

11th COMMEMORATIVE EXCURSION TO ENGERAU IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR JONNY MOSER

Sunday April 1st 2012

Departure **7.45 a.m.** (daylight saving time!)

Return **6 p.m.**

Meeting point: 1020 Vienna, Praterstern 1

(in front of the *Jüdisches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung*)

Metro stop "Praterstern", exit: Heinestraße

Contribution: EUR 12,-

Registration by 20 March 2011:

Organizer:

Claudia Kuretsidis-Haider PhD

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Information and literature:

<http://www.nachkriegsjustiz.at/service/archiv/GedenkfahrtEngerauBericht2011.pdf>

http://www.nachkriegsjustiz.at/ns_verbrechen/juden/Kuretsidis_Diss.php



Itinerary

9.30 a.m.:

Ceremony at the memorial for the Hungarian-Jewish slave laborers at the cemetery in Petržalka (Engerau) / Bratislava, Nábřežna

Program:

Adresses of welcome: H.E. **Josef Markus Wuketich** PhD (Austrian Ambassador in Bratislava), H.E. **Alexander Ben-Zvi** (Israeli Ambassador in Bratislava), **Reinhard Wiemer** (representative of the German embassy in Bratislava), **Viera Polakovičová** PhD (Director of the Slovak Institut in Vienna, counsellor of the Slovak embassy in Vienna)

Speeches: **Ivan A. Petranský** PhD (Chair of the board of the directors of the Nation's Memory Institute Bratislava), **Peter Salner** PhD (President of the Jewish Community in Bratislava)

Historical introduction: **Eleonore Lappin-Eppel** PhD (Austrian Academy of Science, Vienna), **Claudia Kuretsidis-Haider** PhD

11 a.m.:

Journey to sites of the former Engerau camp in Petržalka

Historical background::

Claudia Kuretsidis-Haider PhD

1 p.m.:

Ceremony at the Wolfsthal-memorial for Hungarian-Jewish slave laborers who were murdered during the "death march" from Petržalka (Engerau) / Bratislava to Bad Deutsch-Altenburg

Program:

Adress of welcome: Mayor **Gerhard Schödinger**

Speech: **Claudia Kuretsidis-Haider** PhD

Lunch Break

3 p.m.:

Ceremony in memoriam Professor Jonny Moser in Parndorf, Skupa-Büro, Hauptstraße 104 (in cooperation with Kultur Parndorf)

<http://www.skupa.at/home/index.php/events/details/28-jonny-moser-gedenkveranstaltung>

Program:

Welcome adress: Mayor Ing. **Wolfgang Kovacs**

Statements: **Eleonore Lappin-Eppel** PhD: Jonny Moser – Biographic notes; **Winfried R. Garscha** PhD (Austrian Research Center for Post-War Trials): Jonny Moser and the quantity of the victims of the Holocaust

Reading from the publication Buch Jonny Moser, Waltenbergs Laufbursche: Jugenderinnerungen 1938-1945, Vienna 2006 (**Christian Spatzek**, actor)

Music performance: **Tamburizza Orchestra "Ivan Vuković"**, Parndorf



4.30 p.m.:

Commemoration ceremony at the Bruck/Leitha cemetery for 155 murdered Hungarian-Jewish slave laborers

Program:

Historical introduction: **Petra Weiß** PhD (City Archives of Bruck/Leitha)

Speech: **Irmtraut Karlsson** PhD

Return to Vienna

Professor Jonny Moser



Jonny Moser was born on December 10, 1925 in Parndorf (Burgenland). There, his parents were owners of a general store. When the Nazis deported the Jews from Parndorf to Hungary in April 1938, the then 13-years old Jonny Moser and his family were on the run for seven years: first to Vienna, afterwards to Budapest. In summer 1944 he was set free from an internment

camp all of a sudden. In Budapest Moser met the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who rescued thousands of Jews from execution and deportation by issuing Swedish safe-conduct papers as well as by housing more than 15.000 people in shelters. As Wallenberg's assistant Jonny Moser survived the holocaust in Hungary.

Jonny Moser was one of the foundation members of the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (*DÖW*). In 1966 he presented a pioneering statistical computation of the figure of the more than 65.000 Austrian victims of the Holocaust. This was corroborated by the scientific *DÖW*-project "Registration by Name: Austrian Victims of the Holocaust" (*Namentliche Erfassung der österreichischen Holocaustopfer*) in the noughties.

Jonny Moser died on July 23 2011 at the age of 86. During eleven years he enhanced the commemorative excursion to Engerau with both commitment and interest at all times. It is a great loss to all of us that he is not with us anymore.

Historical background

When the 2nd WW seemed more and more hopeless, also to the German leaders, they ordered to build a so-called Imperial Defence Line (or South-East-Wall) in the second half of the year 1944, which was meant to enable the Wehrmacht to defend the eastern frontier of the German Reich against the Soviet Army. Along the eastern frontier, of which was then the German Reich (and thus Austria of today), the South-East-Wall reached from Bratislava to the southern border of Styria. Members of the local civilian population as well as members of the Hitler Youth and the *Volkssturm*, foreign labourers and Hungarian Jews were recruited for forced labour. The Jews were put up in forced labour camps. All in all there were twenty such camps along the "Austrian" part of the South-East-Wall. Engerau was the most northern one. Engerau (today Petržalka) is a district of the Slovakian capital Bratislava.

The Engerau-camp

The Jews were put up in barracks but also in farms, barns, stables, and cellars, very close to the resident population. The working and living conditions were quite similar to a concentration camp. Like in other camps along the South-East-Wall the Jews were guarded by members of the SA (most of them from Vienna) as well as by so-called political leaders (officials of the Nazis). The SA guards were subordinated to Edmund Kratky, who was later replaced by Erwin Falkner.

The "deathmarch"

When the Soviet Army approached Engerau in March 1945 the Nazis ordered the transfer of the prisoners to the concentration camp of Mauthausen. They were actually supposed to be transported by train, but due to the confusion at the end of the war that was not possible. That was the reason why the captives were forced to walk on a footmarch from

Engerau via Wolfsthal and Hainburg to Bad Deutsch-Altenburg (which was felt by the victims to be a kind of "hunt of rabbits", in German *Hasenjagd*). Numerous prisoners, however, were not able to march due to the prevailing conditions in the camp, so they were shot by a special commando on 29 March 1945. In the following night, the majority of the prisoners left the Engerau camp escorted by SA-guards and political leaders. On their way to Bad Deutsch-Altenburg approximately 100 prisoners were shot, killed or died because of exhaustion. The survivors of the evacuation transport were shipped in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg heading for the concentration camp of Mauthausen. When they arrived there after a week, many of them had died either because of starvation or being shot by the guards. A few days later – before the liberation of the concentration camp of Mauthausen–, those, who had not been gassed the days before, were sent on another footmarch to the Gunskirchen camp near Wels in Upper Austria, where the American troops liberated them on 4 May 1945.

The Engerau-trials

Only ten days later, one of the SA-guards reported the horrible crimes committed in Engerau and the following "death-march" to the Austrian police. On 22 June 1945 prosecution in Vienna was called in and started its investigations. At several on-the-spot investigations five mass graves were found in Engerau containing 512 male bodies and they were buried at the Petržalka cemetery. With his announcement the SA-guard caused the most extensive court case in the history of the Austrian people's courts (which has the duty to charge Nazi crimes) concerning the number of the trials (6), the number of the convicted (20; out of them 9 death sentences, one life-imprisonment) and the period of time it lasted (from 1945 to 1954). All in all investigations against 72 alleged perpetrators were conducted until the 1990ies.