Voices from the Holocaust

The Story of the Ravensbrück Archive

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It has been a truly humbling experience and a time for great reflection being awarded this honorary doctorate.[1] At some level, I feel so underserving of this great honour. Because, for all the important work that has been done, there is so much more that remains undone.

I will dedicate this high honour to all of the oppressed peoples of the world who continue to suffer, and to all of those who have committed their lives to achieving greater justice, human rights, and dignity for all. And I pledge to continue doing my utmost to live up to this esteemed title, by redoubling my own efforts to make a difference in the lives of others.

I really struggled with what approach to take with my lecture. Not being an academic, I do not have original research or books I have authored that I can talk about. Instead, I thought it might be an interesting approach to share a series of narrative stories. Stories not only about the Ravensbrück Archive Project, but also about my personal journey that might help explain why my involvement with this project felt almost like the inevitable

1. This essay is a slightly revised version of the lecture given by the author on the occasion of him being awarded an honorary doctorate by the Faculty of Theology at Lund University in 2018. The author would like to acknowledge and express his gratitude to Dr. Alexander Maurits, Professor Samuel Byrskorg, the distinguished members of the Faculty, and to all of the other esteemed guests, friends, and colleagues who attended the lecture.

convergence of my life's work in support of the Jewish people and my life-long relationship with Lund University.

New Beginnings at Lund University

My first story is about the journey that led me here. It began when I was a young 19 year old student at the University of California Berkeley, searching not only for new life experiences, but also, for ways to make better sense of a world in conflict.

It was 1971, the Vietnam War was raging, and what drew me to become one of the University of California's first ever foreign exchange students at Lund University was not only its world-class academic reputation, consistently ranked amongst the world's best, but also the well-known traditions, idealism, and core values of the Swedish people.

And, upon my arrival, as a stranger in a foreign land, I was quite comforted to be so warmly welcomed into the homes, into the lives, and into the hearts of so many new friends, and I did soon begin to see the world quite differently.

It also soon became clear to me that I was not here just to complete one academic year of studies, but to create a life-long relationship with the Swedish people, and with this great university. I cannot overestimate the impact that Lund University has had on my life and on the lives of so many others.

My Father's Journey

The next story began on 6 May 1919, in northeastern Poland, along the Bug River near Bialystok, in the little shtetl of Siemiatycze. "Shetl" is Yiddish for the small, Jewish villages that once dotted Eastern Europe.

Founded in the sixteenth century by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Siemiatycze, like so many other shtetls, had suffered many invasions throughout the centuries, including the Swedish invasion of Poland in 1655. It was occupied many times by many armies, perhaps most notably by the Cossacks of the Russian Empire in 1807. By the end of the nineteenth century, Siemiatycze had a Jewish population of about 4,600, roughly 75 per cent of its entire population, and it also was beginning to be subjected to the violent anti-Jewish pogroms becoming so prevalent in the Russian Empire, and spreading rapidly to other regions of Europe as well.[2]

So on that fateful day of 6 May 1919, less than one year after Poland had finally regained its independence and formed its Second Republic,

2. "Siemiatycze", *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siemiatycze, accessed 2018-10-25.

Herman and Minnie Resnick gave birth to their third child, my beloved father Hyman Eugene.

Rzeźnik means butcher in Polish, and true to form, Herman was a kosher butcher, which apparently saved his and his family's lives, because he was supplying meat to the Polish army, which in turn was providing protection from the continuing pogroms. Yet, when the threat to his family finally became too much to endure, Herman used his savings to buy the family boat tickets to the so-called "New World."

In 1921, with little more than the clothes on their backs, the young Resnick family set sail for New York. My father was two years old, and no one in the family understood or spoke anything but Yiddish. After being processed through Ellis Island, they began the long journey over land to Los Angeles to open a kosher butcher shop and start their new life. And they became the first Resnicks in the phone book.

My Mother's Journey

Just about the same time that my father's family was preparing to leave Siemiatycze, about 400 kilometers away, a young woman named Helen Kuchevsky was living in Vilnius, now the capital and largest city in Lithuania.

While then a thriving centre of Jewish intellectual and religious culture, with over 100 synagogues and nearly half its population Jewish, Vilnius also at that time was experiencing growing and increasingly severe forms of violent antisemitism. According to Helen, after spending six months in hiding in the basement of her home, with her father Chayim, a respected synagogue cantor, her mother Leah, and her siblings, with nothing to eat or drink but potato peelings and water, she decided enough was enough for her, too. Her sister Mary, already in New York, sent two tickets, and Helen left her family and childhood home to set out with her youngest brother Samuel, on foot, on horseback, and using any and every other mode of transportation available, to make the long trek to Rotterdam, also to set sail for America.

In New York and barely twenty years old, Helen fell in love with an older Russian immigrant named Sam Kaplan, and they eloped to California, where they bought a chicken ranch and became, if not the first, one of the very first Jewish settlers in the city of Riverside. On 13 November 1925, Helen and Samuel gave birth to my mother Ann.

When the Second World War ended in 1945, my mother, then twenty years old, decided to move to Los Angeles to find herself a Jewish husband. On her second day in the city, she happened into my father's delicatessen,

and the rest is history. After seven dates in seven days in a row, he popped the question, and they got engaged. Perhaps in part because of the impression my father made when he picked her up in his shiny new Buick convertible, though far more likely due to his warm heart, generous nature, and huge smile.

After seven days in Los Angeles, Annie called her mother Helen with the great news, and what she heard back was: "Are you crazy?" Well, they were not crazy, and they were married six weeks later, raised four boys, and spent the next 55 years in love, until my father passed away.

My Lifelong Interest in the Holocaust

Fast forward to my early school days in Los Angeles in the 1950s, not that long after the war ended. One memory that really stands out from my childhood is how curious I was about why so many of my school friends' parents spoke with thick accents and had numbers tattooed on their arms.

Like Mr. Belzberg, the kind hearted baker who would bring his delicious donuts home for all the neighborhood kids. Or Mrs. Splevin, who owned the local music store and taught us all how to read music.

I began asking why, and after I asked enough times, *some* of them started to finally open up and tell me *some* of their stories. Like Mr. Abram, who owned the local convenience store which I would visit almost daily to buy candy, but really just to listen to his unbelievable stories about life in Auschwitz.

I always thought that the most remarkable thing all the survivors had in common was that they managed to survive, because the stories they told me of what they had to do just to survive, at very young ages, were almost beyond belief:

- Having to say goodbye to their families and run away into the woods all alone;
- Having to accept as normal, being hunted and captured again and again;
- Being herded like animals into trains to death camps, often to jump out of those fast moving trains;
- Watching their siblings being shot in the street;
- Having nothing to eat or drink for days; and
- Arriving at death camps to witness and themselves be subjected to the worst atrocities ever committed on God's green earth.

As I grew up, I became more and more fascinated with the Holocaust, and just loved to hear the survivors' stories – when they were willing to share them. Only later to understand why so many could not. Simply because they were just too painful. Like, for example, the elderly woman I went to visit in Oslo in 1974, who would only open 14 of the 15 steel chain locks on her door, and then open the door only wide enough to whisper to me, "there is nothing to talk about."

In that same year, 1974, I also traveled to Israel for the very first time, to work on a Kibbutz and tour the country. I visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, and the Museum of the Diaspora at Tel Aviv University, and both of those visits answered fundamental questions I had been grappling with for a long time. At Yad Vashem, I saw pictures and testimonies that documented the atrocities of the Holocaust and I finally understood why it was so painful for many survivors to talk about their experiences.

And at the Museum of the Diaspora, I saw models of villages and communities from all over the world where Jews had migrated over a period of thousands of years, to escape persecution and create new lives, including shtetls like Siemiatycze, where my father was born. It was during that visit to the Museum of the Diaspora, that I finally understood, on a very personal level, why it is so important to have safe communities for our children to grow up in. I realized that, if not for all the sacrifices of prior generations, there would not even have been a Jewish culture for my generation in which to grow up.

At that moment, I made my own commitment to the Jewish people's most cherished legacy of "l'dor va'dor," which is Hebrew for "from generation to generation." My commitment was that during my lifetime, I too would find a meaningful way to contribute to the survival of the Jewish people, so that the next generation and the generation after them, also would have a community in which to raise their children.

When I returned to the United States, I immediately began searching for ways to make good on that commitment, and that journey led to my serving on the founding boards of several major Jewish organizations, my presidency of Kehillat Israel, the largest reconstructionist congregation in the world, the opening last year of the new Resnick Family Education Center at Kehillat Israel, which houses two Jewish schools at Kehillat Israel, and to my very proud involvement in Lund University's Ravensbrück Archive Project.

Why the Ravensbrück Archive Project

In the words of the well-known author and Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel (1928–2016): "For the dead and the living, we must bear witness,"[3] and "to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."[4]

Today, the entire world is able to bear witness to the unveiling of one of the greatest untold stories of the Holocaust: what really happened to the women and children at Ravensbrück concentration camp, as told by them, in their own words, while those painful memories were still all too fresh in their minds. And today, the women and children of Ravensbrück finally have their voices back, after more than 70 long years of deafening silence.

Lund University's Ravensbrück archive is one of the greatest missing links to understanding not only what occurred at Ravensbrück, but of the entire insidious plan the Nazis hatched to carry out their so-called "Final Solution" for all the women and children of the Holocaust. Because, as I learned when I visited the Ravensbrück camp three years ago, the SS had a broader plan. Not only to do the unspeakable things that they did there, but then to export those atrocities to other death camps where they could be done as well.

The Ravensbrück concentration camp, in that sense, became the lynchpin for the creation of more than 40 other Nazi death camps for women and children. Furthermore, the Ravensbrück camp staff included, not only more than 150 trained female SS guards assigned to oversee the prisoners, but also served as a training camp for over 4,000 female SS guards sent to other camps, including the women's camp at Auschwitz, whose founding commandant was a former female head guard from Ravensbrück.

It is not hard to understand why this project is so important, both historically and morally. Neither is it hard to understand that for all of us who had the honour of working on this project, it was no casual undertaking – it was a mission. As the project began, it became so clear to every one of us that failure simply was not an option.

We recognized, early on, the importance of making this archive available:

- To the families whose questions have never been answered;
- To researchers to ensure that the world truly learns from and never repeats this tragic chapter in history; and
- To answer those Holocaust deniers who continue today to attempt to rewrite history so that it, in fact, can be repeated.

3. Elie Wiesel's remarks on 22 April 1993, at the dedication ceremonies for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which also has these words engraved in stone at its entrance.

4. Elie Wiesel, *Night*, New York 1985, xv.

Contents of the Ravensbrück Archive

The archive itself contains a collection of over 500 eyewitness testimonies, handwritten in Polish by Zygmunt Lakocinski (1905–1987), the courageous and committed professor of Polish language at Lund University who interviewed the survivors at the time of their arrival on the White Buses sent from Sweden to pick them up and bring them to Sweden. These interviews are the only known systematic collection of first hand witness accounts, of this type, recorded by survivors at the time of their liberation.

The archive also contains a treasure trove of artefacts, hand carried by the survivors from the camp, including original prisoner diaries, notebooks, correspondence, original artwork, photographs, drawings, poems, handwritten teaching aids for the children, and even a tiny mirror they made out of cardboard and glass shards, that allowed these women and children to see themselves again, and to remember they once had an identity other than a number tattooed on their arm by their captors.

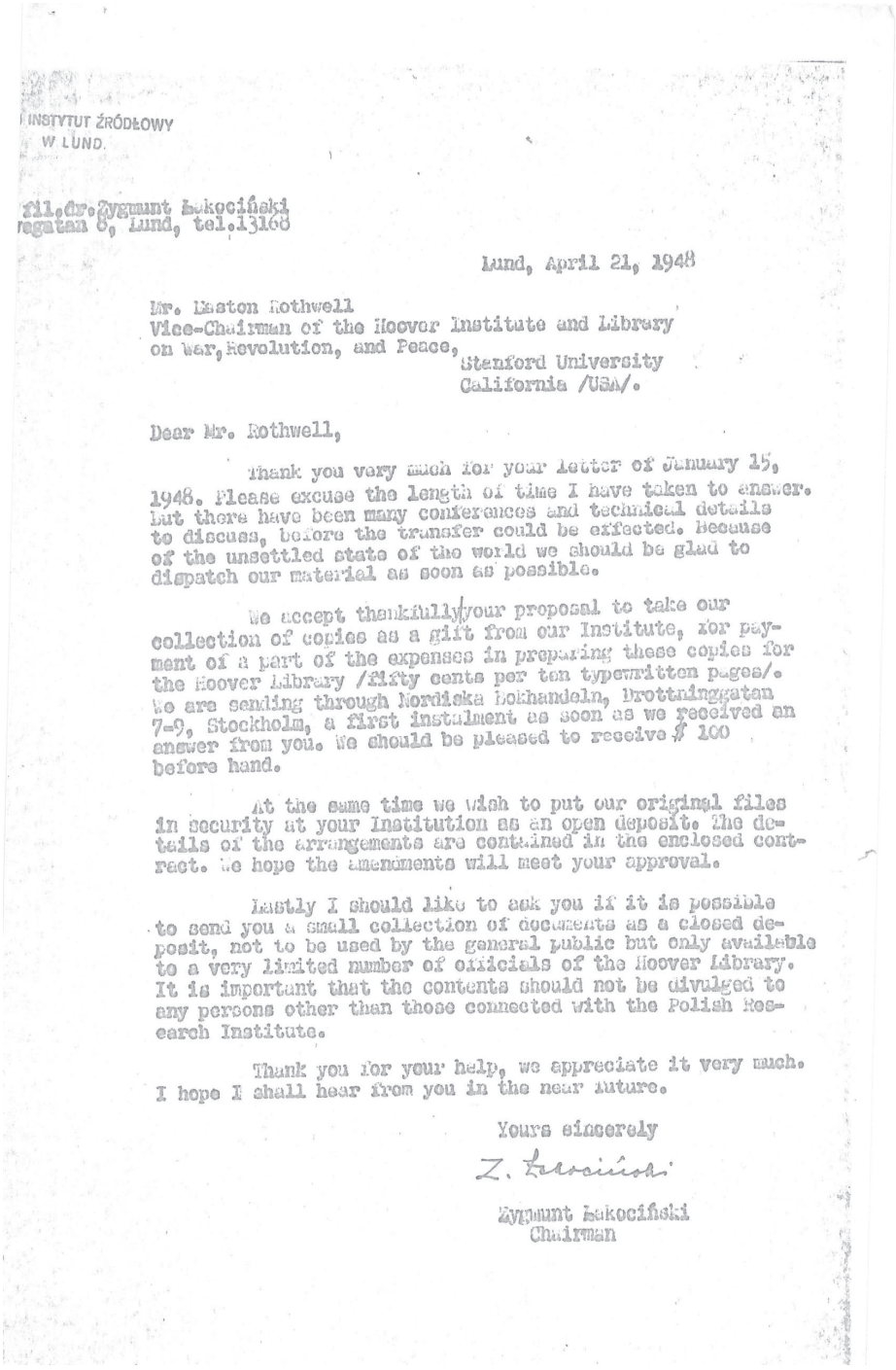
In one of the witness testimonies, a survivor described how they risked being beaten within an inch of their lives to create these items, because it was their only source of hope. And hope was all they had left. The hope that if their spirits survived, then one day they might be able to reconstruct the lives that had been so cruelly stolen from them.

When the survivors boarded the White Buses, they brought these precious items they had created in captivity, each a testament to the strength and endurance of the human spirit. But that was not all. Thirsty and half starved, they also stopped to retrieve the original handwritten SS documents left behind by the Nazis when they fled, each of these, a testament to the crimes against humanity that had been committed against them.

Zygmunt Lakocinski and the Journey of the Archive

Those fateful words of Eli Wiesel, though not yet written, somehow must have been resonating in the thoughts, and most certainly in the heart, of Zygmunt Lakocinski, when he formed a committee, argued his case, obtained funding from the Swedish government, and set out to systematically document these first hand witness accounts. As more than 21,000 former concentration camp prisoners arrived through southern Sweden in the spring of 1945, he worked as an interpreter to help them get processed and resettled, and he collected their testimonies.

For safekeeping, Professor Lakocinski kept the archive in brown paper bags in his apartment until 1948, when the Cold War was intensifying. Sweden began to fear a Russian invasion, and Lakocinski began to fear the Russians would take the archive.



INSTYTUT ŹRÓDŁOWY
W LUND.

fil.dr. Zygmunt Łakociński
regatan 8, Lund, tel. 13160

Lund, April 21, 1948

Mr. Easton Rothwell
Vice-Chairman of the Hoover Institute and Library
on War, Revolution, and Peace,
Stanford University
California /USA/.

Dear Mr. Rothwell,

Thank you very much for your letter of January 15, 1948. Please excuse the length of time I have taken to answer. but there have been many conferences and technical details to discuss, before the transfer could be effected. Because of the unsettled state of the world we should be glad to dispatch our material as soon as possible.

We accept thankfully your proposal to take our collection of copies as a gift from our Institute, for payment of a part of the expenses in preparing these copies for the Hoover Library /fifty cents per ten typewritten pages/. We are sending through Nordiska Bokhandeln, Drottninggatan 7-9, Stockholm, a first instalment as soon as we received an answer from you. We should be pleased to receive $ 100 before hand.

At the same time we wish to put our original files in security at your Institution as an open deposit. The details of the arrangements are contained in the enclosed contract. We hope the amendments will meet your approval.

Lastly I should like to ask you if it is possible to send you a small collection of documents as a closed deposit, not to be used by the general public but only available to a very limited number of officials of the Hoover Library. It is important that the contents should not be divulged to any persons other than those connected with the Polish Research Institute.

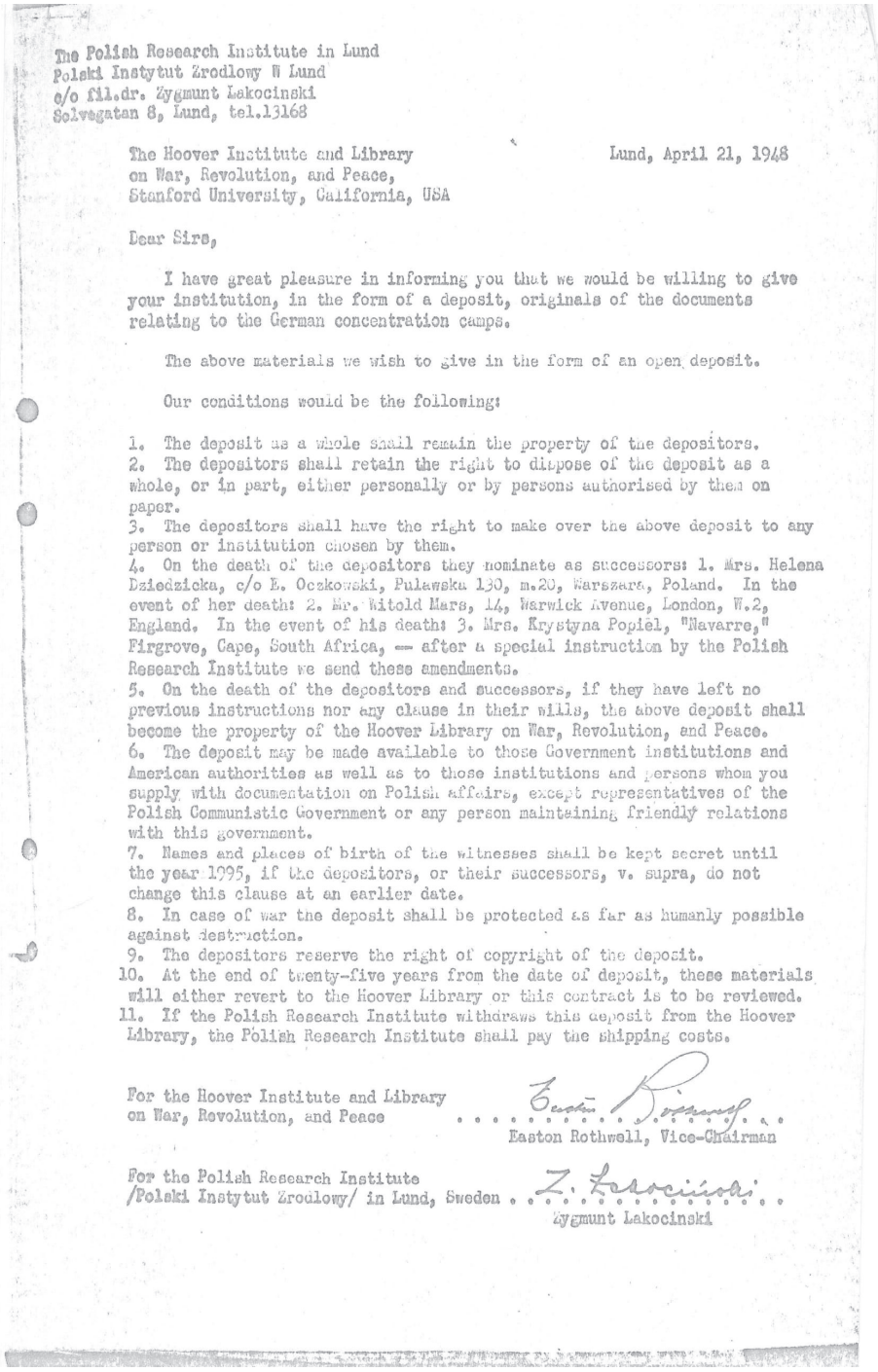
Thank you for your help, we appreciate it very much. I hope I shall hear from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Z. Łakociński

Zygmunt Łakociński
Chairman

Figure 1. Letter from Zygmunt Lakocinski to Easton Rothwell



The Polish Research Institute in Lund
Polski Instytut Zrodlowy W Lund
c/o fil.dr. Zygmunt Lakocinski
Solvegatan 8, Lund, tel.13168

The Hoover Institute and Library
on War, Revolution, and Peace,
Stanford University, California, USA

Lund, April 21, 1948

Dear Sirs,

I have great pleasure in informing you that we would be willing to give your institution, in the form of a deposit, originals of the documents relating to the German concentration camps.

The above materials we wish to give in the form of an open deposit.

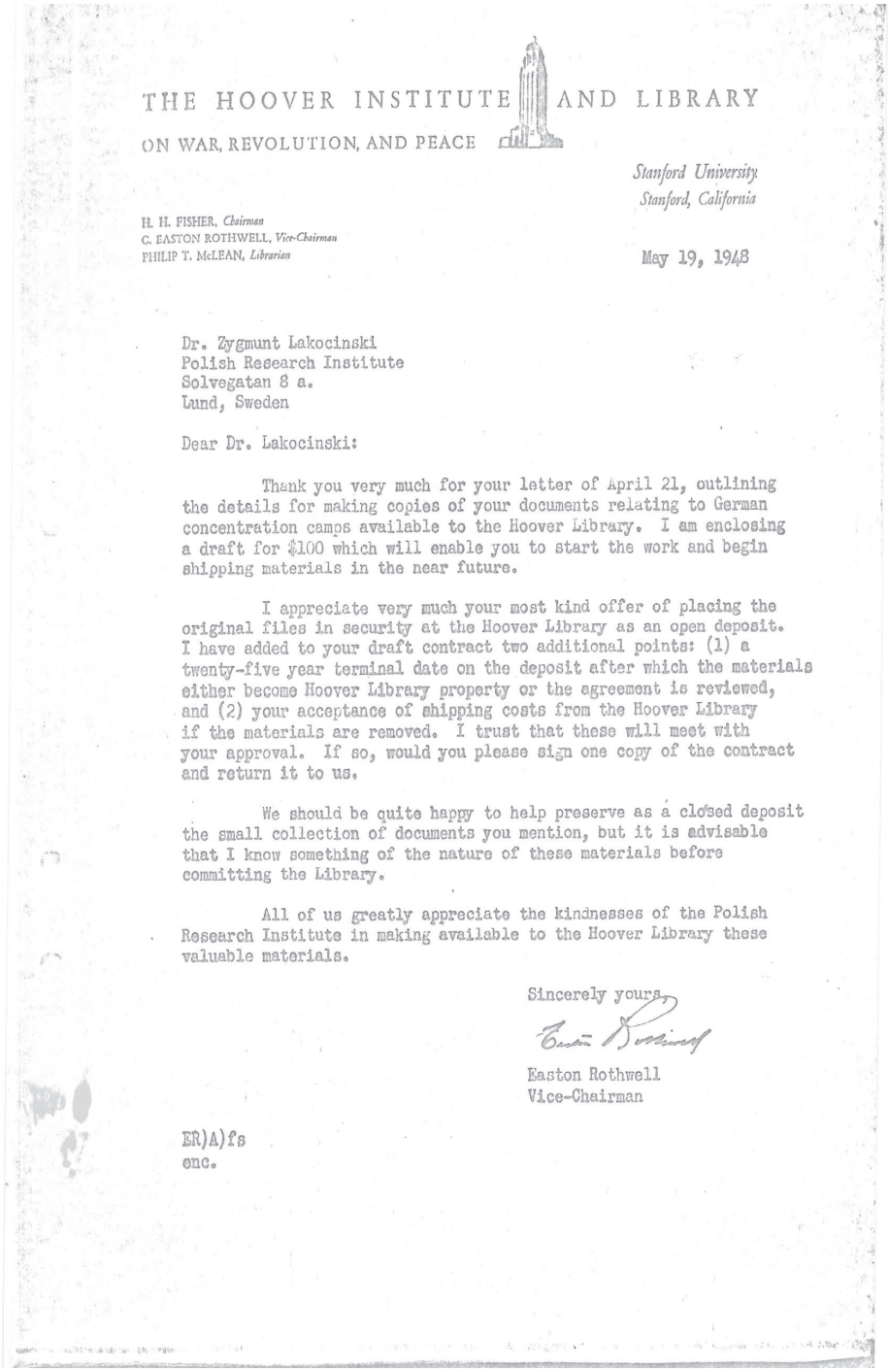
Our conditions would be the following:

1. The deposit as a whole shall remain the property of the depositors.
2. The depositors shall retain the right to dispose of the deposit as a whole, or in part, either personally or by persons authorised by them on paper.
3. The depositors shall have the right to make over the above deposit to any person or institution chosen by them.
4. On the death of the depositors they nominate as successors: 1. Mrs. Helena Dziedzicka, c/o E. Oczkowski, Pulawska 130, m.20, Warszawa, Poland. In the event of her death: 2. Mr. Witold Mars, 14, Warwick Avenue, London, W.2, England. In the event of his death: 3. Mrs. Krystyna Popiel, "Navarre," Firgrove, Cape, South Africa, — after a special instruction by the Polish Research Institute we send these amendments.
5. On the death of the depositors and successors, if they have left no previous instructions nor any clause in their wills, the above deposit shall become the property of the Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace.
6. The deposit may be made available to those Government institutions and American authorities as well as to those institutions and persons whom you supply with documentation on Polish affairs, except representatives of the Polish Communistic Government or any person maintaining friendly relations with this government.
7. Names and places of birth of the witnesses shall be kept secret until the year 1995, if the depositors, or their successors, v. supra, do not change this clause at an earlier date.
8. In case of war the deposit shall be protected as far as humanly possible against destruction.
9. The depositors reserve the right of copyright of the deposit.
10. At the end of twenty-five years from the date of deposit, these materials will either revert to the Hoover Library or this contract is to be reviewed.
11. If the Polish Research Institute withdraws this deposit from the Hoover Library, the Polish Research Institute shall pay the shipping costs.

For the Hoover Institute and Library
on War, Revolution, and Peace . . . . . Easton Rothwell
Easton Rothwell, Vice-Chairman

For the Polish Research Institute
/Polski Instytut Zrodlowy/ in Lund, Sweden . . . . . Z. Lakociński
Zygmunt Lakocinski

Figure 2. Agreement between the Polish Research Institute and the Hoover Institute and Library



THE HOOVER INSTITUTE AND LIBRARY
ON WAR, REVOLUTION, AND PEACE

Stanford University
Stanford, California

H. H. FISHER, *Chairman*
C. EASTON ROTHWELL, *Vice-Chairman*
PHILIP T. McLEAN, *Librarian*

May 19, 1948

Dr. Zygmunt Lakocinski
Polish Research Institute
Solvegatan 8 a.
Lund, Sweden

Dear Dr. Lakocinski:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 21, outlining the details for making copies of your documents relating to German concentration camps available to the Hoover Library. I am enclosing a draft for $100 which will enable you to start the work and begin shipping materials in the near future.

I appreciate very much your most kind offer of placing the original files in security at the Hoover Library as an open deposit. I have added to your draft contract two additional points: (1) a twenty-five year terminal date on the deposit after which the materials either become Hoover Library property or the agreement is reviewed, and (2) your acceptance of shipping costs from the Hoover Library if the materials are removed. I trust that these will meet with your approval. If so, would you please sign one copy of the contract and return it to us.

We should be quite happy to help preserve as a closed deposit the small collection of documents you mention, but it is advisable that I know something of the nature of these materials before committing the Library.

All of us greatly appreciate the kindnesses of the Polish Research Institute in making available to the Hoover Library these valuable materials.

Sincerely yours,

Easton Rothwell

Easton Rothwell
Vice-Chairman

ER)A)fs
enc.

Figure 3. Letter from Easton Rothwell to Zygmunt Lakocinski

In 1948, Lakocinski signed an agreement to ship the archive to Stanford University's Hoover Institute, for safekeeping. The agreement contained a couple of telling provisions that are worth mentioning. The first was an agreement by Stanford University to honour the privacy agreements made with the witnesses, that for their safety, their identities would be kept secret for 50 years until 1995. The other provision was that if the archive was not reclaimed by Sweden within 25 years (before 1973), it would become the university's intellectual property.

In 1972, just one year before that alarm clock rang, Zygmunt Lakocinski's son, Martin Lakocinski, then working as the vice-consul general of Sweden, in the Swedish consul's office in Houston, sent a letter to the Hoover Institute, respectfully reclaiming the archive.

After its return to Lund, however, the archive was still subject to the privacy agreements with the witnesses, which ran until 1995. In 1995, when it seemed like this long lost archive might finally see the light of day, the university lawyers informed the Lund University Library that it also had to comply with Sweden's privacy laws, which required the consent of the survivors, or their heirs, prior to publication.

Once that hurdle was crossed, all that remained to do was to find the funding to launch the project. And the timing was perfect for the newly formed Lund University Foundation, which was looking for its first major project to adopt.

I was honored and excited to be asked to chair this project from the Foundation side, to create a campaign to raise public awareness of the existence of the archive, to convince the world of the importance of the Lund University Library's work, led by Professor Håkan Håkansson, to recover, preserve, organize, and publish it, and to organize a full scale campaign across the United States to fund the project.

As this work progressed, we never grew tired, and our sense of mission only grew. The tears of compassion, that were shed virtually every time we told the Ravensbrück story, soon enough became tears of joy, as we realized that this mission really would be accomplished, thanks to the selfless and tireless efforts of so many.

Inception and Status of the Ravensbrück Archive Project

In 2013, I was asked to join the board of trustees of the Lund University Foundation, and we were looking for a meaningful project to support at Lund University. You can imagine how I felt when I learned of the existence of the long lost Ravensbrück archive.

When I flew to Lund in January of 2014 to speak at the vice-chancellor's launch dinner for the university's 350 year jubilee celebration, I visited the Ravensbrück exhibit at *Kulturen*,[5] and Professor Håkansson, the Ravensbrück Archive Project director, gave the vice-chancellor, the Lund University Foundation president, myself, and a few others a private viewing of the actual archive in the basement of the University Library.

It was so tough to fight back the tears, especially when Professor Håkansson so kindly allowed me to look through the SS prisoner transport list to see if I recognized any of my own relatives' names on it. At that moment, I knew for sure how important this project was, and that there was no turning back.

As I watched the Memorandum of Understanding between Lund University and the Lund University Foundation being signed by the university's vice-chancellor and the Foundation's president,[6] I thought to myself, what better way for Lund to celebrate its proud 350 year history of contributions to humanity, and its core mission to create a better world, than to undertake this project, which was born at Lund University and will truly help heal the deepest wounds ever inflicted upon humanity.

I am very pleased to report that the University Library already has completed Phase 1 of the Ravensbrück Archive Project, and that:

- The voluminous documents and artefacts comprising the archive have all been inventoried and indexed;
- More than half of all the witness testimonies have been translated into English and all will be translated by the end of 2019;
- The University Library's new Ravensbrück archive website has been built and launched;
- Major parts of the archive have been photographed and uploaded to the website for public viewing;
- The website already has been visited thousands of times, and continues to be available to the public, at the click of a mouse; and
- Phase 2 of the project, to create a documentary film that can be sent to Holocaust Museums and educational institutions all over the world, is fully funded and well underway.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the victims was their demonstration of the resilience of the human spirit, and that they were always able to

5. *Kulturen* is a cultural and historical museum in Lund.

6. Per Eriksson was then the vice-chancellor of Lund University and Göran Eriksson (no relation to Per Eriksson) was then and as of today remains the chairman of the Lund University Foundation.

retain a sliver of hope throughout their unimaginable ordeal. Out of that hope grew the often heard survivor saying: *Never Again*.

As the survivors began the monumental task of healing and reconstructing their lives, another well-known survivor saying also emerged: "Forgive, but never forget." The Ravensbrück archive will help all people, across the globe, to assure that the world does not ever forget, so that *Never Again* can anything like this happen. Anywhere. To anyone.

With this in mind, I am proud to share that the story of the Ravensbrück archive, and of Lund University's work "For a Better World," has been officially recognized and honoured by:

- The governing board of the County of Los Angeles, representing 10 million people;
- Members of both houses of the California Legislature, representing 35 million people; and
- The Congress of the United States of America, representing 350 million people.

Lessons Learned

As part of this journey, three years ago, I travelled to the Ravensbrück concentration camp with a dear friend from Israel, eerily similar to the way I visited Auschwitz 25 years ago with a group of Israeli school children. I wanted to view the camp first hand and meet with representatives of the German Brandenburg Foundation, which oversees the remains of all the former concentration camps in the German state of Brandenburg.

I spent quite some time with Dr. Sabine Arende, their chief researcher and archivist, a lovely person who welcomed us and gave us a personal tour of the camp, and their museum and archives.

As we were saying goodbye, I turned to Dr. Arende and said: "You are such a kind person, and an academic who has worked so many years studying what occurred here, I just want to ask you, how could this ever have happened?" She paused, looked down, and said, "I have thought about that very question every day for the last seven years, and I just don't have an answer."

While we may not have that answer, the world has learned some invaluable lessons that must never be forgotten. Because, as we all know, to forget the lessons of history is to risk repeating its most tragic mistakes.

We must *Never Again* allow the world to forget that the only real and enduring way to overcome differences between peoples of good will is to build bridges, not walls.

We must *Never Again* let the world forget how necessary it is to maintain a free exchange of ideas and a free press, and that positive change must come from the force of ideas, not from the force of arms.

We must speak out, and not allow the world to be misled by those who would create false moral equivalencies between Nazis and those opposing them. Because, contrary to what some would have us believe, there are no nice Nazis.

And perhaps the most important lesson of all. We must remain resolute, and always stand together to defend the common universal values we share, and always embrace and protect our most cherished traditions of human rights, diversity, and dignity for all.

I have always told my own children that the mark of a life well led is to leave the world a little better than you found it. In that regard, how fortunate are we at Lund University and the Lund University Foundation, through this project, to have found a calling that has been so transformative, that has brought such a profound sense of shared purpose and meaning to so many, and that is so clearly one of those rare opportunities in life where we had the privilege to help make right what the entire world knows, went so wrong.

As I said at the outset, there remains so much more to do, and so, it is very clear that our work has only just begun. ▲

SUMMARY

This article contains narrative stories about the origins and evolution of the widely acclaimed Ravensbrück Archive Project at Lund University, as well as my personal journey that led to my involvement in this project. The project resulted in the recovery, translation to English, digitization, and publication by the Lund University Library of one of the Holocaust's most unique archives. The Ravensbrück archive includes a collection of over 500 systematically collected eyewitness testimonies from survivors of the former Ravensbrück concentration camp (which primarily housed women and children), handwritten in Polish by Zygmunt Lakocinski, and a treasure trove of unique artefacts carried to Sweden by the survivors, including prisoner diaries, notebooks, correspondence, original artwork, photographs, drawings, poems, handwritten teaching aids for the children, and a tiny mirror made out of cardboard and glass shards. This long lost archive provides unique insights into the treatment of women and children in the Holocaust. I also offer my personal thoughts on the significance of this archive to the world, and why it was so important to give these women and children their voices back after 70 long years of deafening silence.