

## ENGLISH VERSION

I want to first of all thank the Round Table of Ahrensburg and Herr Boege for the organisation of the Gang des Erinnerns, and especially to Martina Moede, who always goes above and beyond to make me feel welcomed. I want to also mention Antje Rudolph from the jewish community who always reaches out to me, and who 4 years ago hosted me in the community. And finally to Herr Özen and the students from the Gemeinschaftsschule Am Heimgarten for all the work they put on researching on my family.

So as a brief introduction of myself, my name is Eric Lehmann, I am the grandson of Heinz Lehmann, and the great grand nephew of Magnus Lehmann. I was born in Argentina, where also my father was born, and where my grandfather moved before the war. I came to Europe at the age of 23 years old to study at the Univeristy of Bournemoth, and 3 years later, I started traveling across Europe, and finally settled in Berlin where I reside today. I want to tell you all, that since the day I moved to Germany, I have been always received with open arms and I had the opportunity to study, to work, and to meet people of all sorts of backgrounds and nationalities. And I mean it when I say that my experience in Germany has been nothing but open doors, and people embracing diversity.

Different were the times of my grandfather. A jewish german that was forced to leave the country because of who he was, what he believed in. Sadly, I barely knew him since I was only a baby when he passed away, but I know from my parents, that he never spoke much about his past. For him, Germany was behind, and in the family, certain topics were just... silenced. Even the language was gone, as my father grew up not learning how to speak German, and subsequently his children (us), seeing Germany as a remote culture and language. My siblings and I hardly knew the history about my grandfather, what his life in Germany was like, how he felt. The generations of the Lehmanns were gradually disconnected from their past through fading memories. And this brings me to think about the famous phrase from George Santayana that reads: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.". But what does this feel like in real life?

However, the foggy memories of our family's past started taking shape around 12 years ago, when my brother came to Europe with the idea to find new opportunities. He had the luck to meet Martina Moede, who wrote the book "Die Geschichte der jüdischen Gemeinde von Ahrensburg", and who helped us reopen a lost chapter in the book of our family. He, alongside with my father Daniel and my aunt Beatriz, witnessed the opening of the Lehmannstieg, a passage named in memory of our families.

So, four years ago, in 2018, I was also invited to Gang des Erinnerns, and had the pleasure to get to know the town, and to connect again with my ancestors. I was shocked and moved when I read the tombstones from the jewish cemetery, which were engraved with the names "Lehmann", dating all the way back to the 1700s! I was asked if I wanted so say something, so improvised a speech that came to me in the moment. I expressed how moved I was from this initiative, and I remember I mentioned how important it was to keep the past alive, because if in only two generations we can forget where our family came from, what happens to societies that can't look back and learn? Especially in today's events, we need to reassure these values we fought so hard and that we have built as a society, and the rights we have won in the name of tolerance and inclusion. That is why, these events like the one we are

part of today have such a deep value, because we need to embrace the past and understand our present, to strive for a better future.

I want to finish up by remembering my great gand uncle Magnus, as a symbol, and I want to repeat to myself that this tragic legacy keeps reminding us, keeps us steering for the better, and encourages us to find each other again, when division is what we're being sold day after day.

I hope you could understand, at least the idea of what I wanted to express today, and I'm, again, deeply grateful for this invitation to this special day.