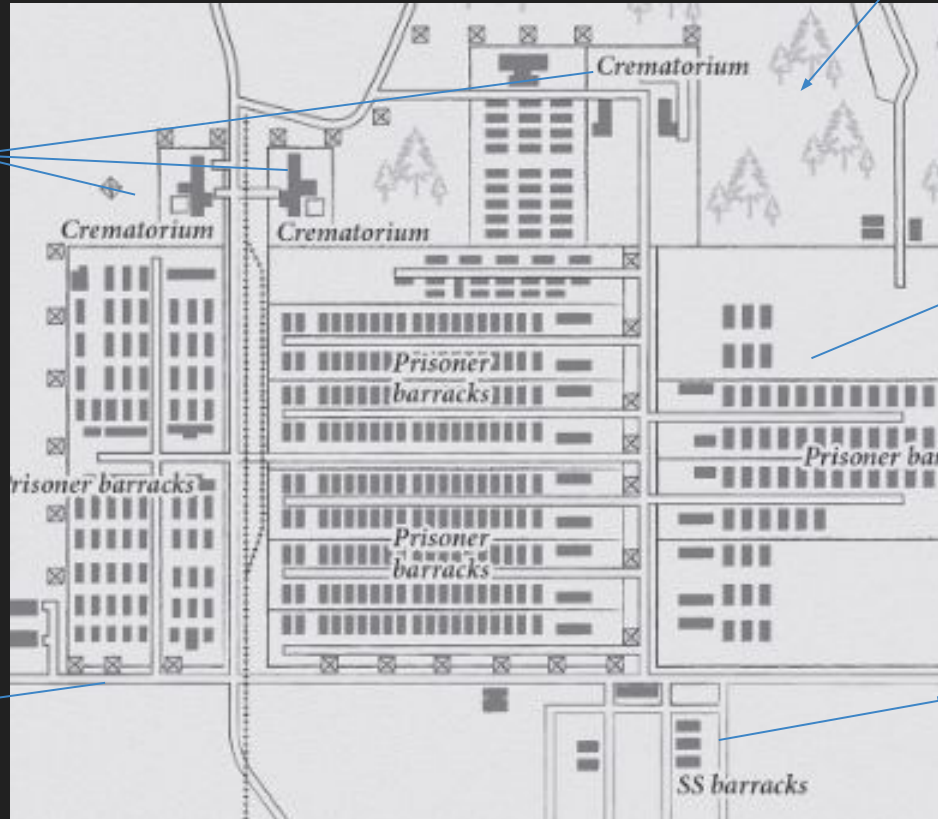




# Map of Auschwitz Birkenau:

This part of the map shows the crematoriums of the camp. There were 3 which were located towards the back of the camp.

These parts here which can be seen around the whole camp are the watchtowers where an SS soldier would be stood at all times during the day to ensure the prisoners didn't do anything they weren't supposed to.



# Map of Auschwitz Birkenau:

The Birkenau camp was mostly surrounded by forestry in order to make it easier for the camp to be hidden and kept a secret so no one would know what was happening at the camp.

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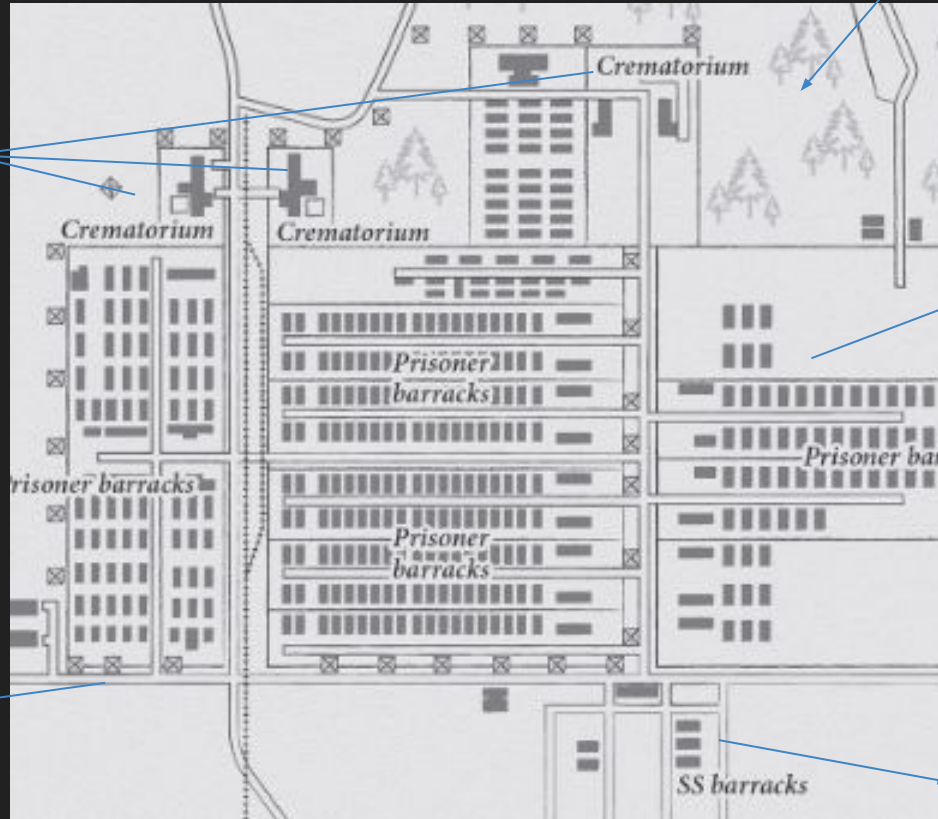


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This here is the part of Auschwitz which was never completed as you can see there are a few barracks but not as many as compared to the fully completed operational sectors of the camp

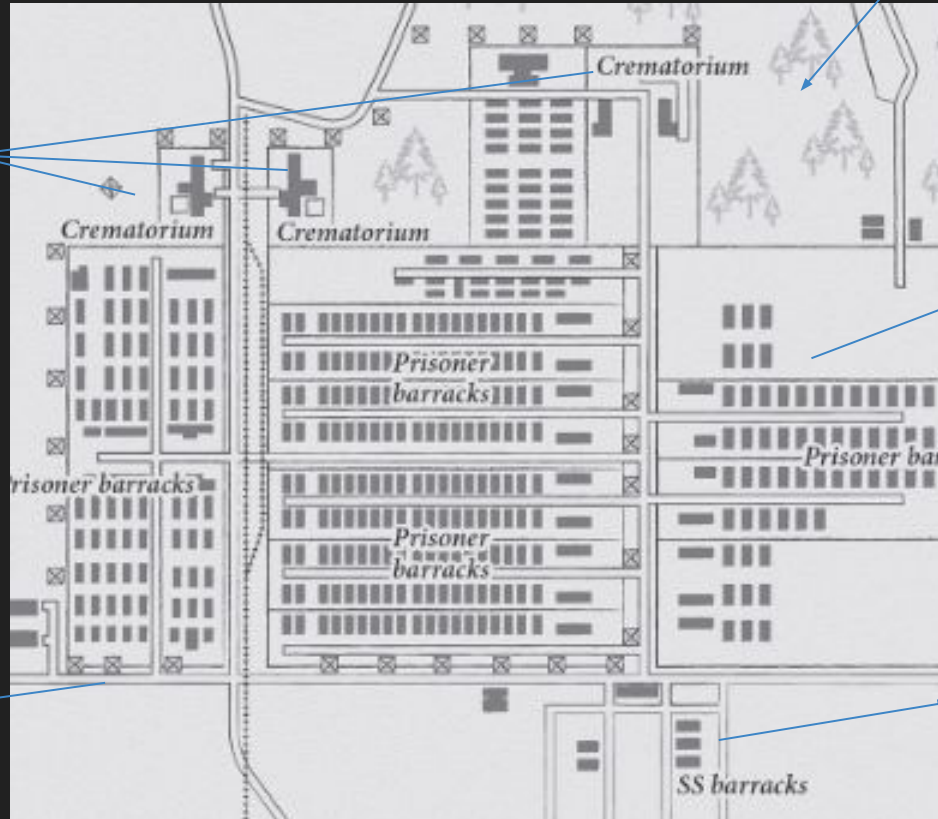


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Here you can also see that there was a barrack for the SS soldiers who ran the camp during the war .

# Ella's experience:



- I have found this whole project fascinating; not just being able to visit Auschwitz I and II, but also meeting people from other colleges and the educators to gain new perspectives and knowledge to widen my understanding on the Holocaust.
- During the visit, I did not feel as upset as I expected I might as there was lots of information to take in but when I got home and had time to process everything, I realised what I had seen and the significance of where I had been.
- I feel like being able to go to Auschwitz is so important because it gives you a much deeper insight into what you might read from a textbook for example and you can learn more about specific individuals and families than just grouping people together as a whole.

# Katie's experience:



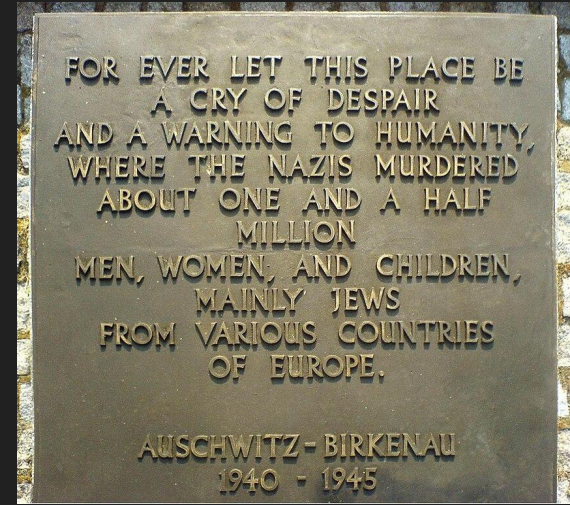
- The lessons from Auschwitz experience was very informative and really opened my eyes to the history of the events of the Holocaust further than what is taught within schools
- During the day trip I feel that I didn't really have the same reactions to the exhibitions as others on the trip, but after a few days I really started to process what I had seen and heard whilst in Poland. If you ever go on a trip like this one it is definitely okay to have a different reaction to others as long as you are still respectful
- If you ever have the opportunity to visit Auschwitz whether that's with school or on your own I would definitely say to do it as it is such and interesting experience in terms of history

# Holocaust Memorial:

At the end of our time in Auschwitz Birkenau, all of the students and educators on the trip gathered round the memorial to pay our respects to those that lost their lives during the Holocaust.

We lit candles to place next to the memorial which is at the end of the train tracks in Auschwitz Birkenau. The memorial plaque has the same message in all the languages spoken by those murdered in Auschwitz I and II .

We also listened to readings, poems and prayers spoken by some of the students and a Jewish Rabbi.



# Janine Webber BEM Story:

During our final online seminar, we listened to Janine Webber share her experience of the Holocaust



She was born in 1932 in Lvov, Poland. In 1941 the persecution of Jews began where she lived and she had to hide underneath her wardrobe to avoid getting caught. Whilst there she heard her father get shot and then moved to hide in a 'kennel'. Soon after that, she moved to a ghetto where her mother sadly passed away. Janine then lived with two different families before being hidden in a bunker with 14 other Jews by a man named Edek. In 1942, she moved to a convent near Krakow and stayed with a priest for a few months then lived with a family as a maid in 1943. After the war had ended, Janine was reunited with her aunt. In 1958 she moved to England where she met her husband.

Something that really impacted me, was how Janine explained that the most important thing she wanted for her children and grandchildren was for them to be kind people and be tolerant of others.

# Historical Conclusions and Takeaways:

- Each person who sadly died was part of a community and culture so the loss also includes loss of culture, ways of life, customs, opinions and ideas as well as the people.
- Many people involved in the Holocaust never went to Auschwitz-Birkenau, it was just one feature of an extremely complex series of events.
- Although the Holocaust was a genocide of Jewish people, we need to remember that there were many other groups of people who were also persecuted.
- The origins and ideas of the Holocaust had begun many years before. One example of this is Nazi Germany started passing anti-Jewish laws in 1933.
- Statistics that we may read or hear are impersonal and behind the 6 million who perished are individuals, families, communities that were normal people who lived regular lives just like we do today.



**Thank you for listening to our presentation, we hope you  
have learnt something new about the Holocaust.**

