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Proclamation of World Kindertransport Day

The Kindertransport Association proclaims December 2, 2013 as World Kindertransport Day - the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Kindertransport.

The Kindertransport (children's transport) was a rescue mission that saved the lives of nearly 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia in the nine months leading up to WWII.

The first Kindertransport left Berlin carrying 200 children from a Jewish orphanage in Berlin which had been destroyed in the Kristallnacht pogrom, and arrived in Harwich, Great Britain on December 2nd, 1938. While nearly 10,000 children were saved, many of the heroic parents who sent them away were murdered in concentration camps, and more than 1.5 million Jewish children were killed by the Nazis.

The Kindertransport Association (KTA) is a not-for-profit organization that unites these child Holocaust refugees and their descendants. The KTA shares their stories, honors those who made the Kindertransport possible, and supports charitable work that aids children in need.

The Association intends to ask the United Nations, the United States Congress, state legislatures, and city councils to issue proclamations in honor of World Kindertransport Day. Commemorative events including reunions, conferences, plays, speeches and film screenings are being planned in the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Australia.

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VIENNA — Like many others in Austria's countryside, a tower bell above the red-tiled rooftops of Wolfpassing village marks the passing of each hour with an unspectacular "bong." But this bell is unique: It is embossed with a swastika and praise to Adolf Hitler.

And unlike more visible remnants of the Nazi era, the bell was apparently overlooked by official Austria up to now.

Ensnconced in the belfry of an ancient castle where it was mounted by fans of the Nazi dictator in 1939, the bell has tolled on for nearly 80 years. It survived the defeat of Hitler's Germany, a decade of post-war Soviet occupation that saw Red Army soldiers lodge in the castle and more recent efforts by Austria's government to acknowledge the country's complicity in crimes of that era and make amends.

Some of those efforts have focused on identifying relics of that time and ensuring they're either removed or put in historical context. As an example, officials often cite government moral and material support for the restoration of the Mauthausen concentration camp, where a museum documents atrocities for school children and other visitors.

The Wolfpassing bell pays homage to Hitler for his 1938 annexation of Austria, a move supported back then by the vast majority of the nation's citizens. It describes Hitler as "the unifier and Fuehrer of all Germans" and says he freed the "Ostmark" – Nazi jargon for Austria – "from the yoke of suppression by foreign elements and brought it home into the Great-German Reich."

Local historian Johannes Kammerstaetter says most villagers would have known about it. But village mayor Josef Sonnleitner asserts even the villagers had no clue until the first media reports last month on the "Fuehrerglocke," or "Fuehrer Bell."

"Nobody cared until all this publicity," he said on the telephone. He refused a request for a longer interview, saying he was busy for the next two weeks with haying.

In any case, the government's recent sale of the castle – with all its historical trappings – has suddenly made the bell an issue beyond the sleepy village of 1,500 people about 100 kilometers (60 miles) west of Vienna.

In a country particularly sensitive about suggestions it has not fully faced its Nazi past, officials are scrambling for explanations of why the bell apparently evaded notice for so long. They also are under pressure to justify a ruling by the government agency in charge of historic monuments that it must remain part of the castle as part of its heritage_ despite the refusal of the new owner to say what he plans to do with it.

In Portugal, A Protector Of a People Is Honored

By RAPHAEL MINDER

CABANAS DE VIRIATO, Portugal — Lee Sterling knew that his sister had not survived the harrowing journey 73 years ago that allowed him and his parents to escape Nazism by traveling from their home in Brussels to Lisbon and eventually on to New York.

He was just 4 years old and is barely able to recall her now, but after consulting Portuguese archives, he found that his sister, Raymonde Estelle, had spent six weeks in a hospital before dying of septicemia, at age 7. "I hadn't cried in years, but when I found out, I just couldn't stop," he said.

Mr. Sterling, who lives in California, was among 40 people who made an emotional pilgrimage last month to retrace their families' pasts. They also wanted to pay homage to the man who saved their lives: Aristides de Sousa Mendes.

Mr. Sousa Mendes, Portugal's consul in Bordeaux when Germany invaded France, provided about 30,000 people with Portuguese visas to escape Nazi persecution, according to the Sousa Mendes Foundation, which is run by descendants of the visa recipients. His status as one of the most important protectors of the Jewish people, if not the precise number of visas, has been confirmed by Yehuda Bauer, a Holocaust historian at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

He issued many of the visas personally and also persuaded some others on the Portuguese diplomatic staff stationed in France to do the same, against the orders of his own government, which was neutral but Fascist. When the government real-

ized the scale of his disobedience, Mr. Sousa Mendes was recalled to Lisbon, tried and dismissed from the diplomatic service. Stripped of his pension rights, he died in poverty in 1954.

For his efforts, Mr. Sousa Mendes received some acknowledgment after his death, starting with Israel, where the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial hon-

ored him as a "Righteous Among the Nations" in 1966. But the search for those who received his visas or their descendants began in earnest only much more recently, as part of a building campaign to grant him the recognition he deserves, particularly in his own country, where he remains relatively unknown.

"Without his help, my parents

wouldn't have survived, and I wouldn't be here. It's as simple, sad and lucky as that," said Yara Nagel, a translator who was the first member of her Nagelschmidt family to be born in Brazil. She came from São Paulo, she said, because "I wanted to retrieve my past."

Since December 2011, the Sousa Mendes Foundation has man-

aged a database of those he helped, built in large part on a visa registry book discovered in Bordeaux. So far, the foundation has identified about 3,200 of the estimated 30,000 people saved by the Portuguese visas.

The foundation also helped organize the pilgrimage along the route taken by some of those who fled, one of the most poignant

stops being this small town in central Portugal, where Mr. Sousa Mendes was born and is buried in a family crypt. There, the participants held a remembrance ceremony. Today the family's former mansion is in ruins, with the roof collapsed, but its prominent place in the town is a reminder

that family members were once powerful aristocratic landlords, until the war and Fascism changed their destiny.

Some of those taking part in the pilgrimage had not returned to Portugal since the war. Until they were contacted by the foundation, many descendants had in fact not heard of Mr. Sousa Mendes, either because their parents never spoke about their wartime experiences or because they probably never realized just what a crucial role he played in facilitating their escape.

Mr. Sousa Mendes started ignoring Lisbon's orders and delivering his visas in 1939, several months before Germany's invasion of France, in part because he had a twin brother, a fellow Portuguese diplomat, who was stationed in Warsaw and told him about Nazi atrocities there.

Many of his visas, however, were issued in the frantic month of June 1940, when the Germans were tightening their grip on France and the Portuguese government was scrambling to bring home its rebel consul from Bordeaux. Mr. Sousa Mendes eventually gave up his struggle and returned to Lisbon in early July, after the Portuguese had also instructed the Spanish border police to turn back holders of his visas.

In the 1980s, Portugal rehabilitated Mr. Sousa Mendes's name and apologized to his family, while the Portuguese Parliament posthumously promoted him to the rank of ambassador.

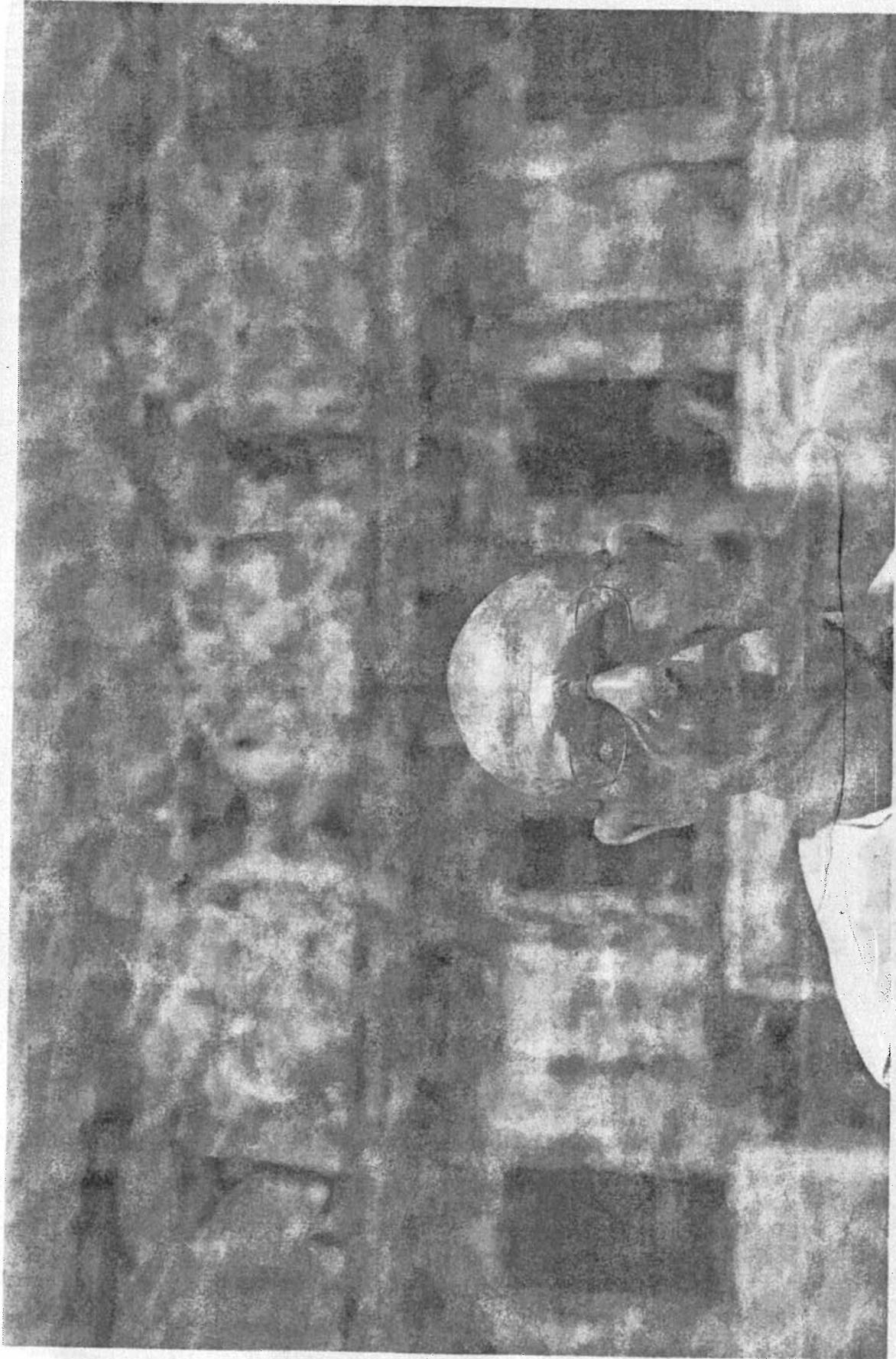
Still, Harry Oesterreicher, the treasurer of the Sousa Mendes Foundation, said that it was disappointing to see the limited recognition Mr. Sousa Mendes had received in Portugal and how his family mansion here had been allowed to fall into ruin. It was repossessed by creditors after his death.

The foundation is now hoping to turn the house into a museum of tolerance, with the Portuguese authorities pledging last month to make an initial contribution of



JOAO PEDRO MANNOTO FOR THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

The abandoned home of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a Portuguese diplomat who helped thousands escape Nazi persecution, was the site of a tribute last month.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO PEDRO MARNOTO FOR THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

The faint childhood memories of Lee Sterling, above, led him to join a pilgrimage to Portugal to learn about his history and the role of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, left, in his family's survival.



about \$400,000. Portugal's attitude toward Mr. Sousa Mendes, Celeste Amaro, an official from its Cultural Ministry, shrugged and said that "our democracy is young, and we still need to do a lot more to understand what happened in our past." Portuguese people, she added, "really need to know better his history and what a great man he was."

Ms. Amaro was attending the inauguration of a temporary exhibition on the doorstep of the derelict house, with photos of the visa recipients posted on translucent panels built by Eric Moed, 25, an American architect whose family survived the Holocaust thanks to such Portuguese visas.

Also in attendance was Mr. Moed's grandfather, Leon, another architect who said that he "very vividly" remembered "the incredible anxiety of my father" as the family lined up for visas to exit France.

As to Mr. Sousa Mendes, "my father said something about having gotten the visa from a special person, but that was it," Leon Moed recalled.

Almost all the participants in

the pilgrimage were Jewish. Mr. Sousa Mendes, however, was a Roman Catholic who fathered 15 children and made "no distinction between religions and whether people were rich or poor," said Mr. Sterling, who is a retired American lawyer, but was born into a Brussels family of diamond brokers named Serebrianyi.

Indeed, Jews accounted for only about a third of the Sousa Mendes visa recipients, with the list also including members of the Hapsburg and Luxembourg royal families and Belgian cabinet members, as well as artists like Salvador Dali and his Russian-born wife, Gala.

Several of the participants said the trip had inspired them to find out more about their family histo-

ries. Jennifer Hartog, who lives in Toronto, said she wanted to write a book about her father and other members of her Dutch Jewish family.

Traveling for two weeks from Paris to Lisbon alongside others whose lives were saved by the Portuguese visas, she said, had also made clear to her the magnitude of Mr. Sousa Mendes's own personal sacrifice.

"You hear about people who argued that they couldn't help because it was wartime and they had their own family to worry about, but here was a man with a career, a wife and an incredible amount of children who certainly did do something for others," Ms. Hartog said.

THE Arts

The New York Times

Scholar Asserts That Hollywood Avidly Aided Nazis

By JENNIFER SCHUESSLER

The list of institutions and industries that have been accused of whitewashing their links to the Third Reich is long, including various governments, the Vatican, Swiss banks and American corporations like I.B.M., General Motors and DuPont.

Now a young historian wants to add a more glamorous name to that roll call:

Hollywood.

In "The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact With Hitler," Ben Urwand draws on a wealth of previously uncited documents to argue that Hollywood studios, in an effort to protect the German market for their movies, not only acquiesced to Nazi censorship but also actively and enthusiastically cooperated with that regime's global propaganda

effort.

In the 1930s "Hollywood is not just collaborating with Nazi Germany," Mr. Urwand said by telephone from Cambridge, Mass., where he is currently at Harvard's prestigious Society of Fellows. "It's also collaborating with Adolf Hitler, the person and human being."

Mr. Urwand's book, to be published in October by Harvard University Press,

has been seen by few scholars. But his research, which was summarized this month in the online magazine Tablet, is already creating a stir.

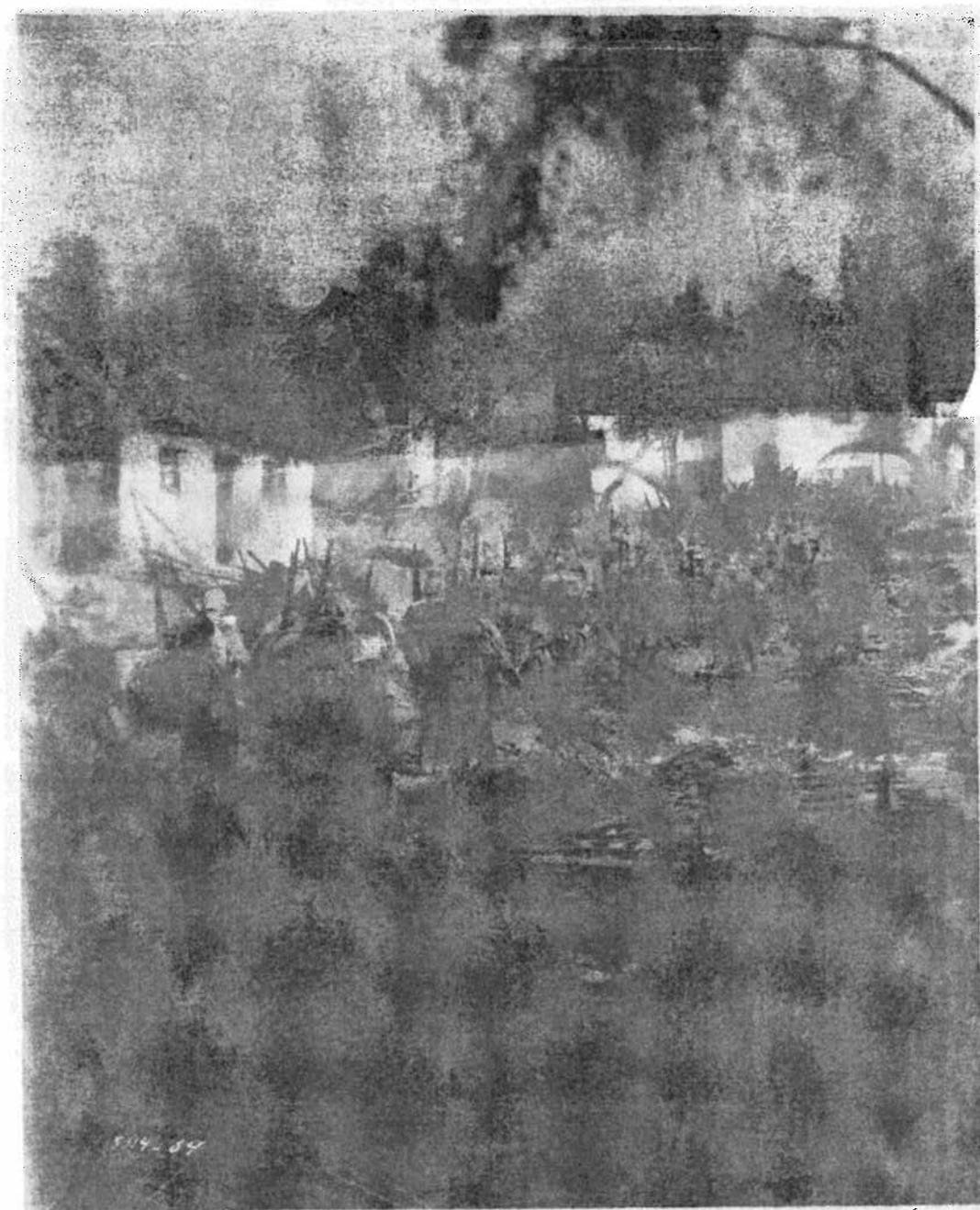
"I think what this guy has found could be a blockbuster," said Deborah Lipstadt, a Holocaust historian at Emory University. "I'm very anxious to see this book. I found it breathtaking in the au-

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CHARLIE MAPOREY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ben Urwand, author of "The Collaboration," due out in October.



"All Quiet on the Western Front" (1930), a film that led to Nazi riots and demands for editing.

Hollywood Avidly Aided Nazis, Scholar Asserts

From First Arts Page

dacity of the story it seems to be trying to tell."

Other scholars familiar with the period, however, question both its claims to originality and its insistently dark slant, starting with the title.

"The word 'collaboration' in this context is a slander," said Thomas M. Doherty, a historian at Brandeis University and the author of the recent book "Hollywood and Hitler: 1933-1939," which covers some of the same ground. "You use that word to describe the Vichy government. Louis B. Mayer was a greedhead, but he is not the moral equivalent of Vikdun Quisling."

That the German government meddled in the film industry during Hollywood's so-called golden age has long been known to film historians, and such activity was chronicled in the American press at the time. ("Long Arm of Hitler Extends to Hollywood Studio," read a 1937 headline in *Newsweek*.)

But Mr. Urwand, 35, offers the most stinging take by far, drawing on material from German and American archives to argue that the relationship between Hollywood and the Third Reich ran much deeper — and went on much longer — than any scholar has so far suggested.

On page after page, he shows studio bosses, many of them Jewish immigrants, cutting films scene by scene to suit Nazi officials; producing material that could be seamlessly repurposed in Nazi propaganda films; and, according to one document, helping to finance the manufacture of German armaments.

Even Jack Warner, praised by Groucho Marx for running "the only studio with any guts" after greenlighting the 1939 film "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," comes in for some revisionist whacks.

It was Warner who personally ordered that the word "Jew" be removed from all dialogue in the 1937 film "The Life of Emile Zola," Mr. Urwand writes, and his studio was the first to invite Nazi officials to its Los Angeles headquarters to screen films and suggest cuts.

"There's a whole myth that Warner Brothers were crusaders against fascism," Mr. Urwand said. "But they were the first to try to appease the Nazis in 1933."

Mr. Urwand, an Australian-born scholar whose Jewish Hungarian maternal grandparents spent the war years in hiding, said his project began in 2004, when he was a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley. He came across an interview with the screenwriter Budd Schulberg vaguely mentioning that Louis B. Mayer used to meet with a German consul in Los Angeles to discuss cuts to his studio's movies. Smelling a dis-

sertation topic, he began digging around.

In the German state archives in Berlin, Mr. Urwand found a January 1938 letter from the German branch of 20th-Century Fox asking whether Hitler would share his opinions on American movies, and signed "Heil Hitler!"

Other discoveries followed, including notes by Hitler's adjutants recording his reactions to the movies he watched each night (he loved Laurel and Hardy but hated "Tarzan"), and a scrapbook in which Jack Warner documented a Rhine cruise that he and other studio executives took with an Allied escort on Hitler's former yacht in July 1945 as part of a trip exploring postwar business opportunities.

"That was the one time I actually shouted out in an archive," Mr. Urwand recalled.

He also uncovered detailed records of regular studio visits by

German officials, including Georg Gyssling, the special consul assigned to monitor Hollywood, who watched films, dictated scene-by-scene requests for cuts and engaged in bizarre debates. (Did "King Kong," for example, constitute "an attack on the nerves of the German people?") And Mr. Urwand found records of a global network of monitors who made sure the cuts were made in all countries, including the United States.

Sometimes entire films were quashed. Previous historians have written about the battle over "The Mad Dog of Europe," an anti-Nazi film planned in 1933 that some Jewish groups opposed on the grounds that it would stoke anti-Semitism. But Mr. Urwand, who uncovered the only known script, argues that the studios were concerned only with protecting their business with Germany.

"We have terrific income in Germany and, as far as I am concerned," Louis B. Mayer was quoted in a legal case as saying, "this picture will never be made."

Hollywood's "collaboration," Mr. Urwand argues, began in 1930, when Carl Laemmle Jr. of Universal Studios agreed to significant cuts in "All Quiet on the Western Front" after riots by the Nazi Party, then rising in Germany. (Laemmle, Mr. Urwand acknowledges, would later help hundreds of Jewish refugees secure visas to the United States.)

And it lasted, in his telling, well past November 1938, when Kristallnacht became front-page news around the world.

In June 1939 Metro-Goldwyn Mayer treated 10 Nazi newspaper editors to a "good-will tour" of its studio in Los Angeles. Mr. Urwand also found a December 1938 report by an American commercial attaché suggesting that MGM was financing German armaments production as part of a deal to circumvent restrictions on repatriating movie profits.

Mr. Urwand said that he found nearly 20 films intended for American audiences that German officials significantly altered or squelched. Perhaps more important, he added, Jewish characters were all but eliminated from

Hollywood movies.

Some of the movies that were never made "would have done a great deal," he said. "They really would have mobilized public opinion."

Some scholars, like Mr. Doherty of Brandeis, point out that many movies of the time contained veiled anti-Nazi slaps that any viewer would have recognized. And in private, the studio bosses often went much further.

Steven J. Ross, a professor of history at the University of Southern California, is working on a book that will detail the little-known story of an extensive anti-Nazi spy ring that began op-

***Inviting Nazi officials
to tour film studios,
and altering movies at
their behest.***

erating in Los Angeles in 1934, financed by the very studio bosses who were cutting films to satisfy Nazi officials.

"The moguls who have been castigated for putting business ahead of Jewish identity and loyalty were in fact working behind the scenes to help Jews," Mr. Ross said.

But Mr. Urwand strongly defended the notion of "collaboration," noting that the word (and its German equivalent, *Zusammenarbeit*) occurs repeatedly in documents on both sides.

And he bristled at the suggestion that Hollywood had a better record against Nazism than other major industries, to say nothing of the State Department, which repeatedly blocked efforts to expand visas for Jewish refugees.

"The State Department's record is atrocious," he said. "But the State Department did not finance the production of Nazi armaments. It did not distribute pro-Nazi newsreels in Germany. It did not meet with Nazi officials and do secret deals."

"Collaboration," he added, "is what the studios were doing, and how they describe it."

Museums Faulted on Restitution of Nazi-Looted Art

By PATRICIA COHEN

Not until 1998, when 44 nations including the United States signed the groundbreaking Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art, did governments and museums formally embrace the idea that they have a special responsibility to repair the damage caused by the wholesale looting of art owned by Jews during the Third Reich's reign.

Now, 15 years later, historians, legal

experts and Jewish groups say that some American museums have backtracked on their pledge to settle Holocaust recovery claims on the merits, and have resorted instead to legal and other tactics to block survivors or their heirs from pursuing claims.

In recent years judges have dismissed several cases after museums argued that recovery claims had been filed too late. California legislators were so disturbed by one blocked claim there that they passed a law in 2010 to

Jewish heirs are losing ground in the courts.

help Nazi-era (and other) claimants avoid tripping over legal deadlines.

In some of the cases, museums like the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Solomon R.

Guggenheim Museum have tried to deter claimants from filing suit by beating them to the courthouse and asking judges to declare the museums the rightful owners.

Critics also charge that museums have not followed their own guidelines, which urge them to be forthcoming with provenance information that could help people trace the history of a contested work of art.

"The response of museums has real-
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ESTATE OF GEORGE GROSZ/LICENSED BY VAGA, NEW YORK MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

George Grosz's heirs want MoMA to return "Poet Max Herrmann-Neisse."

Museums Faulted on Art Restitution

From First Arts Page

ly been lamentable," said Jonathan Petropoulos, the former research director for art and cultural property for the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets, who has been hired by claimants to do research. "It is now so daunting for an heir to go forward."

The question of whether museums are deciding claims on the merits has recently been pushed to center stage again by a series of law journal articles, legal forums and rulings in the United States and abroad. At stake in this emotional debate are the fate of valuable works of art, the reputations of elite cultural institutions and the legal issue of whether the American judicial system is capable of addressing restitution claims.

Both the Association of Art Museum Directors and the American Alliance of Museums insist that their members consistently follow ethical guidelines requiring them to respond "quickly and scrupulously" to restitution requests.

Christine Anagnos, executive director of the museum directors association, said its members were committed "to resolving questions about the status of objects in their custody." Most cases, she said, are resolved through negotiation before claimants feel compelled to file suit.

Museum officials also say they turn to procedural tactics like in-

voking time limits only after they have carefully researched a claim and concluded that it is unfounded.

But Stuart E. Eizenstat, a former special State Department envoy who negotiated the Washington Principles, said museums have adopted a harder line in the last seven years or so, partly in response to some court victories by art institutions and waning pressure from the government.

"The essence of the Washington Principles comes down to one sentence," he said. "Let decisions be made on the merits of the case

A plea that restitution be made on the merits of a claim rather than on legal grounds.

rather than technical defenses."

No one disputes that, even with databases that list looted art, it takes considerable effort and money to track artworks from Nazi-occupied countries, which typically have gaping holes in their provenance.

There is also agreement that not all claims are valid, which requires that museum directors respond cautiously to safeguard their collections.

Simon J. Frankel, a lawyer who has represented the Museum of

Fine Arts in Boston, pointed out in a recent law journal article that since 2010, when the museum went to court to block a Nazi-era restitution claim, it has settled with the heirs of two Jewish art dealers and returned a 14th-century embroidered panel to a museum in Trento, Italy.

Neither side can agree on how many people have approached American museums with restitution claims. The museum directors association, which emphasizes that few cases end up before a judge, lists two dozen cases where institutions, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, returned art to individual heirs without going to court.

But critics, including the Holocaust Art Restitution Project and the Commission for Art Recovery, say problems arise in the less straightforward cases, where documentation is missing or it is unclear whether Jewish owners freely parted with a work of art or were coerced by the Nazi authorities into selling it for a pittance.

Mr. Eizenstat is among those who have long argued that the courts are inherently ill suited to resolving restitution cases and that to avoid litigation the United States should create an independent mediation board, as several European countries have. This spring, a New York chapter of the Federal Bar Association put forward a resolution calling for the creation of an American commission along those lines.

Douglas Davidson, the State Department's current special envoy for Holocaust issues, said at a conference at The Hague in November that "alternatives to litigation are preferable," but he conceded that a similar American commission is unlikely to emerge. One major obstacle is that whereas in Europe, museums are typically government-owned, most American museums are privately run, making it difficult to mandate compliance.

Such panels are not necessarily insulated from criticism in any case. The Dutch Restitutions Committee, for example, drew criticism last month after it ruled that the interest of two museums in retaining paintings outweighed the heirs' interest in restitution.

Raymond Dowd, a partner at the Manhattan firm Dunnington, Bartholow & Miller who often handles restitution claims, complains that museums often review the evidence and decide on their own if a case is valid. Museums often fail to make their original research on a work's provenance or sale available or to submit the scholarship to peer review, he added.

He cited the case of a family that is seeking to recover art once owned by Fritz Grunbaum, a popular Viennese cabaret performer who died at a concentra-

tion camp. He said that 10 American museums including the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College have works by Egon Schiele that were listed on a 1938 German government inventory created after Mr. Grunbaum was shipped to Dachau. Some of the museums failed to provide full information about the provenance of the works, he said, and the Allen did not even list Mr. Grunbaum in the Schiele's provenance.

Andria Derstine, the Allen's director, said in an e-mail that the museum had cooperated with Mr. Dowd's requests for information and that it has concluded after its own investigation that the claim had no merit. It did revise its online listing last month to reflect that Mr. Grunbaum once owned the Schiele.

For years, the family of the artist George Grosz has fought to recover three works from the Museum of Modern Art, arguing they were the subject of a forced sale after Grosz fled the Nazis in 1933.

A federal judge dismissed the Groszes' lawsuit in 2011, citing the statute of limitations. Before

the case landed in court, the museum hired researchers at Yale University and the former United States attorney general Nicholas deB. Katzenbach (who died in 2012) to review their evidence. Katzenbach concluded that Grosz's Jewish dealer, Alfred Flechtheim, had fair title to the works and freely sold them. The Groszes' own experts, though, challenged his report and declared that Flechtheim was forced to flee Germany after his Düsseldorf gallery was "Aryanized" in 1933 and given to a Nazi Party member.

That interpretation was affirmed in April by a ruling from the German government's advisory commission on plundered art in an unrelated case involving the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. While there is "an absence of concrete evidence," the commission concluded that on balance, "it is to be assumed that Alfred Flechtheim was forced to sell the disputed painting because he was persecuted."

Margaret Doyle, a spokeswoman for MoMA, said the museum has no interest in retaining works to which it does not have clear ti-

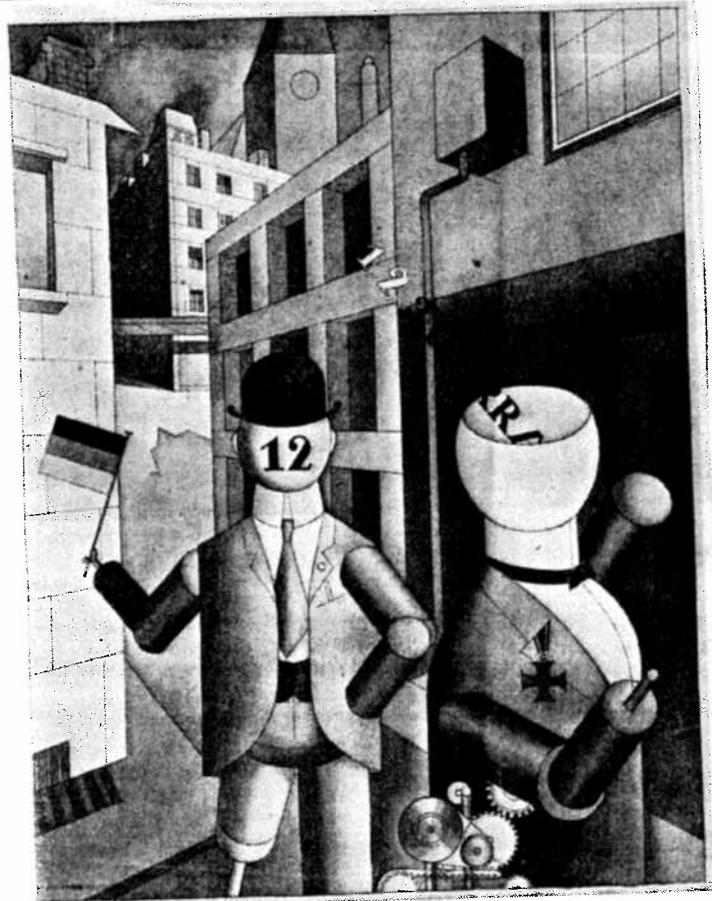
tle. "After years of extensive research," she said, "including numerous conversations with Grosz's estate, it was evident that we did in fact have good title to the works by Grosz in our collection and therefore an obligation to the public to defend our ownership appropriately."

But George Grosz's son Martin, 83, points to a letter his father wrote in 1953 after seeing one of the works, "The Poet Max Herrmann-Neisse," hanging at MoMA: "Modern Museum exhibits a painting stolen from me (I am powerless against that) they bought it from someone, who stole it."

"I can remember talking with my father about it," he said of the painting.

"He was very reluctant to in any way assail or complain about the treatment he got from anybody in the United States," Mr. Grosz said, explaining why his father never fought to recover the work.

When refugees complained, Mr. Grosz said, his father would respond: "You should kiss the ground you're walking on because they let you in."



Grosz's "Republican Automatons" (1920) is also in dispute.

MONDAY, JULY 1, 2013



PHOTOGRAPHS, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, ESTATE OF GEORGE GROSZ/LICENSED BY VAGA, NEW YORK. IMAGE COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
George Grosz's "Self-Portrait With Model" (1928), at MoMa, is sought by his heirs.

Holocaust survivor meets a soldier who freed him

By **Nina Schutzman**
POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

WAPPINGERS FALLS, N.Y. — Moshe Avital, a Holocaust survivor, and Barry Lewis, an Army veteran, have plenty of fallen friends to honor on Memorial Day.

Between them, they've seen thousands of people die, both soldiers and civilians. But this year, the men can think of something besides painful memories of war. On Thursday, Avital, 84, and Lewis, 90, met face-to-face for the first time in the auditorium at Wappingers Junior High School.

The last time Avital and Lewis were near each other was on the grounds of the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany, nearly 70 years ago.

Lewis of Denver, Delaware County, was a staff sergeant with Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army when it liberated the camp on April 11, 1945.

Avital was a 16-year-old Jewish prisoner in the camp, close to death.

Thursday's setting was much different. Avital of New Rochelle, Westchester County, spoke to students about his time in the concentration camps, before being formally introduced to Lewis by Jeffrey Place, a social studies teacher.

Place set up the meeting after learning that Lewis had a relative in the junior high school. It was a "bashert," or destined

occurrence, Place said.

Even if they had met before, the two men wouldn't have been able to recognize each other.

In 1945, Avital weighed 70 pounds after a two-year period of starvation and hard labor in six concentration camps. He also was an orphan. Avital's mother and father, along with half of his 10 siblings, were killed during the Holocaust.

"Now that I met you, a real soldier who fought in order to get to Buchenwald, it gives me a real wonderful feeling."

Moshe Avital, Holocaust survivor, to Barry Lewis, a U.S. staff sergeant during World War II

His parents were sent to the gas chambers at Auschwitz, the first camp the family went to.

They separated men and women when we got there (to Auschwitz), and that was the last time I saw my mother," he said.

Lewis was a young man but an experienced soldier. He was born in Dover, England, left home and began his military service with the British merchant marines as a teen. He later landed in America and joined the Army.

As a staff sergeant with the 293rd Combat Engineer Battalion, Lewis landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day and had been fighting for nearly a year.

He was among the first wave of soldiers who liberated Buchenwald.

"I had seen death, I had seen bodies — probably more than most people," Lewis said. "But this was so horrible — I'll just never get it out of my head. I really didn't know what it was that I was going into. No one said there were civilians there."

The two men were thrilled to meet and said they want to keep in touch. They've been blessed, both said.

Avital "devoted his life" to the educational field, his wife Anita, their children and 11 grandchildren.

"Now that I met you, a real soldier who fought in order to get to Buchenwald, it gives me a real wonderful feeling," Avital told Lewis.

Lewis married Jane Lewis after his first wife died, has "beautiful daughters and has never been fired or out of work."

But still, there are memories that haunt both men.

Avital will always think of the family he lost.

And Lewis wonders how people can "do those things to each other," he said. "I wonder what God thinks, when he sees it."

Seniors tell survival stories to filmmakers

Cedar Crest residents share oral histories in Shoah documentary

ROBERT WIENER
NJ/N Staff Writer

For more than a year, a chaplain, two videographers, and a resident of a senior residential complex in Pompton Plains have been working closely on a documentary about survivors of the Nazi Holocaust.

What makes their project out of the ordinary is the fact that none of the four happens to be Jewish.

The filmmakers have boiled down 35 hours of interviews into an 86-minute presentation, titled *Never Forgotten*, which they are eager to share outside their community,

Cedar Crest Village.

The film was born out of an idea by Cedar Crest resident Doris Sinovsky, a non-Jew whose late husband was Jewish.

During her three years at Cedar Crest, she produced two documentaries based on the oral histories of the World War II veterans among her community's 1,900 residents.

Among the servicemen she interviewed were two men who had liberated concentration camps. "They said it was such a horrible experience they did not want to talk about it. They said, 'No matter what you thought the worst could be, this was worse,'" Sinovsky said in an interview with NJ/N and fellow filmmakers on May 24 in the community's television studio.

That led her to seek out fellow Cedar Crest residents who were willing to share their experiences during

Cedar Crest Village residents Doris Sinovsky and Leo Lowy join the makers of *Never Forgotten*, standing from left, Bert Moor, Larry Curran, and Michael Dygos in the community's TV studio. Photo by Robert Wiener



the Shoa on-camera.

Sinovsky, who grew up in California during the war, recalled Japanese-American friends who were forced to leave their homes for internment camps. "But I didn't know any Jews at that point. Then I met my husband and got more interested," she said. "It is important to get these stories out while they can still be told."

Some 22 survivors were estimated to be among the 1,900 residents of Cedar Crest, but a few "didn't want to talk to us," said Bert Moore, the pastoral ministries manager at Cedar Crest, who conducted the interviews. Moore is an ordained Protestant minister and a retired Navy chaplain.

All those who were interviewed lived through the Holocaust except for the daughter of one survivor and a German-born Christian whose parents aided a Jewish family by giving them food, money, and employment so they could hide from the Nazis.

And it's not that the 19 who did agree to be interviewed were eager to tell their stories, Moore stressed; rather, "they knew they had important stories that needed to be shared. I wanted not only to delve into their past but into how they came to the United States and wound up here. They are our friends and neighbors."

Some of the featured survivors were hidden children, sheltered by Christian families and kept safe from the Nazis.

Others escaped via the Kindertransports, sent by their parents to safety in England.

One man featured in the video survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald because, he said, "I had an angel."

Leo Lowy, a Czech Jew, told *NJJN*, "I was selected by Eichmann for Auschwitz. I was selected by Mengele for

the gas chamber. But I survived by luck, plain luck."

Lowy was orphaned at age 10 and seized by the Nazis from an orphanage three years later. "It was my bar mitzva present," he said ruefully.

After liberation, Lowy immigrated to New York as a teenager, graduated from high school and college, and had a successful career as a draftsman and building designer. Now retired, he speaks about his experiences at schools, churches, and synagogues. "It is absolutely important for survivors to tell their stories," he said.

Larry Curran agreed. As Cedar Crest's TV community coordinator, he organized the production's logistical elements.

"I learned about the Holocaust in school but I was very far removed from any connections with the people," he said. "Here we sat down with the people who were in Auschwitz and Buchenwald and they are not afraid to talk about it."

"I learned just basically what they teach in school, and it wasn't much," said Michael Dygos, the documentary's producer, editor, and director. "I went into it with a basic understanding, but once I sat down with people who lived through this experience it took on a whole new meaning.

"We have to get these stories out there, not only to make sure these things never happen again, but to show that people who lived through this horrible experience can go on to live successful lives," he said.

The documentary received accolades when it was shown to Cedar Crest residents on May 21, said Dygos. He and the other filmmakers are seeking a wider audience; anyone interested in screening *Never Forgotten* may contact him at michael.dygos@erickson.com or 973-831-3567. ■

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Exhibit at Auschwitz-Birkenau Honors Children of Holocaust

By MELISSA EDDY

OSWIECIM, Poland — A small bird, an empty baby carriage, a soldier pointing a gun at a family in the woods. The simple sketches arranged by the Israeli artist Michal Rovner tell the story of loss, fear and hope through the eyes of the 1.5 million children killed in the Nazi Holocaust.

The sketches, with work that includes color footage of Jewish life in Europe between the World Wars and a six-and-a-half-foot-high volume of the Book of Names, make up the new permanent exhibit at Auschwitz-Birkenau honoring the Jewish victims. Called simply "Shoah," the multimedia exhibit, which tries to push visitors beyond their knowledge of the facts of the Nazis' Final Solution, was dedicated Thursday in a ceremony attended by the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

"There are Holocaust deniers," Mr. Netanyahu said after touring the exhibit. There, he found the name of Judith, his father-in-law's twin sister, who was among the 4.2 million known victims listed in the oversize book displayed in the former brick barracks. "Let them come to Block 27 and let them go name by name."

Mr. Netanyahu has accused Iran of plotting a second Holocaust, and recent Israeli attacks on Damascus demonstrate Israel's desire to take advantage of the chaotic situation in Syria to send a clear message to Iran's government. On Thursday, he charged that the Allies had failed to act against the Holocaust, despite knowledge of what was happening in the gas chambers of Birkenau, and vowed that the Israeli people would never again place their fate in the hands of others.

"From here in Auschwitz-Birkenau, this place that serves as a living testimony to the wish to destroy and obliterate our nation, I, the prime minister of the state of Israel, state of the Jewish people, am telling all nations of the world the state of Israel will do all within its power to prevent a second Holocaust," Mr. Netanyahu said, in Hebrew.

Set in the original brick, two-story

former barracks of Block 27, the exhibit seeks to complement the museum's permanent collection of artifacts and the authenticity of the camp itself, through multimedia installations by contemporary Israeli artists, said Avner Shalev, the director of the Yad Vashem Institute for Holocaust Research in Israel, who curated the \$8 million exhibit.

"We decided that we are not going to compete with the artifacts," Mr. Shalev said. The Israeli government asked Yad Vashem to create the exhibit, after Ariel Sharon, then the prime minister, returned from the camp in 2005 dismayed at the outdated, ill-kept display created in the 1960s to honor the Jewish dead.

Faced with the task of making it worth visitors' effort to spend 30 more minutes with the display, after having already toured the sites and main museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Mr. Shalev huddled with researchers, teachers and survivors for several years to develop a mix of moving images, maps, audio clips of Hitler's anti-Semitic rants and survivors' videotaped testimony.

"The exhibit deals with a level of spiritual experience that builds on a culture of elements that you identify with and that make up your identity as a human being," Mr. Shalev said.

One room is dedicated to the youngest victims. With dark, wooden watchtowers outside the windows, the fragility of the children's drawings rendered on the wall by Ms. Rovner slows down visitors and draws them close.

Edited together from fragments of about 3,000 pictures drawn by Jewish children before they were executed, the work tells their story of longing for a daily life lost, through empty baby carriages and a mother hugging her child goodbye; of fear of soldiers poised in the woods and bombs breaking their homes; of the train tracks disappearing beneath the yawning gate at Birkenau.

"They found some kind of energy although they were taken away from everything they knew," Ms. Rovner said of the children.

"They didn't tell this story," she said. "They couldn't."

EXCLUSIVE

BY RICH SCHAPIRO
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

LONG BEFORE he started idolizing Adolf Hitler, Heath Campbell was a wife-beating tyrant who was obsessed with the devil, the Daily News has learned.

An ex-wife of Campbell, who marched into a New Jersey courthouse last week in full Nazi regalia, says he was a hubby from hell.

Literally.

"He claimed that his mother was raped and he was the evil seed planted inside her," Cathy Bowlby told The News. "He believed he was the devil reborn to take over the world."

"He'd say, 'I believe in the devil. I worship the devil. I am the devil.'"

Campbell, who would go on to name one of his sons Adolf Hitler, even lobbied Bowlby to name their first-born Lucifer. But she "talked him out of it" by suggesting that their son take their father's name instead.

That didn't stop Campbell from acting like the devil, Bowlby said.

Throughout their stormy, three-year marriage, he regularly punched, choked, raped and even threatened to kill his young wife, she said.

One of his favorite activities was taking Bowlby on car rides to a local cemetery.

"To show me where he was going to bury me when he killed me," Bowlby said.

He also terrorized their son, Heath. Once, furious that his 2-year-old had knocked into the curtains, Campbell picked up a running vacuum cleaner and held it inches from Heath's face.

"He was absolutely terrified," Bowlby said. "For years after, he would scream and cry when he saw a vacuum cleaner."

Bowlby revealed Campbell's violent past days after he showed up at a custody hearing in Flemington, N.J., Tuesday dressed like his infamous idol and proudly showing off swastika tattoos on his neck and arms.

The 40-year-old Campbell, who is the father of eight kids from four women, is vying to gain visitation rights to see his youngest child, Hons Heinrich.

Campbell's three other kids with his estranged third wife Deborah — Adolf Hitler Campbell, 7, JoyceLynn Aryan Nation Campbell, 6, and 5-year-old Honz-lynn Jeannie Campbell — were also taken away by the state after domestic abuse allegations surfaced.

He also had a child with his first ex-wife and another with an ex-girlfriend. Details about them were unavailable.

Campbell's troubles started in 2009 when he made a stink over a supermarket's refusal to inscribe Adolf Hitler's name on a cake for his son Adolf's third birthday.

"Jewish people came into my house and took my kids all over a name," Campbell told The News this week. "I didn't murder anybody. I didn't hurt anybody. What crime did I do? Yes, I'm guilty of loving my children."

Campbell has long ranked his neighbors in the tiny western New Jersey township of Holland.

"If it wasn't illegal, I'd shoot him," said a middle-aged neighbor, who refused to give his name.

The unemployed Campbell lives off of disability payments and drives a green 1985 Pontiac Bonneville adorned with a swastika on its hood and Hitler suckers on the passenger side door.

When Campbell met Bowlby in 1998, he already had one ex-wife, two kids and a dark past.

Campbell was abused as a child, developed "serious psychological conditions" and never learned to read, court documents show.

At first, Campbell treated Bowlby like a queen, dropping off sweet notes at her house.

But once she moved in with him, he turned into a monster, Bowlby said.

He ordered her not to look at other men and imposed strict rules on what she could wear:

No shorts. Only long shirts with high necklines.

Then came the abuse.

Early in the relationship, Campbell knocked his pregnant wife to the ground — causing her to miscarry, Bowlby said.

Using a bull-shaped ring like brass knuckles, he'd punch her in the head and chest, leaving nasty puncture marks.

And once, while she was pregnant, she woke him up during a late-night trip to the bathroom, prompting Campbell to beat and then briefly smother her with blankets, Bowlby said.

"The abuse happened just about every day," Bowlby said.

Bowlby wasn't allowed to go outside by herself, and Campbell nailed the windows closed to make sure she couldn't escape.

Bowlby said she wasn't allowed to watch TV shows — only cartoons were permitted — because Campbell didn't want her to see other men.

Even after the birth of their second child, a girl named Kurt-lynn, Campbell openly fantasized about killing Bowlby.

"He told me he was going to drown me in the bathtub and slit my wrists to make it look like suicide."

N.J. Nazi: 'I worship the devil ...I am the devil'

● Dad in custody fight is monster, says ex-wife

● He tells News: I'm not bad & Jews took my kids

