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13. August 2024

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The Bahlsen Family

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## **Book Launch: "The History of the Bahlsen Company"**

Hanover. The publication of the book "*Die Geschichte des Hauses Bahlsen. Keks - Krieg - Konsum 1911-1974*" (The History of the Bahlsen Company. Biscuits - War - Consumption 1911-1974) by Manfred Grieger and Hartmut Berghoff is the first detailed, scientific account of the company's history over this long period, times characterised by numerous historical upheavals. The authors worked extensively, using sources that had not previously been evaluated. The study will be published by Wallstein Verlag and is available in bookstores from 21 August 2024 on. The book is in German only.

On this matter, the family Bahlsen has issued the following statement:

"The public discussion in 2019 about the history of our company prompted us to intensively deal with the past in our family. Many details of the company's history were unknown to us, and the truth is that we did not ask questions. As a family, we did not pose the obvious question of how our company was able to persist in the Second World War.

Against this background, we asked Prof. Dr Manfred Grieger to scientifically research the history of Bahlsen in July 2019. The study by Prof. Dr Manfred Grieger and Prof. Dr Hartmut Berghoff is the first academic account of the history of the Bahlsen company from 1911 up until the second generation of the family exited company management in the 1970s. The team of authors had complete freedom of research for this extensive project and, of course, access to important internal sources such as the company archive.

We would like to thank the authors and their team for their meticulous work. The results help us to better understand the events of the past and to learn lessons for the future.

The research results show that our predecessors and protagonists of the time took advantage of the system during the Nazi era. Their main motivation seemed to be to continue the company under the Nazi regime,

with dire consequences. People were harmed, in particular the over 800 forced labourers from 1940 until 1945. That is inexcusable.

The truth about these past events is painful and uncomfortable. We deeply regret the wrong done to these people at Bahlsen. We also regret that we did not face up to this difficult truth earlier.

We cannot change our history, but we can influence our future. The most important insight we have gained from the research results is that we have an obligation to help ensure that similar events do not occur ever again.

We will therefore use the means at our disposal to ensure that these findings will not be kept hidden, but rather to promote a culture of remembrance within the company and in our environment. We fully support the management's activities on this.

We are firmly committed to a democratic and open society and take a clear stand against hatred, xenophobia and anti-democratic tendencies."

Johannes, Andreas, Verena and Julia Bahlsen

Susanne and Werner M. Bahlsen

The management and the Governance Board of Bahlsen welcome the publication of the study as well.

Stefan Ries, Chairman of the Governance Board, said: "The results of the study present a task for the future: Bahlsen is actively committed to tolerance, diversity and a vibrant culture of remembrance. The company is clearly committed to these values, which are also part of the new mission statement introduced in 2023."

Bahlsen's commitment is translated into various initiatives that have already been launched or are currently being developed. This includes a travelling exhibition on the topic of forced labour at the company's headquarters in Hanover and other Bahlsen locations, internal events, a memorial plaque in the foyer of the headquarter building and the planned cooperation with a neighbouring school to commemorate the history of forced labourers. Bahlsen is also emphasising its clear stance against exclusion with the ongoing support of the initiative "*#zusammenland - Vielfalt macht uns stark*" (Diversity makes us strong) and an own campaign at the beginning of 2024.

## **About Bahlsen**

Bahlsen is a German family business in its fourth generation. For over 130 years, we have been producing a wide range of baked goods, for example biscuits and cakes. We are the market leader in Germany in this area. In Europe, we are one of the leading manufacturers. We produce our biscuits at five locations in Europe and export them to over 80 countries around the world. Our main location is Hanover. And that has been the case from the very beginning. Since 1889.