

Reception for the Insel Family – Restitution and Memorial Sign, Tuesday,
September 24, 2024, 2:00 PM, Large Conference Room
Mayor Jürgen Krogmann

Note: The spoken word prevails!

Dear descendants of the Insel family from Israel and from the USA,
Welcome to Oldenburg!

I am very touched that you have taken on this long journey.

I am very glad that we can now carry out the restitution on our second attempt.
Unfortunately, the first appointment had to be canceled by the Shoer family due to
the difficult security situation in Israel.

I would also like to welcome our other guests:

Dietmar Schütz with his wife Waltraud,
the members of the Oldenburg City Council,
Sabine Stührholdt
and all guests present.

With today's restitution, the city faces its historical responsibility. Under the National
Socialist tyranny, immeasurable suffering was also inflicted on Jewish citizens here.
The city administration was often involved in humiliation, disenfranchisement,
persecution, and robbery.

Oldenburg was a "sad pioneer" at the time and was the first of 17 states in the
German Reich to elect a National Socialist single-party government. Already in the
state elections in May 1932, the NSDAP achieved an absolute majority. In May
1933, the National Socialists then also had an absolute majority in the city council.
Democracy and the rule of law were suspended here in these rooms. I am very
aware of the special role administration plays when things change politically.

Siegfried and Henny Insel also became victims of Nazi crimes in Oldenburg. During the persecution by the Nazi regime, they had to dissolve their household under degrading circumstances. Their move to Hanover in 1936 was not a voluntary decision. Inhuman pressure weighed on the couple. Siegfried and Henny Insel had to part with many personal items. They gave away their silver wedding jewelry and a pewter jug to friends (probably because they helped with the preparation for the move). Only much later did these objects come to the Oldenburg City Museum as a donation.

The return of these items is a sign of recognition of the great injustice done to the Insel family. Siegfried and Henny Insel, as well as their children Grete and Hermann, were murdered by the Nazis. I am glad that we were still able to locate heirs.

Today, we want to return the property to its rightful owners. The restitution is an important act: It keeps the memory of the Insel family's fate alive. And it gives the victims of the Nazi era a face and a name.

This is important for our culture of remembrance, which is becoming increasingly significant. Because everywhere, the enemies of democracy are on the march: in the USA, in Israel, and in Germany. Fortunately, our city has a very vibrant and active culture of remembrance. Thanks also to activists like Dietmar Schütz and his civic foundation. The memorial signs are an essential part of our culture of remembrance. A new memorial sign will be erected today at the former residence of the Insel family. Many thanks to all involved for this!

In addition, there are numerous memorial events, for example, wreath-laying ceremonies, the Oldenburg Remembrance Walk, and a memorial day for the victims of Nazi euthanasia in Wehnen.

Furthermore, Oldenburg has maintained a town partnership with the Israeli district of Mateh Asher for many years. Mr. Shoer – Your family lives quite close to there. And I heard that you have already spoken with our Israeli contact person. I am very pleased about this because this contact is important to us. Student groups from Oldenburg and Mateh Asher regularly visit each other. I was in Israel and in our partner district last year.

I am very grateful to all who bring our culture of remembrance and our town partnership to life.

I would now like to conclude my speech with a word of thanks.

The thanks go to:

- the descendants of the Insel family for your journey to us
- the City Museum and its provenance researcher Sabine Stührholdt
- the Civic Foundation for unveiling another memorial sign
- and all who, through their presence today, give special significance to the restitution

Thank you all very much!