

Living in a concentration camp as a jew

War



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Living In a Concentration Camp As a Jew

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Auschwitz was the largest concentration camp to be created by the German Nazis in April 1940. It was located by a town called Oswiecim, Poland. It was one of the most dangerous Nazi camps and was called the "final solution". 1,095,000 Jewish men, women, and children were deported to Auschwitz and 960,000 died in total at the camp. Auschwitz was divided into 3 sections.

One was a prison camp, one was used as a killing and extermination center, and lastly there was a forced labour camp. Only about 11% of children who were still alive in 1933 had survived the Holocaust. The prisoners had 3 small meals a day. Breakfast was half a litre of imitation coffee or a herbal "tea" which was always unsweetened.

Lunch was a litre of watery soup and you would be considered lucky to have a few pieces of turnip or potato peel, and many newcomers had a difficult time eating it. The evening dinners were around 300 grams of black bread with either sausage, margarine, marmalade, or cheese on top. It had to last until the morning so prisoners would hide it somewhere while they slept, but the starving prisoners would usually eat it all right away.

Prisoners had many duties both inside and outside of camp like working in factories, farms, and coal mines. Work was every day except Sunday and they woke up at 4:30 in the summertime and at 5:30 in the wintertime and the nighttime silence was at 9:00. They worked for German companies and were used as slave-labour.

The Sonderkommando were Jews selected for their strength and fitness to work in the crematoria. Their job was to dispose of dead corpses coming from the gas chambers. The Kanada Kommando was another job where prisoners were assigned to sort through the valuables of Jewish people so they could be sent back to Germany.

Kanada was a country that symbolizes wealth to the prisoners, so that's why they named it Kanada because of all the clothing and jewelry. Anyone who worked for the Kanada Kommando had much better living spaces in barracks than the other prisoners, but if they were caught stealing anything, they would be killed. Doing anything wrong or not to the standards could be risking your life.

Most prisoners were sent to the gas chambers immediately after arriving. Different punishments they would use was the "post" or flogging. The "post" was where you're hung in the air for a long time, so your arms become paralyzed and you are sent to the gas chambers because of being unfit for work.

Flogging is when a prisoner is bent over a stool with their arms stretched forward and they would be whipped for about 25 times. A hanging would take place during roll call and it was meant to intimidate other prisoners. A shooting was where prisoners had to strip naked and they were shot in the back of the head. Smoking, relieving yourself at the wrong time, or attempting suicide meant punishment or death.

On January 27, 1945, the Soviet Union soldiers had liberated the remaining prisoners from Auschwitz. In total, 135, 000 Jewish prisoners were liberated but most died soon after.

Many relief workers and physicians tried to save the prisoners but many were too weak to digest food and they couldn't be saved. Since they had gone without food for so long, the food was too rich for the prisoners, so they had to eat little by little. Even though so many had died, there were still those who fought to survive, and they are the people that could still live to tell their story.