



GEDENKSTÄTTE
FÜR DIE OPFER DES KZ
LANGENSTEIN-ZWIEBERGE

STIFTUNG
GEDENKSTÄTTEN
SACHSEN-ANHALT

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,



We begin our review of the year 2023 by remembering those who have passed away: **Marcel Grare**, survivor of the Sachsenhausen and Langenstein-Zwieberge concentration camps, died in Méry-sur-Oise already in November 2022, shortly before his one hundredth birthday.

Rudi Ehrlich, son of Langenstein survivor Hans Ehrlich, died in the Netherlands. Rudi survived the Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt camps as a child. Please remember them with a moment of silence.

The year 2023 has brought some personnel changes.

Nicolas Bertrand and Franziska Dieck left the memorial in April. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for the dedicated work they have done to advance the memorial. Gero Fedtke has taken over as Nicolas Bertrand's successor. Alexa Francine Henze has been with us since August and takes care of all our administrative matters. Continuity is ensured by Gesine Daifi in education and Mike Lehmann and Udo Krüger as caretakers.

In December 2022, the memorial's last newsletter announced that the state of Saxony-Anhalt had exercised its pre-emptive right to acquire the part of the tunnel that had not been altered or only slightly altered by the former East German Army (NVA). However, the exercise of the pre-emptive right has been challenged in court. A decision is still pending. This situation is of course hampering the development of the memorial and is currently preventing the realisation of an appropriate tour of the tunnel, which the survivors demanded years ago. For the time being, we can only offer the existing insight into the tunnel. The number of visitors on the opening weekends and the numerous requests for group tours show the unbroken high level of interest. The larger part of the tunnel that was modified by the East German Army (NVA) is owned by Global Project Management GmbH company.

In recent years, many areas of the former prisoner camp that had become overgrown with trees and bushes have been made visible again. In view of the particularly vigorous vegetation this year, it required the full commitment of our caretakers to keep these areas visible. The support of a team of six participants in a vocational reintegration programme at the Halberstadt training and further education centre was very valuable in this respect.



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In June, 12 high school graduates from the Protestant school centre in Leipzig plucked countless wild plants from the mass graves and from the remains of buildings in the former camp grounds. The city and landscape maintenance company, with the support of the Halberstadt diaconal service organisation, was also active on the site and cleared the treetops in the area below the large memorial. Last but not least, the sheep were also with us again, tending to the grounds in accordance with monument protection regulations.



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This year, some projects that were started in 2022 or earlier continued. The restorers Knüpfer and Marko have completed the conservation of the remains of the main infirmary and a sanitary barrack. In careful, painstaking and precise detail work, they have restored these last material reminders of the prisoner camp and thus halted their recent rapid deterioration.

In April, a new memorial stone was erected during the "Days of Encounter" in memory of the victims of the death march. It stands opposite the former camp gate at the place where the prisoners had to pass on 9 April 1945. Even today, more than 78 years later, we do not know exactly how many people lost their lives on the Langenstein-Zwieberge death march. For the group of Belgian prisoners, however, we can now say quite precisely. Thanks to the research work of Christian Richard and André Maurage, who spent years in archives and corresponded with relatives and authorities. Christian Richard presented the results of their research work at this year's "Days of Encounter". Of the Belgian deportees, 34 had to go on the death march – 24 of them did not survive.



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Around 1,250 pupils received educational support during their visits over the course of the year. This is an increase of 40% compared to last year. There were also projects over a longer period of time, three of which are presented here as examples:

For the "Days of Encounter", young people from different types of schools developed their own commemorative presentation over a period of three months. The basic idea proposed to them by the 2nd generation group was the topic of "war". The result in the form of a scenic performance was presented to the public on the 78th anniversary of the camp's liberation on 16 April. The project was realised together with the umbrella association Reichenstrasse.

From the "Days of Encounter" in April until the end of September, a travelling exhibition designed by the Territoire de Belfort on the life and work of French survivor Louis Bertrand was on display here. It was located directly in the entrance area of the memorial so that all visitors saw it first. Louis Bertrand worked hard to promote co-operation between the Harz district and the Territoire de Belfort. The exhibition can now be seen in the district administration building in Halberstadt.



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Another project called the "Students' Liberation Project" was realised by pupils from Halberstadt's Martineum grammar school as part of their bilingual history lessons. The young people used their excellent knowledge of English to research the history of the concentration camp and to interview veterans of the US troops who liberated the camp. Based on the results of this research, seven posts were created and published on the memorial's social media accounts.

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The time-consuming research work carried out in recent years under the direction of Nicolas Bertrand included finding the original photographs and film footage from the camp as well as aerial photographs. They form a very important basis for the development of the former camp site and are being further analysed by us. While continuing our research, we found a previously unknown film in the collection of the Imperial War Museums, which was shot on 19 April 1945. In addition to footage of the camp, it also contains a short sequence in the village of Langenstein and of the entrance to the 20th Field Hospital in the Mansfeld barracks in Halberstadt. Three minutes and 22 seconds of moving and touching pictures.



© Imperial War Museums London
The statue presumably shows men from Langenstein who were used by the Americans to clear the camp.

The Days of Encounter will take place in 2024 from 4 to 8 April. They are organised by the memorial in cooperation with the Support Association. The main commemorative event is on Sunday, 7 April. Anyone who can still be there on Monday morning is cordially invited to take part in the municipal commemoration of the bombing of Halberstadt. A speech from our part is planned.

To make planning easier, please register by 10 January 2024.

We wish you happy holidays and all the best for the New Year. May the world become a more peaceful place in the coming year.

Your memorial team



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Photo by: Tina Held

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