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Education and culture

Stumbling stone tours: In search of traces in the history of Bocholt

City of Bocholt organises guided tours with Bocholt schools

At the weekend, not only the whole of Germany but also Bocholt commemorated the victims of National Socialism. In cooperation with the Bocholt City Museum and the Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg Adult Education Centre, the Culture and Archives division organised several guided tours of the stumbling blocks and motivated schoolchildren to clean the stumbling blocks.

"Never again is now!" - With the recently published revelations by the media house CORRECTIV about the extreme right-wing meeting of high-ranking politicians, neo-Nazis and financially strong entrepreneurs with plans for "remigration", it is once again clear how important it is to confront the horrors of National Socialism on the ground and that ideologically based racism and anti-Semitism must never be repeated again.

The city of Bocholt is aware of this responsibility and on 27 January, the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism, it commemorated many of Bocholt's fates with a total of 85 pupils from year 10 at St. Georg Grammar School.

Half of the pupils were given guided tours of the stumbling stones by the head of the city museum, Lisa Resing, and cultural manager Oliver Brenn. During a 90-minute tour, they learnt when, where and in what terrible way Bocholt's Jews were harassed, humiliated, deported and subsequently murdered during the National Socialist era.

Among them was Paul Hochheimer, a former pupil of St. Georg Grammar School, who had to leave the school on 16 October 1935 due to anti-Jewish legislation. His deportation on 10 December 1941 via Münster to the Riga ghetto marked the beginning of an unimaginable odyssey of suffering until his death in the Buchenwald concentration camp on 19 April 1945, where he died eight days after the camp was liberated by US troops due to the privations of imprisonment.

The second half of the pupils learned more about the history of the Bocholt city forest camp from the guide Dr Werner Loock, who works at the Bocholt City Museum. Loock reported on the origins of the site as a racecourse and why it was used to house the so-called Austrian Legion. In particular, however, he talked about the fate of thousands of prisoners of war who were imprisoned on the site of today's local recreation area under adverse conditions and who fell victim to this imprisonment in their thousands.

After the guided tours, the pupils cleaned the stumbling blocks laid in Bocholt and helped to ensure that the fates of Bocholt's murdered Jews remain visible throughout the current year.

On 27 January itself, 20 participants took part in the "Alternative City Tour" organised by the Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg Adult Education Centre. Culture manager Oliver Brenn told the interested participants about the fate of Bocholt's Jews during the National Socialists' reign of terror, following on from the guided tour for pupils from St Georg Grammar School.





Stumbling blocks
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