

Toespraak Yitzschak en Yael Bier, Oosterstraat 8, 22 maart 2017

Yitzschak Bier, met zijn echtgenote Yael special voor deze gelegenheid uit Israel overgekomen, vertegenwoordigt de familie Bier. Zijn vader David Bier, was een volle neef van Hedwig Rothschild – Bier. Dit is de tekst van zijn toespraak, uitgesproken door Yael.

Greetings to all,

My family connection to Hedwig Bier-Rothschild is that she was the sister of Julius Yitzchak Bier, who is my grandfather. I, Yitzchak Bier, was named for him.

Hedwig, who died at the age of 57 was one of 10 children, and unfortunately had no children of her own. None of those 10 brothers and sisters survived the war, and only the descendants of her brother Julius, who himself was killed, are alive today. I am one of the 60 living descendants of Julius Bier.

I know little about Hedwig and Jacob Rothschild, but what I do know is this: My father, David Bier, fled Koln in Nazi Germany in 1933 with his family at age 10, who arrived as refugees in Amsterdam. His parents needed to begin their lives again, to find housing and a livelihood for their five growing children. The children had to adjust to a new language and a new culture while their parents worked long hours. My father found warmth and welcome in this house ,at the home of his childless aunt and uncle Hedwig and Yaakov Rothschild, creating for him positive childhood memories.

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to all those present at this event, and the initiators and executors of this project, who have given so much of their time and effort to uncovering all the stories. In particular, I would like to thank Peter Riemersma, who established contact with us for the first time less than two weeks ago. As a result of his prodding us with questions, and requests for details and documents, it awakened in me an understanding that I need to come here from Israel to represent the family, and to continue to uncover more and more of my family history.

I asked myself about the importance of this project. If it is to preserve the memory of the victims, then who is it really for? After all, for those already killed, it will not make a difference anymore.

This project is not necessarily for the generation alive today, who learned firsthand about the events, but for the generations to come. To educate them and to create awareness, to make certain that they internalize that a group is not persecuted and destroyed just because it is different.

And I asked myself about the meaning of the stone. The stone is like a placeholder; today, in the digital age, the unfathomable numbers can be converted to individual stories which make those unknown names suddenly come to life as ordinary people, thus touching the souls of all those who become exposed to these stories.

And as for the symbolism of these Stolpersteine -- there is a Hebrew song about the Western Wall in Jerusalem, which states "there are people with hearts of stone, and there are stones with a human heart".

Thank you very much.

Yitzchak Bier

Israel

Yitzchaks oom **Max Bier** (geb. 1930, Köln), volle neef van Hedwig Rotschild-Bier, die Bergen-Belsen overleefde en nu in Beth Juliana in Tel Aviv woont, vroeg Yael ook zijn tekst uit te spreken:

Honored Guests,

I would like to thank Mr. Peter Riemersma for all his efforts to honor the memory of the Bier family and to uncover the details of my family history. I was a young boy -- only 12 years of age -- when I was went into hiding and separated from my dear parents who then died in Auschwitz. That is why so many of the details of the family and its travails during the war have been unknown to me. Only now, 71 years after the end of the war, along comes a Dutch citizen and brings me new information about my family for which I have so craved.

I would like to thank my nephew Yitzchak and his wife Yael who have come especially from Israel for this moving ceremony, honorably representing my brother David, his father, who fought in the underground and is no longer alive.

Max Bier
Herzliya, Israel