

# International Auschwitz Committee

Stauffenbergstrasse 13/14, 10785 Berlin, Tel. +49 03 26392681

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## **Preserve Remembrance – Conserve authentic Places – Assume Responsibility**

We, the undersigned, survivors of German concentration camps, women and men, represent international prisoner committees of the concentration camps and their sub-camps. We remember our murdered families and the millions of victims who were killed in these places of ashes. Their persecution and murder, for racial, political, religious, social, biological and economic reasons, and a criminal war took the world to the brink of disaster and left behind an appalling toll.

Following our liberation, we pledged to build a new world of peace and freedom: we became involved, in order to prevent any repetition of these incomparable crimes. Throughout our lives we have borne witness; throughout our lives we have made every effort to inform young people about our experiences, about what we encountered, and about the causes.

Precisely for this reason, we are exceedingly pained and angered to recognize today: the world has learned too little from our history. Precisely for this reason remembrance and commemoration must remain the equal task of both citizens and states.

Today the former camps are stony witnesses: they are scenes of the crimes, international cemeteries, museums and places of learning. They are evidence against denial and the playing down of facts, and they must be preserved throughout time. They are places of scientific research and educational commitment. Looking after the educational interests of the visitors must be sufficiently ensured.

The incomparable crimes against humanity inflicted by the National Socialists - and above all in this context, the Holocaust - were carried out under German responsibility. Germany has done much to come to terms with its history. We expect that the Federal Republic and its citizens will continue honouring their responsibility with special commitment in the future as well.

But Europe also has its task: instead of asserting our ideals for democracy, peace, tolerance, self-determination and human rights, history is too often used to sow discord between human beings, groups and peoples. We object to the comparative assignment of blame, to the creation of hierarchies in the experiences of suffering, of competition between victims and to the confusion of historical phases. For this reason we endorse the words of the former President of the European Parliament, Simone Veil, when she addressed the German Parliament in 2004 and appealed for the transmission of memory: "Europe should recognize and stand by its mutual past as a whole, with all the bright and dark sides; every member state should know about its mistakes and failures, and

acknowledge they are at peace with their past, so that they can be at peace with their neighbours.”

Our ranks are thinning. In all areas of our associations, at national and international level, people are coming to our side to preserve remembrance: they are giving us faith in the future, they are carrying on our work. The dialogue that was begun with us must be continued with them. They need the support of state and society for this work.

The last eye witnesses appeal to Germany, to all European states and to the international community, to continue preserving and honouring the human gift of remembrance and commemoration into the future. We ask young people to carry on our struggle, against Nazi ideology and for a just, peaceful and tolerant world, a world that has no place for anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism.

This is our bequest.

Berlin, 25 January 2009

**Noach Flug (Jerusalem)**

International Auschwitz Committee

**Sam Bloch (New York)**

World Federation of Bergen-Belsen

**Bertrand Herz (Paris)**

International Buchenwald Committee

**Max Mannheimer (Munich)**

International Dachau Committee

**Uri Chanoch (Jerusalem)**

International Dachau Sub-Camps Committee

**Jack Terry (New York)**

International Flossenbürg Committee

**Albert van Hoey (Brussels)**

International Committee Mittelbau-Dora

**Robert Pinçon (Tours)**

International Neuengamme Committee

**Annette Chalut (Paris)**

International Ravensbrück Committee

**Pierre Gouffault (Paris)**

International Sachsenhausen Committee