

Flossenbürg Concentration Camp - Reconciles with the Past



Even sixty-two years after the World War II ended, the painful memories of the Nazi horrors still seem unbelievable and inhumanely cruel. Many of those responsible for this unfortunate chapter of our history have been punished. On the other hand, men and women who became the object of torture in the concentration camps and survived until today still fight to cope with that dreadful experience. Many agree that forgetting the past is not the best way of dealing with the camps and their prisoners; recently, the almost forgotten Bavarian concentration camp Flossenbürg became the center of attention again. An exhibition has opened here which is to tell the stories of those who suffered within its walls. The camp was built in 1938 and was liberated by the American Military in 1945. It served as an administrative center for 90 camps in Bavaria, Bohemia and Saxony. Nearly 97,000 prisoners passed through its walls, out of which 30,000 were killed. Jews, Roma, homosexuals and even Jehovah witnesses were being tortured here. The exhibition is the result of four years of an extensive research of several historians; the most important source were interviews with those who survived. Their stories together with pictures drawn by the camp's victims, photos depicting them prior to their imprisonment - images of families, holidays, young lovers, weddings - such items contribute to the very personal and touching character of the exhibition. The ceremony was initiated by Bavarian Premier Edmund Stoiber and the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, but was also attended by the Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, whose father was a prisoner in Flossenbürg. Most importantly, 84 former prisoners were also among the first visitors. The whole project is aimed to remind the whole of mankind of the past; as such memories should never come to oblivion.

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