

„HUMANITY WITHOUT BORDERS“

“A human life is a human life. They were criminals. They were criminals. I don't wish for anyone to have to watch their own child being trampled on, gassed or anything else. (...) If it weren't for that spark of hope, no one would have survived.”

CC survivor Aba Lewit

Until the Second World War, human rights were regulated within the borders of each individual nation. After liberation from the Nazi terror regime and its atrocities, the „Universal Declaration of Human Rights“ was adopted with the aim of creating international peace and security beyond borders. Humanity beyond all borders also plays an important role in the Mauthausen Oath, which was written by concentration camp survivors a few days after the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp.

Under the Nazi terror dictatorship, humanity reached its limits or was lost altogether. Long before they came to power, National Socialists gradually planted anti-human, racist and above all anti-Semitic ideas into people's minds. They were able to win over more and more people to the National Socialist ideology with social and material promises, initial successes and, above all, well-conceived propaganda.

The Nazi propaganda stirred up emotions and prejudices. This was repeated constantly and repeatedly over many years. Enemy No. 1 were Jews, but also political opponents, resistant fighters and others were denounced in Nazi propaganda; disasters were conjured up; fears and hatred were stirred up. Nazi propaganda was an essential reason for the success of the National Socialists. By burning books, arresting dissenters and abolishing freedom of the press, the Nazis were able to control information and establish limits in people's thinking.

Along with these limits in thinking, borders between people developed hand in hand. Immediately after the „Anschluss“ (Annexation), mass arrests of Austrian Jews and opponents of the NS regime began. Not only Gestapo officials participated in these arrests, but also many other followers (tag-alongs). Many of these people who were arrested were deported to concentration camps. In the concentration camps, too, the National Socialists deliberately set up borders. Each prisoner received a colored triangle, the „prisoner's angle“, depending on the reason for his or her incarceration and nationality.

This categorization not only influenced everyday life and thus the chance of survival, but also attempted to systematically counteract humanity among the prisoners and possible resistance actions. The systematic mistreatment and killing of people in the concentration and extermination camps was largely charged in the Nuremberg Trials under the heading „crimes against humanity“. Few people demonstrated civil courage during the Nazi era and helped victims or resisted the Nazi terror regime.

„HUMANITY WITHOUT BORDERS“

Again today, borders, fences and walls are being erected. The justification for this is to protect our „home“, for our own security. We ask: From whom must we protect ourselves? From people fleeing from war, hunger or the lack of prospects for a dignified life in their homeland? And we should protect ourselves with borders and upper limits that determine who should help whom? For these refugees, who have seen their children murdered and their world destroyed, the limits of what is bearable have long since been exceeded. It is not acceptable that again today, in our democracy, it should depend only on the commitment of a few to help these people and save them from death. For many years, right-wing extremists and right-wing populists have stirred up hatred and fears against certain groups of people. Enemy image no. 1 this time is the „refugees“, but also those who help, those who are defamed as „do-gooders“ or those who hold opposing views. Everyone in Europe has a duty to help these people and to forge a Europe of borderless humanity.

“Consider that you are humans. That’s all! Be human!”

CC survivor Aba Lewit’s message to people today

