

*Unpacking His Library Again:
Why does the Paul A. Levine Library Matter?*

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כִּי קָרַב תִּקְרָה רַב קָעַס וַיִּוְסִיף דַּעַת יוֹסִיף מְקָאוֹב.
Ecclesiastes 1,18¹

“For all of us there is a twilight zone between history and memory... the hardest part of history for historians, or anyone else, to grasp...”

— Eric Hobsbawm

“The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”

— Milan Kundera

1. Introduction²

In 2019, most likely while reading about the Armenian Genocide and listening to *Abbey Road*—The Beatles’ album—in the background, on a late October Monday evening, when humanity unsuspectingly stood on the verge of a new world catastrophe named COVID-19, historian Paul A. Levine passed away unexpectedly at home. A week later, on 4 November, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) will announce: *“He was not only loved by his students... but also an outstanding thinker and educator.”*³

The main purpose of this paper is to properly honor his legacy, which has not happened so far due to several reasons, including the new pandemic reality. Yet, this was not the only factor obscuring the sorrowful effort of the few people who had struggled to maintain the only wealth he had left behind and save his archive from being lost forever. Therefore, for the sake of love, empathy, and historical memory, I shall bring forth a few simple suggestions and some questions of high significance: a) Why should Paul A. Levine be honored one more time? b) Why was there a need to rescue Levine’s library? c) What does the library hide in it, and why should it be preserved?

¹ “For as wisdom grows, vexation grows; To increase learning is to increase heartache.”

<https://www.sefaria.org/Ecclesiastes.1.18>. Online on: 18.01.2023.

² I began my research into the archival collection of the historian Paul A. Levine under the insightful and demanding guidance of Silvana Greco and Giulio Busi of the Freie Universität in Berlin, who co-supervised the submitted essay, as well as my studies at the *Institute für Judaistik*, on which my thesis is based. I address my gratitude to Alvin Rosenfeld and Omer Bartov, who have supported my efforts since the Initiative’s beginning in Fall 2019; their advice influenced my academic work and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their time and expertise. My great thanks go to Rabbi Akiva Weingarten for his heartfelt understanding, and for being supportive of my mission from Levine’s funeral to this day. I owe a great deal to Frank Chalk, Igor Schupak, Andras Kovacs, László Karsai, Victoria Van Orden Martínez, John Bernstein, Johan Romin, and Pontus Rudberg who helped in various ways. Amir Gavriely made an important contribution both in advancing my English, and many other ideas; he read and re-read this essay and I am much in his debt. And finally, I’m thankful also to those who didn’t really support me; to say the least: this work was born thanks to heated discussions.

³ IHRA News, *In Memory of Holocaust Scholar Paul Levine*; on 4.11.2019.

Since the present argument draws from both the concept of historical and collective memory and from the issue of the historian's responsibility, I discuss some moral aspects which make more vivid the whole issue; highlighting the importance of private micro-archives for future historiographical studies of the Holocaust, I argue that maintaining the archive is about more than the initiative's struggle against indifference towards a particular historian's legacy. Going deeper, in a limited way, into suggested "what-&-why" questions, I furthermore attempt to provide some core ideas that eventually could supplement the lost narrative of a historian left in the shade. As the initiator and the historian's closest friend, in Berlin, I want to tell you about the initiative's struggles, its first achievements, and its visions.

Paul A. Levine Library is a physical collection of books and archival materials that remained literally "host-less" in Berlin (for reasons both objective and subjective that do not belong in this discussion), where the historian had lived his final years. These circumstances generated the original provocative question: "should Levine's legacy be discarded, or what's in a name?", that finally led to the three main questions above, and was increasingly challenging for Levine's surroundings, as one will learn.

The initiative was launched in November 2019 as a clear response to this dilemma and started its unprecedented actions for rescuing Levine's archive before his apartment's dissolution.⁴ These efforts were heavily impeded due to—but not only—Covid-19.

Hence, the question remains: why is it important to keep the scholar's collection as a living legacy, passing on his knowledge to successive generations? This major question, among several others, opens the debate around the role of the rescued archive, and, moreover, around the memories buried in it, while suggested answers support the seemingly obvious thesis about the collection having great significance for Holocaust historiography not only in Sweden, but in Europe as a whole. I argue that the archive, which survived thanks to both social responsibility and solidarity, is of high relevance for numerous reasons that are partly discussed here, and therefore, it is my responsibility as a historian to advocate for its preservation and accessibility for the benefit of forthcoming generations of researchers.

Levine wrote and taught about the Holocaust over decades. In his field, Levine was known worldwide for his "*detailed study of a much written about and much misunderstood man*", as

⁴ See the initiative's correspondence with *Berliner Amtsgericht*, 2019-2020.

Sir Martin Gilbert defined it in 2010⁵, while by contemporary “town and gown” Levine stands out for his co-authorship of the textbook *Tell Ye Your Children*, as well as for his frequent media appearances on the subject of Holocaust education. Today, the book *Tell Ye Your Children*—many agree that it was and still is one of the most successful in a series of textbooks on the Holocaust—is used in more than twenty countries as part of their effort to educate about the darkest event that happened in Modern Europe.⁶

“Paul A. Levine and his research are foundational to Holocaust research and education in Sweden..., [they] remain essential in the field of Holocaust studies in Sweden and beyond.”⁷

After a long career as an associate Professor of Holocaust History and Genocide Studies at Uppsala University, Paul A. Levine lived the final six years of his life in Berlin, his favorite city, as a freelance historian working on his memoir and teacher’s guide, which remained unfinished. The book was meant to instruct educators how to think and teach about the Holocaust and about genocide in a progressive and humanistic manner. Death snatched his merciless pen from his hands, at a time when Levine was fighting his next historian’s battle and attempting to make a significant contribution to the study and explanation of the Armenian Genocide.⁸

Arguing for the significance of an archive left behind by a scholar while people are struggling due to a global catastrophe, I appeal to the human qualities which were once well-examined by Levine, in his study of Swedish diplomacy and bureaucracy at the culmination of the century’s nightmare, WW2⁹. By that I mean to say that the social and individual qualities addressed here—responsibility, empathy, solidarity, and activism—have become essential for the historian’s own (hi)story in a fashion that Levine would never have imagined himself, even though he really had imagination.¹⁰ Accepting that there is value in establishing historical truth (even though we do not always learn from history), it must be both acknowledged and

⁵ Sir Martin Gilbert assessed Levine’s book, *Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest: Myth, History & Holocaust*, 2010.

⁶ More on the textbook follows in next chapters.

⁷ Bartov acknowledges and foresees. He inspired Levine with his scholarship since meeting in 1992. See in: Levine, 2010, xii.

⁸ Professor Levine expressed to family & friends his last will for a certain engraved epiphany on a headstone at his burial place, in Berlin, “*the city most close to my heart and to my research*”; “*The Belle & The Beast*”, as he called it with love and sympathy. You will learn in this reading that Levine's last will was misunderstood and disregarded.

⁹ Levine, P. A., *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust, 1938-1944*, 1998.

¹⁰ “*One of the great challenges of reading history, let alone writing it, is successfully imagining what things, normal, common, ordinary things, were like during the period being experienced through the printed word.*”- Levine writes in his notes about the role of the imagination in teaching history. Albert Einstein advocates on the role of the imagination, considers owning imagination crucial for human beings: logic would bring you only from A to B, but imagination - everywhere, - Genies marks.

understood what role empathy, indifference, activism, and solidarity have already posthumously played for Levine, and why. My paper will show that empathy, as well as indifference, has many real faces.

“*We do not learn from history,*”¹¹ – as a disillusioned historian, Levine was warning his audience once again in 2001, in Latvia, pointing out the difference between knowledge and understanding; at that time, he was one of two research directors of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies (HGS) Program housed at the Center for Multiethnic Research in Uppsala University¹². In 2021, twenty years later, in a lively discussion on The Statement of Government Policy from January 2019 to establish a new museum in Sweden to preserve and perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust, the Minister of Education in Sweden, Anna Ekström, basically admits the truth of Levine’s statement: she recalls the obviously undone task¹³ in her talk, “*We must all learn from history*”. In this regard, given the meaningful character of memories hidden in the discussed library, it could and should be asked if the newly organized place—the upcoming Swedish Holocaust Museum—could become a future home for the collection, and “*a place in Sweden where future generations can learn*” and, hopefully, empathically understand content that is framed according to historical memory.¹⁴

My study, however, shall provide a basic understanding of what has been done, and what could be done in the future, regarding the remained archive, and why. Unpacking Levine’s library again, the first time it is done without the historian himself present, I extract the “what-&-why” suggestions and plead: “*remember and pass on the spirit!*”¹⁵ An equally great motivation for writing this article is that this current study, and future studies, should serve as a replacement

¹¹ From Levine’s talk in Swedish Embassy Riga, 2001. *Archivegut*.

“When the generation that survived the war is no longer with us, we’ll find out whether we have learned from history.” – Angela Merkel said. Cited in the Guardian/Online, 31 Aug 2018, from an earlier speech.

¹² Both institutions closely cooperated since 1998, were later led by two scholars: Paul A. Levine, PhD, who since 2003 filled the position established as a “Senior Lecturer” (*universitetslektor*) as a historian of modern Europe specialized in Holocaust history, and Satu Gröndal, specialist on Finnish and Swedish-Finnish migrant literature, Nordic minority literature, intersectionality, society and literature (according to katalog.uu.se) In: Uppsala University Newsletter, *The Uppsala Programme for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Uppsala University, 1998-2007, Accomplishments and Goals*, Spring 2007, 1, 2, 3, 8.

¹³ “*Unfortunately, the rise of antisemitism today is a global phenomenon.*” – historian Rosenfeld concludes. Following selection from the *Past webinar series on contemporary Anti-Semitism*, Indiana University, discusses currently the never stopped spreading disease. For add. sources see also: Rosenfeld, A. H., *Contending with Antisemitism in a Rapidly Changing Political Climate*, 2021.

¹⁴ The museum should be established in 2022, located in Stockholm, to make it easier to visit for school students and the public around the country. See press release from the Prime Minister's Office on 2021/01.

¹⁵ Just as when the library of the Jewish community in Berlin was founded in 1899, and Ludwig Geiger, called by Amos Elon “*the leading Goethe scholar in Germany*”, appealed to members of the community to support it with the appeal “*Gedenket des Geistes*” (as supposedly reported by the “*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*” on February 28, 1902).

for the headstone historian Levine had wanted. The Holocaust scholar was thoughtlessly and insensitively buried in a “collective grave” and never received the headstone he desired for his final resting place.

Where do I draw my knowledge from? – You will agree that the very facts of me being both a mature undergraduate student of *Judaistik* at *Freie Universität Berlin*, an institution tied to the tradition of Zunz’s *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and a close friend of Levine – played a major role in my personal understanding of the reasons the collection before me matters, why it should be taken care of, and that it should be made better known.¹⁶ Uncertain in many details, but with an idea about the part of history and memory that Levine’s library saves, I addressed my concern regarding Levine’s archival collection and its significance, drawing up much appreciated attention and support from more than 10 countries including the USA, Israel, Germany, Ukraine, Sweden, Austria, Armenia, Latvia, and others. This interest provided the spark for an interested fellow historian to start initial research on Levine’s archival material. On the other hand, the international interest in the discussed issue delivers one more opportunity to keep working on the idea of Levine’s memorial archive, “instead of” the headstone that he didn’t receive due to decisions made by others.¹⁷ Motivated by all of these things, I began a journey into the disorder of crates holding the rescued archive materials, listing the growing “what-&-why” questions and continuously finding more of them; these provided additional motivations and aspects that I will explore in the following chapters, while inviting you, “*Gedenket des Geistes*”.

The research paper honors the memory of Professor Levine and encourages serious future study of Levine’s archival material. At the same time, tracing Levine’s path through the landscape of the Swedish Holocaust Historiography, the study makes note of some burdens to overcome. “*Those burdens are not abstract, nor are they impersonal,*” – to adopt Levine’s wording. In the chapters to follow, the struggles in overcoming burdens that have already been faced will be subjected to critical review and analysis. Unpacking Levine’s library, I argue that despite any burdens—or rather because of them—the proposed way of memorializing Levine’s life’s-

¹⁶ Although never married, Levine and I were engaged since spring 2014. Considering this fact, you may see my current attempt in the tradition of women-partners who embarked on the path of their man-hero. By the means and for our forthcoming discussion, it’s important to add that a hero for these women was not necessarily the ideal one, but the one fighting for good.

¹⁷ The question--why was Levine buried in a way that doesn’t satisfy neither his last wish nor understanding of remembrance, and that also of many people, who knew the Professor, is not a part of the current discussion, even though I will touch on this sad subject occasionally in considering current arguments.

work through taking care of the scholar's *Schriftgut* refines and helps address critically specific narratives of the past.¹⁸

Concluding my Introduction, I hope that the following chapters will prove useful to those seeking knowledge on the subject presented.¹⁹

2. Theoretical Perspective and Methodology

As much as memory approach is central for our discussion, memory—“*as a resource for history*”—is “*an increasingly popular topic*” today, and, probably for a good reason, it has been “*a major preoccupation for social thinkers since antique*”.²⁰ This chapter summarizes the theoretical meaning and methodological approach of the terminology used.

Inviting to commemorate the prominent academic, the American Jew and the Holocaust historian who was an educator for most of his life, predominantly in Sweden, I enter the widespread terrain of the sociology of knowledge.

In agreement with Ruth Wodak, a scholar of Discourse Studies, on “*the fact that individuals do not remember on their own but with the help of the memories of others*”²¹, I present my argument, based on the notion of both individual and collective memory, from a sociological starting point. Together, let's dare to briefly delve into some theoretical considerations.

A vivid postmodern debate between two strands of academic discussion on social memories—interaction-based vs. the differentiation-theoretic approach—has merged its fruitful outcome into the “*sociology of the social memories in a differentiated modern society*”.²² Scholars of

¹⁸ 7 December 2020, the question “Why does Levine's archival collection matter?” was first raised at the memorial conference “*Forward and don't forget: teaching and writing about the Holocaust today*”, causing more international interest that generated, finally, new ideas about the collection. More in chapter 5.

¹⁹ My paper returns later to those who may seek the knowledge of the presented subject talking about the new Holocaust Museum in Sweden already mentioned; the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam; and some other relevant places.

²⁰ The literature on memory discussions is too vast to even begin listing. A good read could be Nora, Pierre, a leading theoretician, and French historian who suggests, that “*We speak so much of memory, because there is so little of it left*”. Other scholars explain it “*in terms of the rise of multiculturalism, the fall of Communism, and a politics of victimization and regret, among other factors*”. (Olick, 1988,106, 120-121)

Levine spent much time thinking about history and memory (Levine, 2010, 23), which for him was strongly relied on such moral values as indifference and activism, as well as understanding of the historian's role in society. In his legendary study on Raul Wallenberg over a decade ago, Levine summarizes his deep understanding of how historians use memories as a source. He demonstrates “*the frequent 'conflict'*” between primary source documents and memories and testimonies.

²¹ Ruth Wodak, 2009, 15.

²² The modern German sociologist concludes. (Sebald, 2011,187).

social memory – a “*nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise*” – perceive social memory nearly “*as a subfield of sociology of knowledge*” and, in general, as a “*connective structure of societies*”, on the one hand characterizing it as “*a set of practices*” (memorial and the structure of monuments)²³ and forms (tradition, myth or identity)²⁴, while on the other hand appreciating the way in which “*collective memory is a foundation for collective mentality*”, essentially for ‘*mental equipment*’.²⁵ Furthermore, the notable hierarchy between collective memory and collective mentality leads us to the extensive contributions on memory and identity, with a heightened interest to the Jewish identity. Those contributions document how the national past is being adapted to current interests linking memory and justice for a simple but most responsible reason:

*“The way we deal with the past is part of “Vergangenheitspolitik” (politics of dealing with the past): Different groups, political parties or politicians prefer different interpretations with a view to aligning their own positions...”*²⁶

Consequently, the memory does not only depend on the past from which an image is constructed but also on the social and, most importantly, political conditions proclaimed by the “*politics of dealing with the past*” in which this image is remembered in the ongoing present. From the foregoing it follows that memory is like a woven-from-multi-colored-fibers fabric; it can vary over time depending on many social and political components.

Indeed, memory as well as identity is subject to change, whereby remembering and forgetting are the “*modes*” in which social memories operate. But nothing can change the fact that memories are part of our identity.²⁷ A prominent area of this discussion has become studies on

²³ Historians like Aries and Agulhon are named for seeing commemorative practices “*as mechanism of political power, thus shifting historiographical interest from ideology to imagery and from meaning to manipulation...*” “*The intertwine power and memory is very subtle... when we as oral historians try to rescue and interpret these memories... we also inevitably transform their standing and character as memories.*” – reveals Olick citing Leydesdorffet. Commemorative practices “*as mechanism of political power*” will be stressed to a degree in the following discussion. Some authors pay “*particular attention to the role of the family in shaping how we construct the past*”, at the same time “*seeing tradition as disingenuous efforts to secure political power*”. (Olick, 1998, 108, 127)

²⁴ The identity concept was introduced by Ericson as “*self-sameness over time*”. The contemporary identity and memory studies focuses on the way in which we acquire our personal and social identity, agreed that “*Contestation is clearly at the center of both memory and identity*”. Some theorists are convinced that “*the possession of an historical identity and the possession of a social identity coincide*”. See in: Olick, 1998, 105, 107, 121. 122-123, 125.

²⁵ Hutton, 1988, 311.

²⁶ Wodak, 2009, 15.

²⁷ Sebald 2011, 174. Brenner emphasizes that “*since the end of the 17th century the whole of Jewish history has always been told differently*”. (Brenner, 2008, 9). See also Tony Judt’s *Postwar*, a masterpiece, where he thematizes this particular issue in his *Essay on Modern European Memory*. (Judt, 2005). Today, the barbarity of Putin’s war of conquest in Europe is fueled by a history falsified for the sake of political ambitions. However, we shudder from calls to stop reading this or that national literature and, as its radical expression: the destruction of this or that literary legacy on its national basis.

heritage including the topic of biography as one of the forms of the social memory, one that always deals with images belonging to communicative genres of narration.²⁸ Biographical research is defined as a core element of a sociology of social memory; it works in close interaction with other varying factors such as *mediality*, *generational differentiation*, as well as with the selective factor *relevance* considering these factors that make whole the difference by “*the formation of social memory*”.²⁹ Pleading to remember Levine and his work, I stress the topic of memory as a “*source of cultural domination*”, highlighting the role of memory in historiography while also taking in account that “*disciplines have [formatted in a way] collective memories that establish and maintain their identity*”. Introducing furthermore the categories of *talent* and *mediocre*, I enter an empirical area of memory discourse³⁰, reputation studies, that can provide us with an important insight for a grasp of how and why memory can transform in time, and how memory processes operate within specific social institutions. Wherein, the understanding of the debated relations will help to focus our view on the following well-pointed statement that:

“...reputations are only loosely correlated with life-time achievements; not only talent, but social [and political!] factors play a role in securing and maintaining the outstanding reputations of individuals.”³¹

Centering on how Levine is and shall be remembered rather than on how he lived, present work applies, to a limited extent, the mentioned concepts, for instance, to better understand what can mean “to be different”–the way Levine frequently felt about himself – as a social phenomenon, and how this label of “being different” is able to affect a commemoration of a person in social groups.

*“Communities... have a history... and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a ‘community of memory’, one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative... To be a member of any human community is to situate oneself with regard to one’s (its) past, if only by rejecting it.”*³²

My undergraduate study of the named processes of social memory, forgetting, rejection, remembrance, and commemoration, took place at the same time when the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD) in Amsterdam suggested a much reasonable and

²⁸ “*Biographies have always dealt with image-it concentrates in an unprecedented way on how individuals are remembered rather than how they lived*”. The classic contribution in this field is Lowenthal's monumental work *The Past is a Foreign Country*. (Olick, 1998,125,130).

²⁹ Some authors define relevance as “*a mechanism of selection within a theory of the formation of social memory based on the sociology of knowledge*”. When investigating the assessment of relevance, it is always worth looking at who exactly made the decision and for what reasons. (Sebald, 2011, 174).

³⁰ For the list of basic literature on Discourse Theory see in: Keller, 2011.

³¹ Olick, 1998, 108, 130. On experience: Sebald, 2011, 182.

³² Olick, 1998, 122, 130-131.

sensible solution for private archival collections that can be recognized as “*material legacy of the Holocaust*”, announcing the search for their current project by clearly emphasizing their preference:

*“The interest in hidden archival collections outside larger institutions has grown steadily over the past years.”*³³

Voilà! Given struggles and efforts, it cannot be noted without delight that NIOD’s ratification, cited above, appears most suitably in the timely delivery of the main parameters for an even more obviously urgent discussion:

*“We have always been aware that to cover the material legacy of the Holocaust, we need to incorporate the abundant material in smaller archival collections”.*³⁴

If there is still any doubt, the best way to show why Levine’s material legacy - his micro-archive - is relevant to the process of “*covering the material legacy of the Holocaust*” is to see its relevance for contemporary and future Holocaust-historiographical studies, which is clearly obvious to many scholars and fellows of both history and sociology. However, seeking a deeper understanding of the historian’s achievement and arguing the importance of the archive he left behind, I will bring some too quickly forgotten (or discarded [?]) memories of Levine, a “shared experience”³⁵ as a mental pillar in arguing of a few specific questions: 1) who has this outstanding historian been; 2) how had his accomplishments define Swedish Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Holocaust education in Sweden and many other countries; and 3) what has happened to the memory of Levine lately. After all, presenting the first record of the archive’s empirical data for its brief analysis, I argue that we are dealing with one part of a highly relevant narrative, courageously rescued by a group of people. This collection of a brilliant, but in the end a misunderstood historian, and in a way disgraced scholar, “foreign” in the land to which he had devoted his successful research over the decades of the past and present centuries, is of inestimable value both for History in its eternal seek for historical truth and for (Swedish) historiography. Of course, it applies only if there is any interest in revising established knowledge orthodoxies; otherwise, it can be surely suggested again and again that

³³ The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) invites to become part of their network by integrating a micro-archival collection into their portal.

³⁴ EHRI.

³⁵ Heuman and Rudberg, both former Levine’s thankful students, use the term memory in their new study on early Holocaust memory in Sweden “*in its basic sense as an umbrella concept for social processes which relate past and present in different sociocultural contexts.*” The authors emphasize Halbwachs interesting perspective in that “*memory is only a shared experience... shaped within various social frameworks.*” Heuman, 2021, 9-10. “*It is only individuals who remember, even if they do much of this together... Shared memories can be effective markers of social differentiation.*” – as French sociologist Halbwachs reminds. Olick, 1998, 111.

“*A historiography that does not aspire to be memorable is in peril of becoming a rampant growth.*”³⁶ Expressed doubts quickly become legitimate when reading Levine’s legendary PhD thesis uncovering Swedish Indifference, followed by numerous critical reviews, and absorbing his lectures to the subject:

“The unwillingness to address the methodological, intellectual, and—importantly—emotional challenges of studying the Holocaust left Swedish historiography isolated from decades of accelerating international efforts to understand the Nazi genocide.”³⁷

For many years, historian Levine had successfully—even though “radically” for some inland opinions—confronted Sweden with its “neutral” role during the Holocaust, doing it in awareness that, “*by teaching this dramatic bloody failure of democracy we can teach democracy.*”³⁸ The current essay ultimately is, as the introduction chapter announced, a call for social values of a good functioning democratic society: moral courage, empathy, and solidarity. Now, let’s hope for some radical changes in Swedish academia, not least in terms of emotional challenges.³⁹

As stated earlier, two things will be important when attempting to understand the meaning of the scientist’s legacy discussed. Firstly, if we want to understand as fully as possible about Levine’s contribution to the Holocaust historiography, aiming additionally to dispel already appeared myths about the outstanding historian, “*it is important that we understand something of the man himself.*” For this purpose, I gratefully use Levine’s universal formula for a study of a historical personality, arguing that much would be missed if Levine’s personality before his departure to Sweden, as well as his personal and academic background, were not at least sketched.⁴⁰ Such an approach should lead us finally to some insights about: *What kind of person Levine was; What did he achieve; What are the consequences of his impact both for Swedish historiography and for Levine himself?* This initial investigation will aim to clarify the *what-why* questions that have primarily been raised in relation to the surprisingly almost-lost narrative of the not-so-distant past.

Chapter 3, presenting explored sources on Levine, including some circulated myths about him, moves the star-historian into the spotlight of my investigation. Addressing the mentioned

³⁶ Yerushalmi cited in Olick, 1998, 110.

³⁷ Reviewing on Östling, Levine, 2016, 982.

³⁸ In interview to Spektor, Mordehai for „The American Jewish World“, No. 47, 1998.

³⁹ Bei the way, you undoubtedly will recognize the day, “*when Sweden honors moral courage and humanity*”—it is 27. August, *The Raoul Wallenberg Day*.

⁴⁰ Levine confidently used “*a grasp of the who, what, where, and how*” studying his “*misunderstood hero*” (Levine, 2010, 36-37) as the method to uncover the Why, as Canadian historian Frank Chalk underlines evaluating the work of his long-term colleague. Chalk, Frank, *Dr. Paul A. Levine: Letter of Recommendations to the Touro College*, 2016.

struggle of intertwining of power and memory, I argue that certain facets of Levine's personality, including his genius talent and merits as an outstanding thinker, researcher, and teacher, led him to significant achievements for Swedish historiography. Nonetheless, the sketched portrait—these few strokes on the canvas to sharpen the outline, as a part of the undergraduate work—is understandably quite fragmentary. Such an outline picture only gives few insights, that, hopefully will strengthen our ability to follow better the *what-&-why* questioned in this paper. Simultaneously, in the times when “*history became an abstract political chronology*” and “*historical bias was recast in ideological terms*”⁴¹, it has to be most responsibly reminded that any incomplete sketch is insufficient; it rather leaves an admittable gap that some common, even educated, human brains are able to fill with myths and legends as forms of memory.⁴² For instance, one (very-)long-term PhD fellow, one who became much more venerable after Levine's passing, currently named Levine a *braggadocio*. With other words, recently becoming the quite prominent fellow of history in Sweden, this mature PhD student of history had added to Levine's memory more than just historical inaccuracy.⁴³ Unpacking the constructed for some unknown reason historical falsehood, there will be more to tell on the said nought in the chapter on Levine. Thanks to the collective act of the initiative, by which empathy, social courage, and responsibility played one major role, will help us, as I will demonstrate in drawing a much more objective picture of the historian to contradict and dissolve noted nonsense, even though not all opinions have behind them a thought that needs to be academically discussed.

Sharing the first finds from the heart of the collection, this indispensably relevant source of the empirical data, chapter 4 delivers strongly supportive results for the arguments about *Why was it necessary to rescue Levine's library?* Reviewing the remarkable initiative's interaction on a transatlantic level and emphasizing *what* made the presented initial research first possible, chapter 4 honors the noted rescue engagement, given more details on origins and history of the collection.

Unpacking Levine's library again, I discover how complex is the interdisciplinary topic addressed: the first carried out analysis demands social courage and activism in overcoming

⁴¹ Hutton, 1988, 320. Currently, the world unfortunately experiences one of the most radical recasts by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and the whole progressive mankind. See the world's leading news pages.

⁴² On forms of memory see in: Olick, 1998, 105.

⁴³ Not in the name of love, but in search of historical truth, one possible reaction to an impossible nonsense could be thinking of it as of what Levine calls to “*substitute flabby clichés for thinking and analysis*”. - Levine's comment regarding myth, history, and the historian's social responsibility, (Levine, 2010, 15-16, 20). Another, borrowed by Kundera, would be more direct: “*Modern stupidity means not ignorance but the nought of received ideas*”. (Kundera, 180). On *nought* see also in: Kundera, 1986, 164.

some made barriers. Moreover, it implies an essence of knowledge in history, sociology, and library studies; in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and in Holocaust historiography in Sweden, and in Europe; and much more. Although my expertise of explored matter seems insufficient, I will argue that there are in fact some important ascertainments and high-ranking conclusions to be made about both Levine as a historian and an individual, and Levine's-micro-archive. In doing so, I rely on some *formational sources* of communicative memory such as discovered note of Levine's memoir, additionally using conducted memories of people interviewed for the purpose, who knew, worked with, or were taught by Professor Levine; they may enrich our view. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 analyze these memories, supported with reviews of relevant publications. Nevertheless, more accurately, and honestly, in my paper I shall attempt to survey the situation from a more modest, and personal perspective—that is, mine. While reflecting collected opinions of colleagues, friends, and students, I consult field-leading scholars Yehuda Bauer, Alvin H. Rosenfeld, Frank Chalk, Omer Bartov, Randolph Braham, Tim Cole, David Cesarani, Andras Kovacs, Lászlo Karsai, and a few others. Furthermore, I examine the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance reports, documentation from recent research conferences and workshops, Swedish Governmental reports as well as some relevant academic reviews and newspaper articles.⁴⁴ All named contributions should provide my claim with a solid theoretical fundament for the named purpose.

Besides, we should prefer to have some agreed definitions for the use of several common library terms before attempting to deal with the given topic in the current debate related to the accessibility of the past.⁴⁵ For this reason, I consult experts on library & archive affairs talking about *Why do we store materials*.⁴⁶ Even though the addressed archival content has not yet been rated as *Archivgut*⁴⁷ by any professional archivist, it would be certainly appropriate to use the terms “(micro-)archive” and “*Archivgut*”, for the prime description of the rescued materials—records (*Schriftgut*) of a person who had been *a person of public domain* for several decades. I claim that although Bundesarchiv defines an *Archivgut* as “*durch den Archivar oder die Archivarin als archivwürdig bewertete Unterlagen, insbesondere öffentlicher Stellen*”, which

⁴⁴ Regarding *the preoccupation with authorship*, a quite new trend rooted in the Enlightenment (Gordon, 2020, 5), I have to admit “happily and humbly” that I “*have stolen liberally*” (as Levine might say) from many who have thought and written about similar terms as concern us here. The most direct quotes used, are with proper attribution and credit. But since reading through and listening to authors who are much more competent, creating admirable for me art of word, I have absorbed much through “*the happy accidents of intellectual osmosis*”. So, perhaps you will meet some ideas expressed which are similar to others, but for whom I, in disorganized manner, might have failed to note a specific source, person, publication, version, etc.

⁴⁵ Sebald, 2011, 183.

⁴⁶ “*To be able to access relevant information*”, says Archivar Mr. Arends, *Archive theory* courses at FU Berlin.

⁴⁷ *Archival material has a lasting value. Unfortunately, we sometimes have to argue about what value is.* Ibid.

is a subject of “*besonderen rechtlichen Bedingungen vor allem im Hinblick auf die Aufbewahrung, aber auch auf den Zugang bzw. die Benutzung*”⁴⁸, there is no hindrance yet to linguistically support my argumentation with the help of common library terms. On the contrary, creating an initial description to motivate further professional evaluation of the present collection requires using common field-terminology. However, the first specification of the micro-archive at hand is intended to motivate the relevant expert level to recognize and assess Levine’s Library as both an *Archivegut*, and the *archive heritage of Europe*. For Levine’s micro-archive this could mean to expand to a large degree both prospects concerning its physical place and therefore its accessibility.⁴⁹

Lastly, covering the question *What lies ahead*, chapter 5 talks about the collection’s origins and history, followed logically by analysis of the listed content supplemented with an encouraging vision about the collection’s perspectives. EHRI’s statement given in the beginning of this chapter complements *per se* my thesis, delivering as ordered some base evidence for *Why this archival collection must be preserved*. Claiming the undoubted significance of the micro-archive materials on study, I affirm that Levine’s collection must be admitted, honored, and made available for future international Holocaust scholarship and pedagogy, getting its esteemed place in one of the leading Holocaust Institutions in Germany, or in Israel, Ukraine, the US, Sweden, or elsewhere connected with Levine’s life’s-work.

Now then, the next pages are filled with variety of entries from and about the star-historian, throwing into prominence some details of his life and work. A full account of biographical research remains to be written. Nonetheless, by asking some initial questions supported with credible and relevant sources about Levine and his legacy, a basis will be laid for a more lasting and credible understanding of this man and his original importance for the history of the world’s Holocaust and Genocide education, especially in Sweden.⁵⁰

3. Paul A. Levine: Brief Biographical Sketch

Entering History, Paul A. Levine—historian, author, and teacher—left behind his outstanding work and unique archive with several unfinished writings, enriching lectures, and other unique materials. Levine’s star lit up, mastered the art of illuminating, and continues to shine brightly in the collective and individual memories. Entering History as a figure of history, Levine will

⁴⁸ In the glossary of Bundesarchive.de.

⁴⁹ More about forthcoming discussion on question *Where to place the collection?* you will discover in chapter 5.

⁵⁰ As Levine might suggest. Levine, RW, 16.

forever remain the star-historian, merely because human brilliance is frequently—similar to diamonds—compared with that of a star⁵¹. “*Levine’s study is often brilliant..., it spreads new light on a portion of Swedish history...*”, – Svenska Dagbladet highlights his pioneering doctoral study about Swedish bureaucratic indifference and activism that Historian Christopher Browning, the author of *Ordinary Men*, reviews as an obligatory reading for several reasons:

“*Anyone who wishes to understand both the moral and political dimensions of this [Raoul Wallenberg’s] remarkable transformation must read Paul Levine’s important book.*”

Who has this outstanding Swedish American⁵² been? What did he achieve and what does he represent that make his name an apt title for the Initiative? The following chapter of this study focuses on these questions.

It seemed safe to say that for the sake of better grasping both Levine’s contribution as a historian and some attitudes toward his memory, we are seeking to understand something of the man Levine himself. As well, we hope to gain insight of 1) What historical myths did Levine dispel; and 2) What kind of silence he broke “radically” in Sweden confronting Swedish society with “*its ‘neutral’ role during the Holocaust.*”⁵³

The following two lines are taken from Levine’s introduction in Berlin in 2018 that answers, in short, the *Who*-question:

“*I am Jewish-American by birth but lived more than half my life in Europe where I examined and researched, over several decades, European bureaucratic indifference and activism in WW2.*”⁵⁴

The following pages will show that for an American, Levine lived a quite European life, where he had been strongly influenced both professionally and personally.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Not to underestimate stars’ illuminating potential: dark spots are well visible in their light. Science uses this gift of nature as one secure method screening the Universe for life. A human star, too, spreading light brightly, illuminates its own “spots” and those of others. Furthermore, three facts are known about stars: a) neither cosmos’ luminaries nor any brilliancy on Earth are perfect. (Ask, for example, astrophysicist & philosopher, Harald Lesch); b) brightness differs always – grayness/mediocre is ever alike; and c) “*mediocrity, as a goal, sucks... as a result, it is ok,*” – As popular blogger Mark Manson made a noteworthy point in this regard, hear the Business reporter, BBC News, 2016.

⁵² “*...no one would mistake me for being anything but American even after (now, in 2018, well over half my life...) outside of the States.*” Falling in love with a Swedish woman, he stayed in Sweden to make a living and to write a pioneering doctoral thesis “*on the Swedish government’s reaction on the Holocaust*”. From Levine’s unpublished memoir notes, dated into summer 2018, *Archivgut*.

⁵³ Levine in interview to The American Jewish World, 1998.

⁵⁴ On 12 June 2018, Levine, talking about the Holocaust, the reasonability of the younger German generations, but also about the work of an historian, sources etc., at the Goethe-Gymnasium Lichtenfelde.

⁵⁵ What was more important in making the man Paul A. Levine? Even though this question requires detailed biographical research on Paul Levine that would be beyond the range of this paper, yet, his memoir notes give

The second son of four children, Paul Ansel Levine was born in New York City to a family of 2nd generation Jewish immigrants with roots in Eastern Europe, on December 31, 1956. In February 1965, Paul left the East Coast with his family for Covina, near Los Angeles, growing up in Southern California of the 60's & 70's. Before moving permanently to Sweden in late June 1988, where Levine made his living and work for 26 years, until early summer 2014, he lived in Israel for over 3 years, between October 1977⁵⁶ & November 1980⁵⁷; before moving to in Claremont⁵⁸ and New Brunswick, NJ⁵⁹. Much of the time between January 2004 and spring 2010 Levine lived in England. What is less known is the interesting fact that Levine spent at least half a year in Africa, traveling through the fascinating continent, completing a detailed photo report about the places he visited throughout the African continent. Levine's personal notes document most of the time mentioned above, since Levine has repeatedly admitted in conversations that he has been keeping a diary since the mid-eighties. His African slides-material, dated late 80's to early 1990, as well as his diaries, are a part of a unique prime source of uncountable value. Although they are of different significance, the fact of their existence adds more evidence to the *what-&-why* list of questions for us to complete.

In 1988 however, young Levine, who came to Sweden to make history, "*was, by any measure, an intelligent... socially sophisticated, strong-willed, and capable person.*"⁶⁰ Feeling secure as

few hints to an answer: "...my personal and professional lives meant much the same while over half of my life I lived outside of the States." Levine, summer 2018. From Levine's *Archivegut*.

⁵⁶ On 29.11.1977, the 21-years young Paul receives a telegram sent to Kibbutz Raemat Menashe from West Covina, CA, signed by "MOM" with the text: "DAD LEAVING HOSPITAL FRIDAY 12-2 DO NOT COME HOME LOVE MOM". As Paul admitted in our conversations, he flew to Israel because of his father; in Israel he had found home for the next four years, in the much-adored land. His correspondence of that period gives witness to some sorrowful moments of Levine's youth as well as it shows his strong character. Levine kept conversational Hebrew despite a long break until 2014, when he again could practice *Ivrit* on a week-long trip. (Levine, 2018). From Levine's *Archivegut*.

⁵⁷ After Israel, in 1983, Levine receives his Bachelor of Arts *cum laude* in History in California State University Pomona and awarded the John Kershaw Memorial Prize (History Student of the Year). Levine's CV 2019.

⁵⁸ In 1987, Levine received his Master of Arts in The Claremont Graduate School CA, Department of History. Field: Modern European political and diplomatic history, history of the Holocaust; Thesis title: *The Swedish Press and the Holocaust, June 1941- October 1943*. From Levine's *Archivegut*.

⁵⁹ "1994- 1996: Rutgers University, Department of History, adjunct lecturer. Taught courses in history of the Holocaust, history methods and modern European history... 1994-1996: Rutgers University, Director, The Raoul Wallenberg Professorship in Human Rights. Responsibilities included fundraising, development of Holocaust educational outreach programs for teachers, organizing public lectures and academic conferences, etc. 1992-1993: Rutgers University, Department of History-- Visiting Lecturer & Fellow, The Raoul Wallenberg Professorship in Human Rights". – Levine's Academic Employment and Positions, CV 2019.

⁶⁰ The epithets that Levine once used to describe his hero Raoul Wallenberg correspond to the character of the author himself. (Levine, 2010, 35).

a lifelong “*non-believer*”⁶¹, and being forever in debt to his father for his passion for history⁶²; Levine fell to history in his early teenage years, growing to become a keen reader and talented observer. Hence, when “*the myths surrounding Sweden and its neutrality*” in WW2⁶³, continuing studying history as PhD-candidate, he entered Swedish academy with a nurtured comprehension of who he would become and what was expected of him as a historian in terms of the historian's social responsibility,

“...for a historian of the Holocaust, one who is guided by evidence, method and a sense of the historian's social responsibility, there are no saints, and all myths must be subjected to critical inquiry.”⁶⁴

“Though it may be easier to repeat and disseminate a simplistic, short, comforting, and easy to understand narrative..., ultimately this does not serve society's health or its potential for progress.”⁶⁵

This awareness about the historian's social responsibility accompanied the scholar throughout Levine's life; dispelling myths, breaking silence, he shaped his research around “radically” asked questions. “*Levine is the first scholar to explain the fascinating transformation that occurred in Swedish policy...*”⁶⁶

Already in the first decade of his activity, writing and teaching about the Holocaust—Levine's main pre-occupation—changed the established understanding of the Swedish role at the darkest time of modern European history. By confronting Sweden with its “*historical truth*”, Levine made himself both a prized “*celebrity*” and, an “uncomfortable”, a “*radical*” historian, as we

⁶¹ “*Most Christians I've met through the years, not least here in Europe where—need it be added—antisemitic notions & groupthink run deep—there has been difficulty in understanding the fact that a Jew can be, at least one who grew up when and where I have, an atheist. I am ever so proudly and permanently Jewish but have been a committed non-believer (which is probably a better rubric than atheist...) since a little lad.*” (Levine, 2018). Some people mean non-believer being *transcendental homeless*. Read also Sillow-Carroll, Andrew, *Religion for non-believers: It's a Jewish thing*. 19.06.2022, online: www.jta.org. To the question “What are the Jews?” you can consult also Mendelsohn, Ezra, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 1993, 6.

⁶² Levine's parents in general introduced a sense of culture, social justice, and citizen participation to their four children, as Paul remembered. His early influences: Donald Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, William Manchester, and of course Raul Hilberg's double-columned edition of *The Destruction*. Levine's classmate from elementary school in Covina, Mr. V., vividly remembers Paul being a budding bibliophile: “*well-read*”, “*the studious one*” and as one who “*excelled in all of his classes*”.

My personal memories about Paul are that he read literally his every free moment. His first memories of himself were of him reading, Paul told me once. It was history that challenged his extraordinary mind from a young age. “*Reading is hard work for human brain, reading analyzing the score of existed before field-leading publications requires one's intense intellectual work of countless hours and that life-long...*” - Anyone who had once put their own feet in the process of accessing knowledge would admit this clear understanding by Levine of reading as a historian's working process. Paul had read much and constantly wherever he would be situated, being even called “*the man with a book*”. See more in: Levine's notes, *Archivegut*.

⁶³ Levine, in interview to *The American Jewish World*, 1998.

⁶⁴ Levine, 2010, 31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁶ In 1996 Levine receive Doctor of Philosophy degree at Uppsala University, Department of History, field: Modern European History, History of the Holocaust, Diplomatic History. Dissertation title: *From Indifference to Activism; Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust, 1938-1944*, 1996. The book was reprinted in second enlarged edition with a new postscript, 1998, which is rare for any dissertation, but not surprising in the case of Levine.

learn.⁶⁷ Beginning with the next monograph he intended initially to dwell on the popular national hero Raoul Wallenberg, with a *paradigm-breaking* achievement. Working on an important part of Holocaust history, the book about *Raoul Wallenberg and Swedish diplomacy in Budapest in 1944-1945*⁶⁸, Levine “helped to understand Raoul Wallenberg in his real context, destroying existing myths about the Swedish hero”. Further, Sir Martin Gilbert’s review underlines (in the book’s first edition):

“This book is the detailed study of a much written about and much misunderstood man: it has the great merit of asking penetrating questions and producing unexpected and in many ways disturbing answers.”

Omer Bartov calls Levine’s pathbreaking work on Wallenberg “a wonderful achievement”, emphasizing:

*“His [Paul A. Levine] book demonstrates that demystifying legends about those who saved souls during the Holocaust only highlights their true heroism by placing it within its historical and human context.”*⁶⁹

In wonder about humans’ indifference, Levine asked, based on long-term research, “penetrating” questions possessing the great ability to let his audience be much staggered:

*“Why were the Nazis running around the fields of Normandy catching Jewish kids even after the invasion of the allied forces, when they had so many other things to take care about?” “Why did the Norwegians help confiscate the belongings of the Jews, before they even were commanded to do so? Why did the Hungarian government subject the rescued Jews to extinction during the last weeks of the war in July-August 1944?”*⁷⁰

Asking disturbing questions and providing no fewer disturbing answers should have made Levine “unpopular” for some Swedes, as their Swedish Holocaust historiography demonstrates. And Levine’s uncomfortable questions and statements possibly contributed much to the “uncomfortable-historian” status simply because:

⁶⁷ See in: *The American Jewish World*, 1998. Later, as associate professor and senior lecturer at Uppsala University, Paul A. Levine has been awarded the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Medal commemorating the 100th anniversary of Raoul Wallenberg’s birth.

⁶⁸ The research leading to his doctoral thesis began with the prevailing assumption that the story of Sweden’s diplomatic engagement on behalf of Jews in Europe began and ended with Raul Wallenberg, with perhaps a peripheral connection regarding Sweden’s reception of Denmark’s Jewish population when they fled the Nazis in October 1943. Levine’s assumption was surprised by the fact that Sweden’s Foreign Office began helping non-Swedish Jews escape the Nazis long prior to the Danish episode or Wallenberg’s July 1944 arrival in Budapest. Their efforts, in fact, began in November 1942, when the “Final Solution” struck Norway’s tiny Jewish population. Levine, Paul A., *Swedish Historiography and the Holocaust; A Gap hard to Explain*.

⁶⁹ Levine, 2010, blurb. More here in: Bartov, Omer, Webinar in memory of Levine, 2020.

⁷⁰ Levine in Latvia, 2001, as an example of numerous “disturbing” questions.

“...The real challenge for Sweden’s corps of humanities academics was not to understand its neighborhood or its recent past, but to create a new, social democratic society.”⁷¹

Levine’s critique on *“seemingly blind allegiance and adherence to a positivistic theory (teori bildning) which they [Swedish academics] loved with a fetishistic slavishness”* were felt knife-sharp reaching emotions and minds.⁷² Levine’s political links⁷³ had addressed the *“know-nothing”* attitude of Sweden’s *“corps of humanities academics”* in this point. A responsible Historian, he continually stressed *“a matter of indifference in Sweden among those who created and articulated important social and academic debates about history and memory.”* For his expertise, Swedish academics *“...showed little or no interest in studying or understanding Nazism or the Holocaust, either as subjects relevant to their own nation and its future or as general European phenomena.”* In response, it is imaginable that the Swedish academics could have perceived Levine *“as someone radical in a way, as someone who would call things by what they were. Swedes didn’t like it.”* – Mrs. M., another fellow of Swedish academia commented during conversations in 2021.

However, instead of delving into the question of whether some Swedes liked or not Levine’s sharp criticism, let’s think about *how* did Levine’s critique serve the society’s health?

Levine’s role for IHRA⁷⁴ had begun while he was completing *“a study of the diplomatic activities of Raul Wallenberg during the Holocaust and its meaning for the memory of the genocide in society today”*. Since then, continually, Levine was an active participant as teacher and consultant for the Swedish government’s *“Living History Information Project”⁷⁵*

⁷¹ Levine, reviewing Östling, 2018, 982.

⁷² Words are potent weapons for all causes, good or bad. – Manly Palmer Hall, a Canadian-born author, lecturer, astrologer and mystic, used to express.

⁷³ For only one among countless, however, the convincing example on importance of political links regarding the historian’s responsibility, consult the Hungarian philosopher and historian A. Kovács. In his talk on *Antisemitism in post-Communist Hungary*, answering, where hatred comes from; what socially motivates people; K. emphasizes: *“I think this comes basically from political sphere... The source of which forms the everyday life is a media”*. - In: *Passed webinars on contemporary Anti-Semitism*, IU, 2021.

⁷⁴ The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). See also the footnote 30.

⁷⁵ The book, first published in 1998 by the Swedish government, was commissioned as part of a national educational campaign, named *“Living History”*, to teach Swedish citizens about the Holocaust. The written book was the first major project, initiated by former Prime Minister of Sweden Göran Persson in 1997. One positive example of how ideology influences education could be the following: during a parliamentary debate in June 1997, Prime Minister Göran Persson promised to initiate an information campaign about the Holocaust - what really happened and what values and attitudes led to the disaster. The purpose was to convey facts about the Holocaust, facts which in turn would form the basis for a discussion about democracy, tolerance, and the equal value of all people. The reason the issue was raised in the Swedish Parliament was that a survey had been published which showed that young people had a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust and that many young people were not even sure that it had taken place. At the same time, the rise of right-wing extremist groups - which spread propaganda in schools - started to get more and more attention. These factors led to an information project initiated directly by the Prime Minister. The project was named *Living History*. Launched in 1998 by then Prime Minister Göran Persson, this nationwide and international educational project that was based on, but

successfully manifesting his role for Holocaust historiography in Sweden that was indicated by both his monographs and his co-authorship of two further books.

One of them⁷⁶, *Tell Ye Your Children*, caused complete changes in “Swedish” attitude to Holocaust education, creating worldwide consequences. Written by Levine and Bruchfeld, the textbook remains one of the most printed books in Sweden during the last twenty years. The aim of this richly illustrated edition is not only in motivating to ask more questions about what happened that time in Europe, but more accurately:

“...to give an impulse to think about our society and our identity, to think of what is important for the democracy to survive,” because “we have no guaranties that it (Holocaust) will never happen again.”⁷⁷

The book was included in the national school curricula as a teaching means in history in several countries including a few *Bundesländer*.

“[This book is] ...a core school textbook of Holocaust education—making *Tell Ye [Your Children]* a needed and wanted basic puzzle of school curriculum. It takes political conviction and political courage.”⁷⁸

The Chair of IHRA, Yehuda Bauer—a remarkable Holocaust historian and survivor—called the textbook “*The best book on the Holocaust for its length and goals.*”⁷⁹ Most significantly, in 1999, the book directly led to the formation of what was initially the *International Task Force on Holocaust Research, Remembrance and Education*. Serving society’s health, that unprecedented international diplomatic body was evolved into *IHRA*, the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*.⁸⁰

not exclusively about, the Holocaust, educates students, teachers and the public about antisemitism, xenophobia, right-wing extremism and social intolerance against minorities. More on “*The ideologies that controlled public funding for historical research*” see in: Levine on Östling, 2011, 2018.

⁷⁶ Levine had written his second monograph with the historian David Cesarani. (Cesarani, Levine, 2002).

⁷⁷ Levine explains, in 2001 in Latvia. The textbook is an example of how to distill large historical, historiographical, biographical, graphical, etc. information into a format and language which appeals to diplomats and middle-school students. It has been used in university courses, public & private school classrooms, adult education/union organizations, etc. The book gives a historical background to the Holocaust and seeks to explain how what no one could imagine became a reality. – From Levine’s *Archivegut*.

⁷⁸ John Bernstein shared his memories of Levine in 2021. Levine’s archive includes detailed selection of his unfinished project materials, “*A Book about the Book*” that bares some bigger story about and around Levine’s first co-authorship. More see in chapter 4.

⁷⁹ Levine’s *Archivegut*.

⁸⁰ To the background, in May 1998, Prime Minister Göran Persson, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President Bill Clinton agreed to form a working group, the so-called *Task Force*, to promote international cooperation on education, remembrance, and research on the Holocaust before the turn of the millennium. In the same year, Göran Persson undertook to invite the countries in the cooperation group and other interested countries to an international intergovernmental conference on these issues, the Stockholm International Forum. A conference on stolen Jewish assets at the time of the Holocaust was held in Washington in November-December 1998. At that time, the countries present adopted a joint declaration in which they undertook to call on parents, teachers, political, religious, and other leaders to support the teaching of the Holocaust and to help carry the

A brilliant historian and talented pedagogue, Levine developed and taught Sweden's first course on the history and historiography of the Holocaust, and for decades more, continued developing and teaching numerous history and pedagogic courses for several institutions at Uppsala University.⁸¹ The gifted educator Levine was appreciated by his students as both a real hero of the classroom and the *"rock-n-roll historian"*.⁸² The trained senior lecturer taught at Uppsala university and internationally; he was invited to several countries either to create new international programs or to lead seminars and workshops, and to give talks at conferences, and on television and radio. By teaching *"a story of the bankruptcy of Europe"*, and that of other genocides, Levine helped his listeners *"to think about society and their identity"*.⁸³

As a star-academic with a *"minority's view of majority culture"*, Levine had been an informed and critical observer of different society levels which, shaping his own understanding of his (Jewish) identity, served to focus his teaching on human aspects and qualities, appreciating it as an ultimately decisive pedagogical task. Not from books, but from his long-term teaching experience warning about *"a generation of educated barbarians"*, Levine revealed the fact that *"the Holocaust became possible partly because most Europeans simply could not believe that they will be treated so"*.⁸⁴ Instructing numerous international teacher-groups over decades, Levine strongly suggested a humanistic perspective of *"tolerant empathy"* in teaching the lesson of the Holocaust. *"To teach empathy is central, not as an act of sympathy but of understanding someone else's role in history both empirically and intuitively..."*, he said, because then, *"...the inchoate feelings and articulations of some become the philosophical*

memory forward. Since then, several other countries have joined the work and the cooperation group has twenty-four member countries (January 2006). See in: *Stockholms Internationella Forum (2000–2004)*. More in: Kvist, 2020, preface.

⁸¹ From Levine's CV, 2019.

⁸² For being able assess my statement you had to experience his lectures live. Levine's teaching career essentially began as a graduate student, and most intensely by teaching modern European history, the history of the Holocaust, historiography & methods at Rutgers University (New Brunswick), Department of History for three years between 1992-1996. The enriching evaluation from students witnesses their deep acknowledgement and gratitude to their senior lecturer over decades. *"Levine was one of the pioneers in the field of Holocaust history in Sweden and a great inspiration to both of us."* – Acknowledge Levine's former students, Pontus Rudberg and Johannes Heuman in their recent study: Heuman, 2021, vi.

⁸³ Levine in interview to The American Jewish World, 1998. The term identity turns into one of the key subjects in Levine's lectures.

⁸⁴ Levine in Latvia, 2001. Decades later in 2022, continuing learning from history without Levine, we again witness what we *"simply could not believe"*: Putin's Russia genocides Ukrainians in the middle of Europe. See in countless sources that report on Russian terror aggression and its war in Ukraine. And Levine's question sounds in our ears: *do we learn from History?* See also on war in Ukraine the NYT, Tablet, Frankfurter Allgemeine, Washington Post, etc., up from 24. Feb. 2022 until current.

musings of others.”⁸⁵ Levine’s famous way of questioning, challenging our feelings and thoughts, helps reflect differently about the murders of European Jews.⁸⁶

The true *hero of the classroom* and the co-founder of the Hugo Valentine Center, Levine—as explored sources demonstrate—played an instrumental role in the conceptualization and construction of Uppsala Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies.⁸⁷ Studying archival materials for our concerns, it becomes more and more obvious that the explored sources provide us rather than just with his employment biography, with the enumeration of Levine’s significant contributions, both academically and pedagogically. The talented educator, Levine had participated as an instructor, lecturer, planner, and organizer in many teacher-training sessions, public lectures and internal government and institution seminars. Several of these teacher-training seminars were international, taking place in different Central and Eastern-European countries, co-organizing “*teacher-training seminars & workshops*” in such cities as Kyiv, Dnipro, Riga, Tartu, Tallin, Vilnius, Warsaw, Budapest, Banja Luka, Bucharest, Moscow⁸⁸, St. Petersburg...⁸⁹

Growing up “*in the best Whiggish, moderate and reformist lines of thinking, feeling, and acting*” carefully combined with his great respect for Jewish tradition, Levine showed a fair dose of critical confidence in his role and mission as a historian-educator, calling a spade a spade. However, his self-confidence has often, if not always, been mistaken for arrogance⁹⁰, though, as 7” ⋈ from Odessa (which I am) might say in such cases, there are “*two big*

⁸⁵ Indeed, “*education is an act of persuasion, not simply the presentation of facts.*” Levine spoke about this and other important aspects of pedagogy, in Theresienstadt, Moscow, and Graz, in 2018. At the latest since Bin Laden, Kim Jong-un and Assad, it has become clear that the most anti-democratic leaders drew their knowledge from Western universities. And this may mean that in these universities it is possible to comprehend the acquired knowledge in a different way.

⁸⁶ “*I always tried to emphasize key words or concepts which students and teachers could easily identify with—temptation, vulnerability, love & affection being shown by a perpetrator to one person, and then doing vicious killing the next, this killing being done for the fully understandable reason (to all) that it was part of their job, their social responsibility, in order to create the national and individual outcome desired and indeed dreamed about.*” From Levine’s *Archivegut*.

⁸⁷ The University’s Newsletter reports about *The Uppsala Programme for Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (HGS)—the forerunner of The Hugo Valentine Center that was presided over its research and programmatic activities by Prof. Harald Runblom in early 1999 and then was “*led by Docent Satu Gröndahl with Dr. Paul A. Levine as HGS research director*”. Uppsala University Newsletter, Spring 2007.

⁸⁸ “*Oh... the conference in Moscow was of course interesting if not deeply fruitful for many reasons... but it was interesting to find out, from Russian “officials” from both the federal and municipal level, in a conference devoted to fighting “antisemitism, xenophobia and racism”, that the cause of all evil in the world is Ukraine! I wasn’t aware of that before... it was “useful” to be so informed!! A strange conference, to say the least...*” - Levine writing to Omer Bartov, drafting a prospectus, on 21.11.2018

⁸⁹ “*And It is self-evident that teaching Holocaust and genocide history and memory in what T. Snyder influentially called “The Bloodlands” is a different pedagogic and even political challenge than elsewhere in Europe—including Germany*”, – as Levine concluded from his immense experience.

⁹⁰ “*I may have had a tad more self-confidence than your average Raymond, and this seems to have made some difference or another through the years, people, and experiences...*”, – Levine wrote in 2018.

differences”⁹¹ situated between *self-confidence* and *overconfidence*, or between *self-confidence* and *arrogance*. The American Jew, Levine would never feel particularly awkward, but *different*. According to explored sources it is thinkable that being around, in 2021, Levine would have had to add to the research questions from Lund: “*How do self-identified Jews in Sweden experience and understand exclusion, marginalization and discrimination and how do these experiences and understandings relate to continuities and changes within the Swedish racial regime? How do they reflect upon their identity in relation to religious practices and in relation to transnational, national and local communities?*”⁹²

*Perhaps I can make some claim to being different and a smidgen distinct because my “worldly” experiences have been completely non-military and only peripherally political—apart from academic politics... My bureaucratic elbows (though I’ve studied the bloody subject...) simply were not sharp enough—and I was constantly out-maneuvered.*⁹³

The complete list of Levine’s achievements is spelled out on nearly two dozen pages and there is little possibility to cover it in detail; however, sketched examples could give an idea of the dimension of what Levine achieved and what represents him in History: an illuminating and shining star in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Levine’s brilliance as a historian, thinker and teacher makes his name a pertinent title for the raised student Initiative that is described in more detail in the next chapter.

Although, coming to the end of Levine’s brief biographical examination while reviewing some distant and more recent events in Swedish academia, a few questions could appear logical and fully justified. First, I am asking myself: Why would—unknowingly, out of forgetfulness, or on purpose—a sort of distortionary national historiography be produced that rather holds Levine for a “*further example...*”, or “*another American historian*”, who wrote on “*Sweden and the Holocaust*”? Why, after all, to write so humbly about Levine? Even more remarkable, this national historiographical production making Levine less visible has been, in fact, much

⁹¹ This Yiddish rooted expression “צוויי גרויס דיפערענצן” is introduced by Isaac Babel, the famous Jewish writer, in his short story *Odessa*, dedicated to his hometown. Indeed, in the volume of his work edited by his daughter Nathalie Babel, we find the following: “*It’s common knowledge. Instead of saying “a great difference” people there [in Odessa] say “two great differences...”*” See Babel, Isaac, *Odessa*, in Babel, N., *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*, 2005, 75. *Odessans* might say, for instance, “Kyiv and Odessa are two big differences” instead of the standard “there’s a big difference between Kyiv and Odessa”. According to the scholar Rebecca Stanton, this phrase recognizes the basic truth that “it takes two to differ”. In Stanton, R., *Isaac Babel and the Self-Invention of Odessan Modernism*, 2012.

⁹² These questions were part of discussion at the webinar of the Department of Gender Studies, University Lund, on April 21, 2021, where Hansalbin Sältenberg talked about some contemporary attitudes in midst of ‘*Swedishness*’ and about *constructions of ‘Swedishness*’.

⁹³ Many scholars are convinced that Jewish identity in the majority group is inextricably linked to feelings of inclusion and exclusion. Silvana Greco, seminars “*Die Jüdische Identität in der Moderne*“.

celebrated as *The National Historiography* by both Clio- and Nils-Klim-Prizes.⁹⁴ One possible suggestion in this regard can be précised with Ernst Renan cited in Tony Judt's *Essay on Modern European Memory*:

*“Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation; thus, the progress of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things.”*⁹⁵

Second, in Fall 2021, one year after Levine's passing away, many felt surprised when the former Swedish Prime minister Stefan Löfven modestly honored Paul A. Levine alongside the medal-awarded Swedish history-fellow, Stephane Bruchfeld, for “his [Levine's] significant contributions as an academic, in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and in the Forum for Living History”; the medal seems to be awarded to one for the achievement of both. Why was there no medal for Levine? A profane question crossed my mind. Professor Levine always taught to ask questions, that's why I addressed my concern about the felt discrepancy to the Swedish Minister, and received a simple explanation from the Swedish Ministry a few days later - that only a living person could be awarded with the Medal.⁹⁶ Indeed, what a vicious circle, if understood that the award-decision was a matter of choice made in awareness of the fact that Levine is no longer alive. “*This element of choice is crucial*”⁹⁷, isn't it? Both examples should not, but may, refer to some subtle “exclusive choices” that ultimately underestimate Levine's accomplishments for Sweden. “*Sometimes distortion of the past is not the result of ill-will or conspiracy, but rather a desire to strengthen nationalist sentiment*”, the legendary Yehuda Bauer makes a good point in one of his recent articles.⁹⁸

The passionate historian, Levine made no claim of being neither in any way more learned, nor in any way more special than anyone else with his background and training. Therefore, I like additionally to disavow some circulating nonsense⁹⁹, a distortion of the historical memory about the star-historian, to a limited extent exposing the *braggadocio*-gossip mentioned before.

⁹⁴ Östling, 2011, 138, 145, 146. – In English, this is called a “circle jerk”, as the columnist at *Jüdische Allgemeine*, Michael Wuliger may well put. “Circle jerk” definition according to the Urban Dictionary: “The act of constantly sharing the same opinion in a forum full of people who are obviously known to have the same opinion as yours, therefore granting you free upvotes to said opinion, while gathering downvotes to anyone that opposes you on the matter”).

⁹⁵ Judt, 2005, 803.

⁹⁶ See in: Open Letter to the Prime Minister Stephane Löfven, 2021. More in: Löfven, FB post, 4.10.2021.

⁹⁷ Levine, 1996.

⁹⁸ Bauer, 2020.

⁹⁹ “...for a historian of the Holocaust, one who is guided by evidence, method and a sense of the historian's social responsibility, there are no saints, and all myths must be subjected to critical inquiry.” Levine acknowledged the no-nonsense Orwell's inhabited English tradition that combines a clarity of thought and articulation with an understanding that if things are being obscure, it is because something shameful is going on.

Where confusion begins, it is clearly necessary to refer to the basic definition. The *Oxford English Dictionary* explains *Braggadocio*¹⁰⁰ as “boasting in vain, arrogant pretension, cockiness, a show-off, or blunder appearance, meaning a behavior of someone who got it nowhere but claims to be”—an attitude that is completely dissimilar with Levine by fact. Neither the interviews conducted, nor other tertiary sources of information examined confirm the disqualifying statement made. On the contrary, recently, a classmate contacted the memorial Homepage dedicated to Levine, remembering about teenager-Paul: “he never bragged about being smarter than others or better educated, but we all knew that he was”.¹⁰¹ In February 2021, another insider view given by a PhD researcher from Sweden, Mrs. M.—a young scholar whose mentor and adviser Levine became during his last couple of years living in Berlin. Affirming his highest professionalism with much gratitude, she acknowledges, talking about the time of her weekly consultations with the Professor, “He [Levine] treated me as equal!” Referring to numerous sources, it seems easy to disavow the obscure nonsense spread, but the question suggests itself; why? Guided by which evidence, kind of method or sense did someone¹⁰² who studies history feel the necessity in the twisted invention calling the Brilliancy *Braggadocio*? Guessing the answer, some may refer to Pushkin.¹⁰³ However, following lines about “...the air of swaggering braggadocio that all important men are expected to show in fighting”¹⁰⁴, could give us another matter of perspective about why an “important” man, a “fighter” - both of whom Levine defiantly represents, can be seen as a bragging force or person.

¹⁰⁰ German equivalent is *Schaumschläger*. First known use of braggadocio as personification of boasting is given to Edmund Spenser in his *Faerie Queen*, 1594. For definition on braggadocio see also *English Dictionary*, 1971.

¹⁰¹ “He was a transfer student and joined the class during the school year, but it didn’t take him long to blend in and make friends as he was very outgoing. I remember that he sang a derogatory song about Hitler and the rest of us hardly knew who Hitler was at that age... Paul was always the studious one and he excelled in all of his classes and always had interesting comments to make in classroom discussions. I don’t think Paul really viewed himself as head and shoulders above everybody else, he was just acting naturally. He never bragged about being smarter than others or better educated, but we all knew that he was.” March 2021, in correspondence with Mr. V., Levine’s classmate in 1964-1975 in Covina.

¹⁰² “Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them.” - The author Joseph Heller from the novel *Catch-22* may propose.

¹⁰³ From Alexander Pushkin, *Mozart and Salieri*:

“But is he really right

To say that I am not a genius?”...

– “...who can withstand jealousy?”, Proverbs 27:4. That is why, whenever I hear some bigmouth banging on about over-confidence, I mentally enter that time again, when Levine (quite confidently) built up academic programs attracting remarkable international support, co-founding the Hugo Valentine Center, and completing monographs. At the same time, holding his PhD-candidate-status for the next decades, the author of nonsense occasionally discussed his unfinished thesis with Levine, the associate Professor and research director at work, obviously, because of Levine’s confidence. Of course, you will not blame anyone for being slow in getting an academic education... However, if anyone ever doubted, the recent Swedish medal-award confirms the genius, as we already learned.

¹⁰⁴ C. W. M. Hart.

“*Distortion of the past rests on a combination of truth and invention,*” says the IHRA’s Honorary Chairman, Yehuda Bauer, in a recently published article; “*constructing identities, historical memory has both private and collective components*”.¹⁰⁵ Influencing finally how we perceive historical individuals or events, these components’ interplay is decisive in reaching intellect and emotions of those who receive historical (in our case) information. In sake of historical truth, the need of myths refraction is not objectionable, not least because otherwise myths unnecessarily increase historical nonsense. Dispensing myths about Levine moreover would underline the true heroism of the misunderstood hero of the classroom, the talented pedagogue, and a fighter-historian.¹⁰⁶ Though, because Levine taught by always asking questions, it would be worth while to ask, *why* the hero of daily pedagogical *battaglia* for democratic values in research and education, the progressive thinker and prominent historian, who delivered his ideas brilliantly, had been put in one line with a blender-manner? An invention made for what reasons? We cannot answer this question, but we could think about (to better serve society’s health) *how* do we teach history in order to understand someone else’s role in history both empirically and intuitively.

During October 2014 Levine moved finally to Berlin, the city of his love, where he found his roots, his ancestral home, living his last years as a consulting historian and writer.¹⁰⁷ Finally, he was buried in Berlin, which could be satisfying to know if not for the tragedy surrounding his burial. The *Shoah* scholar, who had dedicated his whole life to the study of the European phenomenon of human cruelty, not least studying countless Jewish WW2-mass-graves, finally, was put into a collective grave.¹⁰⁸ Many remain shocked about the inappropriate way of dishonoring the Holocaust historian, deeply saddened, and speechless: “*why?*”¹⁰⁹ For years, Levine had prepared an epitaph line for his headstone, letting his every loved one know.¹¹⁰ My

¹⁰⁵ Bauer, 2020, 14:2. Levine dedicates a whole chapter to *Myth, History and the Historian’s Social Responsibility* (Levine, 2010, 19-35). More on historical memory, myth, and “*powerful dose of mythology: half-felt, half-remembered stories which bear little relationship to historical facts...*”, see by Simon Mundy. The distinction between group thinking and groupthink is especially successfully addressed by Serge, Victor, as Guy Patrick Cunningham reviews, in 2015.

¹⁰⁶ I am convinced that Bartov’s observation regarding Raoul Wallenberg’s myths applies to the misunderstood hero Levine too. (Levine, 2010, cover blurb).

¹⁰⁷ “*I have left my position at Uppsala University. I am now an independent, free-lance historian-- Yes, with a very solid c.v. and somewhat known internationally within my field. But I am presently not affiliated with any university or institution.*”–Levine answered, on 23.11.2015, to his former (2013) student, Emil Kjerte. From Levine’s *Archivegut*.

¹⁰⁸ At our recent meeting in Cambridge MA, Professor Bartov suggested to think about the format of Levine’s burial rather as a “*pure people grave*” than as a “*collective grave*” which might have some truth in it, but doesn’t make it less nonsense in terms of Levine.

¹⁰⁹ Facing the headstone-less burial decision, made for unknown reasons and against his last will by the few, the *initiative Paul A. Levine Library* started asking questions and initiated its activity.

¹¹⁰ Levine discussed vividly the last words “*responsible irresponsibility*” he had invented for himself, that included a clear contradiction; but was he ever understood? Bruchfeld disliked Levine’s contradicting life-

paper remarks that this inadequate failure to properly memorialize Levine represents, in some important ways, the insufficiency of imagination by those who made the final decision for Levine's burial procedure. How could be left aside the alleged meaning of *collective grave* or *mass grave* for a Jew and even more – for a Holocaust historian? Such ignorance of received knowledge by those *educated barbarians*, and their lack of reflection, added to the burdens of Levine's commemoration, multiplying the Initiative's struggles about Levine's memorial matter.

Summing up I would like to highlight one more time Paul A. Levine, the hero of the classroom,¹¹¹ though, misunderstood by some, and the *rock-n-roll* and star-historian. All these facets together made up the big personality of the talented and vulnerable genius Levine. The studied sources brought us closer to the answer of who Levine was; what he achieved; and, whom and what he represents for the Initiative. For many in Sweden Levine embodies—unconsciously, but perceptibly for some—both an “*important*” man, and a “*fighter*”.¹¹² No wonder though, if Levine's image could let some observers literally feel “*the air of braggadocio*”, mistaking *a brag* and *a fight* for the same. “*Well, being great is never easy!*” In addition to my personal experience, many sources confirm that Levine's self-confidence is originally and legitimately based on a) applied tremendous knowledge; b) on merely brilliance in generating and delivering of ideas; as well as c) on wisdom supplied from the scholar's multicultural experience.

Levine belongs to those teachers, whose ideas' life-long follower one becomes, finding oneself deeply fascinated, and encouraged about writing and teaching history. I argue that Levine's ability, the exceptional curiosity, and his boundless interest in knowledge, closely tied to his immense multi-cultural academic and personal experience, created the historian Levine, and the myths around him. It was Levine's novelistic personality that sharpened the brilliance of his “inner” star, shaping the heart of his library to what it later became – the unique archival collection. His intellectual and emotional aptitude made him achieve visionary perspectives in

philosophy, admitting it in conversation soon after the webinar that honored the star-historian in 2020. Obviously, some people forget that even the *Torah* (the Bible) – this moving cradle of three religions – possesses contradicting passages. “Contradiction is what keeps sanity”, not without reason, Gustave Flaubert opens quite a secret logic for some.

¹¹¹ In History, Levine will remain also as “*the rock'n'roll historian*”. Music decorated Professor's life both underlining some big moments of his multicultural life and shaping his identity. (Levine, 2018).

¹¹² “...*his many defeats and fiascos and dishonors added in some numinous way to his stature.*” may have added one of the historian's intellectual heroes, Christopher Hitchens. See Hitchens, 2004, 5.

both thinking and teaching about how to teach the Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the progressive manner.

In history, the name Paul A. Levine will remind us of a responsible historian with a fine sense of humor, courage, self-confidence, a well-ordered mindset, and the great heart of a *Mensch*. The star-historian Levine was misunderstood and, in a way, dishonored. This fact caused an international resonance culminating into the initiative “Paul A. Levine Library” with a task to take care of the historian’s legacy. Unpacking it for the prime evaluation of its meaning and potential, in the next chapter I will both introduce the story of its origins with some noteworthy findings.

4. Exploring the Library's Content: Origins and History of the Collection

On 7 December 2020, I presented the student initiative “Paul A. Levine Library” at the international conference “*Forward and Don’t Forget: Writing & Teaching about the Holocaust Today*,” organized in honor of Levine.¹¹³ The origin of the raised initiative was motivated by the fatal thoughtlessness mentioned before, when the Jewish-American-Swedish Holocaust historian was buried in a “collective grave”, which excluded any possibility of fulfilling the last wish of Professor Levine – a tombstone with his personally prepared epitaph, and his archive was left to the mercy of fate. Only thanks to the joint efforts of the group of responsible people, volunteers, and sympathizers, it was possible to save and preserve the collection. Possessing a high degree of empathy and subtly feeling what was happening, these people provided all possible assistance to save the collection. This was the start of the student initiative whose main goal is to honor Paul A. Levine by taking care of his legacy and transforming it to become his living memorial, stand-alone or integrated into one of the existing Holocaust memorial museums or archives in Europe or in the US.

¹¹³ The initiative’s aims and concerns were presented to a broader audience, supported by international scholars of Holocaust and Antisemitism Studies. Young scholars and experienced academics gathered for a webinar-based discussion about the most urgent issues of the field, alluding to Levine’s life’s work. With this conference, the initiative *Paul A. Levine Library* marked its one-year existence. This memorial-event was supported by the Institute for The Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, Indiana University; History Department, Brown University; *Tkuma*, Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies; Museum “Jewish Memory and Holocaust in Ukraine”, Dnipro; *Afro-Asiatisches Institut*, Graz, as well as by Rabbi Akiva Weingarden, *Besht Yeshiva Dresden e. V.* The organized event brought together honored guests, historians and students, who are active in more than 10 countries and were professionally connected with Professor Levine, knew and honored his life’s work.

Since its beginning, the initiative has received inestimable support from great American historians of the field. Similarly to when the library of the Jewish community in Berlin was founded in 1899 and the literature-historian Ludwig Geiger appealed to community members to support the library with his “*Gedenket des Geistes*”, the initiative appeals today, encouraged and approved with words and deeds by American historians Alvin H. Rosenfeld and Omer Bartov¹¹⁴, to “remember and pass on the spirit”:

*“You are doing the right thing with this initiative. I’m happy to be supportive”.*¹¹⁵

*“A moving and informative panel dedicated to the memory of Paul Levine, a student, a colleague, a friend, and a wonderful scholar, who dedicated many years of his life to Holocaust education and was taken away from us far too early. May his memory be a blessing.”*¹¹⁶

*“It was very valuable; I am glad that you have done this... There is no question, it should be continued, maybe make it annual...”*¹¹⁷

*“This is an important collection in connection with the historiography of Swedish Holocaust... Paul Levine and his research were foundational to Holocaust research and education in Sweden... Given that so much of Paul’s legacy is rooted here in Sweden, it makes sense that Sweden should be considered as a possible home for this material, which is valuable to the public and researchers not only for what it contains about the role of Sweden and Swedish actors in relation to the Holocaust and the Holocaust in general, but also for what it can tell about the historiography of the Holocaust in Sweden. It is important, therefore, that the collection is kept intact and that its provenance is clear, so that it may retain its own context as well as provide insight into the larger contexts to which it pertains so saliently.”*¹¹⁸

Throughout his career, Paul A. Levine gathered a remarkable collection of books, well over 3,000 scientific titles (mainly devoted to Jewish history, WW2, and the Holocaust). In one of the notes Levine comments on his collection:

*“Along the way I’ve collected some absolutely fascinating publications which, though cheap to purchase and hardly rare, nonetheless have influenced the teaching of not so many teachers/historians that I’ve met... Essential memoirs less visible to even the interested reading public are some of the memoirs and lectures (to mention just four... Friedländer, Braham, Bauer & Gutman, not to mention sitting behind Simon Wiesenthal at a conference at Yad Vashem... Some German histos written by either young participants if not perpetrators, or their children. Meeting someone like Katrin Himmler and Charlotte (lectured in UA), Rudolph Vrba, Polish foreign minister survivor, Simone Veil, Raul Hilberg... Hearing Lanzmann denounce our book... etc.”*¹¹⁹

So, what does Levin’s library contain besides several thousand scientific books full of the historian’s remarks? The following list of research material, well organized in labeled boxes, will help us understand this. In-between, the already mentioned and newly added discoveries:

¹¹⁴ Both Rosenfeld and Bartov lend their names for the initiative’s efforts as well as their speeches at the conference on 7 December 2020.

¹¹⁵ Alvin H. Rosenfeld emphasized during the webinar on 7 December 2020.

¹¹⁶ Omer Bartov, on Facebook, 10.12.2020.

¹¹⁷ John Bernstein, in conversation on 24.3.2021.

¹¹⁸ Swedish-American historian, Victoria Van Orden Martínez, in conversation in February 2021.

¹¹⁹ Why Levine saw further pedagogically than most? – Not least because he had “stood on the shoulder of giants”, to cite Sir Isaac Newton. See also in: Levine, Summer-Fall 2018. *Archivgut*.

- Correspondence; Israel years
- Africa: a slide reportage of six months crossing the continent in the '80s
- Memoir notes – unfinished project, a book started in 2017
- Diaries: Levine took notes consequently throughout his life
- Lecture materials from his Rutgers and Uppsala years, including the material of the first Swedish university course on the Holocaust
- Conference talks
- “Hungary Letters” – ca. 2,000 WW2 artifacts
- “All about the book: letters, review, etc...” – an unfinished project to write *A Book About the Book (Tell Ye Your Children...)*. In November 2022, it will be exactly 25 years since the work began on *Tell Ye Your Children...*; Levine had planned to write a book about this prominent textbook that led to so many changes.

At this point of discussion, it is important to understand *why* materials are usually archived: because the information they hold should be found again. While we try not to keep anything that has no value, the next question we usually deal with by sorting materials out is *what* has value for the archives, what will make us say: *we keep that*. A book, for instance, could be found in different libraries, but certain materials exist only once, in the archive. These are unique items. For this paper, I make the emphasis on just two unique finds that were made while unpacking the boxes: Levine’s diaries, and the collection of WW2 envelopes.

Levine’s diaries and memoirs—I argue—can become indispensable material for those who are interested in the life and work of a remarkable historian, providing researchers with his memories of quite a few years in academia, bringing a “different” perspective of what *“happened in one branch of western academia in some interesting decades”*.

*“Researchers are interested in discovering first-hand information that can shed new light on historical events. Moreover, holdings of smaller grass-roots organizations or private initiatives can complement, refine, and critically scrutinize specific narratives of the past.”*¹²⁰

Without doubt, the memoirs documented by one of the world’s leading Swedish-American Holocaust historians are an irreplaceable source of “lost narrative” about Swedish academia.

A second example of World War II artifacts would be the lost account of the fate of some 2,000 Hungarian Jews. After my visit to the State Archives of Sweden, analyzing the contents of the explored envelopes found in it, there is good reason to believe that this group of people were

¹²⁰ Writes EHRI, European Holocaust Research Infrastructure. Online on 4.10.2021: <https://www.ehri-project.eu/call-ehri-looking-micro-archives>. What Levine had to offer during his career was not least a “different” perspective on some interesting things, *“which happened in one branch of western academia in some interesting decades for the subject around which my life has been constructed and decorated with, all of those wonderful years”*, - as Levine summarized in summer 2018.

destined for the same fate, far from being studied and still unknown. The items represent Hungarian registered, censored, opened, and emptied envelopes sent to Stockholm; displaying full senders' data, most of them are stamped between July and August 1943. Why did the envelopes become part of Levine's archive? They could be tied directly to the history of Jewish Hungarian immigration to Sweden since the Hungarian Holocaust was Levine's research field. How many people are behind those covers? Who are those people and what connects them? Why are the envelopes postmarked between July and August 1943? Where are the letters themselves? What happened to both senders and those on whose concern the letters were written? Hungarian historian Andras Kovacs¹²¹ found my questions about the envelopes "*highly valid.*" His colleague, historian László Karsai admitted being surprised seeing the photos of the envelopes:

"I have been researching for many decades in the Hungarian National Archives (since 1994, I am the head of the Hungarian research Group of the Yad Vashem Archives), went through the documents of the Foreign Office, the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, etc... Sorry, but I have never heard about this post."

Beyond dispute, the examples given, although only superficially considered, eloquently convince without superfluous words how relevant they could be for further research. In the process of considering how and where it might be best to preserve this collection and perpetuate Paul's dedication to researching and teaching the Holocaust, I argue that two parts of Levine's archive, his book collection and archival materials, form together the rare *Archivgut*, a highly relevant piece of Holocaust historiography for Sweden, as well as for Germany, Hungary, Ukraine, and the US. Some Swedish historians agree that their new Holocaust Museum could be a potential home for Paul Levine's collection, particularly if it were situated within a memorial library where members of the public could spend time to research, read, write, reflect, etc. In spring of 2021, proposed ideas could have begun turning to a reality, would the new organized Swedish Holocaust Museum had hired people having enough understanding of either Holocaust history or Holocaust historiography for dealing with the question, "*where are the collections related to the Holocaust in Sweden?*"

"Since so much of Paul's legacy is rooted here in Sweden, it makes sense that Sweden should be considered as a possible home for this material. The collection is valuable to the public and researchers not only for what it contains about the role of Sweden and Swedish actors in relation to the Holocaust and the Holocaust in general, but also for what it can tell about the historiography of the Holocaust in Sweden. It is important, therefore, that the collection is kept intact and that its provenance is clear, so

¹²¹ Kovacs, Andras, as I was consulting him in the email exchange regarding the found envelopes on the 20. April 2021.

that it may retain its own context as well as provide insight into the larger contexts to which it pertains so saliently."¹²²

Should these materials disappear, or should they be something museums are interested in considering?

Summing up, this chapter briefly talked about both the library's origins and its 2019-2020 rescue, which, in fact, is still ongoing. Because archives are there to enable access to relevant information and we know that knowledge disappears if it is not documented, they must be opened up/developed/catalogued so that they can be found again. According to one of the archival descriptive standards, cataloguing is one of the important tasks in perspective. But, discussion of what lies ahead is the goal of the next chapter.

5. What lies ahead

Having learned how important Levine's private physical collection is today for the future of the field, what place will we allocate it?

It's time to talk about the Levine library's prospects. As it is hiding a relevant piece of history in it, this historical archive, to which nothing will be added,¹²³ should not be lost; as already noted, a fascinating, exciting Holocaust historian's narrative is situated there as well as many important documents. Consequently, it must be recognized, preserved, and situated available for study. A first step is to assess its size and scope, examine how much curation it would require, etc. Cataloging and indexing of the holdings are central tasks that are imminent; at the same time the material requires a physical place for its proper storage and usage according to the existing norms for *Archivegut-Erhaltung*. In Levine's name, I appeal with concern and worry that without more involvement and support the vision to create a space for Levine's archival materials would remain an idea, not the least because bureaucratic burdens that stand in the way, starting with organizational problems.¹²⁴ Yes, again, it is all about empathy and solidarity vs. indifference.

¹²² Swedish historians, Victoria Van Orden Martínez and Malin Thor Tureby in their writing to Katherine Hauptman, a Swedish Archeologist, a new director of the Swedish Holocaust Museum.

¹²³ Nothing more will be added because the person no longer exists.

¹²⁴ The European bureaucracy was one of the central research topics of Professor Paul Levine. For this reason, the crucial dispute over Levine's life's work is surely both tragic and grotesque.

The logical idea of the Swedish Holocaust Museum taking, curating, and preserving Levine's collection as a collection with the possibility of some sort of small library or reading room was presented in the letter to the museum organizers, signed by two other Swedish academics, in 2021. It was a simple, straightforward yet historic message that proposed to start a conversation on Levine's collection; it never received any response.

What can we do consider the burdens that are both real and have faces? First – we will continue eating matzo-ball soup. And furthermore, we will continue our research on this valuable collection and keep looking for friends and followers who value that what we value.¹²⁵ Surely, what lies ahead for those dealing with Levine's archival materials is inventory, maintenance, evaluation of documents, handing-over, archive-legal issues; pest monitoring, appropriate packaging and room climate control are of central importance when it comes to maintaining archival collections. The question of electronic archiving also concerns all archives today: Levine worked before the digital boom, and most of his work is not yet digitized.

There is long and exciting work on Levine's materials lying ahead. Making sense of the current state of things regarding this collection, while looking into the future, we suddenly realize that the future that we have been preparing for ourselves is no more acquirable; problems from the past - war, famine, epidemics - have returned, unfortunately added to with a few new ones, such as dealing with artificial intelligence and climate change. In their shadow, what is the future of the collection under discussion? In wartime – argues the prominent historian and author Yuval Noah Harari in his recent interview with Mikhail Zigarev – even democratically organized social states raise their military budgets to enormous levels which leave them less opportunities to support, for example, the humanities. Moreover, an indomitable accumulation of weapons makes their use more likely...

What lies ahead and what can we do under the current circumstances? – *“One of the things we all can do and what we really must do, is to make sure that we don't become indifferent”*¹²⁶. The goal of creating a home for Levine's collection is to continue his own educational work in a new dimension. In this way, Levine's project can become a living legacy– passing on knowledge to successive generations.

¹²⁵ Alvin Rosenfeld, joking in one of his talks last year, recommends that Jews, in response, continue eating matzo-ball soup, while Anti-Semitism worldwide increases. Similarly, the initiative will continue to be dedicated to both remembrance and research despite listed struggles that could become even harder in the future.

¹²⁶ Alvin H. Rosenfeld in one of his talks.

6. Conclusion

In times of pandemic and Russian aggression in Europe, I decided to speak of completely different concerns that stay behind the asked question, *why does the Paul A. Levine Library matter?*

The key purpose of this contribution is to properly honor the memory of the historian Levine, which has not yet happened. Following his path from New York City through California of the 60's and 70's, Israel, and Sweden into Berlin, the presented study had responded to a few *whats* and *whys* to provide a somewhat coherent basis for an enlarged and accelerated discussion: 1) why to honor Levine again? 2) why the initiative had to rescue Levine's library; 3) why Levine's *Archivegut* delivers sources that should be both placed in conversation to evolve lost historical evidence for the historiography of Holocaust study. Another important motivation for this work is the need to attract the attention of interested scholars by asking for the support of specialists in the study of Levine's archival materials. It seeks to promote and support a discussion among us interested individuals and institutions towards gaining maintenance for Levine's collection. Unpacking and examining its content I make an argument that Levine's archive should be available to scholars of his field—perhaps to some history-fellows of that ethic and economic caliber, who care about historical truth and memory.

My analysis is based less on an exhausting methodologically orthodox investigation, but it is more personal. More accurately, it is an undergraduate impressionistic review of matters in which I have been personally involved through several years of working with and for Professor Levine. Nonetheless, my outline is well supported by empirical reality. I think it is fair to say, and hardly an exaggeration, that talented and much trained in educating of both feelings and reason of his audience, Levine—being highly successful in his research—achieved an impact in the field of Holocaust and Genocide Studies that is revolutionary and foundational in many ways, first of all but not only for Sweden; mediocrities didn't like it, as was sketched briefly. Upon that, Levine not only inspires many with his accomplishments and strong personality, but also with what he aspired to and what he failed to achieve. "*All great works (precisely because they are great) contain something unachieved.*"¹²⁷

I dare to say that the courageous historian and great teacher, who had taught modern European and Holocaust history and memory for 30 years, primarily in Sweden and the United States, but

¹²⁷ Kundera, M., *The Art of the Novel*, 1986, 65.

also in many other countries, played a decisive role in the foundation and development of the program for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Sweden, where this field finally found its footholds in just the last twenty years or so. Being a freelance consulting historian for the last years of his career, Levine didn't belong to any educational institution that could have taken care of his collection and legacy. However, we can state that the inability of a group of Swedish academics and relatives to properly honor the merits and memory of a remarkable historian and teacher who lived and created at the turn of eras and millennia, on the one hand increasing the bitterness of loss, on the other hand gave an impetus to create the initiative to memorialize and honor Levine and his significant work. If we remember Professor Levine incorrectly, exaggerating dark spots at his star, increasing non-thoughts, and diminishing his memory, how do we then enlarge him and his example?¹²⁸

My beloved Paul was ill, he could not recover; on October 28, 2019, Levine was finally taken to that star which he had once lit up.

Today, making plans to promote the rescued and presented materials collection, while unpacking the library content and asking questions, I have shown that besides an impressive collection of scholarly publications—a few thousand books on Holocaust studies with some of the rarest copies—the library includes another, highly relevant part, filled with unpublished research materials, historical documents, correspondence, and other goods waiting for interested scholars to accomplish the lost story. There is hope to receive recommendations and guidance from international field experts. Whether the Swedish side will become a noted adviser is currently unclear. However, the initiative is created and is caring for the collection currently, turning some created nonsense into sense in memory of Levine. The paths chosen to reach this goal follow several exciting projects which are currently in their initial phases. But, restoring the dignity of the misunderstood hero, who was not buried according to his last will, I could not completely avoid the painful and tabu-full question regarding Levine's last resting place.¹²⁹ – Well, that's my job!

Nevertheless, re-reading Levine, we may achieve perspective that easily will include the stupendous importance of love, empathy, friendship, solidarity, and courage, all those goods of the sensitive teaching-process about the Holocaust and Genocide. No doubt that remembering

¹²⁸ Levine's concept of remembering a hero. See in: Levine, P.A., *Raoul Wallenberg's True Heroism*, International Herald Tribune, 12.1.2001.

¹²⁹ One of current projects, A Traveling Tombstone "Tevat Paul" is a project in cooperation with the Berliner artist and sculptor, Robert Schmidt-Matt. See more: <https://paullevinelibrary.wordpress.com/2022/03/28/a-traveling-tombstone/>.

Paul A. Levine in his real context is essential to honor him appropriately. But the crucial ability to remember can fulfill much more, if/when we understand that, as well as “*there is no teaching without remembrance!*”¹³⁰, so there is no learning without remembrance, too.

And for the very last: deliberately and on purpose, there was not much critique addressed to Levine in this study— this effort has been made by others to a degree. May this undergraduate paper resonate as a hymn for the star-historian Paul A. Levine; may it become an ode for the friendship and love. 🙏

“...*And never forget, the library will always be open to you... Goodbye, your Pasha*”¹³¹

¹³⁰ Philip Spencer: Currents Debates about Antisemitism in the UK, webinar series, 2021.

¹³¹ This was the remark of the great historian Levine, or Pasha, as I called him (from Pavel=Paul in russ.). He wrote this wish into one of the book gifts to me.

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