

Upholding the hope of freedom

Around 50 people gathered at the "Heiligenäcker" cemetery in Geislingen on Holocaust Remembrance Day on Saturday to commemorate the victims of Nazi barbarism.

People came together at the "Maltreated Head" memorial to remember the unthinkable and to remind future generations of the atrocities mankind is capable of.

The song "Friling", composed in the ghetto by Abraham Brudno and written by Shmerke Ksczerginski, opened the commemorative event by Geislingen's mayor Frank Dehmer.

Dehmer chose this song because it shows how music can encourage people even in desperate situations and nurture hope for freedom. "For many, this hope has unfortunately not been fulfilled," said the town hall chief, who on the other hand was pleased that more people, including younger people, had decided to take part in the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony this year.

Some of the young faces came from the "I'll tell your story" project at Geislingen's Michelberg High School. Both German courses from year eleven had dealt with the Geislingen concentration camp and prepared texts. Interviews with survivors and their descendants are also planned. Radio programs are created about this. "We don't just want this to stay in the school, we want it to go beyond that," says teacher Anne Käßbohrer.

Especially in these times, she said, it is important to provide information, including about the Nazi past in Geislingen.

Two students from the project, Amelie Mietz and Debora Schneider, recited the story of Hanna Mann, who was deported from her home to the Geislingen subcamp at the age of 17. "She experienced horrors there," Amelie Mietz recited. Nevertheless: "In April 1945, her dream of freedom came true," reported Debora Schneider. She herself had met Hanna Mann in Israel during her lifetime. A moving experience, as the 16-year-old and her mother described.

In memory of the victims of the Holocaust, Mietz, Schneider and their classmates place eight candles around a globe on the floor. And when the light reflects off the sphere, it reflects the rays a hundredfold, so that these candles represent 800 human lives, said teacher Käßbohrer. The event was concluded by former SPD city councilor Hansjürgen Gölz with the poem "The Butterfly" by Pavel Friedman, who was murdered in the Auschwitz concentration camp.