

Welcome address Anja Krause (Kulturdezernentin)

Dear Mr Prager,

Dear Ram family,

Dear Kwasnik family,

Dear pupils of the Georg-Christoph-Lichtenberg-Gesamtschule, dear Dr Trüter,

Dear Mr Tschirner,

Dear Mrs Heling-Hitzemann,

Dear Dr Driever,

Dear Mrs Herrmann,

Dear sponsors of the Stolpersteine; here I would like to extend a special welcome to the Chief Constable, Mrs von der Osten,

Ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Anja Krause. I am the councillor in charge of cultural affairs of the City of Göttingen and today I have the honour of giving a warm welcome to you on behalf of the City of Göttingen to the 7th laying of Stolpersteine.

The art project "Stolpersteine" by Gunter Demnig, who unfortunately cannot be here in person today, has been in existence for 30 years. The Stolpersteine commemorate the victims of the Nazi era by embedding small memorial plaques made of brass into the pavement in front of their former places of residence or work. Meanwhile, there are more than 90,000 Stolpersteine in 29 European countries. On his website, Gunter Demnig quotes the Talmud with the words "A person is forgotten not until his name is forgotten".

We do not want to forget, we want and we must keep the memory alive!

The importance of remembering the victims of the National Socialism is shown, among other things, by the alarming figures of anti-Semitic attacks in recent times. For example, the Federal Association of Research and Information Centres on Anti-Semitism (RIAS) registered 2738 anti-Semitic incidents for the year 2021. That's 7 incidents a day! Compared to the previous year, this is an increase of 40 %.

And if you have seen pictures of demonstrations of the movement of awkward and intransigent thinkers on the news in recent months, you will probably have noticed that the stigmatizing symbol of the so-called Jewish star, having been introduced by force since 1941, was misused there. Without any shame or historical understanding, the words "unvaccinated" were worn on the body within the symbol of the so-called Jewish star.

What is more, you will certainly remember the discussions in connection with the Indonesian artist collective Taring Padi which used anti-Semitic visual language in a piece of art at the Documenta 15.

I'm sorry to say that I could list a large number of other examples that make it clear how important it is to concern ourselves with our past even 77 years after the end of the Second World War and the fall of the Nazi-regime fortunately involved. Whereby "concern ourselves" here does not mean to have heard about the NS at same point but rather to be aware of the history and to recognise what responsibility we also bear today: to ensure that the victims of the Nazi-regime will not be forgotten, that we remember their names.

Remembering the Göttingen victims of National Socialism and their murder is a central part of our, the Göttingen culture of remembrance. Step by step, we look back and reappraise our past. Let me give you just a few examples: In 1973, we inaugurated the Synagogue Memorial at the place where the synagogue stood. Since then, we have commemorated the destruction of both the synagogue and several Jewish businesses during the Pogrom Night 1938 in annual hours of commemoration on 9 November.

In 2007, we renamed the town house on Gotmarstraße (municipal library) the Thomas-Buergenthal-House in honour of the presumably youngest survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp, Thomas Buergenthal from Göttingen. In doing so, the city of Göttingen calls to mind the crimes of the National Socialist tyranny against the Jewish people and – as Thomas Buergenthal would have wished – urges dialogue, mutual appreciation, tolerance and understanding among nations. Thereby, we also show that Jewish life and the Jewish faith belong to Göttingen and have a place in our city.

In recent years, the Municipal Museum has conducted extensive research into the provenance of the museum objects. In the course of this provenance research, it could be established beyond doubt that there are objects in the collection which were withdrawn from Jewish fellows due to persecution and, therefore, were not rightfully in the possession of the museum. We have decided, in principle, that all cultural objects looted during the Nazi era will of course be returned. We are grateful that several descendants have decided to continue to leave looted objects of their ancestors in the Municipal Museum as a loan and to make these objects available for exhibitions.

We have been laying Stolpersteine in Göttingen since 2013. The question of whether to lay Stolpersteine in Göttingen had been intensively and controversially discussed here for several years. As a compromise, the city of Göttingen decided that Stolpersteine will only be laid if the descendants agree to the laying. Dear Ram family, dear Mr Prager, dear Kwasnik family, all of you have agreed to the laying of Stolpersteine for your family members. And what is more, today you came to us, to Göttingen, for the laying of the Stolpersteine with that making a move towards us in both a concrete and a figurative sense. I thank you very much for this.

In cooperation with the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation and the Göttingen Historical Society we will today lay a total of 20 Stolpersteine at three locations.

We will start on Groner Straße 13 where two Stolpersteine for Amalie and Bernhard Katz will be embedded into the pavement. Dr Driever will welcome us there on behalf of the Historical Society and speak about the fate of Amalie and Bernhard Katz. Subsequently, eleven Stolpersteine will be laid on Papendiek 26 for Markus and Neche Wagner as well as their children Esther, Moses, Karl, Sally, Walter, Hermann and Klara, son-in-law Hermann

Prager and grandson Norbert. Mrs Heling-Hitzemann from the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation and the pupils of Dr Ingo Trüter's tutorial group from the Georg-Christoph-Lichtenberg-Gesamtschule will say a few words there. Finally, we will place seven additional Stolpersteine on Wöhlerstraße 6 for Rosa, Margarete, Ludwig, Arnold, Betty Meyerstein as well as her daughter Lucie Meininger, née Meyerstein, and her husband Kurt. There, Mr Tschirner will say a few words on behalf of the members of the Göttingen police who have taken on the responsibility for a number of the Stolpersteine. Subsequently, the biographies of the Meyerstein / Meininger family members will be presented by Ms Herrmann. Today we will be musically accompanied by Verena Kalinke, Marina Kueßner and Dietmar Buschhaus from the project orchestra KlezPO.

Now I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who have made this laying of Stolpersteine possible and who are taking part in this laying. After the laying of the Stolpersteine, I would be very pleased if you attend a small reception in the Municipal Museum on Ritterplan hosted by the City of Göttingen.