



European pack for visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum

..... Guidelines for teachers and educators

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Guidelines for teachers and educators

Editors: Alicja Białecka, Krystyna Oleksy, Fabienne Regard and Piotr Trojański

Council of Europe Publishing

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Preamble and acknowledgements

This project came into being following a European training seminar held in Cracow and Auschwitz in September 2006. The week-long European workshop is held every year by the Polish Ministry of Education, the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Pedagogical University of Cracow, as part of the Council of Europe's Pestalozzi Programme and the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity.

Following a week of intensive training, provided at Cracow Pedagogical University and Auschwitz-Birkenau for around 50 European and Polish teachers, a proposal by the Council of Europe experts that a European pack of teaching notes be produced for teachers wishing to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp with their students caught the attention of the Polish Ministry of Education and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The teachers present had indicated that it would be useful to have teaching notes to help them organise study visits with their students, from the preparatory stages through actual conduct of the visits to follow-up. The museum confirmed that there was an urgent need for such teaching notes, as there was continuous demand from teachers from all over Europe who wished to visit the camp with their students.

A special team was set up in Warsaw in March 2007 to establish a joint process involving the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the Polish Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe. Without the active participation of the three partners, the project would not have been possible. The project has been funded by the Polish Ministry of Education. We wish to express our gratitude to all the partners, in particular Ms Stefania Wilkiel, Counsellor to the Minister, Department for General Education, Ministry of National Education; Ms Krystyna Oleksy, Deputy Director for Education, Director of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz

and the Holocaust of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; Ms Alicja Białecka, Head of the Programme Section of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; Mr Piotr Trojański, PhD, Institute of History of the Pedagogical University of Cracow, Academic Advisor for the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; Ms Edyta Kurek, Deputy Director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw; Ms Carole Reich, Head of the Division for the European Dimension of Education at the Council of Europe; Ms Fabienne Regard, Council of Europe expert and also all the drafters, translators and proofreaders of the final text. In addition, we would like to express our tremendous gratitude to Mr Jean-Michel Lecomte who helped us and inspired us in setting up the project.

This guide was written partly in Polish and partly in French and then translated in full into English.

Auschwitz – The European dimension

The European and universal roots of the Holocaust

Auschwitz did not arise in 1940 out of nowhere. Its origins – cultural, technical and symbolic – belong both to a body of European heritage and to the history of humanity in general. Far from being a “blip” or an accident of history, the Holocaust is an integral part of it. Academic study of the subject surely depends on recognising that reality, otherwise the Holocaust can exist only in a limbo of the inexplicable, the supernatural or the metaphysical, as some irresolvable act of fate. By reminding ourselves that the tyrants of Auschwitz were not monsters but ordinary people, and by resituating the Holocaust in the context of its complex European roots through analysis of how, at a given point in time, particular circumstances led to the design and implementation of a programme for exterminating one section of society, we can attempt an analytical approach to the question of how such a thing was possible. Contemporary researchers like Georges Bensoussan and Enzo Traverso have stressed the European dimension of this heritage.

Auschwitz did not change the forms of civilisation. If the gas chambers are today perceived as a break in civilisation, it is precisely because they represent a moment that revealed the blind alleys into which civilisation had stumbled and its destructive potential. Counter-Enlightenment tendencies, combined with industrial and technical progress, a state monopoly over violence, and the rationalisation of methods of domination, revealed extermination to be one of the faces of civilisation itself.¹

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 1. Traverso Enzo, *The origins of Nazi violence*, New York and London, New Press, 2003, p. 2 (first published in French as *La violence nazie, une généalogie européenne*, la Fabrique, Paris, 2002).

The motives for this crime (racism, anti-Semitism, anti-communism, eugenics) and the weapons used to commit it (war, conquest and extermination on an industrial scale) are part of the context of European civilisation. The idea that civilisation implies the conquest and extermination of “inferior” or “harmful” races, and the instrumental concept of technology as a means for the organised elimination of an enemy were not invented by the Nazis, but had been notions familiar in Europe since the 19th century and the advent of the industrial society. The “genealogy” traced in Enzo Traverso’s study emphasises the fact that the violence and crimes of Nazism emerged from certain common bases of Western culture. It does not show that Auschwitz revealed the fundamental essence of the West; however, it does suggest that it was one of its possible products and, in that sense, was one of its legitimate offspring.

It was at the time of the Second World War that all the elements identified above came together. Medieval Christian anti-Judaism, the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the inventions of the guillotine, the machine gun and the abattoir, depopulation of the countryside, the Fordist factory and rational administration, along with counter-Enlightenment thinking, theories of racism, “racial hygiene” and eugenics, and the massacres of Europe’s colonial wars and those of the First World War had already fashioned the social universe and the mental landscape in which the “final solution” would be conceived and implemented. They had combined to create the technical, ideological and cultural premises for it, constructing an anthropological context in which Auschwitz became possible. The genocide of the Jews uniquely synthesised a vast range of modes of domination and extermination that had already been tried out separately in the course of modern Western history.²

The continent of Europe during the Second World War

Nazi expansionism based on the notion of conquering *Lebensraum* (and underpinned by racist theories) had resulted in an imperial project to put most of Europe at the

2. Traverso Enzo, *ibid.* p. 150.

service of the “superior”, “Aryan” people. This entailed enslaving some nations and getting rid of others, which had been declared “enemies of the Reich”, in order to make space for the Germans as lords and masters. Of course the project was not described by Nazi propagandists in quite those terms. Reich Press Chief Dr Otto Dietrich had stated at a conference in Prague in 1941 that the “New Order” was to be based “not on the principle of this or that nation’s privileges but on the principle of equal opportunity for all of them”. It was to be “a grouping of nations according to their racial composition but [forming] an organic whole”.³ Such was the billing for the intended thousand-year Reich. Some were willing to interpret the planned “New Order” as an embryonic “United States of Europe”. “Representatives of the nations of the anti-Communist or anti-Comintern pact gathered at the end of 1941 in a congress christened the ‘First European Congress’ and this occasion inspired a ‘Chant of Europe’.”⁴ In reality, the Nazis were concerned chiefly with winning the war and conquering more territory, not with reorganising Europe according to any set plan. An obsession with race was one of the main forces driving Hitler’s foreign policy. During the war years, 1939-45, most of the countries in Europe, from Brittany to the Caucasus and from Norway to Morocco, were affected by Nazism through its ideology, its foreign policy or its acts of war. Measures to implement the “final solution” of the Jewish question were put in place in most of the countries that were home to Europe’s 10 million Jews. Thousands of internment, transit and concentration camps were set up across the continent and the Nazi extermination camps established in eastern Europe drew their victims from virtually every European country.

Auschwitz’s European dimension throughout the war years is thus evident at more than one level: the camp system facilitated implementation of the racist ideology that sought to install the “New European Order” and it was also clear from the origins of the prisoners – deportees from so many countries and regions – that the “final solution” was a project on a continental scale, designed to make all of Europe *judenfrei* (Jew-free).

3. Dietrich Otto, *The Spiritual Foundations of the New Europe*, Berlin, 1941, p. 26 (quoted in Semelin, see following footnote).

4. Semelin Jacques, *Unarmed against Hitler: civilian resistance in Europe, 1939-1943*, Westwood C. T., Praeger Publishers, 1993, p. 5 (first published in French as *Sans armes face à Hitler: La résistance civile en Europe, 1939-1943*, Payot, Paris, 1989).

Europe after 1945

Political Europe in the post-war years was built on the debris of this tragedy. The task was to construct a society based on values quite the opposite of those advocated by the authoritarian regimes of the first half of the 20th century and to promote democracy, respect for human rights, appreciation of diversity, international co-operation and the goal of social inclusion.

Europe's international organisations, including the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), were active in disseminating these values through education, recognising that the concepts of peaceful coexistence and respect for others could be learned from a very early age.

The Council of Europe's Day of Remembrance

The Council of Europe was set up shortly after the end of the Second World War (in 1949) to promote the establishment of a peaceful Europe, founded on respect for human rights and democracy. In 1954 the European Cultural Convention was signed, with the aim of encouraging mutual understanding by promoting study of the languages, histories and civilisations of the other contracting parties, as well as that of their shared civilisation.

At the 20th session of the Conference of European Ministers of Education – in Cracow in October 2000 – a commitment was made to declare a Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity in each of the Council of Europe member states, to begin in 2003. The education ministers fleshed out the idea when they met again at the Council of Europe's Strasbourg headquarters in October 2002 and unanimously adopted a declaration instituting the Day of Remembrance in schools across all the member states.

By 2007, most of the European Cultural Convention's 49 signatory countries had chosen a date for the day in the light of their own national history. The Council of Europe has assisted with the choice of dates, encouraged the countries concerned to promote the teaching of remembrance as part of the curriculum and helped teachers – through training courses and monitoring systems – to introduce special activities in schools to mark the day.

Auschwitz as part of Europe's heritage

At the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum the European heritage dimension is evident from the range of nationalities represented among visitors to the camp, whether students, survivors, tourists or heads of state (on 27 January 2005, the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, 40 countries were represented there at the highest level). Visitor numbers in 2007 totalled around 1 200 000. Of the 10 countries from which the largest numbers of visitors come, seven are signatories of the 1954 European Cultural Convention and two, the USA and Israel, have observer status with the Council of Europe. In terms of museology, Auschwitz I has housed national exhibitions since 1960, presenting the history of the Shoah and the *Samudaripen* in 12 European countries.⁵ In 2005 the United Nations selected 27 January as the date for international commemorations of the Holocaust victims, thus underscoring the camp's symbolic and universal dimension.



Auschwitz II-Birkenau, the “Gate of Death”. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.

5. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Bulgaria, Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union and Poland.



Auschwitz I, a delegation of youth and ministers of education from Council of Europe countries laying wreaths at the "Death Wall", 2005. Photo: Archive International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

The symbolism of Auschwitz and its universal message

The 20th century brought the world a culmination of terror and murder, which had never occurred before in the history of humankind. This was especially the case during the Second World War in German-occupied Europe. Violations of basic human rights, extreme racism and xenophobia, the absolute subordination of populations in occupied countries, while transforming them into slaves, and finally the physical liquidation of political opponents, the cultural elite, people actively fighting against the Nazi regime, and entire nations looked upon as useless or inferior – this was the portrait of occupied Europe.

The most tragic fate was that of Jews in Europe, whom the German Nazis intended to totally exterminate, regardless of age, gender, profession, nationality or political leanings. Elie Wiesel, former prisoner of Konzentrationslager (KL) Auschwitz, said that not all of the Nazis' victims were Jews, but all Jews were victims of the Nazis.

In occupied Europe, the Nazis created many different types of concentration camps, however Auschwitz has become the best known. There were several factors influencing this, among them the enormous number of victims, the vast area of the camp and the remaining evidence of the crimes committed.

Auschwitz operated between the years 1940 and 1945. It was the largest centre for the mass extermination of Europe's Jews, while at the same time the largest concentration camp for prisoners of various nationalities, a source for slave labour, a place where executions and criminal experiments were carried out, as well as the mass plunder of the victims' belongings. The Nazis sent at least 1 100 000 Jews, nearly 150 000 Poles, 23 000 Roma, 15 000 Soviet prisoners of war, and tens of thousands of people from other nations to this camp.

All the nations affected by Auschwitz have created their own Auschwitz – or rather their own metaphor of the camp, as well as their own interpretations and ways to commemorate – according to their paradigms, traditions, and religions. The biggest problems arise from the diverse symbolism of this concentration camp. As a symbol it is known all over the world, even to those individuals who have not learned its complicated history, who have not lost anyone in this place, who do not know that there exists a memorial and a museum, and those who do not plan on visiting or learning about this subject.

The complicated history of this camp, which has changed during its existence, has caused Auschwitz to have a distinctive meaning to different national groups. It is a symbol both in the emotional and intellectual sense. A symbol of the worst evil that can be perpetrated by humans, as well as a symbol of the lack of humanity. It has become evidence of the barbaric destructiveness that is possible in a highly developed and civilised society. It is not without reason that humankind sees Auschwitz today as a symbol of the worst that has happened in history. The name of the camp has even become a specific type of code in civilisation, used to describe the failure of human culture, thought, behaviour and relationships in our time. At the same time, it has become an example of social indifference and apathy, of the lack of accountability of institutions and organisations that should have reacted immediately while the camp operated and thousands were being led there to become its victims. Its symbolic impact had already begun during the Second World War, is still current today, and certainly will continue in the future.

For the Jews, who were 90% of its victims, Auschwitz has become the symbol of the Holocaust, or as it is called in the Hebrew language – the Shoah. Why only Auschwitz and not other death camps, for example, Bełżec, Sobibór or Treblinka, where Jews alone were being murdered? There were in fact many reasons for this. Among these was that Auschwitz had two simultaneous functions – as a concentration camp and as a camp for the immediate extermination of Jews. The majority of the Jews sent to Auschwitz were murdered in the gas chambers immediately after arrival, in a similar way to what took place in Treblinka and Bełżec. However, the SS men chose some of the new arrivals not for immediate death, but to provide slave labour in the concentration camp. Several thousands of them survived the concentration camp and made their way to the West after the war, where they could freely talk about the truth of what they had been through. Among them were many writers, scientists, and people who could describe their cruellest and most tragic experiences in an evocative manner. Moreover, thanks to the work of the Polish

resistance movement and the Polish Government in Exile, and Polish and Jewish escapees from the camp, the truth about Auschwitz, however difficult, was getting through to the Allies during the war and the name of the camp started appearing in the mass media. Most often, what was described was the most monstrous crime: the mass murder of innocent women, men, and children who were sentenced to death only because they were considered to be Jews. Hence this cruel crime against all divine and human rights dominated and eclipsed all other events that also took place in this camp.

Auschwitz is also of great symbolic importance to Poles. It has become a symbol of the German occupation, terror, as well as a system to destroy the cultural, social, and political character of the nation and the resistance movement, as well as a system of slave labour. The symbolic function of this place for the Polish nation started during the time of the German occupation. The words “Oświęcim” or “Auschwitz” appeared in Poland’s underground press and in leaflets, which were distributed in the thousands. The symbolic function of those words spread quickly, being circulated by word of mouth as a symbol of complete peril.

The enormous importance of the camp in the Polish national consciousness and collective memory is generally almost unknown in the West. Information that Poles also died in this camp is, unfortunately, looked upon as an attempt to falsify history, to claim the memory of the Jewish victims, an attempt at Christianisation, or the effect of communist propaganda. Generally unknown is the fact that two years before the Nazis began their so-called “final solution” – the mass murder of European Jews – Poles were being sent to Auschwitz, mainly political prisoners, who were incarcerated and died in the camp up until the end of its existence. Unlike Jewish people, who were deported to the camp along with their entire families, Poles were regularly brought there individually, although there were known instances where a few family members, for instance brothers, or fathers and sons, were arrested together. This fact shows that some families stayed in their homes outside the camp’s barbed wire fence, in freedom. Those people knew well the fate of their family members, friends and acquaintances. After mass round-ups were carried out in Warsaw, followed by transportation of people to the camp, almost everyone in Warsaw was sharing information about these imprisoned inhabitants. Overall, approximately 150 000 Polish prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, and about half of those individuals died. The camp authorities allowed Poles to send letters to their families, which were often censored, but were still generally delivered to the

addressee. In the event of a Pole's death, the camp administration sent an official telegram informing their family of the death.

This kind of information was spread widely during the years of the Nazi occupation and became entrenched in individual and collective memory as the meaning of this place in Polish history. This is how, during the war, thousands of Poles either knew someone who was sent to Auschwitz, or knew a person who had lost somebody they held dear there.

This place has an equally important meaning for the Roma, who were sent to the camp just as the Jews were, but on a smaller scale, simply for racial reasons. They consider 2 August, the date the SS liquidated the so-called Gypsy Camp at Birkenau in 1944, to be a Day of National Remembrance, unifying Roma people living in different countries and confirming their national identity. Every year they come to the museum and memorial to honour the murdered and remind the world of their suffering. In recent years, Roma organisations have been able to bring the history of this nation during the Second World War to public memory and consciousness.

Auschwitz also has a symbolic importance to other groups of victims – for instance Soviet prisoners of war as well as those in the Bible Students Movement (Jehovah's Witnesses), who were also sent to this camp because of their beliefs.

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The fact that the history of Auschwitz, as a symbol, has not been closed provides recourse to it in various fields of education for society, as well as in theology. The need for a new understanding of moral obligations and interpersonal relationships is often examined in relation to the history and symbolism of Auschwitz. You can come across such terms as “the face of God after Auschwitz”, and “the post-Auschwitz generation of Christians”.

Over 30 million people have visited the site of the former camp. Even though the majority of those are Poles, mainly young people of school age, there are more and more people from abroad because the message of this site is addressed to the entire world. Taking into account the symbolism of Auschwitz and its importance to humankind, the Polish government asked to have the site of the former camp listed as a UNESCO Heritage Site in 1979. The Auschwitz camp figures as the only concentration camp on the list under the name, “Auschwitz-Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-45).” In 2005, the UN named 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp, as Holocaust Remembrance Day.

These last facts allow us the hope that, for the world, the role and importance of this site will not be diminished, and its universal meaning and symbolism will be comprehensible to everyone.



Auschwitz I, the “Death Wall” where prisoners were executed. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.



The Roma Extermination Remembrance Day, 2009. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.

**Before
the visit.....**



.....

1.1. What preparations need to be made for visiting Auschwitz and why?

Preparation will be needed to cope with the following problems:

- the difficulty of reconciling mythical representations of Auschwitz with the reality;
- the “unbearable” nature of the trip, if there is no attempt to personalise the search for meaning or the motivation for the trip;
- the sense of dread that visitors experience and their inability to grasp the nature of the place – a kind of intellectual disorientation.

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Preparing an intellectual approach to the visit

For most students, the trip will be a very new kind of experience. In their courses at school they will have been taught to analyse information from different sources but no course offers a method for analysing a place of remembrance. They will lack the tools necessary for coming to grips with this particular reality, and they will be unaccustomed to visiting places of this type. There is a risk that they will be unable to make sense of it and will slip into a kind of apathy or inertia – or, worse, a fascination with the horror of it.

What they will see will not allow them to relive the suffering of the camp residents or even to understand it directly. They will have to engage in an analytical effort to make sense of what has been left behind and, in that respect, the experience is not unlike visiting an archaeological dig. It is often hard for non-specialists not only to picture the camp buildings in a multidimensional way but also to envisage the life there, the people, the sounds and smells and the atmosphere of the place at another time.

Visiting Auschwitz is an indirect learning experience; it is about making a physical connection with absence. How can one give a voice to absence? How can a place of silence manage to communicate? How can a museum with standard modern amenities (café, bookshop and research centre) and staff depict the radical abnormality of the Holocaust to students with no in-depth knowledge of it? For some, it is the rural location of the camp that makes an impression, with a church next door, weddings taking place and people going about their business. While this “normal” dimension may come as a surprise, it can also help to keep the Holocaust situated within human experience: many of the SS officers who ran the camp were kindly dads to their own children. Anchoring the whole phenomenon within human experience will help the students to recognise the danger that things like this could happen again.⁶

James Young has some interesting ideas on the cognitive and symbolic effects of the way that history is presented through museums, for example on the internalisation of the enemy’s perspective:

The Jews of Europe were murdered at least twice over by the Nazis: as both their lives and their humanity had been taken from them, the victims’ memory of their pre-war lives had been destroyed and then supplanted by the Nazis’ own memory of their victims. For what most visitors seemed to remember from their trips to the museum at Auschwitz were their few moments before huge, glass-encased bins of artefacts: floor to ceiling piles of prosthetic limbs, eyeglasses, toothbrushes, suitcases and the shorn hair of women.

But here we must ask: “What precisely do these artefacts teach us about the history of the people who once animated them?” Beyond affect, what does our knowledge of these objects – a bent spoon, children’s shoes, crusty old striped uniforms – have to do with our knowledge of historical events? In a perversely ironic twist, these artefacts – collected as evidence of the crimes – were forcing us to recall the victims as the Nazis have remembered them to us: in the collected debris of a destroyed civilisation. Armless sleeves, eyeless lenses, headless caps, footless shoes: victims are known only by their absence, by the moment of their destruction. In great loose piles, these remnants remind us not of the lives once animating them, so much as the brokenness of lives now scattered in pieces.

For when the memory of a people and its past are reduced to the broken bits and rags of the belongings, memory of life is lost. What of the relationships and

6. See Browning Christopher, *Ordinary Men*, Harper Collins, New York, 1992.

families sundered? What of the scholarship and education? The community and its traditions? Nowhere among the debris do we find traces of what bound these people together into a civilisation, a nation, a culture. Heaps of scattered artefacts belie the interconnectedness of lives that actually made these victims a people, a collective whole. The sum of these dismembered fragments can never approach the whole of what was lost.

That a murdered people remains known in Holocaust museums anywhere by their scattered belongings and not by their spiritual works, that their lives should be recalled primarily through the images of their death, may be the ultimate travesty. These lives and the relationships between them are lost to the memory of ruins alone – and will be lost to subsequent generations who seek memory only in the rubble of the past.⁷

Preparing to cope with an emotional response

Before they arrive in Poland, few young visitors have a very clear idea of what they are going to see. For that reason they tend to be more fearful beforehand than they are during and after the visit to the camp. Given the availability today of “virtual” experiences, it may be useful to explore what teenagers expect to find in Auschwitz: how do they picture not just the deaths of the prisoners there, but also their lives, their suffering and the torture they endured? What does hell look like?

This was a place of unprecedented violence, where almost 1.5 million people perished, including children of the students’ own age, from their own country. Working from the traces left behind, the students must necessarily draw on their imagination to envisage how that happened.

Preparing by situating the site geographically

Literally getting their bearings through this kind of geographical preparation will help students to counter their fear of the unknown. The teacher can begin with exercises that involve visualising the journey to Auschwitz on various maps, familiarising the students with the route to be taken, the countries they will cross and the destination.

7. Young James E., in Weiss Ann, *The last album: eyes from the ashes of Auschwitz-Birkenau*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2001, pp. 16-18.

Studying the topography of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps with the help of photographs – a suggested part of preparatory workshops – would be useful in giving the students some prior notion of what they will and will not see when they get there.

Preparing to think about the meaning of a trip to Auschwitz, individually and collectively

If students visit Auschwitz without having considered why they are doing so, there is a danger that, bereft of understanding, they will simply be traumatised, but there is also a risk that their perception of the Holocaust will be trivialised if they regard the visit as just another school trip.

Cognitive preparation

Certain basic information needs to be acquired and properly understood in order for a visit to Auschwitz to form part of a structured educational process and to be integrated into the curriculum. It is neither a sideshow nor an illustration; it is an additional learning source and it needs to be placed in perspective.

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Auschwitz II-Birkenau, the present day. Photo: Wojciech Gorgolewski.

1.2. The problem of age and coping with emotion as a visitor to Auschwitz

At what age can children begin to learn about the Holocaust at school? There are three complementary teaching approaches, geared to different levels of maturity.

The first involves studying the political background, the Nazi regime, the events that occurred, the statistics and the chronology. Aspects covered will include how the “final solution” was implemented, the legislation, the various forms of persecution, the ghettos, the camps and so on. Students will discover the outcome of this attempt to remove several million people from the face of the earth: they will look at photographs of dead bodies or emaciated people in the camps, of the bulldozers that shifted heaps of naked corpses, of the personal items looted from the victims – from suitcases and spectacles, to toothbrushes and baby clothes. It is feasible to use this approach with students aged 14 to 15 and upwards, in a properly structured context with preparation and follow-up. In effect it covers what the students will see for themselves in the former Nazi camp at Auschwitz.

The second approach introduces the perspective of people who witnessed the events. The children of former times can “speak” to the children of today via accounts of their lives, everyday objects and original sources, giving the students an insight into the existence of people who lived before, during and after the Holocaust (in those cases where there was an “after”). Giving these people a voice once again – and the right to a voice – does not diminish the horror of what happened to them. On the contrary, it highlights the violence that was done to ordinary life. This approach

can be used with children aged 9 to 10 years and upwards, with debriefing sessions and appropriate teaching materials.

The third approach can both precede and follow study of the Holocaust. A general humanistic, democratic approach is relevant with young people over the full age range from 7 to 20 years old. It involves exploration of the concepts that made the “final solution” possible. On the basis of examples from ordinary life, students will begin to study the ingredients of cultural identity and how it is forged, the role of groups, stereotypes, discrimination, scapegoating and propaganda, and the issues of exclusion, freedom of expression, democracy and respect for difference, citizens’ rights and duties, respect, racism and anti-Semitism.⁸

The question of coping with emotions is particularly relevant with the first of the three approaches.

What students feel about Auschwitz⁹

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The anticipatory fear that students experience (phase 1) is to some extent a fear of being afraid, as well as fear of the unknown and fear of oneself. Once they arrive and face the reality of the camp as it exists today, the students will cease to feel these fears in the same way, for they are dealing now not with something fantastical but with actual objects, real people and historical explanations.

Nonetheless, students tend to experience a shock at this stage (phase 2), because most of them are unprepared for what they see or do not see. As they tour the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, they will be confronted not only by the various stages in the implementation of the “final solution” but also by thousands of objects that were looted from the deportees, heaps of shorn hair and photographs. All this has the effect of evoking empathy with the victims (phase 3), and for the students

8. See for example www.facinghistory.org.

9. Not every student goes through all these phases but they represent the stages of reaction that most of them report having experienced. There are some students who feel nothing and that, too, is an interesting response, for to feel nothing is surely to have a sense of nothingness.

themselves it is a protective response: they imagine what they might have felt, without actually feeling it.

When they see the baby clothes and toddlers' pushchairs, they tend to imagine their own families and they then learn that the Holocaust victims included 1.5 million children – children like themselves. A process of identification (phase 4) then occurs, followed by an unbearable feeling of powerlessness and despair (phase 5) at the idea of humanity killing its own innocent and defenceless children. How can humankind be trusted? These parents were unable to protect their children. That particular idea tends to be rejected (phase 6) because the students simply cannot bear it, and they tell themselves that the Holocaust came to an end in 1945. Yet the fact that it happened at all means that it could happen again and there has been a succession of acts of genocide in the intervening years. The students tend to be left with a dull but abiding sense of insecurity (phase 7). What could they do if something like this were to begin again? Then the energy of fear turns into anger (phase 8), directed against racism, anti-Semitism, negationism and apathy.

Protective mechanisms for coping with emotion

To protect themselves against extreme feelings, students may behave in ways that are commonly offensive – passing rude remarks, being noisy, laughing or fidgeting (devices for breaking the bubble of silence and “coming back to life”) – or they may use affectionate body language (holding hands, hugging, comforting or massaging one another) to reassure themselves of their own humanity and enable them to recover their mental and emotional balance. Franz Veldman's¹⁰ research in haptonomy – the science of affective contact developed on the basis of his own experience of the Holocaust in 1942 – teaches us to see in such behaviour healthy acts of defence. They do not imply a lack of respect for the victims, although teachers may wish to explain to the students that their behaviour could be misinterpreted.

10. www.haptonomie.org.

The teacher's role and the process of "historification"

The teacher represents the school context (a protective context for the students), reassuring them that they are here to learn and that they will come out alive. The teacher, as an adult, is their reference point for institutional authority but he or she can also offer protection at an emotional level. Teachers know about history and have some grasp of child psychology, they will know what to do if a student needs help. It is the teacher who makes the connection between the physical evidence and the historical story. The students begin to be actively involved in the process of seeking meaning, a search that is initiated by the teacher.

The importance of emotions in the cognitive process

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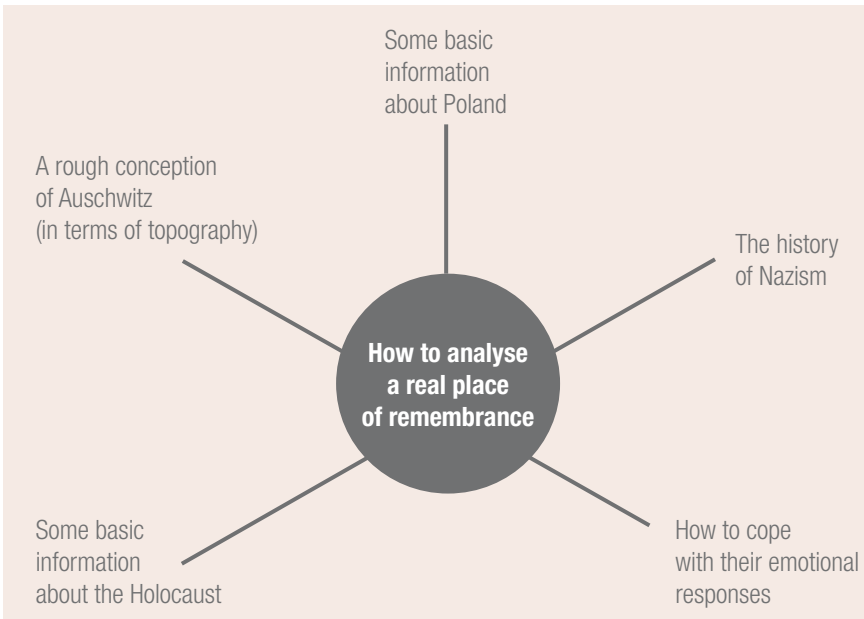
The impact of emotions on the learning process when visiting Auschwitz is both positive and negative. The strength of the emotions that students feel is an advantage in the transfer of information from the short-term to the long-term memory. How could one ever forget that one had visited Auschwitz? Yet there are also disadvantages. The first is the fact that we need to be in a relaxed state in order to register what we hear.¹¹ Stress is one of the factors that impede the assimilation of information. The second is the risk that students may feel guilty if what they feel does not "match" what is before them. ("How could I be in Auschwitz and feel nothing: is it disrespectful, is it hideously indifferent, is there something wrong with me?"). The third disadvantage concerns the limits of understanding: "standing under" something – the etymological sense of the word – is hard if that thing is too big or too heavy, although we may grasp its meaning intellectually by situating it historically and stripping down the mechanisms that produced it. How can we take on board the baggage of Auschwitz and make it part of our own history and knowledge without allowing it to destroy our own balance?

11. See research by Lozanov.



Different age groups visiting the Auschwitz Memorial. Photo: Lidia Foryciarz.

1.3. What do students need to know before the visit?



Teachers can draw on the materials in the other sections of this manual (about the Jews in Europe, what preceded their extermination, the Holocaust, Auschwitz as one camp within the Nazi network, Europe under Nazi domination, resistance and the passivity of the free world) to help structure their workshops or use the “off-the-peg” lessons proposed for two, three or four-hour work sessions.

The cognitive aims are to study Auschwitz from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective; to make sure that the students have assimilated the basic information and can answer a number of simple questions at a very factual, political and human

level (What? Who? When? Where? How? Why? With whom? How many?). The teaching aims are to encourage a multidisciplinary and multisource approach in a learning project; to demonstrate how a theme is enriched by being considered from different points of view. The educational aims are to give students the taste for research; to make them want to know more than just the basics, and to suggest avenues they can pursue in order to learn more; to demonstrate that one can never know all there is to know about a subject and that it is always possible to uncover new information by taking a different angle of approach or looking through a different lens.

The history of the Holocaust in each of the countries affected by it

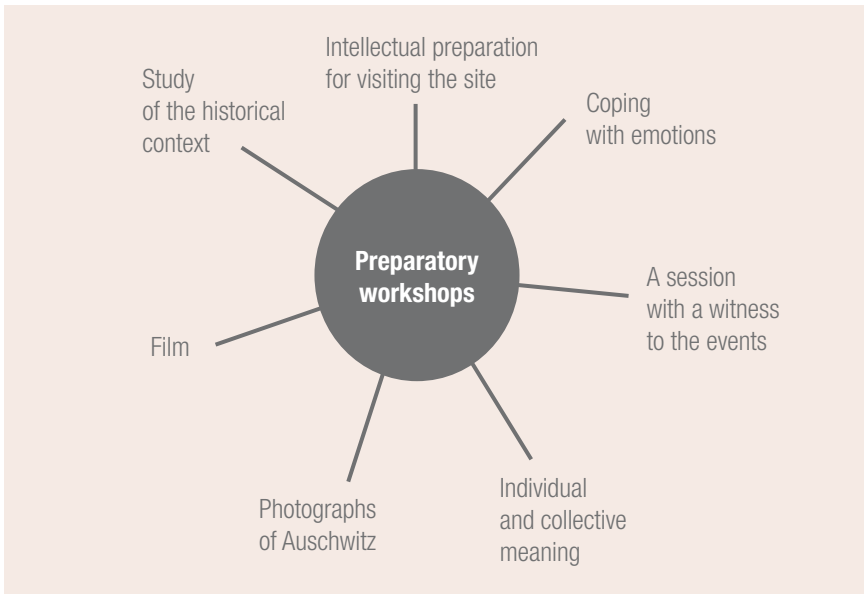
A feature of the Day of Remembrance, established by the Council of Europe in 2003, is the freedom of each country to select its own date for the event. In the light of its own national history, each country chooses a date associated with a key event there. Students can thus feel directly involved because this day is about their own cultural heritage and that of their parents and grandparents.

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Given Auschwitz's European dimension, in terms of both the comprehensive aim of wiping out supposedly undesirable "peoples", and of the national origins of the victims, individual teachers may wish to prepare a lesson about specifically national, or indeed regional, aspects of European history between 1933 and 1945.

To prepare their students for visiting the relevant site in their own country, teachers may extend general preparatory work about the Holocaust to cover events in their respective countries between 1939 and 1945.

1.4. Organising workshops to prepare students for the visit



Example of a series of workshops over two days

Day one: the Holocaust

8-10 a.m.: Historical information and work with photographs from Auschwitz

10 a.m.-12 noon: Meeting a survivor (See Section 1.5)

1-3 p.m.: Coping with emotions; an intellectual approach to visiting places of remembrance; individual and collective meaning of a visit to Auschwitz (See Section 1.11)

3-5 p.m.: Documentary film (See Section 1.13)

Day two: the cultural dimension

8-10 a.m.: Information about Poland

10 a.m.-12 noon: Polish cooking, Jewish and non-Jewish cooking

Shared meal

2-4 p.m.: Klezmer and Gypsy music or a dance lesson based on klezmer music

Alternatively, the workshops could be slotted into the timetable for traditional school subjects:

- historical information – history class
- intellectual approach to visiting places of remembrance – physics or chemistry classes
- situating the site – geography class
- meeting with a witness to the events – language or literature classes
- coping with emotions – physical education, biology or religious education classes
- individual and collective meaning – philosophy, civic education classes
- film – art class
- concert and dancing to klezmer and Gypsy music – music class

Within the workshops there could be an opportunity for psychologists, doctors, social workers, cooks, librarians and technical and cleaning staff attached to the school, as well as parents, to share relevant knowledge and skills.

Musical events or film screenings open to the public could also help with fundraising for the study trip. For example, a klezmer or Gypsy band might be found to give a free concert.

1.5. Meeting a survivor as part of the preparatory process

This human approach, based on an individual's life story, helps to counterbalance the effect of visiting a Nazi camp where the focus is on the outcome of Nazi ideology, presented through an iconography of horror.

Points to bear in mind

It is useful to remind the students that the majority of Auschwitz victims were murdered very shortly after they arrived at the camp, so the account they will hear from a survivor is representative of the 10% of Jewish deportees who managed to survive there for a certain time.

It should also be explained that this account is a source like other sources, which – notwithstanding the respect due to the witness – needs to be evaluated critically and placed in perspective. It remains a source like other sources, even though it is unique inasmuch as it offers access to the genuine small details of a person's life, individual sensitivities and world view.

It is important to prepare the students for meeting a survivor: they need to be in possession of the basic facts about the Holocaust and Auschwitz, as outlined above; they should be reminded that a person who has lived through humiliation and dehumanisation is deserving of respect; and it should be explained to them that, because survivors relive the horror each time they recount what happened to them, their testimony represents an immense gift to those who hear it.

We worked with one survivor who decided that during classroom sessions he would relate only the events of his life up to the moment of his arrival at Auschwitz (including the train journey that took him there) and that he would then invite the students to put any questions they wished about his life in Auschwitz and after the war. This approach was not only a form of self-defence, inasmuch as the witness was not required to give yet another chronological account of an extremely painful episode of his life, but it also offered a degree of protection to the students, who could confine their questioning to aspects where they would find the answers bearable.

Notetaking

One way of structuring notetaking by students aged 15 and over is to prepare a report sheet in three parts under the following headings (as proposed by Florence Descamps):¹²

- factual memory (describing what happened, events and the protagonists);
- procedural memory (how events happened, plans, processes and work);
- ethical memory (judgments, interpretations, hypotheses, assessments and affirmations of identity).

This exercise teaches students to draw a distinction between established historical facts (such as the existence of the gas chambers) and interpretations of events, which depend on the commentator's point of view. In relation to the Holocaust, it is impossible to answer the question "why" without unconsciously adopting the perspective of the persecutor; an interview with a survivor allows students to shift the focus from the commonly asked "why" question to the problem of "how".

An alternative exercise for younger students is to trace the route followed by the witness on the journey from his or her home before the Holocaust to Auschwitz on a map.

12. Descamps Florence, *Les sources orales et l'histoire. Récits de vie, entretiens, témoignages oraux*, Bréal, Paris, 2006, p. 46.

Discussion and analysis of testimony as a specific historical source

Students will carry out an external critique after hearing the survivor's testimony. It will be possible to verify most of the events using other sources or witnesses. Preparing this verification process is a lengthy task and it must fall primarily to the teacher to seek out the necessary documents: photocopies of contemporary newspaper reports, for example, posters, archival material or – in relation to deportations – extracts from the work of Serge Klarsfeld on the French convoys, as well as photographs of memorials or the websites of actual places of remembrance. In many cases we find that survivors who come to talk to groups of students have already done part of this research themselves and that they possess a range of sources, some of which they may have used in putting together their own account (family photographs, significant objects, newspaper articles, history books, cartoons or even extracts from films). It may suffice for the teacher to request, at a pre-discussion briefing, that the witness bring along and share such material.

Once teachers have identified and compiled this type of source material, they can present it to their students for use in interpretation exercises to supplement the information they obtain from the witness's account. The opportunity can be used to show students how to analyse a newspaper article, photograph, drawing, cartoon or film extract.

Alternatively, and depending on the level of interest shown by the class, the teacher's own analysis of the sources can be presented in the form of results, in place of an exercise.

Teachers who ask their students to consider the official chronology of events alongside the timeline of an individual life story will create a link between personal history and official history.

Situating the story

When the survivor is talking about life in Auschwitz, he or she should refer to a map of the camp, so that the students will be better able to get their bearings when they arrive on site.

The students can work with the photographs which form part of this pack (see Section 1.12) before they meet their witness, and he or she can then supply personal commentary about how the pictures connect with his or her own story. Possible questions include: “Did you see this place yourself at the time?”, “Can you use any of these pictures to add context to your own memory?”, “What has changed since that time?”.

It is best, where possible, for the witness to visit the camp with the teacher before meeting the students, so that the teacher can then situate the events recounted. The students will hear the same story twice – once in their own classroom, recounted by the survivor, and again at Auschwitz, from their teacher.

If it is impossible to organise a meeting with a camp survivor, the teacher can use interviews filmed in the students’ own language. While this can help directly to reduce the element of the unknown in the experience, it also entails losing the interactive aspect: the connection between one human being who lived through Auschwitz and another who is about to visit it.

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Meeting with Henryk Mandelbaum, a former Auschwitz prisoner. Photo: Bartosz Bartyzel.

1.6. Visiting Cracow and Oświęcim as a way of learning more about the culture of Polish Jews in the context of Polish history

Justification of an extended stay in Poland

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European youth coming to Poland should not limit themselves to visiting a site of mass murder. Young people ought to be able to take away more than the knowledge learned, empathy felt, and the shock of experiencing a visit to Auschwitz. Being at the place that has been marked by the stigma of the greatest crime in history should, in addition to its educational merit, unleash a profound reflection on the condition of humanity today.

A visit to Poland, in addition to its primary goal, should be treated as a wider lesson in history, culture, geography and civics, undertaken in the spirit of integrating the European people. It gives an excellent opportunity for young people from the “old Europe” to discover – in the words of Pope John Paul II – the “second lung of Europe”, whose contribution to the achievements of European civilisation are not obvious to all people living within its reach. In this case, that “second lung of Europe” makes up the states and people who have always belonged to the Western, Latin cultural area, but because of various historical circumstances, have only been on the firm footing of European values and democracy for twenty years.

A longer stay in Poland gives the opportunity to show the history and culture of the country on whose terrain the German Nazis committed the most tragic deeds of the Holocaust. From almost the dawn of Poland's existence, it has been shaped together by Poles and many other ethnic and national minorities; quite significant among these were the Jewish and German people. Over the centuries, the Polish – and from the 16th century the Polish-Lithuanian – kingdom has been a stronghold for Jewish refugees, becoming at the beginning of the 20th century the world centre for the Jewish Diaspora's culture and tradition, created in the Yiddish language. It was here that Hasidism was born, Zionism was most fully developed, Yiddish literature flourished, and here that a number of other trends relevant to the mentality and Jewish identity came into being.

The multi-ethnic and multicultural Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was, in an era of religious wars, a land without funeral pyres. At that time, it was a European oasis of not only religious tolerance. The Commonwealth, with its unique form of government – the so-called Nobel's democracy – was one of the first testing grounds on which early democracy was experimented with. Its last fruit was the constitution of 3 May 1791, the first modern written constitution in Europe and the second in the world, after the United States Constitution of 1787.

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A one or two-day visit outside the concentration camp allows one to locate historical facts in their own time and place, but does not allow the scope for providing answers to a host of questions that young minds will want to ask. A lack of these answers, as well as a lack of knowledge about the background on which the drama of Auschwitz unfolded, can be a source of flawed conclusions and stereotypes. Museum guides are often met with questions, asked by those shocked by the scale of the crime, as to why the local population didn't fight against what was happening. Many people are surprised by the fact that the main camp is found in a built-up urban area, and that around the former camp of Auschwitz II-Birkenau villages are thriving. These questions indicate a lack of knowledge about the history of Poland before and during the Second World War. The political situation in the years 1945-89, as well as the earlier 123-year break in Polish statehood, means that in the eyes of a large part of "old Europe's" inhabitants, Poland is unknown and its history and the mentality of its people are not understood.

By getting to know the history and traditions of the Polish and Jewish inhabitants of this country, it will be easier to find answers to questions or concerns

that emerge during a visit to the former concentration camp. It will help to blur the barriers.

Of particular educational value will be a visit to Cracow, the historical and spiritual capital of Poland, as well as to the city of Oświęcim.

Proposals for visiting Cracow

Cracow is the historical (from 1038 to 1596) and spiritual capital of the Poles, with their national shrine – Wawel Castle – the seat, coronation and burial place of Polish rulers. During Poland's partition (1795-1918) the city was in the Austrian empire. After the Cracow Uprising in 1846 its role was relegated to a provincial administration centre, however, due to the casual political character of the Austrian partition (Galicia), Polish culture and education were allowed to develop. During the Second World War, Cracow was the capital of the General Government and the Royal Wawel Castle was the headquarters of its governor, Hans Frank. Cracow was one of those cities in Poland that survived the Second World War without major damage. The communist rulers built a gigantic steel-works right next door to the city, more for political than economic reasons. This was the flagship construction project during the first part of the socialist era of Poland. Along with the foundry, a large working class district grew in Cracow that changed its character somewhat. Today, it is a tourist attraction exemplifying the typical architecture of 1950s socialism.

In 1335, King Kazimierz the Great founded a new district named after himself behind the walls of Cracow – Kazimierz – which over the years became the Jewish quarter (Oppidum Judeorum). Kazimierz became a true Jewish city in 1495 when, under royal orders, all of Cracow's Jews had to settle there. Soon, Kazimierz became an important centre for Jewish culture. Luckily, contrary to their policies, the German Nazis spared most of the cultural monuments in the Jewish quarter. Unlike Warsaw, which was systematically destroyed by the Germans after the Warsaw uprising in 1944, Cracow's buildings from the Middle Ages and later periods were well preserved. After Warsaw, it is the largest academic and cultural centre in the country. The city and its artistic community have given it a special charm and unique character. Today, it is a leading destination for visitors to Poland, with a well-developed tourist base.

Visiting Cracow

Cracow can be toured in a number of different ways, as offered by several travel agencies. For young people who are visiting Auschwitz, the most appropriate sites to see would be those which form the core of the historical narrative of Poland and the fate of Polish Jews. Tours can be planned for a minimum of one or two days.

An optimal guided tour would consist of two parts which, depending on the length of the stay, can be appropriately lengthened or shortened:

Part 1. Cracow's old town:

- A visit to the Collegium Maius, the oldest building of Jagiellonian University. In its original interior is an exhibition presenting the history and achievements of the university founded in 1364, the oldest in central Europe after the University of Prague. It is difficult to overestimate the influence it had on the development of Polish science and intellectual culture. Among others, Nicolaus Copernicus studied here. At the Council of Constance in 1414-18 in the presence of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg, Jagiellonian Professor Paweł Włodkowic was the first European to say that each person possesses human dignity as well as the right to live in peace and that nobody has the right to settle disputes through war.
- A walk around the Main Square and Cloth Hall (Sukiennice) – a trading hall founded in the 13th century, one of the most recognisable buildings in Cracow.
- A visit to St Mary's Basilica – the most famous church in Poland, with its magnificent masterpiece, the late Gothic altar created by the Nuremberg sculptor Wit Stwosz (Vit Stoss in German).
- A walk down the Royal Way – a historical road from the northern end of the medieval old town through the main square to the seat of the rulers.
- A visit to the Royal Castle on Wawel Hill and the cathedral where Polish kings were crowned. Buried beneath it are the graves of Polish leaders and national heroes such as: General Tadeusz Kościuszko – a hero in Poland and the USA, who took part in the United States' War of Independence and was the leader of the Polish uprising against Russia and Prussia (1794); Prince Jozef Poniatowski – the commander in chief of the Duchy of Warsaw, Polish general and Marshal of France who fought for independence during the

Napoleonic Wars; Marshal Jozef Pilsudski – Head of State, who led Poland into independence (1918) and to victory over the Bolsheviks in the Battle of Warsaw in 1920, halting the expansion of communism in Europe; General Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Government in Exile and Commander in Chief of the Polish Armed Forces during the Second World War.

Part 2. A visit to the Kazimierz district

This is a special part of Cracow infused with Polish and Jewish culture. From the mid 19th century it was mainly inhabited by the Jewish community. While in this part of town, you can experience sensations arising from fleeting contact with a world that no longer exists – that of Polish Jews who experienced the Shoah. Today, Kazimierz is again full of life – there are cultural centres, synagogues, university buildings, charming cafés, restaurants and pubs, as well as eateries styled in the spirit of the pre-war Jewish tradition. A tour of Kazimierz should cover the following locations:

- A visit to the ancient 15th century Old Synagogue, in which the Jewish collection of the Historical Museum of Cracow is presented.
- A visit to the Galicia Jewish Museum, whose exhibition of contemporary photography shows the remnants of Jewish culture in southern Poland.
- A visit to the Remuh Synagogue.
- A tour of one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in Poland and Europe that opened in the mid 16th century.
- A walk around the streets of Kazimierz.
- A visit to the classic courtyard made famous by the film *Schindler's List*.

Visiting Oświęcim

The city of Oświęcim lies at the confluence of the Vistula, Soła, and Przemsza rivers in the Oświęcim Valley, at the boundary between two geographical and historical Polish regions; around 60 km from Cracow, the capital of Małopolska to which it belongs to historically and administratively; around 40 km from Katowice, the capital of Upper Silesia and its vast metropolitan area, as well as 30 km from the Beskid region that includes the Silesian Beskid mountain range.

More than 800 years' worth of the city's history (first mentioned in writing in 1179) has been eclipsed by its tragic experience in the years 1940-45. Going beyond the area of the Auschwitz museum and seeing the sights and monuments of this industrial centre, inhabited by 40 000 people, allows for the discovery of the relationship between the history of the camp, and the traditional and modern city. Oświęcim is one of the oldest cities in this part of the country and was the capital of the Duchy of Oświęcim. In the mid 17th century, the city was completely destroyed by the Swedes. After the first partition of Poland (1772), the Oświęcim lands became part of the Austrian Empire. Jews settled in the city in the mid 16th century and by the 19th century it had become an important centre for Hasidism. It was called the "Jerusalem of Oświęcim". Just before the Second World War, 60% of the city's population was Jewish. In 1941, these Jewish inhabitants were deported to a nearby ghetto, and then to the "Auschwitz Concentration Camp". Only a few returned after the war, only to emigrate in the 1950s. A walk around town confirms the centuries of cohabitation by the city's Jewish and Christian inhabitants. During a two-hour tour, places one should visit are:

- The castle of the Dukes of Oświęcim. The 13th-century castle tower – the oldest brick building in this part of the country – from which you can see a panorama of the city.
- The Auschwitz Jewish Center whose facilities include the Jewish Museum, and Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue as well as the Education Centre, where you can learn the history of Oświęcim's Jewish population.
- St Mary's Church with the Chapel of St Jacek from the first half of the 14th century, along with the old-town market.
- The Jewish cemetery.

The city's surroundings are quite charming too, with the diversity of the Vistula and Soła river area's vegetation. A beautiful part of the picturesque landscape are the fishponds spread out around the south-eastern side of Oświęcim.

On the way to Cracow it is worth visiting the Vistula Heritage Park Village in Wygiełzów, presenting architectural monuments and rural culture of this region. In Wygiełzów you can also find: a typical Polish inn with traditional food, a characteristic Polish manor house, and the ruins of Lipowiec – the medieval castle of Cracow's bishops. Entering Cracow, you can drive up to the Kosciuszko Mound. This 34-metre-high construction was built by the city's inhabitants in 1820 – who were grateful to Tadeusz

Kosciuszko, the leader of the first Polish national uprising that began in Cracow. A stay here helps young people learn about the country and its inhabitants' tragic fate in the last 200 years, and allows them to better understand the Polish nation.



Saint Mary's Church in the main market square, Cracow old town. Photo: Piotr Trojański.



Wawel – the Royal Castle in Cracow. Photo: Piotr Trojański.



Old Synagogue, Kazimierz, the former Jewish quarter of Cracow. Photo: Piotr Trojański.

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Ghetto Heroes Square in Podgórze, a symbolic monument devoted to the Jews of Cracow. Photo: Piotr Trojański.



The castle in Oświęcim with its medieval tower. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.



Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue and the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oświęcim. Photo: Piotr Gajek.

1.7. How should you plan a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum?

Planning a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum should be done a few months ahead of the visit itself. This is necessary because of the large number of visitors (over 1 million people annually) and due to the limited number of guides for some languages, for example: Spanish, Czech, Japanese, Slovak, and during some periods, French. This means that visiting the former concentration camp and getting a guide for your visit may prove impossible without prior reservation.

Visiting as an organised group is only possible with a museum guide. One guide is assigned for groups no larger than 30 people. Larger groups must be divided into smaller groups.

At the height of the season all individual visitors entering the Auschwitz I site from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. must be accompanied by a museum guide. Those who wish to visit the memorial without a guide may enter the Auschwitz I site at non-peak hours, before 10 a.m. and after 3 p.m. Those who wish to make individual visits during the peak hours may prefer to begin their visit at the Auschwitz II-Birkenau site, where such procedures do not apply.

Opening hours of the museum:

8 a.m.-3 p.m.	December to February
8 a.m.-4 p.m.	March and November
8 a.m.-5 p.m.	April and October
8 a.m.-6 p.m.	May and September
8 a.m.-7 p.m.	June to August

The museum is closed on 1 January, 25 December, the first day of Easter and the date of the March of the Living.

Reserving a tour and guide can be done by phone, fax, or e-mail:

Phone numbers: +48 33 8448099, +48 33 8448100, +48 33 8448102 – reception desk, the point of contact on the day of arrival

Fax number: +48 33 8432227

e-mail: reservation@auschwitz.org.pl

The reservations office is open from Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

When making your reservation the following information must be given: the date and time of the visit, the language needed for the tour, the number of guides needed, and the type of tour – standard, one-day study, or two-day study tour (a description of these tours can be found in Section 2.4 “Visiting the museum”).

Visitors to the museum can also watch the documentary film *Oświęcim – Auschwitz*. The film’s screening, which takes 17 minutes, is agreed upon before the start of the visit. There is also the possibility of organising additional educational meetings to supplement the visit, such as: lectures about the Archives and the Collections Department, workshops on selected topics from the history of the camp, and screenings of other documentary films. These workshops and lectures can be presented in English or German and must be prearranged with employees of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. The centre can be contacted by phone on: +48 33 8448063 or by e-mail at edukacja@auschwitz.org.pl.

In the event that it is not possible to reserve a visit for a certain day or hour, the employees in the reservation centre will suggest other available dates and times.

The visit to the museum will take place according to the arrangements made while reserving your tour and guide. Upon arrival at the museum, one should visit the reception desk where all the formalities dealing with the visit will be finalised and your tour guides will be introduced to you.

The museum is in the city of Oświęcim, which is 65 km from Cracow, about 30 km from Katowice, and around 70 km from the Polish-Czech border in Cieszyn. There are train, bus (PKS), and private minibus connections from Cracow and Katowice.

Questions dealing with hotels and restaurants in and around Oświęcim should be directed to Mejski Punkt Informacji Turystycznej (The City Tourist Information Point) by phone: +48 33 8430091 or by e-mail: mpit@umoswiecim.pl.



How to get to the museum, a map of Oświęcim. Photo: PMA-B.

1.8. Activity – How could people create such a fate for others?

The following is a proposal for lessons conducted before a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum by primary, middle and secondary school students, who do not yet have a good knowledge of 20th century history. To prepare them for what they will see in the museum we need, above all, to help them answer the following questions:

- What are the mechanisms and consequences of the emergence of stereotypes and prejudices?
- Who murdered millions of people and for what reason?
- How could such a crime happen in the 20th century?

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The lesson is interdisciplinary. It can be carried out in co-operation with various teachers, for example, teachers of history, literature, social studies, as well as a school psychologist and pedagogue. These individuals will help students to understand more clearly the process of developing stereotypes and prejudices and the consequences.

Goals

Information (learning goals):

- Learning about the causes and rise of fascist ideology in Germany and the ties this ideology had with the murder of European Jews during the Second World War;

- Understanding and learning the concepts: fascism (Nazism), extermination, Holocaust, death camp, concentration camp;
- Understanding the essence of events and phenomena by reading fairy tales and discussing Nazism and the murder of the Jews with the teacher.

Skills (teaching goals):

- Interpretation of the legend and discussion with the teachers on dealing with and referring to the most important information;
- Formulation of judgments and opinions about the topic learned during the lesson;
- Analysis and synthesis of the new subject;
- Comparison of past and present events.

Attitudes and beliefs (educational goals):

- Using new knowledge to shape own judgments and opinions;
- Fostering sensitivity towards injustice and harm;
- Affirmation of principles of tolerance in society.

Educational materials

Student handout 1.8a: Text: “Legend of the green valley”

Student handout 1.8b: Blank diagram of the mechanism for the emergence of prejudice (to be completed by students). Two copies are needed for the exercise.

Teacher information sheet 1.8a: Diagram of the mechanism for the emergence of prejudice

Teacher information sheet 1.8b: Sample diagram of the mechanism for the emergence of prejudice, based on the story presented in the “Legend of the green valley”

Teacher information sheet 1.8c: The narrative of the persecution and murder of Jews in Europe

Teacher information sheet 1.8d: Sample diagram of the mechanism for the emergence of prejudice, based on the history of the persecution of Jews

Illustration 1.8a: Map of Nazi German concentration and death camps (to be used as a slide in the classroom with Teacher information sheet 1.8c)

Teaching methods

- Discussion with the teacher
- Working under supervision (with texts, diagrams, and the map)
- The narrative
- Elements to discuss

Teaching notes

Step I (10 minutes)

For homework, a few days before the classroom activity, students receive the text “Legend of the green valley” (Student handout 1.8a). They need to read it and contemplate its meaning. In class, the teacher asks the students to give a short summary.

Step II (15 minutes)

Topic: How could people create such a fate for others?

Questions to guide classroom discussion

1. What differences divided redheaded weavers from indigenous black-haired inhabitants of the valley?
2. What motivated the cruel treatment of the citizens of the valley toward the redheads?
3. How did they start to talk about the redheads? (What stereotypes emerged?)

4. Were the redheads actually guilty?
5. How were the redheaded weavers discriminated against?
6. Did the valley's law discriminate against the redheaded weavers?
7. How did the persecution of the redheads end?

The teacher then presents and discusses the diagram dealing with the development of stereotypes and prejudice (Teacher information sheet 1.8a). The teacher hands out a blank diagram (Student handout 1.8b) and asks the students to fill in the information based on what they read in the legend. A sample of a completed diagram is presented in Teacher information sheet 1.8b.

Step III (40 minutes) Transition to the history of Jews in Europe

The teacher reads the text on the persecution and murder of Jews in Europe (Teacher information sheet 1.8c) or the narrative can be copied and given to students to read in class. Illustration 1.8a can be used to help students situate the camps on a map. The teacher uses questions to guide the students as they fill in the diagram. A sample completed diagram is found on Teacher information sheet 1.8d.

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Questions to guide students' work on the diagram

1. What were the differences that divided Jews and other citizens of Europe?
2. Why were relations between Jews and their neighbours not always the best?
3. What did the Nazis say about the Jews in Germany after the First World War?
4. Were the claims made by the Nazis true?
5. How were the Jews discriminated against in Germany after the Nazis came to power?
6. Did this lead to direct physical attacks on Jews?
7. Were the Jews excluded from the rest of society?
8. What led to the extermination of such a large number of Jews?

Step IV (15 minutes)

Students present and describe their own diagrams.

Step V

In finishing the lesson, the teacher draws attention to proper behaviour while visiting the museum. He or she highlights the importance of paying careful attention to the guide, who will present the history of the concentration camp, and asking questions.



Student handout 1.8a

Legend of the green valley

Long ago, deep in a forested valley, there was a kingdom. Most of its inhabitants had black, shiny hair and green eyes. However, for hundreds of years, a group of people who differed in appearance had also lived in the kingdom. They had red hair and black, coal-coloured eyes. In the distant past, they had made their way to the valley and settled there. They lived peacefully and affluently, passing on the skills and secrets of artistic weaving from father to son. They differed from the native inhabitants of the kingdom not just in their looks, but because they had a different faith and traditions. They planted oak trees and the area around these trees became a holy site to them. Every Wednesday they observed "Tree Day". They did not work on that day; instead they sat for long hours under the trees praying in silence. Their religion forbade eating anything that grew on trees. Also, they could never wear green clothing.

Then came the year of the storm. In the spring, the western winds changed into a hurricane, felling trees and destroying homes. The winter came unexpectedly quickly, burying the valley in a huge amount of snow and cold temperatures frigidly gripped the valley. In the springtime, the water from rivers and streams flooded the kingdom, destroying everything that was in its path. Then, the hot, dry summer arrived and the merciless sun burned the crops in the fields, leaving only cracked earth.

Hunger set in, the price of food rose quickly, and even water from the few available wells was being sold. People were full of fear and despair. One evening, at a local roadside tavern, a drunken villager yelled, "This is all the fault of the redheads. It is they who brought us this misfortune!" Someone tried to quieten the man down, but others who were sitting at the tables close enough to hear him started to whisper to one another and nod their heads. A few days later, an unknown assailant smashed the windows in the homes of the weavers and green circles started to be painted on their doors. Somebody beat up redheaded children as they played in the road. At night, the holy trees were set on fire by a group of young people. More and more individuals, who blamed the redheads for causing the disaster that gripped the green valley, started to meet in the tavern. They sent a delegation to the kingdom's council with the demand that they bring the redheads to justice. The council was partially taken over by those against the redheads, while the rest of the council



members were frightened into silence. The council gave out an order: weavers must surrender all textiles, supplies, and equipment from their workshops. A few days later, they were evicted from their homes and taken to an island on the lake where they were held under guard.

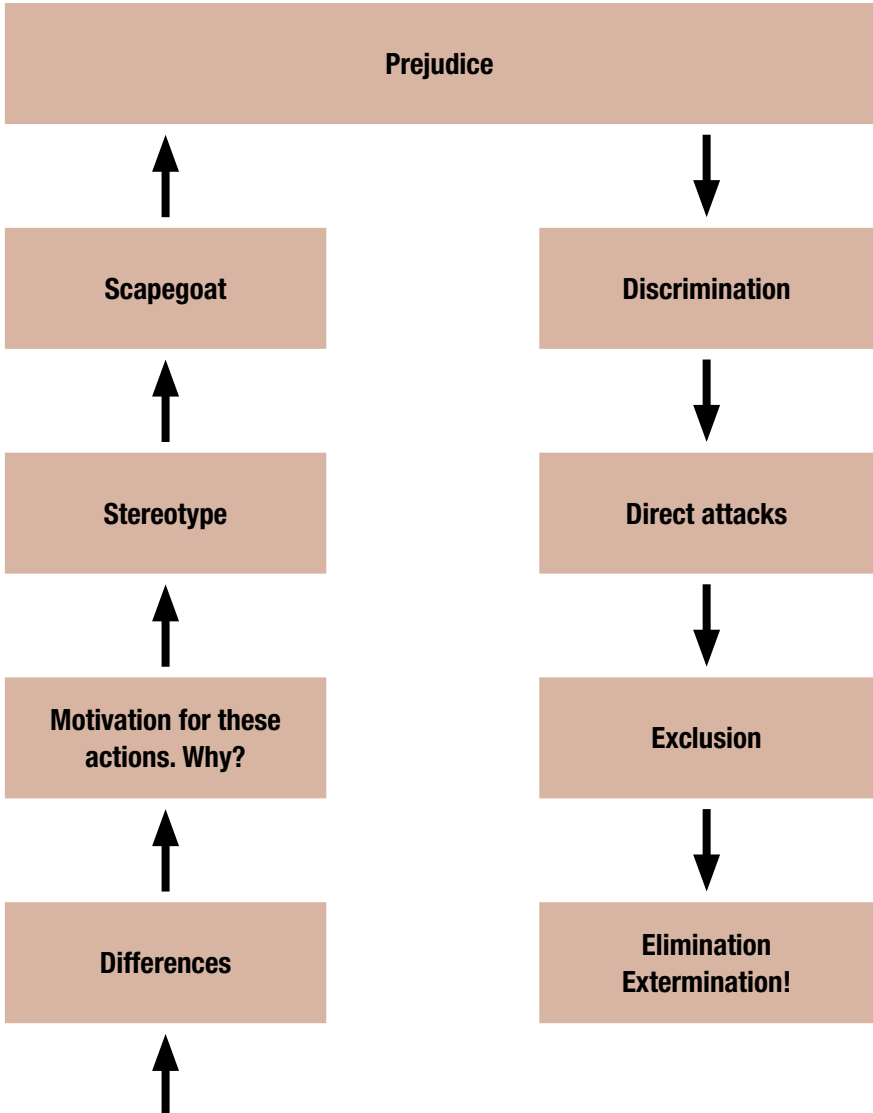
Finally came the day when on the main square the order from the king and council – now fully under the control of the enemies of the redheads – was read: “It is the fault of redheads that our kingdom is dying from the lack of food and water. They conspired against the kingdom. This is treason, and for this crime there is only one punishment – DEATH!”. This sentence was passed on all the redheaded inhabitants of the green valley. They were led to the mountains and pushed into a deep abyss. Every single one of them! Men, women and children. Men carried the sick on stretchers.

Once again, spring arrived. The hurricane force winds again haunted the valley. Tornadoes destroyed homes, bridges and roads. People stared fearfully into the sky. However, there was not a single red-haired, black-eyed weaver among them.



Student handout 1.8b

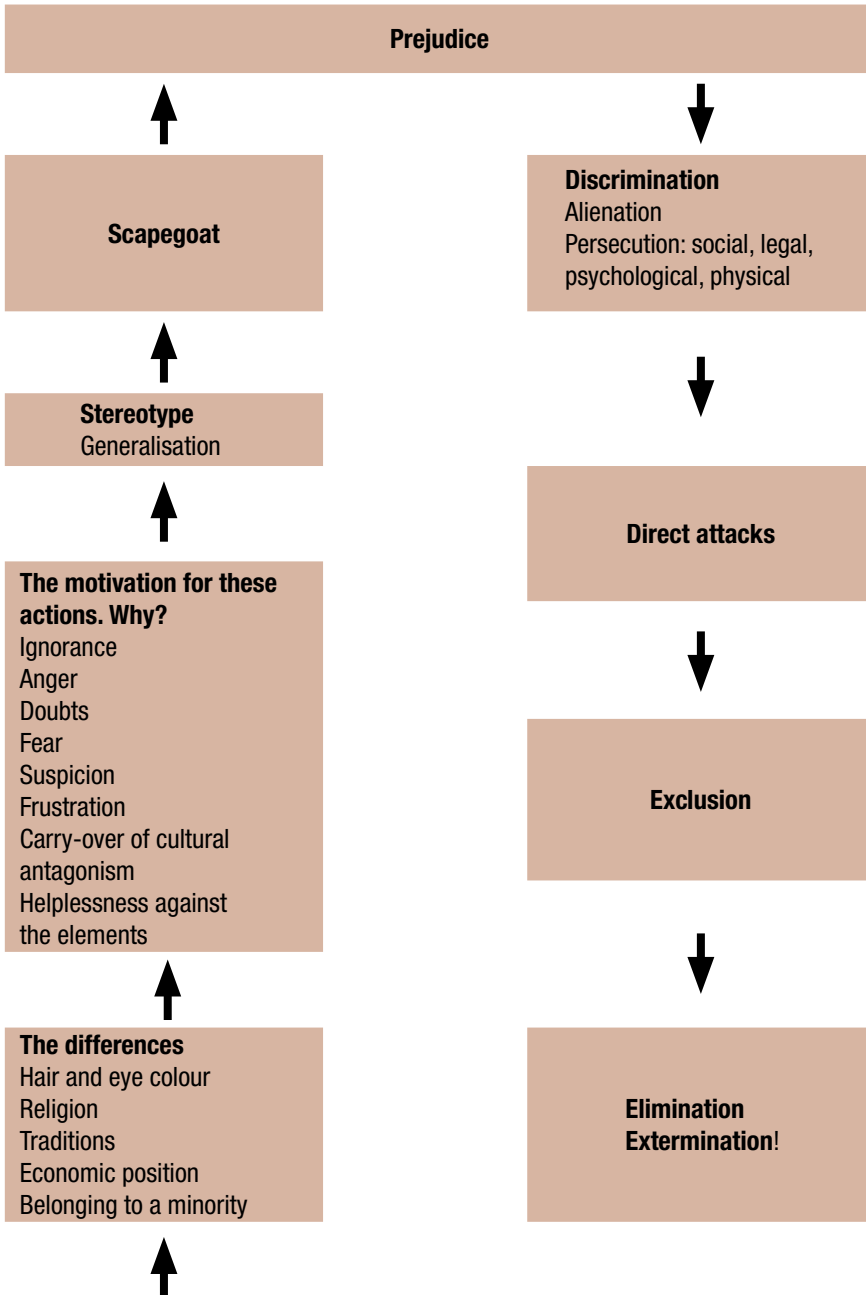
Diagram of the mechanism for the emergence of prejudice



The diagram of the mechanisms of prejudice is used with the consent of the Spiro Institute in London.

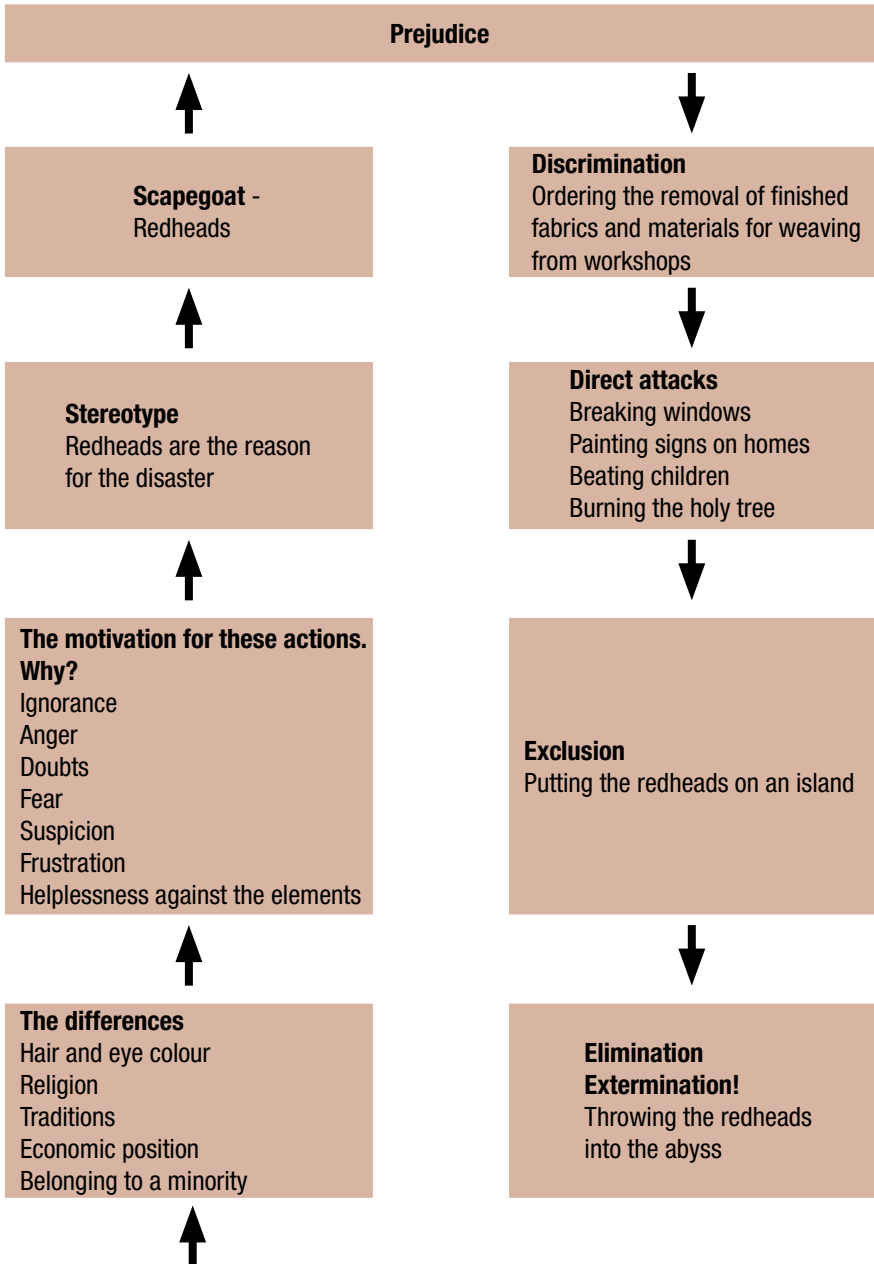


Teacher information sheet 1.8a





Teacher information sheet 1.8b





Teacher information sheet 1.8c

The narrative

The persecution and murder of Jews in Europe

In the last 50 years of the old era, Palestine passed into the hands of the Romans. Early historical experiences (war, displacement) and freedom of movement across the empire led to the fact that, already in the days of Emperor Augustus, more inhabitants of Palestine called Jews lived in other parts of the empire than in Judea. Jews often rose up against the Romans. In the first half of the 2nd century AD, after the last Jewish uprising was crushed, they were finally expelled from Jerusalem, which meant that they needed to live in scattered communities, the so-called Diaspora. Jews lived among other peoples of the empire, but did not integrate with them. They differed mainly by religion – Judaism – with a separate code of moral and religious rites. Believers focused on reading the holy texts, which did not require many priests or the building of numerous temples. They lived in the promise of salvation and believed that they were the chosen people of God. Relations between Jews and their neighbours did not work out well sometimes and frequent riots erupted. The Jews differed from others and they had many successes; this was conducive to the emergence of prejudices.

Jews also lived in European countries that emerged from the ruins of the Roman Empire. Citizens of these countries were mainly Christian and once again the Jews among them were “different”. They dressed and lived differently. Their holy day was Saturday and they did not eat pork. They worked mainly in trade, were merchants, bankers and craftsmen. During the Middle Ages in Europe, Jews were persecuted. In addition, in the 19th century anti-Jewish pogroms erupted. Often, when social tension grew, the first victims were the Jews.

Then came the 20th century – in which Germany lost the First World War. On the wave of bitterness and dissatisfaction about this disaster there arose a number of militant and nationalist organisations. They called for vengeance and hatred and had aspirations for the occupation of other nations. One such group was a political party founded by Adolf Hitler in 1921. Members of this party, the National Socialist



German Workers' Party (NSDAP), were called Nazis. Hitler and his party proclaimed the following:

- That the new order in Europe, established after the war, was the work of Jews conspiring to destroy Germany.
- Germany was the representation of the ultimate Nordic race, selected by nature to rule over Europe as *Herrenvolk* (in other words, as the master race).
- Germany needed "living space" for colonisation.
- Jews should be totally eliminated from all areas of life.

In 1933, the Nazis seized power in Germany and started to aggressively implement their party's programme. They set up concentration camps for political opponents and started to target the Jews. The discrimination and persecution of the Jews took the following forms: boycotts of Jewish shops, banning Jews from attending schools and universities and the exclusion of Jewish artists, writers and journalists from public work. In 1937, the Nazis deprived Jews of the right to do business. In November 1938, the "Night of Broken Glass" took place, during which there was an organised slaughter of Jews in Germany, burning of synagogues, and the destruction of Jewish shops and homes. Some 26 000 Jews were sent to concentration camps in Dachau and Buchenwald. In 1939, Hitler announced the destruction of the Jewish race in the event of an outbreak of war, one he would blame on the Jews.

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On 1 September 1939 Nazi Germany invaded Poland, starting the Second World War. In accordance with the Nazis' policy, Jews were considered "subhuman" and were to be exterminated (annihilated). This required the creation of sites of mass extermination of Jews – the concentration camp at Auschwitz became such a place. Earlier, since 1940, people from occupied Europe, mainly Poles, had been imprisoned there in terrible conditions.

From 1942, Auschwitz became the largest extermination camp for Jews. The Germans built another camp at Birkenau, the second part of Auschwitz, with large gas chambers and crematoria buildings. Each day they could gas and burn several thousand men, women and children. The final number of casualties is difficult to estimate. We know that Auschwitz is the largest Jewish cemetery, the largest but not the only one. Germany also built other extermination camps: Sobibór, Treblinka, Bełzec, Chelmno, Majdanek (shown on the map). It was there that Jews from across Europe were brought from ghettos (segregated areas) wearing the Star of David on their breast, to be murdered.



Teacher information sheet 1.8d

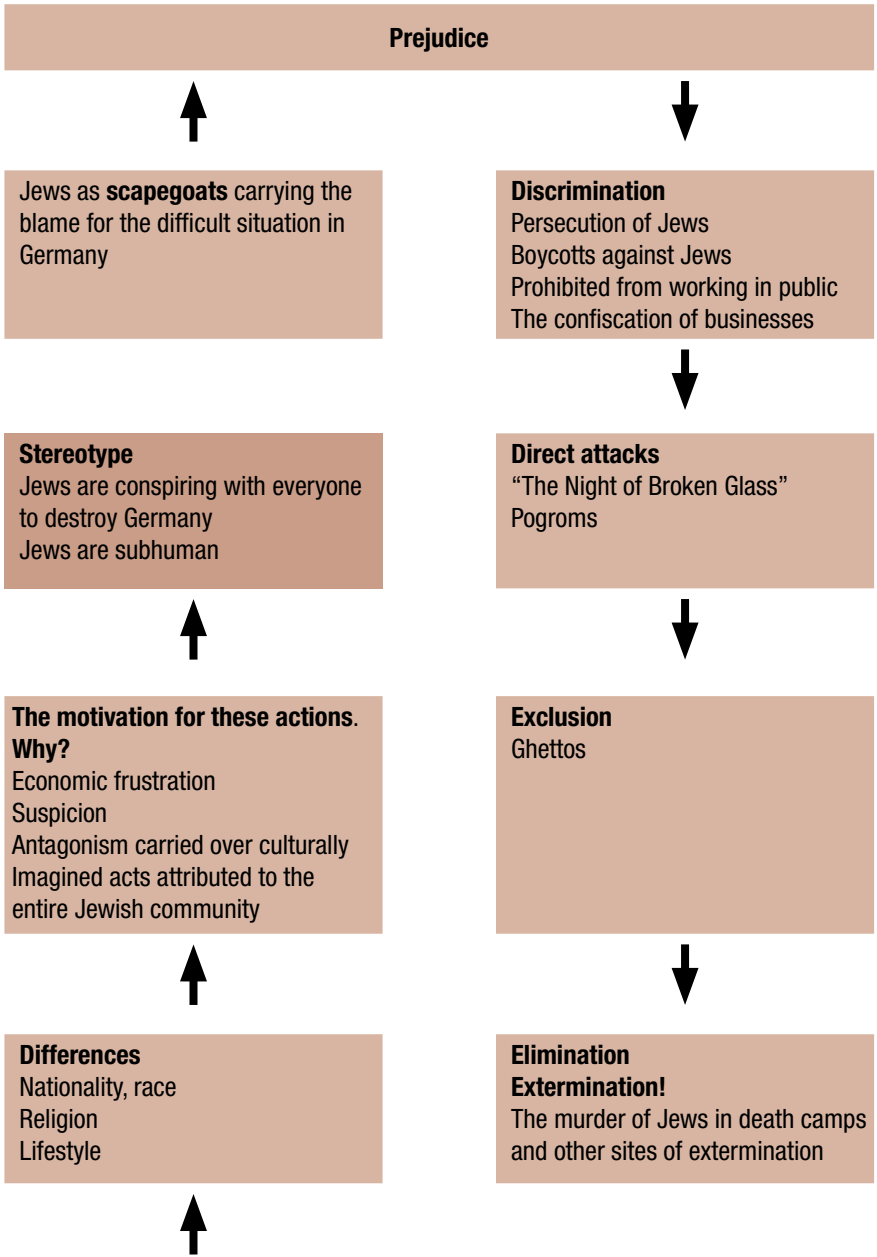




Illustration 1.8a: Map of Nazi German concentration and death camps, © MCEAH, PMA-B.

1.9. Activity – Functions of “Auschwitz Concentration Camp”

This is a preparatory lesson outline for school-aged youth and older middle school students who are to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. It is assumed that these students have a general knowledge of the Second World War and Nazism. With this historical knowledge, they will be able to understand the connection between Nazi ideology and its implementation in occupied Poland, as well as the tragic fate of prisoners at Auschwitz.

After the lesson, the students will know the basic functions of Auschwitz:

- a concentration camp for Polish prisoners and those of other nationalities;
- a site of mass murder of Jews deported from occupied countries in Europe;
- a site where Jewish victims' property was plundered;
- a site where the forced labour of prisoners was exploited.

This lesson is based on independent, pre-lesson work by groups of students under the guidance of the teacher. They must create reports on topics proposed by the teacher about the function of the camp at Auschwitz. The students should be assigned the task several weeks in advance. The teacher should first present the information included in *European pack for visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum – Guidelines for teachers and educators* and reading the supporting literature is also recommended. Next, the materials are selected for the reports and encyclopaedic resources and maps are provided. It must be remembered that information about the Auschwitz camp will later be gathered by the students while visiting the museum with a guide. This preparation lesson should only introduce the student to the subject. It is important to consult with students as they make their reports, so that they are not overwhelmed by the information in the available resources.

It is also important to sensitise the students to the subject they are going to discuss. It is not just a collection of dry facts and numbers. Historical material dealing with Auschwitz is loaded with emotion, and these emotions must be properly dealt with by the students. That is why it is important to choose the appropriate way to present the material, the excerpts of literature and graphic materials. Prepared presentations and school exhibits will be a great help, enabling the students to better understand the subject matter.

Goals

Information (learning goals):

- getting to know the function of Auschwitz and its organisation
- differentiating known historical concepts
 - Concentration camp
 - Death camp
 - Work camp
 - Holocaust
 - Extermination

Skills (educational objectives):

- shaping the skills to judge historical events
- applying learned information in new educational situations
- acquiring the ability to use different educational resources (texts, plans and maps)
- learning how to select the most important information

Attitudes and beliefs (teaching goals):

- condemnation of Nazism as an ideology that spreads hatred
- viewing war as a destructive element
- shaping sensitivity towards injustice and harm towards others

Educational materials

- Pictures and texts included in the *European pack for visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. Guidelines for teachers and educators* and/or other historical texts (the decision is up to the teacher):
- history textbook
- encyclopaedia excerpts

Materials provided for this lesson:

To be photocopied and distributed to students:

- Map of Nazi German concentration and death camps (see Illustration 1.8a, p. 68)
- Student handout 1.9a: Map of the main railway lines leading to the city of Oświęcim
- Student handout 1.9b: Diagram of Auschwitz I

To be used as slides or as transparencies:

- Illustration 1.9a: Aerial photos of the area around KL Auschwitz taken by the Allies in 1944
- Illustration 1.9b: Map showing the so-called camp interest zone (*Lagerinteressengebiet*)
- Illustration 1.9c: Diagram of Auschwitz II-Birkenau
- Illustration 1.9d: Diagram of Auschwitz III-Monowitz
- Illustration 1.9e: Photograph of Auschwitz III-Monowitz
- Illustration 1.9f: Map of sub-camps of KL Auschwitz
- Illustration 1.9g: Map of camps for workers of IG Werk Auschwitz

Teaching methods

- working under supervision (using handouts)
- discussion led by the teacher

Teaching notes

Reports: (several weeks before classroom presentations). Students are asked to write reports on one topic regarding the functions of the camp. Students should work in groups of four or five with one student acting as the reporter. The teacher will be closely involved in the preparation of the reports so as to guarantee that all major points are included. The topics are the following:

Topic 1: Auschwitz-Birkenau – A camp for prisoners from various countries

Topic 2: Auschwitz-Birkenau as a place of mass murder of Jews deported from occupied European countries

Topic 3: Plunder of the victims' belongings at Auschwitz-Birkenau

Topic 4: The exploitation of prisoners' labour

Important points that must be covered in the reports

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Topic 1

1. Concentration camp – as a place of isolation of political opponents and a tool used for terror in occupied countries.

2. Reasons for locating the camp near Oświęcim:

- existing army base buildings;
- good transportation links (to Katowice, Lublin, Warsaw, Prague, Vienna), the proximity to Silesia – where jails overcrowded with arrested Poles were located (Student handout 1.9a – Map of the main railway lines leading to the city of Oświęcim)

3. Expansion of the camp:

- Auschwitz I – camp for prisoners from various countries;
- Auschwitz II-Birkenau, second part of the camp, from 1942 a death camp for Europe's Jews;

- Auschwitz III-Monowitz, created in 1941 near the Buna Werke factory owned by IG Farben;
- around 40 sub-camps (Illustration 1.9f).

4. Prisoners' living conditions:

- Hunger, catastrophic sanitary and living conditions;
- The lack of medicine and clothing;
- Tortures, beatings, threats, terror;
- Executions: shootings, hangings, lethal injections, starvation, punishment.

5. From 1941, citizens from other occupied countries were deported to the camp; these were mainly political prisoners: Czechs, Yugoslavs, French, Austrians, Germans, civilians from the occupied lands of the USSR and Soviet prisoners of war.

Topic 2

1. The Holocaust, the mass murder of Jews perpetrated by the Nazis and their allies during the Second World War.

2. In accordance with Nazi policy, Jews were considered as “subhuman” and destined for extermination (destruction). For this to take place, sites of mass murder had to be constructed, to which European Jews would be deported. Auschwitz and its second part, Birkenau, were to become such a place.

3. Technical preparations at Birkenau for killing such a large number of people: the building of gas chambers and crematoria.

4. Years 1942-44 – mass murder of Jews:

- selections on the railway ramp where victims (who were often unaware) awaited their fate;
- the immediate killing of children, women, the elderly and sick in the gas chambers;
- the number of victims murdered and cremated reached into the thousands per day;

- the monstrosity of this crime. Birkenau is the world's largest cemetery. The number of victims is between 1.1 and 1.5 million, of which around 90% were Jews;
- attempts by the Nazis to hide the Holocaust towards the end of the war, by dismantling and blowing up the crematorium and gas chambers;
- today's questioning in Europe and the USA of the mass murder of Jews.

Topic 3

1. Jews from around Europe were deported, along with their personal possessions.

2. Organisation of the plunder:

- storage of the belongings – at so-called “Canada”;
- everything the victims had with them was taken;
- the sorting of jewellery, money, clothing, shoes, suitcases, baby carriages and other personal possessions;
- the shearing of hair and ripping out of gold teeth of those killed in the gas chambers;
- estimated value of the stolen goods: several million German marks.

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Topic 4

1. Prisoner labour:

- against their will;
- allowed the camp to function;
- used as a tool of terror and to destroy the prisoners.

2. Type of work done by the prisoners:

- building and expanding parts of the camp;
- dismantling of homes in the so-called *Interessengebiet*, (Illustration 1.9b showing from where local civilians were evicted);
- the running and administration of the camp complex (warehouses, workshops, offices, kitchens, hospitals);

- agriculture (poultry farm, fisheries, growing crops);
- work done at around 40 sub-camps (Illustration 1.9f – Sub-camps of Auschwitz), in which prisoners were used for labour in metal foundries, coal mines in Silesia (26 in total), building and renovating projects in Bruntal, Svetl, Brno – the building of the IG Farbenindustrie plant in Monowice.

3. Prisoner working conditions:

- prisoners over-worked, often in dangerous conditions;
- hunger, disease, terror, beatings, often killings by Kapos (prisoners who worked in supervisory positions) and SS men;
- the constant selection of prisoners too sick and weak to work who were sent to the gas chambers.

Homework: (One week before classroom activity). Students are asked to prepare answers to the following historical questions:

1. What were the basic tenets of German Nazism?
2. Describe the actions of the Nazis in German-occupied Poland, 1939-45.

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Step I: Teacher and students discuss the questions that were assigned as homework to prepare for the report presentations.

The following points should be covered:

1. Main tenets of Nazism:

- racist doctrines – domination of one nation (Germans) over others (Jews, Slavs, Roma);
- demanding more “living space” for Germans – moving towards territorial expansion and war;
- taking over of power in Germany by the Nazis and their party, NSDAP (realised in 1933).

2. The actions of the Nazis in German occupied Poland, 1939-45:

- crimes committed by the Wehrmacht against soldiers and civilians;

- the destruction of independent Poland, merging some land into the Reich and creating the General Government in the rest;
- evictions;
- “Aktion AB”;
- executions of Polish social and political elite (for example in Palmiry);
- terror aimed at subduing the nation;
- round-ups;
- using the concept of collective guilt;
- creation of concentration camps Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Stutthof, where members of the Polish resistance were held;
- closing of middle and high schools;
- destruction of Polish cultural heritage;
- economic exploitation of the country;
- using forced labour as a terror tool;
- creation of death camps – the mass murder of Jews and Roma (Illustration 1.8a, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibór, Bełżec);
- the death penalty carried out on entire families for hiding Jews.

Step II: Students present all four reports and then the class as a whole can discuss their feelings of terror, fear and disbelief that people could create such a fate for others.

Assignment to be done during the visit to Auschwitz:

Information from this lesson will be helpful to the students during their visit to the former camp. The teacher suggests that they do an assignment while visiting the museum. He or she divides the class into three groups. Each group will pay particular attention to one of the following:

Group I

1. The artefacts and places of the prisoners’ everyday life.

Group II

2. Evidence of mass murder of Jews (places and artefacts).

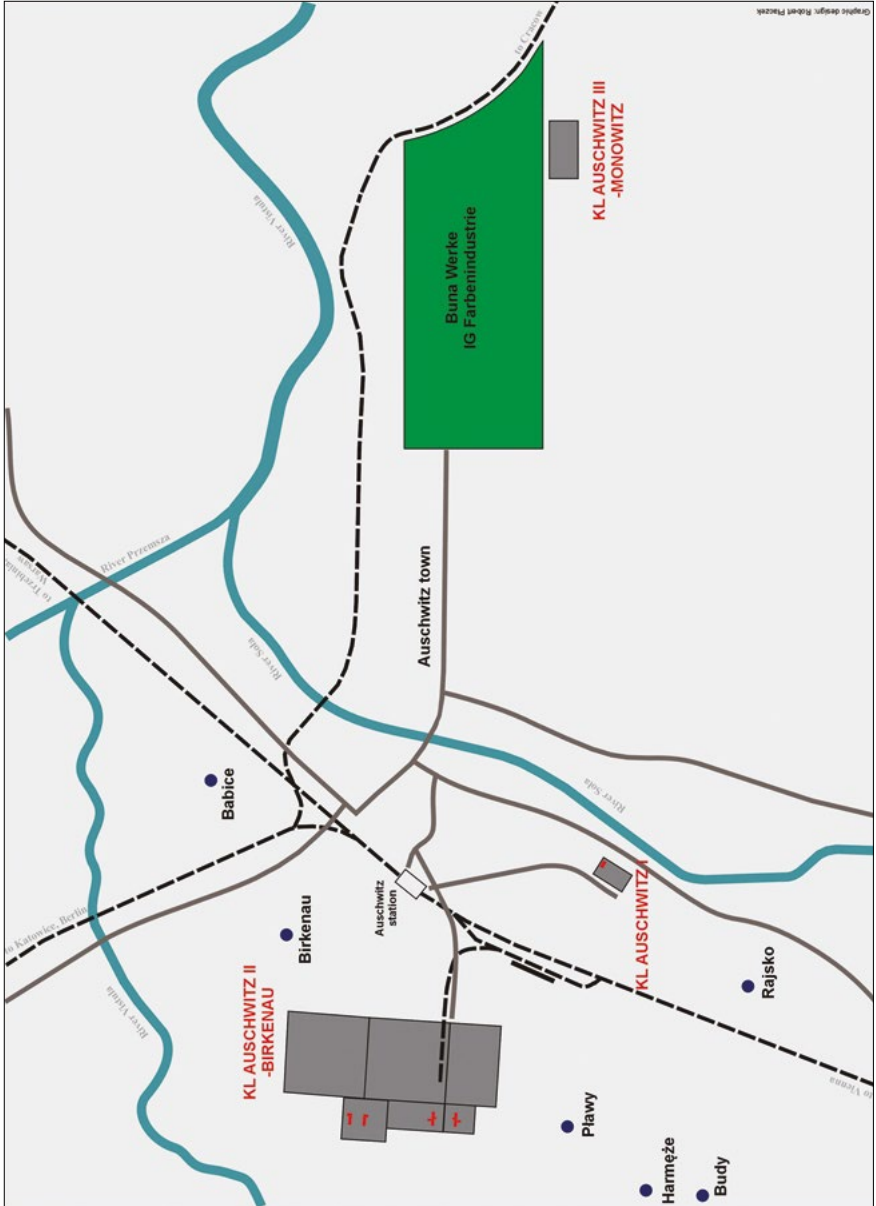
Group III

3. Evidence of camp terror (places and artefacts).

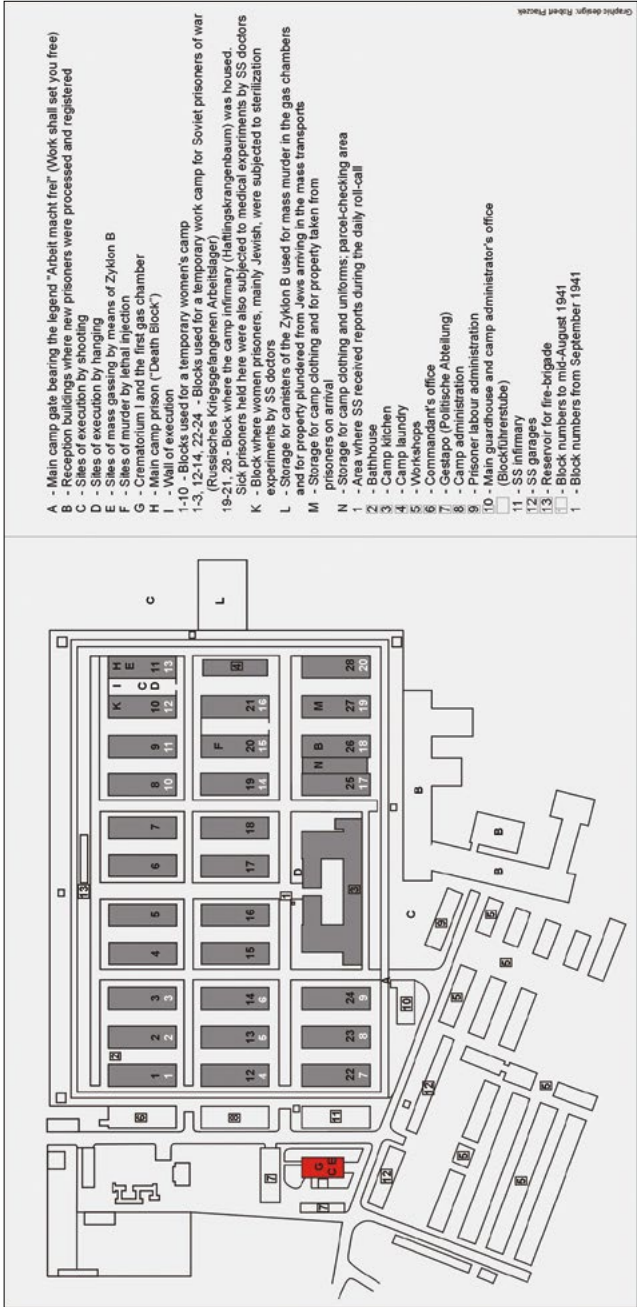
Everyone must answer the following question:

4. What are my feelings and thoughts after visiting the former “Auschwitz Concentration Camp”?

The teacher reminds the class that the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is a very special place, visited by people from around the world, where proper behaviour and attention is important. The teacher asks the students for this kind of behaviour.



Student handout 1.9a: Map of the main railway lines leading to the city of Oświęcim,
© MCEAH, PMA-B.



Student handout 1.9b: Diagram of Auschwitz I, © MCEAH, PMA-B.



Illustration 1.9a: Aerial photos of the area around KL Auschwitz taken by the Allies in 1944, © PMA-B.

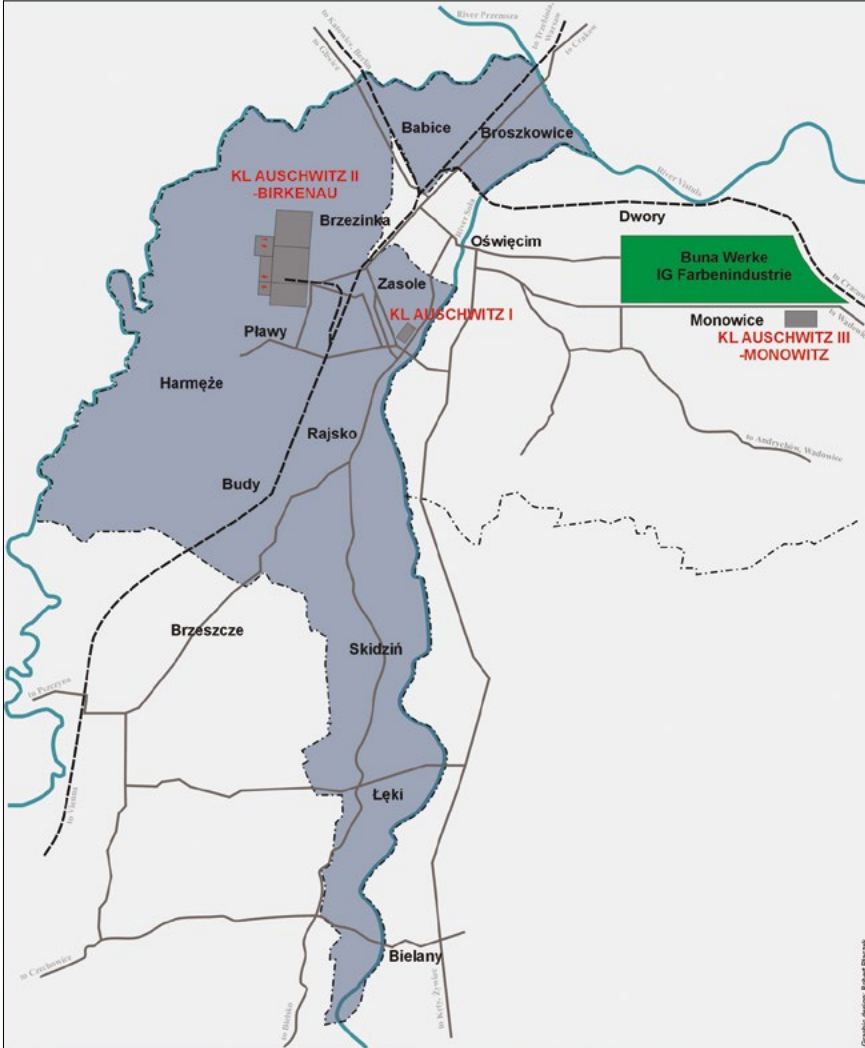


Illustration 1.9b: Map showing the so-called camp interest zone (*Lagerinteressengebiet*), © MCEAH, PMA-B.

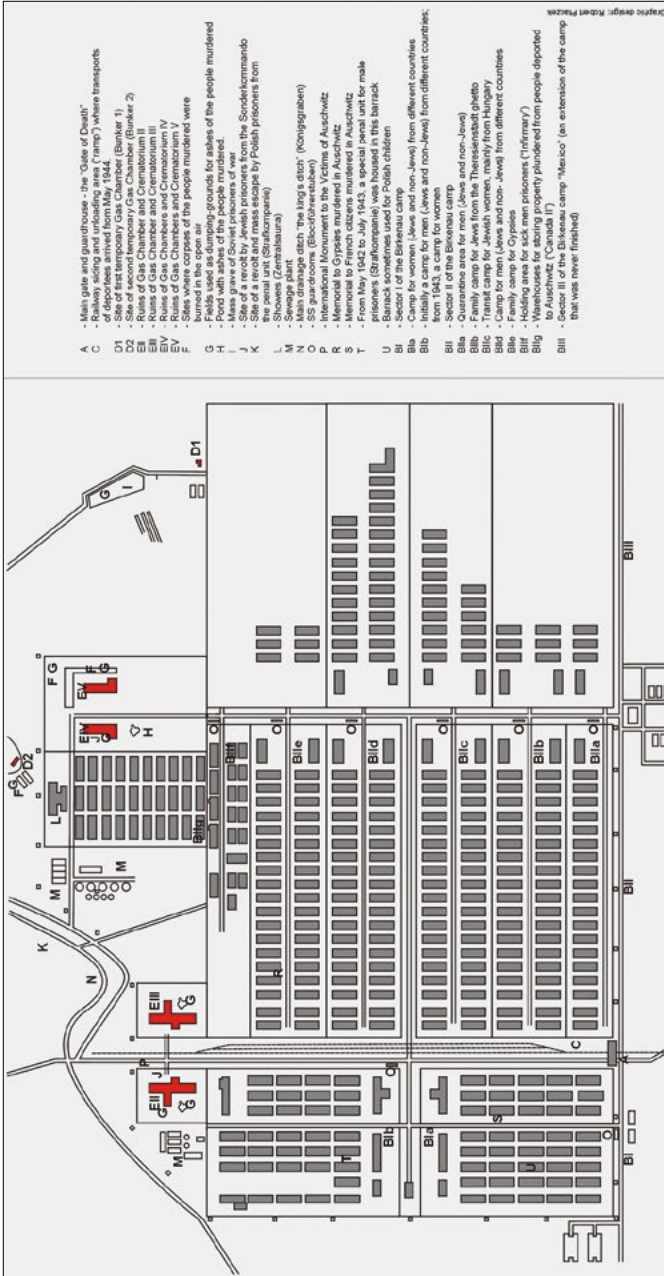


Illustration 1.9c: Diagram of Auschwitz II-Birkenau, © MCEAH, PMA-B.

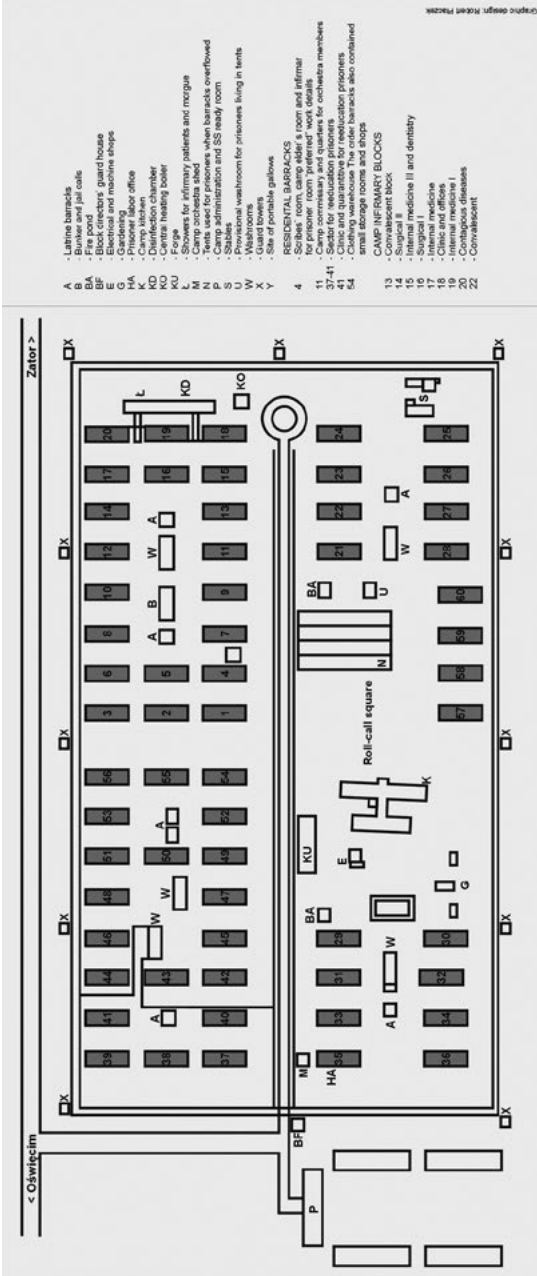


Illustration 1.9d: Diagram of Auschwitz III-Monowitz, © MCEAH, PMA-B.

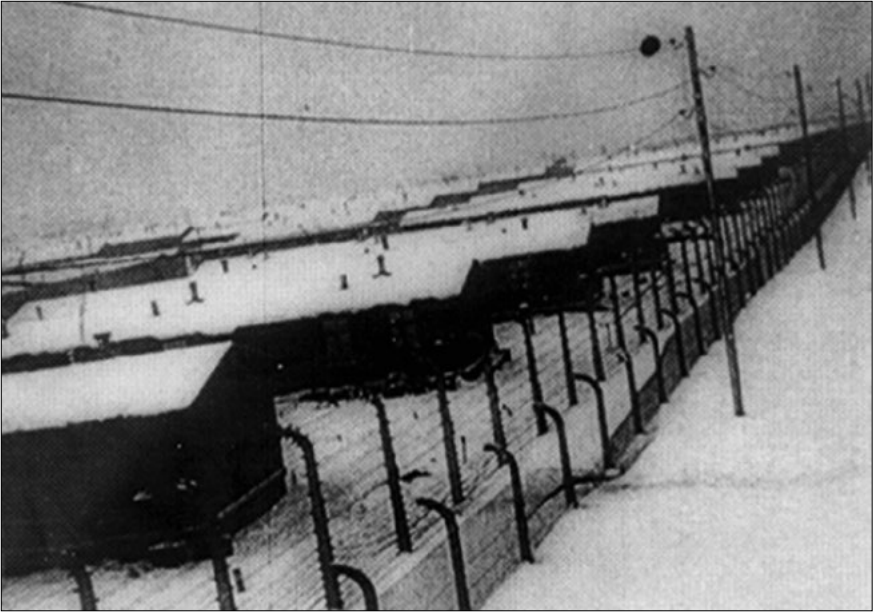


Illustration 1.9e: Photograph of Auschwitz III-Monowitz. Photo: Archive PMA-B.

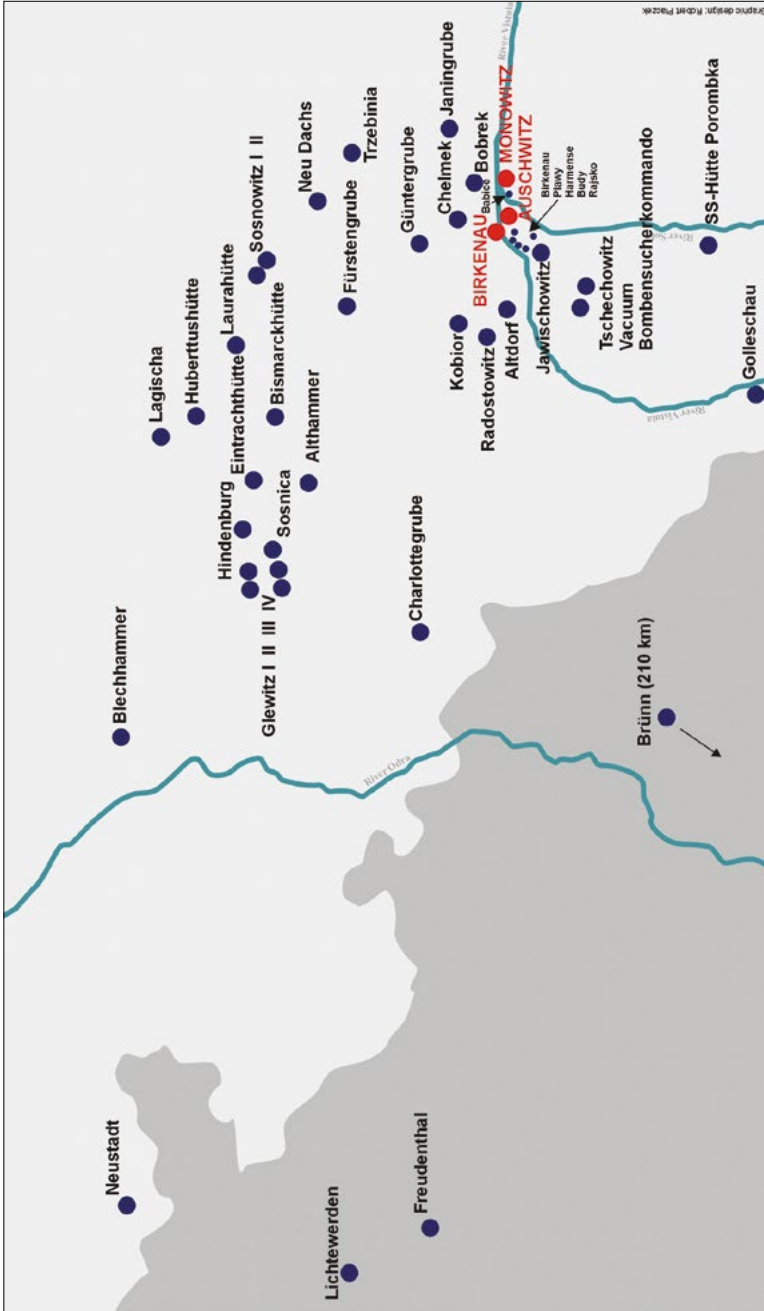


Illustration 1.9f: Map of sub-camps of KL Auschwitz, © MCEAH, PMA-B.

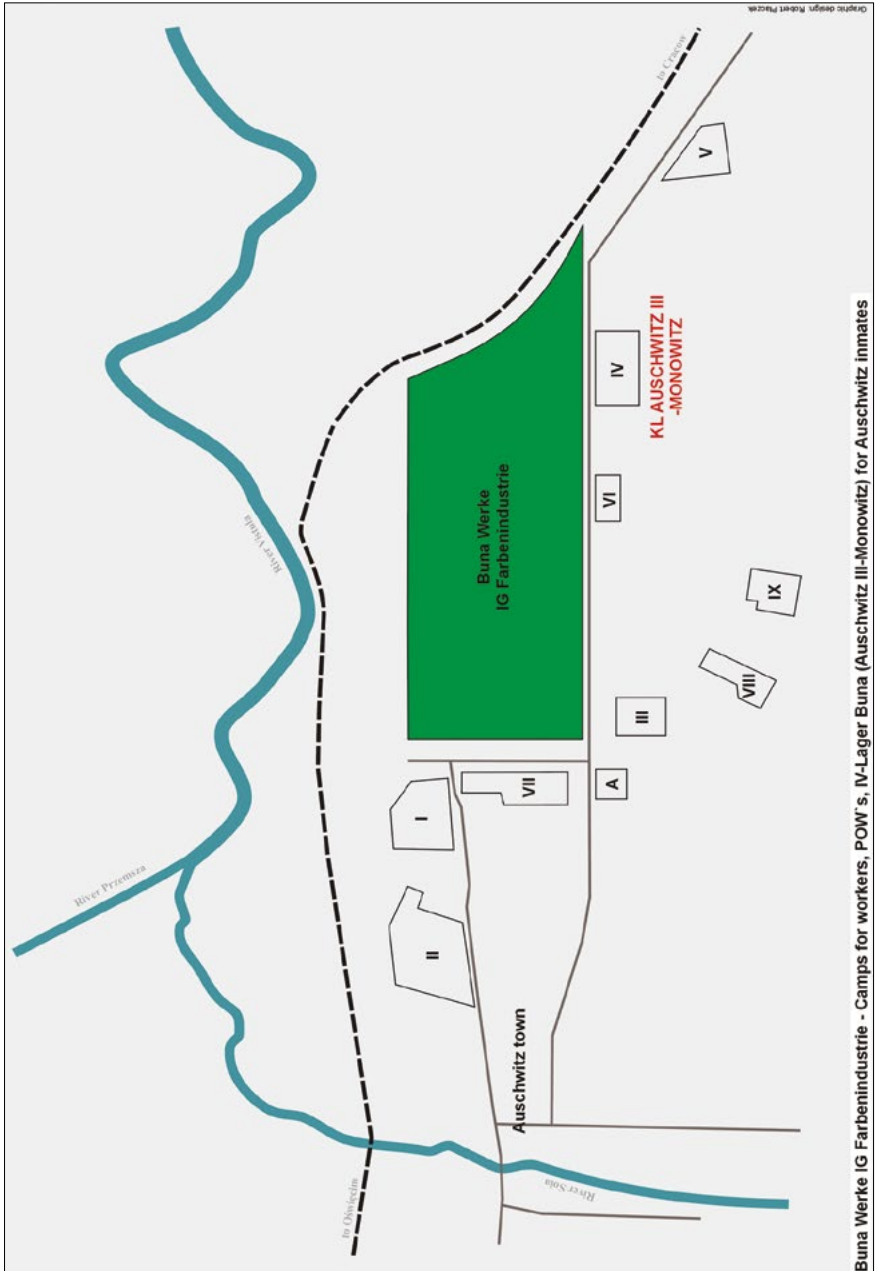


Illustration 1.9g: Map of camps for workers of IG Werk Auschwitz, © MCEAH, PMA-B.

1.10. Activity – Individual and collective meaning of a visit to Auschwitz

The preparatory lesson scenarios can be used either for an extensive day-long programme or in intensive two-hour sessions. Teachers will choose the better option, according to the level of maturity and areas of interest of each group.

- Individual and collective meaning of a visit to Auschwitz
- Coping with emotions at Auschwitz
- Photographs of Auschwitz

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Goals

Cognitive aim: to acquire the skill of managing what one has learned and making sense of it in relation to one's life.

Teaching aims: to be able to assess levels of knowledge and ignorance of a given subject; to make students aware that they share responsibility in relation to what they learn; not to treat them as consumers but to allow them the option of rejecting a project to which they have ethical objections.

Educational aims: this workshop is designed to allow students and teachers to reflect together on the significance of what they are doing. How will the project work at both the individual and the collective level? What is the value in our society of what we learn at school?

The personal dimension

At an individual level it is important for each student to ask the question: “Do I want to take part in this project or not, given that I will be unable to erase what I am likely to see? It is knowledge that I will then carry around with me for the rest of my life and it will be up to me to live with it.”

Activities

To help the students in taking their individual decisions, the teacher could suggest the following personal “checklist” prior to the trip:

- What do I know about this subject?
- What specific aspects of it would I like to know more about?
- What do I expect to get out of a trip to Auschwitz and what do I think I could learn there that I could not learn here in school?
- Do I feel prepared to cope with seeing this iconography of horror?
- Do I feel capable of putting it in perspective in relation to the ideology it reflects?
- How does Auschwitz affect me?
- Why, at this point in my life, should I visit Auschwitz?

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Activity 1

The issues could be addressed as a written exercise or alternatively through drawings, collages or artwork, or in the form of a two-minute video made by two students interviewing a third.

Activity 2

Preparation of a personal questionnaire (10 minutes).

Before the trip, each student will prepare two questions that he or she will try to answer in Auschwitz.

The questions may be based on briefing sessions, on a meeting with a survivor, or on material read or viewed as part of the preparatory work.

Students should be alerted before the preparation process starts, so that they can be thinking about their own questions at each stage.

Those who wish to do so can record their feelings in the form of a personal “log” as the project progresses.

The collective dimension

Group work

Groups of two or three students are given 10 minutes each to consider the following questions:

Group 1

Why will the visit to Auschwitz be meaningful?

Group 2

Why is the problem of Auschwitz a matter of concern not just to the victims?

Group 3

Why is Auschwitz something that affects everyone?

Group 4

How does Auschwitz affect every individual?

Group 5

How can each individual make a difference in life (by opting for commitment as a citizen rather than indifference) – for example, in the case of Auschwitz, by helping an escapee?

Discussion

Each group will present its findings and obtain a response from the rest of the class.

1.11. Activity – Coping with emotions at Auschwitz

Goals

Cognitive aim: to learn self-awareness and how to cope with emotion.

Teaching aim: to teach techniques for coping with emotion, in order to improve the transmission of knowledge.

Educational aims: to defuse fears and emotional responses by presenting them as normal; to help young people acknowledge their emotions and learn to cope with them, rather than becoming victims of them.

Students will experience fear in anticipation of leaving a protective environment – their own neighbourhood or family – to travel to an unfamiliar location known to them only as a synonym for barbarism and horror. They will be afraid of their own inability to cope with fear when they get there and of losing face in front of their friends.

The reaction of some teachers in this situation can be surprising, as they seem to sustain the students' fear rather than seeking to lessen it. We do not take students to Auschwitz either to punish them or to subdue them. Auschwitz is not some sort of virtual university, where visitors magically become intelligent, respectful and humanely tolerant simply by virtue of being there. By offering the students a “toolkit” for managing their fear, we will lessen not only that anticipatory anxiety

but also the fear of getting out of their depth, losing their composure or losing face in front of the others.

Coping with emotions on site

- How do we deal with anxiety attacks or unbearable levels of emotion?
- How can we equip the students to cope before they set off?

Panic attacks are internal constructs (which can develop gradually, but often strike swiftly) in response to aspects of reality to which the visitor ascribes a meaning that generates his or her fear. Individuals create fear and, in the case of real and present danger, it can save their lives, but where no danger exists (for example in the Auschwitz of today), fear can impede the acquisition of knowledge.

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A panic attack does not strike out of the blue. Because we create our own feelings of fear, we can also halt the process, provided we recognise the warning signs and the process that is being set in motion.

The symptoms of anxiety are physical – a change of body temperature, for example, with the sensation of great heat or cold, an accelerating heart rate, a sense of being unable to breathe, trembling, spasms or tears – and they are easy to identify.

In relation to visiting Auschwitz, it is perfectly normal for young people to feel uncomfortable about walking round a site where mass extermination took place. Because there is an absence, at the core of this educational experience, the young people must imagine what took place here in the 1940s – and by imagining that time they will project themselves into it, while they are there on the spot. “The fear is always there. When I was little and I used to visit historic sites, like a Roman settlement or some sort of ruins, I used to enjoy saying to myself, ‘Wouldn’t it be nice to have lived back in Roman times when this village or these ruins were still in use?’. I always think like that when I visit somewhere, so this time I tried it and I

was afraid. I was really very afraid. I pictured the soldiers and the whole thing and it made me truly afraid. I was afraid to walk on this ground.”¹³

Teachers can help their students to describe what they are feeling and try to make sense of these emotions, so that they can resurface from their imaginings. Just as the symptoms of an emotional response are physical, there are also physical means of coping with it (deep breathing exercises to lessen tension, for example, the hunching-up and dropping of the shoulders, or use of a water spray or an elastic wristband as a device for getting back to reality).

What matters is that the young person should be able to break out of the individual “bubble” of fear – to touch or speak to someone, to return to the here and now, using concrete aspects of reality to draw the line between past and present. No Nazis will emerge from the barracks nowadays.

Certain mistakes need to be avoided:

- the scale of their response as human beings must not cause teachers to abandon their educational task;
- young people in distress should not be hugged tightly (for that may serve only to lock in the trauma); instead we should reach out to them (the young person needs to remove himself or herself from the bubble of fear or anger and to set it aside);
- limits need to be set on the expression of anger or disgust at Auschwitz; in other words, teachers should not accept any and every form of behaviour on the premise that these are young people and they are entitled to be revolted;
- students should not be blamed if they feel nothing in reaction to the fundamental abnormality of the situation.

The next step suggested is a means of enabling young people to take control of what they are feeling and to express it, so that they do not return home despairing and disillusioned about humankind. Teachers can, for example:

- propose specific places and exercises for students to express their feelings and emotions;

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13. *Mémoire vive*, Les éditions de l’atelier patrimoine, Collège public de Morez, France, p. 38.

- suggest that they make a small mark on their right hand each time they feel despair and a similar mark on their left hand each time they feel anger, then at a subsequent debriefing session, on the return coach journey for example, they can use the exercise as a basis for reflection;
- make the point that fears and emotions are forms of energy and a student cannot feel anger and fear simultaneously because the same energy is required for each;
- encourage the students to transform their emotions and energies into individual plans after the trip.

Exercise for preparatory work in class

Step 1: 10 minutes

Blank pages are pinned up on the wall and the students are invited to use them to express what they feel in relation to fears about a trip to Auschwitz and the emotions involved.

Step 2: 10 minutes

The teacher asks the students to list and classify all the types of fear mentioned, grouping them by theme.

Step 3: 30 minutes

Talk about different situations in which the students have felt fear or other strong emotions and compare the differences and similarities between those feelings and their anticipation of the trip to Auschwitz. Base the discussion on the students' own life experience.

Step 4: 10 minutes

Suggest some tools that the students can use for coping with their fear, but also ask them to identify their own tools.

Examples of practical tools for coping with fear

- An elastic band around the wrist (stretched and then released) or use of a vaporising water spray for the face and hands can help bring a student “back to earth” from fearful imaginings that trigger panic.
- A paper bag can be used if a student appears to be hyperventilating as a result of a panic attack; a few breaths of his or her own exhaled air from inside the bag should be sufficient.
- The simple exercise of hunching up the shoulders on an in breath then relaxing them on a long out breath can often be enough to release some tension.

Two exercises for getting out of a “fear bubble”:

- The student chooses to “take a photograph” in his or her mind (of an object, place or person) and to retain as many details of it as possible (the nature, colour, size, weight, function and identity of the object, for example).
- A questionnaire is distributed on the coach trip to Auschwitz, as a form of preparation, so that the students can focus during the visit on finding answers to the questions. They will not carry the sheets with them on the tour, as that would prevent them from concentrating on what they see; instead the teacher will redistribute the sheets when they are back on the coach again immediately after the tour and they will work in pairs to fill in all the answers they can from memory (Student handout 1.11a).



Student handout 1.11a

Questions about Auschwitz I

1. Who were the victims sent to Auschwitz?

Complete the name of groups of victims who were sent to Auschwitz:

P_____

crim_____

J_____

Sov_____ prisoners of war

G_____ or R_____

Resi_____

hom_____

J_____ Witnesses

po_____ prisoners

Name the countries that the victims came from:

—

—

—

2. Which was the largest group of people exterminated, 90% of whom were killed immediately after their arrival at the camp in cattle trucks?

The J_____



3. How were victims selected? Who chose those that would be allowed to live? What criteria were used and where did the selection take place?
4. What was the name of the place where the victims' stolen possessions were collected, sorted and stored? What were deportees told to persuade them to bring their possessions with them?
5. What personal belongings did you see?
6. How did the gas chambers work and what did they contain in order to fool the victims? How did the Nazis manage to persuade the victims to enter the gas chambers? Why did the Nazis use Zyklon B gas and what had it been used for previously? How many people was it possible to kill in 20 minutes? What was done with the bodies? Is it accurate to portray the process as the "industrialisation" of death?
7. What did you learn about resistance during the visit?
8. Why were the victims' heads shaved and why were they tattooed? Where were the tattoos placed? Why were some of the victims photographed?
9. What do we see in the photographs in the corridor? What information do they give us about the people? What do you notice?
10. What were the forms of punishment for people who tried to escape from the camp?
11. What types of medical experiment were carried out on victims in Auschwitz?
12. Who liberated the camp on 27 January 1945? What did they find? What is a "death march"?

Questions about Birkenau

1. The huge scale of the camp

How big was the Birkenau camp?

Where did the bricks come from that were used to build some of the barracks?



Where was the hospital?

Which part of the camp was not finished?

2. The barracks, life in them and lack of hygiene

Describe the objects and the living conditions in the barracks.

3. Stages in dehumanisation

What were the stages in the dehumanisation process?

4. The Nazi economy

What happened to the people who, instead of being exterminated, became slaves of the Nazis? To what extent was the camp economically valuable and to whom?

5. Annihilation

Most of the deportees who arrived at Birkenau were selected for extermination. Where did the selection process take place (before and after 1944)? Where did the deportees go next?

How many gas chambers were there in the camp? What was done with the ashes after the bodies had been burned? What happened to body parts that were not destroyed in the fire?

6. Traces and testimony

During the visit you saw traces of what the Birkenau camp had been during the Second World War. How does what you saw provide evidence of the organisation of the concentration camp system and the extermination policy?

1.12. Activity – Photographs of Auschwitz

Goals

Photography has been a major historical source since the end of the 19th century. It affords access to a unique informational level – visual knowledge of an event. No more an eyewitness account or an “official” political or statistical record, but a single point in time and space captured in its authenticity by a snapshot. This source is of interest for all the specific qualities which it conveys (atmosphere, visual disclosure, human dimension). However, it presupposes a more subtle critical approach than other frankly subjective sources. Students looking at a photo are likely to think they instantly comprehend what they see, and above all imagine that what appears in the photo corresponds to what happened. Actually, they are faced with an illusion of truth which they must learn to decode. The teacher must draw students’ attention to the three-fold subjective dimension of a photograph: firstly the photographer, the photographer’s intention and the conditions of execution; secondly the field of view (what lies outside the field?); and thirdly the pupil’s perception of the document. Each image has its own history and, for the photo to be a usable historical source, the necessary first step is to study the history of each picture in order to determine its scientific value, in association with documents of different kinds (records and personal testimonies in particular).

Photography is problematic in the case of the Holocaust. The Nazis wanted to keep the “final solution” secret so, on encountering photos of Auschwitz, the first question to ask is how can it be possible? If pictures exist, who took them, with what intention, and what were they used for? What is seen, and most importantly not seen, in these photos? How do these sources add to our knowledge of the Holocaust?

Cognitive aim: to learn about the history of Auschwitz, prior to visiting the camp, via a medium that tells the same story from different angles.

Teaching aim: to teach students to use photographs as a historical source, decipher and criticise them and make sense of them during the site visit.

Educational aim: to recognise that students play both an active and a passive role in history – the photographs that they take are in themselves historical sources and the things they photograph can become objects of history.

Exercise

Using information from the descriptions below, supplied by the teacher, students should answer the following questions:

- Who took these photographs?
- Why were they taken?
- What do we see and what do we not see?
- What is the story of these photographs and how did they survive until now?
- What do we learn from these photographs about Auschwitz or the Holocaust?

Note: after the visit to Auschwitz, there could be a follow-up session based on photographs taken by the students.

Photographic resources

Photographs by a Sonderkommando member

1.12a –The picture was taken illegally by a member of the *Sonderkommando* (special unit). It shows burning bodies of victims of mass extermination in Auschwitz II-Birkenau. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12b – The picture was taken illegally by the members of the *Sonderkommando* in 1944. Here we can see women driven by the SS-men to one of the gas chambers. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

Prisoners' identity photographs taken in Auschwitz I

1.12c – A boy from Ukraine with camp number 58076, arrested in KL Auschwitz as a Ukrainian political prisoner. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12d – A Dutch female prisoner with camp number 25 563 and marked with IBV symbol (Internationale Bibelforscher-Vereinigung – the Jehovah's Witnesses). (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12e – Józef Szajna, prisoner number 18 729. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

Photographs of Jewish deportees arriving from Hungary

1.12f – Family of Slovak Jewess Lili Jacob (her aunt Tauba with her four children) awaiting selection at the ramp in Birkenau. During the selection all were sent to the gas chambers. The transport from the ghetto in Beregszasz in Hungary left on 17 May 1944 and arrived on 27 May 1944. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

Aerial photographs taken by the Allies

1.12g – An aerial photo taken by South African pilots from an SAAF reconnaissance unit on 25 August 1944. The western part of the unloading ramp is visible, as well as crematoria II and III and part of the camp. On the ramp there is a car and a group of people (prisoners). (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12h – This picture was taken by the Allies. It shows Auschwitz II-Birkenau in summer of 1944. On the left the smoke is clearly visible. It comes from burning crematorium pits next to V, where Germans burned the bodies of murdered Jews. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

Sector BIIe

1.12i – Sector BIIe (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

Photographs by the liberators

1.12j – From among 230 000 children deported to KL Auschwitz only 700 were liberated. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12k – When the Red Army liberated the camp on 27 January 1945, there were more than 200 bodies of those who had died or were killed just before the liberation. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12l – Ruins of gas chambers blown up by Germans running away from the Soviets in January 1945. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12m – Auschwitz I after liberation (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12n – Piles of personal belongings left after mass extermination. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12o – Hospital for liberated prisoners (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

Post-war and contemporary photographs

1.12p – Picture taken after the liberation. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12q – The dock during the trial of 40 members of Auschwitz SS staff. Picture taken in Cracow in 1947. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

1.12r – View of Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Death Gate and Sector BII. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.

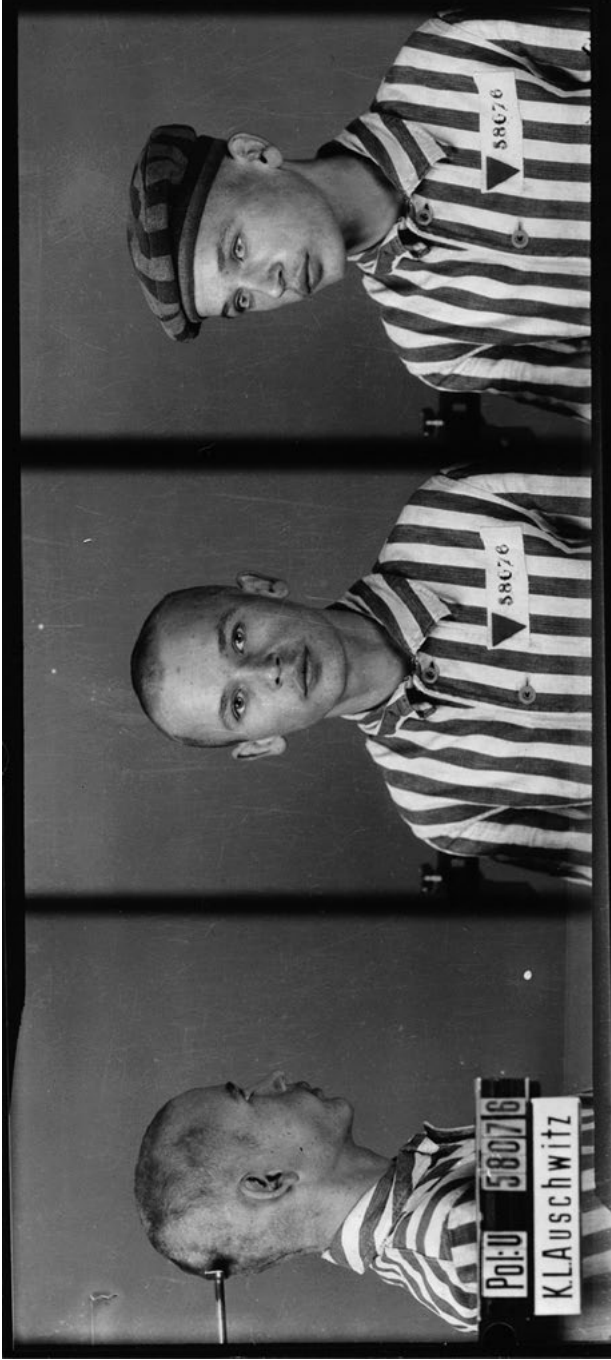


1.12a – The picture was taken illegally by a member of the *Sonderkommando*. It shows burning bodies of victims of mass extermination in Auschwitz II-Birkenau (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



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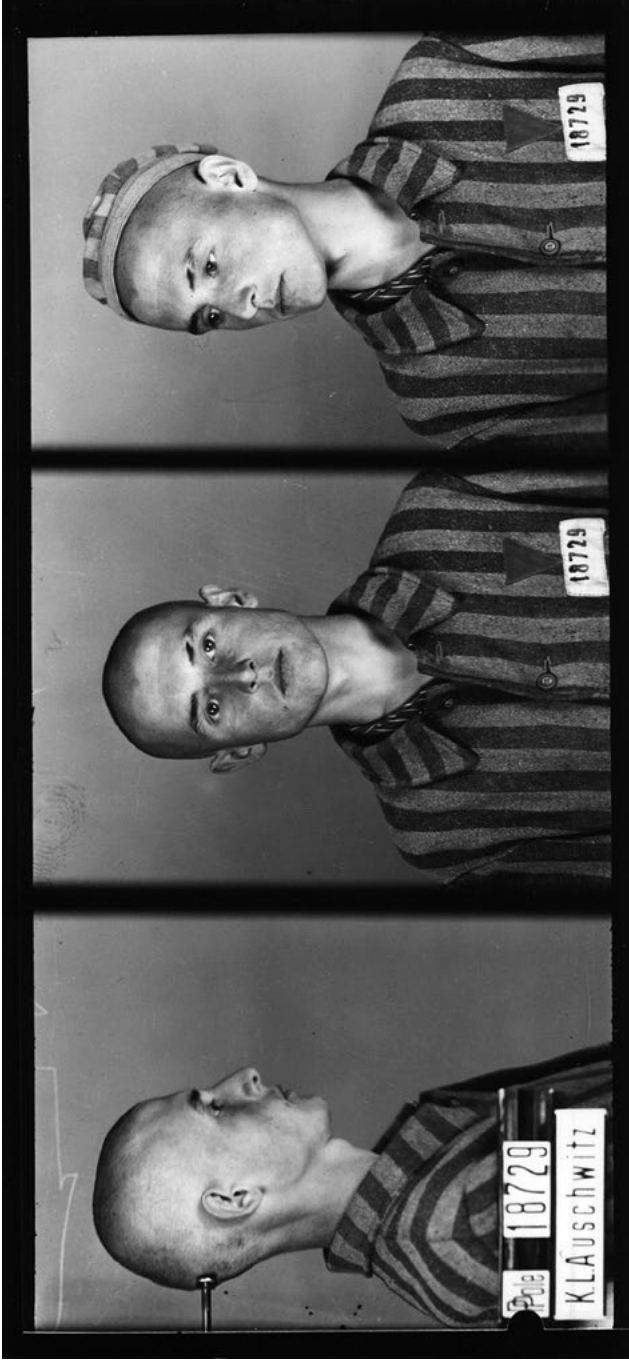
1.12b – The picture was taken illegally by the members of the *Sonderkommando* in 1944. Here we can see women driven by the SS-men to one of the gas chambers (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12c – A boy from Ukraine with camp number 58076, arrested in KL Auschwitz as a Ukrainian political prisoner (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



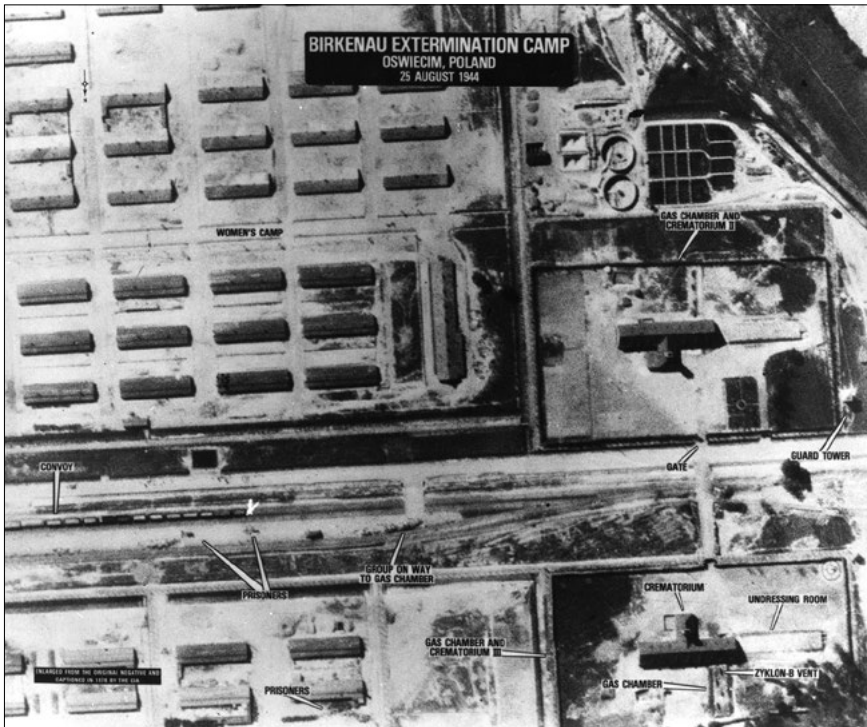
1. 12d – A Dutch female prisoner with camp number 25563 and marked with IBV symbol (Internationale Bibelforscher-Vereinigung – the Jehovah's Witnesses) (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12e – Józef Szajna, prisoner number 18729 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



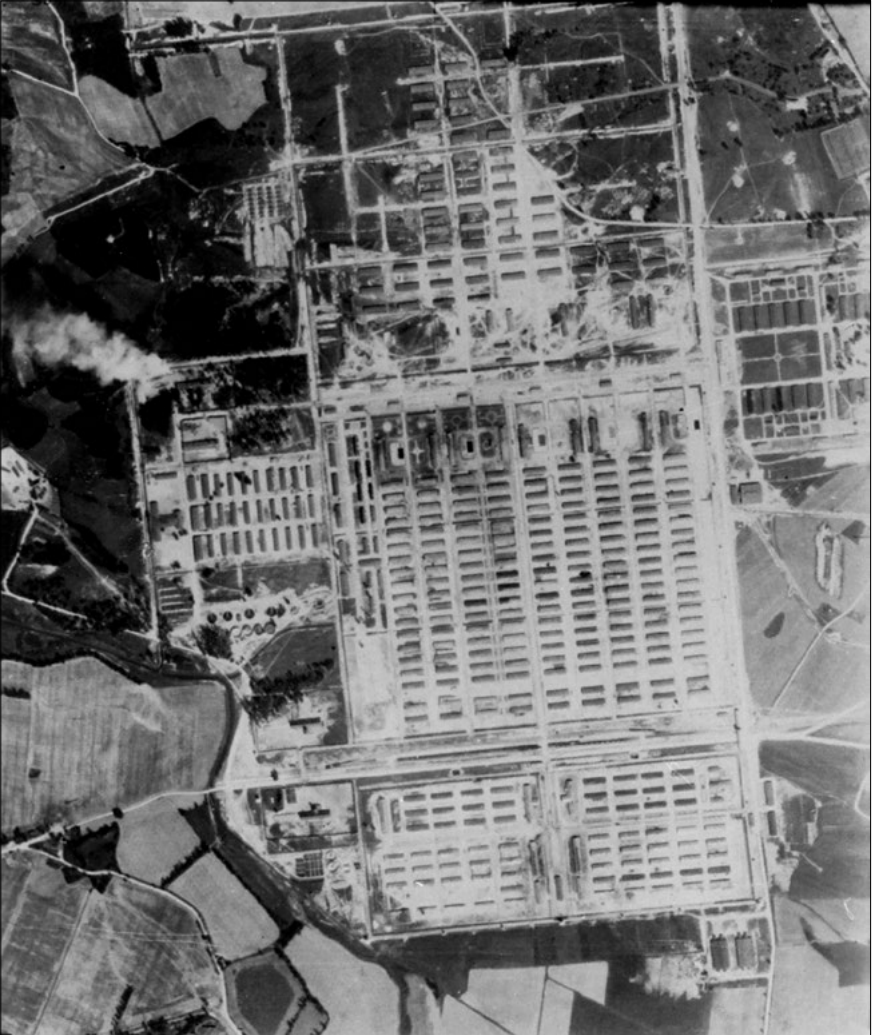
1. 12f – Family of Slovak Jewess Lili Jacob (her aunt Tauba with her four children) awaiting selection at the ramp in Birkenau. During the selection all were sent to the gas chambers. The transport from the ghetto in Beregszasz in Hungary left on 17 May 1944 and arrived on 27 May 1944 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12g – An aerial photo taken by South African pilots from an SAAF reconnaissance unit on 25 August 1944. The western part of the unloading ramp is visible, as well as crematoria II and III and part of the camp. On the ramp there is a car and a group of people (prisoners) (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



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1.12h – This picture was taken by the Allies. It shows Auschwitz II-Birkenau in summer of 1944. On the left the smoke is clearly visible. It comes from burning pits next to crematorium V, where Germans burned the bodies of murdered Jews. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12i – Sector BIIe (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12j – From among 230 000 children deported to KL Auschwitz only 700 were liberated (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12k – When the Red Army liberated the camp on 27 January 1945, there were more than 200 bodies of those who had died or were killed just before the liberation (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.121 – Ruins of gas chambers blown up by Germans running away from the Soviets in January 1945 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12m – Auschwitz I after liberation (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

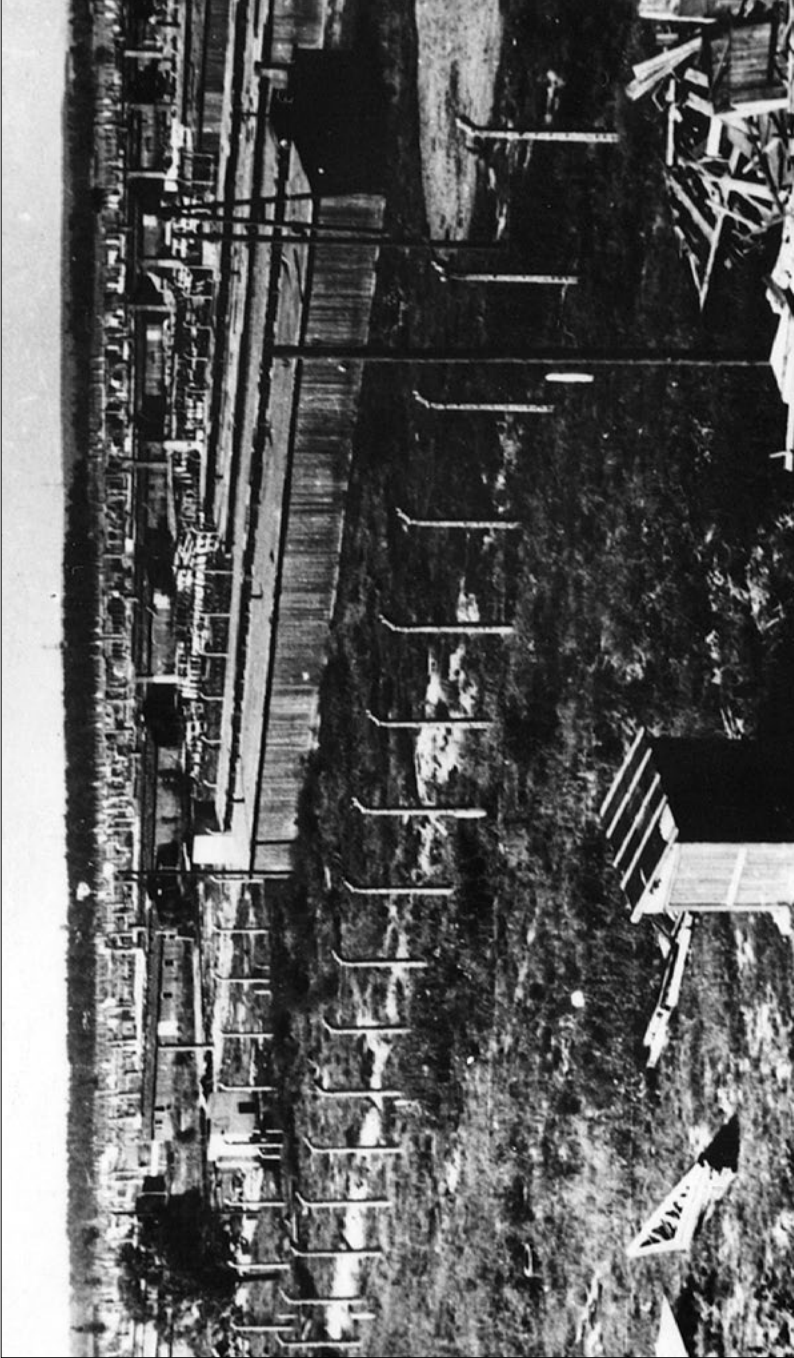


1.12n – Piles of personal belongings left after mass extermination (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).

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1.12o – Hospital for liberated prisoners (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12p – Picture taken after the liberation (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12q – The dock during the trial of 40 members of Auschwitz SS staff. Picture taken in Cracow in 1947 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives).



1.12r – View of Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Death Gate and Sector BII. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.

1.13. Activity – Films about Auschwitz

Goals

In class, when asking the students questions to test their knowledge of the Holocaust, the teacher will notice that their chief information sources are television, cinema and the Internet. They have a visual familiarity with the topic rather than book learning or academic knowledge. First of all, students tend to view fiction films for mass audiences and therefore frequently have a stereotyped perception of the typologies (victims, perpetrators, the Righteous among Nations, bystanders) based on emblematic characters, so that the everyday anecdotal dimension overshadows the political context of the event.

By analysing documentaries, the attraction of the film medium for students can be utilised while offering them a framework in which to reflect on the interaction of these films with other sources concerning the Holocaust. In particular, among the documentary films produced by the Auschwitz museum, the part entitled *Love* telling the story of Edek and Mala can be put to educational use, supplemented by the role-playing described in Section 3.8 “The fate of Individual victims of Auschwitz in documents, testimonies and photographs”, which handles the same theme via biographical and documentary data.

There are many fiction films on the Holocaust. The Council of Europe has published *The Shoah on Screen – Representing crimes against humanity*, setting out systematic teaching approaches for the classroom analysis of the great classics on the subject. In this lesson plan we chose the film *Ambulance* because, though less well-known than others, its 12 minute span provides a basis for general discussion of children’s fate during the Holocaust.

Short documentaries

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum has produced a series of documentary films, lasting under 30 minutes, entitled *From the Auschwitz Chronicle*. The films are available in English, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Polish and Russian.

Covering five themes, the films are based on survivors' testimony and photographs and documents from the period, but they also include present-day views of the Auschwitz camp.

1. *The Longest Roll Call* depicts the escape of a Polish prisoner, the roll call, the search for the escapee, collective punishments, brutality and death.
2. *The Orchestra* is about the establishment of the first orchestra in the Auschwitz camp, the instruments, the musicians and the orchestra's functions.
3. *The Platform in Birkenau* deals with the extermination of Hungarian Jews, with images of the construction of the platform, the arrival of deportees, photographs taken by the SS in 1944, the process of selection, Mengele, plundered property, "Canada" (the unit that handled the belongings of those who had been gassed), the gas chambers and the crematorium.
4. *Love* is the story of Mala, a Belgian Jew, and Edek, a Polish Catholic, who escaped together, only to be recaptured and killed.
5. *The Sonderkommando* records how prisoners were assigned to the *Sonderkommando* ("special unit"), the unit's tasks in the gas chambers and the crematorium, the history of gassing, the creation of the "death factory", the numbers involved in the unit, their life expectancy and their everyday existence and an attempted escape. It includes testimony from a former member of the unit about how the gas chambers worked.

Learning activities

Depending on how much time the teacher wants to spend on audiovisual material, one or two exercises can be chosen from those suggested below.

The students will express a preference for one of the five themes and five groups will be formed, to work in five different rooms.

First two-hour session

Step 1: 30 minutes

First screening of the film.

Step 2: 10 minutes

Each student spends five minutes writing his or her own summary of the film.

They can try to answer the following questions: What? Who? Where? When? How? How many? Why? With whom?

Step 3: 10 minutes

The students share what they have written as a group.

Step 4: 30 minutes

They watch the film for a second time.

They choose three segments from the film, each lasting less than one minute, and note the time codes for the beginning and end of each.

Step 5: 40 minutes

Using their summaries and the chosen segments, each group then prepares a presentation of no more than 10 minutes. They can use other documents and may make connections with what they saw on their visit to Auschwitz.

Second two-hour session

Each group gives its presentation (no more than 10 minutes). The other students can ask questions and the teacher will supplement the groups' replies.

Fiction film

Analysis of the film *Ambulance*

We recommend analysing this film in class because it is too emotionally charged to be used for homework. Teachers should note that gas vans were never used in Auschwitz (although they were at Chelmno).

So what is the point of this film?

In the space of a few minutes it addresses the main aspects of the Holocaust. Everyone will recognise very quickly what it is about. Students may identify with the children in the film but its black and white format has a protective distancing effect, allowing them to realise that this is an account of a historical event.

Length of the film: 12 minutes

A screening of the 1961 Polish film *Ambulance*, made by Tadeusz Lomnicki and Janusz Morgenstern, is used to highlight the specificities of the Holocaust in a session with students aged 14 years and older, who will be asked a series of questions:

1. Who are the children in the film?
2. How do you know that they are Jews?
3. Why an ambulance?

What does an ambulance normally symbolise? What does it symbolise in the context of Nazism?

4. What do we see around the barbed wire and the ambulance?

(Work on the issue of emptiness and the absence of people able to protest or assist.)

5. Who is the adult in charge of the children?

(Korczak and his history.)

6. Do you think that the adult in charge knew what was going to happen to the children? Was he right not to tell them and, if so, why?

7. The question of internalised stereotyping of the “sheep” image and criticism of the persecuted Jews for failure to resist.

8. What is the symbolism of the birds?

(The distinction between perpetrators, victims and bystanders. The latter can range from collaborators to those who were indifferent, and includes those who resisted at the last minute.)

9. What does the dog symbolise?

10. What is the symbolic importance of the little girl’s shoe? What was it like to be a child during the Holocaust?

(Rather than citing figures, answers here should be informed by the students’ own lives.)

11. How do you interpret the attitude of the officer who does not allow the little girl to retrieve her shoe?

12. How do you picture that officer in his private life, relating to his children, his wife or his dog?

(Use this question to discuss the problem of the banality of evil and “ordinary men”, as studied by Christopher Browning.)

During the visit.....2.....

2.1. Who created the museum, and why?

The idea of preserving the memory of the victims of Auschwitz and the truth about German crimes committed on this site was shaped by several prisoners during their stay in the camp. The commitment to make the world aware of these crimes was realised through various methods. German documents were stolen and hidden at the camp, buried or passed on to Polish workers doing jobs for German companies near the camp. Drawings were secretly sketched illustrating the mass murder of Jews in gas chambers, camp realities of those forced to work were recorded and notes and secret messages were also composed.

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A Polish Jew, Zalmen Lewental wrote, "... nobody can imagine the events exactly as they took place... everything will have to be told by one of us... from our small group, the few of us, if we happen to survive". Lewental was forced to work in the *Sonderkommando*, those who had to burn the corpses of people murdered in the gas chambers. He was tormented by the thought that future generations would never know what he had had to endure. He did not fool himself into thinking that he would survive Auschwitz; he buried his written thoughts next to one of the crematoria at Birkenau. They were found after the war, just like other moving texts also written in the camp.

Some of those who escaped from the camp wrote detailed reports about Auschwitz and gave this information to the Allies. The Polish resistance also collected information, testimony, and secret messages and sent these to the Polish Government in Exile in London. Similar activities were carried out by Jewish organisations.

There were prisoners who thought about memorialising the victims and sites after the war in a more visual way. These felt the moral obligation to fulfil the testament of those who had been killed. Tadeusz Borkowski, a prisoner from the very first Polish transport brought to the camp on 14 June 1940, imagined that following the war, a temple should be erected on this site. His sketches of stained-glass windows for the sanctum have survived, having been illegally smuggled out of the camp. They were, according to the artist, to symbolise sacrifice, suffering, love and hope.

Another Polish prisoner, artist Jerzy Adam Brandhuber, remembers that while incarcerated at the camp he created “... a design for a memorial for after the war. I had an official conspiratorial order from my colleague Benek Świerczyna. I completed it. It was a giant. At that time we counted on funds from all over the world, so that there would be too much money for its construction and upkeep. The area to the west of the camp in Brzezinka, from the crematoriums, was to be flattened – like a colossal roll call square, kilometres, square kilometres. In the middle a colossal chimney, rectangular – like that of the crematorium, but x times bigger, 50 to 60 metres tall. And on it, sculpted into the stone, symbols carved deep, on the four sides. It would be visible from afar. It would be connected to a gas pipeline – like an eternal flame. Night and day. At night glowing like back then. And around it prisoners’ blocks in rows, as if standing at roll call.”

A few months following the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the Nazis’ concentration camps, a group of Polish prisoners who managed to survive, started to publicly call for the memorialising of the victims of the largest site of mass murder – the camp at Auschwitz.

As early as December 1945, at a meeting of the State National Council in Warsaw, a number of its members, along with a former prisoner of Auschwitz, officially presented such an idea. In April 1946, several Polish former prisoners arrived, planning to create a museum. They did not yet have the legal authority to do so, but they started to do work preserving the buildings, ruins and evidence of the crimes committed. They brought about the organisation of the so-called Permanent Protection of the Camp at Oświęcim. Almost immediately, thousands of pilgrims and visitors came to find any sign of their loved ones, to pray and to honour those murdered.

Even before the official call for the creation of a museum, the former prisoners created the first exhibition in the former camp buildings. The exhibition opened on 14 June 1947, to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the first transport of Polish prisoners.

Around 50 000 people were present at the opening ceremony for the exhibition, including: former prisoners, families of those murdered, pilgrims from across Poland, a delegation of Polish authorities with then prime minister and former prisoner Jozef Cyrankiewicz, and representatives from the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes and the Central Jewish Historical Commission. Also present were delegates from the embassies of Great Britain, Czechoslovakia and France.

The commemorations culminated in a great silent march, which moved from the Auschwitz camp to Birkenau – “after the prayers of all the faiths, the march, a few kilometres in length, started towards Brzezinka/Birkenau, the route along which the Nazis rushed sick prisoners to death, and healthy prisoners to be gassed, so as to burn their bodies” – so reads a passage from a special brochure created shortly after the aforementioned ceremonies. It also contained an appeal by former prisoners to organise a donation drive for the conservation and commemoration of this place.

While still incarcerated at the concentration camp, prisoners did not think that many of them would survive and that, in reality, they might be able to create a memorial or monument on the site of the former camp. Because of their firsthand experience and close ties with the subject, they found themselves not only at the forefront of those calling for the place to be commemorated, but also as the hands-on organisers, workers, curators, guides and even security guards. Such an initiative was not a simple matter. Jonathan Huener writes about this in his doctoral thesis on the history of the museum: “When creating the post-war Auschwitz, certain problems had to be tackled such as, the topography and physical definition of the memorial, securing it against thieves, the general chaos that existed there, hiring employees, and documenting and memorialising those murdered.”

Former prisoners recall that immediately after the liberation the most important issue was caring for the sick and dying prisoners, creating a hospital, organising food supplies and laying to rest those who had died just before, or just after, January 1945. In April, the Cracow branch of the Main Commission Researching German Crimes in Poland started to analyse the evidence. Also in April, the Department of Museums

and Martyrdom Memorials in Poland was organised under the Ministry of Culture and Arts.

On 2 July 1947 the Polish Parliament issued a decree about “preserving the sites of the former concentration camp as a place of Polish and international martyrdom”, calling for the creation of the State Museum Oświęcim-Brzezinka. From the moment of the museum’s creation, it has been funded by and under the care of the Ministry of Culture and Arts, currently the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Two preserved parts of the former Auschwitz complex form the museum – the main camp (Auschwitz I) in Oświęcim and the Birkenau camp in Brzezinka (Auschwitz II) – areas surrounded by fences. Many sites and buildings connected with the function of KL Auschwitz are found outside the museum’s boundaries. Just as with many issues connected with the existence and functioning of the museum, the size of the area on which the museum sits is a source of discussion in Poland. Proposals put the size of the site from 190 hectares to around 2 000 hectares. However, it should be remembered that even using the largest area proposed, all the buildings and sites connected with the history of the camp are not covered. Many of these sites are found quite a distance from Oświęcim as are, for example, most of the sub-camps. Some were located dozens, even hundreds, of kilometres away.

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial covers around 200 hectares. There are 150 original former camp buildings, such as prisoner housing blocks and barracks, administration buildings, SS guard buildings, prisoner registration centres, guard towers, camp gates and other such structures. Many of the buildings were destroyed before the liberation of the camp. The most important of these, the evidence of mass murder, the gas chambers and crematoria, were partially dismantled by the SS and later blown up before they fled the camp. The SS also burned down the warehouses that contained the belongings of Jews who were murdered in the gas chambers, thus destroying a number of the camp’s documents.

After the liberation, thousands of items belonging to those sent to their deaths were found both at the camp and adjacent to it. These included suitcases – some with names and addresses of those murdered, Jewish prayer shawls, prosthetic limbs, spectacles, shoes and many other items. Currently, all these items are part of the museum collection and many are on display in former camp buildings at Auschwitz I, where the general exhibition on the history of the camp is found. The

museum collection includes thousands of Nazi documents and photographs, as well as art created both illegally by prisoners in the camp and after the liberation.

The rich collection of paintings, drawings, and prints created by former inmates is of great cognitive importance. This is a form of testimony put forth by those who survived. A great number of these works were created by those prisoner artists who took part in the creation of the museum, some of whom were designers and architects, for example Jerzy Adam Brandhuber, Mieczysław Kościelniak and Władysław Siwek. Their creations served to illustrate that which was unimaginable and impossible to put into words.

The museum's collection also includes items created during the camp's operation by the Nazis, the camp resistance and the resistance working outside the camp, as well as materials created after the war. The post-war material consists of a collection of prisoners' accounts and recollections, as well as testimony given during trials against Nazis in various countries following the war. As Martin Walser rightly said, overcome with emotion during the trial against members of the camp's staff in Frankfurt: "Only prisoners know what Auschwitz was. Nobody else knows."

Former prisoners did most of the work creating exhibitions and collecting artefacts in the first years of the museum's existence. Some stayed on at the museum, others worked for other groups such as the International Auschwitz Committee, or for local organisations which were set up in many other countries.

Many prisoners wrote memoirs about their camp experiences. Often, these were written at the highest literary level and have entered the canon of world literature. Sociologist Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs characterised this type of work: "Prisoners' memoirs are often referred to as historical documents and also as a warning. People who managed to survive, speak about the factory of death... They see reality through their own, individual experiences. They share the truth about the camp, touching on their own emotions and painful memories. This is the truth of one unique person, a witness to history, about whom we must remember."

From its start to the present day, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum stays in contact with former prisoners and their families. They come to the museum for every important commemoration and anniversary that has to do with the history of Auschwitz. They take part in educational work, meetings with students and teachers;

they meet those attending special seminars and college courses at the museum. They take the time to analyse new museum projects, books, and exhibits. They were, and still are, the experts on the general history of KL Auschwitz, as well as its details. Without their knowledge and participation, many facts that would otherwise not be grasped are cleared up and more easily understood. In the ranks of the International Auschwitz Committee, there are also former prisoners from various countries. The chairman of the committee is Professor Władysław Bartoszewski, a former prisoner of KL Auschwitz.

Furthermore, the former prisoners who accompany groups of young visitors to the museum play an important role. They are living witnesses to history. Nobody but they can so fully describe the conditions that existed inside of the camp – the ever-present death, constant threat, starvation, psychological trauma and the relationships between prisoners.

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The opening ceremony of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; Józef Cyrankiewicz the former Polish Prime Minister delivering a speech, 14 June 1947. Archive PMA-B.



The unveiling of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism in Auschwitz II-Birkenau, 14 April 1967. Archive PMA-B.



Auschwitz survivors on the 65th anniversary of the camp liberation. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.



Auschwitz survivor on the 65th anniversary of the camp liberation. Photo: Pawel Sawicki.

2.2. Educational work and programmes offered by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim

Historical outline

In the years immediately following the war, the museum's educational role was focused on providing guided tours around the former camp and buildings. Later the museum exhibitions at the former camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau were introduced. The people who took up the challenge first were mostly former Polish prisoners, many of whom became employees of the museum. Groups from Poland and abroad, as well as individual visitors (among them the family members of victims), were educated about the history of the camp, thanks to those who had experienced these events firsthand.

The exhibition that, after various changes, exists to this day was opened in 1955. This exhibition serves as the primary instrument for the educational work done at the museum. Over time, the commentary provided during the tour was standardised and new projects were also undertaken. The new activities started by the museum were film symposiums, conferences and meetings – mainly for teachers, educators and students. In later years, the so-called “national exhibits” were created, presenting the fate of people from various European countries deported to Auschwitz. Moreover, temporary exhibits were created which, over time, made their way out of Poland to, for example, the United States and Japan.

Visiting the main museum exhibition and touring the historical sites and buildings of Auschwitz, continue to be the primary elements in the educational activities of the museum. Over 30 million people have visited the exhibition in the last 50 years.

Visits by dignitaries of states

To underline the particular importance of this site, visits by heads of state and other important personalities from around the world have taken place. Among the many religious leaders, the last two Popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI have visited, as well as the Dalai Lama. The 60th and 65th anniversaries of the liberation of Auschwitz, on 27 January 2005 and 2010, were extraordinary events. In attendance were heads of state and representatives of over 40 countries. To have such important individuals visit the former camp underlines the significance of this site and shows the desire of countries and nations to build a safer world, on the foundations of tolerance and concern for every human in the modern world. This is an expression of concern, so that the tragedy of genocide does not occur in the future.

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International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust

Currently, the educational activities of the museum are organised and co-ordinated by the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust (ICEAH). The opening of the centre was possible due to the initiative of former prisoners, who presented the museum with an “Act of Incorporation” at the 60th anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz. Thanks to a resolution by the Polish Government, the ICEAH started functioning in mid-2005. The ICEAH is an integral part of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau and works with international partners on its projects. It collaborates with many institutions, both in Poland and abroad including Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC and other museums and memorial sites.

Co-operation between the ICEAH and higher education institutions is very important. The educational mission of the ICEAH is based on, among other things, helping young people, students, teachers, researchers, journalists and others to interpret

the challenges of the modern world through the context of Auschwitz. The ICEAH focuses mainly on the problems of Auschwitz and the Holocaust, teaching about the various aspects associated with the tragedy of the extermination of the Jews, the Polish and other camp victims; anti-Polish terror brought on by the German occupiers; the murderous concentration camp system; the persecution and murder of the Roma and of the disabled; the systematic exclusion of entire national, social, and religious groups from society.

The ideals of the ICEAH are based on three fundamentals: remembrance, awareness, and responsibility. Memory, supported by familial and social reminiscences and solid historical knowledge about the tragedy of Auschwitz allow for a personal, individual experience that helps in identifying with the victims. Being aware of the mechanisms of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and the rise in the great evil that came to pass in Auschwitz, as well as the fact that genocides occurred after the Holocaust, should awaken a responsibility for civilisation now and in the future. This awareness emerges from, among other things, what happened in Auschwitz. The conviction that one should take responsibility for the modern world is brought about more easily when we can show the fate of individual people in greater detail – the human, personal, individual tragedies of the victims of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps.

For the last several years, the Council of Europe has provided substantial support to the ICEAH. At the 2005 meeting of ministers of education at the Council of Europe gathering in Cracow and Oświęcim, the attendees expressed a clear conviction that the educational work done by the ICEAH is necessary. A declaration signed by the ministers reads: “Only the unending process of education can prevent the recurrence of such monstrosities. This is the mission that stands before all people of good will and is unanimously accepted as the priority of the Council of Europe and all the European states.”

Currently, the work of the ICEAH is focused on general and specialised education.

General education

General education is understood to be tours of the museum in the care of a licensed museum guide for visitors, both young and old, from Poland and abroad.

Candidates for tour guide posts attend specialised courses that prepare them to work with people from various countries, cultures and social backgrounds. After receiving their licence, guides regularly attend training sessions to increase and improve their knowledge and skills. The museum strives to provide visitors – from more than 100 countries from around the world – with the opportunity to hear the history of Auschwitz in their own language. Museum guides give tours in over a dozen different languages. An additional option for visitors is to see the documentary film *Oświęcim – Auschwitz*, shown in several languages (English, German, French, Hebrew, Italian, Polish and Russian), as well as to hear an audio description of the history of Auschwitz II at the Gate of Death in Birkenau.

Specialised education

The specialised education programme offers an in-depth look at the subject of Auschwitz and the Holocaust, aimed at secondary school students, teachers and other professional, social and religious groups from Poland and abroad.

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All programmes intended for those visiting the memorial for the first time include a tour of the exhibition and terrain of the former camp, which takes place over two days. Additional activities, such as lectures, workshops, multimedia presentations or meetings with witnesses to history, are arranged for each programme individually.

The ICEAH implements projects that are prepared and carried out by the centre itself, and others created and implemented in co-operation with other institutions and organisations. One of the most successful projects is the postgraduate studies programme “Totalitarianism – Nazism – Holocaust”, in existence since 1998 and run in partnership with the Pedagogical University of Cracow. This programme is aimed at teachers of humanities, educators, museum employees and those who work for cultural and educational institutions. The programme lasts for three terms and includes 350 lesson hours. It consists of classes in history, literature, cinematic and art history, sociology and political science. Topics cover the birth of prejudice, stereotypes, anti-Semitism and hostility – and end with the meaning of the Holocaust as a warning of contemporary dangers.

The ICEAH organises multi-day seminars directed at specific audiences: teachers and educators, clergy, soldiers, doctors and university students. There are regularly organised one-day conferences dealing with selected aspects in the history of Auschwitz, for example: “The revolt of the *Sonderkommando*”, “The eviction of civilians living adjacent to the camp”, “The end-station – Alte Judenrampe” and many others. An important supplement to these projects are one or two-day study visits for students.

One and two-week courses on the history of Auschwitz and the Holocaust and how to teach these topics with multimedia course material are organised in co-operation with other institutions. The ICEAH works on these projects with the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, the Polish Ministry of Education, the Council of Europe, Pedagogical University in Cracow, Jagiellonian University and the Shoah Foundation Institute, among others.

The ICEAH is expanding programmes and projects directed at school-aged youth, dealing with regional and local topics, for example: “Auschwitz – my land. History and remembrance after 60 years.” This project allows young people to learn about the lands around Oświęcim and confront the history of Auschwitz. There is also a project entitled “Dried Roses” which focuses on searching for the material traces of the concentration and death camp.

The system of managing volunteerism and internships at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is considered one of the biggest successes of the ICEAH. The first pilot volunteer project created was “Oral History”. The goal of this project is to gather testimony from as many former prisoners of KL Auschwitz as possible, then to digitalise and archive the interviews so that they can be utilised for other initiatives at the ICEAH. Over 50 volunteers have taken part in this project since it began in 2006. A week’s training course in conducting interviews properly was held to prepare the volunteers for the project. Former prisoners welcomed this project warmly and enthusiastically. And, because this project allowed young volunteers to meet those who had had direct contact with historical events known to many only through textbooks, this project was and is uniquely educational.



The future seat of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Photo: Paweł Sawicki, PMA-B.

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Participants of the 4th Council of Europe Seminar on “Auschwitz and the Holocaust in the Context of Teaching Remembrance in Europe”, September 2009. Photo: Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka.



Participants of a seminar for educators from the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem during the workshop at the Preservation Department, June 2007. Photo: Bartosz Bartyzel.



2.3. A brief description of the exhibits at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim

The word “museum” features in the name of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. However, it must be remembered that this institution has in its care the world’s largest cemetery. Because of the nature of this place, it acts as a depository of collective memory and a source of various symbols. Thus, the typical functions of a museum are subordinated to its overarching role commemorating a place of extermination.

The activities of the exhibitions department are a fundamental aspect of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum as an institution. Furthermore, presenting its history by giving tours through the exhibitions and terrain of the former concentration camp is the most common way of learning about Auschwitz. This forms the basis for thorough educational work carried out in schools and universities, or in a wider environment.

The museum’s exhibits are presented in the original buildings of the former concentration camp. It was in these same buildings that prisoners were housed. And it is the authenticity of this place that determines the character of the main exhibition, expressed in a visually minimalist form. The creators of this exhibition decided not to use modern audiovisual forms of presentation. The current exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum has been open, almost unchanged, since 1955.

When the task of creating the museum was undertaken, it was decided that all museum activities, including exhibitions, would be conducted on the terrain of the former main camp, Auschwitz I. The SS opened this concentration camp on 14

June 1940, on the site of a pre-war Polish army base, consisting of well-built brick buildings. These buildings were easily adapted to the needs of the museum. The second part of the concentration camp – Auschwitz II-Birkenau – is located about 3 kilometres from the former main camp. Due to the nature of this site of mass murder, its immensity (176 hectares), and the types of buildings in this area, it was left intact as a special kind of reserve, sanctuary and place of reflection. Within this site are both the former facilities used for mass murder and the concentration camp with its primitive, mostly wooden, buildings. Thus, the exhibition at the former camp at Birkenau is limited to a system of stone memorials, tables, photographs, plans and signs, of which there are a few hundred, throughout the grounds of the former camp. A similar system is in place at the main camp and also on the railway platform located in the grounds of the freight station, between the Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau camps, where Jewish transports were unloaded from trains between the spring of 1942 and May of 1944.

Permanent exhibition

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The main exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is divided into two parts. The first part is dedicated to presenting the general history, which is an element of the standard guided tour of the former concentration camp. The second part of the exhibition consists of exhibits dealing with the deportation of citizens of individual countries to KL Auschwitz, as well as the political background behind this. These exhibits present information on the political and social situation in specific countries, in both the pre-war period and during the occupation. The scale of terror used during the occupation, the implementation of anti-Jewish policies, the resistance movement and the assistance that was provided to the oppressed in each country are also reflected in the exhibits. Finally, the exhibits focus on certain groups of deportees, highlighting people at the top of their field in culture, art, science and politics in each country.

The general exhibition is shown to visitors in its entirety, however some parts may be omitted due to rigid time constraints or the age of the people taking the tour. The standard tour covers both Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau, located in the village of Brzezinka. The exhibition is modest in terms of the visual presentation and it is geared toward the narration of the guide.

The standard museum exhibition is located in the former camp buildings that were used for housing prisoners – block numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 – and the crematorium I building. The interiors of these buildings, with the exception of block 11, have been partially adapted to meet the needs of the exhibits.

Block 4

The tour of the exhibition starts with block 4, where the exhibition entitled “Extermination” is located. In the first two rooms the two primary functions of Auschwitz are presented – as a concentration camp and an extermination camp for Jews. The reasons particular nationalities, including Jews, were deported to the camps are also presented in chronological order. The main part of the exhibition in block 4 describes the process by which Jews were deported to the camp and its culmination. It covers the conditions during transportation, the level of awareness of the victims, the “selection” of the newly arrived, the location of the extermination facilities, the process of mass murder in gas chambers, the burning of the victims’ bodies, and also, the plunder of the victims’ possessions brought to the camp in their baggage. In each of the rooms there are photographs, photocopies of camp documents, and original artefacts that help illustrate the theme of the exhibition. Particular attention should be paid to two tons of hair cut from the heads of women killed by gassing, a sample of the textile made from the hair of victims, the empty canisters that once contained the chemical used for murder in the gas chambers and a model of one of the crematorium buildings at Birkenau.

Block 5

The exhibition in block 5, entitled “Evidence of Crimes Against Humanity”, deals exclusively with the mass murder of Jews. This building contains an exhibit that is modestly described and commented on by the guide – a mass of everyday objects brought by the victims, convinced that they were being sent to work and start new lives. Infants’ clothing and the prosthetic limbs of the disabled – victims of “euthanasia” – deeply move and shock visitors, as do the piles of thousands of shoes, suitcases, cooking utensils, a variety of different brushes and other personal possessions taken from the victims’ baggage.

Block 6

The exhibition in block 6, entitled “The Life of the Prisoners”, shows the extermination of people of various nations through hunger, disease, work, terror, punishment, executions and appalling living conditions. The imagination of the visitor is awoken further by the sketches and pictures created by former prisoners. These images illustrate the everyday life of prisoners and the terror they experienced. In the room devoted to murder by starvation, there are large photos of women liberated from the camp who, four months after liberation, weighed around 23-35 kilograms. Lining the corridors of blocks 6 and 7 are registration photos taken at the camp. Prisoners who were later killed at the camp stare out from these photos, their eyes filled with terror, sadness and pain. The last fragment of the exhibition presents the tragic fate of children sent to the camps.

Block 7

In block 7, the living conditions of prisoners at the main camp are presented, detailing the phases the camp went through and how the living conditions changed. This building also contains a reconstructed fragment of a housing barrack found at Birkenau.

Block 11

Prisoners called block 11 the “Death Block” – it is the only building still in its original condition accessible to visitors. In the history of the camp this building played a special role, serving as the prison camp. The building’s cellar served as the location for the first attempt at mass murder by the SS, using hydrogen cyanide gas called “Zyklon B”. The original camp equipment and furniture in the prisoners’ quarters and SS officials’ rooms certainly make an impression. The camp prison was located in the cellar, where various punishments were imposed on inmates in the cells, often ending in their death. In the courtyard of block 11 is a wall where executions by shooting took place. Today this place serves as a memorial, where visitors light candles, leave flowers, religious symbols, and other expressions of remembrance and empathy, and where they observe a moment of silence for the victims of KL Auschwitz.

This visit to the main camp ends with a visit to the crematorium and gas chamber. This is the only crematorium not destroyed by the SS before they fled the camp.

National exhibitions

The national exhibitions have been at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum since 1960. They express the ideals of the International Auschwitz Committee. These exhibitions were created in co-operation with countries desiring to honour the citizens who were deported to KL Auschwitz. In accordance with guidelines created in the 1990s, these exhibitions are to have a historical character – they cannot repeat the information presented in the general exhibition, but should instead expand on the material already presented. Currently, there are 12 national exhibitions, each created in a unique style.

These include:

- Italian exhibition, opened in 1980, ground floor of block 21;
- Dutch exhibition entitled “The Persecution and Deportation of Jews from The Netherlands in the Years 1940-1945”, reopened after reorganisation in 2005, presented on the upper level of block 21;
- French exhibition entitled “Deportees from France to Auschwitz Concentration Camp: 27 March 1942-27 January 1945”, reopened after reorganisation in 2005, presented on the ground floor of block 20;
- Belgian exhibition entitled “Belgium 1940-1945: The Occupation and Deportation to Auschwitz Concentration Camp”, reopened after reorganisation in 2006, presented on the ground floor of block 20;
- Hungarian exhibition “The Citizen Betrayed: A Remembrance of Holocaust Victims from Hungary”, reopened after reorganisation in 2004, presented in block 18;
- Austrian exhibition opened in 1978, presented on the ground floor of block 17;
- Slovakian exhibition entitled “The Tragedy of the Slovakian Jews”, reopened after reorganisation in 2000, presented on the ground floor of block 16;
- Czech exhibition entitled “Prisoners from the Czech Lands in Auschwitz Concentration Camp”, reopened after reorganisation in 2002, presented on the upper level of block 16;
- Polish exhibition entitled “The Struggle and Martyrdom of the Polish Nation 1939-1945”, opened in 1985, presented in block 15;
- Russian exhibition entitled “The Liberation of Auschwitz Camp”, presented in block 14, opened after its reorganisation in 2010;

- Roma exhibition entitled “The Destruction of the European Roma”, opened in 2001 and presented in block 13;
- European Jews exhibition entitled “The Martyrdom and Struggle of the Jews in Europe from 1933 to 1945”, opened in 1978 and presented in block 27.

Exhibition in the “sauna” (Birkenau)

The only exhibition found at Birkenau is located in the “new” bathhouse, located at the far end of the camp. This exhibition is divided into two parts. The first part of the exhibition presents the historical function of this building as the place for the registration of newly arrived prisoners as well as its sanitary and “disinfection” function. The second part of the exhibition is a memorial. There you can find an array of family photos that belonged to Jews who were mainly from Będzin, a medium-sized city around 50 kilometres from the camp. This moving exhibition is a source for deep reflection. It shows the happy world of European Jews, destroyed as a result of the Holocaust. It is an extraordinary exhibition because all the documents, photographs and memorabilia found in the victims’ baggage were usually destroyed, burned in an oven created for that purpose in crematorium II at Birkenau. It is amazing and inexplicable that these photographs were saved and later found at the camp after its liberation.

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Main exhibition at Auschwitz I, archival photographs of prisoners who were killed in the camp. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.



Auschwitz I, fragment of the exhibition devoted to the fate of people deported from France. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.



Auschwitz I, fragment of the main exhibition – children's clothes. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.



Auschwitz I, fragment of the main exhibition – suitcases of Jews deported from different European countries. Archive PMA-B.

2.4. Visiting the museum

What are the possibilities and options for visiting the museum?

Museum visitors have at their disposal the sites and buildings of former concentration camps Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau. They have the opportunity to choose one of three tour options:

Standard guided tour: around 3.5 hours. This tour covers the former main camp Auschwitz I: the Death Wall in the courtyard of Block 11, the Death Block, gas chamber and crematorium I, and the main historical exhibition located in several former camp blocks. This historical exhibition presents information and artefacts dealing with the extermination of Jews, the material proof of the crimes, the life of prisoners, sanitary and housing conditions. At the former concentration camp Auschwitz II-Birkenau the visit includes: the Gate of Death, wooden and brick housing barracks, the unloading ramp where victims got off the train and the ruins of gas chambers and crematoria II and III.

One-day study tour: around 6 hours. This is a very detailed tour of both parts of the former concentration camps. It includes the ruins of all the gas chambers and crematoria, the remains of the first provisional gas chambers, a visit to selected national exhibitions and a visit to the so-called “Sauna” building, located at Birkenau, which contains exhibits.

Two-day study tour: 4 hours per day. The first day includes a detailed tour of the terrain and buildings of Auschwitz I, the main exhibition, and selected national exhibitions. Day two includes a detailed tour of the terrain and buildings of the Birkenau camp, including the “Sauna” building and the exhibits housed there.

It is also possible for groups to prearrange screenings of documentary films about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, lectures in the Department of Collections and Archives, and workshops on selected topics, from the history to the symbolism of Auschwitz.

Who is allowed to guide tours and why?

Touring the former death camp and current memorial site with a guide is the most common form of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. Only guides licensed by the museum and former prisoners are allowed to guide groups. The museum recruits candidates, organises courses to educate future guides and also holds exams for guides to obtain the museum licence. Guides must participate annually in a series of substantive and methodological training sessions to deepen their historical knowledge and improve their guiding skills. In this way, the museum is responsible for the content of what is transmitted to visitors and at the same time the guide can become professionally acquainted with the history and topography of the camp.

The museum has 255 professionally prepared licensed guides. These include 108 Polish language guides, 92 English language guides, 34 German language guides, 17 French language guides, 14 Italian language guides, 10 Spanish, 8 Russian, 6 Swedish, 3 Croatian and 3 Hungarian language guides. There is also at least one guide for the following languages: Slovak, Czech, Hebrew and Japanese.

The museum makes every effort to ensure that the work of its guides is not only to pass on information to the visitor, but also to allow the visitor opportunities for deep reflection on what they have seen and heard.



Study visit at Auschwitz I, students from the Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.
Photo: Bartosz Bartyzel.



Seminar for Czech teachers organised in co-operation with Terezin Memorial,
October 2007. Photo: Bartosz Bartyzel.

2.5. What is appropriate behaviour while visiting Auschwitz?

In preparing the group for a visit, the significance of the place they will visit must be highlighted. During these preparations, they learn about the different aspects of behaviour expected of young individuals during the visit. Here are some of them:

We are not here alone

Every day, including during the autumn and winter period, groups and individuals from around the world visit the Auschwitz museum. Among them are those who wish to see one of the places listed as a world heritage site by UNESCO, as well the people who come to face the history of the place where their close relatives suffered and died. Hundreds of thousands of young people visit this site. Visitors to Auschwitz come from all continents, represent various cultures and communities and express their emotions in different ways. One can see this through the various symbols of remembrance left: flowers, candles, stones, paper figurines, sculptures and other objects.

It must be remembered that in addition to one's own group there are also other visitors. Often the buildings that contain the museum's exhibitions are crowded. It is important to be conscious of the mass of emotions that accompanies a visit and to be tolerant of people who make your visit more difficult – by suddenly stopping and blocking your path, or by walking the wrong way. There are instances when other people's behaviour may surprise, or even disgust. Most of the time, this does not mean that the person does not have respect for the place, conversely it may be due to different traditions, the fact that they are deeply moved, and also not able to

contain their emotions. Almost everyone who visits this place comes of their own accord and with good intentions.

Silence

Auschwitz is one of the largest cemeteries in the world. This site elicits reflection and contemplation. The most accepted form of showing respect to the victims is to remain silent. However, this is not always possible, because visitors listen to their guides, ask questions and speak to one another. Asking questions and discussing the topic should not be avoided. However, it is best to choose a spot away from other groups and the path of the guided tours, so as not to disturb other visitors. In addition, at both Auschwitz and Birkenau there are places especially prepared for such discussions. However, in significant places such as the crematorium and gas chamber number 1, the cellar of block 11, and the courtyard of the “Death Block”, even the tour guides limit their comments to show respect to the victims. Silence allows one to more fully focus on and understand what happened at Auschwitz, while also showing respect to the victims, as well as to other visitors. As the attendance at the museum has been rising steadily from year to year it introduced a headset-based guide system. The headsets make listening more comfortable for visitors while reducing the noise level in the exhibition.

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Ceremonies and commemorations

Often visitors wish to pray, sing together, read a fragment from a memoir or some poetry. Visitors usually light candles or leave some other symbol of remembrance. This form of honouring the victims is of course acceptable, but the presence of other visitors must be kept in mind.

In order to hold large ceremonies where speeches are given, artists or groups perform using loud speakers, or other such equipment, it is necessary to seek a permit from the Małopolska Governor’s Office. The procedure to acquire such permission should be started at least one month in advance. However, this applies mainly to large ceremonies such as the anniversary of the liberation of the camp, National Memorial Day for the Victims of Nazi Concentration Camps, Roma Extermination

Remembrance Day and the anniversary of the death of Father Maksymilian Kolbe. All ceremonies are to honour the memory of the victims of the camp.

Helpful Signs



At the entrances there is an information board showing what is forbidden, which is helpful in determining what is permissible behaviour while visiting Auschwitz, and what is not. This information is also available on the museum's website. It must be remembered that the entire museum is a non-smoking zone. It is also not permissible to use mobile phones. Taking amateur photos and filming outdoors is allowed. Those who wish to document their visit by photographing or filming indoors must first get permission from the museum director. Furthermore, it is not permissible to take prams or buggies into buildings. Bicycles must be left on the racks in the museum car park. Finally, it is forbidden to take any animals, including dogs, into the former concentration camp.

Clothing

It is important to dress properly when visiting the museum. Clothing should be carefully chosen so that the weather – which is often cold – does not distract your attention from taking in the history of this place.

It can be suggested to young people about to visit Auschwitz to wear clothing that is toned down and to not wear things such as shirts with large slogans, extravagant outfits, clothing that unnecessarily draws the attention of other visitors, or items that cause offence. Simple fabrics, without patterns, are suggested. It is forbidden to visit wearing swimwear or with a bare midriff.

Tours of the former concentration camp in summer, as well as winter, include both indoor exhibitions and walking outdoors. Clothing must provide protection from the wind, snow, rain, both high and low temperatures and also the sun's rays. Visitors walk a route of around four kilometres. Indoors, visitors walk along concrete floors, however, the pedestrian paths outside the buildings are often gravel or asphalt. For this reason, visitors should wear comfortable, safe and durable shoes, preferably with a hard sole. Currently, the museum is not adapted to the needs of disabled visitors. Visiting using a wheelchair is made difficult due to the uneven original paving. It is necessary to carry the wheelchairs up the stairs and into the buildings housing the exhibition. If the group includes a disabled individual using a wheelchair, it is necessary to plan beforehand how to best assist this person during the visit.

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A place available to all

Auschwitz is one of the best-known sites in Poland, Europe and in the world. The museum does not charge for admission to a site of over 200 hectares and, as a result, problems can arise due to the fact that it is impossible to control the numbers entering the site. For this reason, it is imperative to listen to the guide at all times, pay attention to all posted signs and follow the directions of those employed by the museum, including the museum security guards who are responsible for the safety of visitors. Visitors who observe suspicious behaviour or items on the museum grounds should report this immediately to museum security.



Russian students from Moscow during a visit to Auschwitz II-Birkenau.
Photo: Archive International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

2.6. What are the main difficulties faced during visits to Auschwitz?

The Auschwitz museum, as a memorial located on the terrain of the former concentration and death camp, has an extraordinary way of drawing people. Currently, over 1 million people visit each year. More than 60% of visitors are school-aged youth, who take part in guided visits at the museum. Each person approaches the visit to the memorial differently; they have different expectations and levels of preparedness for being at the former camp. Unfortunately, many treat Auschwitz like a typical tourist attraction. These people come to the museum interested only in visiting another attraction in the canon of important and fashionable places to visit. Others come here to confront the reality behind what they have previously learned. The largest group consists of those who call themselves “pilgrims” and come to the site of the former camp not only to learn about its tragic history, but also to show the victims respect and empathy.

Most visitors come in organised groups. These groups of visitors are mainly young people whose goal in visiting Auschwitz is educational. Their goal is realised during the tour of the former camp with the help of a tour guide. The guides are properly prepared to work with young people and they are also specialists in the subject of the camp and its historical and sociological background. The guide has the role of a teacher and caretaker, who helps visitors understand the nuanced history of Auschwitz and the Holocaust and what it means today.

The mass movement of tourism creates a host of organisational problems, but also hinders the peaceful contemplation of the victims’ tragic fate. It is difficult to contemplate the fate of the victims while immersed in a slow-moving stream of people who have only a limited amount of time organised by their tour leader for

visiting the memorial. Another problem is the traumatic nature of the site. Many visitors suffer some level of shock when faced with the issues presented.

This is why problems during the visits should be divided into those of a technical or organisational nature and those with an emotional and behavioural character.

Problems of a technical and organisational nature

The main technical and organisational problem is the convergence of groups during particular time periods. This occurs mainly between the hours of 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., due to the fact that Polish school groups within 200 km of Oświęcim find this the best time to visit. In the late morning hours, visitors from abroad arrive from Cracow. They arrive individually, or in groups organised by local travel agencies. Many of these people take part in foreign language tours organised by the museum. However, some people visit the museum individually, not taking part in a tour and often not respecting the rules of the museum, thus causing difficulty for those on tours. The museum's Visitor Service Section limits the number of visitors during the critical hours. The best time for school groups to visit is in the morning between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., and in the afternoon between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

The exhibitions are located in the former prisoner housing barracks. Because of the buildings' previous function, conservation standards do not allow for the full adaptation of the buildings to fit the museum's needs and the current high level of visitor traffic. Movement is also made more difficult by the stairwells, because the exhibition is housed on different floors in the buildings. Navigating the stairs creates problems for the elderly, who constitute a significant percentage of visitors to the museum, particularly in the spring/summer season.

The most critical point in the exhibition is block 11, a building that was the internal camp jail, currently preserved in its original condition, where visitors must walk in narrow corridors. As a result, at the entrance to this building there are often groups queuing to enter. This means that more time is spent in this block, sometimes forcing the guide to skip certain parts of the exhibition and to present less information. This, above all, causes boredom, annoyance and a lack of concentration in young

visitors. Another “critical area” is block 4, where visits to the exhibition start. The display here illustrates the deportation and mass murder of the Jews. Because of the significance of the subject matter presented, it is not possible to omit this exhibition; in addition, it requires a large amount of information from the tour guide, which means that several groups can find themselves in a single room. A multi-language cacophony of guides’ voices can ruin the mood and proper experience of this site.

Another cause of congestion are groups on the typical whirlwind tours of Europe, organised by major international tourist companies. These groups usually have a very limited amount of time at the museum and make their visit in a speeded up or fragmented manner.

An added reason for crowding in the exhibition are groups of young visitors from abroad, consisting of over a hundred individuals. Mainly, these groups take the non-standard tours. This trend has intensified in recent years and its geographical reach has expanded. These groups dominate the exhibition and cause difficulty for other visitors.

A further problem is the fact that some visitors unconsciously, or otherwise, break the regulations that are in force for the whole of the former concentration camp. The aim of these regulations is to improve the educational process during visits to the former camp, to ensure the safety of visitors and to maintain an appropriate atmosphere of respect and empathy for the victims. These regulations cover safety and fire evacuation regulations, smoking, eating and drinking, unacceptable clothing, bringing dogs, and other behaviour that disturbs the peace and dignity of this site. Another difficulty is the common, but troublesome problem of the weather, including hard frosts, rain, or heat waves, which restrict the length of time spent outdoors, thus hampering the movement of visitors and cluttering exhibition pavilions.

Problems of an emotional and behavioural nature

Other kinds of difficulties that can emerge during a visit to the former concentration camp are of an emotional and behavioural nature. Visitors can be either overly sensitive, or show a lack of sensitivity. Some visitors to Auschwitz expect an uncommon experience while at the former death camp. Seeing the camp relics and having an

awareness of the tragedy that unfolded on this site are not enough to awaken their empathy for the victims. Frequently, they treat the subject superficially, by visiting the former camp individually and not taking part in a structured tour. A significant percentage of these emotionally unprepared “tourists” come during the summer holiday season. Generally, they lack knowledge and appropriate sensitivity. They are unable to cross certain barriers and take the trouble of intellectually analysing the nightmare of Auschwitz. This is also a problem that applies to some school-aged youth. The role of the teacher in preparing the students for a visit to such a traumatic place is very important. This means both emotional and historical preparation. The students should be informed about what they are going to see, what to expect, and what physical and emotional difficulties they should prepare for. Young people should also know what attitude is expected of them and how to behave in such an extraordinary place. The educator or group organiser should work with the guide, supporting him or her, in their work through careful observation of the group and disciplining them when necessary.

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Generally, teachers react properly in situations where students are overcome by traumatic emotions, crying, even in some cases becoming hysterical, and this can sometimes spread to others in the group. A teacher's comforting word and a supportive gesture can quickly reassure students who are feeling despair, pain and helplessness with which they cannot deal. A similar reaction is needed when supervising weary or impatient young people, who often lack basic knowledge and the historical context of these events. It is the teacher's responsibility, in preparing students for a visit to the former death camp, to go beyond the standard curriculum, and to show this event in a broader historical and sociological context – using literature, film or other forms of art. It is also important to note that young people come to the museum with many expectations, stereotypes and prejudices typical of the environment in which they live. These must be carefully defused.

A separate, rather large, group of visitors in this category are emotionally immature schoolchildren who visit the site of mass murder. This mainly involves students aged between 14 and 16 years old, predominantly from countries that were not affected by occupation and war on such a scale as Poland or countries of the former Soviet Union. The problem lies in including topics about the Holocaust and concentration camps at quite an early stage in their education. The most appropriate age for school aged youth to visit is between 17 and 19 years old.

An important part of the problem is that adolescence is an awkward time, on top of an assortment of typical teenage behaviour that occurs in peer groups. It must be remembered that rude behaviour from young people may be a way of hiding their true emotions from their peers. These young individuals may be filled with shock, fear, sadness or sympathy – but they do not want to show these emotions, demonstrating what looks like weakness, because they feel ashamed.

Sometimes they become bold and arrogant. The teacher is not without blame in this situation – they often overestimate their students' depth of perception, as well as their psychological strength and underestimate the need to prepare students for what they will see and learn in Auschwitz. That is why it is very important to discuss ways of dealing with emotions during preparations for a visit to the concentration camp. The teacher's expectations should be in line with the students' abilities. Experience shows that the students' attention runs low after about three hours of touring. That is why, before the teacher decides on a longer six-hour study tour of the concentration camp site, he or she must be sure their students are ready for this type of visit. Young people from countries where knowledge of the English language is generally good participate in tours in that language; this means that they must be more focused and fatigue sets in quicker. It also happens that sometimes the level of English knowledge is not high enough. Improper behaviour and the lack of concentration can also be linked to mental and physical fatigue, because of the crowded atmosphere in which the visit takes place.

Another common problem is the indifference of the teachers, both to the subject matter and the behaviour of their students. This attitude is highly reprehensible and the museum responds to it by sending a complaint about the teacher to his or her school. It is also sometimes the case that teachers are accustomed to certain behaviour from young people and they explain it away while at the memorial, saying that this is normal for these young people to behave in such a way.

Unfortunately, many students from Poland and abroad come to Auschwitz to learn about history, but are completely unprepared for the event. Their behaviour angers other visitors and the value of their visit to the death camp is uncertain.

A major problem is over-sensitivity, which can lead to emotional shock; this can adversely affect the psyche of a young person. This is why the museum begrudgingly accepts groups of students under the age of 14, however – if the group is

accepted – written permission from parents to visit the death camp is desirable and a “milder” version of the tour is offered. At the other extreme lies the concern about trivialising the martyrdom of hundreds of thousands of camp victims to the level of a virtual game in which nothing real happens.



In 2009, 1.3 million people from all over the world visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. Photo: Paweł Sawicki.

2.7. International youth meetings in Oświęcim

The idea that young people from various countries, mainly Poland and Germany, could discuss the difficult and sensitive problems of peace and international co-operation was born out of the work of a German organisation “Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace”. The institution that organises such meetings in Oświęcim is the International Youth Meeting Centre (IYMC), which was started in the second half of the 1980s. During its existence and in the course of its considerable activities, the IYMC has done much outside the framework of Polish-German meetings. Currently, the IYMC is developing programmes with partners from eastern Europe, other countries in the European Union, and countries from outside Europe. The IYMC’s work strongly references history. Both the shorter and longer programmes (those lasting several days) always include a tour of the former camp and other educational activities on the former Auschwitz site.

When planning an international meeting in Oświęcim, you can also use the experience of organisations other than the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the IYMC, which carry out work based on the camp’s history, such as the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer, the Jewish Education Centre, and the St Maksymilian Centre in Harmęże. All of these institutions have facilities in the form of seminar halls, libraries and exhibitions.

Several years of experience by Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum employees has shown that these meetings of young people should not take place during a visit to the former camp, but should instead be held before and after the visit. Getting to know the history of Auschwitz, visiting the memorial, and making contact with the museum guide should be done individually and the tragedy of the victims should be experienced personally. Every effort is put into allowing as many visitors as

possible to visit Auschwitz and to hear a guide's commentary in their own language, and to read the guidebooks about the exhibitions and sites of the former camp that are printed in over a dozen languages. Other events presented on site at Auschwitz include educational workshops, documentary film screenings, meetings with witnesses and the volunteer upkeep activities, usually carried out as a group.

It is a matter of course that proper preparation for these meetings includes getting to know not only the general history of the country from which the partner comes, but also local history. This is especially important in relation to meetings with young people from Oświęcim, whose relatives witnessed the events of the Second World War and repression by Nazi German administrators. It was they who were evicted from their own homes during the building of the camp, punished for working with the resistance, and punished for trying to help escaping Auschwitz prisoners. In the event of a first meeting while visiting Auschwitz, getting to know the exchange partner will decide the choice of group activities.

The places in which youth groups from various countries can meet have been listed above and are found in close proximity to the memorial site. There you will find trained staff and even teams working to provide educational support and help.

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In addition to the listed institutions, schools in and around Oświęcim have experience of projects dealing with international youth meetings. Thanks to this contact, Oświęcim's young people act as hosts to their peers from Germany, France, Italy, Holland and other countries. In recent years, following its opening, the State School for Higher Education in Oświęcim has also expanded its international contacts. The school is located a short distance from the museum and teaching about Auschwitz is one of the elements in the students' education.

When planning a meeting with local young people, the language in which it will take place must be stated. Students at local schools mainly learn the following foreign languages: English, German and French. There may be difficulty in organising Russian-speaking groups. At each meeting there must be an interpreter, who can help when there is a misunderstanding, or if there are those who do not understand the foreign language well. The success of the meeting is often decided by the precision and quality of the interpretation.

If the meeting is between young people from various countries and youth from Oświęcim and is part of the programme for the group while in Poland, it is vitally important that the groups truly get to know and understand each other.

In conclusion, it must be emphasised that meetings between young people in Oświęcim are necessary, but that they are also a difficult form of educational activity. It seems that particularly appropriate projects are targeted toward the future in answering the greatest challenges of the modern world.

2.8. Programmes offered by other Oświęcim-based institutions dealing with education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust

Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oświęcim

The idea of setting up the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oświęcim was born as a result of considerations, which were deliberated by members of the episcopate in meetings during the 1980s. They were seeking to find a solution to the problem of the location of a Carmelite convent near the former Auschwitz camp. The centre's creation was one of numerous initiatives undertaken in the spirit of Vatican Council II, to promote the Jewish–Christian dialogue. There was an apparent need to set up an information, education, meeting, and prayer centre for young people in the immediate vicinity of the former concentration camp, Auschwitz. This centre was established in 1992 as a Catholic institution, founded by the Archbishop of Cracow, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, in consultation with bishops throughout Europe and representatives of Jewish organisations.

The Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oświęcim mainly conducts discussions on the Shoah and the martyrdom of the Polish nation and other European nations during the period of National Socialism, as well as confronting these issues spiritually from a Christian perspective. Over time, the centre has become a place of reflection and exchange of ideas on the human condition, and its tendency to create both good and evil in the temporal and eschatological realms. The centre has also become a

place for meetings and interfaith discussion, based on the Gospel and teachings of the Church about undesirable phenomena in the modern world.

Since 1998, the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oświęcim has been mainly an educational institution, “a place to meet and exchange thoughts and prayers for all those touched by what happened at Auschwitz” – is how the director of the centre, Father Jan Nowak, describes its mission. “The centre commemorates the victims and contributes to creating mutual respect, reconciliation and peace in the world.”

Educational programmes

The main educational programme that has run for many years now is called “At the Threshold of Auschwitz”. The force behind this project is Father Manfred Deselaers who is – as he says himself – “a German priest who works at Auschwitz”. It is worthwhile listening to this man, because he gives us a sense of meeting at the threshold of Auschwitz:

Although our house is called the “Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Auschwitz”, it often seems that we should not start with either prayer or dialogue at this place. One should start with silence and listening, with a visit to the memorial sites, while listening closely to the “voice of the Oświęcim land”. This tangible encounter with the history is deeply moving to almost everyone. This is why the time one devotes to this place, and also to oneself, is so important. Also, in this we wish to help our guests – by creating an atmosphere of openness, friendship and peace in our house. It is our dream that those who visit Oświęcim and confront these terrible memories will also have a positive experience and feel mutual respect and a new hope after visiting.

Visitors to Auschwitz – individuals and groups – can take advantage of the overnight accommodation at the centre. The employees of this institution help visitors schedule their visits, they organise tours of the former Auschwitz camp, and help – at the request of the group – with other ways of getting to know the history of the camp.

The Centre for Dialogue also invites groups to take part in religious observations, organised regularly during Lent and Advent, or at the request of groups coming to Oświęcim.

Further educational programmes include international and inter-religious seminars, and meetings with former prisoners – both Christian and Jewish – for young people from Poland, Germany and other countries. During the seminars there are lectures by teachers from colleges, professors, priests and rabbis. The goal of this type of educational work is to promote Jewish–Christian dialogue.

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Based on information from the centre's website and information packs.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center

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Before the Holocaust, most of the residents of Oświęcim were Jews. Generations of merchants, rabbis, doctors and lawyers raised families here and contributed to a richly textured Jewish culture. The tragedy of the Holocaust suddenly ended the centuries-old Jewish life of the town.

In 1995, the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation was established in order to rebuild a Jewish cultural, spiritual and educational centre in Oświęcim. To make this possible, a sister organisation was created in Poland a year later, called the Auschwitz Jewish Education Center.

In September 2000, the Auschwitz Jewish Center officially opened. It is a non-governmental organisation that exists to serve as a guardian of Jewish memory. Dedicated to public education of future generations, the centre's programmes teach about the richness of pre-war Jewish life in Oświęcim that disappeared forever during the Holocaust.

Since August 2006, the centre has been affiliated with the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, in New York, USA.

The Jewish Center's facilities include:

Jewish Museum – memorialises Jewish citizens of Oświęcim, located in the family home of the Kornreich family adjoining the synagogue. The main exhibition presents almost 500 years of Jewish history, tradition and culture in Oświęcim.

Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue – the only surviving Jewish house of prayer in Oświęcim. The synagogue became the first Jewish communal property to be returned to a Jewish community in Poland and the recipients of the property, the Bielsko-Biala Jewish Community, donated the synagogue to the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation. Today, the restored Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue is a place for education, contemplation and prayer.

Education Centre – In addition to creating the exhibition on the history of Oświęcim's Jewish community, the centre also conducts many educational and cultural programmes such as: contests, readings, and meetings with esteemed scholars, writers, and artists. The initiatives are aimed at the local community, especially young people from Oświęcim and the surrounding area.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center is an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

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Based on information from the foundation's website.

The St Maksymilian Centre in Harmęże, near Oświęcim

The Franciscan Order founded the St Maksymilian Centre in Harmęże in the 1990s, as a sign of gratitude for the gift that was the life of St Maksymilian Maria Kolbe and his act of self-sacrifice, which took place in Auschwitz in 1941, when he offered his life in place of fellow prisoner Franciszek Gajowniczek.

The St Maksymilian Centre is a place of prayer, reflection, development and spiritual rest. It is there to remind us that in KL Auschwitz, which revealed the brutality of man, the great good of man was also manifested. The best example of this was St Maksymilian Maria Kolbe.

By coming to the centre, tourists and pilgrims have the opportunity to learn about the life of St Maksymilian in greater detail and, above all, the meaning and significance of his heroic death in the concentration camp. For individual groups, days of remembrance, retreats, study of St Maksymilian, and academic conferences are organised. The centre's main task is evangelical work inspired by the life and deeds of St Maksymilian.

While at the St Maksymilian Centre, it is worth taking the time to look at the elements associated with St Maksymilian and the former camp at Auschwitz. In the lower part of the church there is an exhibition by Marian Kołodziej – former prisoner of KL Auschwitz, number 432 – entitled “Memory's Images: Labyrinth”. After 50 years of silence, the exhibition's creator decided to acknowledge the tragic experience in the camp. The artist himself writes: “... this is not art, it is not pictures, it is not

words captured in drawings ... It is an homage to all of those who ended up as ashes.” – an enormity of expression and meaning. Visiting this exhibition helps one understand the abomination of Auschwitz.

In the upper church there is a painting of the Immaculate Virgin Mary from the Franciscan church in Lviv, before which young Maksymilian prayed. In front of this painting he swore an oath to the Virgin Mary, which he wrote about in one of his letters: “... I will fight for Her, but I did not know how”. In the chapel of the “Virgin Mary From Behind the Wires”, there is a figure of the Immaculate Virgin Mary created at the Auschwitz camp in 1940 by prisoner Bolesław Kupiec – camp number 792 – from Poronin, Poland. In addition, located in the church are memorial plaques dedicated to clergy who perished at KL Auschwitz.

Contact:

St Maksymilian Centre

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Based on information from the centre's website and information packs.

International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim

The International Youth Meeting Centre (IYMC) in Oświęcim is an educational centre that deals with extracurricular historical and political teaching; where reflection on the history of Auschwitz-Birkenau provides a path towards Polish–German reconciliation and where there is a desire to “educate after Auschwitz”.

IYMC began its work in 1986 with the firm conviction that knowledge and understanding of history makes the creation of a better future possible. The idea for the IYMC in Oświęcim began almost 20 years earlier. It was the brainchild of a German organisation called Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace (ARSP), that had organised study trips for German youth to Auschwitz in the 1960s. From the very beginning,

the centre's educational work focused on the tragic historical events and meetings with Poland as a neighbour.

The first Polish–German programmes took place in 1991. Since then, there has been an increasing number, each with a newer character and form. Over time, the programme changed and started to include participants from the Ukraine, Lithuania, Austria, Israel and France – a vital element of the study groups is the centre's educational work. The IYMC is a place for meetings and dialogue, breaking boundaries and stereotypes and also a place for fun and relaxation, because it was created for young people, keeping their future in mind.

Currently, about 160 groups, mainly from Germany, visit the centre. From year to year, the number of visitors from other countries grows. The IYMC organises seminars for students, conferences for teachers, workshops and exchange programmes for young people.

While visiting Oświęcim, young people not only have the opportunity to visit the former camp Auschwitz, but also to meet former inmates of concentration camps, take part in a historical tour of Oświęcim, and visit the Jewish Center. The IYMC also organises one-day trips to Cracow that include the Jewish history of the city. Every group that takes part in a programme offered by the IYMC is under the educational care of one of the centre's staff from the moment they arrive and register.

It is imperative that each group leader works with one of the centre's educational staff, to set out a detailed programme for visiting Auschwitz, taking into account the nature of the group and its specific needs. During the course of the programme, a staff member is always available for the group to help with any educational and organisational problems.

There are three large hotel buildings for the guests of the International Youth Meeting Centre that can accommodate a total of 100 individuals in two, three, four and five-person rooms. In the summer, a campsite is also available. For those taking part in longer educational visits, large seminar rooms are available. Audio-visual equipment is also available, as well as a library that includes both books and videos. In the media room, users can use computers with access to the Internet at no extra cost. The "House of Silence" – a place for meditation, reflection, and ceremonies – is located in the garden.

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Based on information from the centre's website and information packs.

Roma People's Association in Poland

The primary purpose of the Roma People's Association in Poland, which was founded in 1992, is to act to create appropriate conditions to assure full participation of the Roma in Polish public life. Perennial stereotypes have strengthened the negative image of Roma in the society. In response this association carries out active multidirectional activities which aim to improve the social, economic, and cultural situation of the population. One of the main goals of the association is to remember and commemorate the extermination of Roma during the Second World War.

Educational activities of the Roma People's Association in Poland

The association promotes and supports all activities which aim to present the heritage and value of Roma culture. By organising educational meetings, concerts, festivals, meetings with Roma cultural organisations and conferences, as well as implementing its own cultural and research projects, the association brings Roma cultural heritage closer to the community. The Roma People's Association in Poland also provides access to its library and archives.

Educational activities of the Roma People's Association in Poland also include:

- organising meetings and lectures for young people to disseminate knowledge about Roma history, tradition, and culture;
- organising annual ceremonies (2 August) on International Roma Extermination Remembrance Day;
- documenting the fate of the victims of Sinti and Roma extermination (such as collecting interviews with eyewitnesses and Roma victims of Nazi repression);
- organising exhibitions in co-operation with cultural and research institutions, municipal authorities, and non-governmental organisations;

- publishing projects;
- publishing the sociocultural monthly magazine Dialog-Pheniben, devoted to Roma culture, tradition and the idea of tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

The latest educational project which the Roma People's Association in Poland has participated in is the project "What do we need tolerance for?", implemented in partnership with the Jewish Center in Oświęcim. This is a cycle of seminars devoted to tolerance, organised in the vicinity of Auschwitz and aimed at students and teachers from secondary schools in Małopolska and Upper Silesia.

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www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.pl (Polish only)



Pope Benedict XVI meeting youth in the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer, May 2006.
Photo: Archive Centre for Dialogue and Prayer.



Project “We remember – Zochrim” in front of the Auschwitz Jewish Center. Photo: Tomasz Mól.

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Centre for Dialogue and Prayer, May 2006. Photo: Archive Centre for Dialogue and Prayer.



International Youth Meeting Centre. Photo: Archive International Youth Meeting Centre.



The seat of the Roma People's Association in Poland. Photo: Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka.

After the visit.....



3.1. How to evaluate the visit

The teacher will have worked very closely with one of the guides at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and they will assess together how the visit went, how the students reacted and the types of questions that were asked. This co-operative approach makes the guide part of the educational process.

A visit to Auschwitz can be evaluated in three stages:

- time for reactions;
- time for reflection;
- time for sharing knowledge with others.

Cognitive aim: to allow students to express what they learned during the guided tour and thus to share and build on what they know about the Holocaust and Auschwitz.

Teaching aim: to make the connection between the visit to a place of remembrance and the knowledge that the students already possessed; to let emotional responses take a back seat while the students study hard data in relation to Auschwitz (facts, figures, dates and information on Jewish life before the Holocaust).

Educational aim: to promote thinking about humanity and its limitations, and what can possibly be learned from an experience such as visiting Auschwitz.

Time for reactions

The teacher can organise a debriefing session immediately after the group leaves the camp, on the way back to ordinary life – if possible it should take place on site or in the coach, so that the experience will end with a chance for the students to

express themselves freely and to hear some words of comfort from the teacher if necessary. Having been required to curb their behaviour to a certain extent, and to observe silence in some parts of the camp, the students will need to talk about their feelings and impressions. Teachers should bear in mind that the purpose of bringing a class to Auschwitz is not to “teach them a lesson” in the punitive sense, nor to chastise them, move them to tears, subdue or “traumatise” them as a preventive measure.

The teacher can allow each student who wishes to speak to do so. To conclude, the group can recap on what they see as the key ideas, expand on them, discuss them, consider them from a humanistic, democratic perspective and make connections with the present day.

Time for reflection

The questionnaire for the students to fill in will have been distributed to them on the coach on the way to the camp, although they will have been asked not to fill it in during the tour so as to be able to concentrate on what they see.

The teacher can ask them to fill it in as soon as possible after the trip and they can then have a discussion about it during the next class with one of the teachers who accompanied them to Auschwitz.

Should marks be given for this work or not? The arguments in favour of an evaluation by marking are that it promotes study of the Holocaust as a historical topic and counters a tendency to regard it as a “sacred subject”, thus impeding study. Moreover, this is a subject of such importance to the students in relation to their lives and their future – possibly more important than anything else they will study during the year – that it would be unfair if their work on it were not to count in terms of marks.

Likewise, the level of preparation, the amount of reading and the personal investment required of students is immense and it would be a pity not to reward it.

The teacher may wish to structure the discussion with the students to broaden the perspective from what they saw and how they reacted to it, to a wider-ranging

exploration of the absurdity of the Holocaust and the risk that something like it could happen again in today's society.

Time for sharing knowledge with others

The third stage brings in the dimensions of citizenship and of how to commemorate the students' trip to Auschwitz: how can 15-year-olds, who have become links in a chain of knowledge, attempt to pay homage to the victims of Nazi barbarism?

One way of evaluating how well the students have assimilated information about the Second World War and the Holocaust is to set up an exercise for passing their knowledge on – for example to an invited audience of parents, as an event to present to an old people's home, or in the form of a presentation to a class of younger students who did not have the opportunity of visiting Auschwitz.

3.2. Getting back to normality after a visit to Auschwitz

There are two aims in this session: to ensure that the trip to Auschwitz gave the students a starting point for discussion of more general political issues and to ensure that they have actually “left” Auschwitz. The teacher needs to check that it is not something they cannot get out of their minds: that they have not come back despairing of human nature, mistrustful of their own species and wary of the future and that they have managed to grasp something of the complexity of the world and the general issues and systems that the Holocaust calls into question. Are they capable of looking at the Holocaust as a historical episode (which came to an end in 1945) and distinguishing the various universal themes that it embodies (on the basis of their own life experience and of the world news that the media delivers to them on a daily basis)?

Can they make the connection between the functioning of a political system and the behaviour of individuals with personal responsibility, in a society where students seem, as rule, more interested in defending their own rights and presenting themselves as eternal victims rather than being mindful of any duties? What did they learn about humankind?

Since visiting Auschwitz, have they thought about how to put their own problems in perspective, recognising the difference between vexation and disaster and the fact that there are certain irresolvable and truly serious human events to which, as human beings, they cannot turn a blind eye?

This session can take place in civic education, philosophy or religion classes (in the form of a debate) although it can equally well form the basis of a literature class (if the subject is handled in a dissertation) or an art lesson (on the theme of building

a post-Auschwitz society). The session will be in three parts, already familiar from the preparatory session on “Individual and collective meaning”.

Individual meaning

The replies to these questions may be kept confidential if the students so wish.

In the preparatory session on “Individual and collective meaning”, the teacher suggested that each student should set out to find the answers to a number of questions framed in relation to his or her own life experience. What did the students come up with? In what ways can an individual student make a difference in society after visiting Auschwitz? What is a young person to do with this piece of cultural heritage – this stock of knowledge and experience that he or she, through an accident of the school curriculum, has been given to hand on?

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Collective meaning

What have been the specific effects of making the trip as a class group, rather than individually?

What consequences might result from this collective project both for the class and for the school?

Are the students glad or sorry that their class went to Auschwitz?

Meaning for society

How does Auschwitz make us reflect on the way we live in society? What sort of society do we want to build today? What current aspects of our society hark back directly or indirectly to the concepts that made Auschwitz possible? Themes here may include dehumanisation, exclusion, anti-Semitism, racism, discrimination,

elimination, competitiveness, propaganda, human rights, freedom of expression and the practice of scapegoating.

Through exploration of these three aspects, teachers can confirm that their students' approach is one based on empathy – that is, that they can stand back from what they saw and go on living in their own society without being traumatised or intellectually paralysed by the fact of the Holocaust, but that they will not forget the scale of what occurred, the images that they saw or what they felt about the experience.

3.3. Various activities for students after their visit to Auschwitz

Goals

The purpose of these workshops is to situate the visit to Auschwitz firmly within a structured curriculum, taking a perspective that is broader than the study of Nazism and the Second World War, and supporting the students after their visit to Auschwitz so that they can integrate the experience into the process of learning to be a responsible citizen and a future adult. It is important that students should not be left alone with their new historical burden and that they should be able to use this type of knowledge about the past in the process of building a humanistic, democratic society.

The cognitive aim is to learn to give an account of information acquired on a visit to a real place of remembrance. The teaching aim would be to connect the indirect teaching provided in the place of remembrance with various forms of expression and communication. The educational aims are to make a link between the past and the present; to make students aware that they are active citizens and of the fact that visiting Auschwitz is an act of citizenship.

Writing workshops

Suggested themes

Write a letter to the survivor whom you met.

Write about your feelings in the form of a letter of protest, or a cry of revolt.

Write about what you, from the starting point of your own situation, would like to do with what you have learned.

Write out two pages of questions about everything that concerns or worries you, or makes you fearful, in relation to Auschwitz. Do not try to answer the questions.

Maintain contact with another young person whom you met at Auschwitz.

Drawing workshops

Two suggestions

Use drawings to express what you felt during the visit.

Analyse works of art produced in Terezin, Auschwitz or other camps in the region and consider the various functions of art in the world of the concentration camp.

Journalism workshops

Suggested themes

Produce an “underground” newspaper for young people, reflecting the situation today and using modern means of communication and up-to-date technology. What can people do today to resist racism and anti-Semitism?

Video workshop

Set up a video team and teach them to film, conduct interviews and edit their material.

Suggested themes

Produce a report based on accounts from young people who took part in the trip, either in the form of an edited travel blog, or as a series of interviews on a theme (for example, the entire class could tell the story of Auschwitz to someone from a completely different culture).

Drama workshop¹⁴

- A series of role-playing activities could illustrate the transition through the stages of group culture and stereotyping to exclusion and ultimately extermination, but they could also depict impossible choices and traps, and the perversity of a system that seeks to make its victims culpable. The aim of these role-playing games is to bring out the exceptional nature of the Holocaust and the impossibility of identifying with it, whether as persecutor or victim.

- Forum Theatre

Using the Forum Theatre method (also known as “Theatre of the Oppressed”), the students act out scenes from everyday life, taking as their theme various forms of resistance and also the different elements that contributed to the Holocaust.

The concept of Forum Theatre involves a group of students acting out various real situations and then giving other students an opportunity to take the roles of protagonists in the drama in order to present different points of view, solutions or possibilities.

14. Teachers who are uncomfortable with the use of role play can tackle the same themes using more traditional classroom methods.

3.4. Suggestions for inter-disciplinary projects on the relationship between Auschwitz and the present day

Goals

The idea here is to analyse the various systems that came into play in the Holocaust. How did we get to such a point? What lines had to be crossed in order to end up exterminating human beings and ultimately entire sections of society? An analytical approach will serve to universalise study of the Holocaust, by considering both the lead-up to this unique historical event and its aftermath. The aim is to dissect the process, beginning at the end – that is with the results that the Nazis achieved – in order to demonstrate how it worked and to pick a number of key concepts for further exploration with the students.

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Exercises

First exercise to be conducted with the students: 15 minutes

Describe in a few sentences what the Holocaust was. Outline the processes and stages involved (racism, stereotyping, propaganda, dehumanisation, discrimination,

exclusion, isolation, rejection, violence, ghettoisation, “concentration” and extermination). Then try to identify the factors that allowed the Holocaust to occur, list them and group the students’ responses under three headings:

- relations between oneself and others;
- phenomena that require a first-person response – that is, concerning “me” or “us” (as a group);
- rules for living with other people: the self, the group and others.

Example of a list produced in this exercise:

“Me” and “them”:

Differences and similarities between individuals

“Identity” as a term embodying two apparently contradictory concepts: each individual’s identity is what makes him or her unique, yet the same word is used to describe likeness – the fact of being “identical”

Construction of a cultural identity

The naturalisation of culture

Fear of “the alien” and xenophobia

“Me” and “us”:

Groups

Majorities and minorities

Stereotypes

Effects of the group dynamic on four possible fronts – exclusion (rejection), integration, assimilation and indifference

How can we act on these four fronts in the light of what we have learned about the Holocaust?

Scapegoats

The question of individual freedom within the group

Sectarianism

“Me”, “us” and “them” – living within society:

Democracy and what secures it (freedom of the press, freedom of opinion, etc.)

Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes

Human rights

What values do we choose to defend? The question of cultural relativity and choice

How can an individual change the world from his or her humble position as an ordinary citizen or a teenager?

Depending on the class and on the teacher's own interests, he or she may choose to devise further exercises around the ideas that the students outline.

1. "Me" and "them"

An exercise for use with students aged between 8 and 15 years.

Having established what goes to make up a cultural identity, the students each state in turn one component of culture. The teacher then asks each student, as homework, to decorate a place name card or a T-shirt with 10 or so pieces of information about the student's own cultural identity (using collage, drawing or painting, for example).

A different exercise entails trying to find as many differences and similarities as possible between various students.

Conundrum: why is it impossible to accuse someone of being "different"?

Two replies:

1. mutual difference is a constant state, you are different from me because I am different from you, so I cannot accuse you of being "different" because I bear just as much responsibility for the difference as you do;
2. we are all unique, so inevitably we are all different.

Work can be done on the various components of culture, such as dress, food, music, dance, beliefs, schooling, work, relations between the generations and sexuality (bearing in mind that some people were deported to Auschwitz on account of their sexual orientation), using films, photographs, personal accounts or presentations about young people in today's world.

Using the “differences and similarities” approach in relation to each component of culture is a means of facilitating work on the concept of groups. It demonstrates that many types of group can be envisaged, depending on the criteria used for comparison, and that labels have no absolute or definitive value.

The aim of these exercises is to reduce the fear of “otherness” – enabling students to regard “others” not as irreconcilably different from themselves but as complex human beings, with whom they can identify points of similarity just as easily as points of difference, depending on their perspective.

II. “Me” and “us” (the group)

An exercise on the geographical origins of the class members’ ancestors, based on interviews with their parents or grandparents, opens up discussion about how different countries are populated. The concept of being “a native” can be challenged and shown to be invalid because, in most cases, we find that successive waves of immigration, for political, economic, military or environmental reasons, have created a population mix. Some students who regard themselves as “natives” will discover that they have an ancestor who came from a different region (see Student handout 3.4a).

Two themes for discussion:

- how to find out about and share students’ rich individual cultural heritages;
- examining how the concept of “purity” was used by the Nazis in a racial context, and the consequences.

A practical exercise on the different kinds of relationship between “self” and “group”: exclusion, integration, assimilation, indifference.

Given that every individual belongs to various groups, try to list as many groups as possible to which each student belongs.

The risks of stereotyping:

List the stereotypes of people from other European countries. Obviously these stereotypes present a false and simplistic vision of complex national realities.

Alternative discussion exercise:

How could groups become dangerous to individuals and to society?

What are the different forms of exclusion in our society?

III. Living together: “me”, “us” and “them”

Working with extracts from the transcripts of the Nuremberg trials and documents like the European Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ask the students:

1. to identify what characterises a democratic regime and an authoritarian regime;
2. to find definitions of propaganda, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and freedom of information, censorship, human rights, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Practical exercise on one of two themes:

1. Draft a constitution for a “children’s republic” with all necessary safeguards for children’s’ rights;
2. Working from the example of the Righteous among Nations (non-Jews who assisted Jews during the Holocaust), consider how each of us can be active as a citizen defender of human rights in a democratic system and in an authoritarian system.

Conclusion

It is better to act than to react.

Using the earlier analysis of factors that contributed to the “final solution” or allowed it to happen, what do responsible citizens need to recognise, of what should they be wary, and of what should they be mindful?

Two guiding ideas:

- the importance of taking an interest in what is happening here and elsewhere, being curious about everything, seeking to understand and making connections both with the past and with other contemporary realities;
- “making a difference” means refusing to be indifferent, and accepting one’s role as a citizen of the world.



Student handout 3.4a

Example of an interview for students to carry out.

Your personal cultural background

1. Who are you interviewing?
2. What is his or her full name?
3. Where does the interviewee live? Where do you live? Has he or she always lived there/in this region/in this country?
4. In what regions or countries did your parents live? And your grandparents? And your great grandparents? And earlier generations?
5. In what year did your family arrive in this region? And in this country? Where did they settle when they arrived?
6. Why did they leave their region or country of origin?
7. What jobs did your grandparents do? And your great grandparents?
8. Do members of your family still do the same type of work (parents, uncles, aunts)?
9. What language did they speak?
10. Does anyone in your family still speak that language? Do you speak it?
11. Did they dress differently? What did they wear?
12. What sort of home did your ancestors live in? Did they live in a town, or city, or in the countryside?
13. What festivals or ceremonies are celebrated in your family?
14. What do you eat on those days?

Would you like to bring in a family recipe for a speciality from your region or country, an object of your choice connected with your family history, or a family photograph that you particularly like?

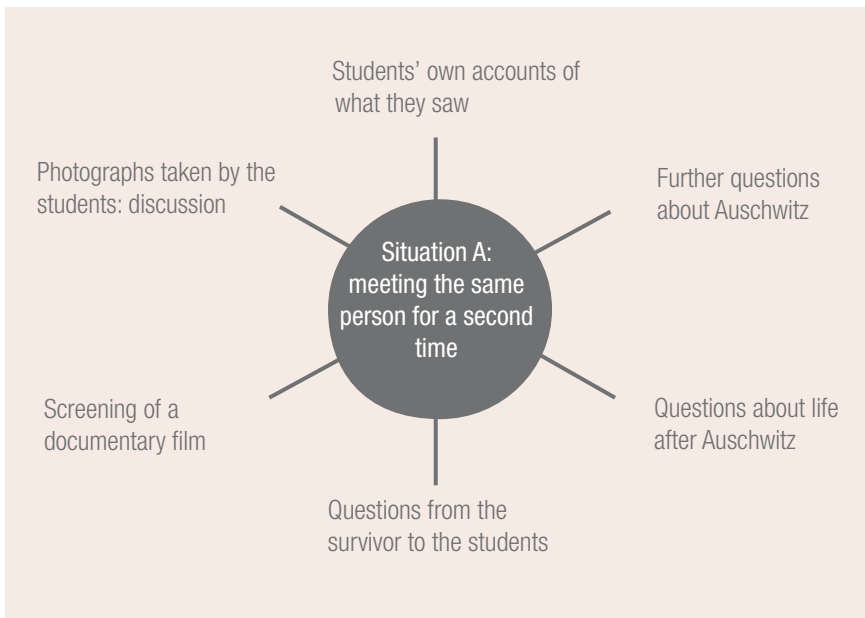
3.5. Meeting a survivor

This will be a different type of meeting from the one that took place at the preparatory stage.

There are two possible scenarios:

A: the students will have met a survivor already, before their trip to Auschwitz, and they will meet the same person again after the trip; or

B: the students did not meet a survivor before making the trip.



Where the students are meeting the survivor for a second time, the aim will be to structure exchanges between two people who have been to Auschwitz – one as a deportee and the other as a member of a student group. Sharing ideas suggested by photographs that were taken in the camp can be a means of linking the two radically different experiences of deportation and of participation in a study trip, while also situating the events historically.

The young people can express what they felt about Auschwitz and can put further questions, not only about life in the camp but also about the period after the Holocaust, about the resilience of the survivor and how he or she has become involved in the community and about his or her emotions and life today.

The survivor will also have an opportunity to question the students about what they understood, what they saw, what has stayed with them and what they want to do with it.

Concluding the session by watching one of the documentary films *The Platform in Birkenau* or *The Sonderkommando* will bring a broader perspective to the survivor's account.

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Where the students are meeting a survivor for the first time, the teacher will ask each member of the class to prepare two questions (based on their visit to the camp), but care must be taken that the survivor has a chance to relate what happened to him or her before he or she arrived in Auschwitz. The teacher must ensure, in particular, that there is balanced communication between the two sides in the encounter – the survivor and the students.

Notetaking and critical appraisal of the source will be based on the guidelines suggested in Section 1.5.

3.6. Activity – “There is a station they reach, from wherever they came...”¹⁵

“Visitor! Observe the remains of this camp and meditate: from whatever country you are from, you are not a stranger. Do not make your trip useless, and do not make our death useless. For you and for your children, the ashes of Auschwitz should be a warning: the horrible effect of hate, of which you have seen traces, must not be new seed for tomorrow or forever.”

Primo Levi, *If this is a Man*

Introduction

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This lesson aims to sum up the visit to the Auschwitz museum. The lesson plan includes activities that not only look at the knowledge presented by the museum guide, but also at the emotions experienced by the students. It is important that students who have visited the museum are not left alone with the traumatic information; they need a chance to talk about their experiences – and sometimes to “calm” their emotions. This lesson is dramatically based, with students taking on roles, thus creating an opportunity for “calming”.

Goals of the lesson

At the end of the lessons the student should:

- know how to use the knowledge gained by visiting Auschwitz;

15. Charlotte Delbo, *None of Us Will Return*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1995.

- expand their knowledge about the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp;
- be able to define Auschwitz as a death factory;
- realise and understand the tragedy of the Jews at Auschwitz;
- be able to describe the particular role Auschwitz played during the Holocaust;
- understand the uniqueness of the mass murder of Jews during the Holocaust;
- know that this is the largest Jewish cemetery;
- get to know what Auschwitz was, through chosen excerpts from literature;
- understand the role of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum for future generations.

Teaching notes

- The subject will be presented during two lessons (90 minutes).

Teaching methods

- Discussion
- Analysing fragments of texts
- Elements of drama (the student taking on a role, sculptures, discussions about the “sun” and “tunnel of thoughts” exercises).

Educational materials

Photos of museum relics (“memorabilia” from prisoners):

- Teaspoon (Student handout 3.6a)
- Suitcase (Student handout 3.6b)
- Painting by a prisoner (Student handout 3.6c)
- Shoe (Student handout 3.6d)
- Photograph from before the camp was established (Student handout 3.6e)

Fragments of texts from literature on Auschwitz:

- Imre Kertesz, *Fateless* (Student handout 3.6f)
 - Charlotte Delbo, *None of Us Will Return* (Student handout 3.6g)
 - Primo Levi, *If this is a Man* (Student handout 3.6h)
 - Elie Wiesel, *Night* (Student handout 3.6i)
 - Tadeusz Borowski, “The People Who Walked On” (Student handout 3.6j)
 - Maria Czapska, “Camps”, in *Star of David* (Student handout 3.6k)
 - Seweryna Szmaglewska, *Smoke Over Birkenau* (Student handout 3.6l)
 - Zofia Nałkowska, “The Adults and Children of Auschwitz”, in *Medallions* (Student handout 3.6m)
- Small self-adhesive cards
 - A medium-sized round card with the caption: “Museum Auschwitz”
 - Motto: fragment of Primo Levi’s text – used during the lesson however desired; for example, shown on a screen using a projector
 - Cards with “I cannot imagine (that).....” written on them

Lesson plan

Activity 1

Divide the class into pairs. In each pair, one student takes the role of a museum visitor while the other plays a friend. The role of the visitor is to tell the friend about what he or she saw. All groups work simultaneously.

Next, the teacher chooses five or six “friends” and asks them to talk about what they heard.

An example of what the “friend” might say: “My friend told me about what he or she saw – the ruins of the crematorium. He or she couldn’t imagine the burning of people there.”

Activity 2

Students must write a word describing their feelings about visiting Auschwitz on a small self-adhesive card. After they do so, put a round, medium-sized piece of paper on the floor with the caption “Konzentrationslager Auschwitz”. Collect the cards from the students and arrange them in a “sun” pattern. Its longest arm has the most important meaning for the participants. Examples of descriptions: moving, inhuman, tragic, unimaginable, etc.

Activity 3

Divide the students into five groups. Give each group a picture of a museum relic (Attachments 1-5)

Group I – teaspoon (Student handout 3.6a)

Group II – suitcase (Student handout 3.6b)

Group III – a painting by a prisoner of Auschwitz (Student handout 3.6c)

Group IV – prisoner’s shoe (Student handout 3.6d)

Group V – a photograph from “pre-camp times” (Student handout 3.6e)

Each group is to tell the story behind each of the relics (for example: how it got to Auschwitz, what happened to it in the camp). After about eight minutes, the students will present their stories.

In their narration, students should tell an individual’s story built around the “relics”, based on their experience at the museum.

Activity 4

Give the students the excerpts of the literary works – each student receives one text (Student handouts 3.6f to 3.6m). Ask the students to choose one sentence from each of the texts, which in their opinion is the most important. Then, have the students read each of their chosen sentences out loud.

Note that if 35 people are in the class, four or five students will get the same text.

Activity 5

Give the students cards on which one sentence is written: “I cannot imagine (that).....”.

Ask each student to finish the sentence. Have some of the students read out their sentences. End the activity with a short discussion.

Activity 6

Choose five students to be “the sculptors”. The rest of the students will be the “sculptor’s material”. The job of the “sculptors” is to create a large sculpture memorialising the victims of Auschwitz. Tell the students to compare their work with the existing memorial at Auschwitz.

Note that this activity is optional; it is to be done with students that are emotionally mature.

Activity 7

Propose that all the students stand in two rows, across from each other. One student is chosen to play the role of a former camp inmate. The two rows of students form a “tunnel” through which the former inmate is “taking a stroll” down the so-called “Tunnel of Thoughts”. The teacher walks around the outside of the tunnel and puts his or her hand on one student’s shoulder. The “chosen” student has to say something to the “prisoner” – for example: “I sympathise with you”, “I cannot imagine your suffering”, etc.

Note that the goal of this activity is, on one hand, to try and take on the role of someone who survived Auschwitz and, on the other, to try to imagine a meeting with such a person. It is very important to discuss the activity later.

The student that played the role of the prisoner should be asked, “How did you feel in this role?” The question for the rest of the students to answer should be if it would be easy for them to speak to a former prisoner.

Activity 8

Conclusion: propose a short discussion on the following topics:

- What should Auschwitz mean to future generations?
- Discuss the lesson’s motto.

Homework

Write a report about your visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.



Student handout 3.6a: Teaspoon. Photo: Tomasz Pielesz, © MCEAH, PMA-B.



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Student handout 3.6b: Suitcase. Photo: Tomasz Pielesz, © MCEAH, PMA-B.

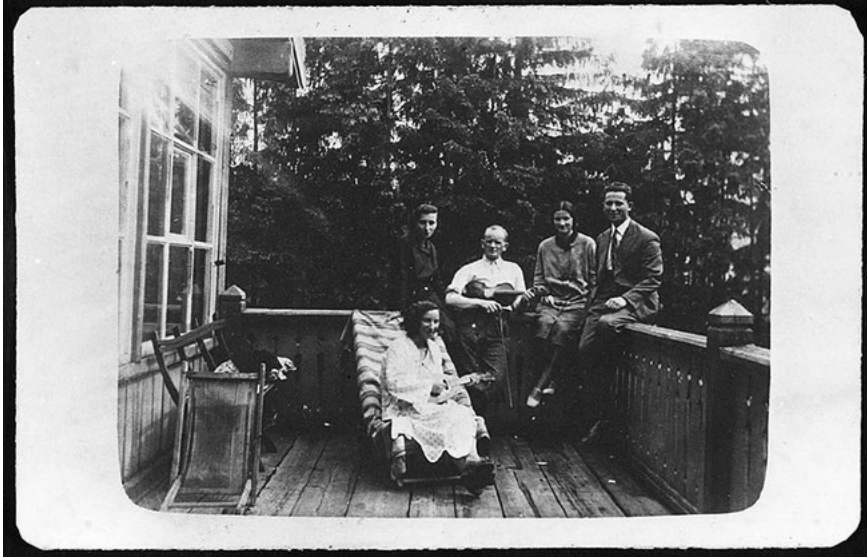


Student handout 3.6c: Painting made by a prisoner, © PMA-B.

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Student handout 3.6d: Shoe. Photo: Tomasz Pielesz, © MCEAH, PMA-B.



Student handout 3.6e: Photograph from before the camp was established, © PMA-B.



Student handout 3.6f

There across the way our fellow travellers were being burnt – all those who had asked to be transported by car, all those who had been judged “unqualified” by the doctor because of age or any other reason, all the children with their mothers, as well as any expecting mothers who, as they said, were “showing it”. From the station they had also gone to the baths. They too were informed about the hangers and the numbers, and the whole procedure was just like ours. They also saw the barbers, I was told, and they also received a piece of soap. Then they also reached the showers, where I heard that there were the same pipes and showerheads, yet it wasn’t water, but gas that poured down on them. All this I didn’t learn at once, but bit by bit, with the constant addition of new details, some questioned, some reaffirmed, some elaborated upon.

I also heard that during the process they were treated cordially, were even surrounded by care and affection. The children played ball and sang, and the place where they suffocated to death was surrounded by beautiful lawns, arbours, and flowerbeds. That is the reason why all that somehow reminded me of a student’s practical joke. Besides, this impression was reinforced when I remembered how cleverly they had got me undressed and redressed with the simple idea of the hangers and the numbers and how they scared everyone who possessed valuables with the notion of an X-ray machine, which finally turned out to be nothing more than a threat.

Imre Kertesz, *Fateless*, W.A.B., Warszawa 2002.



Student handout 3.6g

People arrive. They look through the crowd of those who are waiting, those who await them. They kiss them and say the trip exhausted them.

People leave. They say good-bye to those who are not leaving and hug the children.

There is a street for people who arrive and a street for people who leave.

There is a café called “Arrivals” and a café called “Departures”. There are people who arrive and people who leave.

But there is a station where those who arrive are those who are leaving, a station where those who arrive have never arrived, where those who have left never came back.

It is the largest station in the world.

This is the station they reach, from wherever they came.

They get here after days and nights

having crossed many countries

they reach it together with their children, even the little ones who were not to be included.

They took the children because for this kind of trip you do not leave without them.

Those who had it took gold because they believed gold might be useful.

All of them took what was most valuable because you must not leave what is valuable when you take a long trip.

All of them brought their life, because above all it is your life you must take with you.

And when they arrive

they believe they have arrived

in Hell

possibly. And yet they did not believe it.

They had no idea you could take a train to Hell but since they were there they got their courage up and got ready to face what was coming

together with their children, their wives and their old parents with their family memories, and family papers.

They did not know there is no arriving in this station.

They expect the worst – they do not expect the unthinkable.

And when the guards shout to line up five by five, the men on one side,



women and children on the other, in a language they do not understand, the truncheon blows make them understand and so they line up by fives expecting anything.

Mothers keep a tight hold on their children – they tremble at the thought they might be taken away – the children are hungry and thirsty and dishevelled by lack of sleep crossing so many countries. They have arrived at last, they will be able to take care of them.

And when the guards shout to leave their bundles, comforters and memories on the platform, they do so because they must be prepared for the worst, and do not want to be surprised by anything. They say: “We’ll see”. They have already seen so much and are weary from the trip.

The station is not a station. It is the end of the track. They look and are distressed by the desolation around them.

In the morning, the mist hides the marshes.

In the evening floodlights reveal the white barbed wire as distinctly as astrophotography. They believe that this is where they are being taken, and they are afraid.

At night they wait for the day with the children heavy in their mothers’ arms. They wait and wonder.

With daylight there is no more waiting. The columns start out at once. Women and children first, they are the most exhausted. After that the men. They are also weary but relieved that their women and children should go first.

For women and children go first.

In the winter they are chilled to the bone. Particularly those who come from Candia, snow is new to them.

In the summer the sun blinds them when they step out of the cattle-cars locked tight on departure.

Departure from France the Ukraine Albania Belgium Slovakia Italy Hungary Peloponnesus Holland Macedonia Austria Herzegovina from the shores of the Black Sea the shores of the Baltic the shores of the Mediterranean the banks of the Vistula. They would like to know where they are. They do not know that this is the centre of Europe. They look for the name of the station. This is a station that has no name. A station that will remain nameless for them.

Charlotte Delbo, *None of Us Will Return*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1995, pp. 4-6.



Student handout 3.6h

Last month one of the crematoriums at Birkenau had been blown up. None of us knows (and perhaps no one will ever know) exactly how the exploit was carried out: there was talk of the *Sonderkommando*, the Special Kommando attached to the gas chamber and the ovens, which is itself periodically exterminated, and which is kept scrupulously segregated from the rest of the camp. The fact remains that a few hundred men at Birkenau, helpless and exhausted slaves like ourselves, had found in them the strength to act, to mature the fruits of their hatred.

The man who is to die in front of us today in some way took part in the revolt. They say he had contacts with the rebels of Birkenau, that he carried arms into our camp, that he was plotting a simultaneous mutiny among us. He is to die today before our very eyes: and perhaps the Germans do not understand that this solitary death, this man's death which has been reserved for him, will bring him glory, not infamy.

At the end of the German's speech, which nobody understood, the raucous voice of before again rose up:

“Habt ihr verstanden?” Have you understood?

Who answered “Jawohl”? Everybody and nobody: it was as if our cursed resignation took body by itself, as if it turned into a collective voice above our heads. But everyone heard the cry of the doomed man, it pierced through the old thick barriers of inertia and submissiveness, it struck the living core of man in each of us:

“Kameraden, ich bin der Letzte” (Comrades, I am the last one!).

I wish I could say that from the midst of us, an abject flock, a voice rose, a murmur, a sign of assent. But nothing happened. We remained standing, bent and grey, our heads dropped, and we did not uncover our heads until the German ordered us to do so. The trapdoor opened, the body wriggled horribly; the band began playing again and we were once more lined up and filed past the quivering body of the dying man.

At the foot of the gallows, the SS watch us pass with indifferent eyes: their work is finished, and well finished.

Primo Levi, *If this is a Man*, Summit Books, New York, 1986, p.113.



Student handout 3.6i

We did not know, as yet, which was the better side, right or left, which road led to prison and which to the crematoria. Still, I was happy, I was near my father. Our procession continued slowly to move forward.

Another inmate came over to us:

“Satisfied?”

“Yes”, someone answered.

“Poor devils, you are heading for the crematorium.”

He seemed to be telling the truth. Not far from us, flames, huge flames, were rising from a ditch. Something was being burned there. A truck drew close and unloaded its hold: small children. Babies! Yes, I did see this, with my own eyes... children thrown into the flames. (Is it any wonder that ever since then, sleep tends to elude me?)

So that was where we were going. A little farther on, there was another, larger pit for adults.

I pinched myself: Was I still alive? Was I awake? How was it possible that men, women and children were being burned and that the world kept silent? No. All this could not be real. A nightmare perhaps... Soon I would wake up with a start, my heart pounding, and find that I was back in the room of my childhood, with my books...

Elie Wiesel, *Night*, in: *The Night Trilogy. Night. Dawn. Day*, Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2008, p. 50.



Student handout 3.6j

From the warehouse roofs you could see very clearly the flaming pits and the crematoria operating at full speed. You could see the people walk inside, undress. Then the SS men would quickly shut the windows and firmly tighten the screws. After a few minutes, in which we did not even have time to tar a piece of roofing board properly, they opened the windows and the side doors and aired the place out. Then came the *Sonderkommando* to drag the corpses to the burning pits. And so it went on, from morning till night – every single day.

Sometimes, after a transport had already been gassed, some late-arriving cars drove around filled with the sick. It was wasteful to gas them. They were undressed and Oberscharführer Moll either shot them with his rifle or pushed them live into a flaming trench.

Once, a car brought a young woman who had refused to part from her mother. Both were forced to undress, the mother led the way. The man who was to guide the daughter stopped, struck by the perfect beauty of her body, and in his awe and admiration he scratched his head. The woman noticing this coarse, human gesture, relaxed.

Blushing, she clutched the man's arm.

"Tell me, what will they do to me?"

"Be brave," said the man, not withdrawing his arm.

"I am brave! Can't you see, I'm not even ashamed of you! Tell me!"

"Remember, be brave, come. I shall lead you. Just don't look."

He took her by the hand and led her on, his other hand covering her eyes. The sizzling and the stench of the burning fat that the heat gushing out of the pit terrified her. She jerked back. At that moment the Oberscharführer fired, almost without aiming. The man pushed the woman into the flaming pit, and as she fell he heard her terrible, broken scream.

Tadeusz Borowski, "The People Who Walked On", in *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, Penguin Books, New York, 1976, pp. 95-96.



Student handout 3.6k

The very next day they took us out in an *Aussenkommando* to work under the naked sky. This was landscaping work: levelling the earth, carrying crates full of rocks, etc. The containers full of rocks certainly weighed more than the four girls who lifted them. We were crumbling under their weight, and those who could not cope got a terrible beating. There were days when girls were killed on the job and we had to carry them so that the roll call count would match. After the roll call, the bodies were taken away.

Our block elder was a Slovak woman, Eta Lache. She was a monster. Abusing us no less than the Germans. In this way she sought to ingratiate herself. She beat us. She punished us. She stole our bread. In Auschwitz (at the time) bread was divided into four parts. The block elder, therefore, took from it the so-called middle, and then divided it into four portions... Bread was currency and thanks to that she could make a comfortable life for herself.

Maria Czapska, "Camps", in *Star of David*, edited by Irena Maciejewska, Warsaw, 1988.



Student handout 3.6I

As we have found out from the electricians who often have work to do in the crematories, the vestibule is a clean large hall, where there are no movable articles, just as in a ship's stateroom. Everything is securely fastened. Metal benches are placed around the walls, as in a doctor's waiting room. A large red arrow pointing to the entrance of a long corridor has under it the inscription in several languages – I think they said six: TO THE BATH AND CLOTHES DISINFECTION. Here in the vestibule the people disrobe, folding their clothes with care on a pile, clothes to which they expect to return in a few minutes. Then, lulled into a feeling of security by the distribution of towels and soap handed to them by the Jews who work here as a *Sonderkommando*, they pass down the long corridor.

They enter a huge hall, absolutely bare, except for openings in the wall, which look like ventilators and are at this moment shut. Electric lamps are set flat in the ceiling. When the door closes after the last member of this group, blue lumps begin to drop from the openings in the walls. The gas: Cyclone.

No, it is not so simple to die by gas. Death does not come immediately. It is an established fact that because of the large number of Jews whom the Germans intended to kill by gas, or perhaps for other reasons, it was necessary to economise. A large dose of Blaugas (cyclone) would kill instantly, but the dose that the Jews get prolongs the agony.

Seweryna Szmaglewska, *Smoke Over Birkenau*, The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Książka i Wiedza, Warsaw, 2008, p. 262.



Student handout 3.6m

It could be heard from a distance, how they cried and called out for help. We don't want to go the gas! We want to live!

One of the doctors heard a knock at the window to his little room at night. When he opened it, two completely naked boys crawled in, frozen to the bone. One was twelve years old, and the other fourteen. They managed to run from a vehicle the moment when it pulled up to the gas chamber. The doctor hid the boys at his place, fed them, and got clothing for them. He used a trusted man at the crematorium to register two more bodies than he had actually received. Exposing himself to death every moment, he hid the boys at his place until a time when they could appear at the camp without attracting suspicion. Doctor Epstein, professor from Prague, walking down a road between the Auschwitz camp blocks one clear summer morning, saw two small children who were still alive. They were sitting in the sand in the road and were moving some sort of stick around in it. He stopped by them and asked: – What are you doing here, children? And the response he got was: – We're playing that we are burning Jews.

3.7. Activity – What to do with what we learn in Auschwitz

Goals

Total time required: around eight hours, including homework.

Three themes: coping with emotions after the visit; the dangers of exclusion today; analysis of the concepts and mechanisms that resulted in the Holocaust.

Spend some time, immediately after the class gets back from Auschwitz, reviewing the trip and reflecting on issues of relevance today.

Three suggestions:

Scenario 1:

Homework and an hour in class

Scenario 2:

Homework and two hours in class

Scenario 3:

Homework and four hours in class

In each case, the following three aspects are important:

- ability to express one's reactions (the emotional dimension);

- ability to give an account of what has been learned (the cognitive dimension);
- ability to express the humanistic, democratic implications of the experience (“What has it got to do with me?” and the question of passing on information).

Scenario 1 (for the entire class)

Theme of the exercise: coping with emotion and reinforcing knowledge

The students will have already answered three questions put to them before they left the coach on the trip from Auschwitz to their hotel or home. The students should work in pairs on the following questions:

- how they reacted on site;
- the most important thing they learned during the trip;
- why their teachers took them to Auschwitz, whether they would want their own children to go there and if so, why.

Afterwards they will bring to class a sheet bearing a single sentence or word to describe their response in terms of feelings, impressions or emotions: fear, anxiety, anger, boredom, a desire to escape, nostalgia, regret that they came on the trip, etc. They should be assured in advance that there are no right or wrong answers and that it is also acceptable to have no impressions, emotions or feelings to report.

The sheets will be pinned up on the wall at the start of the session. Students will note the most important thing they learned or found out during the trip on sheets of a different colour. Then, on a sheet of yet another colour, they will write down what Auschwitz has to do with them.

The replies to the questions will be used to facilitate a discussion.

Scenario 2

Theme of the exercise: the dangers of exclusion in today's technologically advanced society

Imagine Auschwitz today, with the full range of modern technology available for disposing of a nation or other group of people on an industrial scale. How could individuals, in their own circumstances today, react and resist?

The subject can be addressed through art in drawings or paintings; through drama or through a writing workshop with a view to producing a news story, fiction or a crime novel.

Teaching aim: to enable the students to recognise that this danger still exists and that what was technically possible in the past is even more possible today. Their critical faculties must come into play and they must recognise that each small aspect of everyday life has its implications or consequences.

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Scenario 3

Theme of the exercise: analysing the concepts and mechanisms that resulted in the Holocaust

Research the mechanisms that made Auschwitz possible.

Imagine what restrictions or safeguards at each step might have prevented the move to the next step and ultimately to the process of extermination. Teachers can adapt the exercises outlined in Section 3.4.

Teaching aim: to enable the students to stand back from a historical event in order to analyse it in terms of the mechanisms involved and to discover for themselves the Holocaust's universal, human dimension.

3.8. Activity – The fate of individual victims of Auschwitz in documents, testimonies and photographs

Introduction

The aim of this lesson is to evaluate the visit to the memorial site. It should be carried out by secondary school students after they have been on a study trip to the museum.

Following a visit to the museum, students are always deeply moved. Visiting an authentic memorial site, especially Auschwitz, always evokes deep feelings of sorrow and depression. Students are horrified not only with what they have seen on the grounds of the former camp and with the enormity of the crimes committed there, but also with the overwhelming number of victims.

The devastating number of victims and the magnitude of the crime make it difficult for students to imagine the individual human being – to imagine what it meant to be a prisoner at Auschwitz. This lesson aims to make this easier. It involves elements of drama. Connecting learning with experiences and actions is a new way of organising the educational process. It awakens the student's learning ability and develops judgment and skills. The newest ideas about teaching emphasise the role of experiences in the educational process. Attention is drawn to the important role

of emotions in shaping attitudes and convictions. The learning process should be accompanied by the emotional involvement of the student.

The students will learn through experience. By studying camp documents, museum materials and the testimony of former prisoners, they can take on the role of these individuals and act out what happened within the camp. What we want is for the students to show their ability to feel empathy, in other words, to be able to put themselves in another person's place and identify emotionally with them. One should remember, however, that not all students will like or be able to work with the drama technique. They should not be forced to do so. The teacher should always be prepared to offer them an alternative, more objective and less personal method of presenting prisoners' profiles. They should make a choice about how they prefer to do it.

Goals

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Learning (information)

Learning about the fate of seven prisoners at Auschwitz based on documents, museum materials and prisoner testimonies.

Educational (skills)

Ability to interpret historical texts (source material and works)

Development of imagination, historical thought and ability to experience by taking on a role

Developmental (attitudes and convictions)

Shaping sensitivity to the pain of others and empathy

Working in a team

Teaching methods

Drama: used practically – taking on a role

Work in groups

Work with historical texts

Educational materials

- Profiles of Poles who perished at Auschwitz
- Camp registration photos of those Jews considered fit for work during the selection
- Prisoner death certificates issued by SS doctors
- Polish Red Cross documents

Length of lesson: 90 minutes

Teaching notes

Activity I

A. Students sit as they listen to the teacher.

The teacher says:

We have visited the museum and memorial at Auschwitz. We saw how that horrible death factory functioned. We saw hundreds of photographs, belongings and the hair of the victims. However, it was difficult for us to conceive of the individual human being. The fate of the prisoner and victim of those mass murder installations is lost in this immeasurable crime. Who was he or she? Where did he come from? What did she think and feel? What was their fate in the camp? Today we will try to find

the answers to these questions by reading documents and survivors' testimonies and by presenting their fate in the camp.

Now you will hear the tragic and very moving story "Love in Hell". Your friends, who have already studied documents and testimonies, will tell you about Edek Galiński and Mala Zimetbaum. Later we will try to play the roles of these individuals. Three of you will show us how we will do this. Earlier, these students received materials dealing with "Love in Hell". Your classmates, one female and one male, will show us what becomes of Mala Zimetbaum and Edek Galiński by taking on their roles.

B. Three students present the fate of Edek Galiński and Mala Zimetbaum. Two of them play their roles; they show photographs and camp documents.

The first student stands up and says:

My name is Mala Zimetbaum. I am Jewish. I was born on 26 January 1918 in Brzesko, however, soon after this my family moved to Belgium. After the start of the Second World War, the Germans deported me because I am a Jew. On 17 September 1942, I arrived at Birkenau. The entire transport was put through the selection. Almost 80% of these people were selected to die in the gas chambers, including my entire family. I was put into the camp and given camp number 19880. Being able to speak several languages, I was put to work in the women's camp as a translator and messenger. Thanks to this, I was relatively free to move about the terrain of the women's camp. After several months, I got to know Edek Galiński, who worked in the fitters' commando. We fell in love. We decided to escape together. Edek came up with an escape plan. On 24 June, Edek – wearing an SS uniform, in possession of SS passes stolen by me – and I, dressed in work clothes, walked out of the camp gate. We successfully escaped from the camp. We wanted to get to Slovakia. On 6 July, in Beskid Żywiecki we crossed paths with a German patrol. Edek, even though he could have escaped, allowed himself to be captured with me. They brought us to Auschwitz and put us in cells in the Death Block. The interrogation lasted a very long time. I knew that certain death awaited me.

The second student stands and says:

My name is Edward Galiński. I am Polish and I am 21 years old. I was born 5 October 1923 in Jarosław, Poland. In February 1940, as part of a group of middle school

students in Jarosław, I was arrested during “Aktion AB” – directed against Polish intelligentsia. From the Gestapo prison, I was sent to KL Auschwitz as a political prisoner, where I received camp number 531. I lived through this hell thanks to help from fellow prisoners from Jarosław and the occasional lucky coincidence. I work in the fitters’ commando and that’s how I met Mala. She had little blue eyes and a beautiful girlish smile. I fell in love with her. We met secretly, risking great danger. For a long time I had been planning on escaping the camp while wearing an SS uniform and I decided to escape with Mala. I knew that a young Jewish woman could be taken to the gas chamber at any minute. We escaped on 24 June 1944. A few days later, we ran into a German patrol in Beskid Żywiecki. I didn’t escape; I wanted to be with Mala to the end. While being interrogated, I did not reveal who had helped us escape. On the wall of the prison cell in the Death Block, I wrote: “Edward Galiński no. 531, Mala Zimetbaum no. 19880”.

The third student puts a picture of Mala and Edek on the board and says:

Mala Zimetbaum was sentenced to death by hanging. Because she didn’t want to die this way, she cut her wrists just before being hanged. The furious SS men severely beat her in front of the entire population of the women’s camp. She most likely died while being taken to the crematorium. Edward Galiński was also sentenced to death by hanging. At the last moment he was able to scream: “Long live Poland...”.

1. Edward Galiński

Born – 5 October 1923, in Jarosław, Poland

Religion – Roman Catholic

A high school student

Lived in Jarosław

Sent to Auschwitz in the first transport of Polish prisoners – 14 June 1940

His camp number – 531

Escaped from Birkenau with Mala Zimetbaum – 24 June 1944

Captured and sent back to the camp – 6 July 1944

Publicly hanged in Birkenau – 15 September 1944

2. Mala Zimetbaum

Born – 26 January 1918, in Brzesko, Poland

Lived in Belgium

Religion – Jewish

Sent to Auschwitz – 17 September 1942

Her camp number – 19880

Escaped from Birkenau – 24 June 1944

Captured and sent back to camp – 6 July 1944

Publicly executed – 15 September 1944



Student handout 3.8a

Historical background

- I. Excerpt from *Auschwitz 1940-1945: Central issues in the history of the camp*, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Oświęcim, 2000, Vol. V, Chapter IV by Danuta Czech, Stanisław Kłodziński, Aleksander Lasik and Andrzej Strzelecki.

Danuta Czech, *A calendar of the most important events in the history of the Auschwitz concentration camp*

1942

17 September

The tenth RSHA transport from the Malines camp in Belgium carried 1 048 Jews: 383 men, 151 boys, 401 women and 113 girls. After a selection on the ramp, 230 men (serial numbers 64005-64234) and 101 women (19821-19921) were registered in the camp. Number 19880 was assigned to Mala Zimetbaum (born 26 January 1918, in Brzesko, Poland). The other 717 persons were killed in the gas chambers.

1944

24 June

Two prisoners escaped from Birkenau: Mala Zimetbaum, serial number 19880, born 26 January 1918 in Brzesko, Poland and sent to Auschwitz in an RSHA transport from the Malines camp in Belgium and Edward Galiński, 531, born 5 October 1923, and sent to Auschwitz in the first transport of Polish prisoners from Tarnów on 14 June 1940. Apprehended on 6 July, they would be sent to Auschwitz by the Bielitz Stapo. After being incarcerated in the Block 11 “bunkers”, they were subjected to a long interrogation before being sentenced to death by public hanging.



II. Excerpt from Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle 1939-1945*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1990.

1940

14 June

German troops march into Paris. The victory parade takes place on the Champs Elysées. For this occasion, occupied Poland is bedecked with banners and swastikas. Polish prisoners transported from Tarnów to Auschwitz see the decorated Cracow railway station and find out about the Germans' entry into Paris from the loudspeakers.

The first Polish inmates, 728 men, are sent to Auschwitz from the prison in Tarnów by the Cracow Sipo and SD commander. The prisoners are given Nos. 31-758 and are quarantined in the building of the former Polish tobacco monopoly¹⁶ near the siding and separated from the rest of the buildings by barbed wire. This transport contains many young, healthy men fit for military service, arrested on the southern borders of Poland attempting to cross the border to reach the newly formed Polish army in France. In addition, among them are the organisers of this border crossing, underground fighters, politicians, representatives of the Polish intelligentsia, clergymen, and Jews arrested in the spring of 1940 in Operation AB, ordered by General Governor Hans Frank.

At the same time, 100 SS men, officers, and non-commissioned officers of various ranks arrive to reinforce the camp personnel and assume administrative functions in the camp.

The 40 inmates employed in the construction of the camp fence are sent back to Dachau. As they depart, they see the train with Polish prisoners from Tarnów on the siding. The prisoners from Dachau are not happy to leave Auschwitz since they count on the help of their fellow countrymen here. On hearing this SS Sergeant Beck informs them they have no reason to regret leaving since that camp will be hell on earth.

16. This building is destined for the future SS guards. The prisoners are lodged there only temporarily, since the barrack blocks are not yet cleared and have no equipment.



With blows, kicks, and shouts, the detainees from Tarnów are driven into the cellar, where they undergo the admission procedure. They are robbed of their personal belongings, shorn of their hair, taken to the bath for disinfection, registered and marked with numbers. As soon as they get their clothes back they are taken to the courtyard, where they have to line up in rows of five for the first roll call. The First Camp Commander, SS Captain Karl Fritch, greets them with the following speech translated into Polish by two inmates as interpreters: “You have not come to a sanatorium here but to a German concentration camp and the only way out is through the chimney of the crematorium. If there is anybody who doesn’t like it, he can go into the wire right away. If there are any Jews in the transport, they have no right to live longer than two weeks, priests for a month and the rest for three months.”

1942

17 September

1 048 Jews arrive from Malines with the tenth RSHA transport from Belgium. There are 383 men, 151 boys, 401 women and 113 girls in the transport. After the selection on the unloading platform of Auschwitz, 230 men and 101 women are admitted to the camp and receive Nos. 64005-64234 and 19821-19921. Mala Zimetbaum,¹⁷ born 26 January 1918, in Brzesko, receives No. 19880. The remaining 717 deportees are killed in the gas chambers.

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1944

24 June

Mala Zimetbaum (No. 19880), born on 26 January 1918, in Brzesko, a female Polish Jew who was sent to the camp in an RSHA transport from the Malines camp in Belgium, escapes from Auschwitz II, together with the Polish political prisoner Edward Galiński (No. 531), born on 5 October 1923, who was brought to the camp with the first transport of Polish prisoners from the prison in Tarnów on 14 June 1940. They are captured on 6 July 1944, and brought back to Auschwitz the next day by the Bielitz Stapo. They are locked in the bunker of Block 11 and

.....
17. On 24 June she escapes from the camp with Edward Galiński (No. 531).



subjected to lengthy interrogation, during which neither Zimetbaum nor Galiński, who is tortured, betrayed any of those who assisted in their escape. Because of their escape, they are condemned to death by hanging; the sentences are carried out publicly in the camp.

1944

15 September

Edward Galiński (No. 531), born on 5 October 1923, is hanged in punishment for his escape from the camp with the female Jew Mala Zimetbaum (No. 19880).¹⁸

18. Edward Galiński and Mala Zimetbaum escaped from the camp in Birkenau on June 24, 1944. They were captured on July 6, 1944, sent to Auschwitz, and incarcerated in the bunker of Block 11. After a long interrogation and probably after waiting for confirmation of judgment by Himmler, they are transferred to Birkenau to be publicly executed there. According to Tomasz Sobański and Wiesław Kielar the executions take place simultaneously, Mala Zimetbaum's in Women's Camp B-Ia and Edward Galiński in Men's Camp B-Id. Mala Zimetbaum succeeds in preventing the execution. While the sentence is being read she slits her wrists and hits the SS man Ruitters, who attempts to stop her, in the face with the bleeding hands. Mala Zimetbaum is taken in a cart to the prisoners' infirmary to stop the bleeding so that the execution can proceed. According to reports by several female prisoners, she dies on the way to the crematorium. According to other reports she is shot to death in front of the crematorium. Edward Galiński does not succeed in spoiling the execution. He is immobilised when he kicks the stool away from under him with the words "Poland lives!" while the sentence is being read. The execution by hanging is carried out. The intended terrorisation of the prisoners by means of these public executions elicits the opposite effects – admiration and respect (Justa, From "Mire and Stone", Kielar, *Annus Mundi*, pp.162-3;).



Student handout 3.8b

The story of Edek and Mala

I'll tell you the story of two people in love, who were united through Auschwitz for better and for worse, for life and death. Their love was beautiful and tragic. It left an indelible memory handed down from generation to generation and a number of small objects, cherished mementoes, stored with great reverence in the archives of our museum. Above all, however, it left hope that even Auschwitz was not capable of killing feelings and stripping away humanity.

When the war broke out Edek Galiński, a Pole from Jarosław, wasn't even 16 years old. As a secondary school student, he was classified by the Nazi regime as an enemy of the Third Reich and in spring 1940 was arrested together with others of his own age as part of the "Operation AB" directed against the Polish intelligentsia. As a political prisoner, he was transferred from the Gestapo prison in Tarnów via the first organised transport to KL Auschwitz, where he was given camp number 531.

In September 1942, when Edek had already spent more than two years in Auschwitz, a transport of Jews deported from Belgium arrived at the camp. Amongst these there was a charming blue-eyed girl called Mala Zimetbaum. The entire transport was subjected to the selection process and the majority met their death in the gas chambers. Mala was classed as capable of working, directed to the camp in Birkenau and given number 19880.

Edek survived more than four years under hellish camp conditions. He spent the early years in Auschwitz I, where after some time he managed to get work in a camp locksmith's shop. Towards the end of 1943 he was transferred to the male camp in Birkenau. He worked there in a "good" team of fitters, thanks to which he was able to move about reasonably freely throughout the camp.

Mala was employed in the female camp as a messenger and interpreter. She had a good command of a number of languages including Polish, German and French. Her work gave her the privilege of moving around the entire camp. Mala's hair wasn't cut and instead of being given the striped clothing of camp prisoners she was allowed to wear civilian clothes.



In the camp, the tall and handsome Edek had grown from a boy to a man. He was friendly, brave and gentle. Mala stood out amongst the other female prisoners in appearance and disposition. Their meeting and the fact that they would fall madly in love with each other seemed to be a foregone conclusion. For several months they met in secret, exposing themselves to great danger.

Edek had long been planning to escape from the camp. By the summer of 1944 everything was ready: forged passes, an SS uniform and pistol. The escape route and tactics had also been prepared. But one important detail changed at the last minute. Instead of escaping with his friend from the first group of transported prisoners, Wiesław Kielar, Edek decided to escape with Mala. He loved her too much to leave her behind. He knew that death awaited her in Auschwitz. As a Jew she could be sent to the gas chambers at any moment.

The daring escape plan succeeded. On 24 June 1944 Edek, dressed in an SS uniform, escorted Mala in her worker's overalls out of the camp. In this manner he "escorted" her through two circles of guards. By evening, the sound of sirens could be heard in Birkenau, first in the male camp and next in the female one. "They've escaped... Edek and Mala... they've escaped...". News got round by word of mouth. Despite expecting punishment and the many appeals to the prisoners, everyone was overjoyed. It was possible after all – the SS weren't almighty, we could survive. The Germans were furious. They could hardly believe that it was these two who had managed to slip through. Telegrams bearing the names of the escapees were sent to all Gestapo stations.

Unfortunately, the prisoners' joy didn't last long. In their attempt to cross into Slovakia a few days later the escapees fell into the hands of a German patrol in Beskid Żywiecki. Mala was the first to be caught. Edek, even though he could have escaped, allowed himself to be caught with her. Love prevailed, without Mala life would not have been worth living. The escapees were easily recognised by the prisoner numbers tattooed on them and were sent back to the camp.

Edek and Mala were placed in separate cells in the basement of the Death Block. They were subjected to a long and cruel investigation. The camp Gestapo tried to force Edek to say where he had obtained the SS uniform and the pistol. Edek and Mala remained silent. In a number of cells Edek engraved the words "Edward Galiński No. 531, Mally Zimetbaum No. 19880, 6 VII 1944". In some cells he left an



engraved heart and a drawing of her face. Witnesses said that during the evening he would hum Mala's favourite song in his cell. This way he let her know that he was still alive.

After several weeks the camp authorities decided to close the investigation and mete out "justice" to the escapees. There was only one punishment – death. The execution was directed in detail. Its purpose was to frighten the other prisoners, to show them what the camp would offer for such impudence. Its purpose was to destroy what was already the start of a legend about the lovers of Auschwitz.

Even at death's door Edek and Mala managed to thwart the plans of their assassins. Edek was hanged in the male camp in Birkenau. During the reading of the sentence he tried to commit suicide. Standing on the stool he tried to find the noose with his head, then pushed his legs away from the stool and hung in the air. The SS only just managed to stop him and finish reading the sentence. But it was not their words that the co-prisoners, gathered around the gallows and full of despair, heard at the end. As Wiesław Kielar records "It was Edek who, during the pronouncing of the sentence, when all was silent, cried out in his stifled voice: "Long live Pol...". But he did not finish. The Lagerkapo suddenly tore away the stool and let the noose fully tighten. "Take your caps off!!!" sounded the command in Polish unexpectedly. The entire camp paid homage to the dead one.

Mala's execution was no less dramatic. During the sentence she slit her wrists, which the SS treated as another "escape" and, much the same as in Edek's case, they prevented her from dying in this manner. After unsuccessfully attempting to stem the flow of blood they threw the half-dead Mala onto a cart and transported her towards the crematorium. She never returned.

These two curls of hair, wrapped in paper with words printed in German, are the last memento of the lovers of Auschwitz – Mala's light lock of hair and the shorter and darker wisp of Edek's hair. The border of the paper contains some words written in pencil: "Mally Zimetbaum 19880, Edward Galiński 531". Nobody knows how Edek managed to get hold of Mala's strand of hair and the piece of paper. But it was probably in the Death Block during the investigation. Shortly before the execution he gave it as a memento to Wiesław Kielar, asked him to take care of it and to give it to his father after the war.



Mugshot of Edek, © PMA-B.

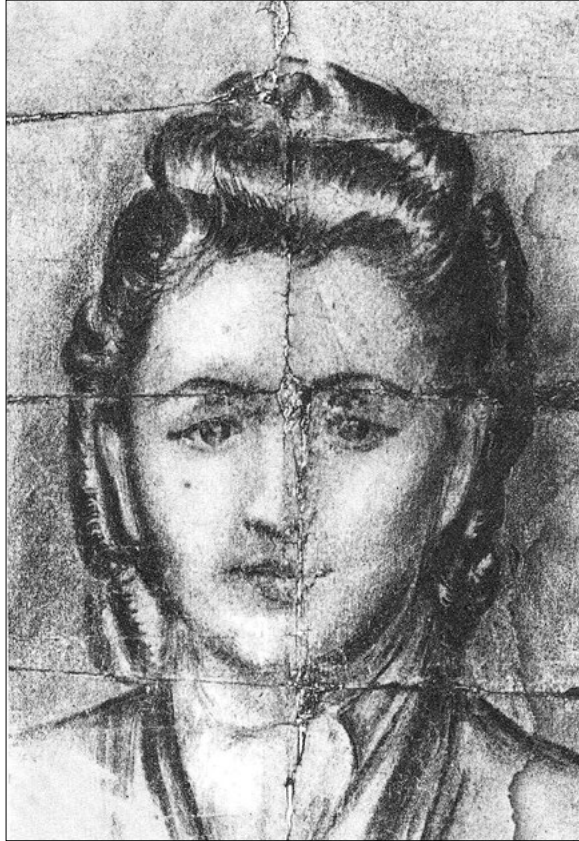
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Photo of the locksmith's shop with Edek and Lubusz, © PMA-B.



Photo of Mala, © PMA-B.



Portrait of Mala, © PMA-B.



(20)

Geheime Staatspolizei — Staatspolizeistelle Litzmannstadt
Nachrichten-Uebermittlung

Aufgenommen				Raum für Eingangsstempel		Beordert			
Tag	Monat	Jahr				Zeit	Tag	Monat	Jahr
25	7	1944		Kripo n. Kutno haben Abschr. erhalten.					
				W 6 K					
O. Nr. 6541				Telegramm — Funkspruch Fernschreiben Fernspruch		Verfügungsvornach			

+ KL AUSCHWITZ NR. 6351 25.6.1944 1020.-- SCHA--

1.) AN RSHA, ROEM. 4 A 6 KLEIN B- U. ROEM. 4 A 4
KLEIN B, *B E R L I N.--

2.) AN SS-WVHA, AMTSGRUPPE D, O R A N I E N B U R G.--

3.) AN ALLE OESTL. STAPO(LEIT)- KRIPO(LEIT) STELLEN UND
GREKO BESONDERS K A T T O W I T+..

- BETRIFFT: SCHUTZHAFTJUEDIN MALKA Z I M E T B A U M, GEB.
26.1.18 ZU BRZESKO, EINGELIEFERT AM 17.9.1942 VOM RSHA.

--- PERSOENENBESCHREIBUNG: 1.65 GROSZ, BRAUNE HAARE,
SPICHT: FRANZ., FLAEM., ENGL.. DEUTSCH U. POLN.,
GRAUEMGEN, BESONDERE KENNZEICHEN: AM LINKEN UNTERARM
EINTAETOWIERTE NR. 19880.--

Z I M E T B A U M IST AM 24.6.1944 AUS DEM KL AU. ROEM.
2 ENTFLOHEN.---

DIE SOFORT EINGELEITETE SUCHAKTION BLIEB BISHER OHNE
ERFOLG. ES WIRD GEBETEN, VON DORT AUS WEITERE
FAHNDUNGSMASSNAHMEN EINZULEITEN UND IM ERGREIFUNGSFALLE
DAS KL AUSCHWITZ UMGEHEND ZU BENACHRICHTIGEN.---

- ZUSATZ FUER STAPOLEIT. KATTOWITZ. DIE UMLIEGENDEN
GEND.- POSTEN WURDEN VON DER FLUCHT FERNMUENDLICH IN
KENNTNIS GESETZT, DESGLEICHEN WURDEN DIE HAUPTZOLLAEMTER
KATTOWITZ, BIELITZ UND TESCHEN VERSTANDIGT UND UM
MITFAHNDUNG ERSUCHT.---

ZUSATZ FUER RSHA. AUSSCHREIBUNG IM DEUTSCHEN
KRIMINALBLATT WURDE DURCH BLITZ FS BEI RKPA BEANTRAGT.--

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Telegram of 25 June 1944 on the escape of Mala, © PMA-B.



The names of Mala Zimetbaum and Edward Galiński, with the date of 6 July 1944 scratched into the wall of cell 20 in the “Block of Death”. Photo: Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicki, © PMA-B.

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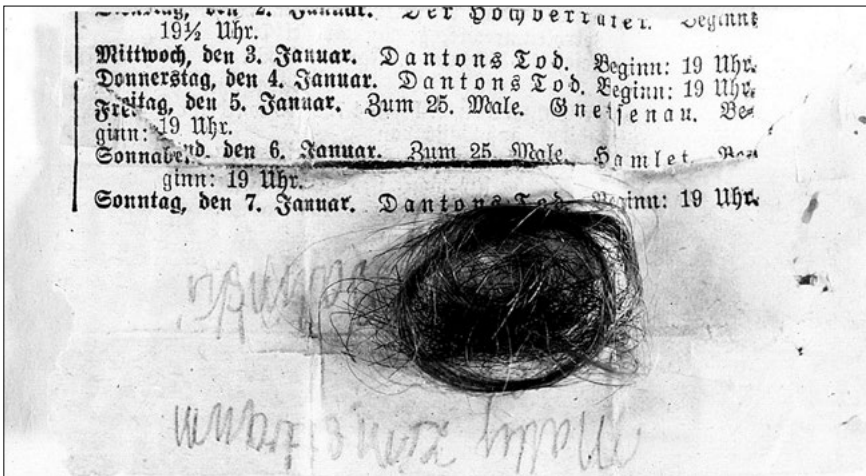


Photo of the hair, © PMA-B.

Teaching notes

Activity II – Group work

The teacher asks the students to divide into seven groups. Cards are given out to all of them. On each of the cards is the name of a camp prisoner and the documents which students must find. These documents are spread out on a few tables. The teacher asks each group of students to choose one person who will take the role of a prisoner and they have to find information about this prisoner and camp photographs of him or her. The other students tell of the fate of the prisoner (how he or she died or what happened to them after the war).

It is important to translate the cause of death on the death certificates that were issued by the SS doctors. The students' attention must be brought to the fact that it is necessary to find materials on the real cause of death of each person. The teacher helps the students find the necessary documents and visits each group to make sure progress is being made.



Student handout 3.8c

<p style="text-align: center;">Baruch Münzer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stefan Kiślewicz</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Death certificate • Page from the daily numbers book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Death certificate • List of newly arrived prisoners
<p style="text-align: center;">Wolf Birnbaum</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Czesława Kwoka</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Death certificate • Page from the daily numbers book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Death certificate • List of deceased women prisoners compiled illegally in the camp
<p style="text-align: center;">Maryla Schenker</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Danuta Terlikowska</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Death certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Death certificate • List of deceased women prisoners compiled illegally in the camp
<p style="text-align: center;">Vincent Daniel</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo taken in the camp • Information about the prisoner • Page from the book <i>The Auschwitz Chronicle</i> • Page from the daily numbers book • Prisoner personal card • Telegram sent by the Gestapo 	

Teaching notes

Activity III – Student presentations

Groups present the fates of other prisoners to the rest of the class.

Group I

Student I stands up and says:

My name is Danuta Terlikowska and I am 21 years old. I am Polish. I was born on 10 March 1921 in Warsaw. I am a nurse. My father is Stanisław Terlikowski. I am a Catholic. I worked in the resistance. I was captured in Żoliborz while cleaning weapons. I was brought to Auschwitz with prisoners from Pawiak Prison on 25 August 1942 – having been given a death sentence. At the camp they gave me prisoner number 18294.

Student II stands up and says:

Danuta Terlikowska was killed by lethal injection to the heart, using phenol. The SS doctor listed her cause of death as pneumonia.

(While the students are speaking, another student places documents and a picture on the board.)

Group II

Student I stands up and says:

My name is Baruch Münzer. I am a Jew. I was born on 24 December 1912 in Gdów and that's where I lived. I worked as a manual labourer. My parent's names are Israel and Blima Münzer. My camp number is 35720.

Student II stands up and says:

Baruch Münzer died in the camp on 25 July 1942.

(During this time, another student places documents and a picture on the board.)

Group III

Student I stands up and says:

My name is Stefan Kiślewicz. I was born on 12 June 1913 in Żabie, near Kosowo. I am a Catholic. I was a teacher. I was brought to Auschwitz on 24 May 1941. I received prisoner number 16189. In October 1941 I was in block 18a.

Student II stands up and says:

On the 27 October 1941 a prisoner from block 18a escaped. In retaliation, 10 prisoners from the block were chosen and sentenced to starve to death in the bunker in block 11. Among them was Stefan Kiślewicz. An SS doctor recorded a false cause of death on his death certificate on 31 October 1941 – pneumonia.

(Another student hangs his picture and documents on the board.)

Other groups present the profiles of other prisoners in a similar manner.

Teaching notes

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Activity IV – Conclusion

Students and the teacher sit down in a circle and discuss the lesson. They ask questions about the feelings of those students who played the roles of prisoners. They look through the registration pictures and wonder what could be read from the faces of prisoners in them. Together, they try to answer questions about the fate of individual prisoners at the Auschwitz camp and the fate of the main groups of the victims: Jews, Poles, Roma (the similarities and differences).



Prisoner profiles

1. Baruch Münzer

Born – 24 December 1912, in Gdów

Lived in Gdów, nr 104, county Myślenice

A Jew

His job – a labourer

His father's name – Israel

His mother's name – Blima née Selenfreund

Sent to Auschwitz – 18 May 1942

His camp number – 35720

He died in the camp – 25 July 1942

2. Czesława Kwoka

Born – 15 August 1928, in Wólka Złojcka

Lived in Wólka Złojcka 12, county Zamość

Her religion – Roman Catholic

A schoolgirl

Her father's name – Paweł

Her mother's name – Katarzyna née Matwiejczuk

Her parents lived in Wólka Złojcka

Her camp number – 26947

She was deported to Auschwitz from the Zamość region in December 1942

She died in the camp – 12 March 1943

3. Maryla Schenker

Born – 20 March 1913, in Cracow

Lived in Cracow

A Jew

Her job – an office clerk

Her father's name – Heinrich

Her mother's maiden name – Juste née Schwartz

Sent to Auschwitz – 27 April 1942

Her camp number – 6842

She died in the camp – 19 August 1942



4. Stefan Kiślewicz

Born – 12 June 1913, in Żabie, county Kosowo

His religion – Roman Catholic

His job – a teacher

His father's name – Izidor

His mother's maiden name – Julia née Mazurek

His parents lived in Żwirka

Sent to Auschwitz – 24 May 1941

His camp number – 16189

He died in the camp – 31 October 1941

5. Wolf Israel Birnbaum

Born – 2 January 1898, in Radomsko

Lived in Częstochowa, 13 Berka Joselewicza St.

A Jew

His job – a tailor

His father's name – Esriel

His mother's name – Jentla née Eckstein

Sent to Auschwitz – 6 February 1942

His camp number – 20133

He died in the camp – 17 February 1942

6. Danuta Terlikowska

Born – 10 March 1921, in Warsaw

Lived in Warsaw, Mickiewicza St. 20

Her religion – Roman Catholic

Her job – a nurse

Her father's name – Stanisław

Her mother's maiden name – Wanda née Januszewicz

Her parents lived in Warsaw

Sent to Auschwitz – 25 August 1942

Her camp number – 18294

She died in the camp – 29 October 1942



7. Vincent Daniel

Born: 15 August 1919, in Smerzna

A Roma

His religion – Roman Catholic

His job – a labourer

His father's name – Karl

His mother's name – Božena née Kocman

His mother lived in Brno

Sent to Auschwitz from Prague – 29 April 1942

His camp number – 33804

He escaped from the camp – 27 May 1942, his subsequent fate is unknown



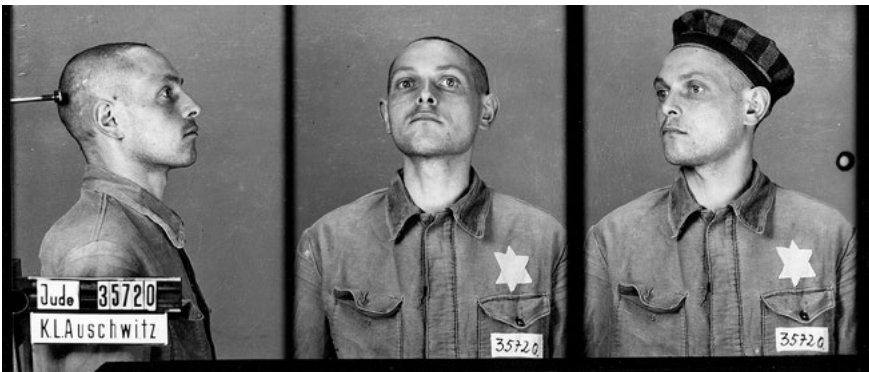
Prisoner photos



Mugshot of Czesława Kwoka, © PMA-B.



Mugshot of Stefan Kiślewicz, © PMA-B.



Mugshot of Baruch Münzer, © PMA-B.



Mugshot of Danuta Terlikowska, © PMA-B.

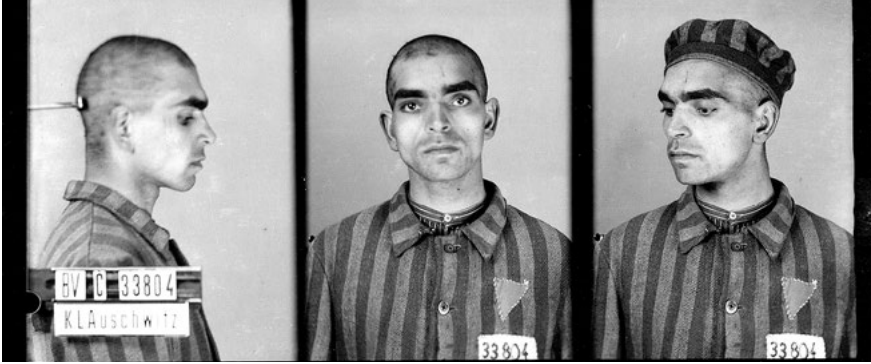
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Mugshot of Wolf Birnbaum, © PMA-B.



Mugshot of Maryla Schenker, © PMA-B.



Mugshot of Vincent Daniel, © PMA-B.



Prisoner death certificates

C!

Nr. 14902/1943 (1354)

Auschwitz, den 23. März 1943

D ie Schülerin Czesława Kwoka

katholisch

wohnhaft Wolka Złojecka Nr.12, Kreis Zamosc

Ist am 12. März 1943 um 08 Uhr 20 Minuten

in Auschwitz, Kasernenstraße verstorben.

D ie Verstorbene war geboren am 15. August 1928

in Wolka Złojecka

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____)

Vater: Pawel Kwoka, zuletzt wohnhaft in Wolka Złojecka

Mutter: Katarzyna Kwoka geborene Matwiejczuk

D ie Verstorbene war nicht verheiratet

Eingetragen auf mündliche — schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor der

Medizin Kitt in Auschwitz vom 12. März 1943

D ie Anzeigende _____

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und _____ unterschrieben.

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem Ersbuch wird beglaubigt.

Auschwitz, den 23.3. 1943

Der Standesbeamte
in Vertretung

Der Standesbeamte
in Vertretung
Quakernack

Todesursache: Kachexie bei Darmkatarrh

Eheschließung de Verstorbener am _____ in _____

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____).

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Death certificate of Czesława Kwoka, © PMA-B.



(558)

Nr. 3560/1941 C'

Auschwitz, den 5. November 1941

er Lehrer Stefan Kisiewicz, katholisch

D Wohnhaft in Zwirka, Kreis Hrubieszow.

Ist am 31. Oktober 1941 um 07 Uhr 05 Minuten

in Auschwitz, Kasernenstraße verstorben.

er Verstorbene war geboren am 12. Juni 1913

D Verstorbene war geboren in Zabie, Kreis Kosow

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____)

Vater: Izydor Izydor Kisiewicz wohnhaft in Zwirka

Mutter: Julia Kisiewicz geborene Mazurek wohnhaft in Zwirka

D Verstorbene war nicht verheiratet

Eingetragen auf mündliche — schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor Heschl
in Auschwitz vom 31. Oktober 1941

D Anzeigende
In Zeile 9 wurde ein Schriftwort gestrichen.

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und _____ unterschrieben

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem Erstbuch wird beglaubigt.

Auschwitz, den 5. 11. 1941

Der Standesbeamte
In Vertretung
Quakernack

Der Standesbeamte
In Vertretung
Quakernack

Todesursache: Lungenödem

Eheschließung der Verstorbenen am _____ in _____

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____).

259



Nr. 16751/1942

249

C1

Auschwitz, den 20. Juli 1942

Der Arbeiter Baruch Münzer

mosaisch

wohnhaft Gdow Nr. 104, Kreis Myslenice

ist am 25. Juli 1942 um 17 Uhr 25 Minuten

in Auschwitz, Kasernstrasse verstorben.

Der Verstorbene war geboren am 24. Dezember 1912

in Gdow

(Standesamt Nr.)

Vater: Israel Münzer

Mutter: Blima Münzer geborene Selenfreund, wohnhaft in Gdow

Der Verstorbene war nicht verheiratet

Eingetragen auf mündliche schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor der Medizin Meyer in Auschwitz vom 25. Juli 1942

Der Anzeigende

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem Erstbuch wird beglaubigt.

Auschwitz, den 20. 7. 1942

Der Standesbeamte

In Vertretung

Der Standesbeamte

In Vertretung

Quakernack

Todesursache: Herzschwäche bei Darmkatarrh

Eheschliessung des Verstorbenen am in

(Standesamt Nr.)

260



Nr. 38064/1942

556

Auschwitz, den 6. November 1942

Die Pflegerin Danuta Terlikowska
katholischwohnhaft Warschau, Mickiewiczastrasse Nr. 20ist am 29. Oktober 1942 um 17 Uhr 00 Minutenin Auschwitz, Kasernenstrasse verstorben.Die Verstorbene war geboren am 10. März 1921in Warschau

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____)

Vater: Stanislaw Terlikowska, zuletzt wohnhaft in
WarschauMutter: Wanda Terlikowska geborene Januszewicz, wohnhaft
in WarschauDie Verstorbene war nicht verheiratetEingetragen auf mündliche schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor der
Medizin Vetter in Auschwitz vom 29. Oktober 1942

Die Anzeigende _____

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und _____ unterschrieben

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem
Erstbuch wird beglaubigt.Auschwitz, den 6. 11. 19 42Der Standesbeamte
In VertretungDer Standesbeamte
In Vertretung
QuakernackTodesursache: Pneumonie

Eheschliessung des Verstorbenen am _____ in _____

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____).

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Nr. 1331/1942

1331

C¹

Auschwitz, den 20. Februar 1942

Der Schneider Wolf Israel Birnbaum

, mosaisch

wohnhaft Tschenschow, Berka Joselewiczastraße Nr. 13

ist am 17. Februar 1942 um 09 Uhr 15 Minuten

in Auschwitz, Kasernenstraße verstorben.

Der Verstorbene war geboren am 2. Januar 1898

in Radomsko

(Standesamt Nr.)

Vater: Esriel Birnbaum

Mutter: Jentla Birnbaum geborene Eckstein, wohnhaft in

Tschenschow

Der Verstorbene war nicht verheiratet mit Rajzla Birnbaum

geborene Schwarz

Eingetragen auf mündliche schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor der Medizin Entress in Auschwitz vom 17. Februar 1942

Der Anzeigende

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem Erstbuch wird beglaubigt.

Auschwitz, den 20. 2. 1942

Der Standesbeamte

In Vertretung

[Signature]

Der Standesbeamte

In Vertretung

Quakernack

Todesursache: Septische Angina

Eheschliessung des Verstorbenen am in

(Standesamt Nr.)

262



C!

Nr. 22794/1942 (254) Auschwitz, den 29. August 1942

Die Beamtin Maryla Schenker
 _____, mosaisch _____,
 wohnhaft Krakau, Josefinska 29
 ist am 19. August 1942 um 03 Uhr 00 Minuten
 in Auschwitz, Kasernenstrasse _____ verstorben.
 Die Verstorbene war geboren am 20. März 1913
 in Krakau
 (Standesamt _____ Nr. _____)
 Vater: Heinrich Schenker, wohnhaft in Krakau
 Mutter: Juste Schenker geborene Schwartz, wohnhaft in
 Krakau
 Die Verstorbene war nicht verheiratet

Eingetragen auf mündliche schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor der
 Medizin Meyer in Auschwitz vom 19. August 1942.
 Die Anzeigende _____

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und _____ unterschrieben

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem
 Erstbuch wird beglaubigt.
 Auschwitz, den 29. 8. 1942

Der Standesbeamte
 in Vertretung

Der Standesbeamte
 in Vertretung
 Quakernack

Todesursache: Sepsie bei Pneumonie

Eheschließung der Verstorbenen am _____ in _____

(Standesamt _____ Nr. _____)

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Polish Red Cross documents

- 206 -

19.7.42

166	H. Jude	46542	Klafter Alfred	geb. 7.6.26	
7	Frz. Jude	46596	Spacier Josef	" 24.1.77	
8		46615	Bauszig Max	" 18.1.91	
9		46730	Lybul Fischel	" 15.4.99	
170	Holl. Jude	48232	Delicma Salomon	" 3.6.97	
1	Erz. H.	2355	Melnyczuk Michael	" 2.10.20	
2		2471	Hawinoga Witold	" 2.1.24	
173		2601	Koczur Marian	" 2.2.19	
					173
					<u>19.544</u>
Neuzugänge am 24 Juli 1942					91
Stärke zum Abendappell am 24 Juli 1942					<u>19635</u>
					<i>Davon 153 Russen</i>
<i>Stärke vom 24 zum 25 Juli 1942</i>					
<i>Verstorbene Häftlinge</i>					
1	H. Jude	30132	Maibaum Max	geb. 5.12.09	
2	Pole	31192	Miodzelewski Lawer	" 30.10.95	
3		34878	Dobula Adalbert	" 12.1.76	
4		34968	Kalita Konstantin	" 8.5.11	
5		35434	Qulinski Felix	" 20.5.85	
6	Jude	37456	Lukier Lejbus	" 1894	
7	Frz. Jude	40924	Kofman Simon	" 30.5.00	
8	Holl. Jude	48200	Klein David	" 12.8.11	
9	H. Jude	30.261	Lanolau Emil	" 25.12.10	
10	Holl. Jude	48.107	Dwinger Moses	" 6.11.86	
11	Frz. Jude	50.032	Lomahiec Zinnul-Elias	" 22.7.88	
					11
					<u>19.624</u>
Neuzugänge am 25 Juli 1942					791
Stärke zum Morgenappell am 25 Juli 1942					<u>20415</u>
					<i>Davon 153 Russen</i>

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20415

312	U Prot.	33789	Holomek Johann	geb. 16. 6. 94
2		33880	Odehnal Josef	" 4. 11. 93
3		33925	Matyska Jakob	" 7. 12. 04
4	Pole	34119	Karzewski Johann	" 16. 7. 82
5	Jude	34156	Lynqiner Kiwa	" 8. 3. 09
6		34170	Prekower Pruwin	" 5. 4. 99
7		34217	Silberstein Lzmul	" 10. 7. 10
8		34570	Frenkiel Jcek	" 11. 12. 11
9		34590	Sychnek Lewek	" 10. 5. 00
40		34617	Dbuderic Gederon	" 25. 10. 97
1	Pole	34642	Jadowski Josef	" 10. 2. 17
2	Jude	34654	Goldfeder Berach	" 25. 12. 09
3		34887	Künstlinger Moritz	" 23. 10. 12
4	Pole	34950	Klanlak Michael	" 13. 6. 16
5		34979	Krajewski Johann	" 8. 1. 11
6		35140	Gajewski Georg	" 15. 4. 12
7		35192	Kowalezyk Anton	" 13. 1. 87
8		35354	Zaluzny Nikolaus	" 2. 12. 02
9		35420	Qawrybiak Ladislaus	" 1. 7. 11
50	Jude	35720	Münster Baruch	" 24. 12. 12
1	Pole	35734	Sadlik Franz	" 1. 4. 86
2	Jude	35742	Spuner Wilhelm	" 22. 10. 20
3	ASO Prot.	35850	Levcik Franz	" 21. 3. 88
4	U. Haft.	35981	Valentik Karl	" 21. 5. 01
5	Jude	36138	Rosenblum Samuel	" 9. 11. 24
6		36149	Zlattner Eugen	" 28. 5. 22
7		36171	Blum Arnold	" 7. 3. 02
8		36187	Guttmann Ignatz	" 21. 12. 10
9		36196	Heiner Bened	" 2. 2. 11
60		36198	Prelinger Leopold	" 21. 7. 06
1		36204	Zimmermann Adolf	" 12. 12. 10

20415

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11.305

Stärke vom 16. zum 17. Februar 1942.

I. Verstorbene Käftlinge:

1. Karx.	458.	Niemczyk	Wladislaw	geb. 25.5.11.	11/6.10 =
2. "	824.	Loj	Stanislaw	" 18.3.12	20/6.10 =
3. Pol.	15803.	Trzechocki	Frank	" 23.9.03	23/5.41 =
4. "	16487.	Kerdinski	Stefan	" 9.12.08	26/5.41 =
5. "	16675.	Frank	August	" 12.1.14	29/5.41 =
6. Cech.	17405.	Komarek	Karol	" 29.10.35	30/6.41 =
7. RD-Sold.	18273.	Fox	Josif	" 10.4.00	22/7.41 =
8. Jude	21011.	Fischl	Sigfried	Tor. " 5.3.77	4/2.12 =
9. Cech.	21324.	Kratochvil	Frank	" 19.11.04	3/10.41 =
10. Pol.	22782.	Iskutnik	Shadaw	" 26.4.09	20/11.41 =
11. "	23578.	Lupa	Josif	" 3.4.05	27/11.41 =
12. Cech.	24465.	Konecny	Frank	" 25.7.92	12/12.41 =
13. Pol.	24552.	Kamucki	Ignatz	" .. 06.	15/12.41 =
14. Jude	24579.	Schipper	Saftali	Tor. " 11.2.18	15/12.41 =
15. Pol.	25107.	Polyniak	Stefan	" 1.1.04.	15/12.41 =
					<u>15</u>

Stärke zum Morgenappell am 17. Februar 1942

11.290

davon 1.228 Russ

I. Verstorbene Käftlinge

1. Pol.	631.	Gmytyczyn	Bogdan	geb. 11.6.23	14/6.40 =
2. "	973.	Czaplinski	Shadaw	" 24.12.99	20/6.40 =
3. Karx.	861.	Malas	Marian	" 20.7.05	20/6.40 =
4. "	1114.	Pitroniec	Ladislaw	" 1.5.22	24/6.40 =
5. Pol.	5793.	Lantara	Stefan	" 2.9.03	29/9.40 =
6. "	11721.	Niemiec	Micislaw	" 15.5.12	5/11.41 =
7. "	14293.	Delorn	Johann	" 3.2.03	6/11.41 =
8. "	14375.	Lminda	Frank	" 4.10.91	6/11.41 =

11.290



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9.	Pole	16860,	Mazurek	Sigmund	geb.	15.2.11.	29/5.41 =	
10.	"	18578,	Pyplack	Joschim	"	27.12.92	24/7.41 =	
11.	"	18909,	Blasniak	Franz	"	14.1.07	30/7.41 =	
12.	"	19176,	Wojcik	Adam	"	25.12.99	30/7.41 =	
13.	"	19442,	Lew	Boguslaw	"	4.5.23	30/7.41 =	
14.	Jude	20133,	Birnbaum	Wolf	geb.	2.1.98	(12.42 =	
15.	Pole	20268,	Kochanski	Leonhard	"	6.12.05	26/8.41 =	
16.	Jude	21573,	Meppen	Teck	Pejach	"	2.3.03	12/2.42 =
17.	Pole	21735,	Orzechowski	Stanislaw	"	13.10.11.	16/10.41 =	
18.	"	21947,	Gembowski	Anton	"	7.3.06	24/10.41 =	
19.	Cech	22089,	Krejalik	Franz	"	11.5.94	24/10.41 =	
20.	Pole	22224,	Kura	Stanislaw	"	18.3.04	25/10.41 =	
21.	Aso-Pol.	22513,	Jakob	Adolf	"	28.7.07	7/11.41 =	
22.	Jude	24278,	Bochner	Isaak	Isr.	"	8.7.14	12/12.41 =
23.	Cech	24430,	Pribyl	Mois	"	24.7.06	12/12.41 =	
24.	Pole	25283,	Garbien	Franz	"	25.2.88	8/11.42 =	
25.	Cech	25599,	Lauer	Aldrich	"	23.5.09	15/11.42 =	
26.	Pole	25933,	Jadach	Mladislav	"	20.8.12	22/11.42 =	
27.	Aso-Pol	16641,	Majewski	Albert	"	11.4.12	21/5.41 =	
28.	Jude	19917,	Rosenfarb	Pinkas	Isr.	"	15.6.84	3/12.42 =
29.	Pole	20384,	Linowski	Klemm	"	7.10.20.	4/9.41 =	
30.	"	20867,	Cybuch	Marian	"	13.2.19	12/9.41 =	
31.	Jude	22665,	Korlewski	Adolf	Isr.	"	15.11.83	13/2.42 =
32.	Pole	23002,	Gawlik	Josef	"	25.4.07	20/11.41 =	
33.	"	23062,	Dobel	Richard	"	8.3.12	20/11.41 =	
34.	"	23563,	Ganaj	Josef	"	1.2.88	21/11.41 =	
35.	"	24002,	Skowronski	Viktor	"	24.3.88	11/12.41 =	
36.	Jude	24292,	Secht	Perex	Israel	"	12/12.41 =	

11.290

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14.403

8	H. Jude	30137	Rechnitzer Albert	geb.	11.3.06
9	"	30182	Gold Arpad	"	1.10.04
10	"	30728	Spitz Leopold	"	12.6.22
11	"	32189	Hausner Efraim	"	4.6.98
12	"	32261	Grünfeld Hermann	"	12.6.17
13	Pole	32488	Bojoczek Alois	"	28.3.12
14	H. Jude	33011	Berger Markus	"	11.7.94
15	Pole	34675	Pajor Ignatz	"	3.11.13
16	H. Jude	36098	Lanyi Richard	"	9.12.84
					16
					14.387

Neuzugänge am 28. Mai 1942
 Stärke zum Abendappell am 28. Mai 1942 14.394
 Davon 158 Russe

Stärke vom 28 zum 29. Mai 1942

Verstorbene Häftlinge

1	Erz.	1226	Lupek Franz	geb.	13.11.19
2	"	1963	Kohn Emanuel	"	21.11.22
3	Pole	18197	Janocik Lenon	"	5.3.10
4	"	25274	Diernat Adalbert	"	9.7.01
5	Tscheche	25557	Howlin Josef	"	19.6.07
6	H. Juden	29959	Heller Ferdinand	"	16.10.00
7	Tscheche	23132	Bilek Rudolf	"	26.12.92
8	Jude	30124	Pollak Oskar	"	16.2.87
9	"	36121	Kolski Zyja	"	15.3.08
10	Pole	14208	Koloszynek Josef	"	19.3.19
11	"	16725	Koziobrek Heinrich	"	5.6.22
12	"	23882	Zalawa Adalbert	"	24.3.04
					14.394



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14.318

46	Sole	16203	Bosiak Simon	geb. 9.10.08	
47	"	18549	Onderka Thadeus	" 1.2.05	
48	"	20369	Gardocki Anton	" 17.1.17	
49	L. b. V.	25958	Orebski Josef	" 10.12.10	
50	R. D.	26545	Schmidt Richard	" 26.3.99	26
Verstorbene Häftlinge					
1	Erz.	1637	Jakubowski Johann	geb. 27.12.97	0
2	"	1687	Jagusz Jakob	" 20.4.21	
3	"	2232	Borron Johann	" 12.2.98	
4	Sole	22714	Wyzner Heinrich	" 31.8.99	
5	"	23371	Lagorski Leo	" 20.3.16	
6	"	24472	Kisiel Johann	" 18.4.12	
7	"	27085	Bunio Josef	" 24.3.86	
8	"	27507	Orchel Stanislaus	" 6.12.21	
9	H. Jude	29498	Müller Albert	" 27.6.01	
10	Sole	29559	Lintseher Franz	" 26.9.91	
11	H. Jude	30106	Weingarten Albert	" 3.11.11	
12	"	30450	Jakobi Desider	" 18.5.02	
13	"	30630	Fenster David	" 22.8.98	
14	"	31532	Klein Josef	" 22.2.11	
15	"	32696	Almasi Simon	" 25.12.21	
16	"	33013	Lick Rudolf	" 6.5.92	
17	"	33045	Neumann Leo	" 9.10.93	
18	Sole	34602	Friedrich Wenzel	" 31.1.96	
19	Frz. Jude	27673	Ejzenberg Ljuzja	" 2.5.94	19 ✓ 46
1	D. V. Lig.	33804	Daniel Vincent	" 15.8.19	1 ✓ 14.272
Neuzugänge am 29 Mai 1942					
Stärke zum Abendappell am 29 Mai 1942					92
					14.364

Davon 158 Russen

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Konzentrationslager Auschwitz
Politische Abteilung

H.-Bekleidungskammer

Zugänge am 24. Mai 1941 :

Einzeliefert von :

Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei
und des SD im Distrikt L u b l i n.

Matr. Nr.	N a m e	Vorname	Geb.Dat.	Geb.Ort	Beruf
15995	Krol	Stefan	26. 8.00	Wloclawek	Arbeiter
15996	Reszczyński	Stanislaus	21. 4.16	Siedlchow	Dreher
15997	Koniczany	Nikolaus	1.12.06	Kcetty	Schlosser
15998	Milosz	Anton	4. 6.15	Siedlchow	Holzarbeiter
15999	Kusy	Czeslaus	2. 5.11	Jablun	Arbeiter
16000	Wilkowski	Czeslaus	18. 3.21	Symbarkowa	Schlosser
16001	Rosolowski	Adalbert	27. 1.02	Janow Lub.	Zimmermann
16002	Rosolowski	Stanislaus	1.11.20	Starzyca	Maurer
16003	Szymanski	Stanislaus	2. 2.19	Lublin	Landarbeiter
16004	Mekelski	Felix	28. 3.19	Wenzkau	Fleischer
16005	Kolada	Johanna	18. 4.88	Gelszewo	Landwirt
16006	Dudek	Paul	15. 1.68	Osierszkowice	Schneider
16007	Kamela	Andreas	1. 1.05	Wierchowice	Landwirt
16008	Kryk	Lorenz	- 8.94	Nowy Dwor	Landwirt
16009	Stachurski	Michael	27. 9.95	Bobolborzyce	Landwirt
16010	Wiczniuk	Thaddeus	31. 7.19	Lubonki	Fleischer
16011	Sanczuk	Albin	1. 3.99	Wohyn	Landwirt
16012	Kosmala	Julian	17. 2.06	Belgiew	Landwirt
16013	Pachuta	Thomas	12. 4.01	Bobianowice	Schmid
16014	Wilkowski	Felix	5. 5.12	Czechow	Landwirt
16015	Lewicki	Stefan	- - 21	Stoczek	Landwirt
16016	Skwirra	Michael	14. 9.03	Igalin	Landwirt
16017	Misiura	Viktor	17. 9.92	Stasin	Schlosser
16018	Fatyra	Franz	3.12.96	Siennica Madolna	Rechtsanwalt
16019	Flechawski	Kasimir	8. 8.09	Lublin	Buchhalter
16020	Mastej	Johann	24. 6.14	Detroit USA	Landwirt
16021	Krol	Siegfried	28. 5.12	Lubartow	Kunstmaler
16022	Szydowski	Viktor	9.10.88	Piaski	Maurer
16023	Petrykiewicz	Ladislaus	24.11.03	Jaslo	Lehrer
16024	Samslikowski	Julius	24. 2.99	Warschau	Zimmermann
16025	Grelak	Stanislaus	12.11.07	Gardzionice	Schmid
16026	Rokicki	Johann	18. 8.20	Koszarzew Dolny	Maurer
16027	Polec	Franz	9. 9.01	Bilgoraj	Kaufmann
16028	Malicki	Johann	30. 9.07	Bystrzejawice	Schuster
16029	Szewe	Kasimir	30.11.22	Piaski	Betonarbeiter
16030	Skwarczynski	Silvester	22. 3.19	Piaski	Arbeiter
16031	Jaszczepnik	Stefan	25. 8.18	Majdan Brzec.	Landwirt
16032	Stepanek	Siegfried	25.12.00	Litmanstadt	Witruangest.
16033	Szymczyk	Paul	- - 03	Klodnica	Landwirt
16034	Igura	Josef	19.10.98	Boleska	Landwirt
16035	Wronski	Franz	19. 6.85	Karczminska	Tischler
16036	Czechowski	Janusz	15. 1.19	Lublin	Schlosser

List of newly arrived prisoners, 24 May 1941, © PMA-B.



Haft Art	Haftl. Nr.	Name	Vorname	Geb. Dat.	Geb. Ort	Beruf
chutzh.						
Pole	16147	Pawlowski	Anton	1. 6.13	Pawlowice	Inadwirt
"	16148	Galczynski	Stefan	23.10.02	Dabrowka	Berufsaunteroff
"	16149	Gawlik	Ignatz	14. 7.03	Gora Pulawska	Chauffeur
"	16150	Podwyszynski	Stanislaus	8. 5.79	Kijew	Beamter
R.D.	16151	Jilek	Johann	29. 8.20	Zalke	Maschinschloße
Tech.	16152	Lacztowiczka	Jaroslaus	28. 2.14	Prag	Schloßer
Pole	16153	Borkowski	Dionisius	8. 4.90	Goraj	Schloßer
"	16154	Bobrowski	Ladislaus	3. 5.06	Warschau	Landwirt
"	16155	Karpinski	Stanislaus	15. 9.09	Borki	Landwirt
"	16156	Balawender	Johann	14. 8.97	Potok	Eisenbahnbeamter
"	16157	Sergiel	Boleslaus	--. 5.14	GrabowSzlach.	Landwirt
Jude	16158	Cymant	Icek Israel	2.11.04	Lublin	Fleischer
Pole	16159	Koszalka	Stanislaus	--.---.14	Sulow	Landwirt
"	16160	Koszalka	Franz	15.11.21	Sulow	Landmann
"	16161	Golos	Julian	15. 2.89	Grabowiec	Heger
"	16162	Czarnecki	Ladislaus	5. 5.96	Raszewy	Gutsbesitzer
"	16163	Zdanowicz	Thadeus	3. 8.10	Druskienniki	Walding.
"	16164	Czerniak	Ladislaus	14. 9.06	Suchowola	Landwirt
"	16165	Jasina	Johann	26. 4.04	Majdan	Landwirt
"	16166	Derkacz	Bronislaus	17. 6.06	Wolka Plebanska	Gärtnner
"	16167	Adolf	Waldemar	19. 4.90	Krakowiec	Rechtanwalt
"	16168	Dmochowski	Heinrich	27. 8.14	Charkow	Elektromechan.
"	16169	Janusz	Konstantin	14. 3.03	Staw Noakowski	Büroangest.
"	16170	Bondaruk	Alexander	3. 6.04	Wola Przewlodka	Landarbeiter
"	16171	Chwikowski	Alfons	10. 2.22	Friedrichshauand	Landwirt
"	16172	Godek	Adam	14. 5.98	Debica	Unteroffiz. i.
"	16173	Jelonek	Jakob	25. 7.06	Lugi	Bürogehilfe
"	16174	Chodynicki	Lukas	16. 7.04	Warschau	Arzt
"	16175	Gorski	Waclaus	1.12.95	Swiack	Ing.Chemie
"	16176	Czapski	Stanislaus	1. 9.99	Brest Lit.	Eisenbahner
"	16177	Muciek	Joahnn	20. 6.90	Glusko	Schuhmacher
Jude	16178	Hurman	Abram Israel	--.---.06	Lisobyk	Maler
Pole	16179	Sliwowski	Mieczislaus	30. 7.87	Skordow	Handelbeamter
"	16180	Gutowski	Alexander	28.10.93	Rzewnie	Gutsverwalter
"	16181	Blaszynski	Thadeus	21. 5.86	Lublin	Brennreitechn.
"	16182	Tokarczyk	Anton	3. 1.09	Barcice	Lehrer
"	16183	Hornowski	Kasimir	14. 1.11	Juniewiec	Lehrer
"	16184	Korzeniewski	Adam	24.12.89	Litzmannstadt	Strassenbaume
"	16185	Bakes	Franz	30.11.91	Grodok Jag.	Lehrer
"	16186	Jusiak	Anton	23. 9.11	Pijany Daluze	Landwirt
"	16187	Chmielowiec	Adalbert	23. 4.99	Beszyce	Beuer
"	16188	Bys	Michael	23. 2.03	Laszczow	Landwirt
"	16189	Kisiewicz	Stefan	12. 6.13	Zabie	Lehrer
"	16190	Mandsiak	Masył	29. 5.17	Stehiatyn	Landwirt
"	16191	Galinski	Johann	20. 4.11	Prawiedniki	Landwirt
"	16192	Chribit	Josef	26. 9.13	Rosanka	Buchhalter
"	16193	Glinka	Simon	--.---.97	Godziszow	Landarbeiter
"	16194	Bakubki	Stefan	14. 8.18	Osnowitz	Arbeiter
"	16195	Chrostowski	Michael	11. 1.89	Osuchowo	Gymn. Lehrer
"	16196	Gac	Johann	15. 7.13	Zamosc	Schloßer
"	16197	Gorecki	Franz	--. 9.14	Lipina Stara	Maurer
"	16198	Cherchel	Adolf	23.12.10	Plaszkwice	Steinmetzer
"	16199	Dluszynski	Ladislaus	25. 6.02	Chyrow	Lehrer
"	16200	Drozdsek	Thadeus	21. 2.21	Warschau	Fuhrmann
"	16201	Dalmaczynski	Heinrich	17. 7.18	Tuczyn	Landmann
"	16202	Golowski	Miroslaus	24. 4.14	Kiszniow	Landwirt
"	16203	Besjak	Simon	9.10. 08	Sobieska ola	Schuhmacher
"	16204	Soznowka	Stanislaus	8. 5.17	Zdzilowice	Landarbeiter



2102	Janina Agata	"15.7.42
22047	Janina Lisa	"16.11."
18993	Bernick Maria	"16.11."
13124	Bernick Jadwiga	"16.11."
19214	Bernick Jadwiga	"16.11."
8692	Sadowna Zena	"16.11."
39479	Maacka Julia	"17.11."
14065	Kamanka Zuzanna	"18.11."
4594	Stankowska Sofia	"18.11."
2430	Simonowicz Jadwiga	"18.11."
3130	Endelick Stanislaw	"19.11."
12665	Dolmancka Zuzanna	"19.11."
6456	Wawer Maria	"19.11."
4524	Wojcieszewska Maria	"20.11."
4241	Kasprzak Sofia	"20.11."
2007	Wojcieszewska Maria	"20.11."
4502	Wojcieszewska Maria	"20.11."
19116	Kulikowska Helena	"21.11."
6802	Wojcieszewska Sofia	"21.11."
3169	Tanowska Jadwiga	"21.11."
14541	Pruszyk Julia	"21.11."
19450	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
2507	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4162	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
3488	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
19776	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
8289	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
20272	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4441	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4939	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4516	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
3442	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
2027	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22088	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
12004	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4534	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
21094	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
45694	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22001	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4909	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
13182	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22299	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
2506	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
6804	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4955	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4946	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4183	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
2102	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
8143	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22554	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
11990	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14675	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
12294	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14605	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
31121	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
71943	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14874	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4412	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4384	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14566	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22572	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14136	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
11994	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
6847	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
6861	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
13122	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
6899	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
21100	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
2442	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4485	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
8153	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
9135	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4148	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
21321	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22064	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
21292	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4522	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14545	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
13164	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14599	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
13154	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4130	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22055	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22072	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14592	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14287	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
14624	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22074	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22072	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4411	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
13125	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
20199	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4515	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
21094	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22506	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
4529	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."
22516	Wojcieszewska Maria	"21.11."

List of deceased women prisoners with the name of Danuta Terlikowska – compiled illegally in the camp, © PMA-B.



4371	Jelena Krakow	1910/13	4372	...	...
4394	Wierka Kofa	" 13 11	4373	...	...
4527	Emilia Kowalska	" 13 11	4374	...	...
4630	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4375	...	...
5003	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4376	...	...
5046	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4377	...	...
5658	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4378	...	...
618	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4379	...	...
584	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4380	...	...
4526	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4381	...	...
6059	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4382	...	...
4674	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4383	...	...
8014	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4384	...	...
9002	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4385	...	...
9069	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4386	...	...
1605	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4387	...	...
9372	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4388	...	...
5059	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4389	...	...
2343	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4390	...	...
9219	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4391	...	...
2352	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4392	...	...
5378	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4393	...	...
4093	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4394	...	...
6051	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4395	...	...
810	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4396	...	...
159	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4397	...	...
1000	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4398	...	...
133	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4399	...	...
256	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4400	...	...
4393	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4401	...	...
622	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4402	...	...
898	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4403	...	...
2430	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4404	...	...
9334	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4405	...	...
9253	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4406	...	...
8021	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4407	...	...
4324	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4408	...	...
846	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4409	...	...
6428	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4410	...	...
4318	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4411	...	...
6843	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4412	...	...
4381	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4413	...	...
9178	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4414	...	...
6590	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4415	...	...
1382	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4416	...	...
1944	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4417	...	...
7346	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4418	...	...
843	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4419	...	...
103	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4420	...	...
1320	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4421	...	...
9180	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4422	...	...
9310	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4423	...	...
1022	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4424	...	...
162	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4425	...	...
888	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4426	...	...
288	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4427	...	...
422	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4428	...	...
19	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4429	...	...
28997	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4430	...	...
29072	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4431	...	...
29178	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4432	...	...
32130	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4433	...	...
34304	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4434	...	...
35149	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4435	...	...
26765	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4436	...	...
29208	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4437	...	...
19517	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4438	...	...
35849	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4439	...	...
35182	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4440	...	...
35204	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4441	...	...
34604	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4442	...	...
32873	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4443	...	...
30612	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4444	...	...
35268	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4445	...	...
24426	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4446	...	...
34273	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4447	...	...
28283	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4448	...	...
28244	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4449	...	...
29406	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4450	...	...
29483	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4451	...	...
28235	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4452	...	...
2509	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4453	...	...
29365	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4454	...	...
29450	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4455	...	...
26056	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4456	...	...
20585	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4457	...	...
2442	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4458	...	...
4428	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4459	...	...
2232	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4460	...	...
26009	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4461	...	...
20034	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4462	...	...
25275	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4463	...	...
2420	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4464	...	...
24585	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4465	...	...
23346	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4466	...	...
24702	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4467	...	...
29416	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4468	...	...
29084	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4469	...	...
28899	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4470	...	...
30625	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4471	...	...
30228	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4472	...	...
26901	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4473	...	...
24243	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4474	...	...
24220	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4475	...	...
26829	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4476	...	...
26918	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4477	...	...
28718	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4478	...	...
29254	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4479	...	...
30732	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4480	...	...
29340	Wanda Kowalska	" 13 11	4481	...	...

List of deceased women prisoners with the name of Czesława Kwoka – compiled illegally in the camp, © PMA-B.



II 4038 1042 (50) 13		
Geheime Staatspolizei — Staatspolizeistelle Litzmannstadt		
Nachrichten-Uebermittlung		
Aufgenommen Zeit Tag Monat Jahr 28. Mai 1942 durch 09	Raum für Eingangsstempel 110	Bestätigt Zeit Tag Monat Jahr an durch
U. Nr. 15119	Telegramm — Funkspruch Fernschreiben Fernspruch	Bei Mitteilungsbemerkung Staatspolizeistelle Litzmannstadt Abt. II 5 der Hauptpartei nicht benannt. 28.5.42 festgest.
K. L. AUSCHWITZ NR. 16 333 28.5.42 1817 = TA.- AN DAS REICHSKRIMINALAMT- AN ALLE OEST. UND SUEDOESTL. STAPO/ LEIT/ KRIPO/ LEIT STELLEN UND GREKO - UND KRIPOLEITSTELLE PRAG - ORANIENBURG AMTSGR. D.---- -- BETR.: V.H. VINZENZ <u>D A N I E L</u> , GEB. 15.8.19 IN SMERCNA, ARBEITER, PROT.-ANGH. LEDIG., VATER KARL, GESTORBEN, MUTTER BOZENA GEB. KOCHAN. WOHNHAFI IN BRUENN, POLNI KOLONIE, PROT. D. WAR ZIGEUNER UND HATTE KEINEN FESTEN WOHNSITZ.-- PERSONENBESCHREIBUNG.- 1,75 GROSS, NASE GRADL., HAARE SCHWARZ, GESTALT SCHLANK, DICKE LIPPEN, GROSSE OHREN, BRAUNE AUGEN, ZAEHNE GUT, 6 FEHLEN, SPRACHE TSCHECHISCH, BESONDERE KENNZEICHEN KEINE (DUNKLE KLEIDUNG).- AM 29.4.42 VON DER KRIPOLEITSTELLE PRAG WEGEN LANDSTREICHEREI, BELLELEI UND DIEBSTAHL, INGES. MIT 4 MONATEN GFFAENGNIS .- POLITISCHE VORSTRAFEN : ANGEBL. KEINE.- BEZUG: OHNE.-- -- DER OEBENGENANNTTE IST AM 27.5.42 GEGEN 16,00 UHR AUS DEN HIES. LAGER ENTFLOHEN. D. WAR ZUM ARBEITSKOMMANDO " ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT KATOWITZ BUNAWARKE " BESCHAEFTIGT. DA DIE SOFORT EINGELEITETET SUCHAKTION BISHER OHNE ERFOLG ERLAIFEN IST, WIRD GEBETEN, DIE FAHNDUNG VON DORT AUS WEITER ZU VERANLASSEN UN D IM ERGREIFUNGSFALLE DAS K.L. AUSCHWITZ SOFORT ZU		

Telegram sent by the Gestapo with the name of Vincent Daniel, p. 1, © PMA-B.



BENACHRICHTIGEN. BEMERKT WIRD NOCH, DASS DER HAEFTLING
UNTER ZURUECKLASSUNG SEINER HAEFTLINGSKLEIDUNG IN ZIVIL
GEFLOHEN IST. ZUSATZ FUER DIE KRIPOL. PRAG: AUSSERDEM BI
ICH DIE AUSSCHREIBUNG IM FAHNDUNGSBUCH ZU VERANLASSEN.
ZUSATZ FUER ORANIENBURG: DIE SUCHAKTION WIRD VON HIER A
ENERGISCH FORGESETZT.- AUSSERDEM WURDEN DIE IN DER UMGEE
LIEGENDEN SCHUTZPOLIZEIBEHOERDEN, GRENZPOLIZEI UND
GENDARMERIEPOSTEN TELEFONISCH IN KENNTNIS GESETZT.
DIE AUSSCHREIBUNG IM FAHNDUNGSBUCH EBENFALLS VERANLASST. I
ZUSAMMENHANG MIT DER FLUCHT SIND BIS JETZT 12 ZIVILPERSONE
FESTGENOMMEN WORDEN. WEITERER BERICHT FOLGT.--

-- GEZ. HOESS SS- STUBAF. U. KOMMANDANT +



KL: <u>Auschwitz</u>		BV.- Ztg. Prot.	
		Häftl.-Nr.: <u>33 804</u>	
Häftlings-Personal-Karte			
Fam.-Name: <u>Daniel</u>	am: _____	Überstellt: _____	an KL: _____
Vorname: <u>Vinzent</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Größe: _____ cm
Geb. am: <u>15.8.1911</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Gestalt: _____
Stand: <u>led.</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Gesicht: _____
Kinder: <u>1</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Augen: _____
Wohnort: _____	am: _____	an KL: _____	Nase: _____
Strasse: _____	am: _____	an KL: _____	Mund: _____
Religion: <u>rk.</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Ohren: _____
Staatsang: <u>Prot. Böh.</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Zähne: _____
Wohnort d. Angehörigen: <u>Kocman</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Haare: _____
<u>Bozena, Polny Konolil, Brno</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Sprache: _____
<u>Obitny Vos</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Bes. Kennzeichen: _____
Eingewiesen am: <u>29.4.1942</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Char.-Eigenschaften: _____
durch: _____	am: _____	an KL: _____	Sicherheit b. Einsatz: _____
in KL: <u>Auschwitz</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	Körperliche Verfassung: _____
Grund: _____	am: _____	an KL: _____	
Vorstrafen: _____	am: _____	an KL: _____	
<u>9 x Diebstahl = 4 Mo. G. I.</u>	am: _____	an KL: _____	
	mit Verfügung v: _____		
Strafen im Lager:			
Grund: _____	Art: _____	Bemerkung: _____	
_____	_____	<u>27.5.42 geflohen</u>	
_____	_____	<u>Kmdo. Buna</u>	
_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	

Prisoner's personal card with the name of Vincent Daniel, © PMA-B.

Editors' and authors' biographies

Dr Fabienne Regard has been an expert in “teaching remembrance and diplomacy of memory” for the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for Prevention of Crimes against Humanity at the Council of Europe since 2005. She received her PhD in Political Science in 1995 at the Graduate Institute of International Studies (GIIS) in Geneva. She worked on didactics in history teaching, using audio-visual sources in teaching international relations, Jewish and Holocaust memory as a researcher (Swiss National Science Foundation 2002-2005) and chargée d’enseignements at the GIIS in Geneva. She is involved in many projects on teaching remembrance such as that in Beit Lohamei Hagetaot. She is author and co-author of several books, handbooks and articles on Holocaust topics (such as memory of Jewish refugees) and didactics for teaching about the Holocaust as a prevention tool (for instance, the survivor testimony in the classroom).

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Dr Piotr Trojański is a faculty member at the Institute of History at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, Head of the Research Centre for History and Culture of Ethnic and National Minorities, specialising in modern history of Jews in Poland, history didactics and especially Holocaust education. He has authored and co-authored several books, as well as many articles, devoted to these issues. He is a co-author of the first Polish curriculum and textbook for teaching about the Holocaust in Poland, as well as an educational exhibition entitled “Jews in Poland. Fellow-citizens or foreigners?”. Since 2006 he has been working as an academic advisor for the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in Oświęcim. He is a member of the International Task Force for Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research and the International Auschwitz Council.

Krystyna Oleksy holds an M.A. in the Polish language from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and completed a postgraduate course in museum practice there. At the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, she worked first in the research-education

centre, then in the publication department, and, from 1990, as Deputy Director for Education. The creation of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the museum was her initiative; she drew up the first operational plans in 1993 and, as Deputy Director, has managed the centre since it opened in 2006.

From 1995-97, she was co-ordinator of the Tempus Civil Society and Social Change in Europe after Auschwitz programme, a co-operative venture among the Jagiellonian University, Oxford University, and the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg. The programme included exchanges of students and faculty (120 people in all), and the art exhibition “Representations”, which was presented in several cities in Poland and Germany. In 1993, she inaugurated permanent co-operation between the Museum and Yad Vashem in the field of training Polish teachers and educators in Israel and their Israeli counterparts in Poland. Approximately 1 000 teachers and guides have participated in the exchanges so far. She is one of the authors of the permanent exhibition in the “Central Camp Sauna” in Birkenau, which presents the world of the European Jews before the Holocaust, as well as the album *Before They Perished: Photographs Found in Auschwitz*, which is the catalogue for that exhibition.

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Alicja Bialecka is an educator and a researcher at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. She specialises in Auschwitz remembrance and how it is represented in literature, as well as the educational dimension of memorial sites in the context of European identity. She has published several articles devoted to these issues, among them educational programmes and papers on the symbolism of Auschwitz, methods of teaching at memorial sites and their role in history education. She is also co-author of the guidelines for youth trips to memorial sites, published by the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Commemoration and Research and works as museum curator and Educational Programs Director at the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. Alicja received her Master’s degree in English Philology and Linguistics at the Modern Language and Literature Department of the Silesian University. She is currently working for her PhD in literature at the Department of Anthropology of Literature and Cultural Studies, in the Faculty of Polish Studies of Jagiellonian University.

Andrzej Kacorzyk is a graduate of the Pedagogical University of Opole and the Teacher Training College in Bielsko-Biała. A teacher and educator, he has worked with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim since 1997 as an Auschwitz

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museum tour guide and from 1998, as an employee of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. Currently, he has additional duties as the supervisor of the Visitors Services Section at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. He completed postgraduate work in history and museum studies at the Jagiellonian University and has also taken part in training sessions at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, as well as in Italy, Germany and the USA. He works as a co-organiser of seminars for Polish Catholic priests at the Yad Vashem Institute. He has also written articles – published by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum Publications Department and the Pedagogical University of Cracow – on the goals, methods and the process of education about Auschwitz at the authentic historical site.

Mirosław Obsarczyk is a historian, curator, PhD candidate at the Jagiellonian University and museum guide. He completed his historical studies at the Silesian University in Katowice and his postgraduate Museum Studies at Jagiellonian University. He has worked in the exhibitions department of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum since 1993. He has authored several articles and historical exhibitions presenting the history of KL Auschwitz. Mirosław works in co-operation with the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust creating educational materials for teachers or educational activities. He is a member of the City of Oświęcim Memorial-Hospice Foundation Council.

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Antoni Stańczyk was a French and Latin teacher at the grammar school in Oświęcim between 1978-86. He has worked at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum since 1986 as a lecturer in the Department of Education. He became deputy manager of the Visitor Services Section in 1991 and its manager in 2000. He currently works as a curator in the programme section of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust and co-ordinates training sessions and educational support for guides, as well as seminars and study visits for teachers and French-speaking students. He is trained in Romance studies, has completed a postgraduate course in museum studies and has taken part in seminars in France, Israel and the USA.

Teresa Świebocka is a former Deputy Museum Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. She read history at Jagiellonian University in Cracow and finished post-graduate studies in museum sciences in 1975. She is an author and co-author of scenarios and curator of several temporary historical exhibitions shown abroad including “Auschwitz: A Crime against Humanity” (presented at the UN in New

York), the commemoration tablet system at the Birkenau site and Judenrampe, the exhibition in the “Sauna”, as well as the co-author of the concept for the new permanent main exhibition at the Auschwitz site (2007). Teresa is the author of articles published in Poland and abroad on the history of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and its collections and activity, as well as on the symbolism of Auschwitz. She is the co-author and editor of more than a dozen books and albums, including the monograph “Auschwitz”.

Wiesława Młynarczyk is an employee of the Public Education Office at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in Warsaw and a Polish language teacher at the LXXXI Grammar School, named after Aleksander Fredry, in Warsaw. She has conducted workshops for teachers entitled “Traces of the Holocaust and the post-War history of the Jews” at the Public Education Office at the IPN since 2001; she also organises conferences and seminars dealing with this history, as well as on understanding recent history. Wiesława Młynarczyk also works as an editor of lesson plans in educational publications for the Institute of National Remembrance. She participates as a member of the jury in central competitions and educational projects related to the history and culture of the Jews and is the author of numerous publications on Holocaust education. In 2008, she was among seven teachers nominated for the Irena Sendler Award “for Repairing The World”. In June 2008 she was honoured with a certificate given to Poles who work in protecting Jewish heritage.

Małgorzata Tracz worked as a history teacher at primary and middle schools in Silesia and, since 2005, works as a museum guide at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. She has authored lesson plans used in relation to youth visits to the museum and memorial at Auschwitz-Birkenau and the educational framework included in the book *The Auschwitz letters of Henryk Serejski: I am healthy and feel fine*. She received her Master’s degree in history at the Faculty of History and Education at the Opole University and finished postgraduate studies in “Totalitarianism – Nazism – Holocaust” co-organised by the Pedagogical University of Cracow and the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

Jacek Lech, finished Polish and Scandinavian language studies at Jagiellonian University in Cracow. A recipient of a scholarship from the Government of Bavaria for graduates in the humanities from central and eastern Europe countries, he went on to study modern German literature and political science at Bertolt-Brecht University in Augsburg. Between the years 2001 and 2008 he was manager of the

information section and the e-learning section at the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. He takes part in international scholarship programmes (State Department Leadership programme), study trips, conferences and seminars dealing with Auschwitz and the Holocaust. He is also the co-ordinator of publishing projects, translator, publisher and guide at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim.

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Taking groups of students to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum is a heavy responsibility, but it is a major contribution to citizenship if it fosters understanding of what Auschwitz stands for, particularly when the last survivors are at the end of their lives. It comes with certain risks, however.

This pack is designed for teachers wishing to organise student visits to authentic places of remembrance, and for the guides, academics and others who work every day with young people at Auschwitz.

There is nothing magical about visiting an authentic place of remembrance, and it calls for a carefully thought-out approach. To avoid the risk of inappropriate reactions or the failure to benefit from a large investment in travel and accommodation, considerable preparation and discussion is necessary before the visit and serious reflection afterwards. Teachers must prepare students for a form of learning they may never have met before.

This pack offers insights into the complexities of human behaviour so that students can have a better understanding of what it means to be a citizen. How are they concerned by what happened at Auschwitz? Is the unprecedented process of exclusion that was practised in the Holocaust still going on in Europe today? In what sense is it different from present-day racism and anti-Semitism?

The young people who visit Auschwitz in the next few years will be witnesses of the last witnesses, links in the chain of memory. Their generation will be the last to hear the survivors speaking on the spot.

The Council of Europe, the Polish Ministry of Education and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum are jointly sponsoring this project aimed at preventing crimes against humanity through Holocaust remembrance teaching.



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The Council of Europe has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Ever since it was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Council of Europe has symbolised reconciliation.

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