

Speech Carole Meyers, Spiegelfabrik Fürth, 14 September 2023

Thank you very much for inviting me to be here. I am honored. I would like to thank Hans, Thomas, Sven and those on the committee for realizing this project and for all their hard work and research over the last few years.

I did not know Joseph Midas. He died in New York before I was born. But I do know stories about him as my mother Margarete and her younger cousin Eve adored him. My mother told me that one of her great joys was to visit her grandfather Joe at the glass factory and play with the animals which lived on the grounds. Her own family house had no pets, but she here she was able to enjoy the company of the dog and the factory cats. There was even an injured squirrel that was nursed back to health, and was called "Maxl". From then on, including in my early child hood, any squirrel that was seen was called Maxl. Joe wrote a nursery rhyme poem about imaginary lion cubs which Margarete as a young mother repeated to me. I did however know Joseph's brother, Lothar as a little girl. He was a happy and jolly man, at least to me, his great grand niece. He too went through unspeakable loss. Their brother Hugo, a career army man was murdered in a concentration camp. One of his daughters (whom I also knew) lost her young husband to the camps and she herself was one of the victims of Nazi experiments. I remember seeing the tattoo on her arm when I was little.

How they all managed to find their way in life and be kind and loving people in their later years is a testament to the human spirit.

I did know some of the glass factory story, but it was not until meeting Hans and Thomas a few years ago and going through all the papers that had been hidden away at my mother's house, did I know the full extent - which you have heard here. Much was "glossed over" or perhaps it was my mother not wanting to share the worst details with me... much as her own parents shielded her as a child. It was only as an adult my mother learned that an America bound ship in Bremerhaven containing the remaining Midas possessions was not bombed, but looted and the contents sold at auction. One identifiable item was a portrait of her mother as a child, which was actually re-sold in the 1970s and maybe some day will be found again.

But what is most important of all is their story. Again, I am deeply grateful for it to be told. They were proud Fürthers. As my mother once simply said, "We were Germans until Hitler said we were not". That their memory along with the stories and memories of so many more, will help teach and prevent atrocities like this from happening to future generations, is indeed a blessing.