

The Holocaust Historiography Project

Remarkable Nonsense about the Holocaust

Auschwitz ashes

Today [Tue, 18 Aug 1998] my wife and I went to the Ohlsdorfer Friedhof (Cemetery) here in Hamburg, for a walk in the nice green parks (Spaziergang) and also to visit and pay our deepest respect to the thousands of German soldiers buried there (the youngest soldiers we saw buried there were 16 and 17 years young). We sat for awhile with the 36,000 citizens of Hamburg who were killed in the fire bombing in 1943. People have planted small crosses and plaques along the sides of the mass graves -- some listing the names of whole families, from Grandpop (Oma and Opa) through to the little blonde kids.

We also walked through the very old Jewish part of the cemetery, and my wife said, "I notice this place (which has literally hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, of very old gravestones) was not bulldozed or destroyed by the Nazis." As a matter of fact, it wasn't even touched. Many, many grave stones are over 100 years old -- not destroyed, not broken, not damaged by anything except a bit of neglect. And I noticed that many many (actually most) gravestones bore the names of Jews who were born in Hamburg well BEFORE the war and who died in Hamburg well into the 1950s-1970s.

Out in the entrance to the Jewish graveyard (where all male visitors are asked to cover their heads) is a large memorial to the "Members of our race who died between 1933-1945." There is no indication of what race they are talking about: it is a Jewish cemetery in a German city, but, silly me, I thought Judaism was a religion. Out in front of this large memorial mounted on a pedestal is a large urn which contains "Ashes from Auschwitz."

On the way home we saw, situated right in one of Hamburgs best suburban addresses a large Synagogue -- built in 1933 and according to the sign outside was used right up until the start of WW2 -- not destroyed, not blown up by the Nazis, and across the front entrance it carries a Hebrew Proverb in large letters. It now houses an exhibition hall for Semitic culture, and a State Radio station.

[from an e-mail correspondent]

Send all questions and comments to webmaster@historiography-project.org.