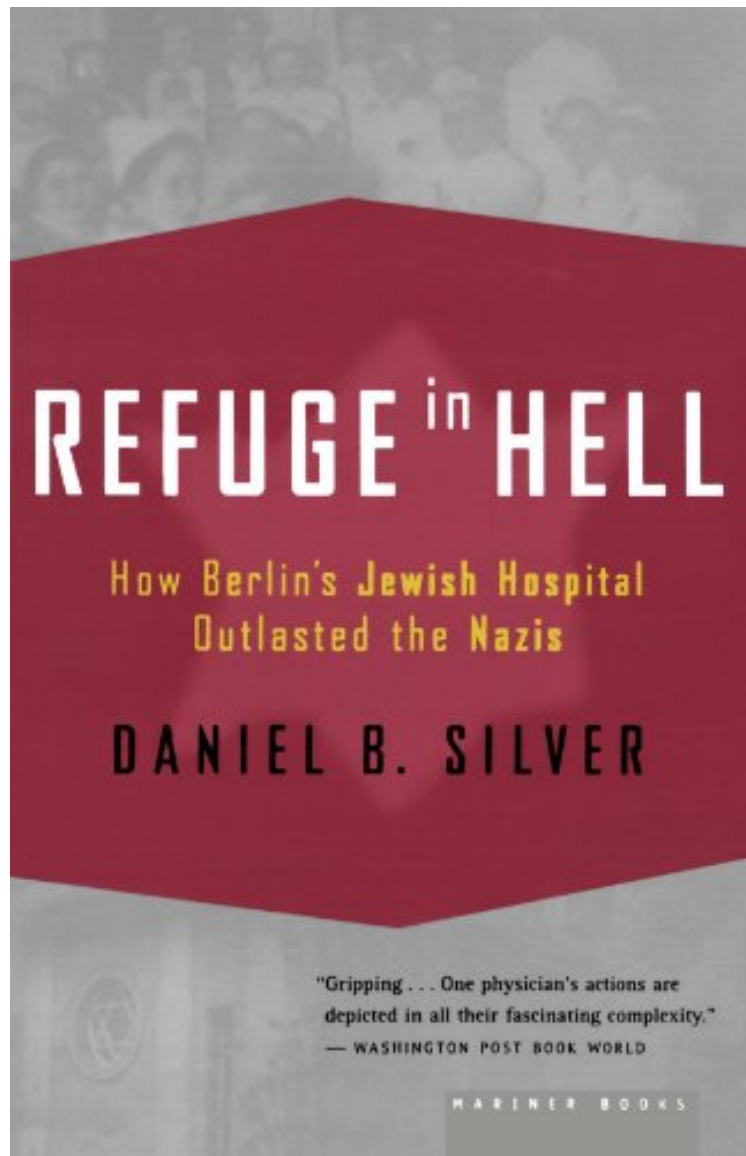


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## Refuge in Hell: How Berlin's Jewish Hospital Outlasted the Nazis

*Daniel B. Silver*

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**Daniel B. Silver : Refuge in Hell: How Berlin's Jewish Hospital Outlasted the Nazis** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Refuge in Hell: How Berlin's Jewish Hospital Outlasted the Nazis:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Refuge in Hell is an extraordinary account of a number of Jewish

staff of the hospital who managed to survive WWII. By Dee Vee Refuge in Hell is one of the most extraordinary books I've come across that describes the turmoil and bravery of so many people, mostly Jews, who worked at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. The book has particular significance for me because my father was head of microbiology at the Hospital and was finally convinced to move the family in February 1939 before total Hell broke loose there. The book has so many facets to it, betrayals and at the same time certain loyalties by a number of non-Jews. At the same time, the graphic description of the horrors that took place, such as the random selection of those hospital workers who were destined to be shipped to the 'East', essentially with no advance notice, is chilling yet unfortunately ever so real. Many Jewish doctors were also picked by the Nazis as well to be shipped off to death camps. The main reason the Hospital survived is that it was used by the Nazis for having food prepared for those to be transported by rail car to the East as well as for treating German soldiers. The hospital was also a holding area for Jews who were to be rounded up for concentration camp as well as part of the hospital serving as a prison. The inhumanity of the Nazis is perhaps most graphically described when the Jewish doctor put in charge of the hospital was obliged to pick Jews to be shipped to concentration camps. Of course there are numerous events of betrayal amongst some of the workers and doctors, their marriages to one another, and in some cases, their escape to the underground. This is not a book for the weak at heart but one that is ever so revealing of just how cruel the world can be. For me and my family, who lived through Kristallnacht, I am grateful that my father finally left voluntarily in early 1939. It was very hard for him to do so as he had great empathy for the Weimar Republic. But starting in 1940, things at the Hospital became indescribably ugly. I highly recommend this book as it gives insight into a unique Jewish establishment that survived the war in spite of ever too many cruelties that took place there. Robert J. von Gutfeld, PhD NYC 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Refuge in Hell: Purchased at .com By dep Refuge in Hell: How Berlin's Jewish Hospital Outlasted the Nazis is the story of how and why the Jewish Hospital survived the Nazi onslaught against the German Jews even through 1945. This is a very interesting story, but it is a challenge to follow all the twists and turns of the story, plus writing about an enormous amount of people. The biggest surprise to me was that nobody can really say for sure why the hospital was not closed down since everything else that was of use to the Jews plus being run by them, was almost always shut down. It seems like a matter of luck, politics and who knows what else that kept the hospital running. A very good read, once I got into the rhythm of the book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Textbook style By New Yorker This is a good subject and is written in the third person similar to how a textbook would be written. For me this made it a slower read. I was hoping for a more gripping story. The book is well researched and the subject matter is quite interesting

In 1945, when the Red Army liberated Berlin, they found in the Nazi capital a functioning Jewish hospital. In *Refuge in Hell*, Daniel B. Silver explores the many quirks of fortune and history that made the hospital's survival possible. His engrossing account of this little-known slice of history "reads like a novel imbued with the richness of a strong narrative and the depth of compelling characters" (Forward). Not since Schindler's List has there been such a wrenching story of personal sacrifice and triumph. Silver's narrative centers on the intricate machinations of the hospital's director, Dr. Lustig, a German-born Jew who managed to keep the Gestapo at bay throughout the war, in part because of his power over his staff and patients and his finely honed relationship with the infamous Adolf Eichmann.

From Publishers Weekly Silver, a lawyer and former general counsel to the CIA, tells the astonishing story of Berlin's Jewish Hospital during WWII. For decades before the Nazis seized power in Germany, the hospital had served Berlin's Jews as their principal medical resource. At the war's end, it was still functioning, delivering what medical care it could and sheltering a large percentage of the city's few remaining Jews. Silver asks how a Jewish institution, located in the capital city of a regime dedicated above all to obliterating the Jews, could possibly have survived. To answer this question, Silver has gathered the available documentary evidence and interviewed the handful of hospital staffers still alive. According to these sources, the institution's survival hinged on an amalgam of factors, including sheer, blind luck and bureaucratic infighting among Nazi organizations. As Silver explains, the Nazis' bizarre system for classifying persons of partly Jewish ancestry played a role as well, since some hospital personnel with mixed ancestry were not treated with the same implacable hostility as full Jews were. Silver acknowledges where gaps in the evidence make certainty impossible, as in assessing Dr. Walter Lustig, the hospital's chief during the war years. Lustig may have been a betrayer and collaborator, as some staffers think, or he may have manipulated the system as best he could to save at least some Jews from destruction. The balanced analysis of Dr. Lustig's record typifies the author's careful use of evidence throughout this absorbing book. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist When Soviet troops liberated the Jewish Hospital in Berlin in April 1945, they found 800 Jewish doctors, nurses, and patients that had survived there during World War II. The hospital's director was Dr. Walter Lustig, a German-born Jew, who had been baptized and married an Aryan woman. His ties to the notorious Adolf Eichmann were the reason that the hospital remained open. Lustig compiled lists of Jews--both staff members and patients--for deportation to concentration camps. He was later executed by the Soviets, purportedly for collaborating with the Nazis. Much of the

book centers on the complex character of Lustig and whether he should be lauded for keeping many of the Jews alive or condemned for sending many of them to their deaths. Silver was able to locate and interview a number of survivors. He also relied on the work of scholars who had researched the history of the hospital. The result is a graphic account of a little-known episode in the Holocaust. George Cohen Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved Silver, a lawyer and former general counsel to the CIA, tells the astonishing story of Berlin's Jewish Hospital during WWII. For decades before the Nazis seized power in Germany, the hospital had served Berlin's Jews as their principal medical resource. At the war's end, it was still functioning, delivering what medical care it could and sheltering a large percentage of the city's few remaining Jews. Silver asks how a Jewish institution, located in the capital city of a regime dedicated above all to obliterating the Jews, could possibly have survived. To answer this question, Silver has gathered the available documentary evidence and interviewed the handful of hospital staffers still alive. According to these sources, the institution's survival hinged on an amalgam of factors, including sheer, blind luck and bureaucratic infighting among Nazi organizations. As Silver explains, the Nazis' bizarre system for classifying persons of partly Jewish ancestry played a role as well, since some hospital personnel with mixed ancestry were not treated with the same implacable hostility as full Jews were. Silver acknowledges where gaps in the evidence make certainty impossible, as in assessing Dr. Walter Lustig, the hospital's chief during the war years. Lustig may have been a betrayer and collaborator, as some staffers think, or he may have manipulated the system as best he could to save at least some Jews from destruction. The balanced analysis of Dr. Lustig's record typifies the author's careful use of evidence throughout this absorbing book. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Publishers Weekly) When Soviet troops liberated the Jewish Hospital in Berlin in April 1945, they found 800 Jewish doctors, nurses, and patients that had survived there during World War II. The hospital's director was Dr. Walter Lustig, a German-born Jew, who had been baptized and married an Aryan woman. His ties to the notorious Adolf Eichmann were the reason that the hospital remained open. Lustig compiled lists of Jews--both staff members and patients--for deportation to concentration camps. He was later executed by the Soviets, purportedly for collaborating with the Nazis. Much of the book centers on the complex character of Lustig and whether he should be lauded for keeping many of the Jews alive or condemned for sending many of them to their deaths. Silver was able to locate and interview a number of survivors. He also relied on the work of scholars who had researched the history of the hospital. The result is a graphic account of a little-known episode in the Holocaust. George Cohen Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved (Booklist) A great deal has been written, filmed and imagined about the Holocaust over the past six decades. And yet Silver's narrative loses none of its poignancy... One physician's actions are depicted in all their fascinating complexity: whether Nazi collaborator or protector of his people, it is not easy to decide... Meticulously documented, the facts seem almost incredible. No more incredible, however, than the author's gripping account of the persecution itself. F. Gonzalez-Crussi (The Washington Post)