

Wien, 14th / 15th December 2023

Cilly Hoze. Her Family, Her House

December 14th, 2023, 10:00 – 14:00
Official opening of the Arnolodová vila after
rehabilitation

*Your Excellency
Ladies and Gentlemen*

December 15th, 2023, 18:00
Hože – Tugendhat – Löw-Beer – discussion und
tour; with manager Jiří Mihol., historian Táňa
Klementová and conservator-restorer / art
historian Ivo Hammer.
Organizer: Meeting Brno

*Dear director Šolc
Dear Dr. Mihola
Ladies and Gentlemen*

I would like to thank director Šolc / *Meeting Brno* for inviting me to this remarkable event of opening this house, situated in the middle of a cluster of important houses. The city of Brno has succeeded in not selling this historic house on the capital market, but rather in renovating it and making it publicly accessible as a dialogue center, also with grateful Norwegian help.

Max and Pauline Löw-Beer family

I am speaking here as a member of the Tugendhat and Löw-Beer family. I am the husband of Grete Tugendhat's youngest daughter, Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat. Cilly Hože, Grete Tugendhat's aunt, was the owner this house, which is called now *Arnoldová vila*.

(December 15th, only):

First, Daniela, the patroness of Meeting Brno 2020, should speak for herself. I am showing a video that I recorded of her in Vienna in April because she was unable to come to Brno due to the corona crisis.

VIDEO (Speech of Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat)

The 5th meeting in Brno with the motto STEP OUT focuses on self-reflection and self-confidence as a prerequisite for a responsible civil society. A civil society with responsible citizens must be the goal of every democracy. Collective self-reflection and self-confidence are only possible if a community deals with its roots. Brno's cultural roots are not only Czech, but also German and Jewish. It is precisely this diversity that contributed to the city's great prosperity in the interwar period. Meeting Brno is an important event, especially today, when ethnic, religious and cultural differences are often seen not as a wealth from which one can draw and learn, but as a danger.

History does not repeat itself. But structural elements can repeat themselves. In the face of a crisis-ridden present, there is a great risk of relapse into nationalistic, xenophobic and authoritarian societies. In the 1930s, a deep economic crisis was one of the prerequisites for

German NS. The blame for the crisis was not sought in the social conditions, in a society in which a few rich faced an army of poor and unemployed. The blame was put on "the others", the Jews. Today "The Others" are predominantly Muslims, refugees and asylum seekers. In order to be immune to populist politics, it helps to deal with one's own past as well as with the cultural diversity of the present.

With this in mind, I wish Meeting Brno every success!

Grete Tugendhat's aunt, Cäcilie Löw-Beer, called Cilly, was married to the lawyer Cornelius Hože, called 'Cornel', co-owner, together with Rudolf Löw-Beer and Max Kohn, of one of the largest cement factories in Central Europe at the time, in Maloměřice.

Cilly's parents, Max and Pauline Löw-Beer, who had considerably expanded Moses Löw-Beer's large family business in Svitávka and Brno in the second half of the 19th century, were among the leading industrialists in this Central European region dominated by the Habsburgs and Prussians. They lived in Brno, had 6 children, first three daughters and then three sons:

- Anna, born in 1858, married to Heinrich Münch, one daughter: Gertrud. After escaping in 1939, she committed suicide in asylum in Haiti in 1940.
- Eveline, called Eva, born in 1859, married to Theodor Pollak. She had 2 sons: Max and Bruno; she died in 1925 in Italy (Bolzano) and is buried in Bielitz in southern Poland.
- Cilly, born in 1864: she had one son: Max. In 1942, she was murdered by the Nazis in Terezín.

The three sons are well known; they married three sisters of the Jewish Viennese family Wiedmann.

- Rudolf, born in Brno in 1865, the third director of the Moses Löw-Beer company, he married Elise in 1905 (1874-1957), the two's children were Helene (1908-1980) and Paul (1910-2003). Rudolf died in Lugano in 1953
- Alfred born in 1872, married on May 27, 1901 in Vienna to Marianne (1882-1975), the two's three children were Max (1902-1954), Grete Tugendhat (1903-1970) and Hans (1911-1993). Alfred was murdered while escaping from the Nazis on the Czechoslovakian border near Plzeň in 1939
and
- Benno, born in 1874, married Johanna 'Hansi' (1883-1948) in 1903, their children were Marie (1904-xx), Fritz (1906-1976), Ernst (1911-2000), he died in hospital in Vienna in 1916.

House Arnold alias Hože

As we know from the research of Dagmar Černoušková and others, on March 23, 1909 the purchase contract for Villa Arnold was signed between the owner, Albertina Antonia Lange and Alfred Pollak, coal merchant, authorized representative of Cilly Hože. Alfred Pollak was possibly a brother of Cilly's sister Eveline's husband, i. e. Theodore Pollak. Josef Arnold

from Ingolstadt, a master builder in Brno, built the villa in his own wine yard at Hutterstrasse 38 in 1862 and lived in it with his wife Katharina, at least during the summer.

Albertina Antonia Lange owned the house from September 30, 1883 until it was sold to Cilly Hože in 1909 and made minor renovations in 1895, a small addition to the west corner and the extension of the southeast wing.

In the years that followed, soon after 1909, Cilly Hože had her house rebuilt and expanded in a high-quality manner, with larger extensions in the north-west and south-east, a veranda in the north-east, with a new facade, and with the technical standards of an upper-class house of the time.

Holocaust

Cornelius Hože died in 1936. Cilly Hože and her only son Max, born on October 4, 1888) with his wife Friederike née Keller, born on September 15, 1896, married Max Hože on April 30, 1916, were reported to be registered in separate addresses in the Protectorate in Prague, we don't know how they got there. They were each deported to Terezín/Theresienstadt on May 12, 1942 in separate transports. Only 64 out of 1002 people from Cilly's transport survived. Cilly's death in Terezín was finally officially confirmed in a disgustingly cynical manner on September 7, 1942. Cilly's son Max, who ran the cement factory after his father's death, and his wife Friederike were transported on to Lublin in separate transports on May 17, 1941. The date of Max's murder in the Maidanek concentration camp is given as June 23, 1942. Friederike was probably murdered at the same time.

Memory

The events surrounding flight, expulsion, expropriation, murder and the Holocaust were apparently so traumatic for many Jews, including the Löw-Beer family, that they were not discussed for a long time. The fate of many family members was unknown.

In the specific case of the Hože family, it was an Israeli lawyer, Erez Bernstein, with the not very savory profession of lucratively tracking down unreturned assets, who, in a statement from the *Reichsprotector* dated April 27, 1943, found information about an insurance asset of Max Hože, the son of Cilly Hože and, for the Restitution, he had to determine the data of all descendants of Max and Pauline Löw - Beer; he found 180 descendants. This research also triggered renewed efforts in parts of the family to deal with family history, following our publication about the Tugendhat house and its family 25 years ago, the film by June Finfer from 2004 and the film by Dieter Reifarth from 2013. Also, Czech researchers such as Dagmar Černoušková, Petra Svobodová and the two Vladimír Velesík and a few others published their research on family history and the family's houses and factories.

Meeting Brno 2017

Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat's tender request to Mojmír Jerábek to organize a small family reunion in the Tugendhat House, which has been restored since 2012, found generous support, also from the city administration, from Primator Petr Vokřál and Deputy Mayor Matěj Hollan and from the organizers of the 2nd MEETING BRNO festival. At the family reunion of the three families Löw-Beer, Stiasni and Tugendhat from May 19th to 24th in 2017, around 110 members of the Löw-Beer family came from all over the world, whose existence was unknown to us and some of whom had never met.

Following this event, Michael Lambek finished a book, entitled: *Behind the Glass. The Villa Tugendhat and its family*, published in Toronto, which is available since 2022. Michael Lambek, the eldest son of Hanna Weiss, Grete Tugendhat's first daughter, tells the family history in an authentic, scientifically meticulous form, also with humorous irony, and – among other things – also as a response to the history-shattering, family history-trivializing novel *The Glass House* by Simon Mawer of 2009.

Two Wishes

I hope that an open and critical dealing with history will take place in this house, which is called house of dialogue. If I understand the intentions of the Meeting Brno festival correctly, this house is an ideal place for Meeting Brno events. More and more people are becoming aware of the fact that around 55,000 residents of Brno, i.e. a quarter of the total population in 1930, were German-speaking. Of the approximately 12,000 Jews in Brno, the majority were German-speaking, and more than 9,000 were murdered by the Nazis. In any case, there could be no talk of collaboration with the Nazis among the Jews. German-speaking fellow citizens should be recognized as equal citizens of Czechoslovakia, even after independence from the Habsburg monarchy. Most of the family members knew the Czech language or actively learned it after 2018. Grete Tugendhat spoke the Czech language fluently. I met Grete Tugendhat's Czech teacher, Mr. Parma, in 1971. **German speaking Jews in Brno are not "German Jews".**

And finally, I would like this house, this place, to become a place of remembrance, a monumental stumbling block, so to speak, that reminds us of the fate of our fellow Jews and of Cilly Hože in particular who was murdered in Terezín. It is international custom for houses to be named not after the architects, but after the residents. In this respect, it would be plausible to rename the Arnoldová Vila to Hožeová Vila. Or, following the suggestion of the former City Councilor for Culture Marek Friš from 2021, to **name the public park Hože Park**.

Thank you for your attention.