Chapter 21

FACT OR FICTION IN A DIORAMA

Numerous historical events have been adapted to make films. In some cases, details of the film almost correspond with the actual historical events. In others, there is a vast difference, and yet in others there is a middle course with where there are a number of changes.

One of these diorama films was entitled "Miracle at Midnight" and describes the rescue of Danish Jews during the Holocaust. I decided I would compare the details of the film with the historical events which took place at the time, and determine how much of the film was fact and how much was fiction. I began my research in about November 2017.

I viewed this film several times and noted down in detail the various events shown in the film. Fortunately, on the internet there is the full text of this film. I printed it out, and having such a transcript made my work easier, especially when I needed to quote verbatim from the film.

I wrote my paper as follows. For each event in the film, and needless to add, there were numerous ones, I would write "film" and devote several lines to describe what occurred in the film. I would then write "history" and compare it in what I found in the historical material on the subject.

The film was largely built around, a Doctor Koster, who was the head of the Christiana Hospital in Copenhagen, together with his wife, son and daughter, the doctor being one of the leaders of the rescue of the Jews. The question is, was there in fact such a character in real life or was he created especially for the film, and furthermore, did he have such a family? I found in the historical literature that there was a Dr. Koster who was head surgeon (or according to other sources held some other position) in the Bispebjerg hospital in Copenhagen. Any further details of his family I could not find. I therefore in May 2018 sent an e-mail in English, which together with a translation into Danish which I made using a computer translation, to this hospital with a number of questions regarding his family. However, they replied in English that they could not help me since they did not have information on former employees

From where and how did I get all my material for the historical part of this paper? The first thing to do in any research is to assemble the relevant information. and as will be shown I utilized many different methods to achieve this. Most of the material came from numerous books on the subject.

Very possibly my earliest information, which goes back about 60 years, on this subject. was the account given in Leon Uris book "Exodus" on the rescue of Danish Jews during the Holocaust. In this massive tome, Uris includes flashbacks to two brothers who fled from Russia during the period of the "First Aliyah" and made their way on foot to Eretz Yisrael, and also an account of a teenager who was in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. However, relevant to Denmark, was a girl from Germany who was transported to Denmark and adopted by a non-Jewish family in Copenhagen. In the course of this account, Uris describes how the Germans issued a command that every Jew must wear a Yellow Star of David on his clothes, in the same way as they had done in other countries under Nazi occupation. Uris then adds that the King of Denmark said he would wear the first Yellow Star and hoped every loyal Dane would do likewise. However, more recently the family of the King have said that no such order was given by the Nazis in Denmark. When looking at this film, one clearly sees that no Jew was wearing such a Yellow Star. Research that I did on this subject confirmed the accuracy of this.

The Kiryat Arba Municipal Library only had one book on the rescue of the Jews of Denmark. There was another book in its entirety on the internet. My study of the bibliography of this subject, as to be expected, showed that there were numerous other books on the subject.

I could have visited libraries outside of Kiryat Arba to study these books but this would have involved numerous visits to study all such books and photocopy the relevant pages. However, I decided on a method to purchase these books at a very reasonable price and then study them at my leisure in the comfort of my home.

This method is via Amazon. People wanting to sell books can advertise on Amazon. They state the price they are demanding, and these can vary tremendously for the same book, and they also have to write what the condition of the book is, for example "new," "used – good," "used – acceptable." If one wants to purchase a book, one goes into the Amazon website, adds the book to "the cart" and gives the address where to send the book. Amazon would then send the buyer an "Order Confirmation." To my sorrow, after having put such a book on my "cart," I sometimes found that the seller was not prepared to send a book to Israel, and I thus had to find the same book from a different seller, sometimes at a higher

price. One also had to pay shipping charges which on many cases was more than the cost of the actual book! There was one occasion that they had overcharged me for the shipping cost. I accordingly wrote to them and they immediately gave me a refund. During December 2017, I ordered seven books on this subject from Amazon, paying by Visa card, and they all arrived at the dates they had estimated. They were all in very good condition.

There were some books which I could not obtain from Amazon, or the sellers were asking a very high price. As to be expected, these books were to be found in the Yad Vashem Library in Jerusalem. Their catalogue is to be found on the internet and I noted the "call number" for these books from their website. I went to Yad Vashem on 22 May 2018 to find the appropriate material from these books and then photocopy it. I had understood that Yad Vashem was next to Har Herzl in Jerusalem but I then saw that there was a ten-minute walk from there to Yad Vashem! I went to their library, ordered these books, found the material I required and photocopied it. In some cases, I already knew the page location in these books from the footnotes of other papers on this subject. The service I received at Yad Vashem was excellent and I wrote them a letter expressing my gratitude for the service.

Three were also articles and other material on the subject on the internet and I downloaded this material and printed out the relevant parts. This material included some newspaper reports published at that period, and also a transcript in English of the Eichmann Trial. There was one case where one could only view the material on the screen but not print it out. I therefore did a screenshot of the relevant pages and transferred them to my computer and then printed them out. I felt that this was legitimate, since I could go to a library which had this book and make a photocopy.

In addition to this printed material, there were some documentary films on the internet on this subject. I went through these films several times and noted down the location in minutes from the start of the film of the relevant points.

The diorama shows Dr. Koster's son listening to a BBC broadcast on a radio, and Dr. Koster told him to put the sound down since the Nazis had forbitten listening to the BBC or even having a radio. I wanted to check the accuracy of this point, and on 23 April 2018, I submitted a question to "Wikipedia Reference Desk" and received several answers and a bibliography of where to find the material on this subject.

One of the items I required during this research was a thesis from Princeton University in the United States. I accordingly, in May 2018, ordered a copy of this thesis and after paying for it by Visa card, they sent it to me via e-mail. It was over 300 hundred pages long and I searched for what I required. It was in fact contained in only a few lines of this thesis. For some reason the pages of the e-mail had a very black background. However, I succeeded in lightening this background.

The subject of this thesis was a biography of Kurt Daluege, a Nazi who was sent to Denmark to oversee the deportation of the Danish Jews. The puzzling thing was that Daluege although being mentioned in the newspapers of those days of arriving in Denmark, was barely mentioned in the books subsequently written on the Danish Jews escape to Sweden. In fact, even the author of this thesis did not even mention him being in Denmark, but only that he had disappeared for those relevant days from Germany.

After writing up the draft of this paper, as with other papers I have written, I made a print out, doubled spaced to allow room for corrections. I then went through it point by point ticking what was correct, putting in any necessary corrections and additions and checking that the references were correctly written. A final copy was then made and a copy put on my website.

There us always a danger, or may I say even a nightmare, when using a computer that something will go wrong with it and one will lose all the files on it. Therefore a "backup" is most essential. My method for such a backup is, when writing a paper, I will regularly send myself e-mails with the updates of the article. Therefore, even if one's apartment is destroyed, even by an earthquake, I can read my e-mails at another location, even at the other end of the world! Needless to say, I made such backups with this paper, the earliest one being on 13 January 2018. In addition, I periodically copy the files on my computer to an external hard disk.

When I write something, I like to also reproduce the relevant source material. In earlier days, I would cut out the relevant parts, paste them on a page adding the footnote reference number in the paper, and then scan them, convert them into a Word document and then make a Word file of these documents in a numerical order as far as possible of reference numbers. However, today I scan the documents, crop out the non-relevant parts, and then convert them into a Word document, all without having to print out anything. I then put them on my website after my paper. For this

paper, I did this for about 200 documents which was almost the entire number of printed sources appearing in the paper.

Finally, I write for my autobiography, (as in the above pages), how I came to research and write the paper including giving sample pages, such as e-mails, letters, entries in library catalogues, which I used to obtain the material for the paper.



film med titlen "Miracle at Midnight"

2 messages

Chaim Simons <chaimsimons@gmail.com>
To: direktion.BBH-FRH@regionh.dk

Mon, May 14, 2018 at 1:47 PM

E-mail:

direktion.BBH-FRH@regionh.dk

En computer oversættelse af følgende brev til dansk kan findes efter den engelske t

A computer translation of the following letter into Danish can be found after the English text.

In 1998, a film entitled "Miracle at Midnight" which dramatized the rescue from the Nazis by the Danish population during the Second World War of Danish Jews to Sweden. A major character in this film was Dr. Karl Koster, the chief surgeon at Christiana Hospital in Copenhagen. In the film also appeared his wife Doris, his son Hendrik who was a student at the university and also an active member of the Danish resistance, and his daughter Else aged about twelve.

Dr. Karl Koster existed in real life and was the Director of the Bispebjerg hospital.

I would be grateful if you could please supply me with the answers to the following questions:

- 1. Was the name of Dr. Koster's wife Doris?
- 2. Did he have a son who was then studying at university and was a member off the Danish resistance?
- 3. If he did have such a son, was his name Hendrik, or was it some other name?
- 4. Did he have a daughter aged about twelve named Else, or was it some other name?

With thanks and best regards.

Chaim Simons

I 1998 en film med titlen "Miracle at Midnight", som dramatiseret redningen fra nazisterne af den danske befolkning under Anden Verdenskrig af danske jøder til Sverige. En væsentlig karakter i denne film var Dr. Karl Koster, den ledende kirurg på Christiana Hospital i København. I filmen syntes også hans kone Doris, hans søn Hendrik der var elev på universitetet og også et aktivt medlem af den danske modstand, og hans datter Else alderen omkring tolv.

Dr. Karl Koster eksisterede i det virkelige liv og var direktøren for Bispebjerg hospital.

Jeg ville være taknemmelig, hvis du venligst kunne forsyne mig med svar på følgende spørgsmål:

- 1. Var navnet Dr. Koster kone Doris?
- 2. Havde han en søn, der derefter studerede på universitetet og var medlem fra den danske modstand?
- 3. Hvis han havde sådan en søn, var hans navn Hendrik, eller var det noget andet navn?
- 4. Havde han en datter i alderen omkring tolv navngivne Else, eller var det noget andet navn?

Med tak og venlig hilsen.

Chaim Simons

BBH-FRH-FP-Direktion < Direktion.BBH-FRH@regionh.dk> To: Chaim Simons <chaimsimons@gmail.com>

Tue, May 15, 2018 at 6:54 PM

Dear Chaim Simons

Thank you for your inquiry. Unfortunately we do not have the opportunity to answer your questions since we as a hospital do not have such information on former employee.

If you look at the link below the name of the family I mentioned.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle_at_Midnight

Unfortunately we do not have the opportunity to help further in relation to your questions.

Regards,

Marianne Birkebæk Anderson

Executive Secretary to the CEO

Bispebjerg og Frederiksberg Hospital

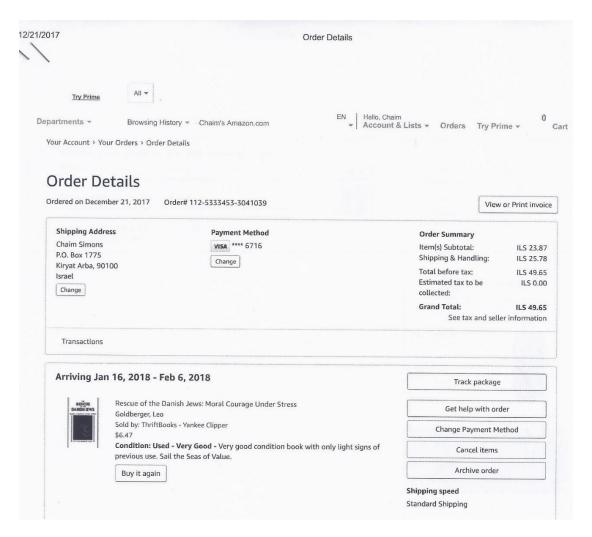
Bispebjerg Bakke 23B, entrance 20D, st.

2400 Copenhagen NV

Phone: (+45) 3863 6060

Fra: Chaim Simons [mailto:chaimsimons@gmail.com]

Sendt: 14. maj 2018 12:48
Til: BBH-FRH-FP-Direktion < Direktion.BBH-FRH@regionh.dk>
Emne: film med titlen "Miracle at Midnight"



A Sample order of book I ordered from Amazon



Your Amazon.co.uk order of "A Conspiracy Of Decency..."

1 message

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Fri, Dec 1, 2017 at 10:31 AM

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Re: Inquiry from Amazon customer Chaim Simons

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Thanks, Adam



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Wed, Dec 27, 2017 at 12:53 AM

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קום הוצאה לאור:	Copenhagen
:וציא לאור	Christian Ejlers
ונה לחיפוש:	2007
מודים:	.p 72
:אורת	.ill., docs., facsims., map, ports
אפה:	English
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	9788772413907
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ISBI: ושא:	DENMARK - JEWS RELIEF AND RESCUE, BY NON-JEWS DENMARK AND DANES

Sample page from catalogue of Yad Vashem Library of a book I referred to there





יד ושם

Letter of appreciation to Yad Vashem Library

Wikipedia:Reference desk/Archives/Humanities/2018 April 23

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

< Wikipedia:Reference desk | Archives | Humanities

。 April 23[edit]

Listening to BBC radio broadcasts in Denmark during the Nazi occupation[edit]

I would like to please ask the users if during the Nazi occupation of Denmark it was permitted or forbidden for the Danes to listen to the BBC radio broadcasts? Can you please also add the sources for your answer. Thank you. <u>Simonschaim</u> (talk)—Preceding <u>undated</u> comment added 09:03, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

It was strictly forbidden to all those under Nazi occupation, not just the Danes. "While listening to foreign radio stations was forbidden under threat of punishment in Germany and in German-occupied territories, a large number of people did take the risk of listening to the British broadcasts."[1] "It was forbidden to listen to BBC broadcasts".[2] "Thus, throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, listening to Allied radio stations, for example, was strictly prohibited".[3] Among other things, broadcasts were used to send coded messages to resistance groups. See for example Radio Londres#Coded messages. Clarityfiend (talk) 09:36, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

Thank you Clarityfiend. I have found on the internet a paper by Crisdella Pastera Frederiksen entitled "With the German Army in our midst". In this paper he writes that although listening to the BBC was forbidden in countries under Nazi occupation, Denmark was an exception to this prohibition. He brings as the source of this information an article written by Martin Armbrust which appeared on 28 March 2012 entitled Tidsafgroensning 1940-1945 danmarkshistorien. I would be happy to please have your comments on this. Thank you. Simonschaim (talk) — Preceding undated comment added 11:48, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

I see that Pastera's article states BBC was allowed, and it cited Armbrust's article as source. However, there's no specific source in this about the BBC being allowed. Maybe the source "Bennett, Jeremy: British Broadcasting and the Danish Resistance Movement 1940-1945 - A Study of the Wartime Broadcasts of the BBC Danish Service, Cambridge University Press, 1966" has more about it. Doroletho (talk) 13:10, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

This: "The Nazis punished Norwegian defiance with harsh repres- sion. In Denmark, on the other hand, the Nazis tried to present a showcase of the benevolent treatment awaiting a cooperative people. The Danes were allowed to keep their radios. " from a review of the book above (Review by: Erik Barnouw Source: Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 83, No. 2 (Jun., 1968), pp. 289-291) might have the answer you want. But it's not specific about the BBC being allowed, but radio

devices in general. I have no access to Bennett's book right not, but it must have more background information, and maybe cites original sources. <u>Doroletho</u> (talk) 13:36, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

Thank you Doroletho Simonschaim (talk) —
Preceding undated comment added 17:26, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

I'm Danish and found two Danish books saying it was legal but one of them says there is a common myth that it was illegal. Translation of [4]: "never illegal during the occupation to hear the British radio BBC's Danish-language broadcasts". Translation of [5] "remained legal listening to the BBC until the end of the occupation". There was German radio jamming with limited effect. Denmark chose not to resist the German invasion and occupation (except a limited resistance movement) and was treated mildly compared to other occupied countries. See Denmark in World War II. PrimeHunter (talk) 14:04, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

Thank you PrimeHunter. Since I do not understand Danish, may I please ask you one further question. You write that one of the books states that there is a common myth that it was illegal. Which of the two books wrote this and could you please indicate it in the text in the same way as you did for the other two references. Thank you. Simonschaim (talk) — Precedingundated comment added 17:33, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

The Nazi administration of Denmark, which had unconditionally surrendered, was initially guite different from countries like Norway and the Netherlands whose the governments had decamped to London to continue the war. The Germans established Denmark as "a model protectorate" (see Denmark in World War II#Protectorate Government 1940–43). When in 1943 Danes began to realise that the Germans might lose the war, there was widespread civil disorder. The Germans demanded that repressive measures be taken but the Danish government refused. On 29 August 1943, the government was dissolved, Operation Safari disarmed what remained of the Danish armed forces and martial law was imposed. Although I can't find a reference, it seems likely to me that listening to the BBC was banned with the imposition of martial law in August 1943. In Response to Aggression: Methods of Control and Prosocial Alternatives (pp. 499-500) by Arnold P. Goldstein, Edward G. Carr, William S. Davidson, describes the role of the BBC in inciting disorder during the August 1943 crisis. According to Origins of Modern Europe; Medieval National Consciousness(pp. 409-410) by Abida Shakoor, the Danish Freedom Council which coordinated the Danish resistance with the support of the Special Operations Executive, began to broadcast on the Danish section of the BBC on 31 October 1943. Alansplodge (talk) 20:56, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

<u>The Danish Listening Post</u>, a newsletter published in the US by Danes who were anti-occupation, describes in October 1943 "the paralyzing censorship of press and radio". Alansplodge (talk) 21:13, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

@Simonschaim: The myth claim is in the first part of the sentence in my first link [6]. Translation: "In spite of the common oral tradition's frequent claims of the opposite, it was never illegal during the occupation to hear the British radio BBC's Danish-language broadcasts". I don't know the full story but the Danish media was censored. Maybe the media wasn't allowed to speak about the BBC broadcasts, and many people at the time just assumed it was illegal to listen. PrimeHunter (talk) 22:15, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

Thank you Primehunter <u>Simonschaim</u> (talk) 10:22, 24 April 2018 (UTC)

<u>Danish Reactions to German Occupation: History and</u>
<u>Historiography (p. 96)</u> by Carsten Holbraad: "Listening to the BBC was not expressly forbidden, though many Danes thought it was". <u>Alansplodge (talk)</u> 22:23, 23 April 2018 (UTC)

Thank you Alansplodge <u>Simonschaim</u> (<u>talk</u>) 10:22, 24 April 2018 (UTC)

Well, I'll be dipped. You learn something new every day. Clarityfiend (talk) 10:49, 24 April 2018 (UTC)



Chaim Simons <chaimsimons@gmail.com>

Princeton University Special Collections Research Account

1 message

Special Collections Research Account <rbsc@princeton.edu> To: chaimsimons@gmail.com Tue, May 8, 2018 at 5:43 PM

Dear Chaim Simons,

Thank you for registering for a Princeton University Library Special Collections Research Account. Research accounts replace paper registration forms and call slips for scholars wishing to consult rare books, manuscripts, and special collections material housed in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the Firestone Library, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library and the Marquand Library of Art and Archaeology. If you have a research or photoduplication question, please submit them to either rbsc@princeton.edu, mudd@princeton.edu or marquand@princeton.edu based on the location of the item in question.

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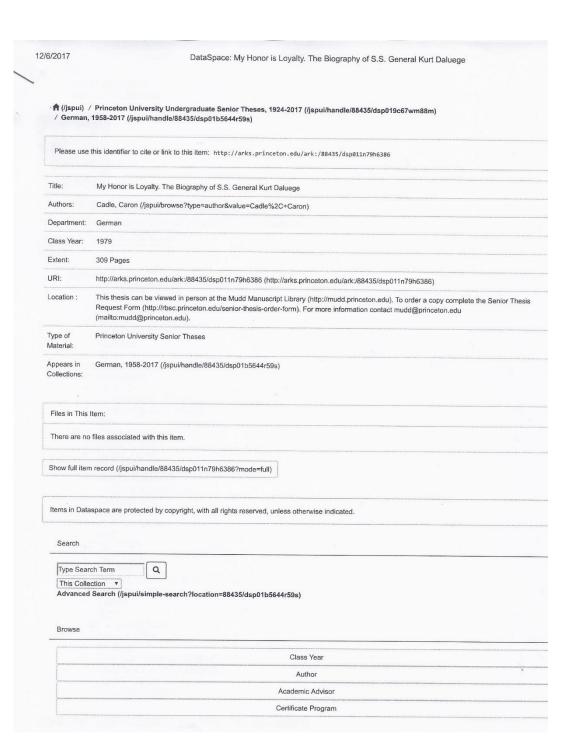
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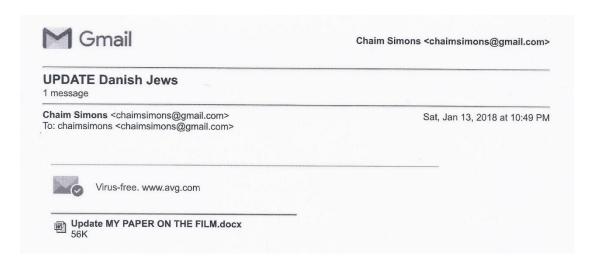
Notes must be taken in pencil, although laptops are permitted. Personal photocopiers and scanners are not allowed. Permission must be granted for the use of cameras, tape recorders, and other special equipment. Furthermore, any personal articles will be inspected as readers leave the Department's reading rooms.



The thesis I purchased from Princeton University

History: No Rabbi with the name Ben Abrams has been traced. However, such an announcement was indeed made in the Synagogue and the Rabbi doing so was Rabbi Marcus Melchior, the acting Chief Rabbi of Copenhagen at the time. The announcement was made on Wednesday morning 29 September, the day before Rosh Hashanah, (and not on 30 September, the first day of Rosh Hashanah, as stated in the film) [e.g. Melchior p.179; Bent Melchior]. Different numbers of worshippers at that service have been given. One source states that since it was a weekday service there were only 20 [Yahil p.215]; another source gives the number as about 80 [Conspiracy of Decency p.43] whilst Rabbi Melchiør himself is quoted as saying "more than one hundred persons" [Melchior p.179] Melchior comments that being the day before Rosh Hashanah there was a "special service" that morning [Melchior p. 179] – he probably meant the large number of Selichot [Penitential prayers] recited that morning. At what stage of the service did Rabbi Melchior make this announcement? He writes "At a very solemn, moment, I interrupted the service" to make the announcement [Melchior p.179] Other sources suggest it was after the service and he then added that the services on Rosh Hashanah were cancelled. [Conspiracy of Decency p.41; Yahil p214-215; Werstein p.68] Unlike the film, no source states that the service was cancelled that morning. The arrest of Jews which had been planned for 1 October at midnight (actually 10 o'clock that evening) would have been on the evening of Shabbat a few hours after the termination of Rosh Hashanah, but still at a time when families are at hon His son Bent Melchior (who after his father's death became Chief Rabbi of Denmark) said in the documentary: "My father interrupted the service went up and told the community the message that we had received" The documentary then shows (in presumably in an archival clip) Rabbi Melchior saying (translated into English) "Leave your homes. Go to your Christian relatives and friends and make sure you can stay there for now, then we'll wait and see. I should add that the vast majority of those present that morning actually

Sample page of my draft text



First occasion when I sent an updated partial text by e-mail as a backup