

Ernst Toller in Niederschönenfeld Prison (1919-24)

Abstract

In 1919 playwright Ernst Toller (1893-1939) was sentenced to five years in prison for his role in the Bavarian Soviet Republic [*Bayerische Räterepublik*]. While in prison he wrote many of the works that would establish his literary reputation. Several of his plays were premiered while he was still in prison, most famously, “The Machine Wreckers” [*Die Maschinenstürmer*], which opened days after the murder of Walter Rathenau and turned into a political demonstration against enemies of the Republic. Toller aspired to what he called a “revolutionary dramatic and epic art.” His work was strident, confrontational and deliberately offensive. After his release from prison, he was expelled from Bavaria and went to Berlin. Since he was both a socialist and Jewish, he was forced to emigrate when the Nazis came to power. He committed suicide in a New York City hotel in May 1939.

Source



Source: Toller in the Nieder-Schönfeld fortress prison 1919 - 1924.

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