

Newsletter

Dahn, 03.12.2023

Dear members, friends and supporters,

With this "Advent letter", we would like to turn to you at the end of an eventful year and give you a brief review of this year - and explain once again why we founded the "Landjudentum im Wasgau" association and what our goals are.

Our association "Landjudentum im Wasgau" is, in short, an association against forgetting.

Keeping alive and remembering those who were persecuted and murdered was the driving force behind the founding of the association. It is our responsibility to ensure that this history and its legacy are not forgotten. True to our slogan "Remember - Preserve - Shape", our aim is to reappraise regional Jewish life, which was once an integral and formative part of our society in the Wasgau, through dedicated commemorative work and to make it tangible for future generations.

Otmar Weber's years of intensive and meticulous work laid the foundations for our association. Otmar Weber has continued to tell the story of the Jews in Dahn, Busenberg, Erlenbach and Vorderweidenthal by analysing countless sources and interviewing contemporary witnesses. In this way, data and backgrounds were compiled and the path of these people and their fates up to the present day was recorded with all these facts.

This path is by no means straightforward. It has bends, steeper stretches and troughs.

When a group of interested parties came together for the first meeting in the hall of the Old Town Hall in Dahn in autumn 2022, it was clear to everyone that we wanted to continue on this path together, although the intermediate stage to founding the company in the summer of 2023 was "a long way off". We have now mastered this part, but that's not all. In extremely successful cooperation with the city of Dahn, the festival week for the 150th anniversary of the synagogue in Dahn was celebrated at the beginning of July this year with a total of over 200 people. We have also set up our office and current meeting center on the second floor of the Old Dahn Town Hall and have already gained over 50 members.

In our opinion: quite motivating successes for such an important topic and such a young club.

However, this is just the beginning. The major goal of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, the district of Pirmasens, the municipality of Dahn and especially the city of Dahn and our association is to establish a Jewish cultural and meeting center in the Old Dahn Synagogue. The synagogue in Dahn is one of the few in Germany and the only one in our region that did not fall victim to the National Socialists' rampage of destruction. In addition, we want to make Jewish history come alive at various places - such as the Jewish cemetery in Busenberg, buildings or stumbling blocks in the places mentioned above - and thus counteract forgetting.

In addition to remembering and preserving, “creating” is also important to us. This means that we want to pass on the knowledge about the history of Judaism in Wasgau and make it tangible and accessible to all interested parties by organizing events such as readings or guided tours and other formats. We particularly have young people in mind. Because they are the ones we need to carry remembering and preservation into the future or to ensure it in the future. This also means that we want to visit the rooms or come into contact with institutions and schools where we meet these young people. This is also part of creating memory work. To show presence, to enter into conversation and to stay in conversation. Current events also show why all of this is so important.

We are horrified by Hamas' attack on Israel, the largest mass murder of Jews since the Nazis. We condemn the Hamas attack in the strongest possible terms, because the State of Israel has an irrevocable right to exist. We also demand humanity towards the Palestinian population. Only mutual respect and understanding lead to reconciliation.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitic incidents are increasing dramatically in Germany. Therefore, let us confront everyone who spreads hatred and incitement against Jews. “Never again!” is now – without any ifs and buts.

Any kind of support is welcome! Anyone who wants to actively participate in this creative commemorative work can look forward to an open reception and interesting projects: for example, the design of cultural tours through Jewish places in the Wasgau, events on memorial days and for prevention, cooperation work with educational institutions and the development of a digital presence for broader exposure and Accessibility of the topic.

We – the entire board – look forward to your support and participation!

A special thank you goes to Holger Zwick: Without his support, many things would not have been possible.

We look forward to the new year with confidence and wish you and your loved ones a blessed Advent and Christmas season. Get well and stay healthy!

On behalf of the entire board and all committed colleagues

Boris Weber, 1st Chairman