



One aim
Together
Never again!

BAVARIAN
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Memorial Sites
Dachau and Flossenbürg



Karl Freller

Dear Readers!

Remembrance and dialogue – these are the central tasks of the Bavarian Memorial Foundation: remembering the unprecedented Nazi terror and the millions of victims, while preserving the memorials and engaging in intensive dialogue on the possibilities of preventing such a rupture of civilisation ever happening again, both now and in the future. These objectives shape the work at the two Concentration Camp Memorial Sites in Dachau and Flossenbürg. The educational programmes, the exhibitions and the cultural projects of these Memorial Sites are especially aimed at a younger audience. With their authentic historical material and the high standards they have set for their educational work, the Memorial Sites point beyond the era of the survivors as contemporary witnesses, playing a decisive role in shaping the future of our free democratic society.

Maintaining the commemorative sites and places of remembrance at the former concentration camps and subcamps, as well as caring for the 75 cemeteries where victims of Nazi terror are buried, is an ongoing task and obligation. The work of the Foundation is thus also an expression of the will of the State of Bavaria to resolutely counter newly emerging right-wing extremist and anti-Semitic tendencies. This is the task of the Foundation, of our constitutional state and our society as a whole.

Karl Freller
Director of the Foundation
former Vice-President of the Bavarian State Parliament

The Bavarian Memorial Foundation

In 2003, the Bavarian Memorial Foundation was commissioned by the Bavarian government with the trusteeship for the Dachau and Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial Sites.

Since then, the Foundation has been responsible for the preservation and maintenance of the Memorial Sites:

as authentic historical sites and as physical witnesses to the crimes of National Socialism

as places for remembering the victims

as learning locations for future generations

The two Memorial Sites form the centre of the culture of remembrance in Bavaria. Also significant, but largely unknown, are the more than 200 former, albeit hardly preserved, subcamps of the two concentration camps. To make these subcamp sites visible and thus enable worthy remembrance of the injustices that took place there, the Foundation cooperates closely with local authorities and associations.

Since 2013, the Foundation is also accountable for 75 concentration camp cemeteries spread across Bavaria. Here, the spectrum of tasks ranges from maintenance and security, providing information for visitors through to overseeing and implementing the redesign of these places of remembrance.



Subcamps

At the end of 1944, the majority of all concentration camp prisoners were held in subcamps as forced labourers. The living conditions were catastrophic: an acute shortage of supplies, extremely arduous and relentless work, disease, exposure to freezing temperatures, and brutal mistreatment led to an enormous increase in deaths.

The Dachau concentration camp had 140 subcamps during its existence, mainly in southern Bavaria, near Lake Constance and in Austria. The approximately 80 subcamps of the Flossenbürg concentration camp extended from Würzburg to Prague and from northern Saxony to Lower Bavaria.

After the end of the war, the remains of many of these subcamps were demolished and built over. Along with them, knowledge of this regional chapter of persecution during the Nazi era also disappeared. Since the 1980s, local initiatives have been trying to bring these forgotten places back into public awareness. The Bavarian Memorial Foundation is supporting them in their efforts and has inaugurated remembrance sites at two of the largest subcamps, Hersbruck and Mühldorf, in 2016 and 2018.



Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

Shortly after Adolf Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor, the Nazi regime established a concentration camp in Dachau in March 1933, which was originally intended for political opponents. It became the "model" for subsequent camps. Until liberation in April 1945, more than 200,000 people from over 40 nations were imprisoned there and in its 140 subcamps. Persecuted for political, "racial" and "social hygiene" reasons, one in five victims died from hunger, disease or SS terror.

The Memorial Site was opened in 1965 on the initiative of survivors, first of all of the Comité International de Dachau. Dedicated to remembering the victims of Nazi persecution, the Memorial Site aims to provide historical and civic education while fostering international encounters. In addition to a main exhibition on the history of the Dachau concentration camp, special exhibitions on a diverse array of themes are held at regular intervals, while a multifaceted educational and event programme is available. Various religious and non-religious memorials also exist on the grounds. Much is planned for the coming years, with extensive renovation work due, exhibitions to be redesigned and updated, and further buildings from the former camp integrated into the Memorial Site.



Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial Site

The Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial Site remembers the fate of the ca. 100,000 persons imprisoned in the camp complex. Working under extreme hardship imposed by the SS, they were forced to mine granite in the concentration camp's own quarry and, from 1943, manufacture aircraft parts for the armaments industry. At least 30,000 of them did not survive their imprisonment.

The Memorial Site, established in 1946/47 on part of the former camp grounds, is one of the oldest in Europe. A number of the camp facilities could be preserved, amongst them the former commandant's headquarters, part of the detention yard, the crematorium, three watch-towers and the roll-call square. Flossenbürg is known worldwide as the execution site of the theologian and resistance figure Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

As a place of remembrance and learning, Flossenbürg has been continuously developed over the past 20 years. Two permanent exhibitions and an education centre have been created, and historical relics, especially in the area of the historic quarry, are being made accessible.



Concentration Camp Cemeteries and Gravesites

At the beginning of April 1945, the Allied advance reached Bavaria. The soldiers were confronted with scenes of horror in many places. At both the main Dachau and Flossenbürg concentration camps and their sub-camps, as well as along the numerous routes of the so called death marches, the Allied soldiers came across the bodies of dead prisoners and found survivors severely marked by their ordeal under the Nazis. In the weeks and months after the war, the Allies ordered that victims, often only provisionally buried, were to be reinterred at 493 concentration camp gravesites. Since the 1950s, many of these smaller burial sites have been integrated into larger grounds.

In 2013, the Bavarian Memorial Foundation took over the administration of the remaining 75 concentration camp cemeteries and gravesites in Bavaria. Since then, the Foundation has not only been committed to maintaining the sites, but also to providing new and relevant information.

Organisational structure

The Bavarian Memorial Foundation is a public-law foundation; responsibility for running the Foundation lies with the directorate, who represents it externally and conducts day-to-day business in cooperation with the Memorial Site directors. A council decides on all fundamental matters concerning the Foundation and has far-reaching powers in budgetary and personnel matters. Its members are made up of representatives from state and local politics as well as church and victims groups. The chair of the council is responsible for supervising the Foundation's directorate.

A board of trustees has an advisory function and is involved in every important decision. Appointed for a period of four years by the Foundation council, the board of trustees is made up of representatives from survivor groups and social organisations. Furthermore, a scholarly advisory board comprised of national and international experts supports the Foundation. The Foundation council is responsible for appointing the members of this board, whose terms are also for four years.

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