

# Newsletter

Dahn, den 27.01.2024

## Dear members, friends and supporters,

with this newsletter, we would like to address you in the new year and give you a brief preview of our activities for 2024. We have chosen this date because it is the day of remembrance for the victims of National Socialism, not a day like any other.

In 1996, former German President Roman Herzog declared 27 January as the official day of remembrance for the victims of National Socialism in memory of the liberation of the Auschwitz extermination camp by the Red Army. A day of remembrance which, despite great efforts by politicians and the media, has not yet penetrated the consciousness of Germans. On this day, all victims of the National Socialist reign of terror are commemorated. These victims included Jews, political prisoners, homosexuals, Sinti and Roma, people with disabilities and many others who were persecuted because of their race, religion, sexual orientation or for political reasons.

Many places in Rhineland-Palatinate commemorate the victims of National Socialism on 27 January.

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## We, the association Landjudentum im Wasgau e. V., would like to commemorate this day in memory of Pastor Jakob Schwalb - pastor in Dahn and an early victim of National Socialism.

An early victim of Nazi terror was the Catholic priest Jakob Schwalb, who was parish priest in Dahn from 1933 to 1934. Jakob Schwalb was born on 4 August 1872 in Hettenleidelheim and died on 25 April 1934 in Mannheim.

On 1 February 1912, he became a pastor in Göllheim in the North Palatinate, where he was very active. Pastor Schwalb was very kind-hearted and generally liked and respected for his willingness to help. As pastor in Göllheim, he was elected dean and was awarded the honorary title of „Spiritual Councillor“ for his services.

Like many Catholic clergymen, Father Schwalb was not only a staunch opponent of National Socialist ideology even before 1933, but also courageously fought against it. When Father Schwalb founded a boys' school in Göllheim together with the young teacher Hans Planck from Kaiserslautern, the National Socialists had had enough. They saw the founding of the Catholic association as a provocation and used it as an opportunity to take action against the priest and teacher. The priest was accused of having an „anti-patriotic attitude“. During the Corpus Christi procession in 1933, the National Socialists staged such a riot because of the Catholic association flags that the procession had to be cancelled. The agitation against Pastor Schwalb intensified and reached its climax on the evening of 23 June 1933. At around 9.30 pm, the SA and NS and an angry

mob stormed the vicarage. The fanatical mob not only destroyed the vicarage, but also moved in front of the sisters' house, where young teacher Planck lived, to continue their work of destruction. Pastor and teacher were severely abused, taken into protective custody and taken to Kirchheimbolanden prison. While Pastor Schwalb and teacher Planck were taken away, the crowd loudly mocked the abused men as „traitors to the fatherland“, chanted „hang them“ and sang „Now is the day of revenge“. On Sunday 26 June 1933, the two were released from protective custody. Pastor Jakob Schwalb did not return to Göllheim, but went to his home parish of Hettenleidelheim.

Pastor Schwalb was a physically and mentally broken man after these riots. With effect from 1 November 1933, he was appointed parish priest in the parish of St. Laurentius in Dahn in order to take him out of the „firing line“ of the National Socialists in Göllheim. As a seriously ill man, Father Schwalb was barely able to fulfil his priestly duties in Dahn. According to a contemporary witness, Pastor Schwalb, who came from a wealthy family of Hettenleidelheim factory owners, made generous donations to the church in Dahn.

On 25 April 1934, a few months after taking over the parish of Dahn, Pastor Jakob Schwalb died in the Theresienkrankenhaus hospital in Mannheim as a result of the abuse he had suffered. He is buried in the family grave in his home town



*Jakob Schwalb, 1906.*

of Hettenleidelheim. There is a reference to his work as a priest in Dahn on the priest's grave in the Dahn cemetery.

Jakob Schwalb is not an isolated case. From 1933 onwards, there were systematic attacks on Catholic clergy in the Palatinate.

In 2006, a stumbling block was placed in front of Jakob Schwalb's rectory in Dahn. This is intended to keep his courageous stand against injustice and violence alive for future generations.

*(amended version of an article by Otmar Weber from 26 January 2012 in the Rheinpfalz)*

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## Outlook 2024

- **Members' meeting:** we are planning this for the 2nd quarter and will inform you in good time.
- **Classical concert:** probably in autumn, again with comprehensive information.
- **Circular trails in Dahn and the surrounding area:** a circular trail of Jewish culture in Dahn with QR codes and corresponding texts and a Jewish cultural trail to the Jewish sites in Dahn, Busenberg, etc..
- **Office in the old town hall:** We have set up an office in the old town hall (2nd floor) and will open it during events organised by the Dahn advertising group.

**Any kind of support is very welcome! Anyone who wants to actively participate in this commemorative work can look forward to an open welcome and interesting projects. In addition to those mentioned in the outlook, we are also planning events to mark important dates, such as 1 September Sunday, the European Day of Jewish Culture.**

*On behalf of the entire Board of Directors and all our committed colleagues, we look forward to an eventful year and your personal commitment to our association.*

*Boris Weber, 1st Chairman*