

Remarks by the Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg (DJCA)
International Holocaust Remembrance Day
January 26, 2024

Bettina Kaplan (Co-Founder, DJCA, descendant of the Arnold/Landauer family):

Good afternoon and Guten Tag, Sehr geehrte Frau Oberbürgermeisterin Weber und liebe Gäste.

The Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg, are again honored to be included in Augsburg's annual commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. This year's event is especially meaningful. As you can imagine, the increased level of antisemitism around the world has special significance for the descendant community. We cannot help but compare this situation to the one our families faced under National Socialism.

*Deborah Sturm Rausch (Editor of DJCA's newsletter **Connections**, descendant of the Sturm/Heilbronner/Steinfeld family):*

Since the attack by Hamas in Israel, our generation has now, like our Augsburg ancestors, witnessed pure evil directed against Jews simply because we are Jews. We are grateful that Augsburg, the City of Peace, is setting an example for others in its efforts to combat antisemitism and hate through campaigns like "Never again is now" and "We are all Augsburg", as well as commemorations like this one. We feel confident that our ancestors would be moved by the actions Augsburg has taken to remember the past and combat the hate that is happening now.

Diane Fischer Castiglione (Co-Founder, descendant of the Einstein family):

I am pleased to introduce one of my Einstein cousins, Talia Keren, who was deeply moved by her first visit to Augsburg in 2017 when she attended the descendants' reunion on the 100th anniversary of Augsburg's synagogue. While Talia currently lives in the United States, she grew up in Israel and most of her family is there. Please welcome Talia.

Talia Keren:

Thank you. As a descendant of the Einstein family and the Jewish Community in Augsburg, I am honored to be able to participate in this year's program so that I can share my perspective as an Israeli living abroad after the horrific attack on October 7th.

In 2017 I visited Augsburg and I was overwhelmed by how much the city has done over the years to commemorate the people killed in the holocaust, to keep their stories alive and to educate the younger generations so that something like the holocaust would never happen again. Visiting the Kriegshaber synagogue where my grandfather celebrated his bar mitzvah and the former barn of the Einstein brothers where my grandpa used to play as a child was such a moving and powerful experience for me.

After my visit to Germany I was optimistic that the world was moving in the right direction and that Never Again was real.

On October 7th, it felt to me like the world had stopped. I was hearing stories of the horrific attack from my family and friends in Israel and I was consumed with sadness, fear and terror.

These stories were so terrible that I was sure the world would soon cry out and condemn them, but instead there was mostly silence.

Since October 7th, we have seen an enormous increase of antisemitism around the world. Today I understand CLEARLY that the roots of antisemitism never really went away. I can't help but think that what we are feeling today is very similar to what my family felt back in Germany so many years ago.

With the knowledge we have of the past, we need to speak up loud and clear, we must work together and condemn hate and stand up for Israel and this way we can all help ensure that this never happens again!

In closing, please join me in praying for the immediate release of the Israeli hostages held by Hamas. May they return safely to their families. May we soon see a day when peace is restored so that Israel and Jewish people everywhere can live in safety.

Thank you Augsburg, The City of Peace for voicing your support to Israel and for standing up against antisemitism. Never Again is NOW!

עם ישראל חי (Am Yisrael Chai)

Thank you!