



In remembrance of the forced laborers of KZ-satellite camp Geislingen a Star of David is assembled with candles in front of WMF gate 1 after the silent march. More than 600 participants walked the way of these women silently. More pictures at www.geislinger-zeitung.de and on page 20 picture: Markus Sontheimer

[link to picture gallery of march and function at Jahnhalle Friday evening May 8th:
<http://www.swp.de/geislingen/bilder/cme1215924,1907677>]

under the banner of reconciliation

**touching moments during the silent march
and info-evening on occasion of
concentration camp liberation**

About 600 participants of the silent march and function in remembrance of the victims of KZ-satellite camp Geislingen experienced touching moments. It was to be a sign of reconciliation.

MICHAEL RAHNEFELD

Geislingen. With Jewish dances on the stage of Jahnhalle it was even a little cheerful at the end. However, what needed to be processed by the 600 participants of the silent march and info-event on Friday evening under the headline “remembering, honoring, reconciling” some three hours before was emotionally laden and highly touching. Many a handkerchief was pulled out in completely full Jahnhalle, which proved that at least some of the listeners brushed a tear away when approximately 25-year old granddaughter Sivan Sobol described again what her 88-year old grandmother Miryam Sobol had experienced as a young girl and Holocaust survivor in Auschwitz and in the KZ-satellite camp in Geislingen during the years of the war.

The old lady, who travelled from Israel to Geislingen together with family members as well as other relatives of former concentration camp inmates at the invitation of a work group of Evangelische Allianz [a network of protestant Christians from various denominations and communities] and the city of Geislingen for the 70-year anniversary of the end of the war, was not in a position of speaking in front of this crowd due to her emotions and impressions in the city of five valleys. Everyone could understand this. In the morning Miryam Sobel had already talked about her fate at a reception in the townhall (*we reported on Saturday*).

The presenter of the evening, Matthias Lotz, chairman of Evangelische Allianz, masterfully connected these memories, this immeasurable guilt of our ancestors and the responsibility of today’s generation in view of a humane world. He succeeded in tearing open the curtain of oblivion, and he was able to finally give words to things hitherto hidden and concealed. Nothing could be put right now and there could only be small signs of reconciliation, Lotz emphasized. Together with the victims he promoted seeking unity in humanity for the days to come. Chani Rieger, Miryam Sobel’s daughter, also called on a society “with positive forces”. The 600 listeners gave standing ovations for the guests from Israel.

(box: GZ-topic: end of war)

At the beginning of the event senior mayor Frank Dehmer had extended a warm welcome to the guests and thanked the organizers in the name of the city. Remembering was a form of encounter, said Dehmer quoting the Lebanese-American poet Kahlil Gibran. He symbolically bowed to Miryam Sobel because she dared to encounter the past. “This also helps us to keep the memory alive”, said Dehmer. Mrs Sobel gave the inmate’s number 20.572 a face and a name, as with all the other humans who are behind the now known 813 names of women and girls who were imprisoned in Geislingen. 120 names of victims were read aloud before and during the silent march, the participants carried clearly visible name tags as well as small candles in glasses which were put on a Star of David in front of gate 1 of WMF Geislingen. At that time at 6 pm the deep bells of the Geislingen churches rang. However, in the area of WMF the sound of the bells was hardly audible.

Likewise the sound of Shofars - wind instruments made of ram’s horn, which are sounded on Jewish festivals, was submerged. They gave the starting signal for the silent march shortly after 5.30 pm at the city’s builder’s yard (Robert-Bosch-Straße) - the camp was once located in the immediate vicinity. The silent march moved via Talgraben, Werk- and Eberhardstraße towards WMF. Old Geislinger inhabitants were aware of the fact that this 2 km route was not the exact way the women once took. Wearing wooden shoes a group of students from Michelberg-Gymnasium brought back memories of the clattering sound the forced laborers had made on their way back then. At Jahnhalle the students then recited dialogs they thought the agonized victims might have had. The Rätsche-Choir participated by singing Jewish songs. o page 20 [that is GZ - Extra, the picture page]

[Rätsche is a group of people committed to organizing cultural events, concerts, theaters and such and also a series of events in connection with putting up a stumbling block - though not a small block, but rather a threshold, close to WMF in remembrance of the forced laborer women in Geislingen on June 2nd at 10 am. This is a link where you can see the stumbling threshold:

<http://raetsche.com/programm/literatur-zum-kz-aussenlager-geislingen/>

They also organized a guided tour of the Jewish Museum in Jebenhausen near Göppingen, not far from here, where there was quite a Jewish community before the war. This is the link to the very detailed and informative website of Jewish life in that area, and I am glad to say that it is also available in English:

<http://www.edjewnet.de>]

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text in the center:

Shalom! Geislingen appreciates you. With an exceptional celebration Geislingen has honored the inmates of the KZ satellite camp 70 years after the end of the war. And not only Miryam Sobol and her granddaughter Sivan (right) extended their hands in reconciliation to the Geislingen people. Together with other persons concerned and their descendants the curtain of silence and forgetting was torn open. For this Geislingen says Thank You.

[captions of the pictures, from left to right and top to bottom:]

The front of the silent march passes Nel Mezzo [a shopping mall] and enters Eberhardstraße.

The victims have names. 120 of them were written on plates.

The “different Geislingen” in form of illustrated books for the Israeli guests.

At the close of the event people joined in dancing.

Students read dialogs.

High-school students make the clattering sound of wooden shoes 70 years later.

presenter Matthias Lotz

In remembrance of the women a big Star of David in front of WMF

Malka Zissmann, daughter of an inmate.

Touching moments in full to overflowing Jahnhalle Friday night.