

Speech held by Ms. Irene Scherer, chairwoman of the "Löwensteinforschungsverein", at the official reception for Doris Angel and Harold Livingston in Mössingen, Germany on July 22, 2009

The History of the Löwenstein Family as an Integral Part of the Future of Mössingen

Doris Angel,
Harold Livingston,
Members of the families of Felix and Artur Löwenstein,
Members of the family of Bea Löwenstein and Adolph Lowe,
Jan Robert Bloch,
Mayor Fifka,
Mr. Frick,
Residents of Mössingen,
Friends,

there are things in the world about which a person of integrity cannot be ambivalent. This well-known statement by the philosopher Ernst Bloch acquires a new significance in the context here today.

We are here to remember collectively and publicly what happened so many years ago.

We are here to honor four personalities, Felix and Helene Löwenstein as well as Artur and Flora Löwenstein. Traces of these four individuals and their lives have been repressed and have apparently disappeared from the history of Mössingen.

We are here to voice our outrage over past injustice, which has continued into the present.

We are here to finally offer a gesture of reconciliation to those who encountered hatred, and were persecuted, threatened, and disgracefully driven out of Mössingen many decades ago.

We would like to establish the story of the Löwensteins as a continuous and definitive part of the future of Mössingen, a story that also evokes its history. The year 2009 seems appropriate for several reasons. Among other things it marks the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Artur Löwenstein, who died in 1959.

Doris and Harold,

we are very pleased that both of you were willing and able to come to Mössingen today, and that you graciously met our request for a constructive dialogue without preconceptions or prejudice.

You welcomed us in Manchester with open arms and open hearts. Your cordiality and warmth demonstrated your remarkable ability to rise above past adversity, disaster, injustice, and suffering without ignoring them.

Inspired by your openness we would like to welcome you here today with the same sentiments of sincerity and warmheartedness, and not only the two of you, Doris and Harold, but also Ann Angel, the daughter of Doris Angel and the granddaughter of Felix Löwenstein as well as Anthony Paxton, the husband of Doris's second daughter Sarah. We are very pleased that Jacqueline Cowley, the daughter of Harold Livingston and the granddaughter of Artur Löwenstein, came all the way from the United States to be here today. And we also greet Ronnie Jacob, the son of Lilo Löwenstein, the sister of Harold Livingston, and the grandson of Artur Löwenstein.

In September 2007 approximately a dozen people from Mössingen and the surrounding area founded the "Löwensteinforschungsverein": this grass-roots network of individuals faced a long and difficult search requiring detailed research, detective work, and above all perseverance. Its statement of purpose—entitled "Ermutigung zur Verantwortung - Erinnerungen an nachwirkende Vergangenheiten" ("To encourage the acceptance of responsibility - To remember the ongoing pasts")—includes the following points:

"We want to contribute to making the unacknowledged historical legacy known. With tact and sensitivity the members want to raise awareness for the facts, to promote openness, and to encourage discussion. It is not the goal of the initiators to make accusations or to impute guilt. Nor are their efforts directed against anyone or anything. Instead, they understand the encouragement of the acceptance of responsibility as a process of consciously confronting the past in order to create a stronger basis for life together in the present and in the future.

The members will propose and support the establishment of a specific place of remembrance for the Löwenstein brothers in Mössingen and will also attempt to find relatives and descendants of the Löwenstein family. They will then be invited to visit Mössingen.

This is by no means an attempt to put the past behind us but to better enable us to take responsibility for the present on the basis of the continuous presence of the past. The history of the PAUSA and the history of the Löwensteins are part of the history of Mössingen and should become an integral part of our common, nonsimultaneous future."

Despite the long-term effects of National Socialism and the widespread desire to remain silent, there have repeatedly been people in Mössingen, who have remembered the Löwenstein brothers and mentioned them in conversations and in personal anecdotes. Hermann Berner has encouraged and advanced this form of oral history, actively contributing to the reinstatement of the name Löwenstein in Mössingen.

Following the excellent groundwork laid by Richard Scherer in his article "Felix und Artur Löwenstein und die PAUSA in Mössingen", published in 2006 in a book edited by Werner Fifka and Hermann Berner, *Das Bauhaus kam nach Mössingen*, it took almost two additional years of work, tenacity, and luck before we were successful in locating Doris Angel in Manchester and Harold Livingston in London.

It took us three weeks to compose our first letter to them. It was to be empathetic, serious, credible, and inviting. From other contexts we were aware how important a first impression can be, particularly when painful memories and the language of one's childhood suddenly resurface.

Their initial reactions gave us hope. Harold Livingston wrote: "I am very pleased to learn that the city of Mössingen—through your "Forschungsverein"—intends to preserve the work of my father, Artur Löwenstein, and my Uncle Felix for the future."

However, his second, long autobiographical communication revealed how intensely the past still preoccupied him. Harold wrote: "The Nazis could not manage to kill me." A blunt, clear statement, indicating that nothing has been forgotten.

After the first series of letters, e-mails, and telephone calls, we decided on the following procedure: before members of the Löwenstein family came to Mössingen, we felt we should meet them on their home ground, and present our request to them in familiar surroundings. There we would personally deliver the official, joint invitation

of the city of Mössingen and the "Löwensteinforschungsverein" to return to Mössingen for a visit.

Our first personal encounter was very moving. Long, highly detailed conversations were carried on, during the course of which many childhood memories and the Swabian dialect returned. At the end we asked Doris Angel how she felt about visiting Mössingen. She answered: "For me this will be coming home."

Doris and Harold,

when we remember your fathers today, we also want to include their sister, Bea Löwenstein and her husband Adolph Lowe. An economist at the University of Berlin, Lowe was forced to leave by the National Socialist authorities. Later he was a professor in Manchester and helped Felix Löwenstein and his family leave Mössingen safely in 1936 and emigrate to England.

Bea and Adolph Lowe were close friends of Ernst and Karola Bloch. Ernst Bloch dedicated his important philosophical work *Atheismus im Christentum (Atheism in Christianity)*, published in 1968, to the cofounder of the Weltwirtschaftsinstitut in Kiel ("Kiel Institute for the World Economy").

We are pleased that two granddaughters from the Lowe family, Sandra Lustig and Catherine Lustig-Radt, are here today, too.

We are also pleased to have Jan Robert Bloch with us. He actually met Bea Löwenstein and her husband Adolph Lowe personally, through his mother, Karola Bloch. A friend and political comrade of HAP Grieshaber and Max Bill, Karola Bloch and her son, Jan Robert Bloch, were in Mössingen respectively have been to Mössingen several times.

Doris and Harold,

73 years have passed since you both were forced to leave Mössingen and Stuttgart at the ages of 12 and 13. It was a sad parting, which destroyed your families' daily lives, interrupted friendships, and coincided with the expropriation of your fathers' life-work.

Today, many decades later, we are beginning to more fully comprehend the scope of your fathers' achievements.

The fitting recognition of Artur and Felix, Helene and Flora Löwenstein in Mössingen is no longer a matter of small, private circles posing questions cautiously. It has evolved into a public and official matter.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, the teacher, role model, and mentor of the “Kreisau Circle”, the members of which planned an attempt to assassinate Hitler, always emphasized that it is a central aspect of human existence to be called by one’s own name. Rosenstock-Huussy said: “The name is the most sonorous and most evocative element of every language.”

Today we are speaking of the founders of the PAUSA by name: Felix Löwenstein and Artur Löwenstein. Today, after the total disappearance of their countenances for decades, we can finally look at photographs of them and discover their faces again. The names and faces have returned. They are finally here and will not be lost again.

In this context we would also like to mention the following: this year, 2009, is the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the PAUSA. The Bauhaus was also founded in 1919.

Today we know that before the expropriation of the PAUSA by the National Socialists, the Bauhaus and the PAUSA were not only linked conceptually in the minds of Felix and Artur Löwenstein. The correspondence between Felix and Artur Löwenstein and Walter Gropius, the initiator of the Bauhaus concept in Weimar and Dessau, is only one indication of this.

In addition, the artist Ljuba Monastirskaja advanced the Bauhaus ideas in Mössingen from 1929 to 1932 as the artistic director of the design studio at the PAUSA. Monastirskaja is currently being celebrated as one of the great Bauhaus women in the area of design. Earlier, in 1927, she had participated in the renowned weaving workshop in Dessau.

Ljuba Monastirskaja was rediscovered by scholars in 2001. Sadly, her colleague in the famous weaving workshop in Dessau, Otti Berger, did not survive the actions of the National Socialist dictatorship against the Bauhaus. She was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

Above all it was Doris Angel and Harold Livingston who gave us some very important information. During our visit to Manchester several weeks ago they showed us old,

original textiles and swatches of fabric from the PAUSA production before 1933, exhibiting patterns and designs of Bauhaus art.

The connection between the PAUSA and the Bauhaus tradition did not first begin after 1945 when the PAUSA was under new management. Today it is indisputable that the PAUSA was an actual production site for Bauhaus art before 1933. Mössingen was an active Bauhaus location before the Nazi rise to power. "The PAUSA produced for the Bauhaus." This is also documented by the presentation of PAUSA textiles and fabrics designed by Walter Gropius at the international exhibition in Paris in May 1930. The rediscovery of this PAUSA tradition should be continued and expanded in the future.

The "Löwensteinforschungsverein" plans to apply for funding to finance other small research projects. Further research would ideally focus on the cooperation between Mössingen, Weimar, and Dessau as well as explore the history here in Mössingen.

"Form-Farbe-Funktion" ("Form-Color-Function") were central concepts of the Bauhaus, and also informed the work of the PAUSA during the postwar years, represented, for example, by Max Bill. The PAUSA reference library of the 1920s—established and owned by the Löwensteins—includes a book entitled *Deutsches Kunstgewerbe 1927 (German Handcrafts in 1927)*. Felix Löwenstein wrote his name in it. In the preface we read: "The characteristic goal of our times is essentially inexpensive mass (machine) production. The prerequisite for this is the handcraft model, the craft-produced individual work." The professional intentions of the Löwenstein brothers related to the PAUSA and the Bauhaus could hardly be summarized more concisely and more accurately!

Now it rests with us, the following generations, to actively determine how well the unacknowledged legacy of the Löwensteins will actually develop in the future.

Remembering the two brothers encompasses the responsibility to present their creativity and diligence to the young generation of the 21st century.

This is a responsibility which clearly includes protest against any and every form of antisemitism.

Let us be open to the challenges of a common future.

Let us begin work on this project together.

Thank you.