

Example of essay on survival in auschwitz response paper

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



Survival in Auschwitz is a brilliantly written book that shows the pathetic state of humanity during the holocaust. Primo Levi recounts his experiences at the Auschwitz camp first hand in a touching and emotional way that is likely to melt even the hardest of hearts. Survival in Auschwitz is one of the most detailed accounts of the holocaust and is a worthy read for any historian.

The Nazis Plan to Destroy the Jews

One of the plans devised (by the Nazis) to rid themselves of the Jews was deportation. The Nazis forcefully resettled the Jews in death camps after they decided that destroying the Jews was for more important than the labor they provided. The Jews were told that they would be resettled for work, and that they should carry clothes and eating utensils. They were rounded up and put in rail cars and cattle cars which were extremely crowded and lacked sanitary facilities. Others were forced to walk in the harsh winter conditions. Those who died in the vehicles were not removed as the Nazi wanted to account for all the bodies.

Out of forty five people who travelled in the same car as Levi only four survived. Many of those who were considered unfit or unhealthy were immediately gassed and cremated. These people were then transported to a camp where they were expected to serve as slaves. They were forced to stay in filthy rooms, which had ankle high water and were forced to remain stark naked in these conditions. They were shaved and humiliated. At the camp, they were expected to obey all the rules without question. Those who became sick due to exhaustion or the inhuman conditions were executed.

The Nazi created ghettos in which the Jews were forced to live. These

ghettos were overcrowded, and the conditions were deplorable. The Nazis hoped that the conditions in these ghettos would kill most of the Jews. Life in the ghettos was so miserable and thousands of the Jews died. There was barely any food, no medicine and the water was contaminated. Diseases thrived. Many of those who did not succumb to diseases froze to death due to the harsh winter conditions. Bodies of the dead piled up in the streets. Very few people survived in these camps.

Auschwitz as a Rejection of the Values of the French Revolution of 1789

The French revolution was aimed at liberating people from an oppressive regime. It was aimed at bringing dignity to an oppressed society. It was the end of an oppressive era, after which people could live in more humane conditions. People were finally free to express themselves without fear of possible adverse repercussions. Levi's experiences at Auschwitz were the direct opposite of this. At the camp, all human dignity was taken away. They could not express themselves and were expected to comply with everything they were told without questioning, no matter how nonsensical the rules. The people at the camps lived in constant fear of execution. They were separated from their families never to see them again.

The experiences at the camp took away all the values of the French revolution. People were not allowed to have opinions and could be executed at any time without trial. They were deprived of basic needs and discriminated against by the Nazis. They were treated in the most inhumane way possible. Levi's experiences at the Auschwitz were a mockery to the French revolution. Life in the camp subjected them to socially unacceptable

behavior which they would have otherwise not engaged in. They were forced to steal and cheat for survival. The camp stood for everything that the revolution fought against.

Levi's Experiences

Levi was transported to the camp together with other people in a vehicle meant for the transportation of cattle. The poor conditions and lack of food and water led to the death of most of the prisoners. On arrival, most of women and children and all the sick and disabled were immediately killed. Levi was one of the lucky few who were approved as healthy. They were then moved to a different location where they lived in very unsanitary conditions. He soon learnt that, in that camp, they were to be seen and not heard. Rules were to be obeyed without question. He also learnt that ill health or inability to work due to exhaustion could lead to death. The food provided was disgusting and inadequate. The bathing water was so filthy that Levi did not believe that it could serve any purpose in cleaning. Bathing for him became a ritual. They were given numbers which were used to identify them.

In the camp, he experienced human suffering at its worst. There, he saw people being punished for getting injured while on duty and others being executed for not recovering after an injury. They were cremated whenever the doctors decided that they could not recover. When Levi got injured and ended up at the infirmary, he saw first-hand people being killed for their failure to recover. The medication was inadequate and some of people died due to the poor conditions. They were subjected to long working hours with

no pay. In the camp, one had to learn to survive alone. Formation of close ties was likely to reduce the chances of survival. And besides, people were killed so often that friendships rarely lasted.

The conditions at the camp left Levi in shock at the state of humanity. It was hard to believe that human beings could treat their fellow humankind with such cruelty. Levi survived death when the Nazis took all the people in the camp for what was to be known as “ the death march” because he had scarlet fever. When the Nazis deserted the camp, he was left behind to die. Luckily, he was not alone. His friends helped him in this difficult time and once again they found a sense of humanity. They shared what they had and for ten days, they had a sense of freedom. They were finally rescued by the Russians.

Works Cited

Levi, Primo. *Survival In Auschwitz*. Touchstone, 1995. Print.