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Sixth Form students were given a unique talk when Holocaust survivor Henry Schachter shared the dramatic stories of his childhood, and how he survived the Second World War despite being born in Berlin to Jewish parents in 1939. Our A Level history students, who have been studying the twentieth century on their course, were also able to talk directly to Mr Schachter in a special question and answer session following the talk.

Mr Schachter has been speaking to schools as well as adult audiences all over the country for several years about his experiences, in order to help promote awareness and prevention of racism. He placed his own story in important historical context, as he went into great detail about how the rise of the far right was possible in Europe in the early part of the twentieth century, and ultimately how anti-Jewish racist sentiment was taught from an early age.

His family's flight from the Nazis into Poland and then Belgium, and their attempts to hide from the Gestapo in a warehouse following the German occupation of the Low Countries, captivated the audience. Mr Schachter presented documents recently uncovered by researchers showing his parent's identity cards which marked them out as Jews, and explained how his father's reluctance to carry his card led to a ten day prison sentence in 1942. Whilst the young Mr Schachter survived by being given a new identity and foster mother, his parents were ultimately captured and killed in the Holocaust.

Media student Jacques Thornewill filmed the presentation as part of a work experience project. He explained that learning about Mr Schachter's individual story really emphasised the enormity of the scale of events that took place: "You often hear about the millions who lost their lives in the Holocaust. But hearing about this story really brings those numbers to life. It was extremely interesting, but also very sad."

Sixth Form student Gabriel Baraldi, also explained that Mr Schachter's words had left a strong impression on him: "It's really important people know about these stories. It shows how racism can become commonplace, and basic humanity should mean we never accept that sort of hatred in society."

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