

# International Auschwitz Committee

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## **Preserve Memory- Maintain Authentic Sites- Take Responsibility**

We, the undersigned, survivors of the German concentration camps, women and men, represent international inmate committees of these concentration camps and their subsidiary facilities. Our thoughts are with our families and the millions of victims slain at these sites of ashes, whose persecution and murder for racial, political, religious, social, biological and economic reasons and a felonious war brought the world to the edge of the abyss, leaving behind a horrific balance.

After our liberation, we swore to build a new world of peace and freedom, engaging ourselves to prevent the return of such an incomparable crime. Lifelong we have given testimony; lifelong we have striven to inform young people of our experiences and their causes.

Therefore it pains and shocks us having to establish today that the world has not learned enough from our history. For this reason the retrospection and remembrance must equivalently be the duty of citizens and countries.

Today, the former camps are now witnesses of stone: These are crime scenes, international graveyards, museums and places of learning. They are evidence against denial and belittlement, and must be maintained. They are places of scientific research and pedagogical engagement. The pedagogical care to the visitors must be sufficiently guaranteed.

The incomparable crimes of the national socialists against humanity – its links to the Holocaust cannot be forgotten - occurred under German accountability. Germany has done much in accounting for the past and we expect the Federal Republic and its citizens to notably embrace their responsibility in the future as well.

However, Europe has its assignment as well. Instead of applying our ideals for democracy, peace, tolerance, self-determination and human rights, history is often used to create conflict between people, groups, and nations. We stand against placing blame against each other, hierarchizing memory through sorrow, bringing victims into competition with one another and mingling historical phases into each other. Therefore we affirm our plea, expressed from the former president of the European Parliament and Auschwitz survivor Simone Veil in front of the Bundestag in 2004, in passing down the memory: “Europe should accept its collective past as a whole and stand by it, with all its dark and bright aspects; every member state should recognize its mistakes and failures, and avow to be at peace with its past in order to be so with its neighbors.

Our ranks are dwindling. In all instances of our alliances, at national and international levels, people are joining our side to take up the memory, giving us confidence in the future and continuing our work. The dialogue, which began with us, must continue with them. For this work they require the support from country and society.

The last eye-witnesses turn to Germany, all European countries and the international community to preserve and dignify the human gift of retrospection and remembrance even in the future. We ask the young people to continue our fight against Nazi ideology and for a just, peaceful and tolerant world in which Anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and right-wing extremism can have no place.

This is our legacy.

**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 Committee of

**Jack Terry (New York)**

International Flossenbürg Committee

**Albert van Hoey (Brussels)**

International Mittelbau-Dora Committee

**Robert Pinçon (Tours)**

International Neuengamme Committee

**Annette Chalut (Paris)**

International Ravensbrück Committee

**Pierre Gouffault (Paris)**

International Sachsenhausen Committee