

Information Cards for Auschwitz - 1940

<p>Auschwitz is located in southern Poland. It is a place with a surprising history.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>	<p>The camp opened in June 1940. It was not built as a place to exterminate Jews. It was built first to imprison anyone the Nazis thought a threat.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>
<p>Auschwitz was modelled on pre-war Nazi concentration camps, but more deadly. Of the 20,000 Poles first imprisoned, more than half were dead by the start of 1942.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>	<p>“It seemed to me that we found ourselves in hell. You cannot describe it any other way. And it turned out it was hell.”</p> <p>- Jerzy Bielecki Auschwitz prisoner, 1940</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>
<p>Auschwitz was in a part of Poland the Nazis wanted to incorporate into Germany. It was first run by Rudolf Hoess – a committed Nazi.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>	<p>“As a fanatical National Socialist I was completely convinced that our ideal would be accepted, and would prevail over the world.”</p> <p>- Rudolf Hoess Commandant of Auschwitz</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>
<p>Hoess was instructed to turn what was a collection of run down Army barracks into a place to strike terror into the heart of the Poles.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>	<p>In the “new” Auschwitz camp, Block 11 was a place prisoners were sent for special attention.</p> <p>AUSCHWITZ 1940</p>

In Block 11 the SS used various techniques to interrogate, torture and kill people.

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The first Auschwitz was not a dedicated extermination camp. But it was a place of immense suffering.

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