

August 2023

Ladies and gentlemen,
dear friends of Neuwied,

as every year, we send you and your families our warmest greetings and best wishes for the High Holidays 5783/84: for the New Year's Day Rosh HaShanah on September 16-17, for the Yom Kippur Festival on September 24 and 25, and for Sukkoth from September 29 to October 6. We wish you blessed holidays!

We would like to give you a small insight and a review of the work of our German-Israeli Circle of Friends in the past year.

While last year was still under Corona conditions, life in Germany has largely returned to normal now that all Corona regulations have been lifted. Nevertheless, it can be said that much has changed socially under the impression of the last three pandemic years.

During the pandemic, personal contacts were reduced to a minimum and many people withdrew more and more into private life, and now many people seem to find it difficult to return to public life. Of course, there are also those who were only waiting for the end of the Corona regulations and who are now enjoying their lives again. Overall, however, it can be said that society in Germany and life in our country have changed profoundly under the impact of the pandemic.

The continuing, terrible Ukraine war is a great strain for people in Germany. The balancing act between, on the one hand, the military support of the Ukrainians by the NATO states and, on the other hand, the repeatedly demanded peace negotiations is difficult and currently hardly conceivable.

In the following I would like to briefly outline which events the German-Israeli Circle of Friends in Neuwied has offered in the past year.

The focus of the events was a series of exhibitions and lectures on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of Janusz Korczak's death. Korczak, a Jewish Polish physician who was also a writer and educator, is one of the exceptional figures in educational practice. He was a lecturer in social pedagogy and an orphanage director in Warsaw and became a pioneer of children's rights and of democratic structures for adolescents. He put his entire life, from the Warsaw Ghetto to the gas chambers of Treblinka, at the service of children and young people. In August 1942 he and the children, whom he accompanied to the death camp, died in the gas chambers.

From Nov. 7-25, the German-Israeli Circle of Friends presented an exhibition on the biographical and pedagogical key data on the life and work of Janosz Korczak under the theme "The View into the Open". The opening of this exhibition was held by the Honorary President of the German Janusz Korczak Society Siegfried Steiger.

In his lecture on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition, the Munich theologian and Germanist Steiger outlined Korczak's life, but also showed how Korczak conveyed his central pedagogical ideas in an extensive narrative and poetic work.

The exhibition concluded with a musical reading by the Experimental Theater Günzburg. The reading focused on the book "Take the book in your hand" by the Israeli artist Itzchak Belfer, one of the last contemporary witnesses and helpers of Janusz Korczak from the orphanage in Warsaw.

The entire series of events attracted many visitors; school classes also came to the exhibition.

On Sunday, November 6, we celebrated, as every year, an ecumenical memorial service in remembrance of November 9, 1938. The service, which was held under the theme "When the stones cried", was attended by the Catholic dean Peter Dörrenbächer, the pastor of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine Annerose Klingner-Huss, and Dr. Jürgen Ries as the former cantor of the Jewish community Neuwied.

On November 9 itself, the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust took place again in Synagogengasse. Restrictions, as in pandemic times, no longer existed, so that the commemoration could take place in the traditional framework, and again numerous students could also participate.

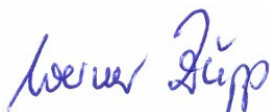
We are grateful for our short visit to Drom Hasharon in September last year. I accompanied Lord Mayor Jan Einig on his first trip to Israel and was happy to be able to accompany him to Drom Hasharon as well. The two days we were guests there were very intense. For our Lord Mayor a short impressive trip, during which he also once again invited Mrs. Oshrat Goni Gonem to visit Neuwied. We hope that we will be able to welcome a delegation in Neuwied in 2024. This fall, the student exchange between the Ami Assaf School in Beit Berl and the Johanna Löwenherz School in Neuwied, which had come to a standstill in the last 3 years due to the pandemic, will be taken up again.

The interest in the website about the Stolpersteine in Neuwied, which was established nine years ago, is still unbroken. The website itself is constantly updated and new information is added as results of the research activity.

It is our wish that this report gives you a small insight into the work of our Circle of Friends. We would be very pleased to hear from you. You can also contact us through our websites www.dif-neuwied.de and www.stolpersteine-neuwied.de, where you can also keep up to date with our activities.

We wish you all the very best, peace and well-being for you personally and your families, for Israel, the whole region and the world. Our thoughts are with you. Shalom!

With warm greetings from Neuwied, also from Dieter Melsbach and Rolf Wüst,



Werner Zupp, Pastor ret.
(Chairman)



Walter Sefrin
(Deputy Chairman)