

KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme

Ausstellungen
Begegnungen
Studienzentrum

KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme Jean-Dolidier-Weg 75 21039 Hamburg

Seasonal newsletter

to the survivors of the Neuengamme
concentration camp, their relatives and members
of the Friends of the Memorial association

Dr. Detlef Garbe
Direktor

Telefon: 040 | 428 131 - 511
Telefax: 040 | 428 131 - 525
detlef.garbe@kb.hamburg.de

Hamburg, 11.12.2015

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

As 2015 draws to a close, we can look back on several round-number anniversaries: In May we commemorated the 70th anniversary of the end of the war and the liberation of the concentration camps, as well as the 10th anniversary of the opening of the redesigned Memorial and Centre for Historical Studies in the grounds of the former camp; this was followed in early November by the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the International Monument in Neuengamme. At the Senate reception that was held to mark this occasion in Hamburg City Hall, former First Mayor Dr Henning Voscherau and other speakers recalled the many obstacles that had to be overcome on the long journey towards transforming Neuengamme into a worthy memorial for the victims and a place of learning.

The commemorative events that were held at the Memorial in May, with great support from the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the German federal government, were attended not only by hundreds of family members from Europe and overseas, but also by 50 survivors of the Neuengamme concentration camp, the youngest of whom was 84 and the oldest of whom was 101. Many survivors who were unable to attend on account of their health were able to follow a live stream of the event online – in Australia and in the United States. One of the main speakers was supposed to have been Victor Malbecq from Belgium, who served as Vice President of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme (AIN) from 1990 and as President from 2013. But fate had other plans. This man who dedicated his life to the preservation of memory passed away just a few weeks before the ceremony. His legacy lives on, however. In November, the AIN elected retired ambassador Jean-Michel Gausso from France as his successor. Jean-Michel Gausso, son of Jean Michel Joseph Gausso who died in the Wöbbelin satellite camp in late April 1945, is the first member of the second generation to stand at the helm of the AIN. He is supported by Vice President Janusz Kahl from Poland, a former prisoner of Neuengamme.

The events to mark the 70th anniversary included talks with witnesses; the "Remember Bullenhuser Damm" international youth exchange with young people from Radom, Eindhoven, Paris, Messina and Hamburg; the "Victims and Places of 'Reprisal' in Occupied Europe" conference; and, once again, the "Future of Remembrance" forum with family members from the second and third generations. The forum's findings are presented on the blog "*Reflections on Family History Affected by Nazi Crimes*"

(<http://rfhabnc.org/>), which should also encourage on-going dialogue between family members. A continuation of the forum is planned for the commemorative events in May 2016.

The above-mentioned conference was connected to this year's exhibition in Hamburg City Hall – "*Deported to Neuengamme Concentration Camp – Punitive Actions by the Wehrmacht and SS in Occupied Europe*" – which we developed in co-operation with associations from Meensel-Kiezegem (Belgium), Murat (France) and Putten (the Netherlands) and which was on display and accompanied by an extensive programme of events from 15 January to 6 February 2015. Many other activities followed in the course of the year. The Memorial carried out a total of more than 280 seminars, projects and events, and it once again participated in the "Long Night of Museums" and "Open Monuments Day". As our number of visitors – which will probably reach over 100,000 by the end of the year, not including the former satellite camps – has grown, so too has the number of guided tours for school classes and other groups. When it comes to educational museum-based events, the Memorial is second only to the Kunsthalle in Hamburg in terms of popularity.

We are very pleased that, at the end of the year, two employment agencies ("Elbe-Werkstätten" and "Sprungbrett") embarked on a long-term partnership with the Memorial in order to help us with grounds maintenance and in the cafeteria, and later perhaps also by supporting seminar groups.

This year we once again participated in exhibitions and redesign projects at other memorials, particularly at the sites of former satellite camps. We were also involved in the creation of the monument to deserters and other victims of the Nazi military judiciary which was dedicated on 24 November on Stephansplatz in the centre of Hamburg.

The Memorial published several notable works this year, including Volume 16 of its journal "Contributions to the History of Nazi Persecution in Northern Germany" which focused on the topic of "Memorials and Memory Policy"; the catalogue to accompany the exhibition "*Deported to Neuengamme Concentration Camp – Punitive Actions by the Wehrmacht and SS in Occupied Europe*" which was put together by Katharina Hertz-Eichenrode; and the teaching materials covering "*Disenfranchisement, Resistance, Deportation 1933-1945 and the Future of Remembrance in Hamburg*" which were developed by Dr Oliver von Wrochem together with the Körber Foundation and the State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development. The end of the year saw the publication of the first volume of a new journal entitled "Concentration Camps: Studies of the History of Nazi Terror", with the sub-title of "Crimes at the End of the War between the Chaos of Collapse and the Extermination Programme". The journal is published by the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Working Group and co-edited by Dr Günter Morsch and myself.

On behalf of everyone at the Memorial, I would like to thank you for your tremendous support this year and wish you happy holidays and a successful, healthy, peaceful 2016.

Sincerely,



Dr Detlef Garbe