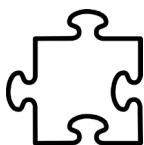




OBERWART PATH OF COMMEMORATION AND EDUCATION



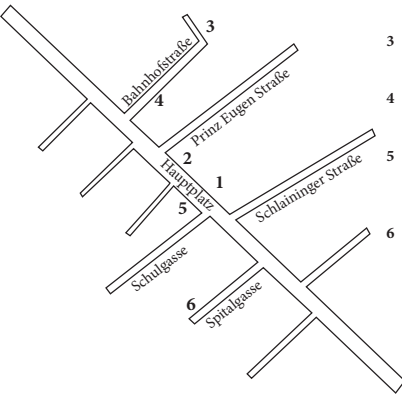
Path of Commemoration
Oberwart 2015

A Project of RE.F.U.G.I.U.S – www.refugius.at

www.gedenkweg.at

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Town Hall



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Town Hall Oberwart/Felsőőr, 1932, Postcard Collection Alexander Mohat, Oberwart

This memorial and educational path aims to commemorate Oberwart's victims of National Socialism. Each station on the path represents and tells the history of a different group of victims. These locations were and still are central public places. Today, the victims of the NS regime are brought back to memory at the very places where they were once persecuted or designated to obliteration. The plaques illustrate that a part of Oberwart's population is missing. Each plaque stands for people once belonging to Oberwart's community who were expelled from it during the NS period. Their forced migration, murder and passing into oblivion has left behind gaps that could not be filled.

The initiative's logo is the puzzle piece. The puzzle pieces symbolize at the same time that a part of the population is missing, and that history can only be approached in a fragmentary manner. This puzzle is never complete.

In memory of the Jewish population of Oberwart
District Commission Oberwart/Felsőőr (formerly Löwy's Store)



Benő Löwy's Store, 1918, Postcard Collection Alexander Mohat, Oberwart

Benő Löwy's family had their store where the District Commission stands today. After it was confiscated in 1938, the building was used for interrogations. At the end of the 19th century Oberwart had a thriving Jewish community that was destroyed in 1938. The Jewish men and women of Oberwart were deprived of their rights, dispossessed and driven away; they were forced into emigration or murdered in the Shoa. Only very few returned. The Jewish community has not been able to reconvene.



Jewish Cemetery in Oberwart/Felsőőr, 2011
 Photo: Ernst Mindler



District Commission Oberwart/Felsőőr, 2015
 Photo: Christian Ratz

In memory of the victims of National Socialism
Train station



Train Station Oberwart/Felsőőr, 1924, Postcard
Collection Alexander Mohat, Oberwart

The train station as a place of departure and deportation is also a symbol for the forceful disruption of personal circumstances. It stands for the exclusion from the community, and it stands for making people leave against their will – into exile, into prisons, into camps, into death.

Under the NS regime, men and women from Oberwart were being subjected to marginalization, humiliation, discrimination and persecution: for racist, political or religious reasons, on account of their sexuality or because they were considered ‘life unworthy of life’.



Memorial for Oberwart's Victims of
National Socialism, 2015
Photo: Christian Ratz



Train Station Oberwart/Felsőőr, 2015
Photo: Christian Ratz

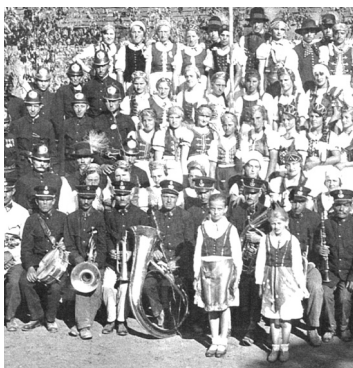
In memory of Oberwart's Romnija and Roma
*Former Police Station**



Romany settlement on the outskirts of Oberwart, 1920s
Source: Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Roma

Even before 1938, Romnija and Roma ('gypsies') had been the targets of ethical and social marginalization and racism, but in the Nazi period this escalated to the Porajmos: genocide. They were deliberately deprived of their rights, robbed, persecuted, deported and murdered. All of this was only possible through an interaction between the various authorities and the population. Only a few Oberwart Roma and Romnija could return to their homes in 1945, because most had not survived the Porajmos.

* As no photo of the former Police Station could be found before going to the press, the photo actually depicts Oberwart's Roma settlements during the interwar period.



Roma and non-Roma celebrating, 1931
Photo: Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Roma



Roma settlement on the outskirts of Oberwart,
2014, Source: Volkshochschule der
Burgenländischen Roma

In memory of Oberwart's victims of political persecution
Oberwart District Court



District Court Oberwart/Felsőőr, 1940s, Postcard Collection Alexander Mohat, Oberwart

The building where justice is being dispensed again today witnessed many unjust verdicts in NS times. After the NS regime came to power in 1938, mostly Communist, Social Democratic and Christian Social opponents got arrested; sometimes mistreated, put on trial and/or sent to labor camps or concentration camps. Some people were active in the resistance; several of them were executed for it.

Three politically persecuted residents of Oberwart were sentenced to death and executed:

Samuel Brunner, on Dec.10,1942
Alexander Heigl, on Mar. 16,1943
Josef Seper, on Jan. 28,1943

Twenty more Oberwart residents were accused and sentenced to prison, nine of whom died due to adverse hygienic conditions, malnutrition or sickness in the concentration camps of Mauthausen and Dachau.



District Court Oberwart/Felsőőr, 2015
Photo: Christian Ratz

Source: Widerstand und Verfolgung
(eng: Resistance and Persecution), 1983, 424-464

**The following institutions and associations
participate in the Initiative Path of Commemoration Oberwart 2015:**

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Evangelische Pfarrgemeinde A.B. Oberwart
Stadtgemeinde Oberwart
Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft
Burgenländische Volkshochschulen
Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Roma
OHO – Offenes Haus Oberwart
K.B.K. – Kultur.Bildung.Kunst

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Imprint:

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DIESES PROJEKT WIRD VOM EUROPÄISCHEN
FONDS FÜR REGIONALE ENTWICKLUNG, VON
BUND UND LAND BURGENLAND KOFINANZIERT.