

25.10.2023

The "Monument of the Grey Buses" permanently in Hadamar

HADAMAR - The "Monument of the Grey Buses" of the Centre for Psychiatry (ZfP) Suedwuerttemberg, which commemorates the victims of Nazi "euthanasia", is now, as a cast, a permanent part of the culture of remembrance in Hesse.



From May 2018 to January 2019, the mobile part of the Weissenau memorial - at that time the original - was already set up at this historic location in Hesse. A lot has happened since then. Four years of intensive work lie behind the town hall of the Hessian town of Hadamar near Limburg, behind the town council, the committed relatives of "euthanasia" victims, the memorial's sponsoring association and many supporters. On the afternoon of 18 October 2023, during the event at the town's intensely frequented "Neue Chaussee", one could feel the relief of all those involved who had worked for the permanent establishment of this memorial to the memory of the victims of "euthanasia" during the years of National Socialism in their town.

In a comprehensive act and framed by fitting musical accompaniment, the cast made in Bad Kissingen, a copy of the Weissenau monument, was handed over to the public of Hadamar. Impressive was not only the clearly visible political accompaniment by Angela Dorn, Hessian Minister of Science and Art, and Dr. Roman Poseck, Hessian Minister of Justice, who emphasised the importance of the culture of remembrance for the state and the government.

The representatives of the Hesse State Welfare Association, the “T4”-memorial in Hadamar, the aforementioned support association, the artists Dr. Horst Hoheisel and Andreas Knitz, as well as the owners of the Memorial of the Grey Buses, the ZfP Suedwuerttemberg and the city of Ravensburg, represented by Prof. Dr. Thomas Müller, were also very supportive.

One of the most impressive moments of the act of handing over the memorial in Hesse was the presentation of two biographies of "euthanasia" victims by pupils of the vocational Friedrich Dessauer School in Limburg, accompanied by their director Stefan Laux. As experts in road construction, the group had designed the newly planned site for the memorial to the grey buses in the form of a small park over the past few months.

The location at the intersection of the streets "Neue Chaussee" and "Am Bahnhof" leads directly to the site of today's Vitos Clinic Hadamar with its integrated memorial to the "T4 killing facility" Hadamar. More than 15,000 people were murdered with gas in this facility. This is also where the patients of the last transport with Weissenau patients were killed by "medical" staff on site, after the Grafeneck killing facility, on the Swabian Alb, had already ceased to function. This historical connection between Ravensburg-Weissenau and Hadamar weighs heavily and could hardly be closer.

The commitment of the town of Hadamar will culminate in a comprehensive renovation and redesign of the "Hadamar Memorial" over the next few years.

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Photos: Thomas Müller