

The father and son who survived Auschwitz

This Sunday is Holocaust Memorial Day. A new book tells the story of two remarkable survivors: a father and son who stuck together in concentration camps for six horrific years...



Journey to the past: Fritz Kleinmann visits Auschwitz again in the 1980s. © Reinhold

Fritz Kleinmann was 17 when he made the most extraordinary request of his life. "I need you to pull whatever strings you can to get me on the **Auschwitz** transfer."

It was the Second World War. Fritz and his father, Gustav, had been arrested for being Jewish. They were sent to a concentration camp in Germany. They had managed to survive for three years when Gustav was chosen to be transferred to Auschwitz. Everyone knew that this camp was worse than all the others.

Fritz had not been chosen, but he refused to let his father go alone — and so they boarded the train together.

And yet, once again, both of them survived.

Their incredible story is told in a new **book** published yesterday.

Throughout the horrors they experienced, the pair kept each other going. "The boy is my greatest joy," Gustav wrote in a secret diary. "We strengthen each other. We are one."

They were finally separated a few months before the war ended. But they survived and were reunited at their home in Vienna.

This Sunday is **Holocaust** Memorial Day. The theme for 2019 is "torn from home". It asks people to remember those forced to leave their homes by dangerous situations.

Survivors

"All this is happening in the 20th century,"

Gustav wrote incredulously in his diary. He is shocked that something so evil could be happening in the world he knows. But could it happen again in the 21st century? After all, **anti-Semitism** is rising around the world. Is that why it is so important to remember the Holocaust?

And what should we take from the story of the Kleinmanns? On the one hand, it is an amazing survival tale. It is a reminder that love can overcome terrible circumstances. On the other hand, it reminds us of all those who did not make it out alive — and who never got a chance to tell their story.

Q & A

Q: What do we know?

A: Six million Jewish people were killed during

the Holocaust, and around 17 million people were killed in total. Last year, the UN secretary general warned that anti-Semitism (hatred of Jewish people) was rising around the world.

Q: What do we not know?

A: Why anti-Semitism is rising again. Some have blamed the US President Donald Trump. However, the White House strongly denies this.

YOU DECIDE

Why is it important to remember the Holocaust?

ACTIVITIES

Write a poem or produce a piece of art for Holocaust Memorial Day, inspired by the theme "torn from home".

SOME PEOPLE SAY...

"Auschwitz is outside of us, but it is all around us, in the air. The plague has died away, but the infection still lingers."

Primo Levi, Auschwitz survivor and author

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



WORD WATCH

Auschwitz – The largest concentration camp of the Nazi era, where 1.1 million people were killed. It was in German-occupied Poland.

Book – *The Boy Who Followed His Father Into Auschwitz*, by Jeremy Dronfield.

Holocaust – The murder of six million Jewish people between 1941 and 1945 by Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime. Millions were also killed

for their race, disability and sexuality.

Anti-Semitism – Hatred of Jewish people.



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Notes

