

Hello! My name is Teres Stockinger and I'm a guide at the Mauthausen Memorial. Here everything is closed due to the corona virus. Therefore, together with my colleague Adam Schmidtberger, I would like to show you something in the outer area, in the monuments park.

Welcome. I am Adam.

We are now in the middle of the monument park of the Mauthausen Memorial.

Here are the monuments of over 20 nations, whose citizens were deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp. One could discuss the different roles that all of these states and their inhabitants played during the Second World War.

Now we are looking directly at the monument of Poland on the one hand, and the monument of Bulgaria on the other.

As for Poland, we probably all know what happened to this country at the beginning of the war, for it was practically deleted from the map. Poland was initially attacked by German and Soviet troops, but in the end it remained under the control of Nazi Germany, which had serious consequences for the people who lived inside the country. Some were regarded as part of the so-called "German people's community", their territories were incorporated into National Socialist Germany and those "citizens of the Reich" had the same rights and obligations as the other Germans. However, persecution began for the rest, especially for the Jews. Virtually all of Poland's Jewish population was killed in places of extermination. On the other hand, there was a Polish government that had no direct influence on what was going on in the country. Nevertheless, this government, based in its London exile, had two armies made up of Polish men who continued to fight Nazism from the outside, and a third secret guerrilla army located directly in the country.

In contrast, the Bulgarian government had decided that Bulgaria should become an ally of Nazi Germany. The Bulgarian government also allowed German troops to enter the country on a case-by-case basis, but it was never occupied by the Germans. Although Bulgaria was an ally of Germany, it did not take part in the attack by Nazi Germany and its allies on the Soviet Union. After the war it became apparent that a large part of Bulgaria's Jewish population had survived the Shoa.

And now, what do you think, what role did Austria play in the Second World War, and what roles could the Austrians play at the time?

In Mauthausen there is also an Italian memorial. It is the one behind me.

The Italian memorial is a wall made of granite, with a golden writing that says „To the Italians that suffered and perished here“. And over here there is another writing.

It is in Latin. It is a verse from the Gospel according to Matthew, from the Sermon on the Mount. It means „Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness“. And there, you see there is a cross. This high black cross that seems like wrapped with barbed wire is a part of the Italian memorial. You see how the barbed wire, symbol of the concentration camps, stands here for an instrument of the sufferings of Christ.

And here there is a triangle of red stone. The concentration camp prisoners had a triangle of fabric of a certain color on their clothes, and the red triangle was the sign of the political prisoners.

So the Italian memorial puts a strong emphasis on political prisoners and on christian faith. However, not all Italian prisoners were christians oder political prisoners. One day I accompanied

an Italian gentleman. He asked me very angrily: „How can this cross be justified?“ What do you think, why could he be so angry? Well, because his Italian grandfather was murdered in Mauthausen because he was Jewish, and now, on his memorial there is a cross. Ah, speaking of Jews: do you know this Jewish custom of putting stones on graves? The stone means: I was here at your grave. I remember you.

This side of the Italian memorial is decated to the national remembrance. However, the Italian memorial has another side, too. Let us go and see it.

This is the other side of the Italian memorial. It is dedicated to the individual remembrance. All these plaques have been put up by the families, or by communities, or associations. You see that for the families the memorial is like a cemetery. In Mauthausen the dead were usually burnt in ovens, and the ashes thrown away. And so for all these people there is no tomb.

Maybe some day you can come to visit the Mauthausen Memorial, and then you can see all these plaques more closely. With this I say goodbye to you. Ciao, see you soon!