

**THE HOLOCAUST & LYDDA AFFIRM THAT WE MUST CONTINUE
TO SEARCH FOR HISTORICAL TRUTH**
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Isranet Daily Briefing, January 9, 2015
[https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/holocaust-lydda-affirm-
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As We Go To Press: AT LEAST FOUR DEAD, INCLUDING PARIS GUNMAN, IN KOSHER MARKET HOSTAGE-TAKING (Paris) — Two police officials say at least four people, including the attacker, have died at a kosher grocery in Paris where a gunman took several hostages. Security forces stormed the grocery minutes after their counterparts assaulted the building outside Paris where two brothers suspected in the *Charlie Hebdo* killings had holed up. The gunman has been identified as Amedy Coulibaly. Before the police rushed in, an official said the gunman in Paris threatened to kill the hostages if police launch an assault on the cornered brothers suspected in the massacre. He took at least five hostages and wounded several in the Hyper Cacher store near the Porte de Vincennes in eastern Paris. As the man opened fire in the market he declared “you know who I am,” the police official said. That came as police swooped in on the suspected Islamist perpetrators of the Jan. 7 attack on the satirical weekly that left 12 people dead in the worst terrorist incident in France in half a century. ([National Post](#), Jan. 9, 2014)

[Eichmann... He Wasn't Only Following Orders: Saul David, Telegraph, Dec. 22, 2014](#)— In 1963 the political theorist Hannah Arendt published *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil*.

[Auschwitz 'Bookkeeper' May Be Last Nazi Tried in Germany For War Crimes: Joe O'Connor, National Post, Nov. 14, 2014](#)— Thomas Walther is talking about Auschwitz, and numbers, and how the statistics of the Holocaust exceed imagination.

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[‘The Nazis Next Door,’ by Eric Lichtblau: Deborah E. Lipstadt, New York Times, Oct. 31, 2014](#)— In the wake of World War II, America recruited a few leading German scientists in order to advance our space and military programs and to keep these valuable assets from falling into Soviet hands.

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EICHMANN... HE WASN'T ONLY FOLLOWING ORDERS

Saul David

[Telegraph](#), Dec. 22, 2014

In 1963 the political theorist Hannah Arendt published *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil*. A Jew who had fled Germany in the 1930s, Arendt

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had been at the trial of Adolf Eichmann, the so-called "Manager of the Holocaust", and believed his claim to be an overworked bureaucrat who was simply "doing his job". He "not only obeyed orders", she wrote, "he also obeyed the law". Arendt concluded that Eichmann, the head of the SS's department for Jewish Affairs who personally oversaw the deportation and extermination of 400,000 Hungarian Jews in 1944, was neither a psychopathic "monster" nor a virulent anti-Semite. Instead, his appalling acts were driven more by stupidity and a desire for professional advancement than by ideology. Thus was coined the term "the banality of evil", implying that there is a potential Eichmann in all of us. Arendt's theory has been challenged before. But only now, with the publication (originally in German) of this book by the award-winning political philosopher Bettina Stangneth, can we see how completely Arendt (and later historians) were hoodwinked by Eichmann.

Stangneth uses newly discovered documents, including Eichmann's own notes and the transcripts of conversations he had with comrades in Argentina in the 1950s, to reconstruct the post-war lives of Nazis in exile. Stangneth's new portrait of Eichmann is very different from Arendt's. Instead of the reclusive, taciturn and boring war criminal on the run, she reveals a skilled social manipulator with a pronounced ability to reinvent himself, an ideological warrior unrepentant about the past and eager to continue the racial war against the Jews. Stangneth charts in detail Eichmann's movements from his escape from Germany in 1948 to his capture by Mossad agents in 1960. We discover just how organised the Nazi escape route to South America was, complete with Vatican officials helping to provide false identity documents, and how openly and brazenly former National Socialists lived in Argentina and elsewhere after the war. Protected by the regime of Juan Perón, they ran businesses, advised on security matters and plotted a political comeback in Germany. In Eichmann's case, he even arranged for his wife and sons to be brought over from Germany to join him.

What ultimately did for Eichmann - as opposed to his former partner in crime Dr Josef Mengele, Auschwitz's "Angel of Death", who had also fled to Argentina - was his egotistical need for his "achievements" to be recognised. He never denied his true identity, allowed his sons to apply for German passports in the name of Eichmann and discussed openly with fellow Nazis his true feelings about the Holocaust. He even allowed a former Dutch SS journalist, Willem Sassen, to record

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some conversations for a potential book. It was during the "Sassen interviews" that Eichmann came clean. His only regret, he told Sassen, was not killing more Jews. "If we had killed 10.3 million [instead of six], I would be satisfied, and would say, 'good, we have destroyed an enemy...' We would have fulfilled our duty to our blood and our people... if we had exterminated the most cunning intellect of all the human intellects alive today." Part of the reason Sassen and his colleagues had begun the discussion was to get Eichmann to deny that genocide had ever been intended. Only then could they distance National Socialism from "the one thing of which we are always accused" - the Holocaust. But Eichmann refused. He was proud to have taken part in the extermination of the Jews, and his only criticism of this lunatic National Socialist project was that "we could and should have done more"...

Fortunately, Eichmann's misdeeds, and the Israeli secret service, eventually caught up with him. Taken to Israel, he was tried and found guilty of crimes against humanity and hanged on May 31, 1962. For many decades since, his cunning depiction of himself as a "small cog in Adolf Hitler's extermination machine" has blinded many people to his central role in the Holocaust and the nature of the key participants. But no longer. Thanks to this brilliant book, exhaustively researched and convincingly argued, the veil has at last been lifted. "Like a mirror," writes Stangneth, "he reflected people's fears and expectations, whether they were fearing for their own lives or hoping he would confirm a theory of evil. Behind all the mirror images lay Eichmann's will to power and desire to control."

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**AUSCHWITZ 'BOOKKEEPER' MAY BE LAST NAZI TRIED IN
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Joe O'Connor

[*National Post*](#), Nov. 14, 2014

Thomas Walther is talking about Auschwitz, and numbers, and how the statistics of the Holocaust exceed imagination. What does it mean, for example, to deport 437,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz in the span of 57 days in the spring and early summer of 1944? What does it mean to murder them at a rate of 3.5 Jews per minute, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that by the end of the 57th day 300,000 of them are dead? What does it mean to have your parents, spouse, children and relatives systematically killed in a German Nazi death camp in German-occupied Poland, only to have them counted by history as a lump sum?

“I can speak about 300,000 dead people who are murdered, but nobody can imagine what that means — such figures of death — while the Holocaust, this word, it is a part of families,” Mr. Walther says. “It is inside of human beings. It is something in the tears, if you wake up in the night and think about your father who was killed. That is the Holocaust. And in the second generation, in the children of survivors, those who suffer the nightmares and memories of their parents — that is the Holocaust.” Mr. Walther, with his red running shoes, grey shoulder length hair and rumpled-looking dark blazer, could easily pass for a university lecturer. But his interest in the Holocaust isn’t academic. The 71-year-old retired German judge is a Nazi hunter, and he has been in Toronto and Montreal for the past two weeks interviewing Hungarian-Canadian Auschwitz survivors as co-plaintiffs for what could be the last Nazi war crimes trial in Germany. “Co-plaintiffs represent their murdered parents and siblings, and I represent the co-plaintiffs in court,” Mr. Walther says. “And to be sure that I find the right words for them, the right feeling in a German courtroom, this is the reason I am here in Canada, interviewing them.”

The accused is Oskar Groening, the so-called “bookkeeper” of Auschwitz, a former

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SS sergeant who sorted and counted monies stolen from the murdered Jews, occasionally couriering it to his Nazi overlords in Berlin. He also stood guard on the train platform in Auschwitz, as cattle cars delivered their doomed Jewish cargo. Doing so in the belief that, as he told *DER SPIEGEL* magazine in 2005, the destruction of the Jews was a “necessary thing.” What makes Mr. Groening, now 93 — and a widower with a comfortable home and robust company pension thanks to his postwar career managing a German glass factory — an intriguing defendant, is that he has repented, in a sense. He admits he was at Auschwitz, and has spoken openly about it. Taking his story public several years ago, as he explained to a German reporter, to combat the lies of the Holocaust deniers with the truth of someone who was there. And in his version of the truth, he is not guilty of any crime. Not in a legal sense, since he was merely a bookkeeper, a brainwashed Nazi zealot involved in executing the murderous master plan of Adolf Hitler, but not an actual executioner himself.

“Guilt really has to do with actions,” Mr. Groening told *DER SPIEGEL*. “Because I believe that I was not an active perpetrator, I don’t believe that I am guilty... “I would describe my role as a small cog in the gears.” Mr. Walther has heard this defence before, and views it is a fairytale, a convenient narrative where the otherwise decent German gets caught up in a killing mess, not of their making, and dutifully follows orders — without blinking an eye — as many did during the Nazi era. “Groening will not deny anything,” Mr. Walther says. “He will only seek to diminish.” Judy Lysy is a Holocaust survivor in Toronto. She recently met Mr. Walther at a dinner honouring him at a local synagogue. She is not among the co-plaintiffs in the Groening case since the charges against him, for German legal reasons, only cover the 57-day killing frenzy associated with the Jewish Hungarian deportees. (Mr. Walther would not disclose the identities of the co-plaintiffs to me, explaining that, even today, there are those unhappy with Groening’s prosecution.) Ms. Lysy, a Slovakian Jew, was raised in pro-Nazi, Hungarian-occupied territory. She arrived in Auschwitz in April 1944. It was a sunny day. She was 16. “There were these German officers, very neat and clean,” the 86-year-old says.

“They asked for a translator, and because I spoke Hungarian, German and Slovak, I put my hand up. And I stood beside this officer telling the people that those able

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and capable to walk, would walk [to our barracks], and the old people and children – he would send by truck. “We would all be together, at the end. I translated all this to Hungarian ladies, including my aunt, with her two little children, and my Grandma. The officer told the mothers not to fuss, if they wanted to stay with their children. And he put them all together, on the side that went straight to the gas. “We did not know where those people had gone for the first 10 days. And this was my arrival to Auschwitz. Oskar Groening didn’t kill with his hands. But he was part of that killing machinery.” Being a small cog, a guard in a watchtower, an accountant in Auschwitz, was a well-tread road to legal – social, moral and economic – absolution for SS men after the war. Of the 6,500 SS members who worked in Auschwitz, only 49 were ever convicted of a crime. “The German police, prosecutors, the local judges, they weren’t interested in going after what were perceived as the small fry war criminals, and this attitude persisted well into the 1970s and beyond,” says Bernie Farber, former CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Many of those judges and lawyers had Nazi pasts, while the German people – including the 20% of respondents to an American survey conducted in the American-occupied zone in 1945, who said they agreed with Hitler’s treatment of the Jews – weren’t willing, or even interested in confronting their complicity in the Holocaust. Hitler and his high-ranking Nazi cronies were the real bad guys, not them.

And the little Nazi fish, such as Oskar Groening, got married, had kids and came to be viewed as valuable employees. He applied managerial skills honed in Auschwitz to a civilian job at a glass factory. Most Nazi war criminals didn’t disappear into the jungles of South America. They moved in next door. And then along came Thomas Walther. “My youngest child went to university in 2006,” he says. “I was 63 and I thought, if I can do something really important, something that has to be done – then I would like to do it.” His father, Rudolf, hid two Jewish families during the *Kristallnacht* riots of 1938, later helping them escape Germany. He taught his son to do the right thing, instead of just talking about it. And in the years since 2006, the retired judge has awakened the German judiciary to the little fish, successfully arguing that Auschwitz and the other camps were macabre assembly lines. Every SS man, like every worker at an auto plant, had a job to do. If they didn’t do their job – the assembly line stopped. “My colleagues in the past, these German prosecutors and judges, did things in the wrong way,” Mr. Walther says. “You have to learn, and you learn it in the second term of law studies: what

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is aiding and abetting a crime.”

It means being a bookkeeper in Auschwitz, being immersed in the terror, and party to its making by keeping stolen money flowing to Berlin, while keeping Jews moving in an orderly fashion toward the gas chamber. Mr. Walther, in his red sneakers, understands that he is in a losing race against time. The Holocaust survivors are dying off. And so are the killers. It is late in the game. Justice must be done. “Where does this end?” the Nazi hunter says. “It ends when it is truly over.” The trial begins in February.

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‘THE NAZIS NEXT DOOR,’ BY ERIC LICHTBLAU

Deborah E. Lipstadt

[New York Times](#), Oct. 31, 2014

In the wake of World War II, America recruited a few leading German scientists in order to advance our space and military programs and to keep these valuable assets from falling into Soviet hands. This is the broadly accepted script about Nazis in America. In fact, as Eric Lichtblau, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter for *The New York Times*, relates in “*The Nazis Next Door*,” we welcomed approximately 10,000 Nazis, some of whom had played pivotal roles in the genocide. While portions of this story are not new — see Annie Jacobsen’s book “*Operation Paperclip*,” for example — Lichtblau offers additional archival information in all its infuriating detail...

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America began reaching out to leading Nazis months before the Germans surrendered. In March 1945, while the war still raged, the American spy chief Allen Dulles conducted a friendly fireside chat in the library of a Zurich apartment with the Nazi general Karl Wolff, the closest associate of the SS leader Heinrich Himmler for much of the war. The Scotch-lubricated conversation convinced Dulles that Wolff, despite his ties to Himmler and his role as a leader of the Waffen SS, was a moderate who deserved protection. When prosecutors sought to try Wolff, one of the highest-ranking SS leaders to survive, at Nuremberg, Dulles worked to have his name removed from the list of defendants. While Wolff was in Allied custody, he was permitted to take a yacht trip, spend time with his family and carry a gun. Nonetheless, he complained that what he endured was “much more inhumane than the extermination of the Jews.” He said the Jews had been gassed in a few seconds, while he did not know how long he would be held. (His imprisonment lasted four years.) While Jews languished in the camps after Germany’s defeat (“We felt like so much surplus junk,” one survivor said), the United States gathered up Nazi scientists. Had only leading scientists been enlisted, it would have been distasteful if understandable. But of the more than 1,600 scientists brought over, some had pedestrian skills. Others had developed the chemicals for the gas chambers, or conducted experiments on concentration camp prisoners. Even the State Department protested.

But we did not stop with scientists. The C.I.A. and the F.B.I. sought out spies and informants who had participated in genocide. For these agencies, engaging in murder was acceptable as long as the recruits did not lie about their record. Ultimately, most of these “informants” never provided any valuable information. Some even offered bogus reports. But these intelligence agencies remained their greatest protectors. In the 1980s, when the Justice Department began to hunt war criminals who had lied in order to enter this country, both agencies actively obstructed the investigations. They were also protected by White House officials such as Pat Buchanan, then a top aide to Ronald Reagan, who denounced the Justice Department’s “revenge obsessed” and “hairy-chested Nazi hunters” as dupes of the Soviets. And the largest group of Nazis who entered America simply slipped in through “the back door,” according to Lichtblau. They gamed the system and immigrated as “refugees,” starting new lives as thousands of people perished in the Allied camps. Lichtblau brings ample investigative skills and an elegant writing style to this unsavory but important story. *“The Nazis Next Door”*

is a captivating book rooted in first-rate research.

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LYDDA, 1948: THEY WERE THERE

Martin Kramer

[Israel Hayom](#), Dec. 25, 2014

Most Israelis know nothing about Ari Shavit's bestselling book, "*My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*." Readers of *Haaretz*, where he's a columnist, may have seen it mentioned in short articles celebrating Shavit's stateside success. But few Israelis have heard of the book, and I'm guessing that only a handful have actually read it. That is because there is no Hebrew edition. Shavit wrote it in English for an American Jewish audience, upon the suggestion of David Remnick, editor of *The New Yorker*. *Haaretz* at first reported that a Hebrew version would appear at the end of 2013, and later that it would be published in the spring of 2014 (by Kinneret Zmora-Bitan Dvir). But while the book has also appeared in Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Hungarian, and Polish, there is no sign of a Hebrew edition.

So Israelis have no clue that Shavit has added a massacre in the city of Lydda (Lod) to the litany of Israel's alleged crimes in 1948. That's why I felt privileged to take part in a December 4 panel on the conquests of Lydda and Ramla in 1948, sponsored by the Galili Center for Defense Studies. The chairman of the center, Uzi Arad, suggested that I explain and analyze the claims made by Shavit in his book, which I had already done in English for the web magazine *Mosaic*. (The organizers also invited Shavit, but he was off collecting accolades in south Florida.) I was

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youngest participant on the panel, and nearly the youngest person in the lecture hall, which was full of veterans of Lydda and many other battles of 1948. These people are not historians, and they do not necessarily know the big picture of how politics and military operations interacted. They were not commanders (the officers are all gone); they were young soldiers in 1948, at the bottom of the chain of command. They have also read a lot and shared recollections over the past 60-plus years, so you cannot always tell whether what they say about some episode is first-hand or derives from something they read or heard. Finally, time erodes memory, as some are quite prepared to admit.

Still, there were some very sharp minds in the audience — people who know more about the history of the 1948 war than anyone but a handful of expert historians. They know the commanders, the military units, the weaponry, the battles, the geography, the chronology — and woe unto you if you make a mistake. They won't wait for the Q&A to correct you. The war to establish the State of Israel was the great adventure of their youth, and they wear it as badge of honor. I was the only one of the four panelists who dealt directly with Shavit's Lydda chapter. I was preceded by two well-regarded military historians, who described the campaign from an operational vantage point, and one veteran of the conquest, Yeshayahu (Shaike) Gavish. Now 89 years old and still vital, he is most famous to Israelis as the general who led the Southern Command in the Six-Day War, when Israeli forces overwhelmed the Egyptians and seized the Sinai. In Lydda in 1948, he was a lowly operations officer, and a wounded one at that, so he had a fairly limited view of the theater, confined as he was to a jeep. His most interesting comments concerned the flight of Lydda's inhabitants, whose mass departure made a deep impression on him (as it did on many other Israelis). While there is no doubt that an expulsion order was issued (on whose authority is debated), Gavish echoed many other witnesses who have said that Lydda's inhabitants were eager to get out, begged to leave, and packed up as soon as the roads to the east opened. He did say that in his opinion, the events in the Dahmash mosque (the "small mosque") which Shavit insists on calling a "massacre," had a strong effect on the populace, reinforcing their desire to flee. But on the question of just what happened at the small mosque, he had nothing to say, as he was not there.

In my presentation, I explained just how large an impact Shavit's book has had on

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American Jewry, and the crucial role played by *The New Yorker* in running the Lydda chapter as a provocative teaser. I then reviewed the "massacre" narrative sentence by sentence, just as I had done in my initial article for Mosaic. I figured that a mostly elderly crowd of Hebrew-speakers would need the crutch of a visible text, so I projected the relevant passages from the Lydda chapter up on the screen and read them slowly and deliberately. Then I explained why I thought Shavit's conclusions were implausible. I could have dispensed with my own analysis. The reactions tumbled forth in immediate response to Shavit's text. I heard gasps of disbelief and angry asides. I didn't ask for a show of hands as to how many thought Shavit's account had any credibility, and in retrospect I wish I had. But to judge from the audible responses, it would not be an exaggeration to say that this audience was surprised and offended. Two passages produced especially strong reactions. Shavit made this claim about the conduct of Palmach soldiers after the counterattack on the small mosque: In their "desire for revenge," "because of the rage they felt," they entered the mosque and "sprayed the surviving wounded with automatic fire." Shavit also charged that soldiers who were ordered to bury the Arabs killed in the mosque "took eight other Arabs to do the digging of the burial site and afterward shot them, too, and buried the eight" with the rest. Simply projecting these passages on the screen provoked a few salty comments I won't repeat.

That said, nothing I heard, either in the lecture hall or outside of it, added to the store of testimony about the "massacre" component of Shavit's Lydda tale. The conquest of Lydda had many moving parts, and most of the veterans I met served the 89th Battalion under Moshe Dayan. That meant that they were not in the city when the "massacre" supposedly took place, but fought the day before, mostly on the road between Lydda and Ramla. But I wasn't looking for new testimony, because there are plenty of recorded recollections from people who witnessed the events, including the scene in and around the small mosque. I did want these veterans to know what much of the world (Israel excepted) has been reading about their battle for over a year now. And I wanted them to start to talk about it among themselves and with others...

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On Topic

[From the Shores of Nova Scotia, Israel's First Soldiers: Rob Gordon, *National Post*, Jan. 5, 2015](#)—The Fort Edward blockhouse in Windsor, Nova Scotia is one of the the oldest wooden fortifications still standing in North America. It played a major role in the Expulsion of the Acadians in 1755, helped defend Nova Scotia in the War of 1812 and, in a truly odd twist of history, assisted in the creation of the State of Israel.

[‘The Wall,’ by H. G. Adler: Cynthia Ozick, *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 2015](#)—Of Homer we know nothing, of Jane Austen not enough, of Kafka more and more, sometimes hour by hour; and yet Achilles and Elizabeth Bennet and Joseph K. press imperially on, independent of their makers.

[Laura Hillenbrand on 'Unbroken': Deirdre Donahue, *AARP*, Nov., 2014](#)—In a 21st century awash with selfies, sex tapes and Kardashians, readers have found inspiration and uplift in a book about an American World War II hero named Louis Zamperini.

[Meet the 'Post's Gatekeeper - 70 Years and Going Strong: Tamara Zieve, *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 31, 2014](#)—“World War II had ended, and our war for independence had begun. You could feel it in the press... from London, New York... there was a very different spirit in those days,” says Alexander Zvielli, chief of *The Jerusalem Post's* archives and the newspaper’s longest-standing employee.

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