



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

Daniel B. Silver

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How did Berlin's Jewish Hospital, in the middle of the Nazi capital, survive as an institution where Jewish doctors and nurses cared for Jewish patients throughout World War II? How could it happen that when Soviet troops liberated the hospital in April 1945, they found some eight hundred Jews still on the premises? Daniel Silver carefully uncovers the often surprising answers to these questions and, through the skillful use of primary source materials and the vivid voices of survivors, reveals the underlying complexities of human conscience.

The story centers on the intricate machinations of the hospital's director, Herr Dr. Lustig, a German-born Jew whose life-and-death power over medical staff and patients and finely honed relationship with his own boss, the infamous Adolf Eichmann, provide vital pieces to the puzzle -- some have said the miracle -- of the hospital's survival. Silver illuminates how the tortured shifts in Nazi policy toward intermarriage and so-called racial segregation provided a further, if hugely counterintuitive, shelter from the storm for the hospital's resident Jews. Scenes of daily life in the hospital paint an often heroic and always provocative picture of triage at its most chillingly existential. Not since Schindler's List have we had such a haunting story of the costs and mysteries of individual survival in the midst of a human-created hell.

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