

Senior Mayor Dehmer's speech on the occasion of laying the stumbling threshold
in front of WMF on Sept. 15th, 2015

Dear members of the city council, representatives of Raetschenmuehle, Mister Demnig, representatives of the churches and schools and the WMF group and, of course, all the interested citizens of our city and the vicinity.

I greet you on the occasion of today's laying of a stumbling threshold here at our city in Geislingen.

Not long ago many of us were standing here in front of WMF's gate 1 and lighting candles in memory of the Jewish forced laborers.

In the context of the silent march a former inmate of the Geislingen camp visited us: MIRYAM SOBEL.

She came here for the occasion together with her family and the descendants of another inmate. Unfortunately, Mrs Sobel has passed away in the meantime and in a letter her relatives made it known to me that they felt Miryam Sobel has made her peace with this journey and that she saw that her concern **never to forget** is being lived in Geislingen.

Today's laying of the stumbling threshold is - 70 years after the end of the war - part of this work against forgetting. I see this as the task of this and the future generations.

I thank the active participants from culture workshop Raetsche, the churches and other groups very much for their involvement in this cause.

Many events inform against forgetting this year and memorials are set up. Like this stumbling threshold here.

Another memorial will be erected close to this place here by WMF group. Right now a memorial is under construction on which all the names of the inmates of the Geislingen camp that we now know will be engraved. In a few days the makeshift solution will be replaced by the final plaque.

Beyond the stumbling threshold, which will stir up passers-by and remind them of this part of our history, the women will have their names

permanently returned to them, which had been hidden behind mere numbers for decades. I would particularly like to thank WMF group for this.

I would also like to greet the descendants from Dr Ferdinand Bausback, who have come here today especially to witness the laying of the stumbling threshold. He was WMF's CEO from 1942 to 1945, at the time the forced laborers had to work for WMF. This, too, is a sign against forgetting. Or, like Mrs Sobel said: The descendant generations are not guilty, but they carry the task to keep the memories alive. I rate today's visit of Dr Bausback's descendants exactly like this and I thank you for your coming.

I would also like to thank the staff of the city council, who helped to prepare this event today and to coordinate it with those responsible at Raetsche. Smaller disagreements have been dealt with pragmatically, I think.

Of course, it must not be forgotten to thank all those who have helped to finance the stumbling threshold with their donations. This project, as well as all the other events against forgetting taking place this year, cannot not be implemented for nothing. More donations are very welcome.

My last "thank you" is to the artist Mr Gunter Demnig. The stumbling stones were his idea. Personally, I like the ambiguity of the word stumbling stone in this context. The effect of the great number of stumbling stones is overwhelming. Again and again you come across these stumbling stones in cities. Sometimes there are just a few - in other places quite many in one place. And each stone, each threshold stands for human fates, tragedies, injustice that has been committed in our country and hopefully should never again happen here or anywhere else in the world. So I explicitly say to you Mr Demnig: Thank you very much for this idea of the stumbling stones and thank you very much that you have come to Geislingen today to lay yet another symbol AGAINST FORGETTING.