

OTTO ROSENBERG

- EASY TO READ LIFE STORY



HOLOCAUST
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Otto (at the front of the picture) with his brothers, sister and mother. This photograph was taken before the Second World War.

Key terms:

Sinti: Sinti are a group of people who share an ethnicity, who mostly live in Germany and other parts of central Europe. In the past most Sinti people lived a travelling or 'Gypsy' life – moving around and not living in one place.

Nazi Party: The political party which ruled Germany at the time of the World War Two. They thought people who were 'Aryan' (white skin, blond hair, blue eyes) were better than all others. They wanted to kill people from other groups that were different to them, such as Jewish people and Sinti and Roma gypsies.

Concentration camp: Places where the Nazis kept many people as prisoners, such as Jews and gypsies. They were put there because the Nazis did not like them. In the camps people were forced to work as slaves or they were killed. There were many camps like this in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

Otto Rosenberg was born in Berlin, in Germany, in 1927. His family were part of a group called the **Sinti**.

Otto lived with his family in a caravan on some land they shared with other Sinti people.

The **Nazi Party** ruled Germany at the time. The Nazi party and people who supported the Nazi Party did not like the Sinti people and they did not want them living in Germany. Because of this, other children at school were mean to Otto and called him names.

When he was still a child, the Nazis made Otto and his family live in a small camp with many other Sinti families. They were not allowed to leave the camp to live in other places. They had done nothing wrong and were there just because they were Sinti.

In 1942, the Nazis decided to send the Sinti people to a **concentration camp** called Auschwitz-Birkenau. Just before he turned 16 years old, Otto was arrested and sent there. When he arrived he was given a tattoo of a number on his arm. The Nazis used these numbers instead of people's names. Otto's number was Z 6084.

In the camp there were many other Sinti people, including Otto's sister and grandmother. Life in the camp was terrible. They worked very hard, with very little food and lots of sickness. Some people were beaten by the guards and many people died.

Later on, the Nazis decided to send some of the prisoners to work in other camps. Otto was sent off on a train to a place called Buchenwald. All the Sinti people who were left behind at Auschwitz-Birkenau, including Otto's grandmother, were then killed by the Nazis.

At this time, many countries were fighting against the Nazis. This was World War Two. In 1944 the Nazis were losing the war and people in the concentration camps were being freed by soldiers from Britain, America and Russia.

Otto was in a camp called Bergen-Belsen when in 1945 and he was freed by British soldiers. He was taken to hospital because he was very weak from being treated so badly for so long.

Once he was strong again, Otto learnt to live his life without being frightened all the time. But he was always sad as he missed his grandmother, brothers and sisters who had been killed by the Nazis. Later on, he set up an organisation which looks after Sinti people. As bad things had happened to him and so many others like him, he wanted to do all he could to make life good for Sinti people in the future.

Otto remembered:

'The children... bumped into me and called me names, that I was a dirty gypsy and much more.'

Find out more...

Nazi Persecution: hmd.org.uk/nazipersecution

Other resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/educators

This story and Otto Rosenberg's quotes are from his book, *A Gypsy in Auschwitz*. Find out more: hmd.org.uk/otto