

The First Commemorative Ceremonies

In the early post-war years, the commemorative ceremonies in Ohlsdorf cemetery, where many victims of the Nazi regime are buried, were jointly organised by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, its political parties, and the local survivors' associations. An urn holding the ashes of an unidentified prisoner from Buchenwald formed the focal point of the very first such ceremony. This urn was later interred at the central "Memorial to the Resistance Fighters and Victims of National-Socialist Persecution".

At the inauguration of this memorial in 1949, the Cold War made itself clearly felt: the Hamburg Senate refused to hold a joint ceremony with the Communistdominated "Association of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime" (VVN) and brought its inauguration ceremony forward to 3 May. On May 8, the VVN held its own ceremony on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Germany's liberation.