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REMEMBERING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

On January 28, 2015, the United Nations held an event marking the tenth anniversary of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, as well as the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, at the UN General Assembly. Avner Shalev, chairman of Yad Vashem, delivered the keynote address "Liberty, Life and the Legacy of the Survivors," via video. Among those who offered remarks were UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Israel's President Reuven Rivlin, Holocaust survivor Yona Laks, and other dignitaries. Grammy award-winning violinist Miri Ben-Ari also performed. A new Yad Vashem traveling exhibition, "Shoah — How Was It Humanly Possible?" opened in the UN

Visitors Lobby on January 28, 2015. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, delivered remarks at the opening ceremony as well as statements by Ron Prosor, permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations, and Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem. Created with the generous support of Cindy and Gerald Barad, the exhibition uses texts, images and video clips to recount a comprehensive history of the Holocaust from 1933 to 1945. The event was held in cooperation with the American Society for Yad Vashem and the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations.

The international community has not yet found the antidote to the poison that led to genocide 70 years ago, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, marking the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust by calling strongly for the world to work together to stamp out all forms of bigotry, hatred and extremism.

"As we remember what was lost in the past, and as we recognize the perils of the present, we know what we must do — and we know we must do it together," said Mr. Ban in opening remarks to the UN General Assembly's annual commemoration of the Day.

Joining the Secretary-General at the event were, among other speakers, Reuven Rivlin, President of Israel, and Denis Antoine, Vice-President of the General Assembly, as well as Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans. Maher Nasser, the acting UN Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, presided over the event.

The International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is marked every year on 27 January, the date on which Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated in 1945. This year's observance, on the theme "Liberty, Life and the Legacy of the Holocaust Survivors,"



The president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, delivers his speech at the UN.

coincides with two milestone events: the 70th anniversary of the Second World War's end and the founding of the UN.

Recalling his visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in November 2013, Mr. Ban said: "I saw the full machinery of murder: the railway platform where

the infamous selections were made; the barracks that held Jews, Roma, Sinti, non-Jewish Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, dissidents, disabled persons and homosexuals; and finally the ovens where human beings were turned to ashes.

"I was especially moved by the displays of photographs and films of European Jewish life before tyranny took hold — family meals, weddings and other rituals, performances by the singers and actors who enlivened the cities in which they lived. We can still feel the pain of all that was lost and destroyed in a frenzy of cruelty," the Secretary-General added.

The images of emaciated camp survivors and piles of dead bodies were prominent in the minds of those who

gathered to establish the United Nations, Mr. Ban continued. A determination to uphold human dignity was written into the Organization's founding Charter 70 years ago — and has defined the UN's work ever since. But there is still a long way to go. The struggle for justice and tolerance faces widespread challenges.

"Anti-Semitism remains a violent reality; Jews continue to be killed solely because they are Jews. Extremism and dehumanization are present across the world, exploited through social media and abetted by sensationalist press coverage. The targets are as diverse as humankind itself," the Secretary-General said.

In Europe and elsewhere, Muslims are under attack, the victims of bigotry at the hands of political opportunists and ultra-nationalists. Vulnerable populations everywhere bury their dead and live in fear of further violence.

"I take heart from counter-demonstrations, rallies and interfaith dialogue. We must all remain on our guard. We must uphold human rights, democratic freedoms and our responsibility to protect people at risk. And we must respond to terrorism and provocation in ways that resolve — instead of multiply — the problem," he underscored.

In his address, Reuven Rivlin, president of Israel, recalled the "brutal," "perverted" extermination of Jews during the Holocaust "in the most horrifying crime ever committed in the history of the human race." The United Nations rose on the ruins of the Second World War, he said, stressing that the International Day was not just a gesture because the pledge "Never again" was "the very essence of the UN," and the principle and primary reason for its existence.

However, since the UN was found-
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REMEMBERING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

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ed, more nations and communities had been slaughtered. "We must ask ourselves honestly: is our struggle — the struggle of the General Assembly against genocide — effective enough?" he said. "Are we shedding too many tears and taking too little action?"

Mr. Rivlin noted that the Convention on Genocide was now 64 years old but remained a merely "symbolic document" that had not realized its objectives. The international community had a duty to lay down the red lines defining genocide and to make clear that crossing those lines must mean intervention. Humanitarian and moral considerations had to take precedence over economic, political or other interests in the fight against genocide.

"Nations cannot be saved and must not be saved as an afterthought or from considerations of cost-benefit," Mr. Rivlin said. "Unless the moral fire burns within us, the lessons of the Holocaust will never be learned."

The General Assembly must act as a determined and unified international community or else risk leaving the "Never again" oath hollow and defiled.

"We must remain silent no longer. We must rise up and take action," he said.

Avner Shalev, chairman of Yad Vashem, in his keynote address delivered via video, said:

"On November 28, 1944, during the last months of the operation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, twenty Jewish children — ten boys and ten girls, ages six to twelve — were chosen by the notorious Nazi doctor, Josef Mengele, Rivka, Edward, Mania, Roman and sister Eleonora, brothers Edward and Alexander, Jacqueline, Sergio, Leah, and ten others, were sent by train to the *Neuengamme* concentration camp near *Hamburg*, Germany.

"Mengele was cooperating with the request of his colleague, the SS physician Dr. Kurt Heissmeyer, to supply him with subjects for his pseudo-scientific study of infectious diseases.

"Upon arrival, the children were infected with tuberculosis, and the terrible effects of the disease upon them were studied for several months. As Dr. Heissmeyer testified twenty years later, at his trial, in East Germany: 'I did not think that the children had full value as human beings.... For me there was no basic difference between Jews and guinea pigs.'

"Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the Red Army exactly seventy years ago, but the murder continued wherever the Nazis still held control.

"In *Neuengamme* this meant the murder of the twenty Jewish children. Eight days before the British army

entered *Hamburg*, the children were brought to a school building where they were injected with morphine, and then hung to death on hooks set in the wall.

"Nazi Germany and its collaborators had murdered one-third of the Jewish people. The extermination of six million Jews in Europe was motivated and driven by a murderous, racist anti-Semitic ideology — that viewed all Jews, everywhere in the world, as a lethal danger to the German nation and to Germany's new world order.

"So every last Jew, everywhere, had to be destroyed, at any cost.

"Recalling the horrible scope and nature of that genocide is the core of Holocaust remembrance, but remembrance extends deeper and further.

"When the War ended, much of the world rejoiced in the



Participants of the UN General Assembly session dedicated to Holocaust commemoration and the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz listen to the video keynote address delivered by chairman of Yad Vashem Avner Shalev.

Allied victory. But the Jews who survived — could not rejoice. Mourning for their families and communities, scarred by their own horrible *Shoah* experiences, they could well have become desperate, bitter and vengeful. And yet, remarkably, they did not.

"In fact, the vast majority of the Holocaust survivors did the contrary: They chose hope. The majority of the survivors chose to strike new roots in their ancestral Land of Israel, my own birthplace, where they joined a viable and self-sufficient pre-Holocaust Jewish entity.

"In every place around the globe that the survivors reached, they demonstrated their restored commitment to human freedom, and faith in humanity.

"Upon these values they rebuilt their own lives, and those of their new families and communities.

"In 2002, hundreds of *Shoah* survivors gathered at Yad Vashem, on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, to participate in an international conference devoted to the legacy of Holocaust survivors.

"They signed a joint 'Survivors' Declaration' stating: After the *Shoah*,

we did not turn into wild animals, hungering only for revenge. This is a testament to the principles we possess as a people imbued with enduring faith in both man and Providence. We chose life.

"During the first decades following the Holocaust, many of its survivors expressed concern that it would fade from the world's consciousness. They feared that it would remain recorded only in history books. But it didn't.

"My mentor, Professor Yisrael Gutman, himself a Holocaust survivor, said: 'The *Shoah* refuses to become history.'

"In the decades since spring 1945, large portions of humanity have come gradually to perceive the Holocaust as a pivotal landmark event for modern civilization.

"Even regions and cultures not orig-

that is not true.

"The Nazis sought to totally destroy the Jewish people and to impose a ruthless totalitarian regime. This was conceived by highly educated individuals and implemented by a technologically advanced German society.

"The deadly mentality that the Nazis expressed and executed is not likely to return in its exact historical form of the 1930s and -40s. But as Auschwitz survivor, author Primo Levi, cautioned: It happened. Therefore, it can happen again.

"Nowadays, destructive evil, including vicious anti-Semitism, reappears in different contexts and ideologies. These ideologies deny human rights and dignity in other dangerous ways and circumstances.

"Confronted by this reality, I ask: How can we ensure that moral values will still be as essential to our lives as technology advances?

"With this question, I have come to this General Assembly, a venue usually associated with statesmen and politicians.

"I am an educator and a teacher of other educators. It is as a Holocaust educator, that I accepted the UN's gracious invitation to address you today, on this tenth anniversary of the International Day of Commemoration for the Victims of the Holocaust. Together with partners and associates worldwide, Yad Vashem teaches Holocaust educators — thousands yearly, from dozens of nations, to draw contemporary insights from the annals of the *Shoah*.

"They learn that in addition to its immense atrocity, the Holocaust was also the context for a dramatic struggle of the human spirit.

"The Jews fought to retain their humanity through countless acts of solidarity, mutual assistance and physical, cultural and spiritual resistance.

"The Righteous Among the Nations, though relatively few in number, chose heroically to endanger themselves while attempting to rescue Jews.

"These inspiring role models help educators teach about our responsibility to act as a buttress against social hatred and violence.

"To identify racism, xenophobia and persecution and to fight them — openly and effectively.

"Of course, the responsibility for moral education rests not only upon teachers.

"Political, economic and social leaders — like many of you in this hall and those whom you represent, must also assume responsibility for shaping moral norms and ethical standards.

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REMEMBERING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

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"Our world today is plagued with cruel conflicts for dominance and resources.

"In the shadow of those conflicts, we can and must educate the next generation of citizens and leaders to choose to behave ethically and humanely.

"To Primo Levy's warning, we add: It did not have to happen then, and so — it does NOT have to happen again.



Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, delivers his speech at the opening of the exhibition "Shoah: How Was It Humanly Possible?".

"My dear friends, from this podium, I call upon my fellow educators in every corner of the world — to strive and persevere in our constant battle for human morality.

"A battle which helps ensure that no person will ever again be referred to, as were the twenty Jewish children at *Neuengamme*, as having 'no value as human beings.'

"Holocaust survivor, philosopher Victor Frankel stated:

"Everything can be taken from a man, except the freedom to choose one's own way.

"For mankind, there is always a choice."

Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, in his speech at the UN General Assembly session, talked about the importance and significance of Holocaust remembrance.

"I consider it a great privilege to stand before you today on behalf of Yad Vashem and the American Society for Yad Vashem on



Candles burn in front of a memorial plaque.

the tenth anniversary of the United Nations initiative to establish this worldwide day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust in close partnership with the state of Israel.

"The participation of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at today's exhibition opening reaffirms the significance of Holocaust remembrance at

the U.N. and among the family of nations. Your presence pays tribute to all those who perished and all those who survived the Holocaust. Thank you.

"The attendance of our good friend, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, is also noteworthy and deeply appreciated.

"The opening of this new Yad Vashem exhibition — 'Shoah: How Was It Humanly Possible?' on this day and at this place is particularly

meaningful and symbolic. It links Yad Vashem's remarkable scholarship and creative abilities as the world's leading institution for Holocaust education, research and documentation with the American Society for Yad Vashem's long-standing commitment to honor the 70-year legacy of the Holocaust's victims and survivors and with the United Nation's groundbreaking 10-year commitment to meaningful Holocaust remembrance.

"This exhibition is a powerful response to a very real need across the globe. Our children and grandchildren need to understand why they should learn about the *Shoah* and incorporate its lessons into their own lives. The story of the Holocaust has to be told and retold, with sensitivity to the world of today...and tomorrow.

"In an environment of increased social tensions and hatred — including anti-Semitism and racism — the story of the Holocaust is both compelling and constructive; but only if appropriate up-to-date tools are placed at the disposal of educators, decision-makers and opinion-shapers. It's what Yad Vashem does every day in Jerusalem, in worldwide teachers' seminars, on the Internet and social media, and through the exhibition.

"A compelling, well-designed and inspiring exhibition — like this one — is a concrete means of opening hearts and minds to Yad Vashem's message of morality, tolerance and the struggle against prejudice, a message that it shares with the state of Israel and the United Nations.

"This exhibit is only one of many examples of the strong partnership between Yad Vashem and the

American Society for Yad Vashem. It begins with Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem directorate and my partner in Yad Vashem's mission of Holocaust remembrance, education and documentation, who is the moving force behind Yad Vashem's inspiring work.

"It was created by Yad Vashem's traveling exhibitions department, which is supported by our friends, Dr. Miri and Sheldon Adelson. Its outstanding curator, Rinat Pavis, is with us tonight. This newest exhibition came to life through the generous support of Cindy and Gerald Barad in memory of their father, Holocaust survivor Ulo Barad, and his parents and four brothers who were murdered in the *Shoah*.

"We also want to acknowledge our close cooperation with the U.N.'s Holocaust outreach program and exhibitions committee (with special thanks to officer-in-charge Kimberly Mann and her outstanding team) and with Israel's ministry of foreign affairs and permanent mission to the U.N. for making today's program possible."

In Europe the main event dedicated to Holocaust commemoration took place in Poland. More than 3,000



Survivors and their families carry candles as they visit the Birkenau Memorial.

guests, including Holocaust survivors and foreign dignitaries, gathered on January 27 at a site marking one of history's biggest horrors, the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps in Poland, which were liberated by Soviet troops 70 years ago in the closing months of World War II.

Because of the survivors' advancing age, this year's ceremony at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum may be the last major anniversary celebration to include more than a handful of people who endured the Nazi camps here, where about 1.5 million people lost their lives, most of them European Jews. Some 1,500 survivors attended the 60th anniversary in 2005, but this year there were fewer than 300 on hand. Most are in their 90s, and some are older than 100.

Their dwindling numbers prompted many at the ceremony to raise the question of how best to sustain memories of the horror when they are

gone, and what it means in a time of fresh outbreaks of religious and ethnic animosities.

"Today, in the name of truth, we need to fight the attempts to relativize the *Shoah*," President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland said as he opened the ceremony, using another term for the Holocaust. "The memory of Auschwitz means the memory of the importance of freedom, justice, tolerance and respect for human rights," he added.

Dozens of heads of state and other prominent figures took part in the ceremony, including the presidents of France, Germany and Austria, François Hollande, Joachim Gauck and Heinz Fischer; the kings of Belgium and the Netherlands, Philippe and Willem-Alexander; and Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew represented the United States, while Russia was represented by Sergei Ivanov, President Vladimir V. Putin's chief of staff.

The anniversary takes place at a time when reports of anti-Semitism are increasing across Europe. One Jewish organization said in a recent report that the incidence of anti-Semitic acts in France had doubled

over the past year.

"Jews are targeted in Europe once again because they are Jews," Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress and a major contributor to the preservation of the museum complex, said at the ceremony.

Mr. Lauder, 70, said the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, including one at a kosher supermarket, had prompted him to radically change the remarks he intended to deliver. He called on the world leaders in the audience to adopt policies of zero tolerance toward hatred of any kind. "Unless this is checked right now, it will be too late," he said.

Steven Spielberg, whose Holocaust film *Schindler's List* won seven Academy Awards, raised a similar warning in a short speech on the eve of the anniversary, saying that Jews were once again threatened by "the perennial demons of intolerance."

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BOOK REVIEWS

SAVING CHILDREN: DIARY OF A BUCHENWALD SURVIVOR AND RESCUER

Saving Children: Diary of a Buchenwald Survivor and Rescuer.

By Jack Werber with William B. Helmreich. Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, N.J., 2014. 141 pp. \$19.95 softcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

A number of years ago this reviewer had the pleasure of reviewing for this paper a unique and fascinating book by Samuel and Pearl Oliner, entitled *The Altruistic Personality*. In that book the authors' goal was to try to better understand why some ordinary people (Jews and non-Jews alike) put their lives at risk in order to save others during the war. Thus, the Oliners interviewed many who did just that, diligently searching for that certain something, that common denominator they all shared. The conclusion they came to? The rescuers' upbringing, the role-modeling their parents provided them, just how they were raised by them — to be empathetic, to care for every human life: that made all the difference.

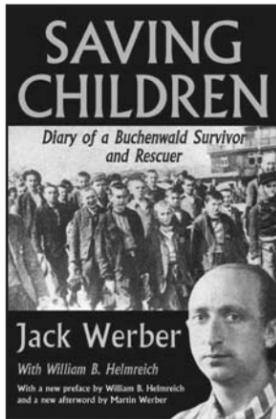
In conjunction with the above, in the preface to the paperback edition of *Saving Children: Diary of a Buchenwald Survivor and Rescuer* by Jack Werber working with William B. Helmreich, to tell Werber's wartime story, the aforementioned Helmreich makes a very astute point, seldom if ever given due thought and consideration: In sum, perhaps there is even more to this act of "saving" another. Perhaps actually saving another also gives one (the rescuer) a very real reason to continue living when there doesn't seem to be much of a reason

anymore . . . For, indeed, as we soon learn, such was very much the case with Jack Werber.

Who was Jack Werber? Born in Radom, Poland, on September 28, 1914, he was one of eight children — actually the youngest. Middle class, he went to *cheder*. Later, he went to a Jewish high school. He learned to play violin. He became a member of Hashomer Hatzair. This meant, in his own words, that "Together with my friends, we dreamed about returning to our ancient and beloved homeland. Helping to rebuild it became an obsession with us." Soon he met Rachel Weintraub, also a Zionist, and fell in love. They married in 1937. Then the dreamed-of opportunity arose to make *aliyah*, emigrating to Palestine. But Werber and his wife didn't. Why? His father's great sadness at the very thought of his son's leaving . . . The life-changing decision Werber made: He "post-poned" his plans. In 1938 Werber became the father of a lovely little girl, Emma. In the midst of all this he opened a store, going into the same business his father was in, fur and textiles. Needless to say, Werber had absolutely no idea that a war and a Holocaust were coming that would change everything . . .

On September 8, 1939, the German army marched into Radom. At first this regular army seemed rather

benign in its actions toward the townspeople and, especially, the Jews. It wasn't long, though, before SS men arrived to replace the soldiers, and, among their countless ruthless acts against the Radom populace, they separated Werber from his family and shipped him off to Weimar Germany . . . and the hell



called *Buchenwald*. How Werber — or rather, #7197, his prison number and identity at *Buchenwald* — would manage to survive five and one-half years in *Buchenwald*, is nothing less than a story of miracles! There was the freezing cold, the gnawing hunger, the deadly work at the *Buchenwald* quarry and on the railway lines. But, more than anything else, there was the frightening and heart-stopping unpredictability of camp life that made it so very easy to be killed by any Nazi overseer at *Buchenwald*, for any infraction . . . or none at all!

Of course, during all this time, Werber had absolutely no idea what was happening in Radom. Surely the thought that things weren't that bad there strengthened him. Surely the thought that one day he would be reunited with his wife and child and return to the life he once knew kept him going. But then he learned the worst from an inmate more recently come to *Buchenwald* from his hometown. Just about his entire family, including his wife and daughter, had been deported to *Treblinka* and were

no more. With that, Werber "fell into a deep depression" and felt he had nothing more to live for — until the 700 children came to the camp.

How did that happen? Early on, Werber had joined the *Buchenwald* underground. Among other things, they looked out for inmates at the camp as best they could. Concomitantly, they did their best to rid the camp of ruthless collaborators. Then in August of 1944 when those 700 boys came to *Buchenwald*, Werber found himself taking a leadership role, along with other Jews in the underground, making it his job to make sure these children survived. We learn how the children were taken care of physically, hidden in work details and throughout the camp. We learn how food was secured for all the children. Moreover, the boys were taken care of mentally and spiritually as well, with classes in history, Yiddish song, and Hebrew language — all of this done, of course, unbeknownst to the Nazis. Among these boys would be the Nobel prizewinner Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, later chief rabbi of the State of Israel.

Why did Werber take on this mission after hearing of the tragedy that had befallen his dearest? He did it in the name of his own daughter. He did it so that these 700 would not suffer her terrible fate!

Interesting, how life-giving is life-giving for all involved in the act . . . the rescued as well as the rescuer.

Dr. Diane Cypkin is a Professor of Media, Communication, and Visual Arts at Pace University.

BOOK PORTRAYS EICHMANN AS EVIL, BUT NOT BANAL

Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer.

By Bettina Stangneth. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group: New York, 2014. 608 pp. \$26.20 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY
JENNIFER SCHUESSLER,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

More than 50 years after its publication, Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* remains enduringly controversial, racking up a long list of critics who continue to pick apart her depiction of the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann as an exemplar of "the banality of evil," a bloodless, nearly mindless bureaucrat who "never realized what he was doing."

Bettina Stangneth, the author of *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer*, published in an English translation by Alfred A. Knopf, didn't aim to join those critics. An independent philoso-

pher based in Hamburg, she was interested in the nature of lies, and set out around 2000 to write a study of Eichmann, the Third Reich's head of Jewish affairs, who was tried in Israel in 1961, in light of material that has emerged in recent decades.

Then, while reading through the voluminous memoirs and other testimony Eichmann produced while in hiding in Argentina after the war, Ms. Stangneth came across a long note he wrote, dismissing the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, that flew in the face of Arendt's notion of Eichmann's "inability to think."

"I sat at my desk for three days, thinking about it," Ms. Stangneth said in a telephone interview from her

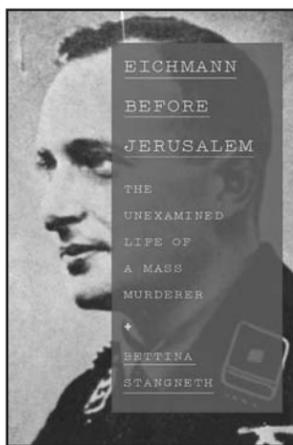
home. "I was totally shocked. I could not believe this man was able to write something like this."

Ms. Stangneth's book cites that document and a mountain of others to

offer what some scholars say is the most definitive case yet that Eichmann, who was hanged in 1962, wasn't the order-following functionary he claimed to be at his trial, but a fanatically dedicated National Socialist.

If previous researchers have seriously dented Arendt's case, Ms. Stangneth "shatters" it, said Deborah E. Lipstadt, a historian at Emory University and the author of a 2011 book about the Eichmann trial.

The facts about Eichmann in Argentina have been dribbling out, "but she really puts flesh on the



bones," Dr. Lipstadt said. "This was not a guy who just happened to do a dirty job, but someone who played a crucial role and did it with wholehearted commitment."

While Ms. Stangneth maintains that Arendt, who died in 1975, was fooled by Eichmann's performance on the stand, she sees her less as a foil than as an indispensable intellectual companion.

"It wasn't my plan to write a historian's book, just arguing against Arendt with historical facts," Ms. Stangneth said. "To understand someone like Eichmann, you have to sit down and think with him. And that's a philosopher's job."

Eichmann Before Jerusalem, based on research in more than 30 archives, certainly contains plenty of eye-opening facts, including the revelation that in 1956 Eichmann had drafted an open letter to the West German chan-

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THE SWEDES WHO TOLD THE WORLD ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

BY SARA MALM, MAILONLINE

On June 9, 1942, a speech was broadcast on the BBC that would change human history.

Władysław Sikorski, Poland's prime minister exiled in London, revealed that 700,000 Jews had been systematically murdered in brutal Nazi concentration camps, quarantined and executed en masse in ghettos, and walked to their deaths in gas chambers.



Sven Norrman, responsible for couriering the documents that would reveal the Nazi Holocaust and slaughter of 700,000 Polish Jews out of Warsaw, pictured with his Polish-Jewish mistress Gizela "Iza" Zbyszynska in the years after the war.

This was the first time the world and the Allied forces had heard of the crimes of the Holocaust, a secret the Nazi leaders had been able to keep until then.

The information, a dossier of photographs and documents, had come to London from Poland via Stockholm, thanks to a group of Swedish men

who had risked their lives to tell the world about the Nazi persecution of Polish Jews.

News of atrocities committed by the Nazi occupiers in Poland had reached the Allies before Sikorski's speech, but never on this scale.

Sikorski had even been advised by a fellow Polish politician to "edit" the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis from 700,000 to 7,000, as the number was too shocking to be believed.

The information in Sikorski's speech would go down in history, but the man who got it there, a Swedish businessman named Sven Norrman, was all but forgotten.

Sven Norrman, born in 1892, was head of Swedish engineering company ASEA in Warsaw, Poland, when the Germans invaded in 1939.

Norrman and a group of fellow

Swedish expatriates working for corporations that would later become Swedish Match and mobile-phone giant Ericsson, were evacuated but later returned.

Norrman and the Swedes lived as comfortably as it was possible in occupied Warsaw; electricians, phone lines and matches were, after all, goods and services the Germans had use of. Most of the time was spent living in a bunker in the Swedish embassy.

Norrman, by then in his late 40s, spoke Polish and was well liked by his staff. Before the war, he had enjoyed hunts and collected Polish art, and had fallen in love with his secretary, a young Polish Jew named Gizela "Iza" Zbyszynska.

Soon, Norrman and the others were witnessing increasing anti-Semitic violence and oppression of the Polish Jews. Norrman was able to photograph the very first implementation of the law requiring Jews to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothes, a practice which began in Poland.

He was later able to lie his way into the ghetto in Warsaw and took thousands of pictures of the horror within, before he was ushered out by a Jewish policeman for his own safety.

As the Nazis escalated their persecution and harassment, friends and colleagues of the Warsaw Swedes were jailed or simply disappeared, and when Norrman was approached



The documents Sven Norrman transported from Poland to London via Sweden detailing the horror of the Nazi concentration camps and the use of gas chambers were translated into Swedish later in 1942, but banned by the then government so as to not upset Nazi Germany.

by the Polish resistance army, he and the others decided to take a stand.

Travel in and out of occupied Poland was heavily restricted, but the men from neutral Sweden could move across the borders, and so became the perfect couriers for Armia Krajowa – the Polish Home Army.

The Warsaw Swedes had been told by their employers in no uncertain terms that nothing was to be done that could anger the German occupiers.

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1939 LETTER FOUND, PLEA TO FDR TO SAVE JEWISH KIDS

BY EVIE SALOMON, CBS NEWS

Recently, *60 Minutes* correspondent Bob Simon told the remarkable story of Sir Nicholas Winton, a stockbroker in London who saved 669 Czech children — most of them Jewish — from the Nazis during World War II.

England took in almost all of the 669 children. Winton, now 105 years old, told *60 Minutes* he had made a desperate plea for help to the United States back in 1939. He said he had written a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, describing the plight of the Czech children and asking that America grant refuge to a number of them.

"But the Americans wouldn't take any, which was a pity," Sir Nick said on the *60 Minutes* broadcast. "We could've got a lot more out."

David Langbart, an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration, happened to be watching *60 Minutes* when the story aired, and he was struck by Winton's story.

"The man has an incredible amount of chutzpah," Langbart says in an interview with *60 Minutes Overtime*. "I thought this is an incredibly caring man who put himself on the line to help people that he didn't even know."

After seeing the story, Langbart decided to look for evidence of Sir Nick's letter to FDR in the Department of State records at the National Archives. "And lo and behold, I came up with his original letter to President Roosevelt," Langbart says. The whereabouts of the document had been a mystery for almost 75 years.

Vanessa Fica, the story's co-producer, says she got "goose bumps" when she learned of Langbart's discovery.

"Winton scholars and even his own children were shocked when we told them the letter had been found," Fica tells *60 Minutes Overtime*. "I am grateful that Winton will be able to see his letter for the first time in 75 years."

Winton's "craft" is evident in the letter he wrote to Roosevelt, says Fica: "He kept it poignant and respectful while conveying a real sense of

urgency."

The letter, dated May 16th, 1939, addresses President Roosevelt as "Esteemed Sir."

"Perhaps people in America do not realize how little is being and has been done for refugee children in Czechoslovakia," the letter reads. "Is it possible for anything to be done to help us with this problem in America?... It is hard to state our case forcibly in a letter, but we trust to your imagination to realize how desperately urgent the situation is."

Also in the archives, Langbart uncovered a chain of internal government communications about Winton's letter.

According to Langbart, after the White House received Winton's letter, it referred the request to the Department of State for action. Shortly thereafter, the Department of State forwarded the letter to the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, suggesting that organizations involved might be interested in Winton's cause.

Langbart also found another memo

from the Department of State that instructed the U.S. embassy in London to "acknowledge receipt of Mr. Winton's letter" and "advise him that the United States Government is unable, in the absence of specific legislation, to permit immigration in excess of that provided for by existing immigration laws."

The U.S. officially denied Winton's request in a letter sent by the U.S. embassy in London. The original copy of that note, which Winton kept in his personal scrapbook, appeared on the *60 Minutes* broadcast.

When asked for his reaction to the U.S.'s response to Sir Nick's plea, Langbart shared that he had roots in Eastern Europe and members of his family had perished in the Holocaust.

"Personally, I wish that the United States government could have done more," Langbart says. "I'm not sure that anybody really recognized what was coming as far as the Holocaust. The United States opened its doors to the extent that the law allowed at the time. I wish it could have been more — but it wasn't."

SURVIVORS' CORNER

DIARIES REVEAL JEWISH SUFFERING DURING HOLOCAUST IN HUNGARY

BY MICHAEL E. RUANE,
THE GUARDIAN

In December 1941, when Hungary severed relations with the US following America's entry into the Second World War, Maria Madi, a doctor in Budapest, started keeping a diary for her daughter, who had just immigrated to Louisiana.

Madi did not know if her daughter would ever see her words. But she wrote anyhow. About the war. About the Nazis. About the suffering of Jews. And about the two people she hid in her apartment, at times behind a large mirror when visitors came to call.

By war's end, Madi, who was not Jewish, had filled 16 notebooks in handwritten English that serve as a grim portrait of the Holocaust in Hungary and of a defiant woman sickened by its cruelty.

"I am going to see, to hear, to witness everything," Madi wrote, adding later, "it may happen of course that neither myself nor my diary will ever reach you."

Now, Washington's US Holocaust Memorial Museum, which was given the diary last year, is preparing to post it online in the coming months and hopes eventually to have it fully transcribed.

Among the thousands of Holocaust

diaries, Madi's is a rare account written in English by a non-Jewish member of a local gentry, the museum said. It is blunt, harsh in parts, compassionate, wistful, sarcastic. It tells the story of an unusual woman, a British-educated, divorced Hungarian



Alfred Lakos, center, at age seven, is seen in 1944, flanked by his father, Laszlo, who was sent to a labor camp and survived the Holocaust, and his mother, Rosza, who was killed at Auschwitz.

doctor who held some negative views about Jews but risked her life to hide a Jewish friend, Irene Lakos, and her friend's seven-year-old nephew.

The nephew, Alfred Lakos, now 77, who lives in the US in Waleska, Georgia, said recently: "She was a hero, in my book." His aunt survived, as well, and died in Italy in 1998, he said.

The Holocaust, the slaughter of

Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their allies, came relatively late to Hungary, which was allied with Germany. But by the end of the war, more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews had been murdered, many of them in the gas chambers at Auschwitz, historians

have said.

In Budapest, Madi, then in her mid-40s, watched in dismay as Jews were humiliated, harassed and rounded up to be sent to labor or concentration camps. Alfred Lakos's father, Laszlo, for example, was sent to a labor camp, from which he escaped, and survived. His mother, Rosza, was sent to Auschwitz, where she was killed.

With his parents gone, and alone in his apartment, "Fred" Lakos found refuge with Madi, and a place in her narrative. Madi, who had lived alone and was unaccustomed to children, found "the poor little worm" exasperating during the almost four months he spent cooped up in her apartment.

"I am never alone," she wrote on 7 January, 1945. "The child is all the time talking, irritating, making noises and trouble."

Two weeks later, she wrote: "It is with the utmost self-control, I can tolerate the boy here in my flat."

Yet she soothed him when gunfire frightened him, and vowed to stay with him when he was in bed with chicken pox, she wrote, and he came to be affectionate with her.

The diary, which also contains snapshots of Madi's dog, Joe; newspaper clippings; and comments about food prices, the weather and politics, was donated to the museum by Madi's grandson, Stephen Walton, of Amarillo, Texas. He said in a telephone interview that the notebooks had been kept in plastic bags in a family safe for 30 years. "Hardly ever looked at them," he said.

After the war, Madi came to the United States, bringing the diary, which she later amended slightly in pencil. She worked as a psychiatrist,

(Continued on page 12)

HOLOCAUST REFUGEES SET SAIL TO PALESTINE – ONLY FOR BRITISH TO SEND THEM BACK

BY JULIAN GAVAGHAN,
YAHOO NEWS

Holocaust survivors set sail to Palestine on board the SS *Exodus* in 1947 — only to be turned back by the British and trigger global support for an Israeli state.

Around 4,500 people crammed on to the biggest-ever Jewish refugee vessel, which was later described as the "ship that launched a nation," at Seté, France.

They were defying a ban on immigration to the then British-controlled and largely Arab-populated Holy Land, which is also cherished by Muslims and Christians.

The Zionist organization Hamossad LeAliyah Bet — Hebrew for Institution for Immigration B — hoped it could beat a Royal Navy blockade.

But as they approached the coast of Palestine on July 18, the *Exodus* 1947 — the biggest-ever Jewish



Around 4,500 people crammed on to the biggest-ever Jewish refugee vessel in France.

refugee ship — was rammed by the British destroyer HMS *Cheviot*.

Sailors then boarded the immigrant vessel — but were challenged by pas-

sengers, who came from all over Europe, and members of the Jewish militant group Haganah.

During the clash, one crew member and two refugees died and two Royal Navy servicemen suffered fractured skulls.

The passengers, who had all fled German and Austrian displaced persons camps where 850,000 Jews still languished in 1947, were then forcibly taken to Haifa.

Among them was a newborn baby, who would die three weeks later after his own mother had died in childbirth during the voyage.

A British Pathé newsreel shows British troops taking injured passengers off the boat while other illegal immigrants stand around in ragged clothes.

The British, hoping to stem the tide of immigration, deported the

Exodus's passengers back to France, rather than Cyprus, where most of the others were being detained.

But the French authorities said they would only allow voluntary disembarkation, and the Jews resisted.

So, in a move that sparked widespread outrage, the Jews were taken to northern Germany, which had been occupied by British troops since the end of World War II.

Media coverage of their treatment triggered a tidal wave of Western support for a Jewish homeland in the Middle East.

And Jews continued to illegally emigrate to Palestine.

Most of the 4,500 on board the *Exodus* were eventually smuggled into the U.S. occupation zone in Germany, where Americans turned a blind eye to fleeing Jews.

In November 1947, the UN voted to back partition of Palestine between

(Continued on page 12)

HITLER'S HENCHMEN IN ARABIA

GUY WALTERS, *THE DAILY BEAST*

When most of us think of the premier retirement destination for unrepentant Nazis, our minds immediately turn to South America. We think of Josef Mengele hidden on a lonely estancia in Paraguay, or Adolf Eichmann ensconced in a two-bit suburb of Buenos Aires.

This perception was magnified by a slew of sensational books that were published in the early 1970s, many of which promoted a very iffy thesis that former Nazis were using the continent as a launchpad for a "Fourth Reich" that would, yes, take over the world.

This culminated in Ira Levin's 1976 thriller, *The Boys from Brazil*, in which fiendish Nazis hatch a diabolical plot to unleash several cloned Hitlers onto the world. The book was made into a film in 1978, and starred no less than Gregory Peck and Laurence Olivier, who were presumably behind on the rent.

But as the recent declaration of the death of the former SS officer and Eichmann henchman Alois Brunner reveals, the boys didn't just go to Brazil. For Brunner, like so many other Nazis, found the Middle East an equally hospitable location, and far less out-on-a-limb than a chalet in Patagonia, no matter how gemütlich.

Brunner, who sent an estimated 130,000 Jews to their deaths, made his home in Damascus, Syria, where he found the conditions much to his liking. Although there has been much guff peddled about Brunner's postwar activities over the past few days — some of which may be true — there is no doubt that he worked in cahoots with the Assad regime, or at least certainly enjoyed its protection.

However, Brunner was not the only perpetrator of the Holocaust

mooching around the streets of the Syrian capital. In terms of gruesome numbers, Franz Stangl, the former commandant of *Treblinka* extermination camp, had some 800,000 murders on what remained of his conscience, and he arrived in Damascus in September 1948 with the assistance of a Roman Catholic bishop.

Although Brunner is said to have variously worked as an intelligence agent, an arms dealer, and a security advisor, Stangl took more menial positions in textile firms. Life was somewhat frugal, but manageable.



Alois Brunner (left) and Franz Stangl.

Unfortunately for Stangl, the local chief of police took a fancy to his 14-year-old daughter and wanted to add the child to his harem. Stangl didn't tarry, and packed his bags and shepherded his entire family to — you guessed it — Brazil.

Stangl seems to have been one of the few Nazis who didn't find the air pleasing in Syria. Most, such as Major-General Otto-Ernst Remer, prospered on Arab Street. Remer was, frankly, a real piece of work, and having founded the swiftly banned Socialist Reich Party in West Germany in the early 1950s, decided that working as an arms dealer with the likes of Brunner was more rewarding.

Unlike Brunner, Remer was itinerant, and spent much time in that other nest of postwar Nazis — Cairo. If anything, the Egyptian capital was even more appealing than Damascus, and had been playing host to Nazis immediately after the war, when King Farouk opened his arms to scores of former SS and Gestapo officers.

That hospitality continued even after Farouk was deposed by the Free Officers Movement in 1952, as Nasser regarded German scientific and intelligence expertise as being an essential component of his regime.

No less a figure than Joachim Daumling, the former head of the Gestapo in *Düsseldorf*, was tasked with establishing Nasser's secret service.

In fact, the list of some habitués of Cairo in the 1950s and the 1960s reads like a who's who of Nazi Germany, featuring as it did the rescuer of Mussolini, Otto Skorzeny; the ace Stuka pilot Hans-Ulrich Rudel; the leader

of a notorious SS penal unit, Oskar Dirlwanger; and the particularly odious and violently anti-Semitic stooge of Goebbels, Johannes von Leers.

What made the relationship between these former Nazis and the Egyptians and Syrians so successful was that it was a genuinely two-way deal. The Arabs offered the Nazis a haven, as well as a market for all their nefarious dealings in arms and black-market currency. The Nazis, meanwhile, were able to provide technical and military experts, as well as the know-how of establishing the instruments of repression.

However, below the back-scratching lay a deep and dark underpinning to

the relationship between the crescent and the swastika. That was, of course, a hatred of the Jews, and in particular, a desire to see the eradication of Israel.

That shared exterminationist desire had been born during the war itself, when the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husayni, had made his home in the luxurious Hotel Adlon in Berlin in 1941, and had impressed Hitler with his hatred of the Jews. The Mufti lobbied the Nazis hard to kick the British out of the Middle East, and he was instrumental in raising recruits for a largely Muslim unit of the SS called the 13th Armed Mountain Division of the SS *Handschar*.

In addition, throughout the war in North Africa, German intelligence had worked closely with the Egyptians, and the Mufti is thought to have been a key intermediary between King Farouk and Hitler himself. If further evidence of the roots of the Nazi-Arab affair were required, then it is worth considering the fact that both Nasser and his successor, Anwar Sadat, had been wartime agents for the Germans.

Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, many old Nazis managed discreetly to trickle back to what they regarded as the Fatherland. However, others, such as the former SS "doctor" in *Mauthausen*, Aribert Heim — and indeed Alois Brunner — would end their days in the Middle East, dying lonely deaths in obscure dusty back streets of Cairo and Damascus.

It is hard to feel sorry for such lonely demises, but in the end, those Nazis who escaped to the Middle East found permanent sanctuary. Remembering that may seem inflammatory when the West struggles with its relationship with that part of the planet, but it is nonetheless the awkward truth.

US SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS TO NAZI WAR CRIMINALS SEND RIPPLES THROUGH JEWISH WORLD

Revelations that the United States currently pays Social Security and other benefits to concentration camp guards and others involved in carrying out the Holocaust has scandalized the Jewish world, eliciting harsh condemnations from many quarters.

The Associated Press revealed recently that such payments continue to be made to participants in the Nazi genocide who were deported from the US because of their crimes.

According to the investigation, war criminals who emigrated to America and were outed and subsequently expelled have collected millions in state benefits.

The wire service claimed it was able to account for four such beneficiaries who are still collecting Social Security payments. The payments, AP alleged, were used by the government to pressure Nazi suspects to leave the coun-

try, by promising them they would continue to receive benefits after leaving.

Most Nazi war criminals and collaborators were never held accountable, Estee Yaari, a spokeswoman for Yad Vashem, told *The Jerusalem Post*. Asserting that there can be no statute of limitations on Holocaust-related crimes, Yaari called on the US to stop the payments and bring the recipients to justice in their respective countries.

"It's maddening that some of these criminals who were forced out of the US once their past was uncovered were able to collect Social Security and live free lives," she said.

Polish Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich went even further in his criticism of Washington, stating that using government funds "to help war criminals is to desecrate the memory of the victims of the *Shoah*."

Deborah Lipstadt, a former member of the United States Holocaust Memorial

Council appointed by former President Bill Clinton, called the payments "outrageous, especially if it were done to make the OSI's stats look good."

The OSI, or Office of Special Investigations, was a unit in the Department of Justice tasked with uncovering Nazi war criminals.

Samuel Dubbin, a Florida lawyer who has represented Holocaust survivors in a number of high-profile restitution cases, said the "survivor leadership supports the immediate elimination of the Social Security loophole, yet are not surprised to learn that the US government has been refusing to acknowledge or correct its actions, as it has protected the thefts perpetrated by global insurers like Allianz and Generali, and refuses to press Germany to fully fund the needs of Holocaust survivors worldwide."

Despite all of the furor over the payments, however, the issue is more

complex than presented in the media, said Dr. Efraim Zuroff, a Nazi hunter with the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

"The maximum 'justice' available in these cases under US law was deportation, except in cases in which there was a country seeking extradition to put the Nazi on trial, which was a very rare occurrence," he explained.

"Under those circumstances, the US pushed to get as many of these out of the country, and one of the ways of doing so was to offer them the possibility of retaining Social Security privileges, if they would depart before a court ordered them deported, thereby hastening their departure and saving the US endless legal proceedings (and the expenses involved).

"The thought of these Nazi war criminals and collaborators enjoying their final years courtesy of US payments is absolutely abhorrent," he said, "but the reality is much more complex than that."

PHOTOHIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION AND THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE I



United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.



Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, and Zigmund Wilf, board member, American Society for Yad Vashem.



Jessica Glickman Mauk, board member; Abi Halpern, chair; Barry Levine, chair — Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem.



Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, with the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin.



Alexandra Lebovits, Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem; and Mark Moskowitz, board member, American Society for Yad Vashem.



Mr. Harry Karten, board member of the American Society for Yad Vashem, shaking hands with the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin.

QUARTERS IN NEW YORK CITY, MARKING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST, LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU



Lawrence and Adina Burian, board members of the American Society for Yad Vashem, with Ron Prozor, ambassador of Israel to the UN.



Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Colin and Gail Halpern; and Shaya Ben Yehuda, managing director of the International Relations Division of Yad Vashem.



Shaya Ben Yehuda, managing director of the International Relations Division of Yad Vashem; Barry and Marilyn Rubenstein, board members of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Ron B. Meier, executive director of the American Society for Yad Vashem.



David Halpern, treasurer, American Society for Yad Vashem; Sharon Halpern; Abi Halpern, chair of the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem.



Jaci and Gonen Paradis, Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem.



Ron B. Meier, executive director of the American Society for Yad Vashem, with Lawrence Burian, board member of the American Society for Yad Vashem.



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

“DO NOT LOSE HOPE”

BY LIMOR BAR ILAN

“One who has never eaten his bread at faraway places, one who has never sat on his bed at night filled with grief — he does not know You, Ye Heavenly Forces.

In memory of our times together at Camp 13, from your brother, Emanuel.”

Dedication written in Frida Gutman's autograph book by Emanuel (Manek) Gutman, March 19, 1942, Gross Sarne.

The autograph book made for Frida (Friedl) Gutman at the Gross Sarne concentration camp accompanied her upon her transfer to Gross Masselwitz and then to Freiburg. After liberation, the book became a precious memento left to her by Jewish prisoners with whom she had crossed paths at the camps, among them her brother, Emanuel. The book has a cover of wood and tin, adorned with a Star of David and the inscription: “RAB: Lager Gross Sarne, 1942.” Prisoners made the journal out of materials they managed to procure at the camp and filled it with poems, dedications, memories and words of farewell.

Frida Gutman was born in Chorzow, Poland, in 1916, one of nine children to parents Leon (Leib) and Klara. It was at Gross Sarne that Frida met her future husband, Yitzhak Poremba. Both survived the war and were reunited in Stuttgart, Germany, where

they were married and had a son, Yakov. Two years later, the Porembas immigrated to Israel, where their daughter Ora was born.

Frida preserved the precious autograph book through the years, yet she never told anyone about it — not even her children. Only when she was over 80 years old did she take the book out of the closet

Poremba decided to approach Yad Vashem, hoping its staff could shed light on his mother's life story. After the book was donated, a careful investigation was carried out using Yad Vashem's numerous databases. Extensive information was discovered regarding the book itself, as well as about Frida's biography and the stories of many other Jews from the

same area. Out of some 30 people who wrote in Frida's book, ten survivors were located. Others had been murdered, their names commemorated in the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names.

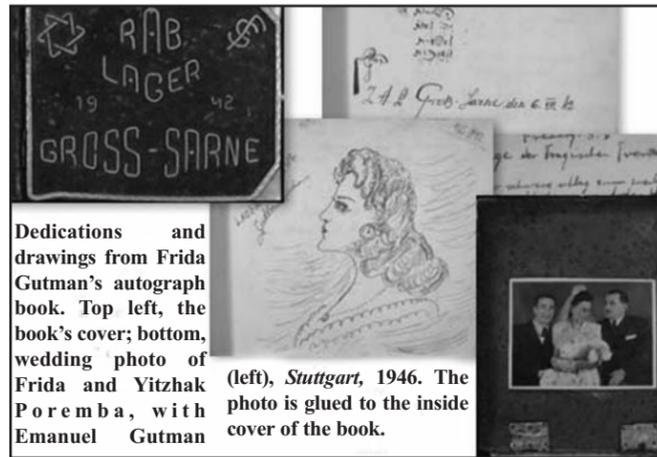
Inscriptions in the autograph book reveal the state of mind of some of the prisoners

at the three camps where Frida was incarcerated — their personal feelings, their hopes and their fears at a time when their very lives were in the hands of the concentration camp regimes. In some cases, the inscription in the book is the last written testimony of a Jewish prisoner. One of the dedications is dated April 4, 1942: “Clench your fists; grind your teeth; walk under the winds beating in your face; march to the sounds of music like true fighters. This is the straight

road by which individuals will travel.” “I hope you'll remember me,” wrote David Lirens to Frida on September 28, 1942. It turns out that Lirens was a businessman from Amsterdam whose property was confiscated and who was then deported. Three months after writing in Frida's book, he lost his life at the *Spytkowice* camp.

Some two years after writing a dedication in his sister's journal at Gross Sarne, Frida's brother Emanuel (Manek) Gutman wrote another inscription, apparently on the day when brother and sister were separated again, this time at Freiburg: “3.5, Freiburg, on the day of the tragic separation. Although a heavy blow has landed upon us again, always stay joyful. After being together for three years, fate has turned and separated us. May you merit to see your brothers again. And now, dear Friedl, do not lose hope. Please continue hoping that we will meet again. Never forget your brother, just as you forever preserve the memory of our parents. Cheer up — from Manek, who owes you much gratitude and who will never forget you.”

The hope of brother and sister to see each other again indeed came to fruition; they were reunited in Poland after the war. In 1948 Frida and her husband immigrated to Israel, closely followed by her sister, Ruth, and her brother, Emanuel.



Dedications and drawings from Frida Gutman's autograph book. Top left, the book's cover; bottom, wedding photo of Frida and Yitzhak Poremba, with Emanuel Gutman

(left), Stuttgart, 1946. The photo is glued to the inside cover of the book.

where she had hidden it and hand it over to her grandson, Ben. After Frida passed away, members of the Poremba family were left with many questions surrounding the contents of the book — which was crumbling with age — and indeed its very nature, especially as the inscriptions in the book appeared in four different languages: German, Polish, Dutch and Hebrew.

Hearing about the “Gathering the Fragments” campaign, Yakov

THE VIOLIN FROM BERLIN

his wife was not Jewish. Theo's youngest brother Hans, a typesetter by profession, was an active member of a communist group. In addition to his involvement in the theatrical sphere, Hans also distributed

march to *Mauthausen*, and from there to *Melk* and *Ebensee*. Hans survived, yet many of his family members were less fortunate. His wife Ruth was also deported to the camps and murdered, as were his

brother Theo, Theo's wife and daughter, their father Manheim and their sister Rosa.

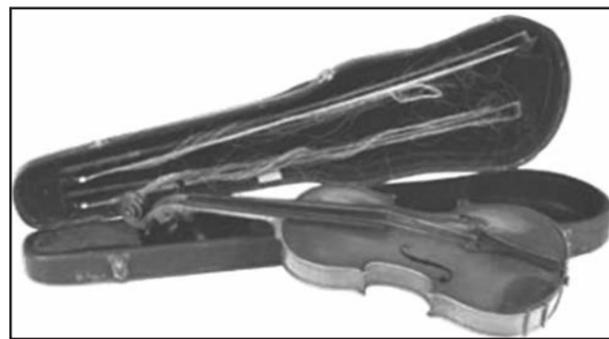
When Hans returned to Berlin, his brother gave him the violin that had been hidden throughout the war. Marrying for the second time, Hans settled in the city of *Weimar*.

He and his wife had a daughter, whom they named Ruth. For 40 years, Hans kept the violin under a bed in his house. When he passed away in 1992, Ruth inherited the instrument. For her, the violin was a symbol of the suffering that befell her father during the war — and a means of commemorating family members murdered during the Holocaust as well as the original owners of the instrument. Recently,

however, Ruth came to the conclusion that Yad Vashem was the only truly suitable place for the precious memento.

Upon arrival at Yad Vashem the violin was examined, and an inscription found stating the year 1715. In an initial investigation carried out by the Artifacts Department, it was established that Theo was deported on August 15, 1942 and sent to Riga, where he was murdered. It appears that the man who gave him the violin was also deported in August 1942, but his identity remains unknown. The violin is scheduled to undergo examination by a professional violin appraiser and historian, which may reveal further clues as to the identity of the owners and artisans of the violin.

The violin will be joining other instruments already safeguarded in the Artifacts Collection that tell the stories of many Jewish musicians who performed in Europe during the war. For a few, music saved their lives — yet most were murdered, and their instruments plundered and lost.



The 300-year-old violin that survived the Shoah.

printed Communist propaganda. In February 1943, Hans was captured and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he became Inmate no. 103926. He quickly located fellow Communists in the camp and, with their help, was assigned to forced labor at a Nazi printing house. When Auschwitz-Birkenau was evacuated on January 18, 1945, Hans and other prisoners were sent on a death

BY SARA SHOR

Recently, Yad Vashem's Artifacts Collection received a precious addition: an ancient violin that belonged to an anonymous Jew who had been deported from a Jewish retirement home in Berlin. The home, located on Grosse Hamburger Strasse, was used during the war as a temporary collection point for Jews awaiting deportation to the East.

In the summer of 1942, a 40-year-old Jewish man named Theo (his full name is recorded at Yad Vashem) was working as a janitor at the retirement home. One day, he was approached by an older Jewish man who said: “Tomorrow I will be deported; I would like to give you the most precious thing that I own. You are still young — you will certainly survive this inferno. This violin was passed down in my family; everyone has been deported. I am the last one left.” Several days later, Theo was deported to Riga. Before leaving Berlin, he managed to give the violin to one of his brothers, who had managed to escape deportation because

BRITAIN MAY HAVE SUPPRESSED “MASTERPIECE” HOLOCAUST FILM SO AS NOT TO HELP ZIONISTS

BY STUART JEFFRIES,
THE GUARDIAN

“In the spring of 1945,” says the narrator, over bucolic springtime shots of the German countryside, “the Allies advancing into the heart of Germany came to *Bergen-Belsen*. Neat and tidy orchards, well-stocked farms lined the wayside, and the British soldier did not fail to admire the place and its inhabitants. At least, until he began to feel a smell ...”

So begins a British film about the Holocaust that was abandoned and shelved for 70 years because it was deemed too politically sensitive. The smell came from the dead, their bodies burned or rotting; or from malnourished, often disease-ridden prisoners in the concentration camp of *Bergen-Belsen*, near all those thriving German farms.

As Allied troops liberated such camps across what had been German-occupied Europe, the British Ministry of Information’s Sidney Bernstein (who later founded Granada Television) was commissioned to make a documentary that would provide incontrovertible evidence of the Nazis’ crimes.

Bernstein assembled a remarkable team, including the future Labour cab-

inet minister Richard Crossman, who wrote the film’s lyrical script, and Alfred Hitchcock, who flew in from Hollywood to advise Bernstein on its structure. They set to work on a documentary entitled *German Concentration Camps Factual*

anthropologist André Singer has made a documentary called *Night Will Fall*, telling the extraordinary story of filming the camps and the fate of Bernstein’s project.

...Singer also interviews another illustrious Holocaust survivor, a

be a producer for *Schindler’s List*. Lustig has a theory about why British authorities suppressed Bernstein’s film. “At this time, the Brits had enough problems with the Jews.” By that, no doubt, he means that Britain was dealing with Zionists agitating for a Jewish homeland in the British mandate of Palestine — and seeing the full extent of Jewish suffering would only inflame them.

Singer says he’s already had flak for including Lustig’s theory. “Why the film was scuppered is not very well documented,” he says. “But Branko may well have a point.” Singer points out that in 1945, the incoming Labour government’s foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, was anti-Zionist and unsympathetic to the foundation of a Jewish state. But he concedes there is no strong proof. “The only documentary evidence we have is a memo from the Foreign Office saying that screening such an ‘atrocities film’ would not be a good idea.”

Lustig’s theory, if it could be proven, would be a bombshell.

Britain suppressing a hugely important Holocaust documentary because it didn’t want to help the Jews who were trying to rebuild their nation after the Holocaust? Sadly, the idea is not far-fetched.



A US combat cameraman, featured in *Night Will Fall*.

Survey. As they worked, reels of film kept arriving, sent by British, American and Soviet combat and newsreel cameramen from 11 camps, including *Auschwitz*, *Buchenwald*, *Dachau* and *Bergen-Belsen*. As well as the dead, the footage showed starved survivors and human remains in ovens.

...Now, 70 years on, director and

Croatian named Branko Lustig. He was a child in *Belsen*, so sick at the time of liberation that when he heard a strange noise he thought he’d arrived in heaven to a chorus of angels’ trumpets. In reality, they were the bagpipes played by Scottish soldiers.

Many years later, Steven Spielberg chose Lustig, by then a filmmaker, to

THE JEW WHO GOT A JOB OFFER FROM THE NAZIS

BY LUCY WALLIS, BBC NEWS

Before World War II 170,000 Jews lived in Vienna — by the end there were just 6,000. One of those who fled the Nazis was Freddie Knoller — now 93, he survived a Gestapo interrogation, *Auschwitz* and a death march in sub-zero temperatures.

“I saw two civilians coming towards me. Each one had a hat on and a long black leather coat, and I recognized them immediately, this must be two people from the Gestapo,” says Freddie Knoller.

It was July 1943. Twenty-two-year-old Knoller had managed to obtain false papers and get work in occupied Paris introducing Nazi soldiers to the nightclubs and brothels of the red light district. But that day he was arrested and taken to Gestapo headquarters.

In a large room with a portrait of Adolf Hitler hanging on the wall, one of the officers interrogated him.

“While he was talking, I saw on his desk a plaster head of a human being and he saw me looking at it and he said, ‘Oh, this plaster head, that’s the head of a Jew, because we were taught how to recognize Jews by the structure of their head,’” says Knoller.

“With that he got up from his desk, went behind me and he took my head between his two hands, tracing it. I’m not ashamed to say I wet my pants because I was so sure I would now be

recognized as a Jew.

“He said, ‘Oh yes, I can see you come from a good German background and I think you should be joining our organization as an interpreter, you will be earning a lot of money and finally you will be working with your own people.’

“I felt so amazed, laughing [to] myself... ‘Wow, what an adventure to be able to get away from the Gestapo,



Knoller (far left) with his brothers and parents - he did not learn the fate of his mother and father until 1995.

and they want me to work with them.”

But it was a job offer that Knoller had no intention of accepting. He quickly made himself scarce.

This was the third time he had found himself under Nazi occupation. The first, he had to leave his home in Vienna as a 17-year-old in 1938 when Austria was annexed by Germany in the *Anschluss*.

His parents sent him to stay with friends in Belgium where they thought he would be safe, but when Hitler invaded the country in 1940, Knoller had to flee for a second time.

He chose to go to France. “I read in these naughty books all about Paris, about Montmartre, about the Moulin Rouge with the half-naked dancers on the stage and this is where I wanted to go,” he says.

But things went wrong almost immediately. He was arrested at the French border for having a German passport and was interned in a camp for France’s enemies in May 1940. After the Nazis invaded France a month later, he managed to escape and finally made his way to the bright lights of Paris.

But his run-in with the Gestapo made him realize it was too dangerous for him to stay there.

Instead of taking their job offer, he turned to a friend for help and was introduced to the leader of the French Resistance. He went to live in the mountains near the town of Figeac in southern France, fighting the occupying German soldiers.

“It was a great joy for me to fight my

enemies instead of earning money from them,” says Knoller.

He learned how to shoot a gun and wire up explosives to derail an enemy troop train.

“Our leader... made sure that whenever we put explosives on to the railway line, we hid it with leaves, grass, so it shouldn’t be noticed immediately. Then he told us that we should go and observe, but quite far away, what is going to happen, up in the hills.

“The train came, we heard the explosion, we saw the first engine topple over on the side and the whole thing just collapsed, but we ran away immediately back to our resistance group. I must say it was wonderful.”

He soon fell in love with a beautiful local girl called Jacqueline. But after an argument, she betrayed him to the gendarmes.

They burned his body with cigarettes to find out more about his resistance group, and when he could not stand the pain any more, Knoller revealed his true identity and was handed over to the Gestapo.

It was September 1943, and the Nazis had finally caught up with him. Knoller was sent to *Auschwitz*, where he was imprisoned until the war was nearly over. He worked in temperatures as low as -25°C carrying 25-kg cement bags in the camp and was forced to run with them — he was whipped if he was too slow.

(Continued on page 14)

DIARIES REVEAL JEWISH SUFFERING DURING HOLOCAUST IN HUNGARY

(Continued from page 6)

Walton said. The family called her "Mami." She died in Houston in 1970, at age 72, he said.

"I'm humbled by the fact that she never mentioned what she had done, he said. "It was just something she felt she had to do."

Walton said the family had always kept the notebooks private. "These are about my grandmother," he said. But recently he wondered if the Holocaust Museum might be interested. It was.

"Hungary is such a specific story in ... the Holocaust," said Rebecca Erbelding, a museum archivist who has studied the diary. "It happens completely differently in Hungary than it happens anywhere else."

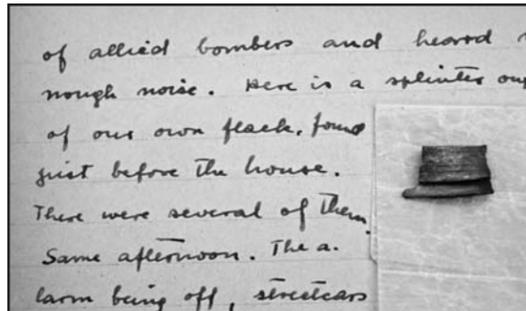
"It's so late in the war ... 1944," she said in a recent interview at the museum. For "the Jews of Germany it's been coming since 1933. For the Jews of Hungary, they had been safe." Some Jews had even fled to Hungary, she explained. "It's the largest and last Jewish community left in Europe," Erbelding said. "There's 800,000 Jews still in Hungary in 1944."

But that March, the Nazis, suspicious about Hungary's wavering allegiance, occupied the country. By early July, 437,000 Hungarian Jews had been rounded up and were sent to ghettos and Auschwitz.

Madi's journal, which chronicles much of this, was a risky enterprise. "This diary would be sufficient to hang me five times a week," she wrote in 1944, adding in another

entry: "I am rather astonished I am not ... reported for my allied sympathies."

Written mostly with a fountain pen, the diary begins on 23 December 1941, after Hungary's declaration of war on the United States. "Since we are at war with the states, there's no more any hope for me to join you, my only ones," she wrote, addressing her daughter, Hilda, then 21; Hilda's husband, George Walton,



Excerpt from the diary of Hungarian doctor Maria Madi, which she began writing in 1941. She attached a piece of shrapnel she found outside her home.

29; and their four-month-old daughter, Barbara. She might not see them again for years, she wrote, according to a partial transcription compiled by Erbelding. "And who knows whether we're going to survive at all."

Four months later, on 24 April 1942, Madi was worried about her Jewish friend, Irene Lakos, whom she called "Lacy." "She is nice as always and tries not to be bitter She says they ... are grateful for every day they can still spend in their flat."

Things got worse after the German occupation started on 19 March 1944:

"Jews will have to wear the yellow star from April 5 on," Madi wrote on 31 March. "They are sick with shame and fear, marked thus, they may be set out to any brutality." A few weeks later she wrote: "Almost every day new atrocities and cruelties happen. It is difficult to register them all and too painful too."

By the autumn, violence, arrests and deportations were increasing, and on 17 October Madi came home and found Irene Lakos and her nephew waiting for her. She took them in. As the days passed, and visitors came to call, she often hid her "friends," as she called them, in the bathroom and in an adjacent apartment.

Outside it was the "darkest middle ages," Madi wrote. There was shooting. Neighbors turned up missing. Yet she maintained some of her era's prejudices. "The more I am attached to my Jewish friends, there is a certain Jewish type I hate," she wrote on 28 October. "And the best joke is this seven-year-old child is just the worst type, whom I try hard to save. No bad quality, we used to know as Jewish qualities, is missing."

Alfred Lakos, who has a copy of the diary on a CD, remembers little from those days. In old family photographs he appears as a handsome boy in shorts, high socks and sport coat. "Based on the diary, I was a very rambunctious child," he said. "According to some of the statements Maria

made, I was a pain in the butt. She was not used any more to a seven-year-old."

"I may have made her mad or something," he said. "Let me put it this way, I was very spoiled."

"Don't hold this against her," he said. "She risked her life to save two additional lives.... She is a hero. Thank God that we had people like her."

On 30 October 1944, with the Nazis in control of Budapest and the SS extermination chief, Adolf Eichmann, hard at work there, Madi worried that snooping neighbors or officials might discover her guests.

"Tonight the janitor was here to register the amount of hot water used this month," she wrote. "I had to show him therefore into the bathroom, but put my friends — before opening the door — behind the book mirror. It was a splendid joke, like hide and seek."

On 5 February 1945, she wrote that there were German soldiers in her building, replaced two days later by the Russians. On 17 February she wrote that Fredi's father, who had also been in hiding, had arrived the day before. "Exhausted ... he was still happy to find his sister and son safe," she wrote. "He and Fredi are off this morning, early, they have to do a good day's walk and the child is untrained."

On 5 November 1945, with the long war in Europe over, she made a final entry for her daughter: "This is the end of scribbling," she wrote. "Last night I addressed my first direct letter to you. From now on there's no more sense in writing in this diary."

HOLOCAUST REFUGEES SET SAIL TO PALESTINE...

(Continued from page 6)

an independent Jewish homeland and a separate Arab state, a plan Britain agreed to.

And by the time Israel declared independence from Britain on May 14, 1948, only 1,800 *Exodus* passengers remained in displaced persons camps.

But on May 15, the armies of the Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq invaded, determined to destroy Israel before it was a day old.

Yet within a year, the country, which had already been fighting a civil war since 1947, had defeated its neighbors and seized 60 percent of UN-designated Palestinian land.

The remaining Arab territory was later mostly swallowed up by Jordan before being seized by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.

The *Exodus* was later described by Abba Koushi, the mayor of Haifa, as the "ship that launched a nation."

The Palestinians, on the other hand, describe the destruction of their state as "al-Nakba" (the catastrophe), and almost five million officially remain refugees.

DOCUMENTARY SHEDS LIGHT ON HITLER'S \$5 BILLION MISSING FORTUNE

A new British documentary exposes the secrets of Adolf Hitler's missing fortune, which is estimated to be worth more than \$5 billion, reported the *International Business Times*.

The documentary *The Hunt for Hitler's Millions* reveals that the Nazi dictator squirreled away a considerable fortune, amassed from image rights, personal appearances and his refusal to pay income tax.

If the money were ever found, one participant in the documentary says, relatives of Hitler could conceivably claim a portion — or earn a continuing wage from the Nazi's image rights.

The documentary also reveals that Hitler levied a royalty on German stamps that used his image and hid the money away in secret bank accounts.

Details about Hitler's hidden fortune were contained in a will drawn up by the dictator just before his death and discovered by Herman Rothman, a German Jew who worked with British intelligence during World War II.

Rothman, now in his 90s, discloses

in the documentary how his counter-intelligence unit spotted a suspicious man dressed in civilian clothes in Berlin, shortly after Hitler took his own life.

Believing the man to be a Nazi on the run, Rothman and his team arrested him. Inside his jacket,



Undated photo of Adolf Hitler and his then girlfriend Eva Braun posing on the terrace of the Berghof, Berchtesgaden, Germany.

they found Hitler's seven-page last will and testament.

The first section of the document was a manifesto blaming the Jews for starting World War II, Rothman said. The second part revealed how Hitler had attempted to hide the

extent of his wealth.

"What emerges is a picture of a smart property and art investor — a shrewd manager of cash with a love of money," the documentary makers said.

"Hitler's actual tax records survive and suggest that he was a 'cash-in-hand' businessman and a serial tax evader. He owed the German taxman a small fortune when he became supreme leader in 1933."

Also appearing on the program is Dr. Cris Whetton, author of a book on Hitler's finances, who said a significant proportion of the Nazi dictator's wealth was from royalties on his book, *Mein Kampf*, which was given by the state for free to couples on their wedding day.

"He loved money," Whetton says in the documentary. "He just wasn't prepared to pay for it."

NAZI DIARY DEPICTS BRUTAL TACTICS EMPLOYED AGAINST LODZ JEWS

Recently uncovered diaries written by Nazi officers meticulously document horrifying occurrences within Lodz ghetto.

BY KOBI NACHSHONI, YNETNEWS

Seventy years after the liquidation of the Lodz ghetto during World War II, a diary containing meticulous documentation of day-to-day life within its walls, as depicted by Nazi officers, was recently uncovered.

Using laundered language, the Germans describe their treatment of the local Jews, including how they punished them over thoughts of escape, and their use of brutal methods to extract information from the “smart alecks” among them.

During World War II, Lodz was home to the second-largest Jewish ghetto. Over 200,000 Jews are said to have passed through the ghetto, many later going to the notorious Auschwitz death camp. Only 10,000 are said to have survived.

“HUNT AFTER CROSSBREED”

The Shem Olam Institute for Education, Documentation and Research on Faith and the Holocaust recently managed to get hold of the rare find which the Nazis attempted to hide, and has now revealed it, on the occasion of *Yom Hakaddish Haklali*, the memorial day for victims of the Holocaust whose dates of death are

unknown.

The difficult text shows another aspect of the violent and brutal regime directed against the locals, which showed no patience to those who failed to obey cruel orders.

The diary features descriptions of the



Lodz ghetto.

use of torture in interrogations of Jews who are termed as “smart alecks,” arrests of Jews suspected of possessing “prohibited items,” and an account of contacts with the *Judenrat*, a Jewish governing council, from which the officers extracted incriminating inside information against Jews who did not adhere to the strict rules.

“The Jew Goldberg Meyer was caught after we received information

that he was pretending to be a Pole, and trading textile products that he had acquired in the past,” the German officers wrote in one of the diary’s pages.

The description is followed by many general reports about detainees and

hunts for Jews: “Shtayer, David, born October 21, year of birth unknown, from *Turek*, about 160 centimeters tall, thin, black hair, brown eyes, also called by the name of Anthony Brodziak.”

Another section read: “The *mis-chling* (“crossbreed” in German) Oscar Steiner, born February 26 1901, from *Melsdorf*, lives in *Oberau* within *Garmisch* district, fled, after

which a hunt for him was conducted by the *Munich* police under an arrest warrant, according to regulations.”

“ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC OF EXTENT OF GERMAN EVIL”

Another entry described the brutal harassment of a family that tried to hide a Jewish boy in their home: “The boy Haimovich Hanek had been staying at Foulkes Deutsche (a Polish of German descent). Following a quarrel between neighbors, we received information that the Yaeger family had taken in a Jewish boy — his family gave them a great amount of money to take care of him. The Yaeger couple was caught after a manhunt, and the boy claimed he was their son. His name was revealed later on. In the morning, a unit will head out to confiscate the property in their home.”

Rabbi Dr. Avraham Krieger, director of the Shem Olam institute, said: “The diary, which was revealed for the first time, displays another characteristic of the extent of German evil. The ghetto officers used any possible means to create a regime of terror and fear among the Jews of the ghetto, and used the cruelest, most despicable tools to serve the Nazi destruction machine. This diary reveals precisely what they Germans wanted with all their might to hide — but they didn’t manage to do so.”

BOOK PORTRAYS EICHMANN AS EVIL, BUT NOT BANAL

(Continued from page 4)

cellor, Konrad Adenauer — discovered by Ms. Stangneth in a trove of Eichmann’s papers held in German state archives — proposing that he return to his homeland to stand trial.

Ms. Stangneth also describes the sometimes surprisingly open postwar networks that protected Eichmann, as well as the reluctance of West German officials — who knew where Eichmann was as early as 1952, according to classified documents published in 2011 by the German tabloid *Bild* — to bring him and other former Nazis to justice.

Such revelations drew headlines when Ms. Stangneth’s book appeared in Germany in 2011, the 50th anniversary of the Eichmann trial, contributing to renewed debate about whether Germany’s postwar government had made a complete break with the past. (The full 3,400-page file on Eichmann held by the German intelligence service, the BND, has yet to be declassified.)

But the core of *Eichmann Before Jerusalem*, which was translated into English by Ruth Martin, is a detailed portrait of Eichmann and the circle of former Nazis and Nazi sympathizers surrounding him in Argentina, based largely on materials previously available to scholars but never, Ms. Stangneth said, fully or systematically mined.

“We waste a lot of time waiting for spectacular new material,” she said. “We haven’t sat down and taken a very close look at the material we have.”

That material forms a veritable mountain. Eichmann’s testimony in Jerusalem runs to thousands of pages of transcripts, notes and handwritten texts, including a 1,200-page memoir he produced after the trial.

Ms. Stangneth, building on the work of others, has also pieced together the so-called Argentina Papers, a tangle of more than 1,300 pages of handwritten memoirs, notes and transcripts of secret interviews of Eichmann in 1957 by Willem Sassen, a Dutch journalist and former Nazi living in Buenos Aires.

The Sassen transcripts, scattered across three German archives in incomplete and confusingly paginated copies, have long been known to scholars, and small portions were submitted as evidence in Eichmann’s trial, where he dismissed them as loose “pub talk.” (Two brief, edited excerpts also ran in *Life* magazine.)

Ms. Stangneth uncovered hundreds of pages of previously unknown transcripts in mislabeled files. She also found evidence that the Sassen circle included more people than scholars had previously recognized, among them Ludolf von Alvensleben, former

adjutant to Heinrich Himmler, whose participation in some of the interviews, she said, had gone undetected.

Together, in Ms. Stangneth’s depiction, these men formed a kind of perverse book club, meeting almost weekly at Sassen’s home to work through the emerging public narrative of the Holocaust, discussing every volume and article they could get their hands on, including ones by “enemy” authors. Their goal was to provide material for a book that would expose the Holocaust as a Jewish exaggeration — “the lie of the six million,” as one postwar Nazi publication in Argentina put it. But Eichmann had another, contradictory goal: to claim his place in history.

The facts and figures confirming the scale of the slaughter piled up as Eichmann recounted the rigors of what he called (without irony, Ms. Stangneth notes) his “killer of a job.” Ms. Stangneth quotes a long Eichmann tirade on his “duty to our blood” — “If 10.3 million of these enemies had been killed,” he declared of the Jews, “then we would have fulfilled our duty” — that left his sympathetic listeners unnerved.

“I cannot tell you anything else, for it is the truth!” Eichmann said. “Why should I deny it?”

For the Sassen circle, Ms. Stangneth writes, this tirade marked the end of the fantasy that Eichmann

would help them defend “pure National Socialism” against the slanderous charges of its enemies. For Eichmann, the Sassen conversations were good practice for Jerusalem, where his Israeli interrogator, Ms. Stangneth writes, noted his facility in answering historical questions, although in service of a very different image of himself.

If Arendt, like many others, was taken in, some historians say, his performance still led her to valuable insights about the mentality of many of those who carried out the killing on the ground.

“She had the right type but the wrong guy,” said the historian Christopher R. Browning, the author of *Ordinary Men*, an influential 1992 study of a German police battalion that killed tens of thousands of Jews in Poland. “There were all sorts of people like Eichmann was pretending to be, which is why his strategy worked.”

Listening to Eichmann in Jerusalem, Arendt saw an “inability to think.” Listening to Eichmann before Jerusalem, Ms. Stangneth sees a master manipulator skilled at turning reason, that weapon of the enemy, against itself.

“As a philosopher, you want to protect thinking as something beautiful,” she said. “You don’t want to think that someone who is able to think does not also love it.”

“PERUVIAN SCHINDLER” GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

BY CARMEN LLONA, FOX NEWS

Without a dab of Jewish blood in her veins, born and raised thousands of miles away in Lima, Peru, this bank clerk and occasional babysitter gave her life to save hundreds of lives in France during World War II.

“She was a working-class hero,” said Luis Cam, who directed a documentary about her. When the film came out, in Peru the media proudly dubbed her “the Peruvian Schindler.”

But Madeleine (also Magdalena) Truel’s story remains largely unknown — albeit not for long now. A Hollywood studio, Transcendent Entertainment, plans to take to the big screen the suspense and drama that ensued when in 1943 Truel joined the French Resistance and became one of the best-regarded forgers.

The setting is Paris, where Madeleine had arrived in 1924 at 20 years of age. She got there with her seven older siblings, after both mom and dad died within a year of each other back in Lima. Following philosophy studies at the Sorbonne, she took a job in a branch office of the Spanish Banco de Bilbao and moonlighted taking care of children — including Jewish children.

To one of the Jewish kids she

babysat, Pascal, she wrote and dedicated a book, *L’Enfant du Metro* (*The Boy of the Metro*), about a kid that lived in the subway and imagined the world on the surface based on the names of the Parisian stations. The book includes drawings



Peruvian Madeleine Truel (sitting) was the youngest of eight in a family of French immigrants.

by her sister Lucha, who had remained living in Paris as well.

Along with the language — she was fully bilingual — from Peru Truel also brought a deep Catholic faith she would keep until her very last day, Cam said.

Her decision to join the French network in support of the Allies and against the Nazi forces came after a one-year stay in the hospital, recov-

ering from a vehicular accident that caused head trauma and left her with a severe limp.

Her specialty within the resistance movement was forging every kind of documentation, which was handwritten at the time, including safe-conducts for Jewish families to exit the country and official papers that allowed members of the Allies forces to move in France with a fake identity. Hundreds of saved lives are attributed to her and the forged documents she provided.

“It is a nice heroism story because we always have the choice of doing nothing,” said Rosa Maria Palacio, a Peruvian journalist interviewed in the documentary. “She could have abstained from participating; however, she did what she thought was her duty: to help other people.”

Luis Cam, who is actually an odontologist, bumped into the story one day in 2012 when chatting with his friend and journalist Hugo Coya, who was researching for his nonfiction book *La Estación Final* (*The Final Station*) about Peruvians who

had ended in a concentration camp. When Cam heard the name Truel it sounded familiar, and he was able to locate a niece of Madeleine, Teresa, working at the university he had attended years before. He arranged a meeting between the two, and was allowed to sit in during the interview.

“When I heard the story I was shocked. I said to myself, ‘This story cannot be forgotten,’” he said. “I thought an audiovisual project would reach more people than a book.”

Madeleine died a horrible death on May 3, 1945, just four days before Germany’s surrender. She was arrested in June of 1944 and spent almost a year captive in a *Sachsenhausen* camp, north of Germany. She died when she was being transferred — by foot — to *Lubech* with dozens of other prisoners.

According to Coya’s research, Madeleine was one of the many who were fatally beaten after expressing a hint of joy when she saw German troops blending in with civilians: the Allied victory was imminent.

“She is probably the main Peruvian hero of World War II,” Coya said. “She was deeply Catholic, deeply Peruvian, from a large family of entrenched Christian values, and when she had the chance to do good, she did it without hesitation.”

REMEMBERING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

(Continued from page 3)

Speaking at a *Shoah* memorial in Paris before flying to Poland for the ceremony at the museum, Mr. Hollande pleaded with Jews in his country not to react by emigrating. “The place of Jews is in France,” he said. “France is your homeland.” He called on Internet service providers to take action against anti-Semitic comments posted online.

Mr. Gauck also gave a speech at home before traveling to Poland. He told a commemorative session of the German Parliament that “while the Holocaust will not necessarily be among the central components of German identity for everyone in our country, it will still hold true that there is no German identity without Auschwitz.”

He spoke of the difficulty many Germans had over the years in acknowledging what had happened during the war. “Remembering the Holocaust remains a matter for every citizen of Germany,” Mr. Gauck said. For the first time, the memorial ceremony here was sheltered from the January weather, under a tent large enough to enclose the entire red brick gateway to the Auschwitz II camp, for many a symbol of the Nazi atrocities. Several survivors were among the speakers.

“The greatest debt we have today is to pass on the memory of their lives to others, their desire and will to live,” Halina Birenbaum, who was at Auschwitz-Birkenau as a child, said of

those who were killed at the camps. “Only in my memories, I can be with my loved ones who died here. Only in my memories, I can recognize right from wrong.”

“People forget what Auschwitz was,” Ms. Birenbaum said, “and that terrifies me, because I know to what kind of hell it leads.”

Administrators of the museum, which includes the remaining grounds of the Auschwitz and *Birkenau* death camps, said that the museum’s mission, once focused primarily on survivors, was evolving toward memorializing the Nazi atrocities for generations born after the war.

Roman Kent, chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants, was a teenager when he was imprisoned in Auschwitz. As he spoke, he struggled to keep his emotions in check.

“How can I forget the smell of burning flesh that constantly filled the air?” he said in a trembling voice as tears rolled down his cheeks. “Or the heartbreak of children torn from their mothers? Those shouts of terror will ring in my ears until I am laid to rest.”

The ceremony concluded with the survivors, who were awarded medals, and the assembled dignitaries placing candles in remembrance of Holocaust victims, arranged symbolically in a straight row that was called “a line under history.”

THE JEW WHO GOT A JOB OFFER FROM THE NAZIS

(Continued from page 11)

“From time to time we were told to line up in front of the SS and told to walk,” says Knoller.

“The SS either said to us go left or go right. I put my chest out and I smiled at them, more or less to say, ‘I’m OK to continue working.’ I wasn’t meek at all about it because I knew if you were ever taken on the left-hand side, they would gas us.”

In January 1945, as Russian troops approached, Auschwitz was evacuated. Knoller and most of the other prisoners were sent on a 31-mile death march in the freezing cold to the town of *Gleiwitz*.

“We walked on that big road on ice and snow and some people just collapsed of the freezing cold in our thin clothes,” says Knoller.

“As soon as people could not walk any more the Germans, who surrounded us, shot them. Some people ran away into the woods, the Germans killed them.”

Almost 60,000 prisoners from Auschwitz were forced on death marches, and more than 15,000 people died.

“I walked and walked without caring what happened to anybody else. We saw people being killed, but it didn’t affect me. I’m still walking and I’m still alive, that’s the only thought that I had,” says Knoller.

Those who survived were loaded on

to trains and sent to *Bergen-Belsen* concentration camp in northern Germany, where Knoller remained until liberation by British troops on April 15, 1945. By the end of the war he weighed just over 41 kg.



As the German army retreated, camps near the eastern front were evacuated and prisoners sent westwards.

Afterwards, Knoller traveled to the US and was reunited with his two brothers. He met his British wife Freda there, and the couple moved to London.

For 30 years Knoller was unable to speak about his experience of the Holocaust, but he was finally persuaded to do so by his children.

It was not until 1995 that Knoller learned the fate of his parents. They had been deported from Vienna in 1942, and by a strange coincidence were in Auschwitz at the same time as he was, but they were killed in 1944.

“I’m proud to have fought for my life, and proud to be able to tell the world what has happened,” says Knoller.

THE SWEDES WHO TOLD THE WORLD ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 5)

The Swedish government wanted to avoid an invasion at all costs, and as a result, remaining neutral was paramount.

Moreover, the Warsaw Swedes knew that being discovered would lead to certain death.



This picture was taken by Sven Norrman in October 1939 in Wloclawek, where the law forcing Polish Jews to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothes was first implemented by the Nazis. The Jews were also banned from using the sidewalks. The picture bears the sarcastic caption: "The master race's cultural endeavors in Wloclawek. Even women and children walk in the street in Wloclawek with yellow marks on their backs."

Despite this, Norrman and his fellow Warsaw Swedes began transporting goods with secret compartments in which they had hidden documents, photo negatives and money.

Norrman, working under the alias "Hjalmar", would become the most important connection between the Polish exile government in London and the resistance in Warsaw.

On May 16, 1942, the commander-in-chief of the Polish Armia Krajowa, General Rowecki, telegraphed to London: "The Swedes take a very irregular route; still, they are fast and reliable and moreover can be entrusted with large deliveries. We cannot allow them to be exposed."

Just days later, on May 21, Sven Norrman would take a very important suitcase with a hidden compartment from Warsaw to Stockholm.

It contained documents detailing the systematic slaughter of 700,000 Polish Jews by the Nazis, including 2,000 photo negatives of Nazi war crimes in Poland, some taken by 51-year-old Norrman himself from inside the Warsaw ghetto. Sikorski held his BBC speech a week later, and it did not take long before the Gestapo began rounding up the Warsaw Swedes.

"Personally, I think the Germans listening in June 1942 grew worried and pissed off that the BBC was able to reveal in such detail exactly what was going on in Warsaw, and started to wonder how the hell the information had leaked," says Staffan Thorsell, author of *Warszawasvenskarna: De som lät världen veta* (The Warsaw Swedes: The men who let the world know).

"The Gestapo did not have to be Sherlock Holmes to figure out that the Swedes who traveled regularly

between Warsaw and Stockholm could be involved."

Seven Swedish men — Nils Berglind, Carl Herslow, Sigfrid "Sigge" Häggberg, Tore Widén, Einar Gerge, Stig Lagerberg and Reinhold Grönberg — were arrested by the Gestapo in July on Heinrich

Himmler's order.

Sven Norrman was lucky. He was in Stockholm, and his mistress, Iza, had been able to get a message to him that the Gestapo was looking for him. As he was the main suspect, it is likely that she saved his life.

Iza herself was also captured by the Gestapo and taken to the Moabit prison in Berlin.

Four of the men, Berglind, Herslow, Häggberg and Widén, were sentenced to death in July 1943. However, all seven would return safely to Sweden.

There are several theories why the four Warsaw Swedes were pardoned, and all are thought to have contributed to their final release in the autumn of 1944.

Upon hearing that four Swedish men had been sentenced to death in Nazi Germany, the King of Sweden, Gustav V, wrote to Hitler himself and asked that the Warsaw Swedes be released.

Hitler admired royalty, and in particular those in countries that he perceived to be the birthplace of the "Aryan" race, and personally assured King Gustav V that he would look into the matter, in a letter sent at the end of July 1943.

It is also known that Heinrich Himmler's personal physical therapist, Felix Kersten, a man who has been credited with saving the lives of some 60,000 Jews from the Nazi concentration camps, put in a good word with the Nazi top brass.

However, most importantly, Nazi Germany relied on neutral Sweden to supply it with iron and ball bearings for its weapons, and it is highly likely that the four Warsaw Swedes were kept as leverage, to ensure that Sweden would fulfill its end of the weaponry bargain.

"To their contemporaries, the Warsaw Swedes were no heroes, but a risk factor," Mr. Thorsell adds.

"They had put Sweden in danger through their efforts for the Polish resistance army and by raising the alarm about the Holocaust."

A book based on the documents Norrman transported from Poland via Stockholm to London was published in Sweden during the war, but every single copy was confiscated by the government before it even reached the shelves.

The then prime minister, Social Democrat Per Albin Hansson, had personally ordered that the book, called *A Polish Black Book on the German "New Order" in Poland*, be collected from the publishers and banned.

After the war, Norrman had one priority: find Iza.

Although Iza had lived as a Christian while in Warsaw, the Gestapo uncovered her Jewish heritage shortly after her capture, and she spent the remainder of the war in a part of the Moabit prison reserved for Jews.



Sigfrid "Sigge" Häggberg was photographed in the Moabit prison in Berlin after the Gestapo sentenced him and four other Warsaw Swedes to death in 1943, one year after their arrest.

She survived her ordeal, and in 1945, Iza and Sven Norrman could be reunited in Warsaw.

In his book about the Warsaw Swedes, Mr. Thorsell writes that Norrman most likely saved her life through bribes passed via Swedish Match's director in Germany to Himmler's man Walter Schellenberg.

Norrman divorced his wife, and the couple married in Sweden. Norrman was later rewarded the Armia Krajowa Cross by the Poles.

In an interview with Polish historian Jozef Lewandoski in the 1970s, Norrman explained why he decided to risk his life to help tell the world about the Holocaust.

"During my entire life I was a businessman. I liked my job and I was good in my field.

"I joined the struggle because I wanted to do something that was not for profit for once in my life."

LATVIA BLOCKS NAZI HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION IN PARIS DUE TO IMAGE FEARS

Latvia has cancelled a Holocaust exhibition in Paris for fear of tarnishing the country's image, as the Baltic nation currently holds the EU presidency. The exposition was to tell the story of child prisoners at a concentration camp near Riga.

The display was organized by historians from Latvia, Russia and Belarus and was scheduled to open on January 25 under the title "Hijacked childhood. Victims of Holocaust as seen by the child prisoners of Nazi concentration camp *Salaspils*." *Salaspils* is southeast of the Latvian capital, Riga.

The exhibition was all set to open its doors. However, there proved to be a last-minute hitch: the Latvian delegation to UNESCO decided to block the planned project. One of the organizers, the head of a Moscow-based history group, said that the decision was explained by the fear that it would "harm Latvia's image during its EU presidency."

"The fact that Latvia's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO has blocked this exhibition is, in my view, a strange and unpleasant surprise for us," said Aleksandr Dyukov of the Historical Memory Foundation.

It is unclear how revealing Nazi crimes could harm Latvia's present-day image, Dyukov said. The country could only suffer if Latvia looked at the Nazis crimes as its own, he added: "The sad fact is that it seems to be that way."

The *Salaspils* concentration camp was created at the end of 1941 and was used to imprison Jews and those who came into contact with the Nazis around the Latvia-Belarus border. The camp was located just 18 kilometers away from Riga.

More than 100,000 people lost their lives in the camp, according to data from the Nuremberg trials protocols. Many perished due to illnesses, intense heavy labor and inhuman treatment.

Riga's stance has been controversial regarding the assessment of its Nazi past. Latvian officials have been criticized for plainly presenting the Nazis as a viable opposition to the Soviets. Parts of the Baltic nation supported pro-Nazi movements in the country while rejecting the Soviet soldiers' crucial role in World War II.

In 2012, a video was released of two men in *Waffen SS* uniforms conducting a kindergarten lesson, complete with handouts, grenades and pistols. The class took place on March 16, the day which commemorates hundreds of Latvians joining the Nazis to fight against the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

The Latvian legion of the *Waffen SS* consisted of almost 150,000 Latvians. It was among the last of Nazi forces to surrender in 1945.

FILMS SHINE NEW LIGHT ON DARKNESS OF HOLOCAUST

Filmmakers using long-lost or forgotten material are shining new light on the Holocaust, from the Nazi death camps to the private life of a chief architect of the “Final Solution.”

In a year that marks the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, three new documentaries screened at the Berlin film festival help illuminate the darkest chapter of German history.

One of them, with the sober title *German Concentration Camps Factual Survey*, takes an unflinching

veteran, fighting back tears decades later, in an interview for the companion film *Night Will Fall*.

The accompanying documentary is the “making-of” story of the *Camps Survey*, which was started while the battles still raged, but shelved by the British government before the end of 1945.

Night Will Fall tells the story of Sidney Bernstein, then head of Britain’s Psychological Warfare Division, who wanted to create “a lesson to all mankind,” even enlisting the help of his friend Alfred

Allies to cooperate with the occupied German population.

Haggith said that, as the war was over, the film simply “had missed its moment.”

He added that screening the footage now would also be a tribute to the cameramen, “the real heroes of the film.”

“They were angered by what they saw,” he said. “They were shocked, but they also had a great ability for empathy.”

Empathy is in short supply in a third documentary, *The Decent One*, an intimate look at the private life of Hitler’s chief henchman, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS and Gestapo secret police.

It is based on another stunning find, the discovery of hundreds of private letters between Himmler and his wife, children and mistress, as well as diaries, photos and even recipe books of the family.

The documents, dated 1927–45, were taken from Himmler’s Bavarian home, likely by US troops, and resurfaced in Tel Aviv decades later, via an unclear route that may have involved a Brussels flea market.

Filmmaker Vanessa Lapa juxtaposes voiceover of the often mundane family correspondence with archival footage, frequently of horrific Nazi crimes.

In the letters, which are also studied in major new newspaper and book projects, Himmler calls his wife Marga, seven years his senior and a visceral anti-Semite like him, “my good, pure woman.”

She playfully tells him “I am so happy to have such a good evil man who loves his evil wife as much as she loves him.”

There are few references to the Holocaust, only allusions, including the chilling line, “I’m driving to Auschwitz. Kisses, Your Heini.”

What emerges is not a split personality, but the portrait of a man devoid of empathy and fully committed to his cause.

“Heinrich Himmler is not a character like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” Lapa told AFP. “I believe he is the same person in private as in public.”

“Whenever there is a sentence or two where he is seemingly kind, loving, banal, you quickly see the hate again. It’s always in there.... He is banal, and at a certain point he chose evil.”



World War Two memorial of mass killings on the banks of the Danube River is seen in Budapest.

look at the atrocities committed at camps such as *Bergen-Belsen*, *Buchenwald* and *Auschwitz*.

The restored footage — shot by British, US and Russian liberating forces, only to vanish for decades in the archives — is hard to take even for modern audiences numbed by frequent on-screen violence.

Like a time capsule from hell, it takes a clinical look at what the Allies saw: survivors with hollow eyes and skin stretched tightly over their bones amid vast piles of decomposing human remains.

The relentless message is the industrial scale of the mass murder. Footage from the *Majdanek* camp in Poland shows heaps of victims’ personal effects, from eyeglasses to suitcases to children’s toys.

“It’s hard to imagine for a normal human mind,” recounts one British

Hitchcock.

Bernstein “anticipated that in the future people would deny the extent of the atrocities,” said Imperial War Museum curator Toby Haggith, whose team painstakingly restored the archival footage.

One camp survivor, Croatian film producer Branko Lustig, 81 (*Schindler’s List*), told the Berlin audience that “this kind of movie must be shown every 25 years, to every new generation.”

Some of the footage was used as evidence at the Nuremberg trials, and shorter versions were screened later, but the major documentary envisioned by Bernstein in 1945 was never released.

Director Andre Singer offers several possible reasons, including the shifting postwar focus on the looming Soviet threat, and the need for the

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