

Geislingen/Toronto.

Helena Lenka Weksberg spent some of the darkest years of her life in Geislingen: Dragged off by the Nazis, she was forced to do forced labor for WMF in a concentration camp in 1944. In 2015, the Canadian, then 89 years old, visited the Fünftalerstadt and spoke about this time in the Kapellmühle. Now, at the age of 96, she passed away in Toronto on March 10. Matthias Lotz, pastor of the Baptist Church in Geislingen and member of the initiative "remembering - honoring - reconciling", received this information from the family members.

Lenka Weksberg, née Lebovic, came from Teresva in the Carpathians. With her parents and five siblings, she was deported by the Nazis to the Mateszalka ghetto in Hungary and interned at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in 1944. Her mother and little brother were murdered the day they arrived. After three months, she and her four sisters were ordered to perform forced labor in the Geislingen concentration satellite camp of Natzweiler-Struthof. They were then taken to Dachau concentration camp and liberated at the end of the war.

Lenka Weksberg said on her visit in Geislingen in 2015 that she was grateful to the WMF for requesting the forced laborers, "otherwise we would have had to face death in Birkenau." Nevertheless, she experienced hunger, cold and the brutality of the guards in Geislingen. She remembers that on the daily walk from the camp at Seebach to WMF, women sometimes threw apples to them. But the guards said: "Whoever picks one up will be shot."

Lenka Weksberg's report in the Kapellmühlssaal was as moving as it was impressive: she had come back with a name, not a number, she explained, as a proud Jew, citizen of Israel and Canada. The unimaginable remains unimaginable, she said - speaking for those who have been silenced forever. "We survivors are passing the torch to the younger generation. My past must never again become their future."