

A life full circle. Miryam Sobel deceased in Israel.

GEISLINGEN/STEIGE: Miryam Sobel was a prisoner in the KZ-satellite camp in Geislingen. She visited the city on occasion of the memorial march on May 8th. Now she has passed away 88 years old.



Miryam Sobel with her granddaughter Sivan at the memorial function in Geislingen. Picture: Markus Sontheimer

Shortly before her death, Miryam Sobel took a stand against oblivion, she lit a beacon of reconciliation. Five weeks ago the 88-year old Holocaust survivor had travelled from Israel to Geislingen and took part in the memorial march and the reception for former Geislingen KZ-satellite camp inmates on May 8th. Last Friday she died in Israel.

When she was 17 years old, Miryam Sobel, then called Maria Kaufmann, and her mother, Regina Kaufmann, were transported from Auschwitz to the KZ-satellite camp in Geislingen. Every day the two women had to work for twelve hours as forced laborers at WMF, after they had to fall in for roll-call inspection for hours on end in clogs regardless of the weather.

The visit at the beginning of May was made possible by the initiative of Evangelische Allianz and the personal commitment of Rosemarie and Hermann Schneider, who had researched in Israel and had found Miryam Sobel there. Together with eight other family members Miryam Sobel undertook the long journey to go along the silent memorial march from Robert-Bosch-Straße up to WMF Gate 1. As a matter of fact she had wanted to talk about her experiences at the following meeting. "But her emotions were too turbulent", said Rosemarie Schneider. Instead, her son Haim Sobol and her daughter Chani Rieger spoke. At last 25-year old granddaughter Sivan Sobol gave a powerful speech. Now she was standing there, where her Granny had worked and suffered 70 years ago. However, her grandmother had not only told her about her suffering. She also remembered the work commander who had slipped her a sandwich and an Aspirin every day when she, having high fever, slogged along to work in order not to be classified as unable to work and murdered.

Rosemarie Schneider, who accompanied Miryam Sobel during her stay in Geislingen, said: "After 70 years she faced the memories of hurtful and also a few positive experiences again. Accompanied by her descendants she was able to face her traumas." She had been overwhelmed by the fact that so many people had walked the "march of agony" together with her one more time: this time not with a gun in her back but with dignity and honor.

Last Thursday Miryam Sobel died as a result of a fall. Her son Haim had informed the Schneider family: "We are happy that she was able to succeed to make the journey to Geislingen and to close the cycle of her life history. She left two children and six grandchildren."