

KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme

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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

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Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

The year 2016 brought a number of gratifying events, but also some sad news. Once again we had to say farewell to survivors of the Neuengamme concentration camp who had actively supported us over the past decades. They included Helge Hansen, the long-standing Chairman of the Danish association of Neuengamme survivors (*Landsforeningen af kz-fanger fra Neuengamme*), who passed away on 1 February 2016 at the age of 93, and 89-year-old Janusz Kahl, who represented Polish former prisoners and served for over 20 years as Vice President of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme before passing away on 2 November. We also mourned for much younger supporters of our work, such as Culture Senator Professor Barbara Kisseler, as well as Hamburg's former mayor Dr Henning Voscherau. Speaking at the memorial ceremony, First Mayor of Hamburg Olaf Scholz recalled Dr Voscherau's close friendship with members of the Amicale Internationale and noted that, thanks to his efforts, "The Memorial is now a living place of learning, without prisons."

The advances in remembrance work are also reflected in the exhibitions we have presented at the start of each year for the past 15 years to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day at the invitation of the City Assembly in Hamburg City Hall. This year's rather unconventional exhibition on "*Hamburg Football under the Nazis: Insights into a History Romanticised for Decades*" was widely covered in the media and attracted nearly 10,000 visitors. During the three-week exhibition, there were 20 accompanying events attended by a total of over 800 people, including many young people from the different fan scenes associated with Hamburg's football clubs. The booklet to accompany the exhibition also received a great deal of attention.

In the course of the year, we hosted the travelling exhibition "Between Harz and Heath: Death Marches and Evacuation Transports in *April 1945*", and we participated in the presentation of the exhibition on the "Maly Trostenets Extermination Camp" in St. Catharine's Church, which is very close to the "*denk.mal Hannoverscher Bahnhof*" memorial that was created with our support to commemorate people deported from Hamburg. And in March, two externally funded projects started at the Memorial on "Racism in Colonialism and National Socialism" and "Military Justice and the City in the War".

As in previous years, the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial invited concentration camp survivors to the events marking the 71st anniversary of the liberation in May 2016. Fifteen survivors made the journey to Neuengamme from Austria, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Ukraine. Many visitors, especially young people, attended the witness talks that they held. From 30 April to 2 May 2016, family members from the second and third generations and other interested individuals took part in the "Future of Remembrance" forum, where they discussed possibilities for an intensified international exchange and new forms of remembrance. During both the forum (which will be held again in May 2017) and the central memorial event, adolescents and young adults who had intensively explored their own family history and connections to National Socialism presented their findings in a stop-motion film.

In August, 20 women and men between the ages of 17 and 62 from 10 different countries attended a work camp. They produced texts for an audio guide, wrote articles for the local press, and marked the location of a kiln in the former brickworks.

The Memorial published two new works this year: Volume 17 of its journal "Contributions to the History of Nazi Persecution in Northern Germany" entitled *'Euthanasia' Crimes: Research into National Socialist Health and Social Policy*, and Volume 6 of the "Neuengammer Kolloquien" series, edited by Dr Oliver von Wrochem and Christine Eckel, on the topic of *National Socialist Perpetration: Effects on Society and Family*, which includes a DVD with interviews by Jürgen Kinter. A second edition of this book was published after just a few months. A new information flier on the history of the Neuengamme concentration camp and the Memorial was also published and will be available in 11 different languages early next year.

Many of the letters and emails we received from you this year expressed concern about current political conflicts, wars and terrorism, and the rise of right-wing populism, antisemitism, and racism. As the obstinacy of individual states once again pushes aside the community of nations, and as efforts to achieve global justice appear to be giving way to the protection of personal privileges, many people are asking themselves just how far the historical lessons learned from the experience of Nazi terror can take us. But anyone who has the horrors of the concentration camps in their mind's eye knows the value of freedom, the rule of law, and democracy. We therefore view these concerns as an incentive to continue our remembrance work and to remain especially vigilant. On behalf of everyone at the Memorial, I wish you all tranquil holidays and a new year that brings better news.

Sincerely,



Dr Detlef Garbe