
LFA REPORT

01/01/01

Created by: Esme, Sophie,
Wania

Ken Stimpson Academy

What was the Holocaust?

“A tragedy not to be repeated”

The Holocaust is the term for the genocide of around six million Jews by the Nazi regime and collaborators during the Second World War, this occurred between 1933 and 1945 wherein Jews were murdered by death squads or transported to extermination camps. There were additional groups that saw prosecution such as Roma, those with disabilities, Soviet prisoners of war, Gay people, socialists, communists, trades unionists, freemasons and Jehovah's Witnesses.



Auschwitz-Birkenau, Concentration and Extermination Camp

Among the many Ghettos, Concentration camps and Extermination camps set up by the Nazis and their collaborators, Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest of Nazi concentration and extermination camps where over 1.1 million men, women and children lost their lives. Until early 1942, the Nazis deported relatively small numbers of Jews and other non-Jewish prisoners to Auschwitz. Later on in 1942 and until 1944, the Nazis deployed the “final solution of the Jewish question” Auschwitz served as the largest Nazi centre for destruction.

Auschwitz was located in Poland, at a railway junction with 44 parallel tracks used for transporting prisoners. In October 1942, Auschwitz Birkenau was developed with 300 prison barracks and four large “Badeanstalten”. Young prisoners were sent to work, Young children, mothers and the elderly were often sent directly to gas chambers with additional thousands chosen by camp doctor, Josef Mengele for medical experiments, namely twins



Through the middle of July 1942, some transports arriving were sent directly to gas chambers and by the second half of 1942, Jews made up the majority of prisoner populations. In total approximately 90% of victims died in Auschwitz



One Survivor's Experience

As part of my time with the Holocaust Educational Trust, we were introduced to a survivor of the holocaust, Eva Clarke, pictured on the left, who told her and her families story. She was born in Mauthausen concentration Camp, Austria, on 29th April 1945. Unfortunately, Eva and her mother are the only survivors of their 15 family members of who were killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In December 1941 her parents were sent to Terezín to which they remained for three years - something considered unusual. During this time, Eva's mother, Anka became pregnant with a son, Dan. This was discovered by the Nazis and made Eva's parents sign a document stating the baby would face "Euthanasia" when born but unfortunately died of pneumonia at two months old. This meant her mother arrived in Auschwitz without being immediately sent to the gas chambers as she had no baby, despite being pregnant again with Eva but not visibly. Eva's mother stayed in Auschwitz-Birkenau from 1st-10th October 1944 after volunteering to follow her husband who was sent there - unfortunately he was shot 18th January 1945.

As not visibly pregnant she was deemed fit for work and sent out of Auschwitz to work in Freiberg to remain for six months. By spring 1945, Anka and her fellow prisoners were forced onto coal trucks, without food and scarce water sources, for 3 weeks. The train arrived at Mauthausen where Anka went into labour, and fortunately the camp's gas chambers were blown up on the 28th April 1945 and the Americans liberated the camp days after Eva's birth meaning both survived.

Anka was one of three mothers who survived alongside each other and their stories can be found in the book "Born Survivors"

Esme's Account

On the 26th March, I visited Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Here I would bear witness to the remaining remnants of the mass genocide carried out by the Nazis and their collaborators. Upon arrival, we started by visiting Auschwitz, a guided tour showing the grounds and buildings left standing. Inside one of the buildings was the book of names, a book that has the singular goal of naming as many victims of the holocaust as possible to actualise the sheer amount of victims and remaining their humanity in history as individuals, alongside their dates of birth, hometown and place of death where possible. This is an ongoing project that resonated with me deeply as it demonstrated the amount of victims who faced antisemitism to the highest level unjustly.

Additionally, another building contained mass exhibits of items that were confiscated from prisoners upon arrival, some included shoes, bags and suitcases, pots, glasses, hair and aids to disabled people such as prosthetics and crutches. This highlighted the sheer inhumanity that the victims were subjected to upon arrival wherein they were under the impression that they were being relocated, which was why they brought their valuables, and not brought their to be subjected to inhumane brutality and conditions.

Finally, We visited Auschwitz-Birkenau. Immediately the scale and size of the fencing enclosing all the bunks highlighted the mass scale genocide conducted. The one building used to house prisoners that we visited showed inhumane conditions that the prisoners were put through making me feel sick and horrified that something like this truly occurred in the past.

Sophie's Account

On the 26th of March 2025, I visited Auschwitz 1 and Auschwitz Birkenau with Lessons from Auschwitz. At Auschwitz 1 I was shocked to discover just how many victims were unaccounted for upon learning the book of names is incomplete. As the day went on, there were various things that struck me more than others. The belongings that were taken from the prisoners such as luggage, pots and pans and items of clothing as well as human hair, all were in such huge piles. It made my stomach sink to see just how much was taken from them upon their arrival. At Auschwitz Birkenau the thing that struck me the most was the sheer size of the camp itself as well as the diabolical conditions they had to live in. The experience was very educational but took quite the emotional toll.



Why is the Holocaust still important today?

As of 2000, there is a “Holocaust Memorial Day” held every year on the 27th of January due to representatives from 46 governments around the world having met back in 2000 in Stockholm to discuss Holocaust education, remembrance and research. The Holocaust serves as a reminder to society that genocide and discrimination is wrong and the Holocaust in particular shows the extremist lengths that should never be allowed to happen again. Since the Holocaust, many examples of extremist discrimination have occurred, notably there has been growth of violent acts across the globe based on extremist views relating to religion, culture and race.

For example, In Cambodia in July 1955 against the backdrop of an ongoing civil war, Bosnian Serb forces led by Ratko Mladić murdered around 8000 Muslim men and boys in the town of Srebrenica. In addition, Ethnic minority groups were also targeted by the Khmer Rouge, who had seized power in Cambodia, including Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai or anyone with those ancestries. Religion was also outlawed with half the Cham Muslim population being murdered as well as 8000 Christians.

These such examples that have occurred since the Holocaust demonstrate that there is still a need to remember these genocides and murders to firstly, honour those who became victims and secondly, help educate on the horrors that can be brought about by extremist views and help prevent as many of these occurring in the future.

Wania's Account

After reaching the town of Oświęcim we began our day at a Jewish cemetery, where I gained a deeper understanding of the role graves play in Jewish culture. I came to see cemeteries not as a symbol of death, but as a place that honours life, family and community. I learnt that they help to offer a more personal connection to one's lineage and a sense of closure. What stayed with me throughout the day was the contrast to Auschwitz, where lives are often remembered only as numbers. Unlike a grave, which marks an individual's life, Auschwitz overwhelms us with statistics. This visit helped me truly grasp the importance of remembering that each number represents a unique person, each with their own story.

Later, walking through Auschwitz 1, the sense of individual remembrance deepened as I saw displays of countless piles of suitcases, pots, and pans. These everyday items portrayed the victims' hopes, in that they were being resettled, not led to their deaths. For me it was a haunting reminder of how deeply the Nazis deceived them. Further witnessing names carefully written on suitcases made it impossible to ignore that each belonged to a real person, with a home, a family and a bright future that was brutally cut short.



Walking through Auschwitz-Birkenau, what struck me the most was were the train tracks, ones that would decide who would live and who would die. Standing there it was hard to grasp that something so ordinary could hold such horrifying power. I further learnt how, within moments of arrival, families were torn apart forever. One of the many stories I heard were of survivors that spoke of the unbearable guilt they carried, of unknowingly helping to guide their loved ones towards the line that led to death, thinking they were keeping them safe. Being there made me realise how cruel these choices were and the fact that those tracks weren't just for transport, instead they decided fates of innocent people in seconds. As a result human lives were reduced to split second choices with devastating consequences.