

MSE2

Prompt: Prompt 2

Division: Essay

Nazi Concentration Camps

“Up, now!” The gruff rumbling of the kapo resonated in the hearts of the prisoners, and they scurried to their feet to begin their day. The captives arranged their sleeping arrangements in a quick and orderly fashion, for not doing so could result in punishment. Putrid air wafted into the room; the oxygen was polluted by the atrocious living conditions in the Nazi’s concentration camps. Despair and pain carved fine lines into the faces of the Jewish held hostage as they were led outside for the roll call.

Nazi concentration camps were often similar in nature by routine, conditions, and treatment. Prisoners were forced to follow a strict and arduous agenda daily. They would rise early in the morning and have roll call. Calling names usually took an extensive amount of time because the officers would double check the list for any missing while anyone who didn’t attend or could not remain standing was severely punished. Mealtimes would be curt and limited as well as the quality of the food. Jews were allowed little free time at the end of the day where bartering and taking care of oneself were popular activities to partake in.

The conditions of the camps were horrific with disease, insects, and other vermin plaguing the area while the living spaces were inadequately supplied. The bugs carried illnesses such as typhoid to the inmates. Sanitation was a foreign term in the concentration camps and hunger was a commonality. Washing was impossible with the lack of clean water due to the septic system being nonexistent.

Alike to the camp’s conditions, Jews were treated far worse. A slight mishap could be fatal, and prisoners were often the subject of repulsive medical experiments. New drugs or treatments were tested

on the Jewish people and often ended in catastrophic results. Prisoners were killed in masses in buildings dedicated for the vile felony. Limbs and bodies were often mutilated from the experimentation. The Jewish were not treated as humans, but as things that could be manipulated by someone's will. Other similarities the camps shared were separation by gender upon entering the camps, methods of torture, labor, and camp system.

Additionally, there was also a fair share of differences in the camps. To illustrate, Auschwitz captives had their identification number tattooed into their arm while most other camps gave their inmates numbered clothing. Their number would mark them as a subject in the camp and were only referred to as by their number. Uniforms also varied depending on the camp but were usually striped attire and were forced to shave their heads. The Nazis stripped away anything that they could associate themselves with including personal belongings and name. Moreover, the usage of the concentration camps varied. For example, Auschwitz was used as an annihilation and labor camp while Bergen-Belsen was used for holding captives.

The acts of the Nazis to the Jewish were inhumane and unjustifiable. The crimes they committed against the Jewish were utterly despicable and brought much grief when it occurred and to this day. Even though people may disregard this topic as irrelevant in our society today, we must look back at our past sins to become better people in the world we live in.

Citations:

(Jewish Virtual Library; The State Museum at Majdanek; The Wiener Holocaust Library, "Transportation to Camps – the Holocaust Explained: Designed for Schools"; The Wiener Holocaust Library, "Treatment of Prisoners in the Early Camps – the Holocaust Explained: Designed for Schools"; The Wiener Holocaust Library, "Types of Camps – the Holocaust Explained: Designed for Schools"; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC)