

Kelvin Grove State College
Humanities Department

YEAR 12 MODERN HISTORY

INQUIRY TOPIC: UNIT 3 National Experiences in the Modern World:

Topic 5: Germany 1914-1945 → Nazi Germany and the Holocaust

Independent Source Investigation

Student Name:
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Historical Questions

Key Inquiry Question

26/3/2020

To what extent were the experiences of women during the operation of the Auschwitz concentration camp (1940-1945) under the Nazi regime indicative of a struggle of life and terror during the Third Reich in Germany, and how did this contribute to the Nazi pursuit of the Final Solution?

Sub-Questions

26/3/2020

What were the key influences that led to the establishment of the Auschwitz concentration camp and what was the system aiming to achieve under the Nazi regime?

What were the key roles and experiences of women during the operation of the Auschwitz concentration camp from perpetrator and victim perspectives, and how is this contested?

What were the short-term impacts of Auschwitz and the Final Solution on women's lives, and how did their experiences contribute to the long-term significance and growing historical consciousness of the Holocaust?

How effective was the Auschwitz concentration camp in achieving the intended objectives of the Final Solution and what are the contesting perspectives regarding the motives of the Final Solution?

Rationale

"In isolation we are waiting for darkness...The famous trucks...I am completely calm... Have a fabulous life, we must board the trucks. Into Eternity, Vilma" (Mowat, 2020). This excerpt from a letter written in 1944 by Vilma Grunwald to her family moments before entering a gas chamber in Auschwitz has really put into perspective on a personal level the antisemitic ideologies present in society during the Third Reich in Germany from 1933-1945. Whilst antisemitic attitudes were present for centuries, Nazi ideology created a new form of antisemitism, viewing Jews as a racial archenemy.

The quote inspired me to focus my key inquiry question on the Auschwitz concentration camp and how this led to the pursuit of the Final Solution by the Nazi party. My sub-questions investigate the motives of the Nazi party in establishing Auschwitz, women's roles and experiences as victims and perpetrators, and how this led to the Final Solution.

I have chosen to examine primary Jewish and Nazi women's experiences from the Holocaust who have been largely marginalised and silenced in society, Nazi perpetrator documents, academic perspectives including Professor Hans Mommsen, a renowned functionalist historian, and visual sources. Many sources were obtained through Yad Vashem, World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, providing reliable and educational resources on the Auschwitz concentration camp. By researching varying traditionalist, revisionist and contesting sources, experiences of women in the Holocaust can be investigated to determine how life under the Nazi regime was indicative of great struggle and terror.

Draft Hypothesis:

Experiences of women as victims and perpetrators during the operation of the Auschwitz concentration camp was significantly representative of ongoing struggle and terror during the Third Reich in Germany, drastically contributing to the pursuit of the Final solution.

Word count: 280

Source Analysis and Interrogations


| Source no. 1 | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| REFERENCE | Yad Vashem 1999, <i>The Auschwitz Album</i> , viewed 10 March 2020, < https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/index.asp > | |
| Relevant sub-question(s) | AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit) | INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit) |
| 2 |  <p>Figure 1: Jewish mothers and children forced walk to the gas chambers, past the barracks and the electrified barbed wire</p> | <p>This primary source is extremely reliable as it is from the Auschwitz Album, the only surviving visual evidence of the arrival and selection operations at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was accessed through Yad Vashem, a key Holocaust institution providing factual information on Auschwitz, increasing the reliability.</p> <p>Ernst Hofmann and Bernhard Walter, members of the SS (Schutzstaffel) in the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi party), enforcing <i>Gleichschaltung</i> (control of Nazi party over Germany) and were instructed to take ID photos of camp inmates, took these photographs in May/June 1944 (Yad Vashem, 1999; Wiener Holocaust Library, n.d.). This is incredibly useful in implying antisemitic ideologies from a Nazi, traditionalist perspective evident in <i>Figure 1</i> where Jewish women, were deceived and sent to gas chambers (Levin & Uziel, n.d.). Through corroboration with Source 2, primary Jewish testimonies, the electrified barbed fences dehumanised women to “[feel] like an animal” (Yad Vashem, 2020).</p> <p>Motives of producing the album is contested (not propaganda), but implied motives include referencing to higher authorities, later published for a world-wide audience. This is explicitly evident in <i>Figure 2</i> where the SS officer observed Jewish women, implying these photographs were to ensure SS officers enforced the systematic processes</p> |



Figure 2: Jewish women prisoners walk inside the women's camp, wearing the standard prison uniform. On the left, a SS man watches them

evident in Nazi ideology (Yad Vashem, 1999). This explicit dehumanisation is seen through women's shaved heads and prison uniform, corroborating with testimonies evident in Yad Vashem (2020) to imply they were humiliated, where "[SS] made all kind[s] of dirty jokes... exposed" (Yad Vashem, 2020)

Word count: 220

| Source no. 2 | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| REFERENCE | Yad Vashem 2020, <i>Women in Auschwitz</i> , viewed 10 March 2020, < https://www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/ceremonies/women-auschwitz.html > | |
| Relevant sub-question(s) | AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit) | INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit) |
| 2 | <p>Narrator 1: ... In her testimony given to Yad Vashem, Betty Perkal describes her arrival at Auschwitz.</p> <p>Reader 2: <i>"Whoever tried to describe that didn't describe anything. I don't know who can. This is, it was the end of the world. It is unbelievable. The inferno of Dante, that's a pale description. It was hazy, very hazy. The trains arrived on a platform. It was drizzling. [...] Everybody was screaming. There was a noise which was unbelievable. [...] The Germans. They were saying, 'Schneller, Schneller, Schneller.' But kids were crying. People were crying. I heard noises. I got deaf. At some stage, I heard myself screaming. I didn't know what happened to myself. I screamed like... I don't know why, what. It came from you, like unconscious and everybody was screaming. Somebody was saying something because people were also calling names, trying to stay together. I didn't find anyone. I didn't see my mother nor my father, anyone. And we were kicked and kicked and we were running, just running." ...</i></p> <p>Narrator 1: ...In her testimony, Laura Varon, a Jewish woman from Salonika, Greece...</p> <p>Reader 4: <i>"They opened the doors, the squeaking doors... and a little bit of air came... When we arrived in Auschwitz, we were already numb: the bones, the legs were not moving anymore. Two men in striped uniforms ... 'Give the children to the old people,' they told us. Again, we didn't [understand] what this meant. How can you understand, 'Give the children to the old people?'..."</i></p> <p>Narrator 1: ...In her testimony, Tova Berger...</p> | <p>This very reliable secondary educational ceremony from Yad Vashem, a credible Holocaust historical institution, incorporates archived primary testimonies of Jewish women from Auschwitz for a global audience to broaden the historical consciousness of terror experienced by women. Whilst the reliability is lowered as memory can be lost overtime, it is very useful in privileging previously silenced and marginalised perspectives during the operation of Auschwitz.</p> <p>"They told us to get undressed and they shaved us..." is very useful in implying the utter terror women experienced due to the camp conditions enforced by the SS because of Nazi ideologies, implying <i>Gleichschaltung</i> (Yad Vashem, 2020). This is explicitly evident in "give the children to the old people", which is very useful in implying the choiceless choices and separation Jewish women faced (Yad Vashem, 2020).</p> <p>"The camp was no maternity ward...antechamber to hell" is very useful in implying women's experiences of terror, and rather than women bringing life into the world (traditional roles), it was the opposite, corroborating with Source 3 regarding the motives of Auschwitz under the Nazi regime where "Every Jew...is to be destroyed," enforcing <i>Volksgemeinschaft</i> by having a racially pure country (Yad Vashem, 2016).</p> <p>Through corroboration with Yad Vashem (n.d.), this source is useful in examining terror experienced by Jewish women as victims and the significant long-term effects, explicitly stating "Life doesn't</p> |

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| 2 | <p>Reader 6: <i>"...They told us to get undressed and they shaved us. They shaved my beautiful blonde hair and my two sisters' hair and we were standing naked before the soldiers and for me it was a shock because I was a religious girl. I never was undressed in front of a man and they made all kind[s] of dirty jokes about our bodies and they looked at us and I was standing there shivering, naked, without hair on my body, and I was exposed. I felt like an animal... and the way they treated us already there was so terrible" ...</i></p> <p>Narrator 1: Yehudit Rubinstein shares her horrific experience.</p> <p>Reader 7: <i>"... they gave us this gray uniform, and just our shoes – the lot of us were holding on to their shoes, put on their shoes, bare naked and nothing on them and out in the garden, out in front of the bathhouse." <u>8</u></i></p> <p>Reader 1: <i>"The camp was no maternity ward. It was only the antechamber to hell."</i></p> <p>Narrator 2: Lea Kahana-Grunwald recalled:</p> <p>Reader 3: <i>"A girl came in. She came in with her mother. She was pregnant and he overlooked it... She gave birth and she had to stand next morning at 'Zaehlappel' [roll call]. She survived. The child was killed..."</i></p> <p>Narrator 1: Miriam Buki talks about life after Auschwitz.</p> <p>Reader 8: <i>"Life doesn't have the meaning, the joy that life had when we were young. [...] Now, it comes more. I still have dreams. They still shoot me and it still hurts. What I meant to say, we survived. We are survivors but we didn't survive the pain. We didn't survive what we went through. We didn't survive the misery." "</i></p> | <p>have the meaning... still hurts", where "Auschwitz...never be erased" (Yad Vashem, 2020; Yad Vashem, n.d.).</p> <p>Word count: 218</p> |
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| Source no. 3 | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| REFERENCE | Yad Vashem 2016, <i>Extract From Written Evidence of Rudolf Hoss, Commander of the Auschwitz Extermination Camp</i> , viewed 10 March 2020, < https://www.yadvashem.org/docs/evidence-of-rudolf-hoss-on-auschwitz.html > | |
| Relevant sub-question(s) | AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit) | INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit) |
| 1 | <p>In the summer of 1941, I cannot remember the exact date, I was suddenly summoned to the <i>Reichsfuhrer SS</i>,* directly by his adjutant's office. Contrary to his usual custom, Himmler received me without his adjutant being present and said in effect:</p> <p>"The Fuhrer has ordered that the Jewish question be solved once and for all and that we, the SS, are to implement that order.</p> <p>... I have therefore earmarked Auschwitz for this purpose, both because of its good position as regards communications and because the are can easily be isolated and camouflaged. ... I have now decided to entrust this task to you. It is difficult and onerous and calls for complete devotion notwithstanding the difficulties that may arise. You will learn further details from <i>Sturmbannfuhrer</i> Eichmann of the Reich Security Main Office who will call on you in the immediate future.</p> <p>The departments concerned will be notified by me in due course. You will treat this order as absolutely secret, even from your superiors...</p> <p>The Jews are the sworn enemies of the German people and must be eradicated. Every Jew that we can lay our hands on is to be destroyed now during the war, without exception. If we cannot now obliterate the biological basis of Jewry, the Jews will one day destroy the German people."</p> <p>On receiving these grave instructions, I returned forthwith to Auschwitz, without reporting to my superior at Oranienburg.</p> <p>Shortly afterwards Eichmann came to Auschwitz and disclosed to me the plans for the operations as they affected the various countries concerned...He also told me the approximate number of transports that might be expected, but I can no longer remember these.</p> <p>We discussed the ways and means of effecting the extermination. This could only be done by gassing, since it would have been absolutely impossible to dispose by shooting of the large numbers of people that were expected, and it would have placed too heavy a burden on the SS</p> | <p>Extracts from written evidence of Rudolf Hoss, the longest-serving commander of Auschwitz, in his autobiography <i>Commandant of Auschwitz The Autobiography of Rudolf Hoss</i> in 1961, is unreliable as Hoss was ordered to write it in Polish captivity (February 1947) following the war, implying the audience included Polish authority at the time, but later published for a world-wide audience, with bias towards the Nazi perpetrator perspective and a lack of remorse, silencing Jewish people (Zimmerman, 1999).</p> <p>Reliability is increased in providing a primary, traditionalist Nazi perpetrator perspective, accessed through a reliable site, Yad Vashem (leading Holocaust research faculty). It reliably documents motives for pursuing the Final Solution, developed from antisemitic values embodied in National Socialism (Nazism) ideologies, by implementing the Holocaust to annihilate the Jewish population, explicitly evident where "Jewish question be solved...SS...implement that order...Auschwitz...easily isolated" as a form of (Yad Vashem, 2016).</p> <p>This corroborates with Source 5, offering a different, revisionist perspective to imply <i>Volksgemeinschaft</i> (racially pure people's community, superiority of the Aryan race) as a motive of the Final Solution, due to an unsuccessful attempt to resettle "Volk Germans to create the Great German Reich" (OpenLearn, 2020; Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997 p3).</p> <p>"Gas-proofing...kill about 800 people simultaneously...borne out later in practice" is very useful in explicitly describing the methods</p> |

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| <p>1</p> <p>4</p> | <p>men who had to carry it out, especially because of the women and children among the victims.</p> <p>Eichmann told me about the method of killing people with exhaust gases in lorries, which had previously been used in the East. But there was no question of being able to use this for the mass transports that were due to arrive in Auschwitz... We inspected the area in order to choose a likely spot. We decided that a peasant farmstead situated in the north-west corner of what later became the third building sector at Birkenau would be the most suitable. It was isolated and screened by woods and hedges, and it was also not far from the railway. The bodies could be placed in long, deep pits dug in the nearby meadows. We had not at that time thought of burning the corpses. We calculated that after gas-proofing the premises then available, it would be possible to kill about 800 people simultaneously with a suitable gas. These figures were borne out later in practice....</p> <p>R. Hoss, <i>Commandant of Auschwitz The Autobiography of Rudolf Hoss</i>, London, 1961, pp. 206-208.</p> <p>* Heinrich Himmler.</p> | <p>used to pursue the Final Solution and the effectiveness in achieving the intended goals to “obliterate the biological basis of Jewry” (Yad Vashem, 2016).</p> <p>Word count: 215</p> |
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| Source no. 4 | | |
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| REFERENCE | Wodenshek, H 2015, <i>Ordinary Women: Female Perpetrators of the Nazi Final Solution</i> , pdf, viewed 14 March 2020, < https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1536&context=theses > | |
| Relevant sub-question(s) | AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit) | INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit) |
| 2 | <p>Wendy Adele-Marie Sarti published <i>Women and Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and other Crimes during Hitler's Regime, 1933-1945</i> ... Sarti focuses her discussion on the roles of women as camp guards in four major camps – Auschwitz... Not only does Sarti prove that women, previously thought to be unable to commit crimes against women and children because of their innate motherly instincts, were instrumental in torturing and murdering thousands of concentration camp victims, but she also draws conclusions about the reasoning behind their actions...these women made a conscious decision to kill. constituted this consciousness, and some women actively participated in mass murder because they saw an opportunity for economic and even social equality to that of their male counterparts...Himmler openly admitted that women who agreed to work in the camp systems were to be treated as equals to their male counterparts (pg 19)</p> <p>Irma Ilse Ida Grese... female SS guard ... In March 1943, Grese left Ravensbrück and was transferred to Auschwitz-Birkenau...Grese came to be in charge of approximately thirty thousand female inmates, at which point, it is believed Grese was responsible for the deaths of, on average, thirty or so prisoners each day... Women like Grese who used excessive violence to impose authority... (p113)</p> <p>Irma Grese became infamous for her unbridled sadism, which was said to include various forms of torture, sexual abuse, and used brute force to beat prisoners to death. In a post-war memoir written by Dr. Gisella Perl, she recounts her time spent at Auschwitz. Having encountered “Irma Greze” on various occasions, and most certainly scarred by the memory of her ... Perl describes “Greze,” the highest ranking women in the SS at Auschwitz, as one of the most beautiful women she had ever seen, and yet, as one of the most “depraved, cruel, imaginative sexual pervert [she] ever came across”... At one</p> | <p>Whilst this secondary source, a senior thesis written by Haley Wodenshek in 2015 titled <i>Ordinary Women: Female Perpetrators of the Nazi Final Solution</i> is less reliable as it is a non-peer reviewed American college student's publication, reliability is increased as a primary perspective from Dr Gisella Perl's memoir, and references sources from the United States Holocaust Museum which reliably provides leading Holocaust research.</p> <p>Providing a revisionist perspective, this source privileged Nazi perpetrator women's experiences that were traditionally marginalised to examine how they facilitated the Final Solution, explicitly stating “some women...participated in mass murder ...equality...male counterparts” (Wodenshek, 2015 p19). This is useful in implying the underlying motives of women perpetrators who violently treated inmates in Auschwitz was due to equality (feminist ideologies), contesting traditionalist perspectives that women were “unable to commit crimes...innate motherly instincts” (Wodenshek, 2015 p19).</p> <p>Through useful corroboration with Cushman (2006 p4), providing academic revisionist perspectives, they explicitly describe the violent roles of perpetrator women in maintaining Nazi ideologies, including Irma Grese (female SS) who was “responsible for deaths...thirty...each day...infamous...torture, sexual abuse, and used brute force to beat prisoners to death” (Wodenshek, 2015 p113–114).</p> <p>The source is very useful in corroborating with United States</p> |
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time, Perl remembers Grese entering the hospital while she had been performing an operation on the infected wound of a woman who had been badly whipped across the breast. Because Perl only had access to a blunt knife, and no anesthetic at all, the patient convulsed in pain throughout the entire procedure. Grese took great interest in this encounter, and looked on with abundant enjoyment at the sight of human suffering. (p114)

Holocaust Museum (n.d.), explicitly describing how Jewish women were sexually abused by female perpetrators which has been marginalised by historians, corroborating with the perspective of Dr. Gisella Perl, explicitly stating “Grese...enjoyment at the sight of human suffering” (Wodenshek, 2015 p114).

Word count: 215

| Source no. 5 | | |
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| REFERENCE | Gordon, A, Reich, A & Goldberg, A 1997, <i>An Interview With Prof. Hans Mommsen</i> , pdf, viewed 15 March 2020, < https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203850.pdf > | |
| Relevant sub-question(s) | AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit) | INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit) |
| 4 | <p>Q- You are a representative of the functionalists?</p> <p>M- I belong to the representatives of that school...there has been an intermingling of the various schools of thought. This was, in a way, propelled by the controversy about Daniel Goldhagen, who, in some respects, appeared to be as a super- intentionalist.</p> <p>The main issue in the debate still is related to the question as to when the Holocaust was set in motion, and that meant, that the killing comprised all European Jews and was not restricted to the Eastern and the German Jewry. There is, however, basically an agreement that the road toward systematic genocide (which is circumscribed by the name Auschwitz) was “twisted,” as Karl Schleunes argued...</p> <p>Q- Can your focus on what motivated [the perpetrators]?</p> <p>M- Undeniably, there existed a consensus about getting rid of the Jews. But it was a different question whether to kill them or to press them to leave the country...There did not exist any clear-cut concept until 1941...At a later stage, the perpetrators got adjusted to murdering people and did not reflect about it any longer. Where the SS cadres were concerned, they were certainly driven by racist prejudice and national fanaticism... The German scholar Goetz Aly, for instance, showed very clearly that among the adjacent motivations, the program to resettle the Volk Germans...</p> <p>There existed an interaction between the target of resettling the Volk Germans in order to create the Great German Reich and the elimination of the Jews in Eastern and Central Europe. The leading perpetrators like Adolf Eichmann or Odilo Globocnik originally spent about 80 percent of their work on resettlement issues and only 10 percent on the “Jewish Question”...As could be expected from the</p> | <p>This secondary interview in 1997 is very reliable as it is from the perspective of Professor Hans Mommsen (leading functionalist German historian), and accessed through Yad Vashem, providing leading scholarly research into the Holocaust, considering multiple historian and academic perspectives.</p> <p>It explicitly states “perpetrators...only 10 percent on the ‘Jewish Question’... resettlement initiatives failed... Holocaust... comprehensive program of ethnic cleansing” (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997 p3). This is very useful in implying the functionalist perspective, suggesting the Final Solution and Holocaust was the outcome of a political process when relocation and emigration of Jews in 1938-1939 were unsuccessful (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997 p17).</p> <p>This source is incredibly useful in offering contesting perspectives in the functionalist verse intentionalist debate, contesting Professor Daniel Goldhagen (Harvard University) that “Hitler was the result of German antisemitism...quite wrong...Hitler's seizure of power was not due to...antisemitic propaganda at that time” (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997 p5).</p> <p>Through corroboration with Source 3, despite ambiguity of Nazi leaders in the annihilation process, there was “unanimous agreement among the National Socialists...European Jews had to be eliminated” (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997 p14). These explicit motives of the Final Solution are useful in examining Nazi ideology, where German society “exempted Hitler from any responsibility for</p> |
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| | <p>any formal annihilation program until the second year of the war. It came into being after the “reservation” projects had failed...</p> <p>Besides of this specific pattern of the decision-making with respect to the “Jewish Question” there is the phenomenon that the implementation of the Holocaust was proceeding on the basis of a certain ambiguity... Hitler himself tended to avoid any distinct option, although he always functioned as the ideological engine to intensify the persecution...Even before the war, Hitler tried to avoid any direct responsibility for the “Jewish Question”...unanimous agreement among the National Socialists...Hitler, that the European Jews had to be eliminated, while the means to achieve that differed over time...</p> <p>Implementation of the Holocaust...a political process which eventually led to the conclusion that there was no way out but to kill the Jews in Auschwitz and elsewhere. This did not come into being before the second half of 1941</p> <p>Average people had the impression that Himmler was the main culprit ...they exempted Hitler from any responsibility for them...widespread phenomenon, reflecting the need of the individuals to protect their sense of national solidarity that was inseparable bound with the leader figure of Hitler. This helps to explain why contemporary Germans tended to repress knowledge of the systematic liquidation of their former Jewish neighbours...even top leaders did not obtain any precise information about the annihilation process.</p> | |
| Source no. 6 | | |
| REFERENCE | Presiado, M 2016, <i>A new perspective on Holocaust art: women’s artistic expression of the female Holocaust experience (1939–49)</i> , pdf, viewed 16 March 2020, < https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17504902.2016.1201365 > | |
| Relevant sub-question(s) | AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit) | INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit) |

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Grim art of Ella Liebermann-Shiber (1927-98), which was created during the first years after her liberation from Auschwitz...focuses on the cruelty that pervaded life in the camps, one can find images of mutual assistance and humanity...depicts the overcrowded block where she lived in Auschwitz. All the women look like *Muselmänner*. Their heads look like skulls – they are all hairless, their eyes are large and sunken, and some stare apathetically into space. They look depressed, apathetic, and isolated. Yet also in this bleak work, a human gesture between two inmates can be seen: one of the women tries to reach another inmate who is lying underneath her – an exceptional act testifying to a positive human connection.

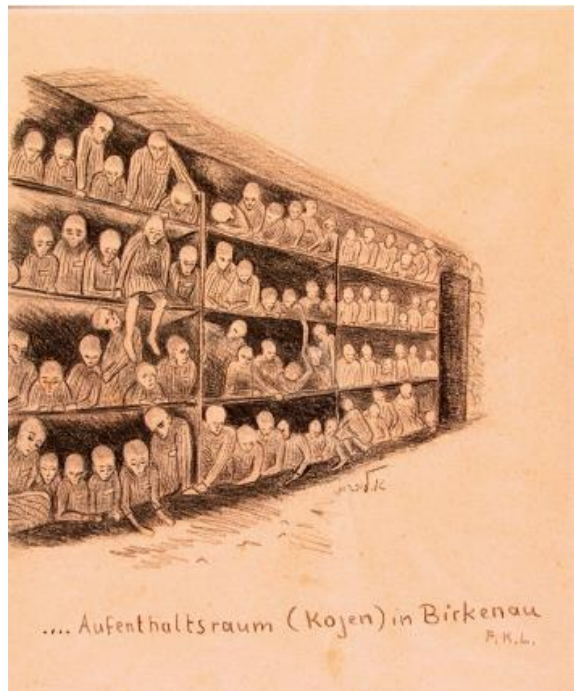


Figure 3 Ella Liebermann-shiber, *Bunks in a Housing Barracks in Birkenau*, 1945-49, pencil drawing on paper

This secondary source is very reliable as it was written by Dr Mor Presiado, a lecturer and researcher in Jewish Art and the Holocaust in Israel, which is incredibly useful in providing an academic, revisionist perspective, privileging previously silenced women's artwork and their experiences from the Holocaust.

It is very useful in displaying the cramped living conditions and terror faced by women in Auschwitz, corroborating with Source 1 and Source 2 in that they "look like *Muselmänner*...like skulls...hairless...eyes are large and sunken...isolated", explicitly demonstrating the dehumanisation faced by women (Presiado, 2016, p425). Whilst the artwork was created in 1945-49 by Liebermann-shiber, a Jewish woman, after she was released from the camp as a form of spiritual resistance, it is extremely useful in implying the growing historical consciousness of women's experiences where it continued to impact women years after Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated.

This usefully corroborates with Source 1, to imply the human story of women in Auschwitz by offering valuable visual perspectives. An act of resistance is seen in *Figure 3* that despite the cruel conditions faced by women, humanity was upheld through acts of kindness, where a woman was reaching out to another person.

Word count: 192

Critical Summary of Evidence

The evidence was extremely useful in answering the sub-questions. Source 3, extracts from written evidence of Nazi perpetrator Rudolf Hoss, reliably highlights key influences leading to the establishment of Auschwitz, explicitly stating antisemitic ideologies where “the sworn enemies of the German people and must be eradicated...Jews will one day destroy the German people” (Yad Vashem, 2016). Further corroboration with Source 5, Prof. Hans Mommsen usefully suggests “there existed a consensus about getting rid of the Jews...Nazi antisemitism...new quality arose in the way in which slaughter was performed”, leading to the Final Solution (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997).

In answering sub-questions 2 and 3, Source 1, *The Auschwitz Album*, reliably provides the only surviving photographic evidence of the process leading to the annihilation of the Jewish population in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Through corroboration with Source 2, primary women’s testimonies, they are extremely useful in documenting Jewish women’s terror in Auschwitz, who “were kicked...antechamber to hell” (Yad Vashem, 2020). Perpetrator women had violent roles in facilitating the Final Solution, where “female SS guard...responsible for deaths of...thirty...prisoners each day”, and their marginalisation and struggle for “equality [of] male counterparts” (Wodenshek, 2015). Corroboration of Source 6, Jewish artwork, and Source 2, Jewish women’s testimonies, is very useful in privileging women’s perspectives that were traditionally marginalised by historians, increasing the historical consciousness of the ongoing terror faced by women in Auschwitz where “life doesn’t have the meaning, the joy...they still shoot me and it hurts” (Yad Vashem, 2020).

Source 5, an interview with renowned functionalist historian Prof. Hans Mommsen, is very reliable in answering sub-question 4, furthering the functionalist verse intentionalist debate on the pursuit of the Final Solution, explicitly stating “resettlement initiatives failed...Holocaust...comprehensive...ethnic cleansing...did not exist any clear-cut concept until 1941” (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997). Whilst this usefully implies the Final Solution was implemented due to ineffective relocation of the Jews and superiority of the Aryan race, the usefulness is furthered by contesting academics regarding the pursuit of the Final Solution including Prof. Daniel Goldhagen, where “Hitler was the result of German antisemitism...quite wrong...power was not due to any significant impact of his antisemitic propaganda” (Gordon, Reich & Goldberg, 1997). Source 5 is useful in implying the effectiveness of the Final Solution in achieving the intended motives, where “[SS] possible to kill about 800 people simultaneously with a suitable gas. These figures were borne out later in practice (Yad Vashem, 2016).

A preliminary answer to the inquiry question argues women’s experiences in Auschwitz were significantly representative of an ongoing struggle of life and terror, seen through the traditional marginalisation of Jewish women and Nazi women perpetrators, and their roles in facilitating the Final Solution. As marginalised women’s perspectives emerge into historical consciousness, and with the presence of antisemitic ideologies in society today, it is critical to ensure the individual memory of the Holocaust lives on as “the Holocaust was not the single murder of six million people, but six million individual murders” (Cohen, 2014).

Word count: 458

TOTAL word count: 2000 words

Cohen, C 2014, *The importance of remembering the Holocaust*, viewed 19 March 2020, <<https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/the-importance-of-remembering-the-holocaust-1.59585>>

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