

Imagine zyklon b gas  
was introduced into

Design



Imagine a place with complete and utter horror where people were subjected to starvation, slavery, torture, and medical experiments. This describes the biggest concentration camp known as Auschwitz. It was initially opened in 1940 to serve as a detention center for political prisoners and is located in Southern Poland. The camp eventually became a housing center primarily for Jews.

From 1939 through 1945, which was during World War II, there were more than 1 million people that lost their lives at Auschwitz. The Auschwitz concentration camps forever changed world history due to the number of innocent lives that were exterminated. Auschwitz was made up of three death camps, the first one being Auschwitz I. This was the first camp established and its construction began in April of 1940. Auschwitz I was constructed for three purposes. The first reason was so that they could secure prisoners of war for an indefinite period of time, the second was so that they could enforce slave labor, and the third purpose was to kill the targeted groups that they selected. The camp contained a gas chamber and crematorium so that they could start eliminating small groups.

Auschwitz II, also known as Auschwitz-Birkenau was the second death camp. The construction of the camp began in October of 1941 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n. d.). Of all three death camps, this camp had the largest total prisoner population and was entirely made just for killing. Auschwitz-Birkenau had four main crematoriums and it was divided into ten different sections that were separated by electrified barbed-wire fences. The four large crematorium buildings had four areas, which included a disrobing

area, a large gas chamber, and crematorium ovens. Eventually, in late 1941, Zyklon B gas was introduced into the German concentration camp system.

This gas was a poisonous gas that was used in the gas chamber to kill all of the innocent people. The gassing operations continued at Auschwitz-Birkenau until November of 1944. In Auschwitz-Birkenau alone, there was approximately one million people that died there. Of that one million at least 9 of every 10 were Jews. Auschwitz III, which was also called Monowitz or Buna, was the third Auschwitz concentration camp that began in October of 1942.

Monowitz was built by the Auschwitz inmates in the beginning of April in 1941. This camp housed prisoners, who through their forced labor, aided in the production of making synthetic rubber, chemicals, and fuel in the factories that were located at the camp. Those that were assigned to work at Monowitz, had a much better chance of survival because the factory workers were considered far too valuable to send to the gas chambers. Through all the Auschwitz concentration camps, there were many forms of mistreatment that occurred. At the Auschwitz concentration camps, there were all kinds of mistreatment. One kind of mistreatment was the medical experiments that they performed on the prisoners.

During 1935 through 1937, Josef Mengele performed the medical experiments on all of the prisoners, but most of them were Jews. Josef Mengele was not the only physician at Auschwitz as there were approximately thirty other physicians during the time he worked there. Some of the medical experiments he conducted consisted of testing prisoners with

drugs, putting them into pressure chambers, freezing them to death, and he also did lots of research on twins. Josef Mengele later became known as the “Angel of Death”.

Another form of mistreatment that happened at Auschwitz was the fact that they put the prisoners into gas chambers. The prisoners considered unfit to work, which included pregnant women, young children, the elderly, and those that were not physically or mentally strong were told to go to the showers immediately. Before entering the disguised gas chambers, the prisoners would have to undress, and some of them were so weak that they had to be carried by truck to the chamber.

The prisoners that were somewhat strong enough to walk, were forced to march to the chambers. Once they got inside, they were exposed to the Zyklon-B poisonous gas. Once they were deceased their bones that hadn't completely burned were ground into powder and dumped into the rivers nearby.

Since there are no bodies that can be recovered, there is no possible way to tell the lives lost at the Auschwitz concentration camps. The third form of mistreatment was starvation. During roll call, they selected hostages and took them to dark cells in block eleven and forced them to stay there without any food. They then would starve to death in those cells.

Others though, were a little more lucky and they would receive three meals a day. For breakfast they would get boiled water with a grain-based coffee substitute added, or they would get an herbal brewed tea. For lunch, they would receive a liter of soup with ingredients that included either potatoes, rutabaga, groats, rye flour, and Avo food extract. Their dinner consisted of

300 grams of black bread that came with sausage, margarine, marmalade or cheese (Memorial and museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, n. d.). After enduring many years of mistreatment, there was finally some hope for those strong enough to survive. When Nazi Germany was defeated by the allied forces that was a turning point for the prisoners in concentrations camps.

In January of 1945, the Soviets liberated Auschwitz. Upon entering the camp, the Soviets had found over 6, 000 starving prisoners that were alive. Prior to the liberation, the Nazis tried destroying all evidence of the mass murders. They attempted to burn, tear down, and blow up buildings.

The Nazis also made the majority of the Auschwitz prisoners march westward in what became known as death marches. For this reason the number of prisoners found during liberation was minimal. The atrocious acts at Auschwitz left behind hundreds of thousands of pieces of clothing and shoes, piles of deceased bodies, and seven tons of human hair that had been shaved from the prisoners heads prior to them being executed.

Between 1. 1 million and 1. 5 million people were believed to have lost their lives at Auschwitz. While the thought of freedom was something the prisoners longed for, unfortunately not many survived long enough to see that day.

Many innocent lives were lost at the Auschwitz concentration camps and this tragic event changed world history forever. With all the evil acts that happened at Auschwitz and all of the lives that were lost there, those that survived the concentration camps liberation were extremely lucky. Through the excruciating stories and tragic history, the actions of the Nazis will never

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be forgotten and the lives of those lost will remain a testimony to the bravery and sacrifice of innocent lives during WWII.