

KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme

Ausstellungen
Begegnungen
Studienzentrum

Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial Jean-Dolidier-Weg 75 21039 Hamburg

Year-end Circular Letter
to the survivors of the Neuengamme
Concentration Camp
to surviving dependants and relatives,
to Friends of the Neuengamme Concentration
Camp Memorial

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Dear Madam, dear Sir, dear Friends,

This year again we would like to write to you personally with a year-end circular letter to thank you for all your support and give you a brief review of all the topics that have kept the Concentration Camp Memorial busy over the past year.

In 2019 we once again featured several special exhibitions. The first, at the beginning of the year, was the exhibition at Hamburg City Hall entitled 'A City and its Concentration Camp. Prisoners of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp in Wartime Hamburg 1943-1945'. It examined the large-scale deployment, in the city centre, of prisoners from the Neuengamme Concentration Camp and the close ties between the SS and the Hamburg authorities as well as numerous commercial enterprises. The exhibition was also shown at the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial in the summer. It also featured photographs taken as part of a photo project supervised by Mark Mühlhaus entitled *Blickwinkel* [Perspectives]. Other exhibitions included 'Stolen Children – Forgotten Victims' by the association of the same name and 'The Long Journey of the Prisoners from the Beendorf Satellite Camp' by the Wöbbelin Memorial Site. Currently you have the opportunity, until 12 January 2020, of seeing the exhibition 'Some Were Neighbours. Collaboration & Complicity in the Holocaust' by the United States Holocaust Museum Memorials.

Of the many other activities over the past year we would like to draw your attention to three in particular. In March we staged the 16th Conference of Satellite Camp Initiatives and Memorial Sites, which also featured the impressive new permanent exhibition at Ladelund and the redesign of the Husum-Schwesing satellite camp. It also discussed forms of inclusion and participation in exhibitions and mediation work at memorial sites. This year the project 'denk.mal Hannoverscher Bahnhof documentation centre' organised various trips that took international participants to some of the deportation destinations of Jews, Sinti and Roma, from Hamburg and northern Germany. The international project 'Memoryscapes' launched new digital forms of mediation. To read the full reports of the work done by the Memorial, do please visit our website.

Our Archive continues to receive a very large number of enquiries from relatives. We always welcome new estates, legacies and documents. One particular find over the past year was the logbook by the clerk at the Kaltenkirchen satellite camp, which was kept by the Polish prisoner Sergiusz Jaskiewicz in his capacity as the camp's clerk and has now been handed over to the Memorial Archive.

This year again we remember those who supported the work of the Memorial over many years and have sadly passed away, including the long-standing director of the Research Centre for Contemporary History in Hamburg, Prof. Dr Axel Schildt, and the former prisoners of the Neuengamme concentration camps Pierre Billaux, Pascal Valliccioni and Marko Max Feingold.

Since 1981 the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial has served as a stark reminder of the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime by preserving accounts, documents and the remains of the buildings involved; its aim is to convey this history in exhibitions, events, education programmes, publications and social media. Given the backdrop of current political developments in Germany and in Europe, it is all the more important to us to establish the relevance of past events for the present and to highlight the importance of addressing National Socialism for today's societies. As museum-based institutions with the wide range of tasks incumbent on extracurricular educational establishments, memorial sites require a high level of autonomy and independence in fulfilling their remit. The Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, which has been part of the Hamburg Cultural Authority since 1999, is to become a foundation under public law in 2020. Legal independence will ensure that we are able adequately to discharge our duties with regards to the ever growing demands for historical and political education at memorial sites on the subject of Nazi terror; it will also serve to guarantee our greater autonomy.

The importance of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial and its branch offices has grown significantly in recent years. Visitor numbers have doubled to 130,000 in ten years; more than 300 seminars and events are organised each year; and more than 2,000 school classes and other groups have been taken around the site and offered educational guidance. We are confident that the new organisational structure will allow us to continue along this path, with even greater success. Beside the responsibility for the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial and the memorials at the sites of former satellite camps in Poppenbüttel, Fuhlsbüttel and the Bullenhuser Damm in Rothenburgsort, on 1 January 2020 the 'Hamburg Memorial Foundation and Learning Centres Commemorating the Victims of Nazi Crimes' is to assume overall responsibility for the existing memorial site and the 'denk.mal Hannoverscher Bahnhof' documentation centre scheduled to open in 2022. The Memorial was also very busy in 2019 preparing an exhibition and drawing up education formats for the Stadthaus historical site, which is privately owned and governed.

The establishment of a Foundation status will also entail a number of personnel-related changes. The current Director of Memorials at the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, Detlef Garbe, is to be appointed to the Foundation's Board of Directors; his current deputy, Oliver von Wrochem, will take over as Head of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial. In autumn 2019 the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme appointed Dr Martine Letterie as its new president. Together, we will be sending out invitations to attend next year's events marking the 75th anniversary of the Liberation.

But for now, on behalf of all our staff, may we wish you a contemplative end to the year, and a healthy and peaceful New Year.



Prof. Dr. Detlef Garbe



Dr. Oliver von Wrochem