

News announcement extracts (2012 – 2015)

For documentation purposes, all events or news statements published here are recorded in the archive in the form of an annual document (pdf, in German).

Below you will find some news announcement extracts (2012 – 2015) translated into English:

Eyes full of tears

A remembrance celebration was held on Saturday, April 18, 2015 on the site of the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp for Girls and Young Women and Later Extermination Site for the 70th anniversary of the Liberation by the Red Army. The Uckermark Initiative released a short article about it (pdf, in German).

ONCE AGAIN: Vandalism on the site of the Former Uckermark Concentration Camp

After the remembrance celebration for the 69th anniversary of the Liberation on May 4, 2014, a sunscreen was stolen from the site of the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp for Girls and Young Women and Later Extermination Site.

On the morning of May 4, 2014, a group of hikers settled down to rest on a bench and learn about the site; “A good opportunity to rest and commemorate.”

In the afternoon at the remembrance celebration, Ilse Heinrich and Charlotte Kroll, survivors of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, sat on benches under a sunscreen with a view of the memorial stone.

A few days later the sunscreen and its mounting devices were gone.

The Usage of the Term: “Extermination Camp”

For a while now, we in the Initiative for a Memorial at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp have been discussing the usage of the term *Vernichtungslager* or “extermination camp” to designate the period of time between January and April 1945 at the site of the Uckermark Concentration Camp.

One frequent argument against the usage of that term is that it would be tantamount to equating the Uckermark Concentration Camp with places such as Belzec, Sobibor, and Auschwitz, and to the events that occurred at those sites. By adding the word “later,” as in “and later extermination site,” we wanted to make the difference clear while also expressing the fact that the camp was converted into a site of mass murder shortly before the end of the war. The (scientific) criteria for designating this site an extermination camp are met for that time period, as people were being systematically instead of selectively murdered during those months. There are many survivors who have testified to that fact and who count it amongst their worst memories. We do not want to use a place name that minimizes or obscures what happened there during the months before the Liberation. On a tour through

the Ravensbrück Memorial Site, the signpost “Stele 35” refers to the camp as a “selection and death camp” [*Selektions- und Sterbelager*], and the English translation even reads “camp for dying prisoners.” However, in the months leading up to the end of the war, the camp did not become a hospice as that may imply – it became a site of targeted extermination. We are looking for a name that will clearly refer to the systematic and indiscriminate murder of those thousands of people, while still accounting for the objections discussed above. We are currently in the discussion process and would appreciate any input on the subject.

- Initiative for a Memorial at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp

After the vandalism on the site of the former concentration camp – sunscreen repaired

Thanks to numerous generous donations, the sunscreen and rain shield were repaired and re-installed on the grounds of the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp for Girls and Young Women and Later Extermination Site.

Initiative for a Memorial at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp put out a press release calling for donations. The sunscreen and a bench were then destroyed with malicious intent by unknown individuals on August 14, 2013 – just one day after being constructed.

Please see [our press release](#) about the support and expressions of solidarity we have received.

Vandalism at the site of the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp

On August 14, 2013, a sunscreen and the foundation of a bench were destroyed with malicious intent at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp for Girls and Young Women and Later Extermination Site. Around noon, one or more unknown individuals sliced up the sunscreen’s fabric, apparently with a knife, and smashed the bench’s concrete foundation. They had only been constructed there the day before by the Initiative for a Memorial at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp.

Starting the conversion process

On August 6, 2012, the conversion process began with the demolition of post-war buildings erected by the Soviet Army. It was covered by the media: the radio station rbb held a live broadcast on that day and the events were written about in numerous articles; in the “[Nordkurier](#),” the “[Evangelischen Pressedienst](#)” and the “[Märkischen Allgemeinen](#),” just to name a few examples published as of August 7, 2012.



Initiative for a Memorial at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp was also there of course, and took a few photos of this crucial step in the process of creating an Uckermark memorial (available as pdf). Here is the speech given at the groundbreaking:

Who would have thought?! Not long ago, the Association of Ravensbrück Camp Survivors, Family and Friends (LGRF) and we, the Initiative for a Memorial at the Former Uckermark Youth Concentration Camp, were practically the only ones working intensively on this site, with the continuing goal of creating a worthy memorial space here. A few years ago, we started a campaign to remove the buildings erected here after 1945 – and now we are standing here today and it is actually about to begin!

We are very happy about that!

However, that feeling of happiness is clouded by the knowledge that we can only share it with a few last survivors: Seventy years have past since the Red Army liberated the prisoners from the Uckermark Concentration Camp and Later Extermination Site – it has taken that long to arrive at this important step in the process towards creating a worthy memorial site.

Just as many survivors never received the so-called reparations, many cannot take part in our celebration today. We took too long!

We would like to thank all those who helped bring about this conversion! I remember all of the letters that we received in 2009/2010 very clearly, calling for the demolition of the military remains: they came from Himmelpfort, a neighboring town, but they also came from France and from Ukraine. Without your support, we would probably not be standing here today. Thank you!

Demolition of Military Remains Within Reach on the Former Site of the Camp

On January 10, 2012, we were happy to hear that the town planning contract had been signed by all parties involved. The signing of the contract was the last official hurdle before the demolition of the military ruins could begin (the conversion), a prerequisite for the creation of a worthy memorial site. The next step is for the *Gesellschaft für Konversion* [Association for the Conversion] to hire a company to execute the conversion (via a tender). The demolition is expected to begin in the spring. We are really delighted about this news: years have gone by since we began this process with your support. Together with all of you, we have put a lot of energy into this issue and it did not always seem as if our efforts would be successful. Now that it is finally happening we are really excited and hope that the collective design of the future memorial site in the Uckermark working group will go just as well. Thank you for your support!