



# BUNDESPRÄSIDENTIALAMT

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**Federal President Christian Wulff  
at the memorial ceremony for Noach Flug  
on 6 September 2011  
in Berlin**

We are gathered here today to remember Noach Flug, truly one of the world's great men. Noach Flug suffered unspeakable horrors and achieved wonderful things. He suffered terribly at the hand of Germans, and yet he was one of the first to extend the hand of reconciliation to us. He had every reason to be bitter, but he enriched us with his warmth, his humour and his joy in life.

I last met him during my visit to Jerusalem. I too was profoundly impressed by his kind and generous personality. His wife, Dorota Flug, who unfortunately cannot be with us today, was his devoted partner and constant support ever since they were together in the ghetto in Lodz. I know that they were bound together by a deep attachment and so my profoundest sympathies go to Mrs Flug. But my thoughts are also with the family, represented here today by Noach's grandson, Mr Boaz Levin, as well as with all his friends and associates.

Speaking in this very place just a year ago, at the ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future", Noach Flug gave us an insight into the shocking story of his life. When he was 14 years old he was forcibly removed from his home to the Lodz ghetto. There he became part of the resistance against the Nazi terror. In 1944 he was deported to Auschwitz and then, when the concentration camp was evacuated, he was forced to join the death march. After more than five years of unimaginable martyrdom, he was finally liberated from Mauthausen-Ebensee concentration camp. At last year's ceremony, Noach Flug said, looking back, "I was 20 years old and weighed 32 kilos. When I returned to Lodz my whole family, more than 100 people including relatives, was dead."

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Keeping alive the memory of the victims of the Shoah, speaking up for the survivors and working towards understanding between Jews and Gentiles, between Israel and Germany – that was Noach Flug's life's work. We bow our heads in respect for him and his extraordinary achievements.

"Memory," he said in his remarkable, oft-quoted speech here last year, "is like water: it is essential to life and it finds its own way to new spaces and to different people. Memory is always concrete: it is alive with faces, and places, odours and sounds. It has no expiry date ..."

For Noach Flug, keeping the memory alive meant telling young people about the indescribable horrors of the Shoah so that this break with civilization can never be repeated. His depictions, always without even a trace of bitterness, made a profound impression on his listeners. His memory has become the memory of each and every one of us. As President of the International Auschwitz Committee, a position to which he was elected in 2002 by the survivors of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, he was especially keen to preserve the memorial and to promote the educational work of the International Youth Meeting Centre.

Noach Flug worked with a tremendous sense of justice to further the interests of the survivors. In the Jewish Claims Conference he was resolute in reminding us of our obligations to the surviving victims of the Shoah. Noach Flug's highest aim was to make it possible for them to live a dignified life. He was also a major actor in the establishment of the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future", which paid out compensation to former forced labourers.

Noach Flug is one of the fathers of German-Israeli friendship. It was a very personal signal, and certainly not something to be taken for granted, that as an Israeli diplomat he accepted a posting to Bonn in the 1980s. There his focus was invariably on our two countries' common future.

My predecessor as Federal President awarded Noach Flug the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in recognition of his wide-ranging commitment to relations between Israelis and Germans, between Jews and Gentiles.

I am very happy that the seed of German-Israeli friendship which Noach Flug sowed has germinated. Mr Levin, the best proof of this is the fact that you, his grandson, have chosen to study here in Berlin. Noach Flug was generous to our country. What a gift, and what humanity!

Noach Flug gave us Germans his trust. He was convinced that we would re-examine our past and fight anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism, today and tomorrow.

In Noach Flug Germany has lost a wonderful friend and a true paragon of humanity. His messages were truthfulness, understanding and reconciliation. Noach Flug continues to remind us that remembering the Shoah is the foundation for and a key element of our common future. His life's work and his tremendous humanity impose an obligation on us. We will continue along the course he set out on. Noach Flug, thank you.