

On A Trip To Mauthausen With Jan Langos



In this photo I'm with Jan Langos, who also took part in one of our trips to Mauthausen. This photograph is from the late 1990s.

Each year, we organize a bus trip to the Mauthausen concentration camp; the participants are former prisoners, their family members and sympathizers, but recently we've been taking students and history teachers, where I show them right on the spot, as a former prisoner, what concentrations camps were all about. I got this idea because various tours of Auschwitz and I don't know what else are put on. And once I was talking to a friend of mine, the poor guy died recently, Colonel Oto Michalec was his name. He'd been there too, and he said to me: "Oto, why don't we also put together a but tour to Mauthausen, where we'll show people right on the spot, what was there, how it was?" At first we had problems, but the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities paid for the bus. In the morning, at 6:00 p.m., we left for Mauthausen and in the afternoon, around two or three, back to Bratislava. Then I promoted the whole thing, and I took out an ad in a newspaper named Bojovník [Fighter] published by the Slovak Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters. I got people to sign up, and now we regularly go to Mauthausen in May, on the anniversary of the liberation.

We, the Slovak Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters, used to have a very good relationship with the Communists. Now, when the government is oriented towards the right, and groups itself mostly with rightists, that relationship is not as ideal [during 1998 – 2006 (thus also during the time of this interview), a right-wing government was in power in Slovakia. After the 2006 parliamentary elections, the situation changed. Currently, leftists have a parliamentary majority in the government of the Slovak Republic – Editor's note]. I attend all sorts of receptions – Chinese, Austrian, German. I meet our ministers there, we say hello, exchange a few words, but that's all. I was always oriented towards the left, and don't see it as being very rosy right now. Now I've for example found out, Janek Langos is a friend of mine, and he told me that they've got two thousand names of former Aryanizers [Aryanization: the transfer of Jewish stores, businesses, companies, etc. to the ownership of another, non-Jewish person – the Aryanizer – Editor's note]. And I said: "Janek, but most of these people aren't alive anymore." "That doesn't matter, their children and

grandchildren should know that their parents and grandparents Aryanized Jewish property." And that's supposed to be normally published like the StB records. I'm assuming it'll be quite unpleasant for the children and grandchildren, when they find out that their grandfather Aryanized Jewish property. I wouldn't publish it. But I don't have any influence over it. It'll just cause useless friction again.