

Dear friends from near and afar who have come to this solemn occasion.

My name is Ann Katina, and I am the chairperson of the Jewish community of Malmö.

Firstly I want to thank Debbie Wahle and your son Daniel Greene, Peggy and Monica Gutmann, and Osnat Savranski with your husband Zvi and Osnat's siblings Yair and Omri Maron with Omri's wife Claire.

It is special for us that you came all the way to Malmö to take part in this important and solemn inauguration of these stumbling stones in memory of your grandparents and relatives.

I also want to thank Deputy Mayor Roko Kursar, Chairperson, of Malmö's Cultural Committee Frida Trollmyr and all the other members of the municipal board of Malmö for your decision to place these stumbling stones in Malmö and to Malmö's cultural administration for implementing the decision and arranging this occasion.

I also want to thank Olle Schmidt who submitted the original motion to create this memorial.

Jerusalem Talmud says "...whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world."

Schulim Bürger, Walter Gerson and Sigfried Gutmann of blessed memory, could have been saved if they would have been granted a permit to stay in Sweden.

But here, on this very place in Malmö, they were instead deported by the Swedish authorities and were subsequently murdered by the Nazis in occupied Poland.

These stones will always remind us of the fate of your relatives. A fate that they shared with thousands upon thousands other Jews who fled from persecution in Nazi Germany and Austria in the end of the 1930's. The Jews had nowhere to escape and became instead subjects to Hitler's final solution to the so-called Jewish question.

I am a grandchild of survivors of the Shoah who found a refuge here in Sweden and Malmö. Sweden received over 30 000 refugees in 1945 and the following years. Of these between 11 000-13 000 were Jewish camp survivors. My grandparents have always been grateful for what Sweden did in 1945 and the years after the war.

But let us also never forget the shameful rejection of Jews who desperately tried to flee their impending doom.

In the 1930's up until the end of the second world war Sweden had an extremely restrictive policy towards refugees. In 1938 both Sweden and Switzerland asked the German authorities to stamp the Jews' passports with a red J, to make it easier to avoid letting in non-wanted persons into their respective countries.

The Nürnberg laws stripped Jews of their rights as citizens and forced Jews into a pariah status. During the November pogrom all over Nazi Germany – which

culminated in the so-called Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, on the 9th and 10th of November 1938, Jewish houses of worship as well as Jewish homes, hospitals and schools were ransacked as attackers demolished buildings with sledgehammers and set them on fire. Overall, 267 synagogues and 7 000 businesses owned by Jews were destroyed, around four hundred Jews were killed, 30 000 Jewish men were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. This happened in plain view. But the world turned a blind eye to the plight of the Jews.

In 1939 when Schulim Bürger, Walter Gerson and Sigfried Gutmann were sent back, Jews were seen basically as not wanted economic refugees.

In 1930's the small Jewish community of Malmö saw with pain how their Jewish sisters and brothers on the European continent were treated and Malmö was the first Jewish community in Sweden to organize a help committee to aid those few Jewish refugees who were able to come to this region. They could only do so much, but for those few who managed to get here it meant a lot.

In chapter 23 verse 16 in the Torah's book of Deuteronomy God says:

"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master"

Our great teacher Maimonides writes about this verse in his monumental book "Guide for the Perplexed" that "...we must always practice this virtue, help and protect those who seek our help, and not deliver them unto those from whom they flee...".

Memory is central concept in Judaism. Let these stumbling stones help us remember and learn from past mistakes to build a more virtuous society.